

A SAINT IN SEATTLE

A Saint in Seattle

THE LIFE OF THE TIBETAN MYSTIC
DEZHUNG RINPOCHE

David P. Jackson



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Foreword

ACCORDING TO TIBETAN TRADITION, it is very important to read the biographies of great lamas as an example and inspiration to spiritual life. H. E. Dezhung Rinpoche was one of the greatest and most learned Sakya masters of our time. His realization was incomparable, his compassion unlimited, and his influence on all he met continues to this day.

It is my pleasure to introduce the first complete biography of his life that is available in English. It is fortunate that this has been written by Dr. David Jackson. Not only is he a student and scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, but he was one of H. E. Dezhung Rinpoche's closest disciples, lived near him for many years, and served him as interpreter. Dr. Jackson has drawn on his own experience as well as interviewed those who knew Rinpoche well.

As Sakya Phüntsook Phodrang Head Lama of the Sakya order of Tibetan Buddhism, I knew H. E. Dezhung Rinpoche as a great Sakya lama, as the cofounder with me of Sakya Monastery in Seattle, Washington, as a teacher, and as a relative—the uncle of my wife and great uncle of my five sons. We shared a spiritual lineage as well as a family lineage. In all my contact with H. E. Dezhung Rinpoche, he epitomized the life of a bodhisattva.

H.H. Jigdral Dagchen Sakya, Sakya Phüntsook Phodrang



3. Dezhung Rinpoche in a private garden. Seattle, ca, 1980.



Preface

I know that I am unworthy and incapable of writing the life of a man so deserving of our imitation and all our veneration. And I would never have attempted it, were it not for the eager desire of the friars. I wanted to be perfectly sure of the truth about his life and have a clear grasp of it before setting it down for posterity, and so I went to his birthplace and visited the country where he lived and he died. There I was able to speak with some of his close friends who were still alive and to interview them carefully, especially those who had first-hand experience of his holiness and had tried to imitate it themselves.¹

THE MODEST and painstaking care avowed by St. Bonaventure in the preface to his biography of St. Francis of Assisi could be a model for a biographer in any era—though Bonaventure did not actually carry them into practice. As a hagiographer, Bonaventure became a censor, cutting from the life story whatever did not fit his ideal of the saint, and even decreeing, forty years after his master's death, the destruction of all previous biographies of St. Francis and their replacement with his own compilation.² Thus even the job of hagiographer has abuses and pitfalls.

For the present biography of the Tibetan master Dezhung Rinpoche (1906–1987), my aims remain the old-fashioned ones of Bonaventure: to grasp the truth about a saint's life and set it down for posterity. I hope I have succeeded in some respects, though truth about a mystic has always been an elusive commodity and it is no less so in this highly reflective and secular age. The respect, gratitude, and affection I have for my saintly subject have certainly influenced and biased me. To what extent I have unconsciously

become a censor, forcing the life story into an idealized, sanitized mold or otherwise distorting the account, the reader must try to judge.

The following story is a hagiography, the biography of a saint. The facts I could ascertain about Dezhung Rinpoche's life from his writings, acquaintances, and my own direct encounters with him were worthy of a traditional religious biography (Tib. *rnam thar*, "spiritual career" or "life of liberation") of a lama. Dezhung Rinpoche in his old age was esteemed as a remarkable man by many of the greatest living Buddhist masters of Tibet. Most who knew him, even non-Buddhists, respected him as a saintly man, and many who knew him most intimately were convinced he was a saint.

Dezhung Rinpoche was born into an ordinary family of Sakyapa (and Ngorpa) patrons and practitioners in Gapa district of Kham in eastern Tibet. Though at the time of his birth in 1906 the Sakyapa tradition had been in relative decline in western and central Tibet, the fires of the tradition continued to burn brightly in Kham province to the east, especially in the person of Dezhung Rinpoche's main teacher, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (1864–1941). Besides Dezhung Rinpoche himself, the greatest figure in this biography is Ngawang Lekpa. Again and again this master influenced Dezhung Rinpoche and determined his actions, from the period of his early studies right down to his building a new Tharlam monastery in Nepal in the 1980s and to the teachings he gave on Sanskrit grammar shortly before he passed away.

Dezhung Rinpoche's life was, however, anything but one-sided. One of his earliest memories was of being given into the care of his paternal uncle, the meditator-monk Ngawang Nyima, who raised him from age four or five in a retreat house and influenced him to devote his whole life to meditative practice. Later, from his teenage years onward, his main guru, the great Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, influenced him to become both highly learned *and* accomplished in meditation. Thus he was caught from an early time between two impressive and powerful figures, each of whom had high but partly conflicting hopes for him. As a youth he was torn between these not entirely contradictory claims, but in the long run this also set the pattern for his later development in which he laid equal stress on intellectual development and meditative realization.

Dezhung Rinpoche grew up under the guidance of some of the greatest religious teachers of twentieth-century Tibet. Such great masters as his main teacher, Gatön, in effect shifted the spiritual center of gravity of the nine-

teenth- and twentieth-century Sakyapa tradition eastward to his homeland, Kham. The same shift can also be observed for many of the most important Nyingma and Kagyüpa lineages, coinciding with an increased openness to all Buddhist traditions in Kham under the influence of the nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement led by such masters as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892) and Kongtrül Lotrö Thayey (1813–1899). Gatön counted both the first Khyentse and Kongtrül among his main teachers, and the spirit of this movement lived on also in another of Dezhung Rinpoche's greatest teachers, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö (1893–1959), the rebirth of the great Khyentse based at the main seat, Dzongsar. Dezhung Rinpoche, as student of both Gatön and Dzongsar Khyentse, was one of the last major upholders and true practitioners of this sympathetic, “inclusivist” approach.

Such facts about the general background of Dezhung Rinpoche's life are clear, but many difficulties remain when compiling in detail the spiritual career of an accomplished Tibetan Buddhist master. The Tibetan tradition distinguishes between the “outer” career of external deeds (*phyi'i rnam thar*), which manifests itself directly to others, and the “inner” and “secret” life story of learning, reflection, meditative experience, and realization.³ Here I can only hope to record his “outer” deeds, with few hints about his inner development.

Even the telling of Dezhung Rinpoche's external story has been complicated by one of his main inner virtues: humility. Despite his remarkable intelligence, energy, and kindness, he remained deeply—almost painfully—modest. At times it seemed to his disciples that he carried this virtue to a fault. One of his main later Tibetan students said, “Dezhung Rinpoche is actually a perfect teacher and master—he's a true Buddha. But if he has one shortcoming, it's that he is too humble.”

Dezhung Rinpoche often repeated the saying, “The teacher was excellent; the student was poor” (*bla ma bzang/ slob ma ngan/*). He was referring to himself as a student, but it applies a hundred times more to me. I especially regret not recording more carefully the events of his life that he told me in passing, some of which I remember now only in their bare outlines, and many others of which I have completely forgotten. But more than fourteen years have passed since Dezhung Rinpoche's death, and it is high time to set down as much as can be reliably learned about his life. It would be a sad irony if the life story of Dezhung Rinpoche, one of the greatest transmitters of history in his generation, were not carefully recorded and transmitted.

I don't mean to imply that Dezhung Rinpoche has been completely overlooked until now. Though Sakyapa masters and traditions have been relatively neglected in recent histories of Buddhism in the West,⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche's career, writings, and influences on Western scholarship and even his Tibetan writings are by no means unknown. In recent years a translation of a long series of teachings that he gave in New York in the late 1970s was published, together with a biographical sketch, as the book *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception* (1995)—a revised second edition of which was released in 2003.⁵ His great personal influence has been recently reacknowledged by E. Gene Smith, one of the most influential American scholars of Tibetan Buddhist literature.⁶ Concerning Dezhung Rinpoche's writings in Tibetan, several appeared from Delhi during his own lifetime, and an edition of his complete works should, let us hope, appear from India or Nepal in the next year or two.

Still, when I began this study in 1992 the situation was different. In particular, there was no satisfactory biography in either Tibetan or English, so I decided to try to compile the main events in Dezhung Rinpoche's life, remembering how much he had stressed the importance of recording the life stories of his own teachers. No doubt many among his students, colleagues, and friends would like to know his life story in more detail, and this biography is primarily intended for them. But his story is in many places of wider interest, recording as it does important facets of Tibetan religious culture that are today radically changed or lost in his land of birth. For that reason I decided to present the biography here in this expanded and annotated form.

Several students of Dezhung Rinpoche had begun already in the 1960s to record his life story. Some encouraged him to set down the main facts of his life, but he opposed the idea. When beginning the present work, I started with my own notes and memories, gradually supplementing those with the reminiscences of his brother Kunzang Nyima recorded by Jared Rhoton, interviews of other surviving witnesses, and whatever other written sources I could locate. I tried to use as much as possible Dezhung Rinpoche's own writings and other trustworthy written sources, though I could not systematically use his diaries from the 1960s and 1970s (for reasons explained below in appendix B). Luckily, I could locate a few scraps of unfinished autobiographical writings among his surviving papers, and these served as crucial records of his early life up to the late 1940s.

Note on Names

In writing Tibetan histories, the correct literary Tibetan spellings of personal and place names (giving them in exact romanization) are essential. A major part of my own struggle when working through the various oral accounts has been to establish these spellings, hoping that they might help the eventual composing of Dezhung Rinpoche's biography in Tibetan. To convert it all to phonetics strikes me as pointless. Imagine what would be lost in a European or American history if the English, French, and Spanish names were presented willy-nilly in rough approximations: Lincoln as "Lingkun," Charlemagne as "Sharleman," etc. Moreover, in some Tibetan border dialects many of the "offending" pre-initial letters are still spoken just as written. Nevertheless, Tibetan in romanization does repel many nonspecialist readers, especially when served up in large helpings. Therefore in the main narrative of this book I have rendered some common proper nouns phonetically, leaving the more infrequent usages in romanized Tibetan. This leads to a combination of phonetic and transliterated spellings, sometimes even within the same name. I beg the reader's indulgence in this unusual convention. For those interested, the corresponding Tibetan spellings can be found in the Table of Tibetan Words and Names.

In a book where hundreds of Tibetan names occur, the reader cannot be blamed for feeling not only bombarded by innumerable foreign names but also adrift among the currents of unknown naming customs. The basic structure of a lama's name is, however, simple. A complete name normally consists of two elements in this sequence: (1) a title and (2) an ordination name. A complete title, in turn, has two parts: (1a) place or lineage of origin and (1b) a function, rank or status. For example, Sakya Panchen ("Great scholar [rank] of Sakya [place]"). One problem for ordinary readers is that many of the common monastic ranks or functions are not easily recognizable. In addition, Tibetans often abbreviate names and titles, making the individual parts hard to discern.

For example, the name of the famous lama Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye can be explained as Kongtrül (title) and Lodrö Thaye (ordination name). Here Kongtrül is the universally accepted abbreviation for Kongpo (place) Trülku (rank). Thus his full name means "Lodrö Thaye, the Incarnate Lama of Kongpo (Bam stengs)." But in a religious context that would still sound bare and hardly respectful. Normally just his abbreviated title was used,

though accompanied by additional titles of respect, in the form: Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche (“The Manjusri-Lord Kongtrül, Precious One”). Such titles of respect have also occasionally slipped into my historical narrative, following Tibetan Buddhist custom. (On the several possible types of Tibetan names and titles, see also E. Gene Smith 2001, pp. 258–262, where the seven names of Kongtrül are listed and explained.)

For the capitalization of proper nouns, I have agreed to use the convention of some North American Tibetologists that avoids internal capitalization, in harmony with the Wisdom editorial style. Another possibly confusing convention is that I have called Ü Province “Central Tibet” (both words capitalized), whereas both Ü and Tsang provinces together are “central Tibet.”

Special Acknowledgments

Many people helped my work by sharing memories, and I am especially indebted to Rinpoche’s youngest sister, Ane Chime Drölma (A ne’Chi med sgrol ma), who patiently recalled many episodes of her elder brother’s life. She retold the story of her travels with him, especially in 1948–1950 and 1958–1960, and also kindly discussed many passages from an early draft of this biography, helping rectify numerous errors and omissions. Rinpoche’s niece, Dagmo Kusho Jamyang Sakya, also assisted by orally relating numerous incidents. Her book (Jamyang Sakya and Julie Emery, *Princess in the Land of Snows*, 1990) helped in reconstructing Rinpoche’s movements during the years when he was traveling with her, especially in 1953–1956 and 1959–1960.

Another exceptionally gracious source has been His Holiness the Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, both in personal interviews and through written replies. I am much indebted to the late Gen Phende Lhakpa (at Tharlam monastery in February to March 1994), who generously recounted for many hours the history and traditions of Tharlam, Gapa, and Ngör.

I am very grateful to two of Dezhung Rinpoche’s longtime American students, E. Gene Smith and Cyrus Stearns, for sharing many memories and allowing me access to notes and other sources preserved among their personal papers. Both kindly read through and commented on early drafts of this biography. Also generous in providing information were Lama Kalsang Gyaltsen, Drau Pön Rinchen Tsering, Ms. Victoria Scott, Mr. Paul

Johnston, Mr. James Sarzotti, Ms. Susanne Fairclough, Ms. Sarah Harding, Ms. Helen Stendahl, Ms. Maruta Kalnins, Prof. Matthew Kapstein, Mr. Moke Mokotoff, Mrs. Michal Bigger, Mr. Jay Goldberg, Mr. Chris Wilkinson, Prof. Janet Gyatso, Prof. Mark Tatz, Ms. Isabelle Robert, Mr. Matthieu Ricard, Ms. Tara Goforth, Geshe Jamyang Tsultrim, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyatso, Mr. Ng Goo Tek, Mr. John M. Reynolds, Dr. John Ardussi, Mr. Tashi Densapa, and numerous others whose contributions will be credited below in the relevant passages. In Seattle in particular, many friends and acquaintances lent much help, including Mingyur Rinpoche, Mr. Richard Baldwin, Mr. John Nyquist, Ms. Vana Jakic, Geshe Ngawang Nornang, Dr. Lawrence Epstein, Dr. Jeffrey Schoening, Prof. Richard Sherburne, S.J., and Ms. Adrienne Chan.

Mr. Tashi Tsering Josayma in Dharamsala kindly provided much background information on the history of twentieth-century Kham and was a great help in locating rare photographs and publications. Also helpful with photographs were Gyatso Tsering, formerly director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA), Dharamsala, and many others whose names are mentioned with the photo credits. I am grateful to Philip Pierce and Victoria Scott for carefully reading through this biography, double-checking for errors or inconsistencies in both language and content; both have contributed invaluablely.

So stands the story of Dezhung Rinpoche's life as far as I could ascertain it. I would be grateful to you, gentle reader, if you would point out any remaining mistakes or omissions.

D. Jackson

June 2002

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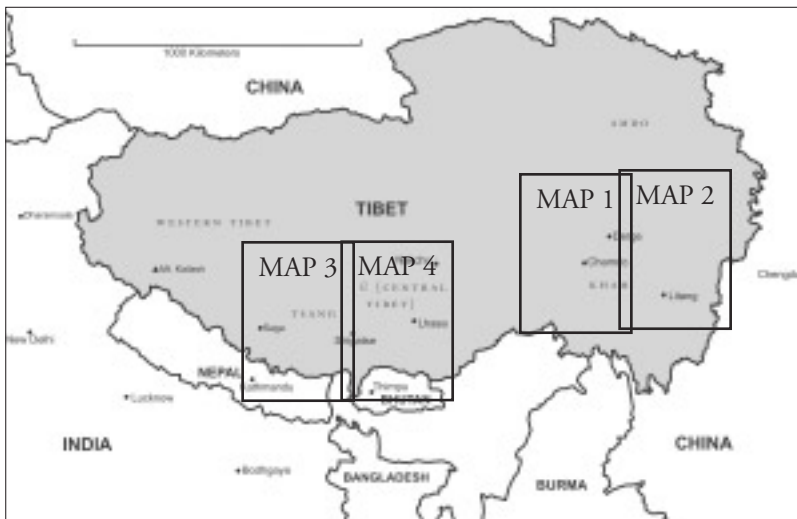
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❧PART 1

Life in the Old World
1906–1960

First Years at Tharlam

ONE SUNNY MORNING in 1910 in a high farming village of eastern Tibet, two young parents observed their four-year-old boy playing lama again. Sitting on a pile of hand-woven yak-hair bags as his “throne,” the boy pretended to perform rites for his playmates on the rooftop courtyard where the children had gathered to play in the sun. The parents exchanged smiles.

Noting the affinity the boy had for religion, the boy’s father, an ex-monk and traditional doctor, made it a point to take his son to the local monastery now and then. The boy liked it there,⁷ and he particularly enjoyed visiting his uncle’s retreat house.

After a little discussion, his parents decided to dedicate the boy to the Buddhist monkhood.⁸ Tibetan parents commonly gave at least one son at about age seven or eight to become a monk. But this young couple took the unusual step of sending their little son, when he was only four or five,⁹ into the care of his paternal uncle, Ngawang Nyima (1872/73–1951), a diligent meditator-monk living in retreat at Tharlam monastery.¹⁰

His parents did not explain their decision or give the little boy any warning. One day his father simply led him to the retreat house of his uncle and briskly carried him down the ladder into an empty, open compound. Just as quickly, his father left.

The boy found himself completely alone; his uncle was still in the middle of one of his daily meditation sessions. He felt so shocked and abandoned he could neither laugh nor cry. Finally his uncle came out of meditation, cheered him up, and put him to bed.

For the next five years the boy remained closed up in his uncle’s retreat house, cut off from his parents and the rest of the world. He never stayed another night at home with his mother.¹¹ When he did see his parents in the

next few years, it was only through the small window through which food and other necessary articles were passed. Some local people were surprised that such a small boy could live in such a secluded setting,¹² but he quickly adapted to the new life.



4. Farmhouses in robber-infested southern Kham, ca. 1910.

His sole companion and caregiver, Uncle Ngawang Nyima, was a tall, thin monk of Tharlam monastery, a great yogi of Vajrayoginī in Nāropa's tradition (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma) who lived most of his life shut up in his retreat house near Tharlam monastery. In his youth, Ngawang Nyima had met the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. As a young monk he went to Ngor monastery in Tsang Province of central Tibet, where he received his main vows and teachings from the great Khangsar abbot Ngawang Lotrö Nyingpo (fifty-ninth Ngor abbot).¹³

In his younger days this uncle had been known as Ra'ok Trakseng, famous locally for his fierce disposition: he habitually got into arguments and never walked away from a fight. He is said to have worked as a young man for

some of his distant relations (such as for Dzinda Anye Kalsang Gönpö), accompanying caravans to Dartsedo and other destinations. He was highly valued as a companion on account of his bravery and dependability.¹⁴ But then, in his early twenties, he met the great Buddhist masters Nyiga Dorjechang, Dezhung Trulku Lungrik Nyima, Lekpa Rinpoche, and the Gapa Lama Chöla Rinpoche, after which he changed radically, shutting himself up in retreat and devoting himself entirely to meditative practice.¹⁵ He also had significant encounters with the masters Dru Jamyang Rinpoche and Rakshül Drukpa Tobju Rinpoche (Ngawang Tobju). In addition, he later received Nyingma teachings from Shenga Rinpoche, including Dza Paltrül's introductory manual to the *Snying thig* cycle entitled *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*), the *Rgyu ma ngal gso* of Longchenpa, and the profound instructions *Ye shes bla ma*.¹⁶

From the age of twenty-four (ca. 1896) until his death fifty-four years later, Ngawang Nyima stayed nearly the whole time in retreat. When his nephew, the young Könchok Lhündrup (Dezhung Rinpoche), joined him, he had already been in retreat for about ten or eleven years.¹⁷ In his life he recited the "Three-Öm" Vajrayoginī mantra one hundred million times, and he also completed the foundation practices a million times each, under the instruction of Dezhung Lungrik Nyima.¹⁸ He was also a practitioner of the Karma Kagyü Jö tradition (*Tshogs las yon tan kun 'byung*) and had completed major retreats for such deities as White Tārā, Mahākāla Gurgyi Gönpö ("Lord of the Tent"), and Seng gdong ma ("Lion-faced Dākinī"). He mastered "holding the nature of mind in view" (*sems ngo skyong ba*).¹⁹ He practiced four meditation sessions per day (especially on Vajrayoginī, Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma), and at the end of his daytime sessions he would ring his bell. After this, sometimes people outside would come to the window of his retreat house and, by speaking through it, consult him.

At first, since the little Könchok Lhündrup was too small to dress or go to the toilet by himself, his uncle had to care for him. After a year or so, the boy was old enough to help his uncle with small tasks, such as making tea. The retreat house was two stories tall and had the dimensions of a normal house inside. Ngawang Nyima kept it beautiful by planting flowers in pots. One of the young boy's duties in winter was to put the pots out in the sunshine in the morning and to take in the tender flowers, covering them with a blanket, at night. Ngawang Nyima loved flowers, and he liked to grow rare and beautiful varieties. Thirty years later, when Dezhung Rinpoche was leaving to visit the great trade town of Dartsedo (Tachienlu) in Minyak,

near the Chinese border, he offered to bring back for his uncle anything he wanted. All Ngawang Nyima requested were seeds or bulbs to grow beautiful flowers, so Dezhung Rinpoche took care to search out a number of special tubers and seeds.²⁰

Occasionally his parents brought food for him and his uncle, passing it through the window. Sometimes other patrons brought food. The door and windows leading out were bolted shut and sealed, and water had to be poured in from outside through a pipe that led into the kitchen. The only practicable way for a person to come in was to climb down a ladder from the upper story of an adjoining house.²¹ Inside the retreat house there was also a dog, who would come and eat with them at mealtimes.²²

Uncle Ngawang Nyima was thus Dezhung Rinpoche's first teacher. Though his uncle treated him kindly, the young boy stood in awe of him, trying to do everything his uncle ordered and trusting strongly in everything he said.²³

From a young age he learned to read from his uncle, and by age six he was quite proficient. When Rinpoche was first learning to read, Uncle Ngawang Nyima would sit nearby, quietly reciting mantras. Rinpoche had to read out the spelling of each word in the traditional way (*sbyor klog*), first one letter at a time and finally the pronunciation of the whole syllable. If he made no mistake, his uncle would keep quiet. But when he gave the wrong spelling or final pronunciation, his uncle would grunt or clear his throat, and he would have to correct himself. If he erred a second or third time, his uncle would pick up a stick that he kept by his seat and whack his young pupil over the head.²⁴

The basic characters of the *dbu-can* alphabet he learned at once, but the combinations of prefixes, subscripts, superscripts, and so forth were more difficult. Learning the cursive script came almost automatically: his uncle showed him a letter from Dezhung Rinpoche's future chief teacher, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, and from that he learned the script almost immediately.²⁵

When his uncle was in one of his daily meditation sessions, he was left all alone. Sometimes in the day when he was all by himself he felt lonely and depressed, but other times he felt elated and laughed. In the evening when his uncle came out of his afternoon meditation session, he always felt happy.²⁶

As his texts for learning to read, he and Uncle Ngawang Nyima used the *Life and Songs of Milarepa* compiled and edited by Tsangnyön Heruka, the *Klong chen snying thig* introductory text *Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*) by Paltrül, the *Bhadrakalpikā Sūtra*, the biography

of Karma Chakme, and other biographies. In particular, his uncle read to him from his own favorite work, the *Life of Milarepa*, and the young Dezhung Rinpoche developed a lifelong admiration for Lord Mila. He came to know the *Life and Songs of Milarepa* by heart, and he wanted to become a great meditator just like the venerable Mila.²⁷

When he could read out loud by himself, he would practice with this text in particular, sitting by the tiny window that was their conduit of communication with the rest of the world, reading out the story in a sing-song, little-boy voice to all passing by. Old people of the village who were doing circumambulations of the nearby monastery, reciting *māñis*²⁸ on their rosaries, would often stop and listen to his chanting. Sometimes the people outside would offer him candies or dried fruit through the small window. Sometimes, too, he would hand sweets or dried fruits back out to them, much to their surprise. But he had to be careful not to be caught. He could only do it when his uncle was in one of his three long daily periods of meditation.²⁹

Omens at Birth

The special little boy, who was later to be recognized as the third Dezhung Rinpoche, had been born on the third day of the first lunar month in the fire-horse year of the fifteenth calendar-cycle (February 26, 1906). He was born at Thaklung, a village just west of the Drichu ('Bri chu, upper Yangtse) river in northwest Kham one day's journey by horse (30 kilometers as the crow flies) due north of the district capital and trading center, Jyekundo (33N 97E).³⁰ Thaklung village lay in the lower part of the high, mostly treeless Ga district (*sga smad*), according to some sources—or at least it lay very near the border of the old Ga and Kyura districts, which in olden days were two of three affiliated territories in the upper Drichu watershed: Ga, Denma, and Kyura (*sga ldan skyur gsum*).³¹ The settlements in the valleys of Ga district were the northernmost agricultural areas in Kham, the only islands of green barley fields in the otherwise seemingly endless expanses of high, rolling nomadic grazing lands. For the tea caravans that since time immemorial plied east and west along the treeless northern route, Ga, with its low-lying villages and trade entrepot, was a veritable oasis.

Certain auspicious events before and at his birth led some members of his family to suspect that the boy was the rebirth (*yang srid* or *sprul sku*) of a lama. When he was still in his mother's womb, his mother once went from her home in Thaklung village to the nearby Tharlam monastery to do

circumambulations. While she was walking around the circumambulation path, she found by the side of the pathway, wrapped in a white ceremonial scarf, a *thangka* scroll painting portraying the wealth deity Yellow Jambhala. She picked it up and looked around to see who had lost it. She stood for a long time holding it up so all who were going around the monastery could see it and the rightful owner could claim it. But nobody did, so she kept it and hung it in the shrine room of the family home. After her son was born and grew older, she gave it to him, explaining how she had found it.³²

At the time of Rinpoche's birth, a "mu" jewel was discovered inside the body of a sheep. This was interpreted as a very good omen.³³ Later the son of Yönrü Tertön 'Chi med rdo rje also pointed out that in his father's discovered text (*gter ma*) was written:³⁴

[Through] one who comes from Ga, born in the horse year, there will occur an immeasurable increase and spread of the Doctrine.

This prediction was said to refer to the birth of Dezhung Rinpoche in Ga.³⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche's Family

The young boy's father and mother were Namgyal Dorje (ca. mid-1880s–1922) and Pema Chödzom (1884–1950).³⁶ Among the six children born to this couple, the future Dezhung Rinpoche was oldest:

1. Könchok Lhündrup, born on the third day of the first lunar month of the fire-horse year (ca. February 26), 1906; died 1987.
2. Nangdzin Wangmo, female ("Aunt Chacha"), born in the earth-monkey year, 1908; died 1972 in prison in Shigatse. Married (1) Yama Dgon phyag; (2) Könyak (Könchok Chödar, ca. 1906–1955).
3. Tashi Sangpo, male, born in the iron-dog year, 1910; died age 6. When he died (ca. 1916), his older brother, then ten years old, was very sad and performed many recitations of the sūtra *Thar pa chen po'i mdo* for his sake.
4. Phüntsok Drölma, female, born in the water-ox year, 1913; died ca. 1962/63 in prison in Lhasa. She was the mother of Sönam Tshedzom (born February 16, 1934), Dezhung Rinpoche's niece who later married into the Phüntsok palace of Sakya.

5. Kunzang Nyima, male, born in the fire-dragon year, 1916; died spring 1990, Seattle. Originally a monk, he studied medicine and later disrobed.
6. Chime Drölma, female, born in the water-dog year, 1922. She is the nun Ane Chime (A ne 'Chi med), a nun at Drönda nunnery (a cloister of some eighteen or twenty nuns) located about four miles from Thaklung or Tharlam.

Dezhung Rinpoche's paternal ancestors belonged to families whose livelihood included not only farming but also tantric ritual and traditional medicine. In recent generations they had occupied a middle social and economic standing, and they intermarried with minor local gentry. Some of his recent ancestors on the maternal side, too, had been doctors, and in recent generations his uncles and cousins included several outstanding religious masters and adepts.³⁷

Paternal Descent

Dezhung Rinpoche's father, Namgyal Dorje (ca. mid-1880s–1922), was a doctor. He had been made a monk by his parents but later reverted to lay life. He was born in the Ra'ok Jokhor (pron. Chokhur) family and married into the Lower Khang srib family at Tharlam as an adopted bridegroom (*mag pa*).³⁸ The Ra'ok Jokhor family traced its paternal line back to the Gökar lineage.³⁹ His paternal grandfather may have come from the Gökar family to the Jokhor as an adopted bridegroom.

Maternal Ancestry

Dezhung Rinpoche's mother, Pema Chödzom (1884–1950), was born in the Lower Khangsip family (Khang srib tshang 'Og ma), a family in Thaklung that in recent generations had produced one or two local monastic functionaries (especially chant-leaders). Her father (Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal grandfather) was evidently Khangsip Anye Tamdrin Tsheskyab. He is believed to have been born in the old Khangsip or Khangsip Takma family, and is said to have founded the Khangsip Okma family with his wife, Sönam Drölma of the Dzinda Becang Anyetshang. Through his maternal grandmother, Dezhung Rinpoche was also related to two of his early teachers, the noted Sakyapa lamas Jamgyal Rinpoche and Gendun Zangpo of Dzinda.

1908: Infancy and Early Childhood

As an infant, the future Dezhung Rinpoche was given the name Könchok Lhündrup. Once, when he was about two, he was taken by his parents to meet the great Nyingma master Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso (1846–1912).⁴⁰ He was too young to be able to remember it later.⁴¹

1911

Uncle Ngawang Nyima always observed the two monthly feast days of Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma), laying out the offerings, reciting the texts, performing the mūdras, and so forth. The little Dezhung Rinpoche was not allowed to look at the texts or eat any of the offerings because he had not yet received the ritual initiation and blessings. But after the end of each Vajrayoginī tantric feast (*gaṇacakra*), his uncle would ask him to take out a little plate of food to offer the remainder to the hungry spirits, and once he was safely outdoors in the courtyard or on the roof, he would first secretly help himself to the meat and fruit and then toss out the rest as offerings. Evidently his uncle came to know what he was doing.⁴²

Nyiga Rinpoche Kunga Nyima

During his sixth year, in the late autumn or early winter, his uncle invited the great meditator and adept Nyiga Rinpoche Kunga Nyima (1846–1925) from the Dzinda Naysep retreat to their retreat house, to give Dezhung Rinpoche the necessary initiation into Cakrasamvara, which would allow him to take part in these and other rites. Nyiga Rinpoche was then a heavily built lama in his sixties. He was the highly realized main disciple of Ngawang Shedrup Gyatso, founder of the Naysep retreat.

The old lama carefully entered the retreat hut from above, slowly climbing down a ladder into the courtyard. After completing his preparations, he bestowed upon Dezhung Rinpoche the four complete initiations for the Kṛṣṇapāda's tradition of Cakrasamvara (Bde mchog Nag po pa'i lugs). He also gave him the blessing for the Vajrayoginī in Nāropa's tradition.⁴³

After the initiation, Uncle Ngawang Nyima offered a pair of cymbals, also on Dezhung Rinpoche's behalf, in gratitude for the teaching. Nyiga Rinpoche picked them up and looked at them curiously, saying, "I've never used these all my life. I don't really need such things." (That master was a

pure yogi, devoid of attachment to material possessions.) He accepted the cymbals but donated them immediately to the Tharlam monastery.⁴⁴ The next day the same master also gave them the initiation for White Tārā in Bari Lotsāwa's tradition.

The great master Nyiga Dorjechang Kunga Nyima was a meditator monk who resided at the retreat center above Dzinda for nearly sixty years. He was sixty-six years of age when he gave Dezhung Rinpoche these initiations, and he lived to the age of seventy-nine.⁴⁵ A great yogi of the traditions of Hevajra, Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma), Mahākāla, and Vajrapāṇi, he was also one of the main teachers of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Jamgyal Rinpoche, and many others. Nyiga Kunga Nyima recited two hundred million mantras of Mahākāla, was gifted with prescience, and was said to have attained the first Bodhisattva spiritual level or *bhūmi*. He was famed also for his Vajrayoginī practice. He had been highly regarded by the previous Dezhung Lungrik Trulku, who met him in Gapa in the early 1890s. After returning to Dezhung and other parts of Kham, Dezhung Lungrik Trulku spread high praise about Nyiga and his disciples (including the young Ngawang Lekpa), saying, "The pure Sakyapa doctrine does [still] exist in Gakhok!"⁴⁶

Dezhung Rinpoche received from the old lama the Vajrayoginī initiation, reading-transmission, and instructions several times, as well as the instruction in Mahākāla practice. Indeed, from then until his fifteenth year, Dezhung Rinpoche received many initiations and instructions from that highly esteemed and influential master.⁴⁷ In particular, when Dezhung Rinpoche was thirteen, Nyiga Rinpoche encouraged him to practice the dream-yoga of Rnal 'byor ma.⁴⁸

After receiving the initiation into Cakrasamvara, the little Dezhung Rinpoche made a solemn vow: "I will recite in this life the mantra of Cakrasamvara one hundred million times, and will finish in the next life if I cannot in this life!"

His uncle was so impressed by this pledge that he wrote a letter to Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, telling him, "My young nephew has received the Cakrasamvara from Nyiga Dorjechang and made the vow to do one hundred million recitations in this life and to complete them in the next life if necessary! Isn't that marvelous?"

The letter was delivered by hand to Lekpa Rinpoche who was sealed in his retreat hut above Dzinda village. In his reply, which Dezhung Rinpoche kept all his life, Lekpa Rinpoche wrote:

The vow made by your young nephew is very good, but it is extremely important to study well when young. Today is the eighth day of the [ninth lunar] month, and the twenty-second will be the holy day of the Buddha's descent from the heavens (*Lha 'babs dus chen*). I am enclosing here a Mañjuśrī "wisdom pill" made by 'Jam mgon Mipham Gyatso himself. Early in the morning on the twenty-second, the young boy should take this pill and then that day he should recite as much as possible the "Arapacana" (the mantra of Mañjuśrī, the great Bodhisattva of Wisdom).⁴⁹ Then he should begin serious studies, and he should take initiations and vows from such masters as Nyiga Dorjechang. When I have finished my retreat, I will give him initiations and oral instructions for his practice.⁵⁰

Along with the letter and pills, Lekpa Rinpoche dispatched one of his old rosary strings for the young boy to tie around his waist.⁵¹

1912

By the age of six, Dezhung Rinpoche could recite so well that one day when reading out the "Names of the Buddha" (*Sangs rgyas mtshan brjod*)—a compilation of the names of the buddhas and bodhisattvas—he annoyed his uncle by reading even faster and better than him.⁵² At age six he did a retreat for the "White Protector" (Mgon dkar Yid bzhin nor bu). On this occasion, his father gave him a ritual vest of brocade.⁵³ Before he could perform the retreat, however, he had to obtain the initiation from Nyiga Rinpoche. At this time his uncle made him sit on a throne and wear his own saffron-colored robe, and his parents made an offering of milk and yogurt in elegant bowls to him. This he later interpreted as a good omen presaging his future enthronement as the leader of Tharlam monastery.⁵⁴

Otherwise, he continued to devote himself to his reading practice. Through the little window now and then he could see or hear children playing outside, and sometimes he wished he could go out and join them.⁵⁵

1913–1914

At age seven, Dezhung Rinpoche took the vows of celibate lay ordination (*tshangs spyod dge bsnyen*) from the master Nyiga Rinpoche. When the latter

clipped off a strand of his hair and formally ordained him, he also gave him the lay-ordination name Ngawang Zangpo.

Once when he was seven or eight, a clairvoyant adept named Druptop Sangyay Rabten, who had been a disciple of Dezhung Trulku Lungrik Nyima (1840s?–1898), had completed eighteen Hevajra retreats, and in whom all had faith, came to the village of Thaklung.⁵⁶ He proclaimed about Ngawang Zangpo, the future Dezhung Rinpoche: “This is my chief guru!” In this way rumors started to circulate that the reincarnation of Dezhung Trulku Lungrik Nyima had been found.

1914: Age Eight

By the age of eight Dezhung Rinpoche had learned to write. His uncle taught him both “headed” (*dbu can*) and “headless” (or cursive) scripts.⁵⁷ Uncle Ngawang Nyima was no expert at calligraphy. He was a serious meditator and practitioner, not a trained scribe or scholar.

This same year, Dezhung Rinpoche came down with “bile fever” (hepatitis? *’khris tshad*), so Ngawang Nyima invited to the retreat house his senior distant cousin, the monk-doctor Josay Gelong Jamyang Gyaltsen (ca. 1880–1950), who later was famed for having achieved the rainbow body at death.⁵⁸ Later in life he stayed in retreat in a small house he had built high above the monastery, just within hailing distance.⁵⁹ From him Dezhung Rinpoche received first an initiation and then medicine to treat the illness. At this time he gave Dezhung Rinpoche initiations for both White Tārā and the Medicine Buddha.

In or around this year, on the fourth day of the sixth lunar month, the day of the Buddha’s first turning the wheel of Dharma, Uncle Ngawang Nyima unrolled a thangka of the Buddha Śākyamuni and told Dezhung Rinpoche of the kindness of the Lord Buddha, also explaining certain symbols on the thangka such as the lions under the throne and the lotus seats. Dezhung Rinpoche afterward wrote a versified poem in praise of the Buddha. When he showed it to his uncle, Ngawang Nyima was amazed. At that moment, someone knocked at the window of the retreat house. The Dra’u Pön ruler’s local secretary had come to offer them a bowl of yogurt. Uncle Ngawang Nyima passed the poem out through the window, and the secretary, too, was surprised, later showing it to everyone in the monastery. The secretary kept the poem, saying, “This is a sign of coming greatness!”⁶⁰

Early Studies under Gatön Ngawang Lekpa

IN 1915 a humble and little-known meditator-monk, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (1864–1941), emerged from fifteen years of strict meditation retreat at the Dzinda Naysep hermitage and returned to teach at Tharlam, his home monastery. Though an ordinary monk and no high lama, he was greeted with ceremonial music and other pageantry by his fellow Tharlam monks, some of whom blew trumpets and played cymbals from the upper roof of the temple.⁶¹ Soon after his arrival, he went to Uncle Ngawang Nyima's retreat house. The latter broke retreat to meet him.

At the opening of the door, the nine-year-old Ngawang Zangpo (Dezhung Rinpoche) met Gatön Ngawang Lekpa for the first time. Dezhung Rinpoche was awestruck—and frightened—when he saw Lekpa Rinpoche: The master's skin had a bluish tinge from staying out of the sun for so many years. His hair reached down to his waist and his nails were long, neither having been cut for fifteen years. He was also very thin, and he struck the young Dezhung Rinpoche as being barely of this world.⁶²

Gatön had started life as a normal monk of Tharlam, and at an early age he had been sent to the Dzinda Naysep retreat. Born into an ordinary family in the nearby village of Dzinda, he never enjoyed special advantages except for excellent teachers and his own inner resources of faith, diligence, and intelligence. Much of his youth he spent in retreat at the Dzinda hermitage, his first teacher being Ngawang Shedrup Gyatso, founder of the retreat. At age nine he took initial ordination from the visiting former Ngor Phende abbot, Kunga Tenpay Lotrö (1822–1884).⁶³ When he was eighteen he journeyed on foot westward to Ngor, in Tsang, and there received the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) instructions from the great Khangsar abbot Ngawang Lotrö Nyingpo (d. ca. 1905/06).⁶⁴ There, at age

nineteen, he took full monastic ordination, and from about then he not only strictly observed the monk's vows (such as not eating after noon) but also a strict vegetarian diet.⁶⁵

The later hardships Gatön faced, however, just strengthened his determination. When he was twenty-six (1890), he walked all the way to Derge to meet and receive teachings from the great masters Jamyang Khyentse



5. Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. Minyak, 1928. First of two surviving photographs.

Wangpo (1820–1892) and Kongtrül Yönten Gyatso.⁶⁶ He had nothing to offer the masters in return for teachings, and this created a serious difficulty. Once when Khyentse was giving a series of profound initiations and instructions, he tried to join the large assembly of students. Many people from all walks of life—monks, laymen, and laywomen—had come, numbering in the hundreds. Since no restrictions were being placed on the attendance, he thought this might be the ideal chance finally to receive teachings from the master. He humbly crept in from the rear of the crowd and sat in the last row at the back of the temple. Suddenly Khyentse looked up from

his throne at the head of the assembly and called out, “Throw out that ragged monk from Gapa!” Gatön was saddened and perplexed by this, but his faith in the master did not waver. He believed the master was Mañjuśrī himself and what he did was meant to purify Gatön’s past misdeeds.

On the next occasion of public teaching, Gatön again tried to gain admission, humbly taking a seat at the far back. Again Khyentse called out, “Throw out the ragged Gapa monk!” This happened five times. Each time he alone was singled out for rejection and public humiliation. Finally he became deeply depressed, since he seemed to be as far away as ever from receiving the guru’s grace. But he continued to view the master as the Buddha himself.

At that time, the biography of Khyentse was printed and Gatön read in it the prediction that in the future, Khyentse would have five different rebirths. Gatön vowed that if he could receive the teachings, he would devote himself completely to mastering them and to passing them on to the next Khyentse rebirths. Then, through perseverance and the intercession of others, including the recommendations of Kongtrül Rinpoche, he was finally graced by Khyentse.⁶⁷ From Kongtrül, too, he received some ninety-five initiations and instructions. From among his thirty gurus, he had the greatest faith in Khyentse and Kongtrül, and continually prayed to those two.

Gatön then returned to his homeland, where, after the death of his father, he entered a long meditation retreat. Though he felt great faith in the practice of Avalokiteśvara as described in the *Mā ṇi bka’ ’bum*, he believed that there were many in Tibet who practiced and transmitted that tradition, whereas few mastered the profound and difficult doctrines of the *Path with Its Fruit*. He hoped therefore to revitalize the *Path with Its Fruit*, but he also realized that such a profound system required great intelligence to master. For cultivating such insightful understanding, he thought he should first pray to Sakya Paṇḍita as Mañjuśrī and the embodiment of all places of refuge. In the course of this practice, he recited 4,100,000 times the *Shes bya ma* verse of praise of Sakya Paṇḍita, combined with the same number of prostrations.

During the retreat, Gatön’s exertions at accomplishing the other “preliminary practices” were similarly mind-boggling. He completed 2,400,000 refuge recitations, 1,800,000 Vajrasattva recitations, and 1,000,000 maṇḍala offerings, and spent a year contemplating impermanence alone.

During those fifteen years he also offered 700,000 water offerings and 1,500,000 offerings of butter lamps. Once when he urged his mother to

bring more butter, she became angry and scolded him, saying, “We are poor, and it is very difficult to bring all this butter up here, with you sitting in your retreat hut, eating the butter.” Though butter was an essential element of the Tibetan diet, Gatön had used every bit of it as offerings.



6. The thangka of Sakya Paṇḍita used by Gatön Ngawang Lekpa during his fifteen-year retreat.

Gatön replied, “Mother, I am not eating it. I haven’t even tasted it. Look at me!” He moved into the light that shone through the hole in the sealed entrance, and his mother saw the emaciated face of her son. Convinced he had told the truth, she broke into tears.⁶⁸

After fifteen years of strenuous practice of the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions and his attainment of realization, Gatön emerged at age fifty to begin

his teaching career. He quickly became acknowledged as one of the greatest *Path with Its Fruit* masters of recent generations. He eventually transmitted the teachings nine times and placed the vase of initiation on the heads of many of the next generation's most eminent masters of his tradition, including (Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's rebirth) Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö and several abbots and candidate abbots of Ngor. He also was honored as preceptor (*dbu bla*) by many great nobles of Kham, including the young Derge king Tshewang Düdül (1915/16–1942).⁶⁹

When Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche first came out of his long retreat and returned to Tharlam monastery, he knew of the young Dezhung Rinpoche's having been with Uncle Ngawang Nyima five years in retreat and of his promising intelligence. But he only asked, "Is this your nephew?"

"Yes," replied Ngawang Nyima.

Lekpa Rinpoche gazed at Dezhung Rinpoche for a long time.⁷⁰ He asked, "What has he been reading so far?"

"Mainly the biography and songs of Milarepa, the biography of Karma Chakme, and a few other things."

"Those are good," said Lekpa Rinpoche, who had special faith for Milarepa.⁷¹ "But I also recommend he read some of the *Path with Its Fruit* lineage masters' biographies that are now available in blockprints."⁷²

"Where were the biographies printed?" Uncle Ngawang Nyima asked.

Lekpa Rinpoche explained that Loter Wangpo had the blocks carved at Derge and that a few volumes had already reached those parts.

Thereafter Uncle Ngawang Nyima, by sending messages, was able to borrow some of these works from the hermitage of Nyiga Rinpoche, who had one or two volumes of the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions. (Nyiga was a real renunciate, and even sacred books were not something he owned in large numbers.)⁷³ In that way Dezhung Rinpoche began to read the lives of the *Path with Its Fruit* masters Ngakchang Sönam Chöphel, Khenchen Ngawang Chödrak (1572–1641), and several others.⁷⁴

From the age of five until he was nine, Dezhung Rinpoche never came out of his uncle's retreat house. By age nine he had become nearsighted and could not see far-off trees and landscapes clearly. He believed this was caused by staying inside all those years. One day at age nine his younger sisters came to meet him and accompany him home, and he was amazed to see—however vaguely—sunlit, open places and things more distant than a nearby wall. At first he felt apprehensive at the sights and people outside.

While walking back to his parents' house, his sisters purposely took him

by a steeper path that passed by a stream. When he saw the flowing water, he stopped and stared in amazement at the uncanny sight. At an incline in the path, he got down and crept along on his hands and knees—all those years shut up inside had made him disoriented when he saw natural sights, and for him a small hill was like a steep mountain. His sisters knew this, and they laughed and pushed him as he crawled along.⁷⁵ To climb a normal hill left his legs shaky and weak.⁷⁶

One important thing he did soon after coming out of retreat was to take a smallpox inoculation. This he did in the traditional way, within the main Tharlam temple, making a solemn prayer while standing before the statue of Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe, the founder of the monastery.⁷⁷

Later that day he went home and played with his brothers and sisters. He was delighted to be back home with his siblings and to play with friends, though the other children now called him “lama.” He thought he would sleep there at night, but that evening his parents would not let him stay. His father gave him a little package of yogurt and parched barley flour, and sent him back to Uncle Ngawang Nyima. He felt let down.⁷⁸ For the next two years he continued to stay with Uncle Ngawang Nyima most days and every night, though he was allowed to go home sometimes and play with his relatives.⁷⁹

That year (1915), in the old main temple of Tharlam monastery, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche gave as his first major teaching the *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*)—a fourteen-volume compilation of sādhana and initiations collected by Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche’s teacher Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. To receive these teachings, more than one hundred disciples gathered, including the Jyekundo Sakya Lama Kunga Chödar, the Ngorpa Buldü Lama Ngawang Gyatsho, Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan from Yergye monastery, the Nyingma master called Lama Dzokchen, the nun sister of the Atro Behu chieftain, the lifetime retreat-meditator (*tshe mtshams pa*) Jamyang Lodrö, and many monks from Tharlam itself.⁸⁰ During the teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche was made to sit between two of his “uncles,” one of whom was the monastery chant-leader (*dbu mdzad*) and the other the disciplinarian (*dge bskos*).

In the course of the teaching, many tremors or quakes shook the temple. They were interpreted as auspicious omens.⁸¹ At one point Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche became ill and temporarily halted his teachings. To ensure the health and longevity of the master, all the monks recited aloud the one hundred and eight volumes of the sacred Kanjur canonical collection.

Dezhung Rinpoche finished his volume before some of the other monks had completed even half of theirs. A few of the monks suspected that he had been just mumbling his way through the recitation, so they tested him, and he proved to be faster than any of them, but still clear in enunciation.⁸² Due to the kind instruction of his uncle and his many years of reading practice, when he came out among ordinary monks he could easily read as well as, or better than, many of the older monks.⁸³

1917: Age Eleven

In 1917 Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche gave the esoteric (*slob bshad*) transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* for the first time, also in the old main temple of Tharlam monastery. The teachings were received by about one hundred and fifty disciples.⁸⁴ Before beginning these teachings, on the thirteenth day of the second lunar month (the death anniversary of Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe), at the request of many monks he expounded the life story of Kunga Yeshe, based on the highly poetical biography composed by the latter's disciple Drung Tsultrim Gyaltzen. Dezhung Rinpoche received all these teachings, this being the first of four times he received the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions from Gatön, but he later said he was too young to understand much.

On this occasion Uncle Ngawang Nyima offered Lekpa Rinpoche an image of White Jambhala. Gatön said that this gift, foreshadowed by a dream the previous night, presaged that he himself would not benefit the Tharlam monastery much with regard to religion, but that he would be able to help a lot materially.⁸⁵

1918: Age Twelve

Even when Dezhung Rinpoche was a boy of just eleven or twelve, Gatön took a special interest in him. In 1918 Gatön had begun preparing for the renovation of the Tharlam main assembly hall, and before demolishing the old structures he performed one hundred thousand prostrations in the old temple before a blessed image of Ga Rabjam Kunga Yeshe, founder of the monastery. He also offered daily one hundred butter lamps and other offerings, in the course of gathering merit and making solemn prayers. During this period the young Ngawang Zangpo (Dezhung Rinpoche) went to see him.

The master advised him to devote himself to language studies and to

begin with the study of Tibetan grammar (*Sum rtags*) as the first nondoc-trinal studies in this life. As his grammar teacher, he was to take the humble Gelukpa scholar, doctor, and meditator Geshe Losang Chökyi Gawa, who had received teachings from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa.⁸⁶ This *geshe* habitually stayed in retreat. He continually practiced two-day fasting retreats (*smiyung gnas*), and by the end of his life he had completed more than three thousand fasts and had recited over three hundred million mantras of Avalokiteśvara. He was the student of Ordzong Geshe, a Gelukpa scholar and yogi of the preceding generation who had also taught grammar and poetics to Gatön (at the recommendation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo).⁸⁷

The young Dezhung Rinpoche requested Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche to begin the course of language studies symbolically by reciting aloud the beginning of the grammar himself, in order to establish an auspicious beginning and ensure good results. Just when Lekpa Rinpoche began to read out the start of the grammar text, “*rgya gar skad du byā ka ra na...*,” the great assembly conch-horn of the monastery was blown from the roof of the temple for the monks’ first assembly of the day. Gatön was extremely pleased at the good omen. “Henceforth don’t be slack in your studies! In the future you will certainly become a great blower of the Dharma conch [i.e., a famed teacher],” he said.⁸⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche then went for the first time to Losang Chökyi Gawa’s secluded retreat hut, about fifteen miles west of Tharlam near the Thag Pass (Thag la), and studied under him for five months. In the course of that and a subsequent stay with him (in 1918 or 1919), he studied the grammatical commentary *Rtogs ldan lhag bsam* by the Fifteenth Karmapa and part of the Gser tog Tibetan grammar (*Sum rtags*). He also learned classical Indian poetics, reading the middle chapter of Daṇḍin’s *Kāvyaḍarśa*. The *geshe* also instructed him in Tsongkhapa’s *Dga’ ldan lha brgya ma* (a guru-yoga text) and in some fasting-rite literature, performing with him several times the two-day fasting retreat (*smiyung gnas*).

During late 1917 and early 1918, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche was gone from Tharlam.⁸⁹ He traveled to Lithang Dezhung, where he gave the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam ’bras slob bshad*) and many other teachings at the request of Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche (1885–1952). At this time he also gave full monastic ordination to several important disciples, including Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche and Dezhung Chöphel.⁹⁰

In approximately 1918, after his return from his first grammar studies and probably still during the absence of Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, Dezhung

Rinpoche took up with two slightly older teenage cousins from Ra'ok who were also monks, at least nominally. The ringleader was named Jampal Tendzin; his younger brother and sidekick was named Ka shod. The two cousins were high-spirited and did not pay attention to the fine points of monastic discipline. One of their favorite pastimes was drinking barley beer. Once they wanted Dezhung Rinpoche to come along and drink with them. He was not sure he should, but he did not want to be rejected by his friends. Finally he gave in and went along.



7. Meditation retreat in southern Gapa (near Shangu), summer 1947.

In the neighborhood lived a woman called “Aunty” who was well known locally for her tasty beer. “Let’s go over to Aunty’s and have a drink!” said the two cousins. “This will make a strong man out of you!”

Between the three of them they didn’t have enough money to buy a single drink. But when “Aunty” saw that Dezhung Rinpoche was one of the

little party, she said, “If the lama is drinking today, then you all don’t have to pay.”

The cousins’ delight knew no bounds. They forced a bowl of barley beer on Dezhung Rinpoche, who did not like the taste. They chided him, saying, “You weakling! If you drink, you’ll develop strength!” Finally he began to sip from his cup. Two or three hours later, after he had drunk quite a bit, he began to lurch and swagger around, and totally forgetting himself, he started to throw things about the room. Auntie the beer-seller looked on calmly and did not interfere, saying, “He’s a lama. He must be subduing evil obstacles!”

Later that evening he somehow stumbled home, drunk and red in the face. When Ngawang Nyima saw him, he sensed trouble. He demanded to know where he had been. Dezhung Rinpoche, who was usually very polite to his uncle, just gave a curt reply. Uncle Ngawang Nyima was deeply displeased.

After that Dezhung Rinpoche never liked the taste of barley beer. As a more mature monk, after studying under such strict monks as Lama Gendun and Jamgyal Rinpoche, his behavior became very disciplined under their influence. But even shortly after the episode at “Auntie’s,” when he was still in his thirteenth year, Dezhung Rinpoche is said to have met the Kagyü adept Druptop Ngawang Topju and in his presence to have renounced all alcohol and tobacco for the rest of his life.⁹¹ This lama was a master of consciousness-transference (*pho ba*) instructions, and Uncle Ngawang Nyima was also a disciple of his. When the lama gave this transmission to large groups—even to a hundred or a thousand people—all would be affected. He used to walk around the congregation and slip the end of a stalk of grass into the crown of each disciple’s head, and it would enter as if inserted into butter. Evil people such as murderers or thieves often collapsed during the teachings, and some vomited afterward. When Dezhung Rinpoche met this lama, he also received the consciousness-transference transmission and had a blade of grass inserted into the crown of his head.⁹²

Dezhung Rinpoche’s adolescent experiences made him realize how important one’s immediate companions were: friends can strongly influence a person for the worse. When he was running around with his two cousins, one man in their community, an old family friend (the father of Dawa Norbu’s mother), kept an eye on him and sharply criticized him for what he did.⁹³ Dezhung Rinpoche never forgot that, and forty years later, in gratitude, gave a large sum of rupees to the man’s son when he came out

of Tibet as a refugee. Dezhung Rinpoche often said, “Those who criticize you directly for your faults are your real friends, not those who speak nicely to your face even when you are wrong.”⁹⁴

*First Scholastic Studies
under Shenga Rinpoche at Jyekundo*

LATER IN 1918, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche returned to Tharlam monastery, with the intention to renovate the old temple. The work involved rebuilding the main structure completely (except for the old protector's chapel, *mgon khang*) and took three years to complete.⁹⁵

During the second year of this project (1920), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche decided to send the fourteen-year-old Ngawang Zangpo (Dezhung Rinpoche) to Jyekundo to begin his studies of the fundamental Mahāyāna philosophical works under the renowned seminary master Khenchen Shenga. Lekpa Rinpoche considered his young charge to be very bright, so before sending him away he stressed the importance of studying so as not to waste his innate intelligence for lack of proper training. Uncle Ngawang Nyima was not in favor of his nephew's going away to study, but he could not actually block the plans of his own teacher Gatön.⁹⁶

For the journey to Jyekundo, Dezhung Rinpoche's companion and attendant was Jampal Tendzin, the most active of his two mischief-making monk cousins. Everyone called this cousin Dzulo ("clown") because he liked nothing better than a good joke and to make others laugh. He wore ordinary monk's clothes, while Dezhung Rinpoche's horse and superior robes clearly marked him as a young lama.

On the road the two of them decided to have some fun, and they switched clothing. Dezhung Rinpoche walked on foot, leading the horse. Jampal Tendzin rode their one and only mount. The latter then played the role of the eminent young lama with all the travelers they met on the road, dispensing blessings and grave advice. All the while Dezhung Rinpoche struggled to keep a straight face and pretended to be his humble and respectful attendant. The two boys laughed so hard and dawdled so much along

the way that as nightfall approached they found they had only reached the nearby village of Drönda.⁹⁷

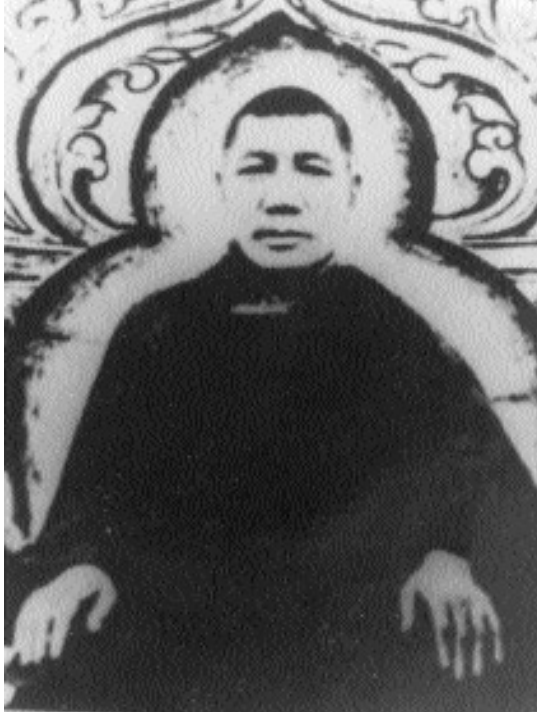


8. Jyekundo with its hilltop monasteries, summer 1947.

After the laughter with his cousin, a much more disciplined environment awaited Dezhung Rinpoche at the Jyekundo monastery. Teaching at the scriptural seminary (*bshad grwa*) of Jyekundo monastery at this time was the great scholar and adept Dzokchen Khenchen Shenga (1871–1927), whose full name was Gyalkhang Shenphen Chökyi Nangwa.⁹⁸ The master Khenchen Shenga had been born at 'Ja' thang in Kha na, or Khangna, a nomadic district (*'brog sde*) in the borderland of northern Dzachukha—a place located about two or three days' walk from Jyekundo to the northeast, on the route to Sining.⁹⁹ (A Gelukpa monastery was at Khangna, and the local people were mainly patrons of that school.)¹⁰⁰ His family was the Gyalkhang tshang,¹⁰¹ hereditary chieftains of about seven hundred nomad families thereabouts. He was originally a layman, with pierced ears. His father intended to make him the next chief, though the young Shenga was not interested in marriage.

The Gyalkhang chieftain family, like many Tibetan nomads, made some of its livelihood by rustling horses and raiding. Once when Shenga was a young man of about sixteen, he went on a horse-rustling raid with his uncle. They succeeded in stealing a herd of horses, but when they were making their escape, one mare with a bulging belly kept lagging behind, slowing

down all the other riders and horses. They were afraid that just to turn her loose might give themselves away to pursuers. Finally they decided to kill the



9. Khenchen Shenga. The only known photograph.

mare. Shenga himself took a knife and deeply slashed the animal's belly. Suddenly the unborn foal dropped out, and the mare, though mortally wounded, turned her whole attention to licking and caring for the aborted foal. This poignant scene left a deep impression on him and turned his heart toward things of the spirit.

Soon thereafter he met the great master from Dzokchen, the Fifth Grub dbang, Thubten Chökyi Dorje (1872–1935). The latter told him, “You must become a monk!” and gave him an upper robe. Some monks who witnessed this suspected favoritism and remarked sarcastically, “My, my, the lama is paying such high regard to this son of a chieftain!”¹⁰²

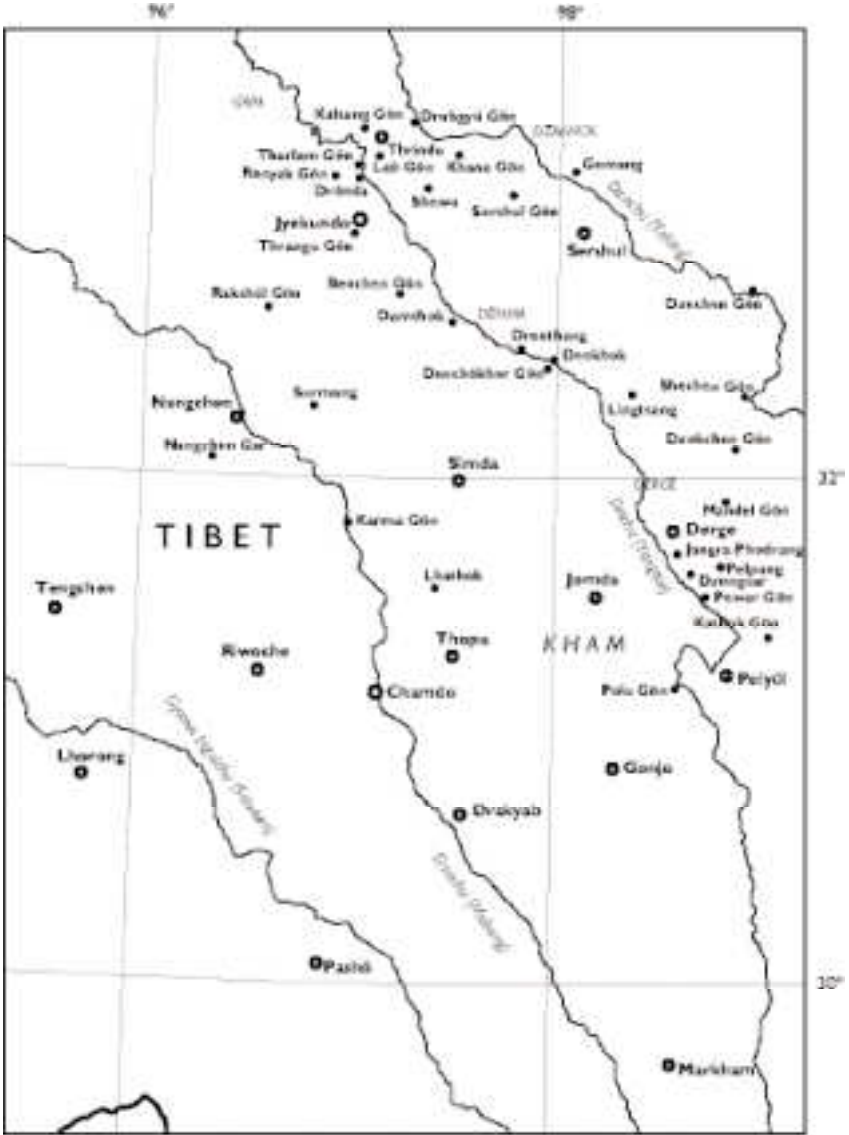
Shenga then ran away from home, renouncing lay life for good. He sought out first the renowned Dza Paltrül Rinpoche (1808–1887), but that old master was not accepting students and sent him on to his student

Orgyen Tendzin Norbu at the Gemang hermitage in Byang Dzachukha. There, after some initial difficult adjustments, Shenga performed a retreat for White Sarasvatī to increase his intelligence, after which he is said to have been blessed with a vision of the goddess. He continued his studies at Gemang for about eleven or twelve years under Orgyen Tendzin Norbu (otherwise called Önpö Bstan li or Bstan dga').¹⁰³ Orgyen Tendzin Norbu was one of the chief disciples of Dza Paltrül O rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po and was also the nephew and sometime student of Byang Dzachu Gemang Khenpo Shenphen Thaye.¹⁰⁴ Shenga was counted by some to have been the rebirth of that Gemang Khenpo (though at Dzokchen there also lived an officially recognized trulku of Shenphen Thaye).¹⁰⁵

After the completion of his studies and the death of his teacher, Shenga taught for a few years at Gemang. Then, in his early thirties (ca. 1902), he went to Dzokchen and began teaching there at the Shri seng seminary. Though he began quite humbly, by the end of his tenure as teaching master at Dzokchen in 1909, his fame had spread to other parts of Kham and beyond.¹⁰⁶

Shenga's fame continued to spread through his establishing either directly or indirectly (through his learned students) many scriptural seminaries whose main curriculum consisted of his series of gloss-commentaries (*mchan 'grel*) on the "thirteen fundamental classics" (*gzhung chen bcu gsum*) of Indian Buddhist doctrine and philosophy. As an exegete, he did not depend on Tibetan commentators, but based himself directly on the explanations of the Indian masters (in Tibetan translation).¹⁰⁷ He also wrote a similar gloss-commentary on one of the fundamental Nyingma tantras. Through this method he trained many of the most outstanding Khampa scholars of the next generation. It was said, for example, that Shenga's fifty students at Dzongsar turned into fifty seminary masters (*mkhan po*).¹⁰⁸

Though originally from a Nyingma background with closest links to Dzokchen monastery, the master Shenga was also extremely fond of the great Sakyapa scholars of the past, especially Sakya Paṇḍita and Gorampa, and of the Sakya learned tradition in general.¹⁰⁹ It was he who encouraged Jamgyal Rinpoche (one of his students at Dzokchen) in the first place to undertake the printing of Gorampa's collected works. He had received many teachings from Ngor Pönlop Loter Wangpo (1847–1914), acting as his assistant teacher (*skyor dpon*) for some teachings at the La se retreat in 1909,¹¹⁰ and was also the student of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. More than one master—including Gatön himself—considered him to be an emanation



Map 1. Northwestern Kham.

of Sakya Paṇḍita. Others viewed him as a manifestation of Candrakīrti; he was unusual for a Nyingmapa in that he was almost exclusively a defender of the “self-empty” (*rang stong*) Madhyamaka.

In his meditation practice, however, Shenga was a staunch adherent of the Great Perfection, or Dzokpa Chenpo. He loved to quote to his Sakyapa

colleagues and students the spiritual songs of Tsharchen Losal Gyatso and the latter's disciple Mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug to the effect that their innermost practices were also of the Nyingmapa.¹¹¹

Before coming to Jyekundo, Shenga had served for two years (1918–1920) as the founding seminary master (*mkhan po*) of the great Dzongsar scriptural seminary (*bshad grwa*) of Khamche Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling in Derge Mayshö district, which had been established under the patronage of Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. Before that, Shenga had taught extensively at Palpung monastery for about seven years (ca. 1910–1918), where his main student and patron had been the Eleventh Situ Pema Wanchok Gyalpo (1886–1952).¹¹² Among the patrons for the carving of his commentaries at Palpung were the powerful general (*mda' dpon*) Bkras thong 'Gyur med rgya mtsho (1890–1938),¹¹³ who was the de facto ruler of Derge during this time, and the Tsang general Thon pa Don 'grub rgyal po (b. 1887).¹¹⁴

Dezhung Rinpoche went to Jyekundo for just one nine-month term of study (1920) under this great master, who was there for the purpose of opening a new scriptural seminary. The main works that Shenga taught at this time were two classics of the Indian Madhyamaka tradition: mainly Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, but also Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*. He gave the text reading-transmission as well as detailed explanations of each, and Dezhung Rinpoche also learned several other briefer works, including the fifty-verse Vinaya text *'Dul ba lnga bcu pa*.¹¹⁵

This was Dezhung Rinpoche's first visit to such a large monastic institution. The monastery Jyekundo Döndrup Ling was the largest Sakyapa monastery in Gapa, housing about eight hundred monks. It had been founded around the 1460s by the Sakya Khön master Dagchen Gyagarwa Sherab Gyaltzen (1436 or 1439–1495) under the sponsorship of Dra'u Lama Kundun Rinchen Chokdrup. In the scriptural seminary there were only fifty or sixty monk students, but the system was still awe-inspiring to the neophytes. This was the first time that Dezhung Rinpoche had sat among many learned monks. The day after a passage had been taught, the seminary master would draw one student's name at random (from rolled-up slips of paper), and that student would have to stand up before the whole assembly and expound the passage. Dezhung Rinpoche's name was drawn several times, and each time he acquitted himself honorably.¹¹⁶

Later in the morning and afternoon, assistant teachers (*skyor dpon*) would repeat the *khenpo's* lesson of the day in a slightly more relaxed atmosphere,

where explanations were easier and where the students were a little freer to ask questions. Dezhung Rinpoche's assistant teacher and tutor at Jyekundo



10. Jyekundo monastery in October 1921.

was his distant relative on his mother's side, the monk Gendun Zangpo (ca. 1880–1939/40), universally known as “Lama Gendun,” a strict observer of monastic discipline and extremely demanding teacher.¹¹⁷ From him Dezhung Rinpoche received more detailed instruction on both the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Madhyamakāvatāra*.

Lama Gendun was the younger brother of another of Shenga's great students, Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen (1870–1940). The two brothers had studied under Shenga from about 1901 to 1906, when he had taught at the Dzokchen Shri seng ge chos sde—that is, during the same time Khangsar Shabdrung Dampa Rinpoche and Dezhung Anjam Trulku also studied there.¹¹⁸ Lama Gendun served for about four years as *khenpo* of the seminary of Jyekundo after Shenga's departure and was a stout defender of Sakya doctrines in local controversies.¹¹⁹ After that he went to Central Tibet and became head of the small seminary at Ngor. He also traveled widely with the Ngor Khangsar lama Dampa Rinpoche (1876–1953, his teacher and senior classmate under Shenga), receiving many teachings from him, and it was in Tsang at Sakya that he passed away in 1939 or 1940.¹²⁰

Dezhung Rinpoche had been instructed by Gatön to stay with Lama Gendun and was accepted by Lama Gendun as his personal pupil. At this

time Lama Gendun had two or three young monks under his personal supervision, including Dezhung Rinpoche and the latter's distant cousin, the future Ngor Khangsar abbot Ngawang Yönten Gyatso (1902–ca. 1963, Ngor abbot 1933–1936), later known as the “Druk Khenpo.”¹²¹ As a teacher Lama Gendun was so strict that both pupils were afraid of him. Once he asked Dezhung Rinpoche to go to another room and fetch a book and a vase of water. Afraid of some rebuke, Dezhung Rinpoche immediately ran off as requested and rushed back into the room, holding the two objects before him, staring intently into his teacher's face to try to divine his next wish. In his nervous distraction, he held the vase over the book.

“What are you doing, careless fellow?” said Lama Gendun, snatching the book out of his hands and swatting him over the head with it. “You should *never* hold something over a book like that!”¹²²

Another time, after some mistake, Lama Gendun scolded him sharply, saying, “You a trulku? Hah! Maybe a vulture's trulku!”¹²³ But Dezhung Rinpoche never got beatings over the head with his teacher's slipper, as his more obstinate companion, the future Khangsar abbot Ngawang Yönten Gyatso, Lama Gendun's nephew, did.¹²⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche did well in his studies and soon found that he could understand much of what Khenchen Shenga taught (at least on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*) without many additional explanations.¹²⁵

Both youths would one day occupy positions of great eminence in their tradition, but at that time they were just ordinary gangly, teenaged monks who were always hungry.¹²⁶ Because Lama Gendun was so strict, he never took meals after noon. If his two young charges wanted any food in the evening, they had to take it surreptitiously, one at a time, while the other kept a sharp lookout for their teacher's return. Dezhung Rinpoche became close friends with his cousin-schoolmate. The latter was a strong and energetic youth, able to lift heavy burdens and do other strenuous work, which Dezhung Rinpoche could not.¹²⁷

Dezhung Rinpoche afterward praised Lama Gendun in the highest terms, saying, for instance, “Studying under him those nine months, I learned as much as I would have in about three years under someone else.”¹²⁸ In spite of the difficulties, during these nine months he learned the foundations of Mahāyāna philosophy.¹²⁹ Lama Gendun never praised Dezhung Rinpoche to his face, but to others he sometimes made encouraging remarks. Once, when a disciple of Dezhung Rinpoche's previous rebirth, Dezhung Lungrik Nyima, came around and inquired about Dezhung Rinpoche, Gendun told

the visitor, “He’s bright, and he’s a scholar (*dpe cha ba*). He is so young, but except for that fact, he could even act as assistant teacher (*skyor dpon*).”¹³⁰

After only nine months, Dezhung Rinpoche concluded these studies under Khenchen Shenga. Once the great master told him, “I will be reborn in a barbarian land where Buddha Dharma does not exist.” Rinpoche later thought that the land he referred to must have been America.¹³¹ The great master also advised him, “Learn the non-tantric studies (*mdo phyogs*) from others; I will teach you tantric subjects myself.” Dezhung Rinpoche asked him to bless and sustain him spiritually (*rjes su gzung ba*), and Shenga Rinpoche assented.¹³² While still in Jyekundo, Dezhung Rinpoche also received teachings on the *Sgyu ma ngal gso* from the Nyingma *Ngal gso skor gsum* cycle of Longchenpa in this period from a seminary master (evidently Shenga Rinpoche).¹³³

Later in 1920, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Tharlam. In this year, his fifteenth, he also took ordination as a novice monk (*dge tshul*) from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, receiving the novice name Byams pa kun dga’ bstan gsal. His two fellow monks at his ordination were the Tharlam novices Ngawang Rinchen and Yeshe Nyima.¹³⁴ During this period he also performed a long retreat (almost a year in duration) for the propitiation of Mañjuśrī, bodhi-sattva of wisdom.¹³⁵

Initial Recognition as a Trulku

WHEN DEZHUNG RINPOCHE was thirteen or fourteen (1919–1920), Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche consulted Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche about whether to recognize him as the rebirth of Dezhung Anjam’s late uncle, Lungrik Nyima (1840s?–1898).¹³⁶ Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche believed that Dezhung Rinpoche was that lama’s rebirth, but he suggested that they ask the Sakya throne-holder, Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen (1871–1936), for his official decision. Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche then traveled with his father, the Dezhung chieftain Rabten Wangyal, to Central Tibet and visited Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen, going personally to meet him when the latter was in Lhasa, not far from the large Sakyapa monastery of Nalendra.¹³⁷ To visit Nalendra was also important because Dezhung monastery was a branch of Nalendra, unlike Tharlam monastery, which was a Ngorpa affiliate.

Anjam Rinpoche, though a chieftain’s son, was so self-effacing that he drew no attention to himself on arrival at Nalendra, so at first he was not received in any special way. But then, owing to a dream of the Chobgye Trichen Rinchen Khyentse Wangpo (1869–1927), he was invited to the Chobgye lama residence. He then taught actively at Nalendra, though his time was somewhat limited because of his father’s insistence that he not stay long in Central Tibet.

In Lhasa, Trulku Anjam went to meet the Sakya hierarch Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen.¹³⁸ Through the help of a certain monk named Gendun who had previously been to Dezhung and who was one of the important monks in the Sakya throne-holder’s retinue, Anjam was extremely well received by the great Sakya lama.¹³⁹ The latter ritually invoked the *rgyal po* spirit Pe har, protector of Nalendra. Finally the Sakya throne-holder wrote a letter stating his results: “The child Könchok Lhündrup, son of Pema Chödzom and Namgyal Dorje, born in the horse year, now at Tharlam, is the rebirth of Lungrik Nyima.”¹⁴⁰

The next year (1921) Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche returned to Kham and Gapa. He came to Jyekundo monastery and consulted further with his teacher Dzokchen Khenchen Shenga.¹⁴¹ He also visited Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, his main guru, and told him about the Sakya hierarch Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen's findings. He earnestly requested Gatön's own final decision.

Lekpa Rinpoche told Dezhung Anjam, "I know he is Lungrik Nyima's trulku. You can recognize him with the name, if you like. But I want him to stay with me at Tharlam."¹⁴²

Since Dezhung Anjam was a close disciple of Lekpa Rinpoche, these words had the force of a command for him, and he would never have thought of going against them. This meant that this trulku would not take



11. The Sakya throne-holder Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen and his court at Sakya in 1934.

up permanent residence at Anjam's home monastery of Dezhung Gönpa, but would only visit on a few occasions.¹⁴³

The actual investiture ceremony (*na bza' gsol*) of Dezhung Rinpoche as a trulku took place on the fourth day of the third lunar month in his seventeenth year (May 1, 1922), and consisted mainly of the ceremonial offering of a set of robes by the Dezhung monastery and his accepting these. The noble lama from Jyekundo, Dra'u Pön Lama Tendzin Gyaltzen (1884–1944), was invited to officiate by Dezhung Anjam, who sent him an invitation letter with an offering of money from where he himself was

staying, in Lithang Dezhung. Also present at the ceremony was Ngor Khangsar Shabdrung Dampa Rinpoche Ngawang Lotrö Shenphen Nyingpo (1876–1953), who came from Jyekundo to Tharlam on his way from Kham to Tsang to assume the abbatial throne of Ngor.¹⁴⁴

The day of the investiture was an astrologically lucky conjunction of the Cancer asterism (Tib. Rgyal; Skt. *Tiṣya* or *Paṣya*) with Phur bu (the planet Jupiter and the day Thursday; Skt. *Bṛhaspati*).¹⁴⁵ This day, which occurs only once or twice a year, was most auspicious for ceremonies such as enthronements, as it was thought to ensure success. Also, early in the morning, at the moment of Dezhung Rinpoche's recognition, the sun shone forth and the trumpets blew simultaneously in the main assembly of Tharlam, an extremely good omen.¹⁴⁶

Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche did not attend that ceremony; he was in retreat. He sent a set of robes, however, and said he would perform another investiture ceremony himself when the new temple was finished.

Much later, when Dezhung Rinpoche was in his fifties and in Seattle (ca. 1963), he wrote about why he had come to be identified as the "Dezhung Trulku" and its consequences:¹⁴⁷

I, who am known as his [Lungrik Nyima's] rebirth, was born in the fire-horse year (1906) near the Thaklung monastery in upper Ga. When Dezhung Lungrik Nyima came to Gakhok district [in the early or mid-1890s], he gave many religious teachings to the monastic assembly at Tharlam monastery. At that time my paternal uncle Lama Ngawang Nyima invited him to his residence for a meal. He requested the blessing of the *Nā ro Mkha'* spyod ma from him. At that time he served him tea with much milk, which delighted [the nomad lama Lungrik Nyima], who said, "I have a chance to drink the authentic tea of my own native place!" and he stayed quite a long time [as Uncle Ngawang Nyima's guest]. The disciple-host asked whether it would be permissible to have a *thangka* painted that depicted [the master] Lungrik Nyima in a realistic likeness. [The master assented,] and [my uncle's] having it painted seems to have created an auspicious interconnection.

To Lama Lekpa Rinpoche he also said, "You in the future will become a great upholder of the Sakyapa tradition. You are my guru. I must [later] request many teachings from you." Afterward the Lord Lama Lekpa Rinpoche told me as follows: "If you look at our

connection as teacher and disciple, I think you are the true rebirth [or ‘trulku’ of Lungrik Nyima].”

There are many other reasons that might be mentioned, such as how [Lungrik Nyima] when he was leaving Thaklung monastery said to many monks: “I’ll come once again to this monastery,” but for [this] one occasion I will only mention those. In any case, when I was about eight or nine, a lama called Sangyay Rabten with clairvoyant powers was the first to identify me as the trulku of the Dezhung district. After that report had gradually reached Dezhung district, the nephew of Lungrik Nyima, [Dezhung Anjam] Kunga Gyaltsen, requested the Sakya throne-holder Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen to investigate and decide the matter. The latter said the result of his prognostication was very positive. And in particular, Dezhung Anjam requested very emphatically for a decision from Lekpa Rinpoche, who reached the decision that I was the trulku.

Accordingly, [Dezhung Anjam] sent from Dezhung a letter and an offering of money, and prepared a set of robes. Then, in my seventeenth year, on the fourth day of the third lunar month in the water-dog year [May 1, 1922], which was also the day of the auspicious *rgyal phur* astrological conjunction, in the Tharlam Rnam rgyal gling temple in the presence of the Ngor Khangsar [Dampa Rinpoche] Ngawang Lotrö Shenphen Nyingpo and the [Jyekundo noble monk] Dra’u Pön Lama Tendzin Gyaltsen, I removed my old robes, put on the new robes, and an auspicious investiture ceremony was performed.

From that point on, I possessed the title of “trulku.” I sat at the head of the monastic assembly.

After that, once again, my incomparably kind main guru Lekpa Rinpoche performed an investiture ceremony in which I was enthroned as his regent on his golden throne in the Thub bstan mdo sngags chos kyi dga’ tshal, the great temple of Ga Tharlam monastery that he had erected himself, with prayers and with gifts, including an exquisite silk scarf, offerings of the “supports” of enlightened body, speech, and mind [i.e., statues, books, and stūpas], a ceremonial hat, a cup with silver stand, excellent brocade robes, and Chinese *rdil tshad* silver pieces. Based on that investiture, there has arisen this profound connection by which I am recognized and called by the name *Dezhung Trulku* in the Sakyapa monasteries

in all parts of western, eastern, and central Tibet, from Sakya and Ngor in Tsang [in the west] to the districts of Kham Minyak [in the far east].

At the age of sixteen, after this initial investiture, Dezhung Rinpoche studied and practiced the rites of Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig*) and other cycles with Dezhung Chöphel (1880s–mid-1950s), the learned monk of Dezhung monastery who was a close disciple of both Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche and Shenga.¹⁴⁸ Dezhung Chöphel's full ordination name was Jamyang Kunga Namgyal, and later he attained the rank of seminary master (*mkhan po*) after completing extensive studies under Khenchen Shenga and the latter's chief students. From about 1936 to 1940, he served as fifth seminary master of the great Dzongsar Khamche seminary.

He was learned in all subjects, but claimed himself to possess a special mastery of astrology and prognostication (*rtsis*). He was a strict follower of the Vinaya discipline, observing such rules as not eating after noon.¹⁴⁹ He wrote several commentaries, including works on the fundamental Sakyapa Tantric treatises the *General System of the Tantras* (*Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam gzbag*) by Sönam Tsemo and the *Tree of Realization* (*Mngon rtogs ljon shing*) by Drakpa Gyaltsen. His works were carved onto blocks at Dezhung, and these blocks were later transported to Derge.¹⁵⁰

In the fourth lunar month of the water-dog year (ca. June 1922), the painting of the main temple building of Tharlam monastery began under Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche's supervision. About twenty painters were invited from Dzonyak Samdrup monastery. Dezhung Rinpoche was in a retreat, but Lekpa Rinpoche ordered him to come out because finishing the newly rebuilt monastery was more important. Dezhung Rinpoche gladly obeyed and collaborated in supervising the murals.

Lekpa Rinpoche himself skillfully planned the compositions of the new murals. The main figures he wanted painted within the main part of the temple were the Lord Buddha Śākyamuni and the Buddhas of the Ten Directions, one in each major section of mural. Surrounding them he planned illustrations of over one hundred *Jātakas* (Stories of the Buddha's Previous Births) and similar tales from a collection called the *Bodhi-sattvāvadāna Kalpalatā* (*Dpag bsam 'khri shing*)—originally composed in elegant Sanskrit verse by the eleventh-century Kashmiri poet Kṣemendra—with several traditional additions. All figures representing the Buddha's previous lives had to be painted gold, so Lekpa Rinpoche instructed Dezhung

Rinpoche to consult those stories in volumes 91 (*ke*) and 92 (*khe*) of the Derge Tanjur and then to paint with saffron dye the correct figures in each story as they were depicted in the block-printed “Hundred Deeds of the Buddha” (*mdzad pa brgya*) illustrations in the eighteenth-century Narthang xylograph version commissioned by Pho lha nas Bsod nams stobs rgyas. The master painter used this version for his model, and the saffron marking indicated for the artists which figures were to be later painted with powdered gold pigment. Dezhung Rinpoche applied himself to this task, and his master Lekpa Rinpoche later praised him for his good work, telling him affectionately how intelligent he was.¹⁵¹

While the work proceeded on the murals, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa would come to inspect the progress in the afternoon. He did not take meals after noon, but only sucked on pieces of rock candy, as was allowed monks in the Monk’s Discipline (Vinaya).¹⁵² Now and then he would give his young assistants pieces of sugar crystals. Dezhung Rinpoche later remembered how disappointed he was when Lekpa Rinpoche sometimes did not give him some. (Dezhung Rinpoche in his maturity also had the habit of eating rock candy and giving some to his students or visitors.)

Other murals high on the walls, beneath the skylight opening (*rgya mthongs*), included depictions of nine great masters of the tradition, beginning with the five Sakya founders, and ending with images of Ngorchen, Ga Rabjampa, Tsharchen, and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, whom Lekpa Rinpoche considered his main teacher. Around each main figure were painted smaller figures from lineages such as the *Path with Its Fruit* masters and the abbots of Ngor, all the way down to the current abbot, Dampa Rinpoche. For the exact depictions of the various masters, the painters relied on notes set down (at Lekpa Rinpoche’s request) by Dezhung Chöphel from a wonderful set of three old lineage thangkas in Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö’s possession, which had originally been sent by the eighteenth-century Sakya Dagchen Ngawang Kunga Lotrö (1729–1783) to the king of Derge when that Sakya master was obliged to decline an invitation to come to Derge.

Below the painting of Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe in teaching gesture, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche had himself depicted, in a seated posture and offering a maṇḍala. To the right was a depiction of Dezhung Rinpoche holding a golden wheel, while to the left was the monk Drönda Gelong Jamyang Gyaltzen holding a white conch.¹⁵³ Lekpa Rinpoche explained that this was meant to create auspicious circumstances for the flourishing of the Doctrine in both teaching and meditation practice.¹⁵⁴

While the work of painting the murals was going on, Gatön mentioned in passing that he himself had been present in a previous life as a student of Ga Rabjampa (in the mid-fifteenth century).¹⁵⁵ He also recalled seeing Dezhung Rinpoche there in Ga Rabjampa's presence. At the time Gatön spoke of this, Dezhung Rinpoche did not dare to ask anything more (such as who precisely he had been at that time), nor did any of the few other monks present.

Dezhung Rinpoche asked permission to sponsor a painting of the life of Sakya Paṇḍita to the right and left of the entrance door, and Lekpa Rinpoche gave his assent. Dezhung Rinpoche then planned the painting according to the biography of Sapaṇ by his disciple Lho pa Kun mkhyen Rin chen dpal. The first half of the mural had as its main figure Sapaṇ in the form of a lama, as he is envisioned in the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga (*Sa 'jam sbag sgrub*), while the second half showed Sapaṇ in the form of his ultimate buddhahood, that is, in his sambhogakāya form as the Buddha Vimalaśrī. Both figures were surrounded by depictions of episodes from Sapaṇ's life. Lekpa Rinpoche at first instructed Dezhung Rinpoche to have all the figures of Sapaṇ painted with gold. But since Dezhung Rinpoche could not bear the expenses for this by himself, Lekpa Rinpoche told him to sponsor just the second section of the mural.¹⁵⁶

The help Dezhung Rinpoche gave on the mural work was a major turning point in his relations with Lekpa Rinpoche. Seeing how capable and intelligent he was, Gatön was impressed and told him, "You have a good intelligence."¹⁵⁷ I don't need to do all this myself; you can do it!" From that point on, Gatön took him under his wing and assumed responsibility for him.¹⁵⁸

In about 1921–1922, Dezhung Rinpoche had a certain Sakya lama 'Dud pa rgya mtsho, a clairvoyant monk of the Sakya Kram Mdo khog monastery, perform a prognostication rite (*pra phab*) of Sarasvatī concerning his future. In his vision, the lama saw a strange, inconceivably vast land, the likes of which he had never seen before, with oceans and many houses. He was amazed at this, and when he repeated the rite, the same things appeared. Also when Khangsar Dampa Rinpoche was asked about this, he said, "It is your future."¹⁵⁹

Dezhung Rinpoche's father, Namgyal Dorje, died in 1922. At the time of his father's death, his mother was pregnant and soon gave birth to her last child, Ane Chime (Chime Drölma). At this time his mother depleted much of the family wealth, making memorial offerings of money, jewelry, horses, yaks, and other animals to lamas and monasteries.¹⁶⁰ Dezhung Rinpoche, then sixteen, conducted special rites in his father's memory.

After this, Dezhung Rinpoche, as the oldest son, became a sort of head of the family, even though he was a monk and did not live with them. He would perform divinations to decide what should be done about important issues affecting the family, and from 1922 until the mid-1930s, they occasionally knew hard times. (Later Dezhung Rinpoche used to say that with the birth of his niece in 1934, the fortunes of the family changed for the better.¹⁶¹)

1923

At the end of that lunar-calendar year (i.e., in early 1923), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche went to Dzonyak Samdrup monastery in a nearby district of Ga south of Tharlam, and Dezhung Rinpoche accompanied him. The group of visitors was greeted by the local monks with jubilant monastic pageantry upon its arrival. Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche, and some of their party went to the nearby retreat of Theg chen, a place where Ga Rabjampa had once stayed. As Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche sat outside, relaxing and viewing the scenery, he saw two men carrying burdens approaching from afar. When they arrived, it turned out they were messengers from Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche, bearing many messages also from various disciples in Dezhung, as well as a letter and precious medicinal offerings from Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö in Dzongsar—some thirty messages in all.

After two or three days, Gatön's party returned to Samdrup monastery. Gatön dictated replies to all the letters, and in particular gave his replies to the numerous questions from Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche regarding difficult and profound essentials of meditation practice.¹⁶² By then, although Dezhung Rinpoche's handwriting was not particularly good, his spelling was quite correct. So when he was asked by his guru to serve as secretary for the needed correspondence with disciples and patrons, this he willingly did, after which Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche was pleased and encouraged him with kind words. Whatever mistakes of spelling and grammar he made, Gatön corrected immediately, and this benefited Dezhung Rinpoche very much.¹⁶³

At the request of that monastery, Lekpa Rinpoche bestowed upon twenty-five monks the Yamāntaka initiation in the Ngorpa tradition, and to quite a few monks who had already received the great empowerment of Yamāntaka he gave instructions in the production stage and completion stages of Yamāntaka practice. Following Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche's instructions, Dezhung Rinpoche acted as assistant instructor for the follow-up lessons, and this was the first time Dezhung Rinpoche gained a

real understanding of an instructional manual for tantric meditative practice (*khrid yig*). The Samdrup monastery monks also requested Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche to come again and give the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions, which he agreed to do.¹⁶⁴

The next lunar year (1923/24), when Dezhung Rinpoche was seventeen, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche returned to Dzonyak Samdrup monastery, and beginning on the twenty-first day of the first lunar month (ca. March 8, 1923), started the instructions on the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) to a group of about two hundred disciples, headed by Lama Gendun, the greatly learned Dezhung Chöphel, and other illustrious monks.¹⁶⁵ During much of this year, Dezhung Rinpoche seems to have remained at Tharlam in retreat, doing meditation practices that would prepare him for further studies at Dzongsar. The four retreats he did were for the deities (1) Vajrapāṇi Bhūtaḍāmara (*'Byung po 'dul byed*), to develop power for removing obstacles; (2) Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig*), for helping the deceased¹⁶⁶; (3) Mahākāla, since Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche had foreseen through divination that Dezhung Rinpoche might have obstacles to his future studies in Dzongsar; and (4) the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga (*Sa 'jam sbag sgrub*), to increase his discriminative understanding for forthcoming studies.¹⁶⁷

Enthronement at Tharlam

Later in the year Gatön returned to Tharlam. On the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month (ca. November 1, 1923), the special day of the Lord Buddha's return to this world from the divine realm, which was doubly auspicious because it also coincided with a propitious (*rgyal phur?*) conjunction, Gatön held the double ceremony of the new monastery's inauguration and the official enthronement there of Dezhung Rinpoche.¹⁶⁸

Gatön led offerings and festivities on a grand scale, as Dezhung Rinpoche describes in his biography of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa.¹⁶⁹ In the middle of the ceremonial gathering, he offered Dezhung Rinpoche the three "supports" (*rten*) of body, speech, and mind, and a ceremonial scarf, and in so doing he named him the successor to the Tharlam religious seat and also his own spiritual heir. For the "body support" (*sku rten*) he offered a sacred gilt-metal image of Mañjuśrī, which Dezhung Rinpoche kept the rest of his life. For the "voice support" (*gsung rten*) he offered a beautiful copy of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti* written in gold letters on black paper. For

the “mind support” (*thugs rten*) he offered an excellent vajra and bell (Gatön’s own personal possessions?).¹⁷⁰ Together with these, Dezhung Rinpoche was given an “emblem of Mañjuśrī” made of silver. He also received from Lekpa Rinpoche a Sanskrit scholar’s slate, on which the opening lines of the *Sarasvatī* grammar had been lightly written, along with a pen shaped like a golden sword, the symbol of Mañjuśrī’s wisdom.¹⁷¹

Then the ceremony paused. Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche told Dezhung Rinpoche to remain seated on the throne, adding that the others would go out briefly and then come back a little while later. Gatön and the others then left the assembly hall. After a few minutes, they all came back in and recited a three-verse prayer for the long life of Dezhung Rinpoche that Gatön had specially composed for this occasion:¹⁷²

Long remain among us, O illuminator of the teachings of Kunga Yeshe who was the second Maitreyañātha, great religious scholar and master of the Dharma,¹⁷³ O master of wisdom, kindness, and power, protector of living beings, kind sun among teachers!

May your mind be enriched by the three pure vows, may you reach perfection in manifold study, reflection, and meditation, may you always spend your time in teaching, debating, and composing, and may your virtuous enlightened activities forever be vast!

May you, highest of emanations, live for a hundred aeons, may all your intentions spontaneously be fulfilled, and thus may the sun of the teachings of the venerable Sakyapa, lord of wisdom, shine in the universe!

As part of the same ceremony, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche appointed Jamyang Shedrup as chant-leader, and Drönda Gelong Jamyang Gyaltzen as disciplinarian, and he also announced his newly composed monastic rule (*bca’ yig*) for the monastery. After the religious ceremonies, Drönda Gelong and others asked permission to hold celebrations through song and dancing by the young lay folk from the surrounding communities. Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche assented, saying that such celebrations at the completion of the temple would become “rejoicing in virtue,” one of the seven branches of religious practice, just as histories related that, at the completion of Tibet’s first temple, Samye, a celebration of singing and dancing was held for two

years. At this time Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche composed lyrics praising the great religious masters who had appeared at that monastery, including chiefly Ga Rabjampa. Dezhung Rinpoche added to those some versified lyrics that he himself had written in praise of Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche. These lyrics were then set to song and joyfully performed with dancing by the young people of the village.¹⁷⁴

Journey to Derge and First Studies of Sanskrit

IN THE SPRING OF 1924 (the wood-rat year), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche made preparations for leaving Tharlam and going to the retreat and meditation center of Dramagang near Derge to give the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) teachings at the request of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö.¹⁷⁵ Dezhung Rinpoche, too, planned to leave Tharlam at this time. Although it would have been more typical for him, as a young monk and lama of the Ngorpa tradition, to go to Ngor to receive full ordination and the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings, his master Gatön wanted him to go instead to Derge for further studies.¹⁷⁶

Before their departure, the master stressed once again to Dezhung Rinpoche the importance of studying, so as not to waste his intelligence for lack of good training. In particular, Lekpa Rinpoche insisted strongly that Dezhung Rinpoche study Sanskrit grammar. “Many others are studying the thirteen great basic texts of Buddhist scholasticism,” he said, “but very few are learning Sanskrit and the other minor fields of knowledge.”

In Dezhung Rinpoche’s immediate family, however, almost everyone opposed his going away to study. A number of female relations objected strongly, as did Uncle Ngawang Nyima. “Food and drink are very scarce in Derge,” they said, “and that place is so far away! However you look at it, it would be best not to go.”

Uncle Ngawang Nyima believed that Dezhung Rinpoche would probably just fall in with a bad group of monks there. He was also convinced that meditative practice was everything, and that a little book-learning only caused pride, quarreling, and other problems. But Gatön insisted, placing great hopes in the studies of Dezhung Rinpoche.¹⁷⁷

Once, as a young teenager, when Dezhung Rinpoche had gone to visit Gatön in retreat, the master told him: “Last night I dreamt of seeing a splendid

thangka painting of Mañjuśrī Sakya Paṇḍita with many lamps offered before it. Now you have come. It is sure that we have a close bond of the sacred tantric vows. It seems that you have a connection with the Mañjuśrī guru Sakya Paṇḍita.” So saying, he showed great kindness and affection toward Dezhung Rinpoche.

More recently, Dezhung Rinpoche himself had decided he wanted to start his formal studies either at Tharlam, under a local teacher, or under another master farther away. One day he went to see Gatön, who told him, “I have been thinking a lot about what you should study. You are intelligent and I am fond of you. Nowadays, throughout both Kham and central Tibet, few people study Sanskrit grammar. Therefore you should study the three Sanskrit grammatical treatises—Kālapa, Candrapa, and Sarasvatī. This will be of much benefit to the Buddhist Doctrine both in general and in particular. The study of the language arts is of utmost importance for gaining a knowledge of both sūtras and tantras!”

Since Gatön expressed in many ways how essential these subjects were, Dezhung Rinpoche, too, became enthusiastic about them. But he requested the master, “Please perform a prognostication to determine whether I have the karmic propensities for such studies. If it comes out positive, then I will accomplish whatever you say.”

“I will do just that,” replied Gatön.

The next day, Dezhung Rinpoche visited the master again. Gatön said, “Yesterday from noon until sundown I sat in the temple before the main image of Kunga Yeshe and prayed with all my might. I took down Kunga Yeshe’s four-volume collected works and consulted the commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti* as an oracle about three important matters. The first thing I asked about was Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche’s command that I go to teach the *Path with Its Fruit*. I asked: ‘Will there be obstacles if I go to teach at Dramagang in Derge?’ The words which came up were: *rdo rje hūṃ ste hūṃ zhes sgrogs*. That was excellent!”¹⁷⁸

“My second question was how it would work out with the twenty-five monks in Khyentse’s retreat center (*sgrub grwa*) for their practice of the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions. This time the answer was, ‘Perfect achievement, without mistake’ (*grub pa mthar phyin ’khrul pa med*).”

“Then I asked about your own study of Sanskrit. After praying again, I opened the book and the first words I laid my eyes on were: *’chi med dbang po lha yi bla ste drang srong phur phu*, ‘immortal lord, teacher of the gods, the seer Br̥haspati’ [Tib. *lha yi bla*, Skt. *suraguruḥ*; part of verse 148]. As the

words of the commentary explained, these lines referred to the divine sage [Tib. *drang srong*, Skt. *ṛṣi*] Bṛhaspati.”¹⁷⁹ (Bṛhaspati in Indian mythology was the regent of the planet Jupiter. He was the chief offerer of prayers and sacrifices, the priest of the gods, and himself a deity of wisdom and eloquence. His particular domain was Sanskrit language and grammar.) “In the whole book there could not have been a better passage!” Gatön said.¹⁸⁰ “You do indeed have the propensities for these subjects. If you do not slacken your efforts, I can personally assure you that you will come to understand these things!”

Hearing this, Dezhung Rinpoche became elated. He decided to accompany Gatön to Derge. Though his family raised objections and could not easily afford to support him during his studies, he gathered whatever provisions he could and prepared to go.¹⁸¹

From the first, Lekpa Rinpoche had insisted that Dezhung Rinpoche cultivate skills in Tibetan grammar and poetry, which would benefit him later in composition and teaching. Now he wished even more that Dezhung Rinpoche study and master Sanskrit grammar (*sgra*). In Kham, as elsewhere in Tibet, the number of otherwise well-educated monks who learned Sanskrit grammar was very small. But even more was apparently at stake: It seemed to Dezhung Rinpoche that Gatön hoped eventually to benefit from these studies by being able to learn from Dezhung Rinpoche subjects that he had himself been unable to study in his youth. Much later in life, in the 1970s, Dezhung Rinpoche compared Gatön’s hopes for him with the case of the Chögyal Phakpa (1235–1280) and Shongtön Dorje Gyaltsen. Shongtön had met Phakpa, then Yüan imperial preceptor, when Phakpa returned from China, and he asked to be supported so that he could carry out his studies of Sanskrit and other literary subjects. Phakpa agreed, hoping that Shongtön would be able to teach him some things that he had not been able to learn from his uncle Sapaṇ before the latter’s death in 1251 (when Phakpa was only fifteen). Shongtön succeeded in becoming expert in Sanskrit poetics through studies under Indian and Newar paṇḍitas.¹⁸² Evidently Gatön had similar reasons for wanting Dezhung Rinpoche to master these subjects.¹⁸³

Dezhung Rinpoche, then aged eighteen, finally set out for Derge district. He accompanied Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche as far as the retreat center of Dramagang near Derge, and these were his first travels over long distances. In their group were two monk-attendants of Lekpa Rinpoche and also Dezhung Rinpoche’s maternal uncle, Ngawang Gyaltsen. Along the way

they passed many monasteries and temples, each of which invited Lekpa Rinpoche to stop and visit. Thus, even though they traveled by horse, the journey took about twenty days. Lekpa Rinpoche, through the influence of Dzongsar Khyentse, had a pass from the Central Tibetan government requisitioning transport. This benefited the young Dezhung Rinpoche, who could thus transport his possessions by pack animal and not on his own back.¹⁸⁴

They took a more direct but also more arduous route, passing through the Derge-governed low agricultural district of Denma, a few days' journey southeast of Tharlam in the Drichu valley. Here they passed by the ancient



12. The Derge king (Dorje Senge?) ca. 1917, with consort, infant son (Tshewang Dündül 1915/16–1942), and attendants.

temple of Tārā in Denma, the Glong thang 'Jig rten sgrol ma lha khang, which housed a venerable image of the goddess said to have once been the possession of the Indian king Ajataśatru.¹⁸⁵ That night Dezhung Rinpoche dreamt that he had carried the precious statue away from the temple but then worried he would be accused of theft. When he woke up, he worried that his dream was inauspicious, but Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche reassured him that the hagiographies of many great masters show how Tārā had protected them in their works. "This dream shows that you, too, have a connection with her, so you must practice her meditation diligently and regularly."¹⁸⁶

Farther on in Denma, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche, and

their party stopped at the monastery of Damthok, a large Sakyapa establishment. The monks welcomed them with the blaring of long ceremonial trumpets, the offering of tea, and so forth. They were told that in the monastery an old monk lay ill and dying, with his one last wish that he see the face of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. When the great master went to the room of the dying monk, Dezhung Rinpoche accompanied him. The old man could not lift his head from his pillow, but when told, “This is Ga Ngawang Lekpa,” he opened his eyes and saw him. Lekpa Rinpoche performed the ceremony of consciousness-transference of Amitābha for him.¹⁸⁷ The old



13. Pine grove on the road to Derge, summer, 1947.

monk's room was nearly empty, except for a bed and a few other things. But the dying monk did possess a nice silver bowl, which he offered to Lekpa Rinpoche. He also had a small gilt statue of Yellow Jambhala, a deity of wealth, which he presented to Dezhung Rinpoche. When they had gone outside again, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche remarked to Dezhung Rinpoche, “Ordinarily this should have been offered to me. It augurs that you will not experience the obstacles of poverty or deprivation in your life.” They saw the monk at about eleven o'clock in the morning; the monk passed away about an hour later. (Dezhung Rinpoche kept this image with him until he was forced to leave it behind in 1958, when fleeing the Chinese Communists.)¹⁸⁸

Crossing a pass on the road to Derge, Dezhung Rinpoche saw a pine tree for the first time in his life.¹⁸⁹ A few days later, the party at last reached Dramagang, and there Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche stayed, beginning his teaching of the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) to the twenty-five meditators at that center and to many others who came, forming in all a group of about one hundred.

Dezhung Rinpoche left after a few days of rest at Dramagang. He continued on with his maternal uncle to Dzongsar monastery in the district of Mayshö, a valley south of Derge town that was one of the main agricultural centers of Derge district. Here his main aim was to continue his religious



14. The seminary-master Khenpo Öntö Khyenrab.

and literary education. He carried with him letters of introduction from Gatön to the main lamas at Dzongsar, mainly to Khyentse Rinpoche and Khenpo Khyenrab.

Arriving at Dzongsar, he found himself in a warmer and more sheltered area, especially in comparison with the high, outlying nomadic regions.

Here the people grew wheat, barley, and vegetables in the valley of the May-chu, a stream flowing south toward the Drichu. Above the valley grew forests of coniferous trees on the northern slopes of nearby mountains, where leopards and other animals lived.

At Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche hoped to meet and study under the widely famed master Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö (1893–1959).¹⁹⁰ This teacher, who was then just thirty-four years of age, had been born into a lineage descending from Gter chen Bdud 'dul rdo rje, and at the age of six he had been identified as the main rebirth of the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.¹⁹¹ Khyentse was in strict Hevajra retreat at the time, so they could not meet until it ended. But when he was informed of Dezhung Rinpoche's arrival through Gatön's letter, Khyentse sent a letter of introduction and recommendation to the headmaster of the nearby Dzongsar Khamche scriptural seminary (*bshad grwa*), Khenpo Khyenrab Chökyi Öser (b. 1889).¹⁹² This master, who is otherwise known as Öntöpa Jamyang Khyenrab or Mkhyen rab chos kyi snang ba, was the second seminary master of the Dzongsar Khamche seminary (tenure 1920–1929).¹⁹³

On the basis of Gatön's letters of introduction, Dezhung Rinpoche was well received and kindly looked after. He accordingly went to the famed Khamche seminary and began his studies there, learning first such subjects as Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka* and traditional Tibetan grammar (*sum rtags*).¹⁹⁴

There were about fifty scholar-monks at the seminary then who received support from the seminary. Dezhung Rinpoche himself joined the seminary as an outside student—one who received his food and other necessities from elsewhere. (He received a little support from his family and a little from Dezhung.) This was actually an advantage since it freed him from compulsory attendance and from services that the seminary-supported monks had to perform. Seminary-supported students had to spend several months every year performing rituals, and the monastic regimen for them was very strict.¹⁹⁵

In the seventh lunar month (September 1924), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche himself came to Dzongsar while on his way to Dezhung district in Lithang, where he planned to give the empowerments of the “Hundred Sādhanaś” (*Sgrub thabs brgya rtsa*) collection. Before leaving for Dezhung, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche instructed Dezhung Rinpoche, “Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö is truly Mañjuśrī himself. So when you meet him for the first time, you should request the reading-transmission (*lung*) of the *Litany of Mañjuśrī's Names* (*Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti*).”¹⁹⁶

Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche was also concerned that Dezhung Rinpoche begin his Sanskrit studies and had earlier tried to find out who the best teacher for this would be. He consulted a close lay patron of his, the Denma nobleman Dran 'khor Bu Dbang 'dus nor bu, who was a high official in the Derge court, asking him, "Who would be best to study Sanskrit under?"¹⁹⁷

"There are only a few scholars these days who know the minor fields of knowledge (*rig gnas chung ngu*, the language and literary arts)," the nobleman replied. "From among those, only two know Sanskrit grammar. These are Drongnyin Tshewang Lama¹⁹⁸ and the old Palyul Lama."

"But wouldn't the Indian Khunu Lama Tendzin Gyaltsen be good as a Sanskrit teacher?" Gatön asked.

"No, sir!" the nobleman said with a laugh. "That Indian lama is just an Indian beggar-yogi!"¹⁹⁹ The best teacher of Sanskrit for your student would be the Palyul Lama in Dzongsar,²⁰⁰ because the other possibility, Drongnyin Tshewang Lama, is tutor to a great lama, and it would therefore be hard for someone to study under him."

On the basis of this strong recommendation, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche wrote a letter to Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, requesting his help in arranging for Palyul Lama to be made Dezhung Rinpoche's teacher.

When Dezhung Rinpoche arrived at Dzongsar, he was told that the old Palyul Lama (who was then in his sixties) had become eccentric and had given up normal teaching activities, spending most of his time performing rites for lay patrons (*grong chog*) in return for offerings. Dezhung Rinpoche had Gatön's letter recommending him to Khyentse, but that was not of immediate help, because Khyentse was in retreat. However, the Khyentse Labrang servants helped arrange Dezhung Rinpoche's accommodations and said they would try to introduce him later to the old Palyul Lama.

In the meantime, Dezhung Rinpoche struck up a relationship with one of Lekpa Rinpoche's sponsor families in Dzongsar. The "chaplain-monk" of this family, who was not a learned monk but who was otherwise very capable, quickly befriended him. When Dezhung Rinpoche asked about his prospective Sanskrit teacher, the monk replied, "Yes, Palyul Lama is here in town. In fact, I was just performing a rite with him yesterday. I'll introduce you to him!"

Some time later, the monk took Dezhung Rinpoche to meet the Palyul Lama. When he finally was guided to his future tutor's residence in Dzongsar, he found it to be the poorest of dwellings, ill-kept and almost empty of furnishings. The old lama was seated by himself in a dingy corner.

Dezhung Rinpoche explained his purpose and requested that he teach him the Candrapa system. The lama replied:

Since you, a trulku, have come at the urging of a great religious master all the way from the sun, upper Ga, expressly for the purpose of Sanskrit studies, I can't give you a flat 'No' for an answer. When I was young I made a good study of Tibetan grammar, poetical figures, Sanskrit grammar, and astrology/calculations. If I had been approached then by a student who wanted to learn, I would have been willing to teach. But at that time nobody was interested. Therefore I spent more than thirty years as just a lama who performs rituals for householders in upper and lower Mayshö. More recently, when I was nearly sixty, Khenpo Shenga sent two students—Thar lo and 'Gyur lo—and urged me to teach them the Candrapa grammar, which I did once. Then Lama Lekpa's student Dezhung Kunzang²⁰¹ came, having been sent by that master. And so I had to teach the Candrapa once again. Anyhow, I'll try my best to teach you the Kālapa system.²⁰²

They agreed to start the Sanskrit teachings on a Sunday, which the teacher explained would be most auspicious. The Palyul Lama Sherab Öser then began to teach Dezhung Rinpoche the *Kālapavyākaraṇa sūtra*.

Dezhung Rinpoche studied Sanskrit for a number of months under this teacher, during this, his twenty-fifth year. But, all in all, he was not satisfied with his progress. Later he said about his Sanskrit grammatical studies, "From the start, the auspicious connections did not fall into place" (*dang po nas rten 'brel 'grig ma song/*).²⁰³

Studies under Jamgyal Rinpoche and Khunu Lama

LATER IN 1924, after he had concluded the esoteric transmission of the *Path with its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) at Dramagang in Derge, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche went to the Gagu retreat, where he gave the Hevajra initiation and other central Sakyapa teachings at the invitation of Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen (1870–1940), who had also originally been a Tharlam monk and one of Gatön's younger fellow monks from the Dzinda retreat in the 1880s and 1890s. Commonly known as “Jamgyal Rinpoche,” this master had that year emerged from a five-year retreat. Dezhung Rinpoche came with Gatön to Gagu at this time.

After Jamgyal Rinpoche received the Hevajra Cause and Path Consecrations, as well as the initiations for the other three of the “Four Unbroken Practices” (*chag med rnam bzhi*) of the Sakyapa, he put a number of questions to Gatön concerning the vital points of the *'Khor 'das dbyer med* (“Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa”) theory. Dezhung Rinpoche acted as scribe for Gatön and dutifully wrote down the answers as Gatön dictated them.²⁰⁴

1925–1926

Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche subsequently journeyed south to Lithang Dezhung, and when he came back some months later (ca. 1925), before returning to Tharlam he went to Dzongsar and bestowed Vajrabhairava initiations and instruction on Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. Also fortunate enough to receive these teachings was a small group of important lamas and close disciples, including Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche, Dzongsar Ngari Trulku Jamyang Sherab Gyatso (Byams pa kun bzang shes rab, 1877–1942),²⁰⁵ Khenpo Khyenrab, Dezhung Chöphel, the Dezhung Kyashül Trulku Kunzang Chökyi Nyima, and Dezhung Rinpoche himself.²⁰⁶

Probably sometime in 1925, Dezhung Rinpoche went to Gagu again to study under Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen,²⁰⁷ one of the meditator-monks (like Gatön and Nyiga Rinpoche) from the Dzinda Naysep hermitage. Jamgyal Rinpoche was a distant cousin on Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal side²⁰⁸ and was the older brother of Lama Gendun. When Dezhung Rinpoche met him this time, he was an imposing, venerable monk of about fifty-five years.



15. Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen. The only known photograph.

Jamgyal became one of Dezhung Rinpoche's main teachers, and Dezhung Rinpoche was to spend a total of about two years studying under him.

The Gagu retreat where Jamgyal Rinpoche stayed had previously been the residence of the Lama Grags pa rgyal mtshan, a disciple of Dza Paltrül and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.²⁰⁹ Lama Grags rgyal had been blessed with a vision of Amitābha, and when Jamgyal had met this lama here in the 1880s, he had requested from him the initiation of Amitābha and the *Prayer for Rebirth in Sukhāvātī* (*Bde ba can gyi smon lam*).²¹⁰ Dezhung Rinpoche, under Jamgyal Rinpoche's guidance, studied the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and other sūtra-class teachings, such as the Kadampa Seven-Point Mind Training instructions (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*) in Chekawa's tradition.

Jamgyal Rinpoche, after spending his youth as a disciple of Nyiga Dorjechang, was appointed in his late twenties to the position of chant-leader (*dbu mdzad*) of Tharlam monastery. He was very idealistic and tried to use the influence of that position to reform and purify some of the practices of

the monastery, but this led to a revolt by the other monks. They even locked him up for awhile, and the lord of Jyekundo (the Dra'u Pön) sent officers, who sided with the other monks and were intent upon punishing Jamgyal. This led to his expulsion from Tharlam monastery.

After these troubles, Jamgyal went to Trindu, north of Tharlam in Ga, where he happened to meet an old monk from the nomadic region of Dzachukha. When Jamgyal heard the monk came from Gemang, he asked who had succeeded the deceased Orgyen Tendzin Norbu.

"Haha!" laughed the monk, "The golden sun has set, but the white-conch moon has risen! Now teaching is Gyalkhang Shenga, whom the deceased master appointed as his successor, saying, 'He is no different from me.' He is now raining down a shower of religious teachings there."²¹¹

The mere sound of Shenga's name set loose intense faith in Jamgyal. He decided to go to Dzachukha to study the great Indian Buddhist treatises. But first he wanted to get the advice of a former monk of Trindu named Champa Tendzin, who was famed for his high spiritual attainments, including clairvoyance. Jamgyal learned that "adept Byams bstan," as he was called, was staying at Khams 'jo monastery, a Drikung establishment just over a nearby pass. Taking the Trindu chant-leader Phakchok with him as guide, Jamgyal set out.

While climbing the pass that morning, they heard local herdsmen driving their cattle up the mountain, shouting, "The adept Saraha knows!" Suddenly they encountered a man wearing a layman's robe with a knife stuck in his belt, walking down the hill toward them.

Phakchok recognized him and said to Jamgyal, "This is the adept Champa Tendzin!"

Jamgyal prostrated immediately, but the adept said, "Don't prostrate!" Jamgyal then thought, "I should prostrate nine times," at which the adept remarked, "Or prostrate nine times."

Then, even though the lama Jamgyal was the elder of the two, the adept said, "Phakchok, since you are older, you take the higher seat." Jamgyal was actually older, but the adept evidently meant by this that the master Jamgyal would pass away earlier, whereas Phakchok would live to great old age.

Jamgyal offered him a few silver coins, explaining his plans to go study at Dzachukha and asking the adept's advice.

The adept said, "Very good. I don't need the money. As a student, you will have to buy firewood and other things." So saying, he returned the coins.

Jamgyal offered him instead a bead of agate from his rosary. This the

adept accepted with delight, rubbing it with his hand again and again.

Jamgyal asked, “In the future, how could I be of greater benefit to the Sakya doctrine, through teaching or practicing?”

The adept replied: “Oh, wage a hostile campaign! Wage war against the enemy! Eat tasty food! Live happily!”

This was later interpreted as symbolic speech prophesying the master Jamgyal’s enormous future activities in all three spheres: teaching, practicing, and meditation.

Jamgyal asked for a Dharma-connection, and Champa Tendzin said several times: “Oh, space!” At that, Jamgyal sat with rapt attention, as if meditating.

The adept then stood up and prepared to leave. Phakchok beseeched the adept, “We beg you, lama, for a Dharma-connection!”

Lama Jamgyal said, “I already received one,” thus indicating he had been introduced to profound ultimate reality by the adept.

Jamgyal returned home and asked his father for permission to study under Shenga. Then, with a lot of grain as provisions for his studies, he traveled to the Dzachu Gemang mountain retreat. Just as the old monk had explained in Trindu, Shenga had indeed taken over the position of head teacher at Gemang after the death of Bstan li and was teaching, but only about twenty disciples, though the old monk had told him there were more students.

Upon their first meeting Shenga remarked: “Lama Orgyen Tendzin Norbu told me that there was a monk of good understanding from Thaklung. That seems to be you.”

While at Gemang, Jamgyal also received transmissions from Gemang Khenpo Yönga, who wanted to involve him more deeply in the Nyingma tradition. Jamgyal, after considering that, decided to devote himself to the Sakya tradition, which he considered more needy of preservation. Shenga later told him he need not follow the plans of Yönga (who had already enthroned him as a lama of the Nyingma tradition), and that he could keep their tantric bond intact by just following a little Nyingma practice.

After completing five years of studies under Shenga, Jamgyal asked, “Nowadays this doctrine of the Sakyapa is extremely feeble. What would be the best means for furthering it?”

Lama Shenga, who was an admirer of the Sakyapa teachings, thought it over for many days before answering: “There are many outstanding commentaries on sūtra and tantra by the omniscient Gorampa in which he has

with great wisdom explained the thought of the Sakya founding masters. If you could have these carved onto printing blocks, the doctrine of the Sakyapa would certainly grow.”

At Khenpo Shenga's suggestion, and with the subsequent cooperation of Loter Wangpo (1847–1914) in Derge, Jamgyal Rinpoche undertook (ca. 1906–1910?) the very extensive project of arranging the editing and printing of a number of rare works, beginning with the complete writings of Gorampa Sönam Sengge (1429–1489). The works of this most influential Sakyapa scholastic, whom Shenga revered, were hard to obtain, as they contained criticism of Tsongkhapa's views and were thus virtually banned in central Tibet.

By 1925, that great project had been completed and Jamgyal had completed a five-year meditation retreat. Still, he continued to engage in other important printing projects, such as Sachen's eleven *Lam 'bras rdo rje tshig rkang* commentaries (*Rnam 'grel bcu gcig*); the three *Prajñāpāramitā* commentaries (*Sher 'grel*) in short, medium, and very extensive lengths of G.yag ston (1348–1414); the commentary of Rongtön (1367–1449) on the long *Prajñāpāramitā* (*'Bum 'tik*); and many works of Gorampa's chief disciples Mus Rabjampa and Kong ston as addenda to Gorampa's complete works.²¹² Dezhung Rinpoche had helped him a little the previous year (1924) with the proofreading of Rongtön's commentary on the very extensive *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*'Bum 'grel*).²¹³

Jamgyal Rinpoche (like his brother, Lama Gendun) had previously (ca. 1901–1906) been a student also of Nyiga Dorjechang, Ngor Pönlop Loter Wangpo,²¹⁴ Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, Gatön, and Drakri Chöje Jamyang Chökyi Nyima.²¹⁵ A few years after Dezhung Rinpoche's first meeting him, Jamgyal would even serve for a little over one year (in 1929/30) as the third seminary master of the famed Dzongsar Khamche seminary.²¹⁶

A Derge aristocrat who was one of his patrons once remarked, “Surely the arhats of India must have been like him!”²¹⁷ Jamgyal was widely revered as a teacher in Derge, and his students included not only many Derge nobles, but also the Derge ruler Tshewang Dündül (1915/16–1942).²¹⁸

At Jamgyal's hermitage the rules of the Vinaya were strictly observed. Jamgyal did not, for instance, accept gold or silver, or gifts directly from women. At his retreat, no women were allowed to stay. He was a vegetarian and did not take food after noon. He was *never* sectarian in his talk, showing sincere respect and appreciation even toward the Bonpo tradition. He became very displeased if he heard sectarian remarks from his followers. He would speak

only of the Dharma, and only when addressed by others. At farewells he would use the formal, somewhat stilted expression, “Be mindful!” (*bag yod par gyis shig!*).

On the twenty-first day of the first lunar month (ca. March 15, 1925), Jamgyal began teaching Śāntideva’s classic *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, using Khenchen Shenga’s gloss-commentary. He taught that work twice and also taught four basic Vinaya works: the greater and lesser “*Vinayakārikā*,”²¹⁹ the *Pratimokṣasūtra* (*Sor mdo*), and the *Vinayasūtra* of Guṇaprabha (*Mdo rtsa*). Also present as students were Dezhung Kyashül Trulku Kunzang Chökyi Nyima, Nyarak Kunga Zangpo, Dar rtse mdo pa Ngag dbang chos dar, Ldan Damthok Bstan ’dzin chos grags, Khri tsho Dge tshul ’Jam dbyangs chos bzang, Dbon po stod pa Tsultrim Rinchen, Dzongsar monastery’s Lotrö Wangchuk, Ngag dbang lhun grub (maternal nephew of the Derge Göñchen Yarnay abbot Samten Lotrö), and Jamgyal’s attendant, Kun dga’ ’od zer.²²⁰

Certain things Dezhung Rinpoche learned from Jamgyal stayed with him all his life, such as habitually reciting the final lines from the *Seven-Point Mind Training* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*) of Chekawa every night before retiring. Jamgyal normally recited these verses while stepping out in the evening to make a few circumambulations of his meditation hut. During the circumambulations, after finishing the mind-training verses, he recited the praises of Tārā.²²¹

1926

In early summer of 1926, Jamgyal Rinpoche was invited to the Derge retreat of Dramagang. There were actually two small monastic centers there: the Upper Ridge (*yar sgang*) and the Lower Ridge (*mar sgang*). The Lower Ridge had been founded by the Derge-king-turned-royal-monk Yab chen Byams pa kun dga’ sangs rgyas (b. 1786). The Upper Ridge had been founded (in the late 1800s?) by the Ngor Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup (b. 1811), who had died soon thereafter. Both monasteries had fallen into disrepair and were being restored through the persistent efforts of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. Since Jamgyal was the maternal nephew of the Denma Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup, he was especially invited to attend the restoration ceremonies. The other main lamas at the ceremony were the Göñchen Yarnay abbot Samten Lotrö, Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, and the Dzongsar Shedra Khenpo Khyenrab.

Jamgyal Rinpoche was asked to function as abbot for the observance of the monks' rainy-season retreat, and as his main teaching he gave the assembly of monks (which included Dezhung Rinpoche) the text-transmission for the thirteen volumes of Gorampa's collected works. The transmission for the sūtra-section had been ritually revived (*lung spel*) through a precept of Stag lung thang pa Bkra shis dpal preserved in the *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*)—a tradition passed down to Stag lung thang pa from Phagmotrupa, who had received it from Sachen Kunga Nyingpo. He also gave the reading-transmission for the four volumes of Gorampa's tantric teachings, which he had received from Hocho Lama Könchok Gyaltzen. The latter had received the lineage from Pönlop Loter Wangpo, who had been given it by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. Dezhung Rinpoche received in addition from Jamgyal Rinpoche the text-transmission for the two volumes of works of Gorampa's students, published as an addendum (*kha skong*) to Gorampa's collected works.

In the assembly of monks who received the text-transmission were the seminary master Khyenrab Chökyi Öser with about eighteen disciples from the Dzongsar seminary, Kyashül Trulku Kunzang, Nyarak Kunga Zangpo, Dar mdo Ngag dbang chos dar, Göncen Ngag dbang lhun grub, Ye na Khenpo Chos 'phel rab rgyas, Grags 'byor, Öntö Grags pa chos dar, his attendant Kun 'od, and Pad lu can, the maternal nephew of the Derge Nub lama Jamyang Khyenrab.²²²

Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, who was on his way back to Tharlam (in 1925–1926?), returned at this time to the Derge principality and visited the great Derge monastery (*dgon chen*) Lhun grub steng.²²³ There he gave an Amitāyus empowerment to the Derge Göncen Yarnay abbot Ngawang Samten Lotrö (1868–1931).²²⁴ This great master served as rainy-season retreat abbot of the main Derge monastery.²²⁵ He was also revered as a royal preceptor by the Derge ruler Tshewang Düdül (1915/16–1942).²²⁶ In return, the great abbot gave Gatön (and possibly Dezhung Rinpoche, too) the initiation for the practice of the four-faced Protector.²²⁷

Sometime during this period when Gatön was visiting the Derge Göncen, he met and had discussions with the father of Ngor Phende Shabdrung Ngag dbang blo gros theg mchog chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1906–1960s), later commonly known as the “Müpa Khenpo.”²²⁸ Müpa Khenpo was the son of the Phende lama palace's business manager (*phyag mdzod*), Dawa Norbu, a man of Tsang who had previously been the chamberlain (*gsol dpon*) of the Ngor abbot Palden Lotrö Gyaltzen (1840–1900).²²⁹

His mother was a daughter of the Minyak Jakla king. Though the young monk had studied some years under worthy tutors, he had proved inca-



16. Monks gathered in a courtyard of the Derge main monastery, summer 1947.

pable of real learning or other accomplishments. His father, Dawa Norbu, a clever and ambitious man, was disappointed with this son.

Dawa Norbu was then residing at the Phende lama residence in the Derge Göncen, and he proposed to Gatön Ngawang Lekpa to put his son more or less permanently into meditation retreat and appoint Dezhung Rinpoche (who was the same age) as his replacement. They would first make Dezhung Rinpoche a candidate to the abbacy (*zhabs drung*) for the Phende lama palace at Ngor—one of the four abbatial palaces of Ngor among which the abbacy rotated—and then they would have him serve as “acting abbot” (*mkhan tshab*) of Ngor. Eventually he would be enthroned as full-fledged abbot.

When the father approached Gatön and asked his permission to carry out this plan, the master was not pleased. Gatön already had his own plans for Dezhung Rinpoche: He wanted him, for the moment, to continue his studies and spiritual development. Later Gatön hoped to see his disciple based at Tharlam and continue several of his own projects from there. Being made Phende Shabdrung and later abbot of Ngor would be a great obstacle to this. But Gatön, not wishing to create an unfavorable omen (*rten 'brel*), gave neither approval nor express disapproval.

Dawa Norbu's plan found avid supporters nearby. The proposal had immediately reached the ears of Dezhung Rinpoche's attendant, Ngawang Gyaltzen (1896–1931), his maternal uncle, an ambitious young monk of about thirty. This uncle was enthused by the idea of his nephew attaining the position of Ngor abbot, with all its pomp, honor, and other trappings. He threw his full support behind the plan, and he schemed with Müpa Khenpo's father to find a way to appoint Dezhung Rinpoche to the Phende lama palace.

But Dezhung Rinpoche's paternal uncle Ngawang Nyima, still in retreat at Tharlam, somehow got wind of these plans. He was shocked and repulsed. He broke retreat and rushed directly to Derge to where Ngawang Gyaltzen



17. A corner of the Derge printery with part of Derge monastery in the background.

was staying, telling him, “The Phende lama palace is poor. It is the poorest of all the four lama-palaces at Ngor and is deeply in debt. As a candidate abbot, my nephew would do nothing but travel around from place to place collecting offerings for the lama-palace. There is no way this could be acceptable! It would be much better just to let him practice, study, and stay in retreat!”

Hearing this adamant refusal, Ngawang Gyaltzen lost his temper, and the two quarreled, nearly coming to blows. But Uncle Ngawang Nyima, never afraid of confrontation, stood his ground. He firmly insisted on his own right to settle the matter.

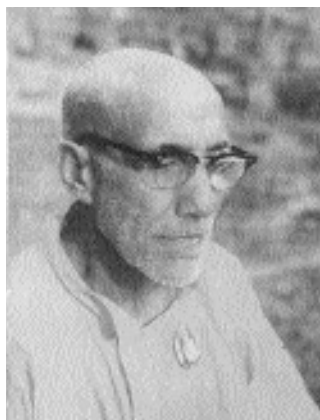
“I have the power to decide!” he shouted. “I raised him from the age of five!”²³⁰

For the next several years Uncle Ngawang Nyima stayed in Derge district,

mainly in Mayshö but now and then visiting Dezhung Rinpoche (to keep a closer eye on his progress, as a sort of occasional companion).²³¹ Dezhung Rinpoche's main task from this point on was to continue his studies as ordered by Gatön, especially the study of Sanskrit. By this time it had become clear that the best teacher of Sanskrit would be Khunu Rinpoche Tendzin Gyaltsen (1894 or 1896–1977), who was then in the midst of his eleven- or twelve-year sojourn in Kham.²³² Dezhung Rinpoche set out on foot to find him, and they met for the first time on the road from Derge to Dzokchen. When Dezhung Rinpoche explained his interest in receiving instruction from him, telling of Gatön's instructions and his previous stud-



18. The great Sikkimese savant of poetics and grammar 'Bras ljongs Bsam 'grub khang gsar ba, teacher of Khunu Lama.



19. Khunu Lama Tendzin Gyaltsen late in life in India.

ies, Khunu Lama replied, "If you really want to learn, then follow me for five years. Only then will you be able to learn Sanskrit grammar."

Khunu Lama was a native of Sunnam Village in Ropa Valley of the Indian Himalayan district of Kinnaur (near Kulu Manali), in the present northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. As a youth he had gone (ca. 1913) to Gangtok to study under the famous Sikkimese scholar of poetics 'Bras ljongs Bsam 'grub khang gsar ba O rgyan kun bzang bstan 'dzin rdo

rje (fl. late nineteenth to early twentieth century), who continued the learned tradition of the great eighteenth-century scholars Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (1697–1769) and Situ Paṇchen Chökyi Jungnay.²³³ Khunu Lama Tendzin Gyaltzen himself had become famous as a scholar and teacher after serving at Tashilhunpo as the tutor of the Ninth Panchen Rinpoche, Chökyi Nyima (1883–1937), and after acting as one of the founding teachers in the Kun gzig slob grwa school also at Tashilhunpo.²³⁴ (The Panchen Rinpoche had, incidentally, fled from Tashilhunpo to China just a few years before, in 1921.) Khunu Lama during these years was gathering teachings from many of the greatest masters of Kham, and in this period visited Khenpo Shenga in retreat, being one of the last to receive instructions from him.

After meeting his prospective student Dezhung Rinpoche, Khunu Lama proceeded to the great Nyingma monastery of Dzokchen in the high Dzachukha nomadic area east of Derge. Founded in 1685 by Padma rig 'dzin, this monastery had received Derge royal patronage and was the largest Nyingma establishment in Tibet, housing some eight hundred fifty monks and eleven trulkus. Because of Khunu Lama's high connections (including his former service as a tutor to the Panchen Rinpoche?), he carried an official permit allowing him to requisition transportation (*'u lag*), so he could travel comparatively easily to Dzokchen—and elsewhere in Kham—on horseback.²³⁵ Dezhung Rinpoche wanted to accompany him and continue his Sanskrit studies. But as a poor student monk, he had to lag behind on foot, carrying a bag on his back and with the rest of his supplies loaded on a little donkey.²³⁶ His uncle Ngawang Nyima accompanied him for a few weeks, just to see him settled. On the way to Dzokchen, while he and Dezhung Rinpoche were crossing a river in spate, their little donkey was swept away by the muddy current and lost. They had no choice but to walk on, Dezhung Rinpoche carrying his few remaining possessions on his back.

At Dzokchen, Dezhung Rinpoche was left alone to study Sanskrit grammar (the Kālapa and Sarasvatī systems?) under Khunu Lama, which took six months in all. He also studied the lexicon *Prajñā*. He did not live at the great monastery itself but rather in a small retreat nearby. At that time there were quite a few Bhutanese monks who were also studying Sanskrit grammar under Khunu Lama. But with the loss of his supplies, life at Dzokchen for Dezhung Rinpoche was hard. Once during this time his mother came to see him (with more supplies) and to look after him, but after a short while Khunu Lama sent her away, saying that the mother's presence would be a distraction. "Mother will be thinking of son, and son will be thinking

of mother; this will interfere with his studies,” he told her. She wept at these words and reluctantly left.²³⁷

After some months, Khunu Lama decided to go from the bleak swampy uplands of Dzokchen to Kathok monastery in the forested mountain country of southern Derge district, another of the largest Nyingma monasteries in Kham.²³⁸ By that time they had completed parts or all of the *Sarasvatī* (*dbYangs can sgra mdo*) and *Kālapa* grammatical treatises, as well as the second (middle) chapter of Daṇḍin’s treatise on poesy, the *Kāvyaādarśa*. (In



20. Kathok monastery in southern Derge in 1905–1922.

this period or later, Dezhung Rinpoche also studied under Khunu Lama the work on correct orthography *Dag yig ngag gi sgron me*,²³⁹ the Tibetan grammatical commentary *Gsum rtags lhag bsam*, Situ’s great grammatical commentary on the Tibetan *Sum rtags* [*Si tu ’grel chen*], and the Amarakośa lexicon [*Chi med mdzod*], but he had not yet received the Candrapa grammar or the metrical treatise *Chandoratnākara* [*Sdeb sbyor rin chen ’byung gnas*].²⁴⁰ Teacher and pupil had by that time become quite close.

1927

Early in the year 1927 (the fifth day of the first lunar month, ca. March 8, 1927), Dezhung Rinpoche’s revered teacher Dzokchen Shenga (1871–1927)

passed away while in retreat at the Rgya phu hermitage, at the age of fifty-six.²⁴¹ When Dezhung Rinpoche heard of Shenga Rinpoche's death, he was deeply saddened, for he had been devoted to him and had planned to return one day and study under him again. At their final parting Dezhung Rinpoche had expressed the wish to receive further instructions on the Mantrayāna. Shenga had told him he would be welcome to come back later and receive teachings on tantra. "For the time being you should study the great scholastic treatises with others," he had said. "Afterward I'll give you what you want."²⁴²

Hearing now of Shenga's death, Dezhung Rinpoche made offerings, recited the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, and made heartfelt prayers to his deceased master. That night, Shenga Rinpoche appeared in his dream. Shenga was standing, walking toward him. To the master's left, holding his hand, was Khenpo Khyenrab, one of Shenga's chief spiritual sons. Shenga was holding many raisins in his right hand. These he gave to Khenpo Khyenrab, who passed many of the raisins to Dezhung Rinpoche. (This dream Dezhung Rinpoche later interpreted as foreshadowing that he would receive many teachings directly from Khenpo Khyenrab, and thus indirectly from Shenga.)²⁴³

At the time of his death, Shenga Rinpoche had been living in meditation retreat at a remote spot for over five years (from 1922 to early 1927). The final rites and cremation ceremony were performed by Palpung Situ, who afterward constructed at Palpung a very large three-storied reliquary stūpa in Shenga Rinpoche's memory.²⁴⁴

During his Sanskrit studies under Khunu Lama, Dezhung Rinpoche received another visit from his uncle Ngawang Nyima, who had been staying in Derge. Ngawang Nyima was suffering from more than one hundred painful boils all over his body.

Khunu Lama told Dezhung Rinpoche, "You had better go now with your old sick teacher and help look after him. We'll meet later, and you can continue your studies at Kathok monastery." He instructed him to recite the "Prayer of Benevolent Conduct" (*Bzang spyod*) and to dedicate the merit.

On his arrival, Uncle Ngawang Nyima had expressed his opinion once again that Dezhung Rinpoche should not waste his time by learning Sanskrit and such things. He could not see any value in language or literary studies, and much preferred meditation and ritual practice. At the same time, Ngawang Nyima had brought with him a letter from Ngawang Lekpa, who instructed Dezhung Rinpoche in no uncertain terms to study the three main Sanskrit grammatical traditions. Dezhung Rinpoche decided at once

to obey the command of Lekpa Rinpoche, but for the time being he agreed to stop his Sanskrit studies and accompany his uncle.²⁴⁵ The two traveled together back to Derge district, where the local people had begun to honor his uncle with the title “Gapa Lama,” and many requested his uncle’s blessings, hoping to benefit from his spiritual power after his many years of staying in retreat. Ngawang Nyima stayed quite a while in Mayshö, developing here some repute as an excellent practitioner of Severance (*Gcod*). He also received a certain amount of wealth from generous patrons.²⁴⁶

In the fifth lunar month (July 1927), Dezhung Rinpoche and his uncle went to Dramagang (also spelled Grwa ma sgang) retreat and there met again Jamgyal Rinpoche. The latter chided Dezhung Rinpoche for “roaming around” so much from one place to another.²⁴⁷ At that time Jamgyal requested the reading-transmission for the collected works of the five Sakya founders (*Sa skya bka’ ’bum*) from Göncen Yarnay Khenpo Samten Lotrö (1868–1931).²⁴⁸ Dezhung Rinpoche begged to be allowed to receive the teachings, too. He was one of the youngest monks to request these teachings—most of the other lamas and monks were much older. At first Jamgyal Rinpoche discouraged him from coming, saying, “At your age, you could be doing better things with your time.” But when Jamgyal asked the venerable abbot’s permission, the latter was delighted to hear of Dezhung Rinpoche’s desire and agreed, saying, “This will benefit the tradition in the future.”²⁴⁹

At the time he received the reading-transmission, Dezhung Rinpoche sat at the front between two strict senior monks, one being his teacher Jamgyal Rinpoche, the main patron, and the other, evidently, his uncle Ngawang Nyima. Only monks were in attendance. At many text-transmission readings the students commonly passed the time by reciting their prayers, writing letters, or reading another book, but the master Samten Lotrö did not allow any of that. The disciples were forbidden even to cough. (“If you cough, you’ll interfere with the transmission,” said the master.) Samten Lotrö also treated the volumes he read with the greatest respect, carefully washing his hands with saffron-scented water and drying them with a clean cloth before touching the pages, and never licking his thumb before turning the pages as was the typical habit of many Tibetans.²⁵⁰ Later Dezhung Rinpoche said that because of the strict conduct of the others at this teaching, he had also concentrated hard and not let himself get distracted. Therefore he was sure he had received a good and complete text-transmission (*lung*).²⁵¹ In fact, since the master had recited the works so carefully and

distinctly, Rinpoche later said, “It almost counted as a practical instruction (*khrid*) instead of just a reading-transmission (*lung*).”²⁵²

At this time Khenpo Samten Lotrö also gave to Jamgyal Rinpoche the initiation into the thirteen-deity maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava in the Rwa tradition, together with the practical instructions (*Rwa khrid*) and the text-transmission



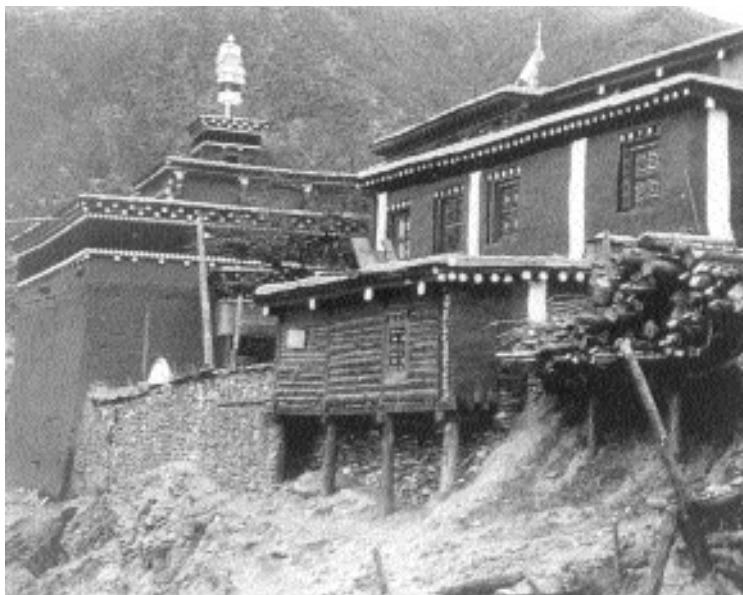
21. The young Dampa Rinpoche (left) with Khenpo Ngawang Samten Lotrö (right).

for the volume of Rwa-tradition teachings (*Rwa pod*) in both the Ngorpa and Tsharpa transmissions. Dezhung Rinpoche, too, received these instructions.²⁵³

Travel to the Wara Retreat and Monastery

After this Dezhung Rinpoche went on foot, carrying his provisions on his back and enduring much hardship, to the remote Wara meditation retreat (Wara or Ara ri khrod). In that place, on the far side of the Drichu, south-west of Derge, lived Hocho Lama Könchok Gyaltsen, formerly the chamberlain (*gsol dpon*) of the Ngor Pönlop Loter Wangpo (1847–1914). Dezhung Rinpoche had learned that the Hocho Lama possessed the lineage for the reading transmission for the nine volumes of writings by the great scholar from the Denma district of Kham, Shuchen Paṇḍita Tsultrim Rinchen

(1697–1769). This he requested and managed to receive from the Hocho Lama. He also received from him the text-transmission for the four-volume collected writings of Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo (1382–1456), the text-transmission for the collected writings of Dngul chu Gyalsay Thokmay Sangpo (1295–1369), the initiations and text-transmissions for the fifteenth-century



22. Wara monastery east of Derge.

adept Thangtong Gyalpo's *Gsang spyod mkha' 'gro snyan brgyud*, the *Sa ru pa* (?), and the initiations and text-transmissions for the Severance (*Gcod*) instructions in the Drung lugs tradition.²⁵⁴

During this time Dezhung Rinpoche also visited the nearby residence of the Wara Lama (or Ara Lama) Damchö Tenpa (died ca. 1945), a great yogi who had performed over one thousand two-day fasting retreats (*smyung gnas*).²⁵⁵ He was a disciple of Jamgyal Rinpoche, and like Hocho Lama, he had served as personal attendant to Loter Wangpo. At the death of Loter Wangpo, he was responsible for the erecting of one hundred stūpas in which his master's relics were enshrined (he built only one large stūpa himself, carrying the rocks and earth on his back, but he organized the building of the other stūpas by urging others, requesting sponsorships, and in other ways).²⁵⁶

Damchö Tenpa requested from Dezhung Rinpoche the reading-transmission (*lung*) for the collected works of the five Sakya founders. This he



23. Travelers in the Mekong River gorge, southern Kham, ca. 1910.

gave to him, as well as to many other yogis and practitioners, and it was the first time he himself gave this transmission. Altogether he stayed about four months at Wara monastery and retreat.²⁵⁷

Meanwhile Dezhung Rinpoche's mother had come on foot again to Derge to see him, but was disappointed and worried not to find him in Dzongsar. When she learned he was at Wara monastery, she sent one of her traveling companions, a monk from Tharlam, to fetch him, and he came back to see her. While she was waiting, she stayed with the Phu ma tshang family (patrons of Jamgyal Rinpoche), who kindly helped her.²⁵⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche and his mother then went together to Jamgyal's retreat of Gagu. No women were allowed to stay within the monastic

precincts there or in the main retreat house, so even though she was a close relative of Jamgyal Rinpoche, his mother had to camp for the night in a tent on a plain below the temple. She was afraid to sleep alone outside, so Dezhung Rinpoche kept her company. At sunrise they went up to meet Jamgyal Rinpoche in person.²⁵⁹

Sometime during this period (in Dezhung Rinpoche's twenty-third year, 1928?), Jamgyal foresaw an obstacle for Dezhung Rinpoche and advised him to do a Vajrapāṇi ('Byung po 'dul byed) retreat.²⁶⁰ Altogether Dezhung Rinpoche studied under Lama Jamgyal for two years during the period 1925–1930.

During this time (in early 1928), Dezhung Rinpoche stayed again for a while with Lama Jamgyal at Gagu.²⁶¹ Lama Jamgyal advised him to go to the Dzongsar seminary, where Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö would be giving the teachings of the *Collection of Sādhana*s compilation of initiations and sādhana's. Every five years, with the "graduation" of each seminary class, Khyentse gave major teachings, so this was an excellent chance to receive them. (Jamgyal himself was invited the following year to Dzongsar to serve as the next seminary master.) Dezhung Rinpoche received the teachings from Dzongsar Khyentse, together with Dzi dga' Kongtrül, Shechen Önrül, Dzokchen 'Brug sprul (d. ca. 1960), Kathok Rmang gsar, and Trulku Kunzang (b. 1909, the rebirth of Minyak Kunzang Sönam).

Travel to Horkhok and Lithang Dezhung

IN THE EARLY SPRING OF 1928, at the conclusion of the teachings from Dzongsar Khyentse, Dezhung Rinpoche made plans to rejoin Khunu Lama and continue his grammatical studies. But while still in Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche received a letter from Dezhung Chöphel, informing him that Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche was about to give a very extensive presentation of the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* and that both Dezhung Anjam and Dezhung Chöphel thought he should be present for it.²⁶² A few months before, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche had gone to the Horkhok region of Kham east of Derge and visited a number of monasteries there. Now he was about to give the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings at Nyarak monastery in Horkhok.²⁶³

Dezhung Rinpoche was unsure what to do, so he asked a monk Rdo rje (later known as Po lo Khenpo, but then just an ordinary monk) to perform a prognostication (*pra phab*). The signs were positive that he should receive the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions.²⁶⁴ Thereupon he and three other monks from Tharlam who had been studying at the Dzongsar seminary—Yeshe Nyima and two with the same name, Ngawang Rinchen—decided to go by foot to Horkhok and request these teachings.²⁶⁵

Upon leaving Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche offered his mule (together with an image of Amitāyus) to Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, so he and the three even poorer monks had to walk the whole way. Much snow had fallen in the mountains. They had to cross many ridges and passes through deep snow and high winds. Dezhung Rinpoche became snow-blind, and his face developed sores from the fierce blasts of wind.

Five days later the small group straggled into Nyarak in bad condition. Dezhung Rinpoche went as soon as possible to meet Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, who seemed not to recognize him at first and was surprised to see him.

The first thing Gatön asked about was his studies: “Did you get the Candrapa grammatical instruction?” he asked.

“No, sir.”

“Did you study metrics?”

“No, sir.” (By bad luck these were the two main traditions he had not yet studied.) Dezhung Rinpoche then told him about the many religious and other instructions he had received.

Even then, Gatön was not pleased. In particular, he was disappointed about what Jamgyal had been teaching—the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, mind training, and so on. Gatön said, “If you are going to study ordinary Mahāyāna



24. Nomad monk visiting the tent of his parents in southern Kham, ca. 1910. (The monk is Shelton's assistant, the Jö lama.)

subjects, you should study the great basic texts (*gzhung chen po*), not just minor instructions!” Most of all, he encouraged him to keep on studying Sanskrit.²⁶⁶ “Oh, what a waste those two years were!” Gatön exclaimed. (Jamgyal Rinpoche for his part had discouraged Dezhung Rinpoche from studying Sanskrit, saying, “All the texts have been translated into Tibetan; there is no reason anymore to study Sanskrit.”)

Ngawang Lekpa then questioned all four of the newly arrived Tharlam students, putting questions to them on different topics. The three other students found it difficult to answer well, while Dezhung Rinpoche was

able to give somewhat satisfactory answers. However poorly the other monks answered, Lekpa Rinpoche seemed not to mind, while no matter how well Dezhung Rinpoche answered, it did not seem to help. Lekpa Rinpoche continued to show his displeasure, even commenting on the shabby condition of Dezhung Rinpoche's robes.²⁶⁷

"There is no immediate need for you to receive the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings now," Gatön finally said. "You should be studying other things. Later on I'll give a very extensive presentation of those instructions for you at Tharlam; for the present, it would be better for you to go on with your Sanskrit grammatical studies."²⁶⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche decided he should not displease his master further by trying to receive the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions, and resigned himself to returning at once to Derge district to continue his studies. But before he departed, Dezhung Rinpoche went to see Anjam Trulku to say goodbye, and the latter told him, "No, you should stay and receive the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions." He also saw Umdzay Trashi from Ra'ok (the chant-leader from Tharlam monastery and a distant relative on his father's side, then serving as an attendant of Gatön), who told him, "This is too far to come and immediately go back. Stay awhile! I'll speak with the master." Then, through the intercession of others, Dezhung Rinpoche received Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche's forgiveness, and in the end he was able to remain and receive the full *Path with Its Fruit* teachings.²⁶⁹

On the twenty-first day of the first lunar month of the earth-dragon year (ca. March 12, 1928), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche began teaching the profound *Path with Its Fruit* precepts at the great monastery of Nyarak Rdo rje gdan.²⁷⁰ This monastery in Horkhok district stood in a precarious location several hundred feet up a steep hill, beneath a high mountain. From there one had a spectacular view of the villages and temples in the valley below, through which since ancient times tea-bearing yak-caravans had passed on their way from Dartsedo to Lhasa.

Gatön's disciples at Nyarak included many important lamas from Horkhok and Dezhung, as well as a few monks from Tharlam. The assistant teacher giving the text-transmissions and explanations of the visualizations was Dezhung Chöphel.²⁷¹ Dezhung Rinpoche and his fellow student-monks from Tharlam monastery were poor and shabbily dressed. Then one well-off monk whom Dezhung Rinpoche knew from previous meetings, Nyarak Kun dga' chos 'phel, gave Dezhung Rinpoche a good set of robes.²⁷² Later Dezhung Rinpoche received some offerings from Dezhung monastery, and

from that time onward he was no longer so poor.²⁷³ Also during the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings, many generous offerings were made to the whole assembly by the Nyarak Labrang, the Nyarak monastery administration, and various patrons.

During this time, Dezhung Rinpoche gave at Nyarak monastery the reading-transmission (*lung*) for the collected works of the five Sakya founders to Nyarak Trulku and many monks from Minyak. This was the second time he gave this transmission.

The First Journey to Dezhung

After completing the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions, Gatön was invited to Dezhung. Gatön's disciple Dezhung Anjam Trulku insisted strongly to Dezhung Rinpoche that he also visit Dezhung. Lekpa Rinpoche was not very pleased, but in the end he gave his permission.²⁷⁴ Thus, in the summer of 1928, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, Trulku Anjam, and Dezhung Rinpoche traveled together through southern Horkhok and Tsa zla Lung pa to north-west Lithang district and to the monastery Dezhung Grwa tshang Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling.²⁷⁵ For Dezhung Rinpoche, aged twenty-two, this was his first visit to Dezhung, the home of his previous rebirth, Dezhung Lungrik Nyima (ca. 1840s–1898). From Nyarak monastery the monk Brag g.yab Blo gros (not the famous Dzongsar seminary master) came as Dezhung Rinpoche's attendant. Also with the party came the second Dzongsar Khamche Khenpo, Khyenrab Chökyi Öser.

Dezhung was a high, cold, treeless nomadic area, being one of three adjoining 'Brog pa *stong-sde* districts in northern Lithang, the other two being Yönrü and Othok.²⁷⁶ The inhabitants of these regions were ethnically distinct from the surrounding settled areas of Lithang, having fled from Golok hundreds of years before and still speaking Golok nomad dialects.²⁷⁷ According to oral traditions still current in these districts, the Dezhungma were one of three nomadic groups to settle in Lithang at this time. The other two were Yönrü and G.yas ru, though the latter two combined after a certain point following the conquest of G.yas ru by Yönrü.²⁷⁸

The district of Dezhung thus fell within the greater dominion of Lithang in "Lower Kham" (*mdo kham*s *smad*).²⁷⁹ Traditionally this part of Kham was classified within the "highland of Spo 'bur" (*spo 'bur sgang*), one of the six uplands of Mdo kham.²⁸⁰ The Dezhung territories lay in an upper valley of the Tsingkhü River, in "Tsingkhü khog." Its monastery stood about one

day's journey (by fast horse) or two or three days' journey (driving mules) northwest of Lithang on the main route traveled by mule caravans heading for Lhasa by way of Tromthar and the main route through Trehor.²⁸¹ Dezhung lay at a place called Nags sgar steng in the upper Lichu watershed beyond Lithang 'Bum nag thang where the Wa shul Yönrü nomads were settled.²⁸² Travelers from Lithang commonly called the monastery not "Dezhung" but rather "Nags sgar monastery," that is, "Monastery of the Forest Encampment." Sometimes the men driving the mule caravans to and from Lhasa would stop there for the night. After leaving their mules to pasture on higher ground, they went to pay their respects to the lamas at the monastery.²⁸³

Even before their arrival at the Dezhung encampment, Gatön, Dezhung Rinpoche, and party were received with great honor by the Dezhung noble family (*dpon tshang*) and monks, who came out in advance to meet the great master Gatön and their new trulku. They were conducted to the felt-tent monastery of Dezhung, which had been founded in this treeless district of high nomadic grazing lands in the second half of the 1600s by Lce btsun Mkhyen brtse rab brtan.²⁸⁴

The chieftains of the Dezhung nomads were traditionally said to descend from Gel pa kha sho, a son of the legendary Gling rje Ge sar. The family descended from the Ldong tribe, one of the six ancient great tribes (*rus chen*) of Tibet.²⁸⁵ Their clan was Wa shul (or Dbā' shul), the same clan as the Wa shul A 'bum tshang, a powerful family of Amdo also said to be identical with the Gser tha clan among the Golok. The Dezhung chieftain family held the Chinese rank of *tha ji*, and according to the biography of Anjam Rinpoche, it was descended from one of thirteen lords who had this position during the Mongol Bstan 'dzin chos rgyal's rule of Tibet (from 1642 to 1654).²⁸⁶ At other times the head of the family had been honored with many other ranks and insignia.²⁸⁷

In the early eighteenth century, the Dezhung nobles had received special recognition from the Central Tibetan government (Sde pa gzhung) for helping protect the young Seventh Dalai Lama, Kalzang Gyatso (1708–1757). That Dalai Lama had been born in Lithang, and when he was still an infant, his parents heard that the envoys of the Dzungar Mongol chief Lha bzang Khan, then ensconced as ruler of Tibet (and supporting his own pretender–Dalai Lama in Lhasa), were searching for him. His parents fled with him first to Derge territory and then to Wa shur, before being invited by the Dezhung chieftain Mkha' 'gro and by Mkha' 'gro of Tromthar to their

lands, where he could remain in hiding, safe from robbers and brigands—and, of course, safe from the Mongol search parties.²⁸⁸ For generations, the chieftain family had been rich and powerful. It was said that another chieftain of Dezhung, Be skor Thub pa bkra shis, had met the treasure-revealer (*gter ston*) Klong gsal snying po (1625–1692), who had predicted that this family would not be poor for seven generations.²⁸⁹

Since their monastery was a branch of the Central Tibetan Sakyapa monastery of Nalendra, the Dezhung chieftain's family were devoted patrons of that monastery. As was usual in many nomadic areas, the main hall of the monastery was a great tent. Its walls were of thick felt, not adobe. It had two main sections: (1) the Kye rdor Grwa tshang, in which the monks performed the ritual practices of Hevajra and Mahākāla Mgon po gur, and (2) the Tshogs chen, the “great assembly” in which the main ritual cycle practiced by the monks was Kun rig (Sarvavid-Vairocana).²⁹⁰

In the mid-1800s, one of the Dezhung chieftains, Dezhung Pön Tshang Orgyen Kyap,²⁹¹ was particularly devoted to the Zimwok Rinpoche Champa Ngawang Tendzin Nyendrak (d. 1884) of Nalendra monastery. The chieftain's consort had until then been barren. But that lama, called Tendzin Nyendrak for short, during his first visit to Kham and Dezhung gave her a blessing-talisman to wear so that she could conceive, and also gave a name to her first child while it was still in her womb. The next chieftain, Rabten Wangyal, was one of the five boys born to that pair.²⁹²

This nobleman accordingly made a great prayer that Tendzin Nyendrak would be born in his own family. His hopes were realized.²⁹³ The autobiography of Tendzin Nyendrak's chief disciple, the Chobgye Tripa Champa Rinchen Khyentse Wangpo (1869–1927), states that on the day of Tendzin Nyendrak's cremation, the Chobgye Tripa had a vision of Tendzin Nyendrak sitting in the flames giving him a five-colored scarf, which was interpreted to mean that he would have five emanations. The next Zimwok Trulku at Nalendra, Kunga Tendzin, who was born one month and three days before Tendzin Nyendrak's death, was held to be the bodily (*sku*) emanation. The Dezhung nobleman's son, Dezhung Anjam, was the speech (*gsung*) emanation.²⁹⁴ The mind (*thugs*) emanation was said to have been the Sakya Khön monk 'Jam dbyangs thub bstan bzang po (1885–1928)—the younger brother of Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen—who received the *Path with Its Fruit* from the Chobgye Tripa at Nalendra in 1912.

When Anjam was still a child, some travelers from Central Tibet reached Dezhung and reported to Dezhung Lungrik Nyima that another candidate

had been enthroned at Nalendra as the Zimwok Trulku. Lungrik Nyima replied, “Even though we had said the trulku was this child of our own chieftain family, such a thing has happened. Well, anyway, it doesn’t matter. He *is* this trulku of ours.”²⁹⁵ Later when the Zimwok Trulku came to Dezhung, Anjam left retreat to meet him and was given a rosary of the previous Zimwok incarnation.²⁹⁶

The nomadic district of Dezhung was famed because although it was a remote and sparsely inhabited and its monastery not large, it had been regularly graced by saints and scholars of great stature. Several highly accomplished Buddhist masters had been born into the Dezhung chieftain family itself. In the mid- or late 1600s, the noble-monk Kun dga’ rab rgyas of the Dezhung Pön Tshang (chieftain family) was a disciple of the Nalendra master Mkhjen rab byams pa ngag dbang lhun grub (1633–1703), a main transmitter of the esoteric transmission of the *Path with its Fruit* (*Lam ’bras slob bshad*).²⁹⁷ In addition to the more recent Anjam Rinpoche (1885–1952),²⁹⁸ other noted monks in this chieftain family included Anjam’s paternal uncle, Dezhung Trulku Lungrik Nyima (Dezhung Rinpoche’s previous embodiment; ca. 1840s–1898); Lungrik Nyima’s uncle Pönpo Lama Lotrö Wangchuk (fl. mid-1800s)²⁹⁹; and the latter’s uncle, Dpon bla Phrin las rab rgyas (fl. early 1800s).³⁰⁰ Another scholar of note from Dezhung monastery (though not of the chieftain family) was Dezhung A ’dzi Rnam dga’ (fl. mid-nineteenth century), author of the polemical work *Brgal lan rdo rje me char*, which replied critically to a work written in 1848 by Dzokchen Khenpo Padma rdo rje.³⁰¹

Dezhung Trulku Anjam (1885–1952) was thus born to the Dezhung chieftain Rabten Wangyal³⁰² and his wife Nor bu sgron ma (d. 1887), a lady of the Othok chieftain family.³⁰³ Once, when Anjam Rinpoche was still quite young, the Ngor Phende abbot Palden Lotrö Gyaltsen (1840–1900) identified him as being the rebirth of the fifty-third Ngor abbot, Phende Kunga Tenpay Lotrö (1822–1884), and said he should be given to the Phende lama palace to become a candidate to the abbacy (*zhabs drung*). Anjam’s father, being bound to this venerable abbot by the ties of tantric vows, had to assent, and for awhile the young Anjam was even called by the title “Phende Shabdrung.” But then the monks of Dezhung monastery (*grwa tshang*) objected vociferously to this plan, asserting their prior claims upon him as their own lama, and the whole idea had to be given up.

Later he was given into the keeping of Ngor Pönlop Loter Wangpo (1847–1914) in Derge, a chief disciple of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, in

whom Anjam's paternal uncle A lhun had special faith. Under Loter Wangpo, Anjam received between 1895 and 1898 the *Path with Its Fruit* and the great tantric compilations *Sgrub thabs kun btus* and *Rgyud sde kun btus*.³⁰⁴ He also received various Kadam mind-training (*blo sbyong*) instructions, which he later practiced intensively and propagated widely.³⁰⁵ But in 1898, when he was thirteen and his uncle Lungrik Nyima passed away, he had to return to Dezhung to serve as the lama of his home monastery.³⁰⁶

Anjam's subsequent teachers included some of the greatest Sakya and Nyingma masters in Kham in those days: Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Khenchen Shenga,³⁰⁷ Dge bshes Bstan 'dzin dbang grub,³⁰⁸ 'Jam dbyangs snyan grags, Nub Lama Jamyang Khyenrab,³⁰⁹ Ngawang Samten Lotrö,³¹⁰ A 'dzom Drukpa (1842–1924), the Ngor Phende abbot Palden Lotrö Gyaltzen, and Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö.³¹¹

When Anjam was about eighteen (i.e., ca. 1903), he ran away from Dezhung monastery and district, and with three other monks secretly came to the Ru dam Shri seng seminary at Dzokchen, where he met and began studies under the great seminary master Shenphen Chökyi Nangwa (Khenchen Shenga).³¹² For the next six years or more, except for a few brief journeys up and down (to Dezhung), Anjam hardly left Shenga's presence. Later too, Anjam continued for a long time to visit and receive teachings from Shenga, even visiting him several times after that master had retreated to the solitude of the Rgya phu hermitage.³¹³

At first, when Anjam began studying the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* under Shenga, about one foot of snow fell at the start of the morning teaching session, but by the time the class was let out the snow had melted without a trace. For such long sessions the master taught, expounding, at great length and in minute detail, each time two pages of his annotation-commentary—applying in a wonderful way to every word teachings equally on the two truths and bodhicitta—following the oral tradition of Paltrül, with supplementary discussions. When Anjam witnessed this, he had deep faith both in the teaching and the teacher, thinking, “Certainly this is what is called a bodhi-sattva teacher and the doctrine such a teacher practices!”

Anjam later reported that his mind became helplessly entranced at that time by both the teachings and the lama, and that a day of instruction hardly passed without him shedding tears. Later he made this excellent text one of his main practices.

When Anjam first came to Dzokchen, he had little food, and what he had was not of the best quality. Some time later, after his father the noble

chieftain came with supplies, his circumstances became better. Shenga remarked at the time, “My goodness, you certainly are what is referred to by the phrase, ‘born as the son of religious parents.’ Such generous help!”

Anjam later stated, “Most of Lama Shenga Rinpoche’s students considered him to be learned, but not accomplished in practice. But from the very beginning I felt the deep conviction that he was an unimaginably great scholar and adept—a great being who had appeared in this life according to his prior wishes. Not only that, but also as a human being he possessed all the qualities of a noble-minded, broad-minded man, such as wide knowledge, not being moved by trifles, mental depth, and speech that was profound and kept secrets. Whatever ups and downs I went through I would report at once to that lama, who from his side favored me with nothing but highly helpful and to-the-point instructions, like a father advising his son, even about my everyday behavior, and in that way we became as in the simile ‘like two minds blended into one.’”³¹⁴

The young Anjam also gained a reputation as one of the very best students of Shenga for retentiveness and critical discernment.³¹⁵ Anjam Rinpoche studied under Shenga at Dzokchen in the same group as Jamgyal and Dampa Rinpoche. At first Dezhung Dawö acted as assistant teacher (*skyor dpon*). But when the master began to expound the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*, Dezhung Anjam took over as assistant because he knew the doctrinal contents better.³¹⁶

Anjam Rinpoche received from Shenga complete explanatory instructions on all the basic Indian Buddhist texts for which there existed unbroken expository lineages—the so-called thirteen great texts—together with their ancillary works, using as textbooks the gloss-commentaries that the great seminary master himself had composed. Some works he studied not just once, but twice or even thrice. He also learned from him numerous greater or smaller Sakyapa works such as the *General System of the Tantras* (*Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam gzhag*) by Sönam Tsemo, the *Tree of Realization* (*Mngon rtogs ljon shing*) by Drakpa Gyaltsen, the *Hevajra Basic Tantra* (*Kyordor brtag pa gnyis pa*), and the *Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*) by Sakya Paṇḍita. The Nyingma teachings Anjam received included several initiations such as the *Rig pa rtсал dbang* and instructions such as the *Ye shes bla ma*.³¹⁷

Shenga urged Anjam to practice Nyingma teachings thoroughly, telling him, “You certainly have a strong karmic connection with these teachings. In your previous incarnation as the Zimwok Trulku you took great trouble

to receive the Nyingma Bka' ma texts at Dzokchen under the very old lama Mi 'gyur nam mkha'i rdo rje, going so far as to appoint someone to read the texts in the place of the old master (whose eyesight had failed)."

Anjam Rinpoche did have genuine faith in those teachings, and that was before he had a full appreciation of the excellences of the Sakyapa instructions. But he believed that since his monastery was a Sakyapa establishment, it would not be good either religiously or on a worldly level to go over to the Nyingma teachings completely. He was the leader of the monastery, and "where the head leads, the body will follow." Exercising skill in means, he managed to extract himself from those masters' original command.³¹⁸

Among all his gurus, Anjam Rinpoche counted himself most deeply indebted to Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. His studies under Ngawang Lekpa spanned many years and included instructions he received during Gatön's visits to Derge, Trehor, and Minyak, on his four trips to Dezhung, and on numerous occasions when Gatön was in residence at Tharlam monastery or the nearby Dzinda retreat. Gatön later stated that because of Anjam's great devotion—viewing the teacher as the Buddha himself—he had perfectly received the transmission of Gatön's own realizations of the *Path with Its Fruit* practices.

As a monk, Anjam Rinpoche followed the discipline of conduct prescribed by such texts as the *Vinaya* and *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, walking with eyes downcast and not looking about heedlessly. He was a renunciate and bodhisattva. Though the son of a chieftain, he was modest and self-effacing. A nomad, he ate meat twice a day. Later in life he did not spend much time at the Dezhung monastery itself, for he never desired the position of a high lama. Instead, he devoted his life to studying at the feet of great teachers and meditating in remote places accompanied by a single companion. During the last decade or two of his life, he lived in a hut in the woods of Rdo 'dzoms, in the place called Rong khog Bzhag pa.³¹⁹ This retreat hut was a few miles from the main Dezhung monastery; a number of felt tents, the dwellings of his students, were pitched nearby.³²⁰

Although Trulku Anjam never wanted to occupy the throne of a high lama, later in his life he did teach quite a few disciples. In particular, he taught his retreat-attendant in later years, the Jyekundo Khenpo Trinlay Chöphel, twenty-eight basic treatises he had learned under Khenchen Shenga.³²¹ He was also particularly close to Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. His younger students included Khenpo Kuse Appéy Yönten Zangpo (b. 1927) and Dhongthog Trulku Tenpay Gyaltzen (b. 1934).³²²

After the arrival of the Tharlam party at the monastery of Dezhung—with its temple in a large felt tent—Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche granted the young Dezhung Rinpoche full monastic ordination. Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (whose full ordination name was Ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas ye shes dpal bzang po) acted as “presiding abbot” (*mkhan po*), and Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltzen acted as “ceremony-master” (*las kyi slob dpon*).³²³ Dezhung Rinpoche, then in his twenty-third year (summer/fall 1928), received his full ordination name, Champa Kunga Tenpay Nyima. Since Dezhung Rinpoche was a monk of Tharlam (a Ngor affiliate), theoretically he should have gone to Ngor for ordination. And since he had been recognized as a trulku of Dezhung (a Nalendra affiliate), he could have gone to Phenpo Nalendra for ordination. But because Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche was held to be the Buddha Vajradhara incarnate, it was decided that Dezhung Rinpoche could simply take ordination from him. In this period many other novice and full monks were ordained in Dezhung by Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche.

At this time Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche also gave the forty-five great initiations of the *Vajrāvalī* (*Rdo rje phreng ba*) collection—the only time that he gave these. The *Vajrāvalī* initiations took place at noon. During this same period Gatön instructed Dezhung Rinpoche to study two different scholastic treatises under two masters: in the morning the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* (*Mngon rtogs rgyan*) with Khenpo Khyenrab and in the afternoon Sapaṅ's *Tshad ma rigs gter* under Trulku Anjam Rinpoche. This was a sort of punishment for the time Dezhung Rinpoche had spent on other things at Derge. Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche tested him daily on his knowledge, and this was a busy and difficult time for Dezhung Rinpoche because many patrons from Dezhung also came to meet him. Studying the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* with him under Khenpo Khyenrab at this time were (Lithang Kyashül) Trulku Kunzang Chökyi Nyima and three others, making five students in all.³²⁴

That winter (1928/29), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche left Dezhung Rinpoche in Dezhung and departed for Minyak.³²⁵ Anjam Rinpoche then told Dezhung Rinpoche, “It is like you are being squeezed between two rocks. It would be better if you first learned Abhidharma, and then Pramāṇa.”³²⁶ Accordingly, Dezhung Rinpoche concentrated first on Abhidharma, learning the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu under Dezhung Khenpo Tendzin Dawö in Dezhung, thus receiving the Abhidharma lineage of the earlier Dezhung Trulku Lungrik Nyima.³²⁷ This Lama Dawö was highly learned and had years before served as an assistant teacher (*skyor dpon*) under Khenchen

Shenga at Dzokchen.³²⁸ Later Dezhung Rinpoche himself often stressed the importance of Abhidharma studies to his students, saying they gave one an essential conceptual basis for understanding other doctrinal systems, especially tantra.

While at Dezhung, a formal enthronement took place, during which Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche presented him with the ornate official robes of the previous Dezhung Trulku, Lungrik Nyima, and also gave him some of his own monastic robes. As a “body support” (*sku rten*) offering, he was given a gilded image of Yamāntaka, which had been the sacred object of the previous Dezhung Rinpoche. Other formal maṇḍala offerings were made, with prayers for his long life. As an auspicious portent, Dezhung Rinpoche himself gave the reading-transmission for a sūtra.³²⁹ With this, the Dezhung people recognized him as the rebirth of their previous lama, Dezhung Nyendrak Lungrik Nyima (1840s–1898).

The Two Previous Dezhung Trulku Incarnations

Lungrik Nyima, the Second Incarnation

THE PREVIOUS DEZHUNG RINPOCHE, Lungrik Nyima (actually the second in the line of rebirths), had been born as the first of the five sons of the Dezhung noble and old chieftain Pöngen Orgyen Kyap.³³⁰ Because he was born at sunrise and his birth brought such great joy to his father and to the whole Dezhung noble family, they named him *Nyi gsar dga' ba*, “Happiness of the New Day.”³³¹ His family did not immediately devote him to the monkhood as a boy because they wanted him to succeed his father as chieftain. But even when very young he was by nature compassionate and sensitive to the sufferings of animals. As a small child he would not allow others to beat dogs or to whip horses or other domestic animals. In particular, if he saw a sheep or other animal being butchered, he would be overcome with pity and would do anything within his power to save the animal’s life. Thus when the nomads had to butcher animals, they would either do it where he could not see it or they would first take him into the felt tent to keep him from knowing about it.

When he was still a boy, his father Pöngen Orgyen Kyap³³² gave Lungrik Nyima and his brother Rabten Wangyal bows and arrows and sent them out onto a high rolling plain of nomadic grazing country, telling them, “Whichever of you two boys can kill more zizels (earless marmots) and other animals, I will make the next chieftain!” Instead of hunting, Lungrik Nyima simply sat there as if meditating, or found other ways to pass the time, but did not kill any animals. His younger brother hunted down quite a few little animals with his bow and arrows and later divided their corpses with his older brother, keeping about twice as many for himself. When the two boys showed the dead animals to their father, the latter said, “My son Rabten Wangyal is the more active and wilder (*rgod che*) of the two and is more

suitable to become chieftain.” He then sent Rabten Wangyal to the (secular) school in Lithang, where he learned Tibetan and some Chinese, in accord with the custom in those days.

The chieftain decided it would be best to make his oldest son a monk of their local monastery, Dezhung Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling. He came to this decision based in part on his son’s innate meritorious inclinations, but also in part on the fact that the yogi Changchup Nyima (fl. early to mid-1800s), who had died the year before Nyi gsar dga’ ba’s birth, had before his death entrusted his personal hat, bowl, and sitting mat to Orgyen Kyap, saying, “I’ll come back for these soon.” Orgyen Kyap began to take these signs seriously and came to believe that this had been an omen that his son would be born as the rebirth of the yogi Changchup Nyima.



25. Nomadic camp in Amdo.

At his initial monastic ordination, the young Nyi gsar dga’ ba was given the name Lungrik Nyima at Dezhung monastery by his paternal uncle, Pönpo Lama Lotrö Wangchuk. As a young boy he was tutored by the best local teachers in reading, writing, and the performance of the basic rituals. He went on to study logic-epistemology and other basic subjects at the home monastery, and received novice ordination from the Fourth Zimwok Trulku, Champa Ngawang Tendzin Nyendrak (d. 1884), who named him Nyendrak Lungrik Nyima. Later he received many important teachings,

including the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions and the *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) (and full monastic ordination?) from the Ngor Phende abbot Palden Lotrö Gyaltzen (1840–1900) when the latter was visiting Khrom rdo khog and Lithang districts (in the mid- or late 1870s?).³³³ He also became the disciple of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892), Kongtrül Lotrö Thaye (1813–1899),³³⁴ and Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyal (1846–1912).

When still a young man he went to Lhasa to perform prostrations and make offerings before the two holy images of the Jowo Śākyamuni and at the three great monasteries of Sera, Drepung, and Ganden.³³⁵ In particular he visited the great monastery of Drepung and took up residence there, studying the main doctrinal treatises as well as the other fields of knowledge.³³⁶ He performed the required offerings to the colleges and great assembly of Drepung and received such scholastic and monastic titles as *chos mdzad*,³³⁷ *bka' bcu pa* (“scholar proficient in ten basic texts”), and *dge bshes* (“fully qualified scholar”), all the way up to *tshogs chen sprul sku* (“trulku of the great assembly”). After achieving all those, he still wanted to attain the coveted title of *ho thog thu* (“trulku with imperial recognition”).³³⁸ To do that one needed to make still greater offerings, which even the rich and powerful Dezhung noble family could not then afford. However, at that time (the late 1860s), Lungrik Nyima found a powerful and politically skillful friend at Ganden who had links with Lithang district: the monk-official known in Kham as Ganden Nari Khenchung.³³⁹ This friend, who was more commonly known in Central Tibet as the Spyi khyab Khenpo Dpal ldan don grub, told him insistently, “Whatever help you need, I will give. You have the learned qualities that will enable you to go as far as the Ganden throne, so I am ready to offer any service or make any necessary offerings or donations that will be conducive to that!” He also offered him an extremely fine-quality yellow ceremonial vest (*stod 'phog*) made of many little animal skins. But when Lungrik Nyima put that garment on, he became polluted by contact with it and as a consequence his previously strong ambition lost much of its force.³⁴⁰

According to a later oral tradition, within a short while (in 1871) his sponsor the Ganden Nari Khenchung was involved in an attempted coup against the central Tibetan government; after it failed, he lost his powerful position and came to a violent end.³⁴¹ He is said to have taken refuge at Ganden monastery. There the monks prepared for battle, storing up many stones and wooden beams to hurl down on their enemy. One night the central

Tibetan government troops used the stratagem of driving toward the monastery sheep and goats to which had been attached glowing embers (punks used to fire muskets). Mistaking these for the opposing troops, the monks hurled down their stones prematurely. The *mkhan chung* then fled with his nephew, and when cornered, he ordered the latter to kill him. The nephew lost his nerve and could not carry through the command, so the *mkhan chung* was obliged to commit suicide to avoid torture.³⁴² Finally his body was brought back to Lhasa, his head was ritually buried in a pit, and exorcisms were performed by the Sakya Tripa Ngawang Kunga Sönam (1842–1882) to suppress his spirit.³⁴³

Lungrik Nyima afterwards went to Nalendra in the Phenpo valley north of Lhasa, where he joined the monastic school. He engaged in many activities there, including making offerings and fixed donations for the attainment of certain high monastic positions. Though he was requested to occupy the throne of head teacher of the monastery (*chos sde'i bzhuḡs khri*), he did not remain for longer than a few months. Two unavoidable factors worked against him from the start: first, he was from Kham, and second, he was a nomad. The lamas and trulkus of the monastery's colleges and two lama estates (*bla brang*) who were studying under him were mostly high-born sons from upper- and middle-level Central Tibetan noble families. He, by contrast, had been born and raised among the nomads, so his behavior and speech habits were very different—not only did he speak a strong nomad dialect but also his use (or non-use!) of honorific speech clashed with normal Central Tibetan usage. Thus their personalities did not accord. Eventually he headed back to his home district in Kham.³⁴⁴

During the early or mid-1890s, long after Lungrik Nyima had returned to Kham, a serious territorial dispute broke out in Lithang district between the Dezhung nomads and those of the adjoining tribe to the southeast, Yönrü. In the initial fighting the Dezhung men killed many leading men of Yönrü, including the chieftain. Since they knew they would be overwhelmed by the numerically superior forces of Yönrü if the latter regrouped and counter attacked, the people of Dezhung fled to an empty, desolate place called Ma mo A dos, in the Kham upland of Rma Rdza Zal mo sgang. At this time, the Lama Lungrik Nyima also left Dezhung, and after traveling through many districts of Kham, he eventually came to Gakhok with several monks for the sake of collecting offerings. At Jyekundo Döndrup Ling he gave the initiation for the Red Yamāri, stressing that he had received this teaching from Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and that his own spiritual

link with the master was intact.³⁴⁵ Gatön Ngawang Lekpa received these teachings, as well as several other initiations, including those for Sarvavid-Vairocana, Akṣobhya, the Cause and Path Consecrations for Hevajra, and the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga. Gatön's dream before the Red Yamāri initiation was particularly auspicious.³⁴⁶

Later, Gatön and Jamgyal invited Lungrik Nyima to their retreat at Dzinda Naysep. They doubted whether they should leave retreat or even whether, as poor recluses, they would be able to serve properly the traveling high lama with his attendants, horses, and mules. When they asked Lungrik Nyima, however, he said it would be fine for them to leave retreat to receive initiations from him. He agreed to come to Dzinda, stayed in Gatön's residence, and all the meditators served him and received teachings, including the exposition of the Hevajra Mūla-Tantra according to the Rngog tradition.³⁴⁷ It may have been at this time that he also visited the residence of the meditator Ngawang Nyima at Tharlam monastery.³⁴⁸

Lungrik Nyima possessed great learning, self-discipline, and kindness. He gained control of his dreams and possessed great wisdom. His writings included works on correct orthography, a commentary on Sapaṇ's classic on Buddhist logic and epistemology, the *Tshad ma rigs gter*, songs of realization, and personal instructions.³⁴⁹ He stayed a long time in Horkhok at Dhongthog monastery and composed several of the ritual texts still recited by the monks there to propitiate protective deities.³⁵⁰ He also wrote the biographies of the first three Dhongthog Trulkus, these works forming one large volume.³⁵¹

The sole work of Lungrik Nyima now accessible is a brief poem of realization that brilliantly condenses the main points of Buddhist theory and practice, concentrating on the definitive truth. Entitled *Nges don snying po'i gtam*, it has been published with a collection of pithy religious instructions by his nephew Trulku Anjam and other Sakya lamas (including Red mda' ba and Tshar chen).³⁵² In conclusion he stresses the need for observing strict silence in practice, for ending all connections with ongoing projects, and for avoiding sectarianism. The blessings of the guru may be decisive for quickly reaching realization if one has honestly chosen one's guru not out of sectarian partiality but due to having perceived his inner qualities, he wrote.

Since he spent his whole life in learning and teaching, Lungrik Nyima had hundreds of disciples. These included the Ngor Phende abbot Ngawang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen (1863–1899, sixty-first abbot of Ngor),³⁵³ the Sakya Khön nun Jetsunma Pema Trinlay (b. 1871/72), his own nephew Trulku Anjam, the Hor Nyarak Trulku,³⁵⁴ the Dhongthog Trulku,³⁵⁵ Dezhung

Khenpo Tendzin Dawö, Sakya Pönlop Mönlam (d. 1948), Druptop Sangyay Rabten from Trindu Dgon gsar monastery, the Ga lamas Nyiga Dorjechang Kunga Nyima (1846–1925), Gatön Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche (1864–1941), and Jamyang Gyaltsen (1870–1940), and Ra'ok Jokhor Ngawang Nyima. Yet no biography of him is known.

Lungrik Nyima was relatively short-lived, dying while still in his fifties.³⁵⁶ While healthy and in his prime, he had had a vision of the divine realm Tuṣita and had foretold that he would go there after his death. But on his deathbed in 1898, he had a dream in which he had ascended almost to the divine realm of Tuṣita when his special protector, Mgon po Shalshipa, appeared in the form of a bearded Brahmin and bade him return to the world.³⁵⁷ In his final testament, Lungrik Nyima instructed his nephew Anjam Rinpoche, then just fourteen, to request the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions later from Ga Lama Ngawang Lekpa.

Changchup Nyima, the First Lama in the Trulku Lineage

In his previous life, Dezhung Lungrik Nyima is said to have been a great meditation adept named Changchup Nyima, who had been originally a disciple of the Nyingma Kathok tradition.³⁵⁸ Later in life this master was graced by the goddess Tārā, and he reached high realization after cultivating bodhicitta for eighteen years at Mtsho nag Gangs rwa, near Kam po Gangs rwa in Mdo smad (Amdo).³⁵⁹ Changchup Nyima composed some six volumes of writings, including an autobiography, the manuals of religious practice *Ri chos padma stong ldan* and *'Dab sngon stong ldan*, and an exposition of philosophical tenets (*Grub mtha'i rnam bzbag*); some of these were later printed.³⁶⁰

During the second half of his life he had no fixed residence but traveled about, giving religious teachings and advice and performing helpful rituals for patrons. He lived in different parts of Lithang district. As his fame spread, the Dezhung people invited Changchup Nyima to come and stay near them, and it was sometime in the year of his death that he entrusted his hat and a few other articles to the Dezhung chieftain. His final rites were performed by local monasteries as well as by his disciples from Gling Kar shod.³⁶¹

When he was just about to die, he said that he would take birth in his next life in the Dezhung chieftain family, and gave them his eating bowl. Yet even though Nyendrak Lungrik Nyima was accordingly born in the family,

the family did not hand him over to his previous monastic seat; in any case, nothing was left by then of Changchup Nyima's old residence, besides the scattered remains of his old religious encampment.



Final Studies in Derge

AFTER COMPLETING HIS FIRST VISIT to Dezhung, the twenty-three-year-old Dezhung Rinpoche returned to the Derge area to continue his Sanskrit studies.³⁶² He heard that Khunu Lama was in Dzongsar, so he went there. When he arrived, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö was giving teachings to Khunu Tendzin Gyaltzen.

Khunu Lama had begun teaching the Candrapa grammar system to some students, though by the time Dezhung Rinpoche came, he had already finished the first volume. After some studies, Khunu Lama went to Gagu, the retreat of Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal uncle Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen, and Dezhung Rinpoche also went. Khunu Lama's purpose was to receive teachings from Jamgyal connected with the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions (*lam 'bras chos skor*). He also received from Jamgyal many teachings on "mental training" (*blo sbyong*). At this time Dezhung Rinpoche received numerous instructions from both Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen—who was about to become master of the Dzongsar seminary?—and Khunu Lama. The latter taught him the Tibetan grammatical commentary *Si tu 'grel chen* and instructions on metrics (*sdeb sbyor*). Jamgyal Rinpoche himself requested from Khunu Lama instructions on grammar (*sgra*) and metrics, saying, "It is just to create a habit-formation" (to benefit him not immediately, but in a future life).³⁶³ By the time they had finished these studies and Khunu Lama was ready to leave, Dezhung Rinpoche and Khunu Lama had spent about two years together in different locations.³⁶⁴

1930

From Gagu, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to nearby Dzongsar. There he waited for Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö to come out of retreat, and when Jamyang Khyentse finally did reemerge, the two met. Khyentse made

offerings to Dezhung Rinpoche that were connected with his attainments in the study of Sanskrit: as the “body support,” a cast image of Amitāyus, from eastern India; as the “speech support,” a volume containing five Sanskrit grammatical works; and as a “mind support,” a ritual bell, one of twenty-five that had been used by Chögyal Phakpa in giving initiations. He also received a ritual crown once possessed by the recently deceased Sakya Khön monk ’Jam dbyangs thub bstan bzang po (1885–1928) of the Drölma palace (the younger brother of Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen). As was customary, Khunu Lama had wanted to give Dezhung Rinpoche a grammarian’s name upon completion of his study of poetical and grammatical treatises. The circumstances of Dezhung Rinpoche’s studies had prevented this.³⁶⁵ So Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö wrote a letter to Khunu Lama at Kathok monastery, asking him to send Dezhung Rinpoche’s new name.³⁶⁶ The latter sent a reply in which he gave his student the grammarian and poet’s name (*tha snyad rig pa’i btags ming*) ’Jam dpal zla ba’i go cha Dbyangs can dgyes pa’i bshes gnyen.³⁶⁷

This was probably the occasion when Dezhung Rinpoche gave many text-transmissions (*lung*) to Chökyi Lotrö. These included the *lung* for the collected works of the five Sakya founders (*Sa skya bka’ ’bum*) and perhaps the writings of Ngorchén.³⁶⁸

In the spring and summer of 1930, news came that the area of Nyarak in Trehor had become the scene of a serious dispute that ultimately led to a full-fledged war between the Chinese and Tibetans. Nyarak was the monastery where Dezhung Rinpoche had only two years previously received the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions from Ngawang Lekpa. These events resulted in the loss to the Chinese of much of Kham—including Derge, which in the 1920s had been under the control of the Central Tibetan government (*sde pa gzhung*).

Dezhung Rinpoche later explained the immediate causes for this fighting.³⁶⁹

Under the Beri local ruler in Horkhok there were three monasteries: Nyarak (Nya brag, which was Sakyapa), Beri (which was Gelukpa), and Gu lu (which was Nyingmapa). The first two lay on opposite sides of the river, and they were always quarreling. Nyarak monastery had a trulku who was widely revered and believed in by many people. He was the son of the very powerful Sandu tshang [a great Khampa trading family].

There lived a rich woman on the land of Beri monastery who was a faithful patron and disciple of Nyarak Trulku. Because of her great faith in him, on her death she left him a large amount of money in Chinese dollars. Nyarak Trulku took charge of her money, but when he did so, the officials of Beri monastery became angry. The woman



26. A Ngorpa Lama in Kham, ca. 1920.

had lived on their land, and therefore they claimed the money as theirs. They went to complain to the Beri chief. He favored Beri monastery and told the Nyarak Trulku to return the money. The latter refused.³⁷⁰

Then one day the Beri chief invited all the people involved in the dispute to come to his palace and bring their titles and other documents, saying that he would check them over. However, when he got hold of the old woman's will, which the Nyarak Trulku had brought, the chief just kept it. This eliminated all proof of the Nyarak Trulku's claim.

The Nyarak Trulku then said, "Everything that has happened is my fault. Let's make up." He invited them all to come to a peace

party, and he especially invited the Beri chief. It seems that Nyarak Trulku was secretly planning to attack and overthrow the others by force, if they came. He was counting on the help of his allies at the powerful Targyay monastery, a Gelukpa monastery in Horkhok about one day's journey from Nyarak. Half of this monastery belonged to the Sandu tshang.

But this plan did not come to fruition because only one person showed up from the Beri camp. The chief himself did not come, but in his place he sent his personal attendant, Karma phun tshogs, who knew all about these dealings. When he came to Nyarak monastery the Trulku confronted him with all the things done against him, and he put Karma phun tshogs in prison. The Beri chieftain got scared after this and began preparing for worse troubles.

Meanwhile the trulku of Gu lu monastery came to mediate. He went back and forth between the two parties many times, and finally the Beri chieftain said that if Nyarak let his man go, he would take a solemn oath affirming that there would be no further fighting, and Nyarak could keep the money. The Nyarak Trulku agreed to those terms. However, when the man was set free, Beri called all available forces together, including even some people under him who were patrons and followers of Nyarak. Immediately after that, those who were allied to Nyarak through family or other connections held a second meeting at Nyarak in which they planned to desert to Nyarak's side once the battle had begun. Also, some of the monastic officials of Nyarak monastery, including the disciplinarian (*dge skos*), did not like the Nyarak Trulku, and this group went over to the side of the Beri chief.

On the fifteenth day of the fourth month (ca. June 12, 1930), the whole of Nyarak was surrounded by Beri's forces.³⁷¹ Most of the monks in the monastery hastily disrobed, took up arms, and fought in defence of their monastery. When attacked, they shot back from their fortresslike monastery at the forces of Beri. They fought for two days and successfully held back the Beri attack. Perched as it was on a steep hillock, the monastery was hard to assault directly. But the monastery's defenses had one great weak point: it had no well, and all water had to be hauled up from outside. Therefore, after just two days, the besieged monks ran out of water. At this time several officials and monks came from Targyay

monastery to mediate, and the fighting did stop. Nyarak Trulku acknowledged defeat and agreed to pay many boxes of tea in reparations.

After this ceasefire, however, Nyarak Trulku immediately rushed to Targyay monastery, and he quickly returned, accompanied by a troop of armed monks from there. They went to Nyarak monastery and captured the monk-officials there who had gone over to Beri's side, especially the master of discipline (*dge skos*). These they took back to Targyay monastery and put in prison.

At this, the Beri chief informed the Chinese representative at Krang da'i krang (an area east of Beri where a Chinese official was staying). The latter informed the governor of Sichuan, Li'u kru'u shi [= General Liu Wen-hui?], who lived in G.ya' kru [?], south of Tachienlu. Chinese troops armed with cannon and semiautomatic rifles flooded into Horkhok like a river. The well-armed monks of Targyay monastery fought against the Chinese for several days and seemed to be winning. But then many more Chinese troops arrived and the fortunes of battle tipped in the enemy's favor.

At this the forces of Targyay monastery sent an appeal for help to the two Central Tibetan Sde dpon officers—the Bkras thong general (Mda' dpon) 'Gyur med rgya mtsho (1890–1938), then holding the post of *spyi khyab* [governor] of Derge,³⁷² and the “Thang dpon” [the Thon pa Gtsang Mda' dpon?]³⁷³—who were stationed with some troops at Lcangs ra near Derge. The latter informed the Mdo smad Spyi khyab, the Tibetan governor-general of Kham stationed at Chamdo.³⁷⁴ [The latter must then have informed Lhasa.] Then Tibetan troops were sent, and the fight began in earnest. For a while the Tibetans enjoyed military success. [By March 1931] they had repelled the Chinese and captured the territory up to the Hor Brag mgo [in lower Horkhok].

But these victories were short-lived. The Chinese called in many reinforcements [and by late 1931 were gaining the upper hand]. They retook Horkhok [by May 1932] and drove the Tibetans back to the far side of the Drichu [in July 1932]. They also eventually burned down the monastery of Targyay.

In March 1931, the Dalai Lama notified the Kuomintang government that hostilities had ceased. In early spring of 1932, some peace negotiations

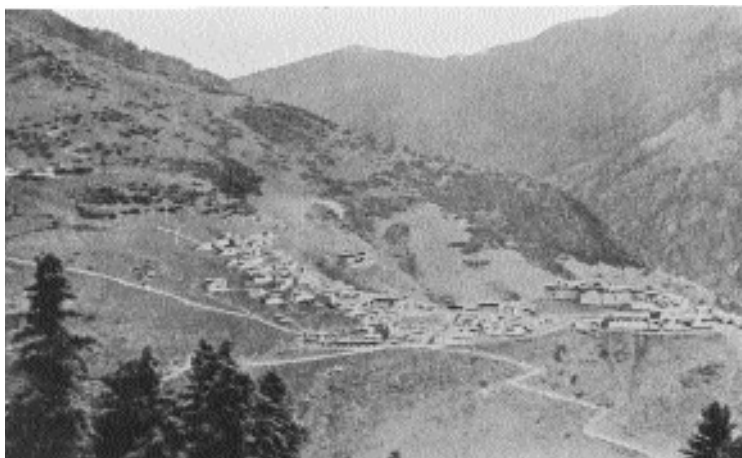
took place in Chamdo (Chab mdo), but the Beri people allegedly resented the stationing of Tibetan troops in their territory (one of the terms of peace), and negotiations broke off again.³⁷⁵ Not until October 10, 1932, was the final truce signed, ceding Derge and all lands west of the Drichu (Yangtse) to China.³⁷⁶

Evidently just before this period of conflict, Dezhung Rinpoche received a letter from Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche. By 1930 Gatön had returned to Tharlam by way of Dezhung, after visiting many monasteries in Minyak and giving the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) at Minyak Rikhü. In his letter Gatön wrote: "You have stayed in Derge seven years. Now you should come back to Tharlam." At about the same time Dezhung Rinpoche also received a letter from Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche at Lithang Dezhung monastery, instructing him by all means to come to Lithang Dezhung. Dezhung Rinpoche asked Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö what he should do. The latter said, "Since Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche is your principal religious teacher, it is best to do as he instructs."³⁷⁷

Because Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche had also instructed him to master the Derge style of script, Dezhung Rinpoche is said to have gone (ca. 1929–1930) to the Karma Kagyü monastery of Palpung (which was also nearby, within Derge-administrated territory). There he studied scripts under Trungyig Tshe chos (?),³⁷⁸ secretary to the Eleventh Palpung Situ Rinpoche Pema Wanchok Gyalpo (1886–1952).³⁷⁹ He also learned such ornamental Indian scripts as *lañcana* and *vartula* from this secretary and expert scribe.

At this time at Palpung, the powerful Situ Rinpoche had just completed a huge statue of Maitreya. For the consecration of the image, he had invited Khenchen Ngawang Samten Lotrö of Derge Göñchen (the famous adept from whom Dezhung Rinpoche had previously received teachings) to preside over the consecration ceremonies. Dezhung Rinpoche therefore met this great abbot again at Palpung. He witnessed the interesting meeting and reconciliation of the Situ Trulku and the abbot, who had previously been slightly at odds and had even made ironical remarks in public about each other's behavior and activities. Some people were amazed that, after all this, the Situ Trulku would extend such an invitation; others were equally surprised that Samten Lotrö would accept. The great honor that the powerful Situ showed the abbot when inviting and receiving him at Palpung impressed everyone. Khenpo Samten Lotrö also deported himself with great sensitivity and graciousness, so that both sides were won over simultaneously.³⁸⁰

Khenchen Samten Lotrö had once been requested by a student of Gatön to compose a brief guru-yoga text for the worship of Gatön as master of the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings. This he had done, but afterward the disciple for some reason could not return to receive it from him. Thus when Dezhung Rinpoche came to see him, Samten Lotrö decided to teach it to



27. Palpung monastery south of Derge in 1918.

him. He told him to listen carefully and memorize the work as he recited it three times, and then to teach it later. This Dezhung Rinpoche did.³⁸¹

While at Palpung, Dezhung Rinpoche also met for the first time the young Sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpay Dorje (1923–1981), who had come to Palpung with his large entourage. The meeting was in a group audience of about twenty people.³⁸²

Again Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Dzongsar to see Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö and pay his respects one last time before departing for Gakhok. He also met Jamgyal Rinpoche, who evidently had just completed his brief tenure as seminary master at Dzongsar. The latter told him, “You have done well. To make sure your lifespan is long, I shall give you a long-life empowerment,” which he did.

Two Tharlam monks and two mules arrived, one mule sent by the Tharlam monastery administration and the other by Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche himself, to accompany Dezhung Rinpoche back to Gapa and Tharlam. Also present were his brother, Kunzang Nyima, and Uncle Ngawang Nyima.³⁸³

On the way back, near a bridge at the border between Derge and Hor-khok, Dezhung Rinpoche is said to have met an enlightened female adept, the (*mkha' 'gro ma dākiñi*) Hor Udren.³⁸⁴ As the story has been transmitted:³⁸⁵

She was ninety years old and ugly and lived under a bridge with three dogs and traveled round the world every day. Dezhung Rinpoche asked her for precepts. She denounced monks as a whole but told him to go to study at Derge [?]. She foretold his future accurately—the death of his family members and how he would go to India. She had a basket which she would not open. One day Rinpoche's younger brother [Kunzang Nyima] opened it secretly and saw a bleeding human head. At one time she also gave him [i.e., Dezhung Rinpoche?] a white shell, after putting it in her mouth [this may have been at the time of her death]. She cured Dezhung Rinpoche's teacher [Ngawang Nyima] by spitting on his pustules, although the teacher had expressed a dislike of women.

Dezhung Rinpoche saw her death, at which time she turned quite young. A rainbow appeared and touched her head. There was an assembly of *dākiñīs* in the four quarters.

*Further Studies under Gatön at Tharlam and
Enthronement as Gatön's Successor*

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE and his party arrived in Gakhok in autumn of 1930, his twenty-fifth year. They reached the town of Jyekundo on the last day of the seventh lunar month and were met by a deputation of Tharlam monks sent by Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche. The monks brought a message instructing them not to arrive on the first, but rather on the more auspicious second day of the eighth lunar month (September 25, 1930), which they then did.³⁸⁶

When they finally neared Tharlam, the party was welcomed by a long row of monks, many on horseback and all dressed in their brilliant ceremonial finery. Heading the greeting party was Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche himself, mounted on a horse.

After Dezhung Rinpoche's arrival, Lekpa Rinpoche asked him about his studies. Also returning to Tharlam at this time were the two seminary students Yeshe Nyima and Ngawang Rinchen. These continued their studies, in time becoming the seminary masters (*mkhan po*) of Tharlam's own small seminary.³⁸⁷

After he had heard the full account of Dezhung Rinpoche's studies, Gatön suggested that the best thing to do would be to review everything again in a "study retreat." But two of Dezhung Rinpoche's paternal uncles then insisted that he needed to build a house and establish his own lama residence or lama estate (*bla brang*), and this project created a temporary obstacle to his religious studies and practice. They knocked down a large, dilapidated house adjoining Tharlam monastery belonging to his paternal uncle 'Jam bzang of the Ra'ok Jokhor tshang (Ngawang Nyima's brother). On this site a team of workers, including a number of close relatives (such as his sisters) and several monks from Tharlam, gathered to build the new house. For the purpose of work details, the monks of Tharlam monastery

were customarily divided into six groups, and on this occasion each of the six groups sent one monk per day to help with the work. Also some of the subjects (*mi ser*) of the monastery came to help.³⁸⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche later explained why he felt obliged to found his own lama residence and estate:³⁸⁹

When I was young, I had hoped to become a good religious practitioner who renounced [ordinary] life [and lived] in a remote retreat. But when I was seventeen, based on the positive prognostications performed by numerous great masters, such as the Sakya Trichen Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen, that I was the rebirth of the great Trulku Nyendrak Lungrik Nyima of Dezhung monastery in Lithang, I was [ceremonially] invested with a complete set of robes by Dezhung monastery and given the title “trulku.” At earlier and later times I [also] received gifts of many Chinese *'dil tshad* silver pieces. Nevertheless, I did not have to go [and reside at] Dezhung monastery. Because it was such a distant place, I did not have much desire to go there. Also people said that there did not exist anything like a lama estate at Dezhung, apart from just the noble family into which the previous Dezhung Rinpoche had been born. When the latter had passed away, nobody in Dezhung had expected that there would be a further recognized rebirth, and so they disposed of all the previous lama's possessions, [using them up] in connection with the ceremonies and activities carried out after his death, I was told.

And further:³⁹⁰

Because of that I was given the title of “trulku” and therefore had to sit at the head of the row [in assemblies] on the same level as other high lamas. My own family, moreover, was poor. Since I had no lama estate, I completely lacked the robes, ornaments, horses, mules, and other articles that would be suitable for a person of high rank. Therefore my appearance was poor and shabby. Because of this, my own kind relatives said, “It would be good to establish a dwelling and acquire physical possessions.” And I, too, was bound by attachment to the appearances of this [material world].



28. Gatön Ngawang Lekpa in Minyak, 1928.

By this time Dezhung Rinpoche had studied important aspects of the five main traditional fields of knowledge (*rig pa'i gnas lnga*) and also some of the five minor fields, which made him already an unusually broad scholar. (1) Medicine (*gso rig*) he had studied to some extent at Dzongsar with the doctor Derge Lha rje Bstan pa dar rgyas. He had also gone to the mountains with his younger brother Kunzang Nyima to learn the recognition of plants and herbs, though Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche stopped him from pursuing these studies further.³⁹¹ (2) Arts and techniques (*bzo*) he had learned to some extent at Tharlam from the artist (*lha bzo*) Kun dga' 'jam dbyangs during the painting of the Tharlam murals. At this time he learned the theory of proportions of sacred images, but not the actual practice of painting or image-making. (3) Tibetan grammar (*sum rtags*) and Sanskrit grammar (*sgra*) he had learned under Losang Chökyi Gawa, Palyul Lama, and Khunu Lama. (4) Logic and epistemology (*tshad ma*) he had learned from Anjam Trulku at Dezhung monastery. (5) Buddhist doctrine (*nang don rig pa*) he had learned from many masters, but for his main doctrinal and

philosophical studies he was indebted to Khenchen Shenga, Lama Gendun, Khenpo Khyenrab, Khenpo Dawö, and others. For the lesser literary subjects, he had studied poetics (*snyan ngag*, and possibly metrics, *sdeb shyor*) with Khunu Lama, as well as with Geshe Losang Chökyi Gawa at the beginning of his studies. Astrology and calculations (*rtsis*) he would learn soon thereafter under the Trindu Umdzay Lhun grub dpal ldan of Sakya at Dzonyak Samdrup monastery (while his leg was ailing him in 1932–1933), studying under him the *Sna bsdus* (?) *kyi ri mo*.³⁹² Though he never studied music or drama formally (except monastic ritual music), he did contribute to the musical performances at the dedication celebrations of Tharlam temple by composing lyrics for the songs.

At the performance of the Dgu zlog rite in which all evils and negative forces were ritually banished at the end of the lunar year, Dezhung Rinpoche presided over the ceremonies because Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche was in retreat. During the lunar New Year's celebration (1931?), two monks came from Dezhung inviting Gatön to their monastery. Gatön accepted their invitation, telling Dezhung Rinpoche, "While I am gone, you stay in my room."³⁹³

At first, when Rinpoche was in retreat, Lekpa Rinpoche had stayed nearby. But before he left, Gatön had the old monk Rgan Mgon dkar stay in retreat in the hut near Dezhung Rinpoche.³⁹⁴

In 1932 or thereabouts, Dezhung Rinpoche also did a "study retreat" and after that went into meditation retreat. This was suitable, for in the outside world then there were major political and military disturbances not only in Horkhok and Derge, but also in Gapa.³⁹⁵ He exerted himself strenuously in his meditation. He went from Tharlam to the Dzinda retreat Nges gsang chos kyi dga' tshal Thub bstan bshad sgrub gling, the monastery's more remote meditation center, and there performed the preparatory meditations and spiritual exercises (*sngon 'gro*) for tantric practice. In conjunction with these, he recited many times the verse of praise of Sakya Paṇḍita known as the *Shes bya ma*.³⁹⁶

This meditation retreat at Dzinda had been founded in the late 1870s or early 1880s by Ngawang Shedrup Gyatso, who had been the chamberlain of the Ngor Phende abbot Kunga Tenpay Lotrö (1822–1884) when the latter came to Kham. Together with that abbot, he had received the *Path with Its Fruit* and other essential Sakyapa instructions from the Derge Shar Lama Kun dga' dpal ldan, who predicted to Ngawang Shedrup Gyatso that the Dzinda retreat would be a good place for his practice. The local people

helped build a retreat hut for him and gradually constructed several other meditation huts nearby, offering a number of boys to become monks and meditators there. Several of these boys grew up to become great masters, including Nyiga Dorjechang, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Jamgyal Rinpoche, and Jamyang Losal.³⁹⁷

Because Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche had performed many prostrations while in retreat there, Dezhung Rinpoche did the same, completing from two thousand to twenty-five hundred prostrations per day.³⁹⁸ Like his teacher Gatön, Dezhung Rinpoche developed physical complaints as a result of too many prostrations. His illness, which gave him back pains and tension, was later diagnosed as a *rlung khrag* disorder.³⁹⁹ Since his right knee was also causing him pain, a doctor at a nearby retreat gave him some medicine for a leg ailment, but this did not help. Meanwhile his right knee became swollen and inflamed.⁴⁰⁰ Because of his knee problem it was difficult to go to the toilet, and because of this he developed further problems with his digestive tract. He was ill for one year, taking different medicines but never becoming completely cured.

Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche and the monks of Tharlam were concerned and did ceremonies for Dezhung Rinpoche's long life. Finally they reasoned that if the water at the Dzinda retreat was causing part of the problem, as was suspected, he should return to Tharlam. Once he was there, he was treated by his relative (the son of his paternal great aunt?), the adept and doctor Josay Gelong Jamyang Gyaltsen. The latter tried a number of remedies, and gradually Dezhung Rinpoche's leg improved enough so that he could walk with a cane.⁴⁰¹

1933

In the month of the Virgo Spica asterism (Tib. *nag pa*, Skt. *citra*) of the iron-horse year (May 1933), Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche began his eighth exposition of the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit*.⁴⁰² Of the nine times he gave the *Path with Its Fruit*, this was the most extensive and detailed. The disciples numbered more than two hundred, chief of whom were, besides Dezhung Rinpoche, the Ngor Thartse abbot 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1903–1960), who had already served as Ngor abbot around 1927–1930, and the Ngor Khangsar Shabdrung from Lingtshang Guzi. (The latter was probably the nephew of Ngor Khangsar Dampa Rinpoche; he had to leave Tharlam after receiving only the Three Visions

[*Snang gsum*] and Causal Consecration [*rgyu dbang*] because of other pressing obligations.⁴⁰³) Many other outstanding teachers and meditators were also in attendance.⁴⁰⁴ The most powerful noble-monk in the whole Gakhok district—Dra'u Pön Tendzin Gyaltzen (1884–1944)—came, together with his younger brother Dpal ldan tshul khrim.⁴⁰⁵ At Gatön's insistence, Dezhung Rinpoche served as assistant meditation instructor.⁴⁰⁶

1934

In 1934 Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche encouraged his chief disciples to gather and study the three main tantric writings of the Sakyapa: the *General System of the Tantras* (*Rgyud sde spyi'i rnam gzbag*) by Sönam Tsemo, the *Tree of Realization* (*Mngon rtogs ljon shing*) by Drakpa Gyaltzen, and the *Hevajra Basic Tantra* (*Kye rdor brtag pa gnyis pa*). This course was led by Gatön's chief spiritual son, Dezhung Choktrül Rinpoche Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltzen (1885–1952), better known as Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche. Among the students were: Jyeku Döndrup Ling Khenpo Ngakga and Dakho; Rig 'dzin dbang rgyal, a lama of Kalzang monastery; the Tharlam seminary masters Ngawang Rinchen and Yeshe Nyima; Dezhung Kyashül Trulku Kunzang; and Kunga Rinchen, the chant-leader of Dgon gсар monastery.⁴⁰⁷ These studies lasted some eight months. Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche taught all his students generously and openly, but for these eight months, Dezhung Rinpoche was the special target for his instruction, and the master asked him to put to him any questions or doubts he might have.

The *Hevajra Tantra* commentarial exposition had after a certain point died out among the Sakyapa, but it had been revived by Khyentse Wangpo and spread by his disciple Loter Wangpo. Yet Anjam Rinpoche's biographer, Khenpo Trinlay Chöphel, later pointed out the limitations of both Loter Wangpo and Shenga as teachers of *Hevajra Tantra* exposition. Loter Wangpo's expositions had been not that detailed because of his great responsibilities and many activities. Shenga's expositions had also not been so detailed because he had not been born into the tradition. But Anjam Rinpoche, by mastering the Sakyapa commentarial literature and clarifying key points with Gatön, had his eyes opened and gave detailed expositions that penetrated to the intended meaning of the instructions of the tantra-teaching means.⁴⁰⁸

During this year, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche also gave a number of important practical instructions, including the blessing and instruction for

Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma), the initiation for Mahākāla in a cycle of ten deities (Mgon po Khro bo bcu), the outer Mahākāla instructions of the "Rock Fortress" (*Brag rdzong ma*), and the initiations for the *Zangs gri skor gsum*. After these teachings, Lekpa Rinpoche and Dezhung Rinpoche did "study retreats" in adjoining rooms. Dezhung Rinpoche chiefly reviewed topics of the *Path with Its Fruit*.

Also in this year, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche on one occasion called all the monks of Tharlam together. Without their having requested it, he gave them the initiation into the meditation of Avalokiteśvara according to the *Mdo khams shar phyogs ma* sādhana composed by the Ngor abbot Könchok Lhündrup, and also the Avalokiteśvara practical instructions (*Spyan ras gzigs dmar khrid*) in the tradition of the Tibetan adept Tshembupa, following a manual of Sangs rgyas phun tshogs.⁴⁰⁹

Lekpa Rinpoche gave these instructions when he found he could not impart the true full Dharma of both scripture and realization (*lung dang rtogs pa*) to his disciples. He also explained to them the four requisites for being born in Sukhāvātī.⁴¹⁰ These four were: first of all, to awaken bodhi-citta, which means one must have produced the thought of attaining buddhahood for the sake of others; second, to accumulate the two assemblages of merit and wisdom in a very vast way; third, to keep very clearly in mind at all times what Buddha Amitābha looks like and also what his pure realm of Sukhāvātī is like; and fourth, to pray continuously that at the moment of death one may go at once to the pure realm of Sukhāvātī and instantly see the face of Amitābha.⁴¹¹

Gatön gave each a rosary and told them that they should each recite the mantra of Avalokiteśvara a hundred million (*dung phyur*) times. At that time Dezhung Rinpoche was also in the assembly, and although he had already been practicing this teaching, he now made a firm commitment to continue practicing regularly.

Gatön felt a very strong connection with Avalokiteśvara. He is also said to have been deeply inspired by his reading of the *Mā ṇi bka' 'bum*: his hairs stood on end and tears began to fall from his eyes as he read it. He placed the book on his head and vowed to do one hundred million recitations of the mantra. He also prayed and aspired to reach realization through Avalokiteśvara and thereby to exert a concerned and compassionate influence for the benefit of others. On the wall of his private quarters he had written the reminder not to forget the great aspiration (*dam bca' chen po mi brjed bzbag*). During the day, when not engaged in other activities, Ngawang

Lekpa recited *māṇis* very slowly and distinctly, like a very old man. He had vowed to recite at least five thousand mantras per day.⁴¹²

Earlier in life Gatön had stated that he would probably be reborn again as a monk in order to contribute to the further flourishing of the Sakya tradition. But after a certain point he said that, as he saw it, only the name of Sakya and Ngor would remain in the future. Since this would depress him to witness, he decided not to return but to go to the pure realm of Sukhāvātī.

This made no sense to his disciples, who could not imagine how the great monasteries of Sakya and Ngor with their hundreds of monks could become “just names.” “Perhaps Rinpoche is simply saying that these traditions will not be well maintained in the future,” some speculated. “Perhaps there will not be competent monks, or else the discipline will not be kept properly,” others said. But within thirty years after Lekpa Rinpoche’s death, it came to pass that both mother monasteries were literally destroyed: the whole of Ngor was demolished and just one major structure at Sakya was left standing.⁴¹³

During this period, Dezhung Rinpoche received an invitation from the scriptural seminary at Surmang Rnam rgyal rtse to come and teach Sanskrit grammar. Surmang Rnam rgyal rtse was a Kagyü monastery in the district south of Jyekundo, whose lamas were Tertön Rolpay Dorje Trulku and the Surmang Chögyam Trungpa Trulku.⁴¹⁴ But Gatön Ngawang Lekpa advised him to perform a Hevajra retreat rather than go out then and teach.⁴¹⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche went into retreat and was instructed by Gatön, who visited him occasionally. At the end, Gatön and Dezhung Rinpoche performed the fire-offering ceremony (*homa*) of the four activities (*las bzhi'i sbyin sreg*) and other ceremonies of Hevajra. Gatön examined his dreams and saw that obstacles might arise for Dezhung Rinpoche, so he gave him the initiation for Mgon po Khro bo bcu. At Gatön’s advice he did a Mahākāla retreat, at the end of which Gatön performed the final *homa* ceremony for him.⁴¹⁶ During one of his early retreats, he had applied himself with such great concentration that at times he feared for his own sanity. To restore his mental balance he had to slacken his too forceful efforts.⁴¹⁷

At about this time a patron is said to have requested initiation from Gatön into the extraordinary four-faced protector (Shalshipa)—a teaching into which only five initiates could be admitted. After this, Gatön instructed

Dezhung Rinpoche to practice this teaching in retreat, which he did for more than three months.⁴¹⁸ (The biography of Gatön mentions that in 1934, at the request of Jyeku Döndrup Ling Khenpo Ngakga and Dakho, Gatön also gave the secret instructions of Mahākāla Mgon po Gur, and these initiations and instructions were received also by Dezhung Rinpoche, at Gatön's encouragement.⁴¹⁹)

1935

In about 1934 or 1935, Dezhung Rinpoche received another invitation to teach Sanskrit, this time from the Namdak Trulku (Karma rnam dag?) of Shedzang monastery, a Kagyü monastic establishment in northern Gapa, northeast of Tharlam in the general vicinity of Trindu on the far side of the Drichu. This lama had met Dezhung Rinpoche when they both attended the funeral ceremonies for Karma rgya mtsho of the Thaklung Li pha tshang,⁴²⁰ who had died about 1933 or 1934 (during the time when Dezhung Rinpoche's knee was still giving him trouble). The trulku liked Dezhung Rinpoche and was astounded by his knowledge. He strongly urged him to come.⁴²¹

To Namdak Trulku's invitation Dezhung Rinpoche had replied, "If the auspicious connections fall into place (*rten 'brel 'grig na*), I'll come."

"The auspicious connections will fall into place! (*rten 'brel 'grig 'gro gi red*)," replied the Namdak Trulku with a laugh. "There is only one river and one pass between here and there."⁴²²

Dezhung Rinpoche deferred giving a definitive answer, saying, "I must ask my guru."

"Yes, please ask him!" replied the lama. "Surely he is not likely to refuse to let you teach!"

"I have a bad leg, so it's hard for me to walk. I also have no horse or mule to ride."

"I will send you both a horse and a mule," replied Namdak Trulku.

Dezhung Rinpoche consulted his guru Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, who said, "He is a master who keeps the discipline well. It will be fine if you go." Dezhung Rinpoche then sent a letter of acceptance to the Namdak Trulku, but there was no response for some time.

Meanwhile, Dezhung Rinpoche was requested by other patrons to perform ceremonies and give ordinary religious instructions locally. His uncle Ngawang Nyima came to hear of the invitation and scolded his nephew,

saying, “Your teachers advised you many times to do a study retreat. I also requested you to do so, and Gatön Ngawang Lekpa has even scolded me because you don’t. If you go out to teach Sanskrit and grammar, you will just be wasting your time.”

Since his uncle was so insistent, Dezhung Rinpoche decided to do a study retreat and began making preparations for it. Then, the day before the retreat was to begin, monks of Namdak Trulku came with a horse and two mules. This was all Dezhung Rinpoche needed to be convinced, and he decided to go after all.⁴²³ He crossed the Drichu by ferry near the white stūpa of Ga, headed east of a side valley, and finally crossed a pass to reach his goal.

At Shedzang he found a monastery of more than fifty monks and a lama estate (*bla brang*) of the local noble family, the Trindu Pön Tshang.⁴²⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche’s distant cousin Dbang ’dus (son of Jamgyal’s brother Lcags khra), who had studied before under Lama Gendun, was a monk here.⁴²⁵ Dezhung Rinpoche taught at the monastery for a number of months, expounding the Sarasvatī system of Sanskrit grammar (*dbyangs can sgra mdo*), Tibetan grammar (*sum rtags*), Sanskrit textbooks (*sgra yig cha*), and related subjects.⁴²⁶

The Namdak Trulku was no great scholar. He said he was studying just to create memory- and habit-impressions (*bag chags*) for a future lifetime.⁴²⁷

It was a great treat for Dezhung Rinpoche to visit Shedzang monastery, for throughout most of the 1930s Gatön did not let him leave Tharlam. While there, Dezhung Rinpoche could also borrow and read some of the writings of the great later Karma Kagyü scholars such as Situ Pañchen and the Dpa’ bo Trulkus, an opportunity that he treasured. Books by great masters from other schools were a wealth that could not often be obtained. Later he explained that his procedure for an important book was to read it thrice: once to get a general idea of its subject matter, a second time to explore it and understand it more thoroughly, and one last time really to grasp and absorb its contents. With his remarkable memory, he could quote names and other exact details from these books even forty or fifty years later.

Dezhung Rinpoche was at Shedzang monastery for quite a few months, perhaps even as long as a year.⁴²⁸ At approximately this time, when he was about twenty-eight or twenty-nine, Dezhung Rinpoche is also said to have composed a prayer for the Kālacakra (*Dus ’khor smon lam*) at the request of a famous Kagyü artist named Kar ’brug (b. 1860).⁴²⁹

Later in 1935, while still teaching at Shedzang monastery, Dezhung Rinpoche received an urgent message to return at once to Tharlam. As he

departed, his patron, the rich Namdak Trulku, offered him three milk-producing *mdzo mo* (female crossbreed yak/cows) laden with goods. Everyone was amazed at the lama's munificence.⁴³⁰

Tharlam had been visited by both an ex-abbot⁴³¹ and abbatial candidate (*zhabs drung*) of the Thartse lama-palace at Ngor. The Thartse candidate, Champa Namkha Kunzang Tenpay Gyaltzen (1907–1940), was a scion of the ancient Lce Zhwa lu sku zhang family of Tsang (his younger half-brother was the sixteen-year-old Chobgye Trichen at Nalendra [b. 1919]),⁴³² and he was a year younger than Dezhung Rinpoche. He had come to Kham about two years previously to collect alms for his abbatial palace (*bla brang*) and for Ngor, and he stayed in Kham altogether about six years, his main seat being Wara monastery in Derge district. (He was therefore counted as the third “Wara Shabdrung.”) He had great faith in Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, so he insistently requested from him the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions. Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche agreed to give these teachings and for this reason called Dezhung Rinpoche back to Tharlam.

The Thartse candidate was highly promising and at age twenty-eight was already an excellent scholar. The young lama told Dezhung Rinpoche, “I need a teaching assistant to give additional help during the instructions. Khenpo Trinlay Chöphel [an extremely learned disciple of Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche who was capable of prodigious feats of memory] has taken a vow not to leave his retreat for thirteen years, so he is not available. I hope you will act as teaching assistant!” Dezhung Rinpoche tried to refuse and also expected Gatön Ngawang Lekpa not to consent to this, but Gatön Ngawang Lekpa said, “Thartse Shabdrung has a brilliant analytical mind, and you, too, are intelligent. Through discussion, you will improve your understanding. I agree that you should do it.”⁴³³

About a hundred and fifty disciples gathered for these teachings, including the Thartse Shabdrung, the Dgon gsar Spu ru Lama Byang 'od, the Thang nag Sakya Lama of Kalzang monastery, and Dezhung Rinpoche. This was the ninth and last time Gatön Ngawang Lekpa gave the *Path with Its Fruit*.⁴³⁴

Dezhung Rinpoche served as assistant teacher for the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions and also in general as Thartse Shabdrung's tutor and helper at Tharlam. Dezhung Rinpoche had much faith in and admiration for the young lama, and this was reciprocated. The two became close friends.⁴³⁵ The Shabdrung frequently visited Dezhung Rinpoche's quarters in his *bla brang* residence. Some evenings, the two became so engrossed in conversation that the Shabdrung could not return to his official residence in the

main Tharlam monastery because the monastery's entrance was locked. He then spent the night at Dezhung Rinpoche's residence.⁴³⁶

Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, too, had the highest regard for this young lama. He instructed Dezhung Rinpoche to go to Ngor and receive the *Path with Its Fruit* from this Thartse lama when the lama was serving his second or third tenure as abbot.

1936

After the conclusion of the *Path with Its Fruit*, the Thartse Shabdrung went to perform ceremonies among the nomads in the Brgya sde kha gsum area,⁴³⁷ while Dezhung Rinpoche received the initiation for White Tārā from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa and went into a three-month retreat. Then there came another invitation from Namdak Trulku of Shedzang monastery to teach another basic Sanskrit grammatical work, the Kālapa. Dezhung Rinpoche went there and began to teach. Before he could finish, Thartse Shabdrung returned to Tharlam and asked Gatön Ngawang Lekpa for special instructions in the Inner, Outer and Secret Protector (*Mgon po phyi nang gsang gsum*), and for that Dezhung Rinpoche was called back to Tharlam. (A maximum of five disciples were allowed to hear these teachings.)

After these teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche went with Thartse Shabdrung up into the nearby high nomadic grasslands for a break. It was summer. They stayed in tents and enjoyed the good food of the nomads; animal products such as cheese and yogurt, and the special dish of the nomads called *thu*—powdered cheese mixed with butter and sugar—were plentiful. They enjoyed the celebrations and songs of the nomad people in their black tents.

Dezhung Rinpoche's younger brother, Kunzang Nyima, then came to the encampment and offered him a fine set of robes, ceremonial hat, and brocade vestments. Dezhung Rinpoche was pleased and said that since he had not yet been able to make a suitable offering to the Shabdrung, he would now offer these items. When he did so, together with a horse, the Shabdrung asked, "But won't your brother be displeased if you give away his presents?" "No," Dezhung Rinpoche replied, "he already gave them to me."⁴³⁸ The Shabdrung accepted the offerings and gave Dezhung Rinpoche the "three supports" (*rten gsum*) for his long life: as "body support," a statue of Mahākāla; as "speech support," two Mahākāla texts; and as "mind support," a Vijāya stūpa (*rnam rgyal mchod rten*).⁴³⁹

1937–1938

In this period (ca. 1937) Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal grandmother died, and much of the remaining wealth of the Khangsip 'Og ma family was given to the Tharlam monastery in her memory, the main exceptions being the house and land. Later, Dezhung Rinpoche's brother-in-law Könyak (1906–1955), a precious-metal worker and trader, worked to build up the household again until it was one of the more prosperous in the village of Thaklung.⁴⁴⁰

During 1937, Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche invited Gatön Ngawang Lekpa to come to Lithang to give religious teachings.⁴⁴¹ Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, after initial hesitations, was convinced by an auspicious dream that he should go. He did so, visiting Dezhung and other parts of Lithang down to Tsho gsum Mo la, including Mingyur monastery and Lithang Tshong 'dus, after which he returned by stages to Tharlam. All the offerings he received in Lithang he converted to gold and used for the building and dedication of the great images within the new temple.⁴⁴²

On his return, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche introduced Dezhung Rinpoche to a new phase of freedom and responsibility. He told him, "Until now I haven't allowed you to go away and teach on your own, but have kept you under my wing and controlled your career like a mother bird, until you, like a fully developed fledgling with strong wings, could fly without difficulty."⁴⁴³

One of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa's main projects at this time was the completion of the temple interior, including a great three-story-tall, gilded-copper image of the Buddha Śākyamuni in the center, and two smaller gilded-copper images of Sakya Paṇḍita on the right and Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo on the left.⁴⁴⁴ In addition he prepared nine large silver offering bowls, one hundred smaller silver water bowls for each image, and numerous other ritual objects from silver. Many precious relics and objects were deposited in the great images in preparation for their consecration.⁴⁴⁵

1939–1940

Finally, on a highly auspicious day (in Dezhung Rinpoche's thirty-fourth year, 1939), the full ceremony of consecration and vivification (*rab gnas*) was performed for the new Tharlam monastery and its sacred contents. In connection with this great ceremony, Lekpa Rinpoche also enthroned Dezhung Rinpoche as his effective successor at Tharlam. He made Dezhung

Rinpoche sit on a great golden throne. Before him, as offerings, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa placed a table arrayed with every ritual object, fine robes, dishes, and Gatön's own ritual crown. Gatön Ngawang Lekpa then announced to the assembly, "This is my successor at Tharlam." He also offered him, as "body support," a statue of the Buddha Śākyamuni; as "speech support," the two-volume printed biography of the thirty-fourth Ngor abbot Palden Chökyong (1702–1769); and, as "mind support," a thangka of the maṇḍala (?) of Mahākāla drawn in gold.⁴⁴⁶

On another occasion during their last years together at Tharlam, Lekpa Rinpoche gave a special long-life initiation in the new temple. For this he and his monks prepared special longevity pills. The monastery was filled to overflowing, and many people from outside Tharlam stayed in tents set up all around. Dezhung Rinpoche, as one of the main disciples, gave an elaborate exposition of the cosmic-maṇḍala offering.⁴⁴⁷

Dezhung Rinpoche always stressed his great indebtedness to Lekpa Rinpoche, writing, for instance:

This master, a student of Kongtrül and Jamyang Khyentse, was endowed with ocean-like learning, self-discipline, and realization-through-practice. Due to whatever karmic relation existed between us in previous lives, he watched over me with great loving-kindness. Just about every initiation, text-transmission, and practical instruction that the lord himself obtained, such as the profound Sakyapa *Path with Its Fruit* instructions and the initiations of many tantric cycles such as for Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma, Yamāntaka, and Inner and Outer Mahākāla, I myself gradually obtained from him on earlier and later occasions. Until I reach enlightenment, I will owe this master an unpayable debt of gratitude, since whatever little amount I have been able to learn about the Sūtras, Tantras, and fields of knowledge is due directly or indirectly to his kindness.⁴⁴⁸

*Second Visit to Dezhung
and the Death of Gatön*

IN THIS SAME PERIOD (1939–1940), Gatön Ngawang Lekpa received invitations to return to Minyak to teach. He refused to go because of advanced age, but he deputed Dezhung Rinpoche to travel there in his place.

When Gatön first mentioned this to him, Dezhung Rinpoche could not bring himself to agree. But after Lekpa Rinpoche insisted strongly three times, Dezhung Rinpoche had no choice but to try to live up to his master's wishes the best he could. Moreover, Lekpa Rinpoche warned him that if he did not go to Minyak, there would not come many offerings in the future to support Tharlam monastery. (In fact, after Dezhung Rinpoche's journey to Minyak, a tremendous number of offerings were later received at Tharlam monastery.⁴⁴⁹)

Gatön also wrote a letter addressed to all his disciples, especially in Lithang and Minyak, in which he stated:

Now I am old. I have accepted Dezhung Rinpoche as my successor and there is no difference between us. Those who wish to meet me, should meet him. If they need teachings, they should ask him. Any offerings made to Dezhung Rinpoche are the same as offerings to me; any offerings made to him and merit dedicated will be accepted spiritually by me.⁴⁵⁰

Appointing Dezhung Rinpoche his successor and sending him to teach in his stead in Minyak was also an important part of Lekpa Rinpoche's long-term plans. One of the main acts of Dezhung Rinpoche as a mature lama, though still following Lekpa Rinpoche's instructions, would be to make a pilgrimage to the central provinces of Ü and Tsang to visit the great mother

monasteries of Sakya and Ngor. To prepare for this, Dezhung Rinpoche needed to make a long teaching tour in the eastern districts of Kham for collecting offerings. Near the Chinese border one could also buy such items as tea, which made good offerings at the great temples in Central Tibet.

Gatön had given him three main commands.⁴⁵¹ The first was to study Tibetan grammar and orthography, poetics, the three traditions of Sanskrit grammar, and the religious traditions of the sūtras and tantras. The second was to perform on a vast scale activities for Sakya and Ngor monasteries, in order to accumulate merit both through giving donations and through religious teaching. The third was to look after Tharlam monastery, both spiritually and materially. Dezhung Rinpoche had for the most part already accomplished the first command and was about to start accomplishing the second. As he later explained:⁴⁵²

Lama Lekpa Rinpoche also told me, “You must definitely journey to Ü and Tsang and to the main monastic seats [of Sakya and Ngor]. It is inconvenient to bear the title of ‘trulku’ if one cannot manage to make great offerings and presentations there [and] lacks resources.” [Thus he arranged my enthronement as head of Tharlam.]

So then, in combination with the instructions he gave to the monastic officials of Tharlam monastery and to the Dra’u Pön local ruler, when I was in my thirty-fourth year (1939) Gatön enthroned me atop the golden [religious] throne of Tharlam monastery. He gave me presents of his own *sa zhu* ceremonial hat, porcelain cup with stand, vajra and bell, many Chinese *rdil tshad* silver pieces, and so on. He [and the others recited] a long-life prayer he had composed for me. The Gra’u Pön, our monastery[’s administrators], and the general assembly of monks also gave offerings. In connection with all this, Gatön proclaimed that henceforth I was his regent and that I was the religious leader of the monastery. Finally he gave a maṇḍala offering to me, accompanied by an elegant oration in verse structured around the “five complete perfections” (*phun tshogs lnga*).

“Now go by way of Lithang Dezhung to Minyak district!” he ordered me. Previously the master himself had given at Minyak Rikhü monastery the *Path with Its Fruit* to a gathering of nearly one thousand monks, including both local monks and those who had come from other more distant places. They had also requested him to teach the *Collection of Sādhana*s. But because of his advanced age

and because he needed to complete the building and decorating of the new Tharlam monastery, he told them, “This time I must excuse myself. Later on, if I get a trustworthy disciple, I will be happy to send him.”

Because of this, on the present occasion Gatön sent a letter to the monasteries of Minyak in which he stated, “This trulku is my regent and representative. He is my best disciple. You should take the *Collection of Sādhana*s from him. Make offerings to him. This will be no different from making them to me.”

When the reply from Minyak came, and I was about to leave Tharlam, he told me, “From whatever you receive as offerings, set aside one part as the basis for [covering] your own requirements. Otherwise, most of it you should use for making offerings at Sakya and Ngor. Since Sakya and Ngor are our head monasteries, if you can manage to make very good offerings there, that will fulfill my own wishes. You yourself will also achieve much merit.”

When Dezhung Rinpoche was about to depart from Tharlam, he went to visit his master Gatön Ngawang Lekpa one last time. Gatön gave him many words of advice and prayers for his future success.⁴⁵³ At that meeting, Gatön was seated on a high seat, and Dezhung Rinpoche took a place on a lower seat before him.

“Where will you be living when I come back after several years?” Dezhung Rinpoche asked. “Will you be at Tharlam?”

“I won’t be living *anywhere*; I will have died by then,” replied Gatön.

These words struck Rinpoche to the heart, for he did not want to leave his teacher and was going away only to fulfill Gatön’s command. A short while later he sadly said his final farewell and asked for Lekpa Rinpoche’s blessings. The latter recited a verse of benediction by Thangtong Gyalpo. As he was going out the door, Dezhung Rinpoche looked back at his master with a heavy heart, hearing Lekpa Rinpoche repeat the same benediction again and again:⁴⁵⁴

May master and student not part, but associate together! May their life spans be long and secure! May they continually enjoy the drinking of excellent tea! And may the good fortune of happiness and the flourishing of Buddhism come to pass!

*1940: Departure from Tharlam
for Other Parts of Eastern Tibet*

Dezhung Rinpoche set out in the lunar month of the Virgo Spica asterism (*Bya'u* = *Nag pa*, approximately the third month) of his thirty-fifth year (the iron-dragon, 1940) for Lithang and Minyak.⁴⁵⁵ Before traveling farther



29. Dezhung Rinpoche representing Gatön in Minyak, 1943.

afield in his own career of teaching and travels, he wanted first of all to receive further blessings and instructions from two of his most revered teachers, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö and Jamgyal Rinpoche, so he struck off first for Derge. But in late April, while he was still on the road, he met a messenger coming from the other direction bearing the sad news: Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen (1870–1940) had died a short time before, while returning from Dzongsar to his residence at nearby Gagu. Dezhung Rinpoche

stopped immediately and, together with his companions, performed the rites of guru-worship in memory of Jamgyal Rinpoche.⁴⁵⁶

Dezhung Rinpoche went on to Dzongsar and learned that Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö had fallen ill and would not meet anyone. Nevertheless he sent Khyentse Rinpoche a letter of petition. In reply, Chökyi Lotrö sent a message requesting Dezhung Rinpoche to perform on his behalf the purifying rite and initiation of Uṣṇīṣavijayā (*Gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ma*) and later to come to him. Dezhung Rinpoche performed these as requested and finally was admitted into his ailing master's presence. When he arrived, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö told him, "This morning at dawn I saw in a dream the maṇḍala of Uṣṇīṣavijayā clearly with her nine deities of the maṇḍala. She was handing the vase to me. Now you have come. Excellent! You must bestow upon me this initiation for Uṣṇīṣavijayā!"⁴⁵⁷

Later Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö told him, "In order to remove all obstacles to your life and work, you should go to the Dzin Namgyal protector's chapel and perform one hundred invocation rites (*bskang gso*) for Mahākāla. While there, two monks from Dezhung will arrive."

Accordingly, after taking leave from Khyentse Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche went to the famous Dzin Namgyal protector's chapel in Dzinkhok (Derge district), which contained a special statue of the Protector (*Mgon po*) in which Śāriputra's (and Śākyamuni's?) staffs were contained, and which had been consecrated by Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) and his nephew, Chögyal Phakpa (1235–1280). Just when Dezhung Rinpoche had finished his invocation rites, the two monks arrived from Dezhung and invited him there.⁴⁵⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche and his small party then proceeded south by way of Tromthar toward Lithang and Dezhung, passing through many high, desolate nomadic lands. Tromthar was dangerous territory—there were many thieves and brigands there—but Dezhung was quite safe: its people were so famed for their bravery that few robbers trusted their luck amongst them. Besides, Dezhung was very high and cold—sometimes it even snowed during the sixth lunar month. Life was not easy, even for a very energetic nomad, so there was not much to steal. As the saying went, "A mouse in Tromthar is happier than a man in Dezhung."⁴⁵⁹

Upon arriving at the main encampment in the Dezhung nomadic region, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited to the dwelling-tent of the Dezhung chieftain family, where he was requested to stay. He enjoyed very close relations with that family.⁴⁶⁰ After being received in a fine way, he performed rites for their sake, accompanied by some local monks. Dezhung Anjam Trulku was

then about to leave for Tharlam. He instructed Dezhung Rinpoche to do a six-month retreat of the “Three Lords of the Lineages” (*Rigs gsum mgon po*, i.e., the three great bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajrapāṇi) while at Dezhung, because to be able to give the full *Collection of Sādhana*s later in Minyak, Dezhung Rinpoche would need to have completed this retreat. This Dezhung Rinpoche did.⁴⁶¹



30. Riders leaving a nomad encampment in southern Amdo in the 1930s.

In late spring or early summer 1940, not long after Dezhung Rinpoche's arrival in Dezhung, news arrived of the death at Ngor in Tsang of Dezhung Rinpoche's dear friend and vajra-brother, the young Thartse abbatial candidate Champa Namkha Kunzang Tenpay Gyaltzen.⁴⁶² The candidate had recently been elevated to the Ngor abbacy, but after just four months as abbot, at the age of only thirty-three, he suddenly fell ill and died during the break in the winter teachings when most of the monks at Ngor had gone to visit Sakya for the great Mdos chen ceremony. This was a terrible blow to Dezhung Rinpoche and also a sad shock to Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche and the whole Ngorpa tradition.⁴⁶³ Many hopes had been placed in this young lama, and he had been particularly close to Dezhung Rinpoche from the time of their receiving the *Path with Its Fruit* together at Tharlam under Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. Dezhung Rinpoche later stated that he believed that had

this Thartse Shabdrung not died so young, he would have become as great a scholar for the Ngörpa tradition as Gorampa Sönam Sengge himself.⁴⁶⁴

After completing the Three Lords of the Lineages retreat, Dezhung Rinpoche perceived clear signs of his impending death (*'chi ltas*). The main omen was a dream in which he rode naked on horseback up to a group of people who were also naked. Therefore he entered a retreat on White Tārā, practicing all the next day. That night his horse, a fine animal, suddenly disappeared. Someone had stolen it. But the danger of his own premature death, he later believed, had been averted by this practice.⁴⁶⁵

Some of the people of Dezhung were outraged at this theft. They insisted on forming a search party and tracking down the culprit. But Dezhung Rinpoche told them, “Never mind! I don’t need the horse. I am just paying back my old karmic debts.”

Hearing this conciliatory answer, Anjam Rinpoche was relieved. He did not want to see the problem worsen to the point of violent acts of revenge and further feuding, which could easily happen in cases of horse theft among nomads.⁴⁶⁶

Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche also told Dezhung Rinpoche that he would have obstacles while traveling and that he ought first to do a retreat for Mahākāla, which he did. Then nomad patrons invited him here and there to their tents to teach and perform rituals, and one presented him with a new horse. (Later, in Dezhung and Minyak, pious donors offered him *many* horses.) He performed initiations, rites, and the recitation of text-transmissions, especially for a number of new monks who had not yet properly started their training. There followed many more requests for initiations and instructions, as well as to perform ceremonies for living and deceased lay patrons—all in all, a busy and difficult time, though in the meantime he had received many offerings.⁴⁶⁷ The main initiations he gave in Dezhung to large gatherings were those for White Tārā, Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig*) and Akṣobhya (*Mi 'khrug pa*).⁴⁶⁸

While in Dezhung he had a lama perform a *pra-phab* mirror-prognostication, asking how it would turn out if he went to Minyak to teach. Seen in the vision was “A lama is seated on a throne.” This he interpreted as a very good sign, and he felt more confident of his coming success.⁴⁶⁹

Accompanying him to Dezhung and Minyak as both his personal attendant (*gsol dpon*) and business manager (*gnyer pa*) was the Tharlam monk and distant cousin Kunzang Shedrup, who was with him the whole time until he returned to Tharlam six years later. Also traveling with him at least as far

as Minyak Rikhü was his brother-in-law Könyak (b. ca. 1906). Könyak had been a gold- and silversmith but had given this up and devoted himself to trading and other business pursuits to build up the estate of the Khangsip house into which he had married. He was an excellent appraiser, and many people came to get his opinion on the value of gold- or silverwork, jewels,



31. Lama traveling with entourage through Kham, 1947.

guns, horses, and other items. On one occasion he did go back to his vocation as a goldsmith to fashion a special reliquary box for Dezhung Rinpoche, whom he highly respected. Dezhung Rinpoche carried the reliquary with him the rest of his life.⁴⁷⁰

1941: The Death of Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche

While in the Dezhung region, Dezhung Rinpoche spent much of his time teaching and performing rituals among the black tents of the nomadic people. One day in late spring of 1941, as he was traveling from one nomadic

encampment to another, he and his party, which included his brother-in-law Könyak, had to cross a high ridge between encampments. Suddenly Dezhung Rinpoche told the others he wanted to stop. He sat down apart from the others, during which time he had a vivid vision of seeing and talking with Gatön Ngawang Lekpa as if through a small “window.” Gatön Ngawang Lekpa was giving him final words of instruction.

Dezhung Rinpoche realized his teacher was dying and said, “I must come immediately!”

“No,” replied Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, “You stay there. Don’t come.”

When Könyak came back to get him, Dezhung Rinpoche said he had been taking a rest. Two or three weeks later, a messenger arrived in Lithang from Tharlam announcing the death of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. When Dezhung Rinpoche heard this news definitively, he stopped his other activities and performed the Sakya Paṇḍita guru-worship in Lekpa Rinpoche’s honor, presiding at the head of the Dezhung monks for seven days.

Afterward they calculated the time of Gatön’s death, which had been a little after noon on the twenty-ninth day of the third lunar month (the month of the Virgo Spica asterism, *zla ba nag pa*, i.e., May 25, 1941), the day Dezhung Rinpoche had stopped on the ridge to rest.⁴⁷¹ According to what Könyak later told his niece, the rest of that day Dezhung Rinpoche did not act normally. He was unusually quiet and just did his own prayers, not talking to others. Könyak himself was very skeptical about most lamas, but he had a lot of faith in Dezhung Rinpoche.

Dezhung Rinpoche normally did not talk about such experiences. Later, in America, when he did speak about it once at his niece’s insistence, he told her, “It was a dream—like seeing faraway things through a small window.”⁴⁷²

When Dezhung Rinpoche had departed for Lithang and Minyak, Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche had been staying in his own private quarters on the top of the Tharlam temple. But shortly before his death, though he was sick, Gatön said, “It would not be right to leave a corpse in the monastery,”⁴⁷³ and he had himself carried in a palanquin across the stream and into the residence of Dezhung Rinpoche, where Ngawang Nyima was also staying. Ngawang Nyima lived in the interior room, while Gatön Ngawang Lekpa resided in the room near the entrance, receiving visitors in the open courtyard there.

One day Dezhung Rinpoche’s niece (Sönam Tshedzom) and youngest

sister (the nun Ane Chime) brought offerings of yogurt, cheese, and so forth for the great master. Because women over a certain age were not allowed in, Ane Chime had to wait outside, but his niece, a little girl of only six, could bring in the offerings. Gatön Ngawang Lekpa picked her up and placed her on his seat, patted her head, and told her to recite the famous verse of refuge-taking and bodhicitta by Atiśa that begins: *sangs rgyas chos dang*. Normally he would not have touched a girl, but as she was Dezhung Rinpoche's niece, he treated her specially. Afterward, her great uncle Ngawang Nyima told her, "You were greatly blessed!"⁴⁷⁴

Within less than a week, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa passed away. On the day of his death, he completed all his usual morning meditation practices and then came out into the open courtyard area and took his seat facing west. He asked those who had come to meet him: "Have you finished that scroll painting showing the realm of Sukhāvātī yet?" (He had previously ordered that such a thangka be painted by an accomplished artist.)

They answered, "Yes, sir, it is finished and already framed."

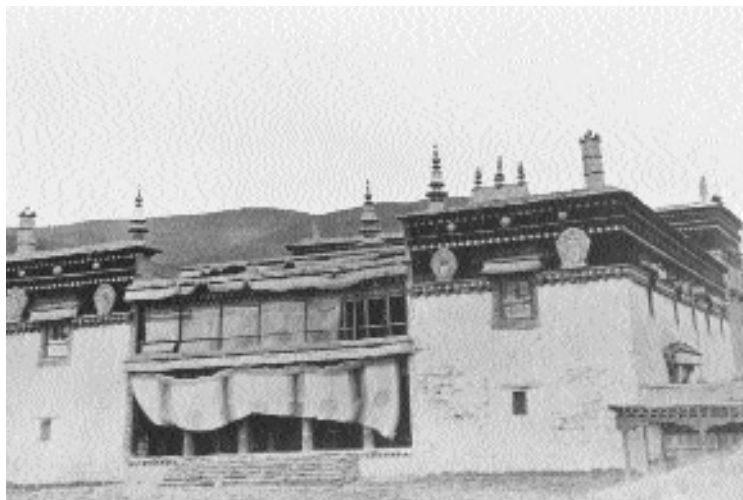
"Then bring it and hang it in front of me," he told them. Accordingly they put up the painting before his seat.⁴⁷⁵

He then laid out three piles of sacred pills and medicines. He asked where his younger brother was. When told he was eating breakfast, he said, "Summon him. I am going to die." In his presence sat the Tharlam Khenpo Ngawang Rinchen and a small number of other attendants and monks. His brother Kun dga' came, and when he heard what Gatön had said, he began to cry and lament. Lekpa Rinpoche comforted him, saying, "You have served me good food, butter, and other things and also helped me in many ways when I was in fifteen years of retreat. The merit of these acts will be very powerful and beneficial for you." He distributed some of the sacred pills (from one pile) to those present.

Gatön then sent everyone away except Khenpo Ngawang Rinchen, to whom he gave a third of the sacred pills. Sitting at Gatön's side, Ngawang Rinchen began to weep, but Lekpa Rinpoche told him, "There is no real need to cry, for I am going to Sukhāvātī, and not to some hell realm where there would be reason for tears."⁴⁷⁶

So saying, Gatön partook of his share of the sacred pills and medicines dissolved in grape or raisin juice. Then, staring intently at the beautiful scroll painting of Buddha Amitābha and the pure land of Sukhāvātī before him, he recited prayers to be reborn in the buddhfield of Sukhāvātī. He sat upright, took his rosary in hand, and slowly recited not more than one

round of *māṇis*. He paused, placing his hands in his lap in meditation posture and entering meditative concentration. A little after noon, his body jerked with a faint “hic” sound, which happened two more times, after which the great master passed away to the realm of Sukhāvati.⁴⁷⁷



32. Lithang Gönchen monastery in southern Kham, ca. 1900.

Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche was asked to come to Tharlam to preside over the final rites. He did not go but asked to be sent relics after the cremation.⁴⁷⁸ In Dezhung, Anjam Rinpoche commissioned to be built a life-sized, gilt-copper image of Gatön, as well as a reliquary stūpa. He made great offerings, sponsored the recitation of the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*) one hundred thousand times, and in many other ways worked to fulfill the final intent of his master.⁴⁷⁹ Dezhung Rinpoche no doubt took part in the extensive memorial ceremonies conducted in Dezhung, and from this time on he was the head of Tharlam monastery, though it would be some years before he returned.

Gatön had also left a final written message for Dezhung Rinpoche. Mainly he instructed him to practice virtue and no evil, to observe the moral discipline perfectly, and to recite the mantra *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ*.⁴⁸⁰

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE's visit to Dezhung was a success not only religiously but also materially. By the end of his stay his patrons had given him seventeen stallions, some twenty goats (*rwa skam*), and forty yaks or yak-cow hybrids, along with many other things.⁴⁸¹ Then, late in the iron-snake year (late 1941/early 1942), Dezhung Rinpoche concluded his stay among the Dezhung nomads and said farewell to his disciples there. He started east for the border district of Minyak Rab sgang, heading principally for the Sakyapa monastery of Rikhü Dar rgyas gling, which was the mother establishment for a number of Sakya monasteries in those parts.

Dezhung Rinpoche's route led him first south to the center of the Lithang district, the great Gelukpa monastery of Lithang Göncen and its surrounding town.⁴⁸² Here he stopped a day or two and made offerings. Then, together with his retinue of a few horsemen from Dezhung, he struck out, again eastward, for the nomadic district of (Lithang) Othok. As they were ascending toward the higher nomadic lands, they met a party of horsemen coming down, headed by the Othok chieftain, A chos. The Dezhung horsemen said they were prepared to escort Rinpoche to the main encampment of the chieftain. But A chos told them that although he himself was obliged to go to Lithang Göncen to receive religious teachings, he would send messengers back to his people calling for an escort. Dezhung Rinpoche should wait there, he said, and in two or three days a party of Othok horsemen would come to escort him the rest of the way through Othok territory.⁴⁸³ So this is what they did.

After briefly visiting Othok, Rinpoche was escorted farther east to Nyag chu kha, a district on the shores of the great Nyag River (Nyag chu), which formed the border between Lithang and Minyak.⁴⁸⁴ He crossed the river and traveled eastward into the settled farming area of 'O rong, where he was met by a horseman sent at the orders of the Rdzong'phel tshang noble



Map 2. Northeastern Kham.

family to escort him the remaining stages of the journey into western Minyak territory as far as the monastery of Kapshi. After a brief visit at Kapshi, Dezhung Rinpoche continued eastward toward Rikhü.⁴⁸⁵

1942

When he finally reached Rikhü Dar rgyas gling monastery (also called Rikhü Dpal ldan bsam grub chos dar gling), Dezhung Rinpoche was received in an incomparably grand fashion by the Rikhü Kusho Jigme Chökyi Öser (1892–1956).⁴⁸⁶ The latter was the most powerful Sakyapa lama in Minyak, being the head of all the twelve Sakyapa branch monasteries of Rikhü monastery.⁴⁸⁷ He was the main patron who had invited Dezhung Rinpoche there. Being both a religious and secular leader, even non-Sakyapa monasteries in his domains followed his orders.

Beginning in the first lunar month of the water-horse year (February or March 1942), his own thirty-seventh year, Dezhung Rinpoche began to transmit the great *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) compilation of initiations and sādhanas, for which some seven hundred students gathered, including about five hundred monks.⁴⁸⁸ He received great offerings from the lamas, nobles, and the general assembly of disciples. Besides Rikhü Kusho, his main students included Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim (1909–ca. 1967)⁴⁸⁹ and Kapshi Trulku Losal Thubten (ca. early 1920s?–1957).⁴⁹⁰ Many geshe and trulkus from the Geluk, Kagyü, and Nyingma traditions also requested the teachings.⁴⁹¹

Dezhung Rinpoche began by bestowing the general initiation of the “three families” (*Rigs gsum spyi dbang*) of the Kriyatantra system and then gave the complete set of initiations, instructions, and text-transmissions for the whole of the next five months.⁴⁹² The teachings he gave also included the initiations for Hevajra (from the Vajrāvali collection), the Thirteen Golden Dharmas of the Sakyapa (*Gser chos bcu gsum*), and the initiation and instructions for the Outer Protector (*Mgon po phyi khrid*).⁴⁹³

Rikhü monastery had been founded by Sbas don Sherab Gyaltzen, a disciple of Serdokchen Pañchen Shākya Chokden (1428–1507).⁴⁹⁴ For the first century or two, its monks went to Shākya Chokden’s monastic seat at Serdokchen in Tsang for ordination, but after a certain time they began to go to Sakya as their mother monastery (*gdan sa*). The three hundred fifty or four hundred monks of Rikhü monastery included many monks drawn from its branch monasteries, the two largest and most distinguished of which were Chukmo monastery and Pal Lhagang. The abbots of all twelve branch monasteries were appointed for two- or three-year terms from Rikhü. The abbots of the latter two monasteries, however, had the higher rank of *khri pa* and a correspondingly higher insignia. For its part, the local head monastery

of Rikhü had twelve regional dormitories (*kham tshan*), one for each branch monastery. Each of these regional dormitories appointed two of their best monks to act in the governing body of the monastery.⁴⁹⁵



33. Rikhü Kusho in his younger days.

After concluding his initial extensive teachings at Minyak Rikhü, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited by his new students to the various other Sakyapa monasteries in Minyak. At each monastery he visited, he performed consecration (*rab gnas*) rites and received longevity offerings of “body, speech, and mind supports” (*sku gsung thugs rten*) in return. He visited Pal Lhagang monastery first, where he gave Vajrabhairava teachings in the Rwa tradition (*Rwa khrid mkha’ ’gro snyan brgyud*) and initiations for the thirteen-deity maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava, Sarvavid-Vairocana, and so forth. He also performed Mahākāla rites. Because the monastery was poor, he returned all the offerings he received while there.⁴⁹⁶

Afterward he went to the monastery of Chukmo, where he gave the text-transmission of the four volumes of tantric teachings from Gorampa’s

collected writings, as well as the initiation for Cakrasamvara.⁴⁹⁷ From there he went to Lha 'bri monastery, where he also gave an initiation for Cakrasamvara.



34. Dezhung Rinpoche in Minyak, 1943.

He returned in 1943 to the main monastery of Rikhü Dar rgyas gling, where, at the scholastic seminary, he gave the text-transmission for the collected works of the five Sakya founders to an assembly of several hundred lamas and monks, headed by Rikhü Kusho. He also bestowed the initiations for Sarvavid-Vairocana, the nine deities of Amitāyus, White Tārā (*'Od dkar drug sbrag*), and other minor initiations, including some for longevity.⁴⁹⁸ At some point he is also said to have given the text-transmission for the collected writings of Gorampa.⁴⁹⁹

At the upper retreat of Rikhü, at the invitation of his great patron Rikhü Kusho, he gave to a restricted group of disciples the initiations for the Path and Cause Initiations of Hevajra. He also gave special initiations and instructions for the Six-Handed Protector (*Mgon po phyag drug pa*) and the outer instructions of Mahākāla, including detailed yogic instructions. Similarly, he gave in great detail special instructions on the “Cycle of Three Red Deities” (*Dmar po skor gsum*: Red Gaṇeṣa, Ḍakkirāja, and Kurukulle).⁵⁰⁰ The last instructions he gave after doing a Kurukulle retreat. At Rikhü he also stayed in a White Tārā retreat.⁵⁰¹ Now and then Rinpoche found time to explore the extraordinarily rich library of the monastery.⁵⁰²

By then it was about 1943, Dezhung Rinpoche's second year in Minyak.⁵⁰³ Two similar photographs of Dezhung Rinpoche exist, both taken this year on the same occasion at Minyak Rikhü by Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim (1909–ca. 1967) from Khams gsum grags (“Ku se brag”) monastery in Minyak, whom Dezhung Rinpoche got to know quite well.⁵⁰⁴ The latter had been among Dezhung Rinpoche's disciples at the *Collection of Sādhana*s teachings and was a colorful figure. He could speak Chinese, Central

Tibetan, and several border dialects, had flown in an airplane, and possessed his own camera. Some years later, during a prolonged visit to Central Tibet, he was granted the title of Huthuktu or *tshogs chen sprul sku*.⁵⁰⁵ Also at Rikhü was Brag g.yab Byang chub, the *dge rgan* of the monastery, who had the same function as seminary master (*mkhan po*), though he humbly refused that title.⁵⁰⁶

In about 1943 or 1944, Dezhung Rinpoche also visited many small communities around Rikhü within a day's journey by horse. In all those places he encouraged his disciples to join him in performing eight sets of *smying gnas* two-day fasts, following the rituals of Avalokiteśvara. The places he visited included: Zhag nang, Ri rtse, A ja grong, and Kya kye, east of Rikhü; Mang si, Ta ra phog, and La li shing, west of Rikhü; and Mi'u rong, north of Rikhü.⁵⁰⁷

At about this time Dezhung Rinpoche met the treasure-finder of the Go log Gser thal country, O rgyan phrin las gling pa, or as he was more widely known, A paṃ Tertön (d. ca. 1944), who, after traveling around for a while in Minyak, died there.⁵⁰⁸ Before he died, he claimed he would be reborn soon as a son of the Sakya Khön family. Dezhung Rinpoche discussed this with Rikhü Kusho, who remarked: "Some say he is an excellent lama; others say he is a hoax. Well, by next year we'll know whether he is gold or brass! If no son is born to one of the two Sakya palaces, he will be proven a fake!"⁵⁰⁹

Circa 1943–1944

From Rikhü district, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited westward to the monastery of Kapshi, the main seat of the famed fourteenth-century Sakyapa scholar of Minyak, Khenchen Kapshipa Rikpay Sengge (1287–1375).⁵¹⁰ The main lama of the temple, who was then in residence, was his student, the young Kapshi Trulku Losal Thubten (ca. early 1920s–1956). At Kapshi there were about ninety or one hundred monks. In addition to the resident monks who had gone to Sakya for ordination, there were a number of geshe and monks who had gone to Central Tibet and received their training at the great Gelukpa monasteries.⁵¹¹ Because the Gelukpa-trained geshe there had already received the initiation for Guhyasamāja, Dezhung Rinpoche was able to give them the Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma) teachings directly. He also gave the initiations for numerous other tantric tutelary deities (*yi dam*) and Dharma protectors.

While traveling here and there in Minyak, Dezhung Rinpoche gave innumerable long-life empowerments, initiations, and text-transmission readings. On at least one occasion (at Ri tse or Spe 'dze?), he and an assembly of monks and practitioners collectively recited one hundred million (*dung gyur cig*) six-syllable *māṇi* mantras of Avalokiteśvara.⁵¹²

In due course he went to Dartsedo (Chin.: Tachienlu), the main trading town in this border district with China and the chief city of Minyak. This city of less than forty thousand inhabitants, with its massive Tibetan-style houses, was located in a narrow gorge at the confluence (*mdo*) of the Dar and Rtse rivers, which gave the place its name. The town was perpetually shaken by the roar of the two powerful, turbulent rivers.⁵¹³ It lay at an elevation of more than eight thousand feet and was the terminus of the many yak caravans that carried Chinese tea to central Tibet in ceaseless succession.⁵¹⁴ Local people said that the town had once been larger and more prosperous, but that in the nineteenth century a great flood and landslide had destroyed it and its inhabitants.⁵¹⁵ In the early 1940s, Dartsedo was counted as the capital of the newly created Chinese province of Sikang.

There were three or four small Sakyapa monasteries in and around Dartsedo (including a Ngor dgon pa, Sakya dgon pa, and Mgo thon dgon pa), and Dezhung Rinpoche stayed mainly at the Ngorpa one. At one of the others he gave teachings of the protectors Bhūtaḍāmara and Mahākāla Gurgyi Gönpö with his retinue of eight deities. He found that the shrines in the Mahākāla chapels of the Sakyapa monasteries of Dartsedo were not well maintained. For instance, the sacrificial cakes (*gtor ma*) were cracked and falling apart: they had been made of nothing but ordinary parched-barley flour (*tsam pa*) and water. Remarking, "If we humans can't eat them, how could these be a good offering for the deities?" he had the shrines cleaned up and sponsored the offering of excellent butter *gtor ma* cakes that could last one year.⁵¹⁶

His brother, Kunzang Nyima, arrived in Minyak in 1943 or 1944, and accompanied Dezhung Rinpoche to different parts of Minyak.⁵¹⁷ Now Rinpoche's brother-in-law, the trader Könyak (Könchok Chödar), arrived to make preparations for accompanying Rinpoche back to Tharlam and for related business. Könyak had much trading to do in order to convert the many offerings Dezhung Rinpoche had received into a large consignment of high-quality tea for Central Tibet.⁵¹⁸

The chief lama of Dartsedo, the Gsang Lama ("Soong Lama"), was devoted to Dezhung Rinpoche.⁵¹⁹ Dezhung Rinpoche performed the "fire

ceremony for the four activities” (*las bzhi'i sbyin sreg*) for him and gave him many teachings.⁵²⁰ To the Jakla king (Lcags la rgyal po), the traditional ruler of the Jakla principality, whose capital was Dartsedo, Dezhung Rinpoche



35. Frontier town of Tachienlu (Dartsedo), looking down the valley toward China.

gave initiations for Avalokiteśvara and longevity blessings, and also performed consecration rites (*rab gnas*).⁵²¹ He visited the home of the Wasi skyabs (or Dbal gsas tshang, pronounced “Waschab”) noble family, owners of a great inn and trading center, bestowing on them the initiation of White Mahākāla for their increased prosperity.⁵²² He stayed seven days in the protector’s chapel of the family, performing rites. All together he stayed about seventy-five days in Dartsedo.

After that, he returned to Rikhü monastery, where he gave novice-monk (*dge tshul*) vows to some thirty neophytes. All in all he stayed about seven months at Rikhü monastery with Rikhü Kusho, the lord (*dpon po*) of all the Sakyapa monasteries in Minyak.

When he found a good occasion (ca. 1944 or 1945), Dezhung Rinpoche went to Khams gsum grags (pronounced “Khu si drag”) in southeast Minyak, home of another of his students at Rikhü, Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim (ca. 1909–ca. 1967), who had been born in Minyak ’Dra khog.⁵²³ At Khams gsum grags monastery, near the famous peak Minyak Gangkar,

he gave many initiations, including that of Sarvavid-Vairocana, and performed the four fire offerings (*las bzhi'i sbyin sreg*) in a long form, taking four days for each of the four.⁵²⁴



36. Jakla King Phüntshok Namgyal and his son Jakla Gyaltsen in a group photo, August 1951. Second and third seated figures from the right.

Then Dezhung Rinpoche visited the nearby Kagyü monastery of Bo Gangkar, in the same vicinity but at a higher altitude than Khams gsum grags. This was the home monastery of the famous master Bo Gangkar Trulku Karma Drupgyü Chökyi Sengge (1891–1957),⁵²⁵ a tutor of the Sixteenth Karmapa and a scholar whom the Situ Pema Wanchok Gyalpo had called “the most learned man in all the hundred and eighty Karma Kagyüpa monasteries of central Tibet and Kham.”⁵²⁶ He had also received teachings from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa⁵²⁷ and Khenchen Shenga,⁵²⁸ among others.

Dezhung Rinpoche first met the Bo Gangkar Trulku in Minyak when they both performed rites at the same funeral ceremony. They spoke a little, finding they liked each other. Dezhung Rinpoche said, “I’ve heard of you and wanted to meet you.” The lama expressed the same sentiment, and they both were glad to have met spontaneously, without making any special effort. When Dezhung Rinpoche expressed his wish to visit Gangkar monastery, the latter said, “Please come any time at all! You will be most welcome!”

Later Dezhung Rinpoche reflected: “Of all the masters in one hundred

and eighty Kagyüpa monasteries, he is the greatest. He is very learned and observes the discipline purely. He has excellent meditation practice, and his qualities as a teacher are wonderful [though he was extremely learned, for



37. Three lamas of Minyak: Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim (left), Minyak Rikhü Önpö Trulku (center), and Gathar Kugyal Trulku (right). Winter 1957.

instance, he was still very humble]. So if I am going to study under a Kagyüpa lama, I'll never find a better one than him!"⁵²⁹

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed at Bo Gangkar for seven months, studying many texts under Gangkar Rinpoche, including the great Tibetan-grammar commentary by Situ and the second chapter of Daṇḍin's poetics. When studying poetics, it was the custom for the student to write practice examples (*dpe brjod*) for each poetical figure (*rgyan*) and show them to the teacher. Dezhung Rinpoche's examples won his master's praise.

When they met a third time, in Minyak in the winter of 1955/56, at the funeral of the Rikhü Kusho, Gangkar Rinpoche asked him, "Do you still have those exercises you wrote?"

"No," Rinpoche answered, "I threw them out at some point."

"What a pity!" exclaimed the master. "They would have been useful to me!"⁵³⁰



38. Approaching Minyak Gangkar monastery, 1929. A Naxi assistant of Joseph Rock stands before a flowering rhododendron.

Dezhung Rinpoche received from this master numerous Kagyüpa empowerments and instructions: initiations for the White Tārā in the Mar lugs tradition (i.e., of Mal Lotsāwa?) and the five deities of Cakrasamvara; the Phag mo blessing; the blessings for the Kagyüpa trio of founding masters (Marpa, Mila, and Dwags po Lha rje Gampopa); the reading-transmission for the life and songs of Milarepa; the *Bka' brgyud mgur mtsho* collection of songs of realization; the initiation for the *Rgyal stabs spyi brlugs* in the Phur pa tradition of Ratna gling pa; the Six Dharmas of Nāropa in extensive, medium, and brief lengths according to the manuals of Gampo Jennga Tashi Namgyal, the Sixth Shamar, and the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje (1555–1603); initiations and instructions on the Karma Kagyüpa tradition of Severance (*gcod*), and initiations for the four-armed Mahākāla and Bernakchen. He also received instructions on Dza Paltrül's famous introductory manual, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*).⁵³¹ Dezhung Rinpoche also requested from him the initiations and

instructions for the Jatshön Nyingpo revealed teaching (*gter ma*) *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus* and for Jigme Lingpa's Great Perfection instructions *Kbrid yig ye shes bla ma* together with the *Rig pa'i rtsal dbang*.⁵³² He also received Paltrül's Great Perfection instructions *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg*s.



39. Minyak Gangkar monastery at the head of the Kongkar Longwa valley in 1928.

At Bo Gangkar, Dezhung Rinpoche gave to Gangkar Rinpoche and his monks the initiations for Orange Mañjuśrī and also Black Mañjuśrī. In the monastery he also performed a three-day consecration ceremony and the vase consecration of White Mahākāla for three days. To a large gathering of local people he gave an Avalokiteśvara initiation and blessing for longevity.⁵³³ Gangkar Rinpoche praised him highly to his own monastic students and the lay patrons, saying, “That such a great master should now come to visit our remote border area is a rare wonder, like the saying of ‘a golden boulder coming through the door’ (?) (*gser gyi pha bong sgo 'grim*). Hence you all must pay respect to him, and if you can establish a religious connection with him, that would be most fortunate!”⁵³⁴

Dezhung Rinpoche also gave many teachings to Gangkar Rinpoche personally and before leaving made extensive offerings to him.⁵³⁵ Later he considered him one of his main fundamental teachers (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*), reciting his supplication-prayer every morning as part of a long offering prayer before his morning tea.⁵³⁶ When he mentioned Gangkar Trulku to others in Minyak, he did so with highest respect, calling him “Gangkar Dorjechang.”⁵³⁷



40. Minyak Gangkar Trulku.

1945

Returning to Minyak Rikhü monastery, Dezhung Rinpoche did a long-life retreat for Tshe sgrub Sgra mi snyan. At the scriptural seminary there, he bestowed the initiation for the Sakya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga on the teachers and students. His disciple the noble-lama Rikhü Kusho requested the Lion-Headed Ḍākiṇī (*Seng gdong ma*) initiation for himself and a select group of monks, who then went into retreat. This lama also requested the initiation of Vaiśrāvaṇa. On numerous occasions Dezhung Rinpoche also performed there the four-day initiation for Red Avalokiteśvara, giving it to large gatherings of the local populace. While in Minyak, his students requested him to give the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings, but he refused, saying, “My master Lekpa Rinpoche did not instruct me to give the *Path with Its Fruit* here.”⁵³⁸

In 1945 Dezhung Rinpoche composed a versified colophon for the block-print edition of Kapshipa Rikpay Sengge's biography and a brief related work, which are found in the Indian reprint edition.⁵³⁹ Some of Dezhung Rinpoche's other minor writings, including a long-life prayer (*zhabs brtan*) he composed for himself and a number of offering liturgies for local deities, are still possessed by monks in Minyak.⁵⁴⁰



41. Yaks awaiting their loads of tea bound for Central Tibet.

One of his main patrons in Minyak was the powerful Zam pa kha pa family, which gave him an excellent female yak near the end of his stay there.⁵⁴¹ To this day Dezhung Rinpoche is remembered reverently by many older monks and lay patrons throughout Minyak, who refer to him as “Longri Trulku” (Lung rigs Sprul sku), “Longri Rinpoche” (Lung rigs Rinpoche), or—as is more usual—simply as “[Our] Basic Master” (*Rtsa ba'i bla ma*). In the 1950s, a life-sized image of him was erected by his faithful disciples in a chapel at Rikhü.⁵⁴²

During his extended stay in Minyak, Dezhung Rinpoche also was obliged

several times to help recognize the rebirths of trulkus, including once at the main monastery of Rikhü itself. Dezhung Rinpoche did not want to accept this responsibility, but it was impossible to refuse, and this was very hard on



42. Yak caravan in southern Tsang, 1937.

him. With the Rikhü Önpö Trulku in particular, he was afraid the selection might go wrong, so he went into retreat and performed his divinations strictly and carefully.⁵⁴³ Early in 1943, Dezhung Rinpoche had helped perform the funeral rites for the previous Rikhü Kathok Önpö at Lhagang. At that time he had been asked whether there would be a rebirth of that lama, and if so, where. He replied, “If you look at the omen of the smoke from the cremation fire, it went first in the direction of Zhwa brag gangs and then turned eastward. He will probably be reborn, and in the east.” Indeed it was in the east, at Dartsedo in the Wasi family (Wa se skyabs or Dbal gsa tschang), that the young trulku was later located.⁵⁴⁴

*Pilgrimage to Sakya and the
Holy Sites of Milarepa*

IN LATE 1946, his forty-first year, Dezhung Rinpoche completed his long visit to Minyak and left the far-eastern borderlands to begin the 880 kilometer journey back to Ga district and his home monastery. By this time he had gathered a large number of offerings that he planned to take in due course to central Tibet and offer at the great monasteries of Sakya and Ngor. Accompanying him on the return journey were his brother, Doctor Kunzang Nyima; his brother-in-law, Könyak; and several monk-disciples from Minyak. His personal attendants were Kunzang Shedrup from Tharlam and the Sakya monk Gendun Targye, both of whom served Dezhung Rinpoche well.⁵⁴⁵

On the way home he made several stops to give religious teachings. For instance, he gave instructions on the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* to the seminary master and students at Dzokchen monastery.⁵⁴⁶ He is also said to have received privately some teachings from one of the important lamas in residence at Dzokchen.⁵⁴⁷

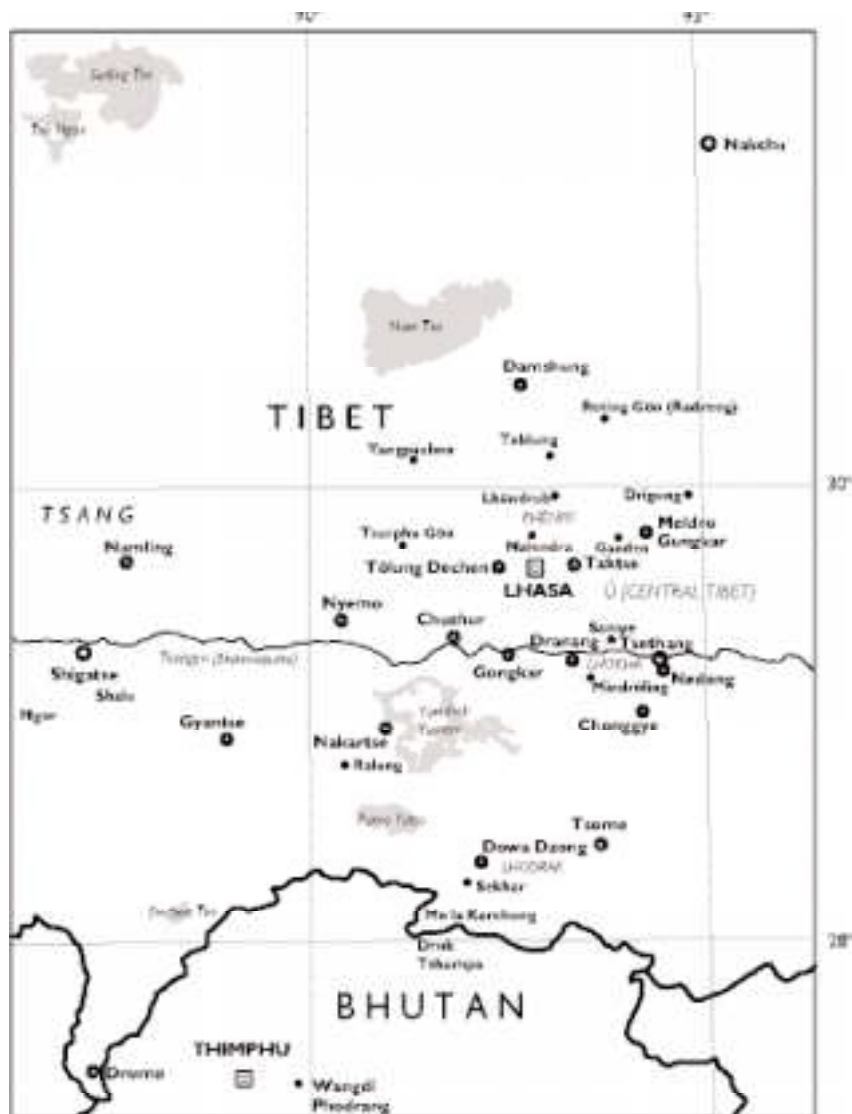
In late 1946 or early 1947, Dezhung Rinpoche arrived at Tharlam after an absence of almost seven years. He remained there for about six months, sitting at the head of the assembly of monks and visiting his uncle and other relatives. As presents for his aged uncle Ngawang Nyima, he had brought back from the Chinese borderland special flower seeds and tubers, as well as two talkative parrots with green feathers and red claws and beaks.

He stayed in his lama residence (*bla brang*), from the roof of which there flew a yellow banner of victory some six feet high. His was the newest of three such residences at Tharlam. A number of his students from Minyak had come with him, including two monks who were skilled tailors and experts at making beautiful sacred embroideries. One of these, A khu Chos grags, helped sew in Tharlam for several months before returning to Minyak.



Map 3. Western Tsang Province.

During this time Dezhung Rinpoche and his uncle completed the reliquary stupa at Tharlam for their revered guru Nyiga Dorjechang, who had died about eleven years before, in late 1925.⁵⁴⁸ The cremation and related ceremonies had been carried out by the life-long meditator (*tshe mtshams pa*) Nyi bzang (Nyi ma bzang po?) from Jyekundo monastery, and with some



Map 4. Eastern Tsang and Ü Provinces.

of the relics a large *caitya* in the style of a “bodhi stūpa” (*byang chub mchod rten*) had been erected on a spot near Dzinda village. Other relics were handed over to Tharlam monastery for enshrinement, but no reliquary stūpa had been built because the monastery could not afford it. Ngawang Nyima and Dezhung Rinpoche had each made a contribution toward a

fine gilt reliquary and had also requested contributions from others in Gapa, though they succeeded in gaining only two other large donations—one from the noble-monk Dra'u Behu Tendzin Gyaltzen and the other from Dzinda Dge rgan Ngag dbang bsam grub. Now, however, Dezhung Rinpoche had many more resources at his disposal, so he and Uncle Ngawang Nyima commissioned, as Nyiga Rinpoche's "inner reliquary," a gilt-copper caitya measuring four of Dezhung Rinpoche's hand-spans (*mtsho*) in height. It was in the style of a *dbyen-sdum* stūpa (the same type that Dezhung Rinpoche's own reliquary stūpa was to be in Bodhnath, Nepal). This they completed by filling it with sacred objects and performing a ritual vivification (*rab gnas*) ceremony.⁵⁴⁹

During these months Dezhung Rinpoche also got to know his one and only niece, Sönam Tshedzom (b. February 16, 1934),⁵⁵⁰ much better. She was now eleven or twelve and (following his instructions communicated by letter about three years previously, from Minyak) had been attending the local school, the only girl in the village to do so.⁵⁵¹

This niece was the daughter of Dezhung Rinpoche's younger sister Phüntsoḱ Drölma (b. 1913), who wed the Jyekundo *sa 'go* (district administrator and tax collector for the Chinese governor in Sining) Gönpö Tsheten (b. ca. 1899).⁵⁵² (His Chinese name was Kru Shan-krang,⁵⁵³ and this was his second marriage; he had two sons by a previous marriage.) Gönpö Tsheten served two three-year terms as *sa 'go* in Jyekundo before returning to Sining in about 1938.⁵⁵⁴ He is believed to have died in Sining in the early 1950s under house arrest.⁵⁵⁵

As a monk and lama from a branch monastery of Ngor, it was imperative that Dezhung Rinpoche eventually go to the Ngor mother monastery in Tsang province of central Tibet and there receive the *Path with Its Fruit* from the abbot. Having accumulated much wealth during the years he taught in Minyak, he was now ready to make offerings at Ngor and Sakya.

Another reason for the journey was to accompany his aged mother on pilgrimage. Both Gatön Ngawang Lekpa and Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö had stressed to him the importance of his mother, and both had recited the sūtra *Drin gzab pa'i mdo*, which reminds one of the kindness of one's mother. Therefore Dezhung Rinpoche had decided he would definitely take his mother with him to the holy places of central Tibet.⁵⁵⁶

Fall 1947: Departure for Central and Western Tibet

Dezhung Rinpoche and his party—including his mother and his youngest sister, the nun Ane Chime—left in the fall of 1947 for the west. With their group were four monks (Ngag dbang tshe ring, Kun dga' bstan 'dzin, Yon tan dar rgyas, and Gendun Targye, the last being the Sakya monk returning from Minyak), one steward (Kunzang Shedrup), and forty-two horses and mules. The many yaks loaded with the main offerings of tea would



43. The Sakya northern monastery complex viewed from the east.

arrive later, when brother-in-law Könyak came the following year. For the first six days of the journey, as far as Nakchukha, where duties were levied and Central Tibetan government control became more effective, their group was accompanied by an armed and mounted party of relatives, including Rinpoche's younger brother, Kunzang Nyima. This escort provided both a respectful send-off and protection against bandits.

The group's destination at this stage was not Lhasa but Shigatse and Sakya in Tsang. They took basically the northern caravan route, but they followed trails of nomads where the grazing was better for their animals, though this made the danger from bandits greater.⁵⁵⁷ The journey to Shigatse took a little more than one month. From Shigatse they traveled the remaining distance to Sakya, four days of slow travel. In Dezhung Rinpoche's immediate party were his mother, his sister Ane Chime, the monk

Ngag dbang tshe ring (his “nephew”), and another nun, Sgrol ma yongs ’dzom (a cousin).

When they finally arrived in Sakya, it was on the holiday of one of the “four [special] times” (*dus bzhi*) in the eleventh lunar month (December 1947/January 1948).⁵⁵⁸ The party was directed to a smaller “summer palace”—a sort of holiday or picnic house (*spro khang*) of the Sakya



44. The great southern monastery of Sakya, Lhakang Chenmo.

Phüntsok palace—on the grounds of a park near the Sakya throne-holder’s main summer palace. Their quarters were in the upper story of the two-story structure.⁵⁵⁹ Due to his residing there, Dezhung Rinpoche became known among the common people of Sakya as “Spro khang Trulku.”⁵⁶⁰

Soon after arriving, Dezhung Rinpoche was granted a brief audience with the incumbent Sakya throne-holder, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk (1900–1950) of the Phüntsok palace.⁵⁶¹ He respectfully offered the great lama a horse and a mule.

Not long after that, he had an audience with the Sakya *dagchen* Rinpoche of the other palace, the Drölma Palace⁵⁶²—Ngawang Kunga Rinchen (1902–1950), elder son of Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen (1871–1935).⁵⁶³ To him he also made the offering of a horse and mule. At this time Dezhung Rinpoche first met Ngawang Kunga Rinchen’s son, Āyurvajra Rinpoche (b. 1945), the future Sakya throne-holder (*khri ’dzin* = “Trizin”) who was then a

little toddler.⁵⁶⁴ In comparison with the busy throne-holder, it was much easier to get an audience and receive teachings from the Drölma palace *dagchen*.

The Sakya throne-holder, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk, was very busy preparing for his grand official visit to Central Tibet (*Dbus phebs chen mo*), during which he would be officially confirmed in his position, make offerings, and perform the Phur pa rites on behalf of H.H. the Dalai Lama and



Left: 45. Ngawang Kunga Rinchen, Dagchen of the Drölma palace in Sakya.



Right: 46. The Sakya throne-holder Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk at Sakya in 1946.

the Central Tibetan government.⁵⁶⁵ It was the duty of all Sakya throne-holders to make such a visit to Lhasa at least once, and this was a complicated and expensive affair since over one hundred Sakya officials and retainers accompanied the throne-holder to Lhasa.⁵⁶⁶ The throne-holder requested Dezhung Rinpoche to perform a prognostication (*mo*) to foretell how the visit would go. When Dezhung Rinpoche reported that the results seemed to be somewhat negative, the throne-holder asked Dezhung Rinpoche to stay in retreat one month and perform in his absence a long-life-achieving rite (*tshe sgrub*). Afterward, during the Sakya throne-holder's stay in Lhasa, the disturbances of the Radreng (Reting) conspiracy and the Sera Je rebellion occurred (in April and May 1947),⁵⁶⁷ and these were understood to be the inauspicious events that had been foretold.⁵⁶⁸

A great help to Dezhung Rinpoche from his first day in Sakya was the

tutor to the Sakya nobility Yongdzin Pönlop Shedrup Yarphel, a former student of Ngawang Lekpa who was then tutor to the Sakya Khön noble-monk Trinlay Rinpoche (Ngawang Kunga Trinlay Trashi, 1934–1998) of the Phüntsoik palace.⁵⁶⁹ He helped in arranging many introductions and other important matters.

Soon after his arrival, Dezhung Rinpoche also came into close contact with the Sakya Pönlop Mönlam (d. 1948), an old and venerable monk who had served as tutor to the incumbent Sakya Tripa, Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk, when the latter was young.⁵⁷⁰ This teacher had studied under Shenga in Kham⁵⁷¹ and had also been a disciple of the previous Dezhung Trulku, Lungrik Nyima, having received the Vajrayoginī spyod ma teachings from him. He, too, helped Rinpoche in many ways. He was influential in Sakya because he was still close to his former pupil, the throne-holder. He died not long thereafter, while Rinpoche was traveling in the western borderlands.⁵⁷²

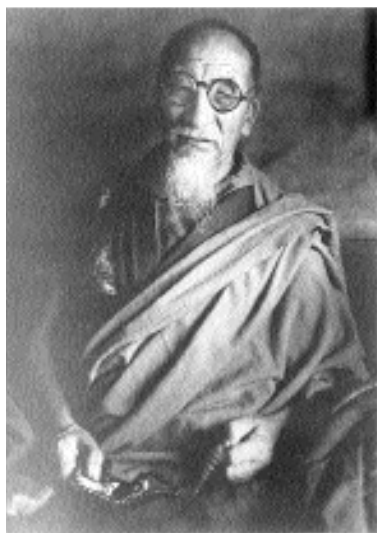
During his stay in Sakya, Dezhung Rinpoche's attendant was a tall young monk from Minyak who had a big nose, one of about fifty Minyak monks then visiting Sakya for ordination and teachings. Because of his somewhat foreign appearance, this monk was given the nickname "the American" by the common people in Sakya. In the 1970s Dezhung Rinpoche jokingly told H.H. the Sakya Trizin that this has been an omen foreshadowing his coming to America.⁵⁷³

Pilgrimage to Western Tibet in Spring 1948

After completing the rites requested by the Sakya throne-holder, Dezhung Rinpoche decided to make a pilgrimage farther westward through upper Tsang to many of the famous caves and retreats where Milarepa had meditated. He departed, accompanied by his sister Ane Chime, a maternal nephew, and another nun. At first they all traveled on foot. They left Sakya in about the second lunar month (March or April 1948), and their trail led them from Sakya over the Phra bo Pass to such places as Mangkhar Nyugulung, Dar Drangmoche, Shelkar, Dingri (including Langkhor), Porong, Dzongkar, Drakkar Taso, Kyirong (site of the Jowo 'Phags pa Wa ti), Nyanang, Lhatse, and La Thar lam mgon po (?). At most of the holy spots where Lord Mila had practiced austerities, Dezhung Rinpoche offered the tantric feast (*tshogs 'khor*) of the Mila guru worship (*mi la bla sgrub*), performing this rite a total of one hundred sixty times. He also gave on several

occasions the text-transmission for the life and songs of Milarepa, which he had received from Gangkar Rinpoche in Minyak.

One of their first stops outside Sakya was across the Phra bo Pass at Mangkhar. Here they met the Nyingma lama Dephuk Rinpoche Dbyings rig byang chub dbang po (1904–ca. 1989/90), who was passing through this area, giving teachings to and performing rituals for a local nobleman.⁵⁷⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche gave him the text-transmission for the biography and songs of Milarepa. On their departure, the lama sent one of his disciples to show the way to Dezhung Rinpoche and his group. Later Dezhung Rinpoche said, “He was very kind to us during our travels.” (He met Dezhung Rinpoche again as an old man in Nepal, in about 1985.)



47. Diphu (Dephuk) Rinpoche in Shar Khumbu, Nepal, in the 1970s.

Dezhung Rinpoche and his companions traveled on a short distance to Mangkhar Nyugulung, the ancient seat of Drokmi Lotsāwa, located in a nomadic area. At the holy caves Rinpoche performed rites of worship. Dezhung Rinpoche later described how at Nyugulung there were several caves, each with a shrine for a particular type of religious or worldly purpose; for example, there was a cave called “Instructions Cave” (*Gsung ngag phug*) where Gayadhara had given Drokmi the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions.⁵⁷⁵ There was also a Bdud rtsi phug where Drokmi and Gayadhara had imbibed “nectar” (*chang*) together, a “Translation Cave” (*Sgra ’gyur phug*) where the *Hevajra Tantra* had been translated, a kitchen cave where food had been

prepared, and so on.⁵⁷⁶ In addition to a meditation cave of Gayadhara, there were “thirteen great caves” (*phug chen bcu gsum*).⁵⁷⁷

They made another stop at Dar Drangmoche, the monastic seat of Tsharchen Losal Gyatso (1502–1566), founder of the Tsharpa subschool of



48. Nomad encampment in southern Tsang, 1937.

the Sakyapa.⁵⁷⁸ Dezhung Rinpoche offered many lamps before the reliquary of Tsharchen and stayed here one day to visit two holy sites of Tsharchen. Their local host and patron was the Yon bdag Shar pa.

Tsharchen had had two monastic seats (*gdan sa*), Drangmoche and Thub bstan dge 'phel. Drangmoche was the main monastery located in the Dar Valley and had about fifty monks, in addition to the sacred reliquary stūpa and images. On the peak of a mountain above the valley was the hermitage Rnam rgyal stag rtse. Dezhung Rinpoche made his way up the mountain to see it, but the path was overgrown with brambles and at the top he found the retreat empty and abandoned. This was where the great statue of Mgon po (the holy object or *thugs dam* of Ngakchang Sönam Chöphel) had once stood, though it and all the other images had later been brought down to the protector's chapel of Drangmoche.⁵⁷⁹

Dezhung Rinpoche and companions traveled on to Shelkar Dzong, where their patron was a central government official of the highest military rank of *mda' dpon* (general). He gave them permission to stay with a local

family without paying, but Dezhung Rinpoche insisted on giving something to the housekeeper. The high officer requested teachings (mainly a *khrus* lustration) from Rinpoche and offered him a horse. He also gave him a pass requisitioning transport (*lam yig*) to carry their baggage along the way. Before this they had all carried heavy loads on their backs.⁵⁸⁰

At Dingri they visited the monastery of Phadampa Sangyay at Langkhor. There they saw the “Dam pa Nga ’dra ma” statue, a realistic likeness of Phadampa. The monastery had fallen somewhat into disrepair. There Dezhung Rinpoche met the high military officer “Major” (*ru dpon*) Tshering, a disciple of Dudjom Rinpoche and commander of the large army encampment there.⁵⁸¹ (Kyirong had two administrative districts [*rdzong*], east and west.) One day the officer requested a long-life initiation from Rinpoche; another day he supplied the offering articles for a *gaṇacakra* tantric ceremony. Here they were also helped by another officer of the lower *brgya dpon* rank.⁵⁸²

Wherever he went, Dezhung Rinpoche asked the local people about the meditation caves of Milarepa. In far-western Tsang, many of the places he tried to find were unknown to most people. But after further inquiries he usually found an old man or woman who remembered something about them. Many of the local people were happy to guide the pilgrims—or at least point out the way—to the remote caves, and Dezhung Rinpoche always gave them a present for doing so. In these districts some of the sacred caves were inaccessible, so he could pay his respects only from a distance.

From Dingri he continued west by way of the nomadic area of Porong, with its beautiful big lake, and headed for Dzongkar. In Porong there were many minor places of Mila’s meditation called “castles” (*rdzong*): Glang sgo Klu dug rdzong, ’Bas phug Ma mo rdzong, Khro rgyal Rdo rje rdzong, and La phug Padma rdzong.⁵⁸³ Dezhung Rinpoche’s Tibetan disciple and friend Wangchuk (now in Portland, Oregon) is the son of a patron who was particularly kind to Dezhung Rinpoche in Porong.

Finally he arrived in Gunthang Dzongkar, where he stayed for one day, after which he went south by the most direct route to Drakkar Taso through the gorge of the Kyirong river. The path was bad, and it was sometimes very difficult to find the way.⁵⁸⁴ (The birthplace of Mila was reached through a higher, indirect path.)

High up in the rocks on the right side, to the west of the main path, they found the remote and precariously perched Kagyüpa monastery of Drakkar Taso, an establishment founded in the sixteenth century by Lha btsun Rin

chen rnam rgyal (1473–1557), a disciple of Tsangnyön Heruka (1452–1507, author of the best-known Milarepa biography). Here, about halfway between Gungthang and Kyirong, the group made a relatively long halt, meeting the Kagyüpa lama Drakkar Taso Trulku Kagyü Tendzin Norbu (1899–1958), who was in residence.⁵⁸⁵ Dezhung Rinpoche and his companions developed much faith in this lama and requested several teachings,



49. Tendzin Norbu, the Trulku of Drakkar Taso.

including the initiations for the “Peaceful and Wrathful Apparition” (*Rgyu 'phrul zhi ba dang khro ba*) and the “Emptying Out the Hell Realm” (*Na rak dong sprug*) cycles.⁵⁸⁶ Drakkar Taso had both a nunnery and a monastery. The monks and nuns lived in simple, even spartan circumstances, and this was a wonderful place to perform austerities. Dezhung Rinpoche made offerings of tea, sponsored a *ganacakra* ceremony, and gave Nepalese silver coins to the resident monks and nuns.

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed at Drakkar Taso a total of forty days, and while there, he saw a block print of the rare early biography of Lord Mila based on the accounts of the twelve great disciples (*bu chen bcu gnyis*) of Mila.⁵⁸⁷ He also saw what was thought to be the second and perhaps only other copy of the extremely rare biography of Milarepa by Zhi byed Ras pa (called the *Madzod nag ma?*), which was in the possession of the Drakkar

Taso Rinpoche. This biography speaks of Mila's visits to Ü and Kham after his enlightenment.⁵⁸⁸

From Drakkar Taso they continued south down the Kyirong river gorge into the warmer valley of Kyirong, near the border with Nepal and due north of Kathmandu. In and around Kyirong, many of the meditation caves were remote and difficult to reach, so Rinpoche made offerings to them



50. Travelers passing a high lake in southern Tsang, 1937.

from a distance. To all the little monasteries and nunneries they passed during the pilgrimage, they made, at the very least, offerings of tea and some coins.

At the village of Orma Rdzong [?] ('Or ma?) near Kyirong, they met a woman from Chamdo who was married to a central government official. Dezhung Rinpoche knew her relatives, and she took good care of him and his companions during their stay.

At Kyirong itself they visited both the nunnery of Thugs rje Chos gling and a locale sacred to Padmasambhava. On the high holy day of the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month (*Sa ga zla ba'i dus chen*, ca. May 24, 1948), they went to the pagoda-roofed temple of the Kyirong Jowo to worship.⁵⁸⁹ There Dezhung Rinpoche performed a two-day fast (*smyung gnas*). He offered gold to the face of the Jowo (the main Avalokiteśvara image), lamp offerings before the Jowo, and tea to the small assembly of resident

monks. By then the district governor (*rdzong dpon*) of Kyirong had begun to act as Dezhung Rinpoche's patron.⁵⁹⁰ Rinpoche had come to Kyirong bearing a letter of introduction from the Drakkar Taso Trulku. The first day in Kyirong, Dezhung Rinpoche and party had stayed in small cells in the pilgrim's quarters within the precincts of the Jowo temple, but on the second day the governor invited them to stay in his official residence.

After Kyirong, they went to Nyanang district, where Rinpoche visited the Nyanang Grod pa phug cave. Accompanied by two or three local men as guides, he then visited the meditation caves of Khre pa phug and Phi ge gling. After Nyanang, he and his companions went to Lhapchi Gangs to visit Mila's meditation cave of Lhapchi Bdud 'dul phug. To reach it they had to cross a glacier-covered pass.

When crossing high snow-covered passes, Dezhung Rinpoche could not ride the horse and so had to make his way step by step. The conditions were at times difficult. At one point their nun companion fell sick and had to be left behind for awhile. A sore formed on Ane Chime's back from carrying her rucksack. In the very remote places there was danger of robbers. For such emergencies they had sewn a few small gold coins into the linings of their clothes.⁵⁹¹

Returning from Lhapchi to the Dingri valley, they visited the meditation spot of Rgyal ba Yang dgon pa (1213–1258), Rgyal gyi shri in western Tsang (i.e., Snam sding and possibly also Lha gdong monasteries at rTsis ri). At Dingri Langkhor they stopped again at the Phadampa Sangyay shrine at Langkhor. Dezhung Rinpoche on this occasion stayed long enough (twelve or thirteen days) to read four volumes of rare scriptures of the Zhi byed tradition. He performed a "tantric feast" (*tshogs 'khor*) rite before the shrine of the great Indian adept Phadampa Sangyay. This was a rest stop, too, because everyone was tired after nearly six months of travel. Dezhung Rinpoche had been planning to visit the holy site of Lord Mila's final passing into nirvāṇa at Drin, but he decided to stay a little longer at Langkhor to read these rare volumes. The local lama of the temple, who was an ordained monk (which was rare in those parts), was ill, so he invited Dezhung Rinpoche to give him a long-life empowerment.⁵⁹²

Great Offerings at Sakya and Ngor

MEANWHILE, Dezhung Rinpoche's mother (then in her mid-sixties), who had been left behind in Sakya for nearly six months, worried about her two children on pilgrimage. When Dezhung Rinpoche's group was just a few days' journey from Sakya on the return route, they met a party of Nangchen Khampa pilgrims coming from Sakya who told them their mother had fallen ill. She had seen flooding in the local 'Brom River at Sakya and imagined that her son and daughter had been carried away in similar flooding and had drowned. She had worried herself sick. Hearing this, they decided not to visit the site of Mila's nirvāṇa but to hurry straight back to Sakya.

Traveling was not always easy and they never knew what kind of accommodation they would find at the end of the day. One evening in the village of 'U yug, a single day's journey from Sakya, when they knocked at a door seeking lodging, an old woman received them gruffly. She scolded them and refused their request. Dezhung Rinpoche accepted this in patient silence. A short while later, several people who knew Dezhung Rinpoche arrived from Sakya and revealed his identity to the local people. The woman was mortified to realize whom she had treated so rudely, so she sought them out, apologized with a deep bow, and invited them to stay. Later Rinpoche gave her and her family a long-life blessing.

Once their party had stayed overnight in any inhabited place, it was difficult to leave early the next morning. Patrons would line up for blessings and bring images to be blessed by vivification (*rab gnas*). The people of western Tibet were also generous to them with offerings of food and drink. In general, wherever Dezhung Rinpoche went, he made good connections with the lamas. When he met nobles, they too respected and helped him.

Though others had warned him that the local officials in western Tsang and eastern Ngari province could be difficult, during this pilgrimage he received a great amount of support from the local lords, especially on the return journey.⁵⁹³

Summer/Fall of 1948

When Dezhung Rinpoche and his companions arrived back in Sakya, it was already the seventh or eighth lunar month (ca. September or October).⁵⁹⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche's mother was overjoyed to see him and Ane Chime. She had been taking medicine, but without result. After her son arrived she recovered at once, so that he teased her, saying, "I am a medicine for you!"

Two or three months after their return from western Tibet, the Sakya throne-holder, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk, returned from Lhasa (in about the tenth lunar month, ca. December), and a grand welcoming reception was given for him at the winter palace. In preparation, Dezhung Rinpoche performed a longevity ritual (*tshe sgrub*) and offered the throne-holder a long-life empowerment (*tshe dbang*). Then a symbolic offering of the cosmos (*maṇḍala*) was made to the great lama in a hall at the Gzhi thog Labrang, and Dezhung Rinpoche led the offering, giving a long, detailed speech explaining the parts of the cosmological maṇḍala (*maṇḍal bshad pa*) and other auspicious elements making up the great symbolic offering.⁵⁹⁵ Following this, the local religious scholars Gephel Pönlop Sangye Rinchen and Yongdzin Pönlop Shedrup also made auspicious speeches.

During his stay at Sakya, Dezhung Rinpoche received from the throne-holder a teaching from the *Thugs sgrub* cycle of the Nyingma *Byang gter* ("Northern Treasure Teachings") tradition, as well as several long-life empowerments and other minor initiations. He also received the special blessing of nectar called the *Gzi thod ma*, given from a precious ritual skull-bowl (*kapala*) of banded onyx or some similar material (*gzi*), one of the ancient holy objects of Sakya.

When Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Sakya from his pilgrimage, he again contacted the Pönlop Shedrup, who had been an old student of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa and who now served as tutor to the Sakya throne-holder's younger son, Sku gzhon Trinlay.⁵⁹⁶ Pönlop Shedrup and Dezhung Rinpoche had known each other from Kham. His family had once been wealthy

but had recently fallen upon hard times. He therefore consulted Dezhung Rinpoche for advice.

Dezhung Rinpoche replied that he and his family must accumulate merit. “You could give such things as medicine to the sick and alms to the poor,” he suggested.



51. Fields of barley in southern Tsang, with Mt. Chomo Lhari in the background, summer 1935.

“I can’t afford even that,” replied the man. “What else can we do?”

“You could at least perform one hundred thousand water offerings.⁵⁹⁷ It’s easy to do; it costs little and brings great benefit.”

Pönlop Shedrup did as Dezhung Rinpoche advised. He invited Rinpoche to the house of his layman brother. Here they called together many relatives and nuns, and also a number of Shedrup’s own students. Together they performed by the banks of the ’Brom River one hundred thousand offerings of water, together with other offerings of lamps, prostrations, and *gtor ma* sacrificial cakes.

A little while later the Drölma palace *dagchen* Ngawang Kunga Rinchen heard what was being done and asked Pönlop Shedrup the reason for it. The latter repeated Dezhung Rinpoche’s explanation of how effective this practice was for accumulating merit. Shortly thereafter, the Drölma palace

dagchen asked Dezhung Rinpoche to perform another hundred thousand water offerings, this time for the sake of his own family. The *dagchen* erected a small shrine by the stream in the park, complete with images of the enlightened body, speech, and mind (*sku gsung thugs rten*). Dezhung Rinpoche performed the offerings as requested.

Not long afterward, the Sakya throne-holder came to know that many monks were gathered in the park, assisting Dezhung Rinpoche in some activity. When he learned what was being done, he requested Dezhung Rinpoche to repeat the water-offering ritual yet again, and he had an even bigger shrine erected near the river. While making the offerings and pouring water, Dezhung Rinpoche recited the seven branches of practice from the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*).⁵⁹⁸

In the early winter of 1948 (in about the tenth lunar month, when Dezhung Rinpoche was about to leave for Ngor), Sönam Drölkar—the younger wife of the Drölma palace *dagchen* and mother of Āyurvajra, the future Sakya Trizin Rinpoche—fell seriously ill.⁵⁹⁹ The Drölma palace *dagchen* had married this second daughter from the Bon grong shod pa (Pönshö, Bon shod) noble family when it had become evident that his first wife, her older sister Trinlay Paljor Zangmo (1906–1975), was probably barren. Dezhung Rinpoche was called to the Drölma palace to confer the blessing of the three long-life deities (*tshe lha rnam gsum*). Then he performed the same blessing for the Sakya throne-holder Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk.⁶⁰⁰

Dezhung Rinpoche received the initiation for Hevajra and other major initiations from Ngawang Kunga Rinchen, whom he regarded as one of his principal masters. On the night before receiving the initiation for the *Tsi'u dmar po srog gtad*, Dezhung Rinpoche dreamt that the deity appeared before him, as real as life.⁶⁰¹ This increased his faith in the great master still more.⁶⁰²

In the late autumn or early winter of 1948, Dezhung Rinpoche is said to have dreamt that a beautiful image of the goddess Drölma (Tārā) broke. This dream worried him, and he sent a message informing the Drölma palace *dagchen* about it. The *dagchen* asked Dezhung Rinpoche to investigate the dream's meaning. A short while later, Sönam Drölkar, the *dagchen*'s younger wife and mother of his heir, passed away.⁶⁰³ The *dagchen* told Dezhung Rinpoche that his presence at the palace was essential and asked him to stay.

One of Dezhung Rinpoche's main reasons for going to central Tibet was to visit the mother monastery of Ngor and make offerings there, while

receiving the *Path with Its Fruit* from the incumbent abbot. He had been preparing for this pilgrimage for years; by completing it he would be carrying out one of Gatön's main commands. The teachings at Ngor were an annual event and followed a fixed schedule because each year several hundred monks came to attend from long distances—mostly from Kham. Normally, the winter session (*dgun chos*) and the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings began on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month.⁶⁰⁴ In order to receive the complete teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche had requested permission to go to Ngor. But since the Sakya *dagmo* had died so recently, the Drölma palace *dagchen* needed him to help with the final rites. Dezhung Rinpoche accordingly stayed at Sakya and performed rituals every day for the next forty-nine days. After the final rites and cremation, he was asked to oversee the offering of a hundred thousand butter-lamps in the name of the deceased. To do this, Dezhung Rinpoche had to go around to a large number of chapels in Sakya, where, all day long for many days, he directed the offerings of the memorial butter-lamps and recited prayers of merit dedication.⁶⁰⁵

In general, Dezhung Rinpoche had the greatest respect and affection for the Drölma *dagchen* and counted him among his nine main spiritual teachers (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*). When in 1974 the Sakya Trizin Rinpoche visited Seattle, seeing his face reminded Dezhung Rinpoche so strongly of his late father that he was moved to tears.

Visit to Ngor

In early 1949, when the memorial observances were complete, Dezhung Rinpoche was finally able to depart for Ngor, which he reached near the end of the annual *Path with Its Fruit* teachings. He brought with him a letter from the Drölma palace *dagchen* explaining his late arrival.⁶⁰⁶

At Ngor he took up residence first in the Denma regional dormitory, to which he belonged as a monk from Gakhok.⁶⁰⁷ During the concluding session following the actual teachings, he made offerings and sponsored ceremonies by the assembly of monks on four successive days: on the first day, the guru worship (*bla ma mchod pa*); on the second day, the rite of Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig cho ga*); on the third day, a rite of the Long-Life Buddha (*Tshe chog*); and on the fourth day, a Mahākāla propitiation (*bskang gso*), together with ritual feast (*tshogs*).⁶⁰⁸ On each of the four days, Dezhung Rinpoche gave to the large assembly—composed mainly of poor Khampa

monks who were about to start the long journey home—different food and tea offerings, including a fancy feast dish called “graduation pudding” (*ming rtags*), a rice pudding made rich with much butter and dried apricots. He also made a money offering of 100 silver *srang* in paper money.⁶⁰⁹ The abbot,



52. Ngor monastery before 1959.

Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso, and each high lama of the four main lama-palaces (*bla brang*) received a big box of tea, and each monk was given five small quarter-bricks (the equivalent of 1.25 large bricks) of fine tea. The monks and lamas were highly pleased. It was said that such a large offering of tea had never before been made at Ngor, and that all in all it was the best offering made there for many years.⁶¹⁰ (Soon thereafter Dezhung Rinpoche made a similar offering of excellent tea at Sakya, and it was said that a few monks from Sakya treasured these tea-bricks so highly that they even brought some with them when fleeing Tibet ten years later in 1959.)

While Dezhung Rinpoche was at Ngor, the steward of the Thartse lama-palace, the “Shud khud Sras sku zhab” Bsod nams dbang rgyal (1915–ca. 1974/75), invited him to visit their lama-palace and residence (*bla brang*).⁶¹¹ At that time the two Thartse candidates to the abbacy—Sönam Gyatso (1933–1987)⁶¹² and his younger brother Thartse Shabdrung Kunga Gyurme (b. 1935)—were young, and he had lunch with them and their uncle, afterward giving them long-life empowerments.⁶¹³ Dezhung Rinpoche’s skills in

poetics and the language arts had become well known, so Shabdrung Sönam Gyatso and his uncle (the Thartse chamberlain, or *phyag mdzod*) discussed with him various points of poetics.

Also at Ngor at this time, newly arrived from Kham and bearing provi-



53. Sönam Gyatso, Ngor abbot from the Thartse Labrang, in the 1950s.

sions, were Dezhung Rinpoche's niece, Sönam Tshedzom; her mother, Phüntso Drölma; and her aunt "Chacha" (Nang 'dzin dbang mo). Dezhung Rinpoche's mother and Ane Chime remained at Sakya. These other family members had been waiting with Dezhung Rinpoche's treasurer—Könyak, his brother-in-law—in Shigatse ever since Rinpoche's arrival from Sakya had been delayed. As women were strictly forbidden to stay in the monastery of Ngor, they slept outside the monastic precincts in a tent pitched in a nearby garden. It was here that they celebrated the lunar New Year (February 28, 1949).

From the ex-abbot of Ngor, Khangsar abbot Ngawang Khyentse Thubten Nyinpo (1913–1988),⁶¹⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche specially requested and privately received the exoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit*

(*Lam 'bras tshogs bshad*) in the Ngor tradition. The abbot transmitted these teachings to him in a briefer form, using the manuals of Ngawang Chödrak. Moreover, each day the abbot gave teachings that normally would have taken four days. This caused no hardship for Dezhung Rinpoche, who had studied and practiced the esoteric transmission of the *Path with its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) intensively before. For the purpose of receiving these teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche moved into the Khangsar lama-palace and stayed a little longer at Ngor than the rest of his party. Ngor was in a remote and not very hospitable location. For visitors, especially laypeople and nuns, Sakya was more pleasant.

Return to Sakya

Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Sakya, where he carried out the next part of Gatön's second command: in the course of three days, he made extensive offerings to the great lamas and monk assemblies of Sakya. To begin with, he made a large offering to the Drölma palace *dagchen*, including a horse, a mule, and many loads of tea, butter, and dried fruit.⁶¹⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche and his family members (mother, three sisters, and niece) received a formal audience with the Sakya throne-holder Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk in a large reception room on the second story of the main palace.⁶¹⁶ Dezhung Rinpoche made offerings of money, large boxes of brick tea, bolts of silk fabric, quantities of packed butter, one horse, and two mules. The specific gifts and their recipients were itemized on a list that was presented, wrapped in a fancy ceremonial scarf, on the throne table before the Sakya throne-holder himself.⁶¹⁷ As a sign of high regard, the throne-holder bent over to touch foreheads with Dezhung Rinpoche.

Rinpoche also made a great offering of bricks of fine tea to each of the four or five hundred monks of both southern and northern monasteries, and offered them a excellent meal. This tea was highly prized and only used on special occasions such as the Lo gsar (New Year's) Festival.⁶¹⁸

During his stay in Sakya, Dezhung Rinpoche is said to have composed a propitiative ritual (*bskang gso*) for the protective deity Tsi'u dmar po at the request of the Phüntsook palace prelate.⁶¹⁹ At about this time a traveler arrived from Kham, reporting that the Communists had partly taken over in Ching-hai province, including Sining. Strange events were afoot. There was no news of Communists having reached Thaklung, but some had come to

Jyekundo, where they were confiscating animals and telling the people of the great transformations Communism would bring. These Chinese claimed to be Communists, but some were thought to be Nationalist impostors. Meanwhile, the local people in nearby parts of Kham were confused. Completely unheard-of things were taking place: taxes, for instance, were not being collected on time.⁶²⁰

A Short Pilgrimage North to Ngamring

Soon thereafter, in about the second lunar month (ca. April 1949), Dezhung Rinpoche left Sakya again to visit several sacred places in the northern districts of western Tsang. Owing in part to his increased standing at the Sakya court, Dezhung Rinpoche was able to arrange a horse and donkeys for transportation. Traveling was thus much more comfortable, especially for his sister and companion, the nun Ane Chime. Moreover, on this occasion the journey was much shorter, lasting only about one month.

First they traveled to Lhatse, where they visited such places as Ras chung phug, a meditation cave of Mila's great disciple Ras chung pa Rdo rje grags. Then they crossed the Tsangpo River and went to the great stūpa of Rgyang 'Bum mo che. At Lhatse lived a faithful noble patron named Kar rgyal, who was himself absent when they arrived. But they carried a letter of introduction from Khenchen Jampal Zangpo (1901–1961), an eminent scholar and monastic leader at Sakya who had befriended Dezhung Rinpoche, so Kar rgyal's family looked after them well. At the Lhatse Dzong administrative headquarters they were given a *lam yig* pass to facilitate their travel.

From Lhatse they traveled to Tsang Ngamring Dzong. They found no public lodging there, but they were able to stay in the house of a well-off and hospitable local family. They visited the Ngamring Chos sde temples and were shown around by a helpful monk. The Ngamring district governor sent some of his subjects (*mi ser*), who helped them with further transport.⁶²¹

Dezhung Rinpoche also visited Jonang and the monastery of Phüntshokling. He paid homage at the Jonang stūpa and saw the centuries-old iron-chain bridge over the Tsangpo built by Thangtong Gyalpo, which he did not cross because it was in disrepair.⁶²²

One of the high points of the trip was their visit to G.yas ru Byang Skya bo kha gdong, a holy place of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092–1158), first great patriarch of the Sakyapas. This was where Sachen, after practicing

meditation, passed away to Sukhāvātī, having displayed four different bodies at the time of his death. Here there was a temple containing many life-like images of the *Path with Its Fruit* lama lineage, as well as wonderful murals of Sachen's life, which they admired. Dezhung Rinpoche made extensive offerings and also performed a tantric feast (*tshogs 'khor*).

Like most of Tsang, control of this place and its temple had in about the mid-1600s fallen into the hands of the Tashilhunpo government, and at the time of Dezhung Rinpoche's visit it was administrated by a regent of the Paṇchen Rinpoche appointed by the Lhasa government. Many of the books were kept under official seal. Dezhung Rinpoche gave presents to the caretaker of the shrines, who became cooperative. The caretaker even managed to open up some of the cloth wrappings around a few ancient manuscripts without breaking the seals, thus allowing Rinpoche to read them. The same caretaker also gave Dezhung Rinpoche some sacred votive tablets (*tsha tsha*) he had retrieved from a spot on a nearby hillside.

Rinpoche was saddened that many of the sacred objects at this wonderful shrine of the Sakya founder were kept sealed and not made accessible to pilgrim-visitors. After returning to Sakya, he requested the Sakya throneholder to try to gain control of it again. The Sakya hierarch said he would try, but by his death the next year, he had not succeeded.⁶²³

*Sojourn at Sakya
and Travel to Serdokchen and Lhasa*

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE and his small party had to return to Sakya by the third lunar month of 1949 (ca. May), to witness a great performance of ritual dance (*'chams*) by the two palaces, and especially by the Drölma palace. On their return journey, many people came to receive Dezhung Rinpoche's blessings.

In Sakya, Rinpoche renewed his close contacts with the Drölma palace *dagchen*, Ngawang Kunga Rinchen, and formally requested him to give the Vajrakīla initiation in the Khön family tradition.⁶²⁴ The *dagchen* said that since this was the first time he would give it to his son (the four-year-old Āyurvajra), he would give the most extensive version. Dezhung Rinpoche accordingly received this initiation in its fullest form. Two other visiting lamas from eastern Tibet who also received the initiations were a main lama from the Dhiḥphu Chöje monastery in Amdo⁶²⁵ and Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim of Minyak Kham gsum grags (or "Ku se brag") monastery.⁶²⁶

The Drölma *dagchen* bestowed the great Vajrakīla initiation for the "upper activity"—the gaining of enlightenment—through the colored sand maṇḍala, and the initiation for the "lower activity"—the violent "liberating" of enemies and obstacles—through a painted maṇḍala. The first took place in the residence Gzims chung Shel gling chen mo, and the second in the Mjal kha lha khang. During the second initiation the great *dagchen* donned a black hat and wrathful attire and performed a ritual dance.⁶²⁷ Subsequently Dezhung Rinpoche also received from this master an exposition of the Vajrakīla commentaries by the great Sakya master Ameshap Ngawang Kunga Sönam (1597–1659): the *Phur pa'i stod smad rnam bshad* and the *Phur chung rnam bshad bdud rtsi snying thig*.⁶²⁸

Then the surviving *dagmo* from the Drölma palace, Trinlay Paljor Zangmo (1906–1975), fell gravely ill. Dezhung Rinpoche was called to come and give her one hundred times the long-life empowerment in Thangtong Gyalpo's tradition, the '*Chi med dpal ster*. He moved into the Drölma palace.



54. Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk, Dagchen Rinpoche of the Phüntshok palace of Sakya, visiting the Williamson camp with his children. Outside Sakya, 1934.

On this occasion the *dagmo* had a vision of the great fifteenth-century Tibetan adept and bridge-builder Thangtong Gyalpo, and the next day she offered new garments to a statue of Thangtong Gyalpo in their palace. Soon she was able to sleep well and recovered quickly.⁶²⁹

Her husband Ngawang Kunga Rinchen told Dezhung Rinpoche, “Your prayers are very powerful. Now please perform the long-life rite *Tshe dbang brgya rtsa* for me and my children.” Dezhung Rinpoche did so and then asked the Dagchen Rinpoche for the initiations of the extraordinary form of the “Cycle of Three Red Deities” (*Dmar po skor gsum*), which Dezhung Rinpoche had never received. The *dagchen* replied, “We have a close relationship, so I will give them to you.” Only a restricted group of eleven received the teaching, including Dezhung Rinpoche, the *dagchen*’s senior wife, his daughter ’Jam dbyangs dbang mo (1942–1950), Khenchen Jampal Zangpo, Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim of Minyak, Kapshi Trulku Losal Thubten, and five others.⁶³⁰

Dezhung Rinpoche again performed the rite of the Three Long-Life

(*Tshe lha rnam gsum*). Then he received from the Drölma palace *dagchen* the initiation for the protector Mahākāla with eight deities (*mgon po lha brgyad*) at the famous shrine of the protector at Gorum in Sakya. It was said that anyone who received the initiation there would always be watched over by the protectors.

Dezhung Rinpoche then went to the nearby Kha'u Brag rdzong and visited the meditation retreat of the Sakya Khön nun Jetsun ma Pema Trinlay (b. 1871/72), the paternal aunt of the Drölma palace *dagchen* and the sister of the previous Sakya throne-holder, Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen. There were two meditation caves there, one belonging to each of the Sakya palaces. The venerable nun was staying in the cave of the Drölma palace, and since the other cave was empty, they were able to stay in it. Traveling with him this time were Dezhung Rinpoche's sister Ane Chime and his nun cousin, Tshe ring chos 'dzom.⁶³¹

The venerable nun Pema Trinlay had received extensive teachings and initiations from such great masters as Loter Wangpo (1847–1914), but by the early 1930s she had for the most part retired from giving teachings to others.⁶³² She was renowned for having attained siddhis through the practice of Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma), and indeed had received that initiation from the previous Dezhung Trulku, Lungrik Nyima (ca. 1840s–1898), among others. She was also famous for being able to foresee someone's time of death. Dezhung Rinpoche accordingly asked her about his own longevity and his future as a teacher.

After their initial meeting, Dezhung Rinpoche requested and received from her a long-life empowerment and a White Tārā initiation. She later consented to bestow upon him the blessing and instructions for the Nāro Mkha' spyod ma. During their Dharma discussions, she mentioned that she had once had a vision of the fierce goddess Dmag zor ma (Pārvati), perceiving all the ground before her as a sea of blood, and she later showed him a scroll-painting depicting her practices and extraordinary experiences in this connection. Dezhung Rinpoche requested this initiation, too. The venerable nun was seventy-eight at that time,⁶³³ and she in her turn requested an initiation from Dezhung Rinpoche, in order to cement their relationship. He therefore gave her the long-life empowerment in Thang-tong Gyalpo's tradition to ensure her longevity.⁶³⁴ She gave him a long-life blessing, too.

He had great faith in her, and she reciprocated. She told him, "I can't

believe in all the so-called trulkus these days or in the people going around saying ‘I’m a trulku, you’re a trulku.’ But I do believe you are definitely the rebirth of Lungrik Nyima!”

“I don’t know how I could possibly be the rebirth of such a highly realized master,” he replied. “But anyway, I bear the name and title.”⁶³⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed seven or eight days at Kha’u Brag rdzong. After he returned to Sakya, the Drölma palace *dagchen* asked what had detained him for so long. Dezhung Rinpoche told about meeting the *dagchen*’s aunt, the venerable Pema Trinlay, and receiving the initiation of Dmag zor ma from her. When the *dagchen* heard that, he requested the same initiation from Dezhung Rinpoche.



55. Much of the Sakya northern monastery complex.

The Drölma *dagchen* Ngawang Kunga Rinchen also requested the Hevajra initiation from Dezhung Rinpoche, who declined to give it, saying, “You are the owner and lord (*bdag po*) of Hevajra. I will request this initiation from you, but cannot offer it.”⁶³⁶ In due course Dezhung Rinpoche received the Hevajra cause and path initiations from this master, as well as the Nā ro Mkha’ spyod ma blessing.⁶³⁷

Once the Drölma palace master told Dezhung Rinpoche about a vision he had had. He had been doing religious practices before the famous ’Jam dbyangs rTsoḍ rgyal ma image of Mañjuśrī, when suddenly the statue stood up. The master realized he was seeing Mañjuśrī, so he also rose and offered prostrations, reciting the verses of confession, “From beginningless time

down to the present... (*thog ma med nas da lta'i bar...*).” To this Mañjuśrī replied, “Just verbally confessing your misdeeds will not purify them. To do that you must pray to your chief teacher who is also your father. That will purify your deeds.”

The Drölma palace *dagchen* then asked Dezhung Rinpoche what he thought the words spoken by Mañjuśrī in the vision had meant. Dezhung Rinpoche replied, “It is an excellent vision. It probably means you should practice the guru-yoga in honor of your father, [Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen].”⁶³⁸

The *dagchen* planned to visit India on pilgrimage and asked Dezhung Rinpoche to stay in his palace and perform in his absence rites to ensure the health and longevity of his children. Thus, in order to serve as the “longevity



56. H.H. the Sakya Trizin as a child, ca. late 1940s.



57. H.H. the Sakya Trizin as a boy, ca. early 1950s.

chaplain” (*zhabs brtan bla ma*) for the young Āyurvajra Rinpoche (which he did for eight months in all), Dezhung Rinpoche stayed in the Drölma palace at the ’Chi med bde ldan Gzims chung residence. He performed lustrations (*khrus*) every Monday, the rite of the protector (*bskang gso*) every night, and a long-life empowerment (*tshe dbang*) once every week (on Friday).⁶³⁹ Each night before bedtime the children received a blessing from him: at this time they all climbed up on his lap with much play and mischief.

When the little Āyurvajra Rinpoche came to his room in the palace, Dezhung Rinpoche hid any candies or sweets he had. He was concerned

about “germs”—that is, disease-causing impurities—not about him eating too many sweets. Dezhung Rinpoche worried about keeping himself clean and pure, and he also told his niece not to bring people with her when she came to visit him. A first son of the family had died at an early age, and there had also been the recent tragic death of the Pönshö *dagmo* Sönam Drölkar, mother of the Drölma *dagchen*’s children. In this period of eight months Dezhung Rinpoche was under tremendous pressure, conducting his practices and prayers practically day and night.⁶⁴⁰

During this period he also gave the initiation for the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga (*Sa ’jam sbag sgrub*) to Khenchen Jampal Zangpo (1901–1961) and the monks in the main assembly of the southern monastery, the Lha khang chen mo.⁶⁴¹ While in Sakya, Dezhung Rinpoche also received from Khenchen Jampal Zangpo an exposition of the treatise on the three systems of vows and related doctrinal problems by the Ngor Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup (b. 1811), the *Sdom gsum ’jam dbyangs bla ma’i dgongs rgyan*.⁶⁴²



58. Jetsun Chime as a young nun, ca. early 1950s.

During the absence of the Drölma palace *dagchen*, Āyurvajra’s older sister ’Chi med phrin las (b. 1938) suffered from a nosebleed that refused to stop. At the Drölma palace, Dezhung Rinpoche and two other lamas (Jampal Zangpo and Dhiḥphu Chöje Rinpoche) performed a very extensive Tārā ritual to repel negative forces (*sgrol ma gyul mdos* [?]), reciting all day and late into the night. At the end of the ritual, he and many monks carried off the *mdos* symbolic sacrifice.

Finally the Drölma palace prelate returned from India to Sakya. He told his ill daughter,

“Now you’re okay. You go to bed.” That night her nosebleed stopped.

Soon after this, Dezhung Rinpoche began having serious difficulties with swelling and pain in his right leg. They were believed to have been caused

in part by his sitting so long in the lotus position performing rituals.⁶⁴³ For some time he could not walk and had to be carried outside to sit in the sun in the morning, later in the day being carried back inside.⁶⁴⁴ His sister Ane Chime visited him every day in this period.

He did not feel fit enough for the long trip home, so he delayed his departure.⁶⁴⁵ During his long stay at Sakya, he found time to read at various times. He could borrow books from both palaces and also from some of the old collections. He collected and saved the dust that fell from the many old sacred volumes he read.⁶⁴⁶

Once, at the request of one of the palaces, Dezhung Rinpoche embarked upon seven days of intensive ritual practice on the first floor of the Gorum temple, site of the famous mask of Mahākāla brought to Tibet by Rin chen bzang po and given to Sachen in the twelfth century. One day, when he and several monks were conducting their propitiation rites (*bskang gso*) for Mahākāla, a formal sealed message box (*sam ṭa*) from the Phüntsoḱ palace was delivered to him by a Sakya government secretary. He knew it was something important, so he opened the letter in the presence of the others. He was shocked to read its contents. It was a request from the oldest son and future *dagchen* of the Phüntsoḱ palace, Jigdral Rinpoche, for the hand of his niece in marriage.

While Dezhung Rinpoche pondered what reply he should give, the Sakya secretary waited outside, since he had been instructed not to come back without an answer, though he had not been informed of the contents of the message. Dezhung Rinpoche, sitting in one of Sakya's holiest shrines, was placed in a most difficult position. He did not want to give a negative reply to the Sakya religious prince, but feared the consequences of a positive one. Finally he wrote his answer, stating basically: "It is not a matter of my 'giving' or 'not giving' my niece's hand to you in marriage—your parents must agree and give their consent for it to be possible."⁶⁴⁷

Dezhung Rinpoche immediately requested that the whole family receive the Hevajra initiation from the Drölma *dagchen*. This was good for protection against obstacles and would also formally prepare his niece to become Jigdral Rinpoche's consort in case the marriage was consummated. The Drölma palace *dagchen* conferred the ritual as requested, initiating them into the full maṇḍala of Hevajra.

Soon after this, the Sakya throne-holder and his wife visited the Gorum temple, where Dezhung Rinpoche informed them of their son's request.

They were thoroughly surprised and upset and did not consider the proposed union at all suitable.

Dezhung Rinpoche was put in an awkward position. As a monk it was irregular for him to handle such a lay, domestic issue, but he was the only male member of the family who was present. After some thought, Jigdral Rinpoche's mother, the Phüntsoik palace Rgyal yum chen mo, Bde chos sgrol ma (daughter of the lord Shangs Bya rigs pa), expressed her regret that Dezhung Rinpoche had not answered at once emphatically in the negative and thus cut off the hopes of the two sweethearts from the start.⁶⁴⁸

The matter dragged on unresolved. Jigdral Rinpoche remained adamant and refused to back down; he was enamored of the intelligent and strikingly beautiful maiden from Kham. In the meantime, Dezhung Rinpoche's mother had become fond of the impetuous young noble suitor and favored a match between him and her granddaughter. Then another onerous duty was laid on Dezhung Rinpoche's shoulders: the need to act as representative of his niece's family during the negotiations. Bearing a ceremonial scarf, he went to Jigdral Rinpoche, stating the great distress this matter had caused Jigdral Rinpoche's parents, suggesting that the two young people should probably forget about each other, and adding that his niece's family was preparing to depart for Lhasa and Kham. Above all, Dezhung Rinpoche wanted to avoid causing trouble for the Sakya throne-holder and his family.⁶⁴⁹

During this time the Sakya throne-holder and most family members went to Sikkim and India for a one-and-a-half-month pilgrimage. Jigdral Rinpoche stayed behind. He openly visited the house of Dezhung Rinpoche's relatives, and soon the whole town knew. It was a time of great strain.⁶⁵⁰

While Dezhung Rinpoche was in Sakya, numerous other pilgrims, many from eastern Tibet, visited Sakya. One party came all the way from Kham mainly to ask the throne-holder to identify the rebirth of their monastery's recently deceased trulku. When they learned that Dezhung Rinpoche was in Sakya, they came to him, saying, "Please help us. You have a good connection with the Sakya throne-holder; could you please make a request for us?"

At that stage his relations with the Phüntsoik palace were delicate, to say the least. He had to reply, "I really can't intervene for you, and I don't have any special connection with the throne-holder at all! But if you want to request a divination from the Drölma prelate, there at least I could help you. Except for the difference of occupying the position of throne-holder or not, he is equally holy and eminent as a religious master, and we are close

because I have received many teachings from him. If you want me to make a request on your behalf to him, that I could do.”

The Khampa pilgrims finally agreed, so Dezhung Rinpoche went to the Drölma palace and conveyed their request.

The Dagchen Rinpoche replied, “This whole business of trulkus is troublesome! To do divinations and everything— No, it really won’t do.”

“But they’ve come from their homes so far away. Please help them!” Dezhung Rinpoche persisted.

Finally the *dagchen* agreed to perform a prognostication. Two or three days later he gave a letter to the supplicants that mentioned the names of the trulku’s father and mother and the village of his birth. One of the people from the Khampa group was astonished and pleased, saying, “Yes! I know these people. They are a family in my home area!”⁶⁵¹

In late summer or early fall, a monk from Gakhok arrived, bearing a two-month-old letter from Dezhung Rinpoche’s younger brother, Dr. Kunzang Nyima, in Tharlam. According to the letter, the Nationalist Chinese leaders in Sining had ordered the chieftains of the twenty-five tribes in Nangchen to bring to Sining a thousand horses and mules and two hundred men armed with rifles. No reason for this order was given, but people assumed it was for fighting the Communists. Dr. Kunzang Nyima said that he would be among those going with the Dra’u Pön, chieftain of Gakhok. He said Kham was no longer peaceful and that the many strangers passing through could not be trusted.⁶⁵²

At about this time a letter also arrived from Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö in Kham. The Drölma *dagchen* had written him after his consort’s death, asking about the obstacles the Drölma palace faced and how they could best be overcome.⁶⁵³ In reply Khyentse stated that there would be further obstacles to the *dagchen*’s health and adversity to the palace.⁶⁵⁴

Fall 1949: Departure from Sakya for Shigatse and Lhasa

In the fall of 1949, Dezhung Rinpoche’s legs were better and he felt fit enough to travel, so he took his leave of the great masters of Sakya and left for Shigatse, desiring to complete his pilgrimage to Central Tibet and then return to Tharlam. His niece’s proposed marriage to the Sakya prince had still not been approved, so she stayed behind with her aunt Nangdzin Wangmo (“Chacha”) until an official decision could be made.

Dezhung Rinpoche requested the Drölma palace *dagchen* when taking leave, “If there are serious problems and my niece is abandoned with a child, please look after her and the child.”

The *dagchen* replied, “Don’t worry! The child would be a ‘son of the Khön lineage’ (*khon gdung sras*) and our blood relative. If, perchance, things did turn out so badly, we would surely take care of your niece and her child.”⁶⁵⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche’s party first traveled to Shigatse, where his brother-in-law Könyak was waiting. They did not remain long—just one or two days. They stayed in town and their quarters were not that pleasant. Dezhung Rinpoche left some money, tea, and other items in Shigatse to be traded for necessary wedding items for his niece.

Dezhung Rinpoche and his party then traveled east to Serdokchen, the monastery of the fifteenth-century master Serdokchen Pañchen Shākya Chokden (1428–1507), situated east of Shigatse near the southern banks of

the Tsangpo River. Residing there at the time was the venerable Ngor abbot Dampa Rinpoche Ngawang Lotrö Shenphen Nyingpo (1876– 1953), a teacher born in the ancient Gnubs lineage and one of the greatest Sakyapa masters of that era.⁶⁵⁶ Born in eastern Tsang at Rong Sman thang in 1876, Dampa Rinpoche was given as a boy to become abbatial candidate (*zhabs drung*) in the Khangsar lama-palace of Ngor. After qualifying for the position of candidate, he was sent to Kham to collect offerings for his lama-palace, which was facing great financial difficulties.



59. The Ngor Khangsar abbot Dampa Rinpoche.

He met the Dzokchen seminary master Shenga and was unhappy that he could not answer the questions Shenga put to him about Sakyapa doctrine and philosophy. He was young and until then had not had any chance to study the basic texts. He resolved, “Whether I achieve service to the Khangsar lama-palace or not, for the correct practice of the Buddha’s teachings it is essential to begin with learning and reflection, and therefore I must study under this lord of scholars!”



60. Dampa Rinpoche in tantric regalia.

When Dampa Rinpoche asked Shenga to accept him as a student, the master replied, “Since you were sent by the Khangsar palace to gather offerings, go gather offerings. You won’t be able to endure the hardships and exertions of study.” But when he implored the master with great insistence, he finally gained his consent.

Dampa Rinpoche told his brother, the elder Guzi abbatial candidate at Gling (a Khangsar *shabdrung* resident at Guzi monastery in Lingtshang district in northern Derge, only sixty kilometers away from Dzokchen), and his elder nephew (or half-brother) Brag ra Dorjechang (a close disciple of Loter Wangpo) of his desire to study. His brother said, “As you are young, it is perfectly right for you to study. It will be enough if I send from here in Guzi as large as possible an annual offering to the Khangsar lama palace.”

Hearing this, Dampa Rinpoche’s joy knew no bounds.⁶⁵⁷ He gathered the necessary provisions for the coming study term and went, with a single attendant and two or three horses and mules, to the scriptural seminary at Dzokchen. At this time, the seminary master and his disciples were engaged in their studies at a site in some high swampland above Dzokchen.

Since his horse could not pass through the swampy land, Dampa Rinpoche

arranged for a guide and three local pack animals (or porters) from the main monastery at Dzokchen and set out to meet Shenga. From a very high swampland in the distance he saw blue smoke emerging. The guide told him, “Lama Shenga and his disciples are staying yonder in that swampy spot.”

When Dampa Rinpoche approached nearer, he heard a sound as if someone had been blowing a thigh-bone trumpet. At his arrival, he found himself received by the seminary master and his disciples—dressed in their formal upper monk’s robes and standing in a line of formal reception, holding incense in their hands. To mark the beginning of the teaching session, someone was blowing a horn made of a hollowed-out antelope horn, and this sound also greeted his arrival. Immediately upon their meeting, the lama and his disciples felt great faith and joy.⁶⁵⁸

On the night before Dampa Rinpoche’s arrival, Shenga Rinpoche dreamt that five differently colored women wearing jewel ornaments and holding a vase spoke a verse to him with a single voice:

All subjects of the three vehicles, the four philosophical systems, the four tantric classes and their individual parts, as vast as the Dhar-madhātu, are all the sphere of a great saint who dwells on the great levels.

Then the women handed him the vase.

The next day Shenga said about the dream, “The omen does not refer to me. It is a prophesy that whoever arrives tomorrow as a new disciple is a saint who dwells on the great Bodhisattva levels.” Dampa Rinpoche arrived in Dzokchen and met Shenga Rinpoche the next day. (This prophetic vajra-verse uttered by ḍākiṇīs was later added by Shenga to Dampa Rinpoche’s long-life prayer and verses of supplication that Shenga wrote for Dampa Rinpoche’s enthronement as abbot of Ngor.)

Dampa Rinpoche exerted himself hard in his studies, often studying all the way through the night until dawn.⁶⁵⁹ When Dampa Rinpoche was studying Sapaṇ’s classic on Buddhist epistemology the *Tshad ma rigs gter*, some people teased him, saying, “There is no need whatsoever for that investigation of oxen of the Sakyapa!” Hearing this, he became especially determined to learn that subject, and he studied each verse of the *Rigs gter* seven days, carefully considering its meaning. Moreover, he saw to it that Shenga’s other main Sakyapa disciples at the time, such as Dezhung Anjam, Lama

Jamgyal and his brother Lama Gendun, and Kunga Lotrö, all studied Buddhist epistemology (*Tshad ma*) with great rigor and seriousness.⁶⁶⁰

Lama Shenga possessed a small amulet box made of ivory. Shenga's eminent disciple Gser kha Chos grags once remarked to the master, "Rinpoche, since so many people from far-western Tibet all the way down to Dartsedo in the far-eastern borderlands are gathering in your presence, could it be that you possess something like a 'subduing wheel' (*dbang sdud 'khor lo*) talisman in that reliquary of yours?"

Lama Shenga replied, "If you want to call 'Kusho Rinpoche' (his name for Dampa Rinpoche) the achievement of a 'subduing wheel,' then fine. But apart from his coming here, I have not achieved any 'subduing wheel.'" ⁶⁶¹

Dampa Rinpoche's main teacher as a young monk at Ngor was the great Khangsar abbot Ngawang Lotrö Nyingpo. Later on, after completing vast studies under the great seminary master Shenga, he received from Ngor Pönlop Loter Wangpo and Drakri (or Brag ra) Dorjechang Jamyang Chökyi Nyima the *Path with Its Fruit* and two of the great *Ris med* collections of tantric initiations and instructions. His other main teachers included, for special Sakyapa tantric instructions, the Khampa masters Mthu chen Jam-pal Tendzin, Nyiga Rinpoche, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, and Khenchen Samten Lotrö.

Later, as a teacher in central Tibet, Dampa Rinpoche was one of the most active and successful propagators of Sakyapa tradition in recent generations.⁶⁶² In the late 1930s he transmitted at Tanak Thubten the *Collection of Tantras* (*Rgyud sde kun btus*) to the Phende abbot Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso (1917–1969) and to the Nalendra Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche (b. 1919), among others. Shortly before his death in 1953, he also gave the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions and part of the *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) to H.H. Sakya Trizin.

Dezhung Rinpoche had met Dampa Rinpoche at Tharlam monastery twenty-seven years before, at Dezhung Rinpoche's first enthronement ceremony in 1922. Now, before this second meeting, Dampa Rinpoche made discreet inquiries about Dezhung Rinpoche to some of the others. He was delighted by what he heard and greeted Dezhung Rinpoche warmly.⁶⁶³ Dampa Rinpoche quickly became fond of him and the two carried on many long conversations.

Because Dezhung Rinpoche was traveling with several monks and nuns who were returning to Kham, he could not stay as long as he wanted at

Serdokchen, but he did manage to remain three or four months. Dampa Rinpoche was transmitting the *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun brus*) compilation, so Dezhung Rinpoche mainly received initiations that were being given from this collection, and he received the smaller compilations of sādhanas, “The Hundred of Narthang” (*Snar thang brgya rtsa*) and “The Ocean of Sādhana” (*Sgrub thabs rgya mtsho*). He also requested a few other urgently desired initiations. The great master agreed to give some initiations out of order, saying, “If you need these particular ones, I’ll give them first.”⁶⁶⁴ In addition, he conferred upon Dezhung Rinpoche the cause and path initiations (*rgyu dbang* and *lam dbang*) of Hevajra.

Also staying at Serdokchen and receiving the teachings was Dezhung Rinpoche’s distant cousin the Phan khang abbot Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso, originally a Tharlam monk, who was at the beginning of his second three-year term as Ngor abbot. Also in residence were the young Khangsar Shabdrung Ngawang Lotrö Tendzin Nyingpo (1927–ca. 1956)⁶⁶⁵ and Yönrü Rabsal (d. 1949?), a learned lama from Kham Lithang and disciple of both Gatön and Dampa Rinpoche.⁶⁶⁶ Dezhung Rinpoche taught the latter two, as well as the Serdokchen Khenpo, a little bit of Sanskrit grammar on this occasion.

Dampa Rinpoche was suffering from a certain illness and, as part of his treatment, had been ordered by his doctor to avoid sleeping as much as possible. Hence Dezhung Rinpoche visited him a lot, accompanied by Yönrü Rabsal. The three of them sat up late, and Dezhung Rinpoche told various histories and episodes from the lives of great masters to keep Dampa Rinpoche awake. Yönrü Rabsal would note down the accounts as Dezhung Rinpoche told them. When Dezhung Rinpoche related the details of Ngawang Lekpa’s life, Dampa Rinpoche now and then interrupted and said, “Oh, yes. I also had a similar experience once,” and then shared many episodes from his own life story. Dampa Rinpoche’s monk-attendants later said, “The master never told us any of those stories about himself!”⁶⁶⁷

After their close relationship had been established, Dezhung Rinpoche requested profound direct instruction from him, saying, “Please, Rinpoche, introduce me to the nature of mind!”

“I don’t know anything about introducing the nature of mind!” Dampa Rinpoche replied. “You know about it yourself—you are Gatön’s disciple and are someone who has received the *Path with Its Fruit* many times! I don’t know a thing about it.”

Dezhung Rinpoche did not feel bold enough to insist, so he dropped the subject. Some time later he again requested those instructions. Dampa Rinpoche replied, "You know, this continual talking about one's own deepest spiritual experiences is really harmful!"

"Yes, sir."

"Also, it is nowhere taught that one should give introductions on the nature of mind to Sakyapa lamas and trulkus." With these and similar comments, the master indicated that it was not essential for him to give such teachings. Once again Dezhung Rinpoche did not dare press the matter.

Finally it was time for Dezhung Rinpoche to leave Tsang province and begin his travel homeward, so he approached the great lama one last time, determined not to give up. "I'm about to depart, Rinpoche," he told Dampa Rinpoche, "and I really have faith in you from the depths of my heart. I will stay here and implore you until you grant me my request. Please give these instructions to me! If you need a Sakyapa manual from the 'Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa' (*Khor 'das dbyer med*) instructions, I can go fetch one.⁶⁶⁸ Or if you want to teach it according to the Nyingma tradition, I can go right now and fetch the *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg* manual. I have a copy in my quarters."⁶⁶⁹ So saying, Dezhung Rinpoche got up from his seat and waited to hear which manual the master preferred.

Dampa Rinpoche laughed and said, "In that case, you don't have to go fetch any manual. Do you see that volume up there in the bookcase with the green cloth wrapper? The *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg* manual is there. Bring that volume here!" Dezhung Rinpoche did so, and the great master transmitted to him the profound *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg* instruction of the Great Perfection by Paltrül.⁶⁷⁰

A Pilgrimage Visit to Lhasa

After some thirteen or fourteen weeks at Serdokchen, Dezhung Rinpoche and his party took their leave and traveled on toward Lhasa via the northern route, north of the Brahmaputra River. The main caravan halted in a nomadic region at the monastery of Yangpachen, former seat of the Shamar Karmapa, but since the late eighteenth century in the hands of the Gelukpa sect. Dezhung Rinpoche visited this monastery twice: once when newly arrived from Kham and now once again, on his way back. In one of the

chapels of Yangpachen, Rinpoche made offerings and viewed the original old wall paintings attributed to the great fifteenth-century painter Sman thang pa Sman bla don grub.⁶⁷¹

Then Dezhung Rinpoche and most of his companions traveled quickly on to Lhasa and its vicinity. Near Lcags po ri there existed a large boulder



61. Potala Palace, Lhasa, ca. 1900.

where Thangtong Gyalpo had inscribed the mantra *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ* in huge letters. Dezhung Rinpoche sponsored putting gold on these letters.⁶⁷² At Lcags po ri he saw the images that Thangtong Gyalpo had made from conch, coral, and other materials.⁶⁷³ There was also a self-originated Tārā image there and an Avalokiteśvara image to which pilgrims from Minyak offered white conch-shell ornaments.⁶⁷⁴ The next day he went on, intending quickly to visit the main holy places in the Lhasa area and make offerings. He offered gold to the faces of all three Jowo images of Lhasa: in the Jokhang, Ra mo che, and Potala.

It was then that Dezhung Rinpoche first visited the Lhasa Jokhang temple with its holy image of Jowo Śākyamuni. He invited eight monks and recited prayers together with them. He also sponsored many butter-lamp offerings. He made offerings of gold to the faces of the images and also money to the artists who applied the gold paint. For offering “face-gold” to these holy images, it was necessary to call and pay a high fee to a special

painter. The Minyak monk 'Jig med rdo rje, a relative of Trulku Kunzang, helped arrange offerings and other things. (He had good connections with important officials in Drepung and Sera; by this time Trulku Kunzang had received the high title of "great assembly trulku" [*tshogs chen sprul sku*] and wore insignia granted by the Lhasa government.)⁶⁷⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche and his companions stayed in temporary lodgings within the Bar 'khor middle circumambulation path of the holy city. They had to limit their stay to a little more than two weeks; there was a large party of tired Khampa pilgrims with many yaks and other animals, all waiting at Yangpachen to start their homeward journey.⁶⁷⁶

While in Lhasa, Dezhung Rinpoche wanted very much to meet the scholar Gendun Chöphel (ca. 1903–1951),⁶⁷⁷ who was then staying at the Hor khang noble family's Lhasa residence. Gendun Chöphel had traveled widely and had lived for years in India and Ceylon. He was famed for his excellent knowledge of Sanskrit, which made Dezhung Rinpoche want to meet him all the more.

But already at Sakya, Dezhung Rinpoche's Minyak friend and student Trulku Kunzang (himself an accomplished scholar of Sanskrit grammar by Tibetan standards) had discouraged him from contacting Gendun Chöphel, saying, "Yes, the Amdo scholar is learned. But he is living a dissolute life, drinking spirits, smoking cigarettes, and so on."⁶⁷⁸ An acquaintance in Lhasa is also said to have warned Dezhung Rinpoche not to contact him, as the Amdo renegade was under suspicion for political reasons, so in the end he decided not to attempt to see him. Dezhung Rinpoche was disappointed by this turn of events, for he considered Gendun Chöphel to be a "realized master" (*rtogs ldan*) and had also heard about his unusual Madhyamaka views.⁶⁷⁹ In less than two years (by late 1951), Gendun Chöphel would be dead.

Though his wealth was exhausted, Dezhung Rinpoche still wanted to buy gifts and offerings for Tharlam monastery. While in Lhasa, by chance he met and befriended the rich bursar (*phyag mdzod*) of the Ganden throneholder.⁶⁸⁰ Both the abbot and his bursar in this period were from Minyak, and after a short conversation with the bursar, Rinpoche found they had many Minyak friends and acquaintances in common.

In the course of their conversation Rinpoche said, "I really ought to buy a number of things to offer my home monastery, including some expensive *rgya ser* golden Chinese brocades for making robes to offer to the statue of

the protector Mahākāla at Tharlam. The only problem is, I'm running very short of money."

"It should be no problem to arrange a loan," the bursar replied.

With the borrowed money, Dezhung Rinpoche was able to buy the things he required. The interest rates, however, were usurious; indeed, it took Dezhung Rinpoche two years of strenuous efforts to repay this loan and the interest.⁶⁸¹

*Return to Kham, Teaching among the Nomads,
and a Visit from the Sakya Dagchen and Dagmo*

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE and his party returned to Kham and Gapa by slow caravan in early 1950. Their path led northward to the old Kadampa monastic seat of Radreng. There he offered rice and money to the monks of the main assembly and made offerings to the sacred image of Jowo 'Jam pa'i rdo rje.⁶⁸²

They continued on, through Nakchukha and the northern nomadic regions, where the weather was bitter cold. It was the dead of winter. Just one day's journey from Tharlam, they met travelers bearing the news of the miraculous death, on the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month, of Rinpoche's "uncle" Josay Gelong Jamyang Gyaltzen. The meditator monk was said to have attained the "rainbow body" (*ja' lus*), leaving behind in his sealed retreat hut just his hair and fingernails.⁶⁸³

Arriving home, Dezhung Rinpoche made many offerings at Tharlam monastery to the assembly of monks and its holy shrines. He and his family members there also celebrated the lunar New Year. After a few months, in early spring, they were gladdened by the news that the marriage of his niece in Sakya had finally been approved. Dezhung Rinpoche and his sister sent felicitations to Dagmo Kusho (as Sönam, Tshedzom then became known) in Sakya and formally celebrated the announcement at home in Tharlam.

In the summer of 1950, there came news of the deaths of both of the greatest lamas at Sakya in rapid succession. First Rinpoche's revered guru, the Drölma *skyabs mgon*, Ngawang Kunga Rinchen, passed away,⁶⁸⁴ and soon thereafter the Sakya throne-holder himself, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk.

That same summer, at the age of forty-four, Dezhung Rinpoche departed

from Tharlam again, this time to perform ceremonies, teach, and gather offerings among the nomads in the high northern grazing lands of Dzachukha, some four days travel east of Tharlam. With him as his attendants among the nomads were the Tharlam monks Phrin las rgya mtsho and



62. Radreng (Reting) monastery in 1950.

Tshe ring rnam rgyal. By this time Rinpoche not only lacked ready cash but also had contracted substantial debts. Before Dezhung Rinpoche's departure for Minyak, Gatön had advised him to divide the offerings he received into three parts: one share for Ngor, one share for Sakya, and one smaller share to cover his own requirements (which included the needs of his own lama estate and home monastery). But later on he did not conserve the share meant for himself; he gave everything away during his visit to Sakya, Ngor, and Lhasa.⁶⁸⁵

Before he left Tharlam for the nomadic lands, Rinpoche left explicit instructions with several relatives and gave them a sacred pill, saying, "While Gatön Ngawang Lekpa was away studying at Dzongsar, his mother died. If my mother falls seriously ill while I am away, be sure to put this in her mouth." A few months after his departure, in the autumn (in the eighth lunar month), his own mother, Pema Chödrom, fell ill and died. She was in her sixty-seventh year.⁶⁸⁶ Uncle Ngawang Nyima performed the transference of consciousness (*'pho ba*) ceremony for her, and signs of success

became visible on the crown of her head: a bump appeared there, and also a visible hole.⁶⁸⁷

A monk was sent to inform Dezhung Rinpoche, who was unable to return immediately for the ceremonies. However, when he heard the news he performed a number of times the two-day rites of fasting with the Avalokiteśvara meditation (*smiyung gnas cho ga*) in her memory. He also sent one of his monks to perform the Sarvavid-Vairocana final rites and to make offerings on her behalf.⁶⁸⁸ Letters were sent informing Dagmo Kusho in Sakya, who immediately dispatched money and scarves to Tharlam requesting prayers and rites in her grandmother's memory.

Some weeks later, Dezhung Rinpoche and other family members sent Dagmo Kusho more letters and presents. Dezhung Rinpoche wrote that the whole of Chinghai province, including Jyekundo, was now under Communist control. There had been no fighting, and the change of government had yet to have any concrete effect on their way of life. He mentioned that Kunzang Nyima and Dra'u Pön's group, who had been sent to Sining, had all come back safely. Included with the letter were a number of presents for Dagmo Kusho, such as gold dust, silk yardage, silver coinage, and a white scarf. Dezhung Rinpoche instructed her to use the gold dust for jewelry both for herself and for Jigdral Rinpoche.⁶⁸⁹

During his first year among the nomads, Dezhung Rinpoche did not receive many offerings. His debt with the Ganden Tripa was compounding rapidly, and he was concerned about paying it off as quickly as possible. He went into retreat for several months. Subsequently the nomads gradually came to know about him, and in late 1950 and early 1951 he was invited more and more to perform ceremonies and received good offerings of butter, cheese, animals, and other things.⁶⁹⁰ By the summer of 1951 he was able to send the monk Phrin las rgya mtsho back to Lhasa to clear his debt with the Ganden Tripa.⁶⁹¹ The wealth that remained after paying the debt was used for gifts for his niece and for buying goods to be sold in Kham.⁶⁹²

Meanwhile, great political changes loomed on the horizon. In July 1950 there began the first hostile military contact between Communist Chinese and Tibetan forces in Kham, when the Chinese wiped out the Tibetan wireless transmitter at Dengo in Denkhok, followed by a fierce battle at Yilhung.⁶⁹³ On October 5, 1950, the Southwest Army Corps of the People's Liberation Army suddenly crossed the Driчу and, in an attack with four major prongs, began their rout of the ineptly led Central Tibetan army in

Kham. The prong that ultimately cut off the lines of Tibetan retreat marched rapidly through Gapa and Nangchen.⁶⁹⁴ Two weeks later, the outfought and outmaneuvered Tibetans surrendered, and the high Tibetan officials in charge of them, based in Chamdo, were captured. Militarily, all



63. Nomad tent in southern Tibet, 1935.

of Kham had fallen.⁶⁹⁵ But Khampa sentiment was not yet strongly anti-Chinese; on the contrary, the Chinese took pains to make a good impression on the local people and followed up their victory with a new propaganda campaign for the “peaceful liberation” of Tibet. In October 1951, the Dalai Lama and Tibetan assembly would be forced to accept the “Seventeen-Point Agreement,” and in late 1951 several thousand Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) troops would march into Lhasa.⁶⁹⁶

1951

In the late fall of 1951 (on the twenty-ninth day of the eighth lunar month), Uncle Ngawang Nyima died in his retreat house at Tharlam. He had not been noticeably ill beforehand, but he was approaching the age of eighty. When Dezhung Rinpoche heard the news, he hurriedly returned to Tharlam from the nomadic region he had been visiting.

By the time Dezhung Rinpoche arrived, his uncle’s body had been left

untouched in the samādhi position for seventeen days. All were waiting in Tharlam for Dezhung Rinpoche himself to arrive.⁶⁹⁷ As soon as he got there, he bathed and prepared his uncle's remains. He invited a group of lamas to come, and for five days they performed the final rites before the enthroned corpse. Dezhung Rinpoche also offered lamps on a great scale at many of the large monasteries nearby in Gapa. He sponsored one lama and three nuns to perform a series of fasting retreats and Avalokiteśvara recitations (*smjung gnas*) in his uncle's memory, beginning on the twenty-first day of the ninth month and ending on the sixteenth day of the fourth lunar month.⁶⁹⁸ Dezhung Rinpoche also wrote to his niece Dagmo Kusho in Sakya, informing her of her great uncle's death. He told her that Ngawang Nyima had known he was going to die for some time before and had left messages for everyone.⁶⁹⁹

In the meantime Dezhung Rinpoche must have learned that his niece's first child, the daughter Bstan 'dzin, had died (ca. May 1951) in Sakya and also that his niece's husband, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche of the Phüntsok palace, had been passed over in the succession for the Sakya throne. In July, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin rgya mtsho (b. 1935) and his government in Lhasa had confirmed the young Āyurvajra Rinpoche of the Drölma palace as the next Sakya throne-holder (*khri 'dzin*).⁷⁰⁰ This had come as a surprise to some in the Phüntsok palace, where Jigdral Rinpoche had been fulfilling the role of acting throne-holder (*khri mjug*) for the several months since his father's death.⁷⁰¹ Dezhung Rinpoche, however, in addition to his close links to the Phüntsok palace through his niece's marriage, had for years enjoyed especially cordial relations with the Drölma palace. The young Āyurvajra (b. 1945), whose head he had so often anointed and for whose sake he had so diligently practiced and prayed just four years before, was now the forty-second Sakya throne-holder, Ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen phrin las dbang rgyal.⁷⁰²

1952

In 1952, Dezhung Rinpoche went into a retreat at Tharlam to practice long-life-bestowing rituals (*tshes sgrub*, and possibly also for Mahākāla practices?). In the fall of that year, Dr. Kunzang Nyima and Dagmo Kusho's mother, Phüntsok Drölma, went to Lhasa to meet Dagmo Kusho for the first time in her new status, while Dezhung Rinpoche returned to the plains of

northern Dzachukha to continue teaching and performing ceremonies among the nomads.⁷⁰³

1953

In late winter of 1953, the Sakya Phüntsok palace *dagchen* Jigdral, husband of Dezhung Rinpoche's niece, accepted an invitation to visit Lhagyal monastery at Derge Yilhung in Kham. They planned to pass through Gapa on the way to Derge. In early March 1953, Jigdral Dagchen, Dagmo Kusho, and their attendants arrived in Gapa and proceeded to Jyekundo, where they took up residence at one of the Dra'u Pön's palaces in the great monastery Jyeku. Their party then traveled to several nearby monasteries, including She'udo monastery, which housed a famous statue of the late-eighteenth-century Sakya Khön lama Dbang 'dud snying po (1763–1806?).⁷⁰⁴

Meanwhile Dezhung Rinpoche had heard of their arrival and returned from the nomadic regions to meet them. Learning that the Sakya party was at She'udo monastery, he went there. Asking for accommodations, he was told there were none to be had; because of the visiting Sakya *dagchen* and the many extra guests, there were unfortunately no extra rooms. Dezhung Rinpoche did not identify himself but did manage to send a message to Dagmo Kusho, who was busy at that moment preparing new robes for the old figure of Dbang 'dud snying po. The message as it was relayed to her was merely that a lama had arrived and wished to see her.

He waited outside her room with a single attendant, and when she finally came, even she at first did not recognize him. His skin was rough and his complexion darker from two years of exposure to the sun, snow, and wind of the nomadic regions of Dzachukha. Dagmo Kusho herself was in advanced pregnancy. Dezhung Rinpoche paid his respects to Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, who was now the senior lama of the Phüntsok palace, and soon the abbot and other officials of the monastery were offering to make the distinguished guest comfortable. Dezhung Rinpoche, his sister, and his niece all smiled at this, for only an hour or two earlier they had told him the monastery was completely full.⁷⁰⁵

After two days Dezhung Rinpoche went back to Tharlam and attended to his affairs there. He had been gone from the monastery for about a year, and needed among other things to prepare for the visit of his niece and her husband.

At Jyekundo, on the nineteenth of May, 1953 (seventh day of the fourth month of the water-snake year), a son was born to Dagmo Kusho, with her mother acting as midwife. The birth took place at the Dra'u Pön's palace Stag rtse dmar po. Dezhung Rinpoche was informed and arrived a week later. Together with the father, Jigdral Rinpoche, he named the boy Mañjuvajra ("Minzu"), whose full name was Jamyang Kunga Wangyal.⁷⁰⁶

Dezhung Rinpoche performed lustrations and other auspicious rites, and stayed nearby for about a month. Then he returned to Tharlam to prepare for the arrival of the Sakya party there. Dr. Kunzang Nyima also came and stayed with the child.⁷⁰⁷

Later in 1953, after some delays because of other visits and duties, the Sakya family and entourage traveled northward the forty miles from Jyekundo to Tharlam, stopping at the large Gelukpa monasteries of Ranyak and Bamji along the way, and taking three days to reach Tharlam. At Tharlam, the Sakya party was welcomed by Dezhung Rinpoche and a long line of yellow-clad monks, some holding auspicious banners or playing drums and other instruments. Many lay patrons also lined the way, holding incense sticks or censers. Thrones were arranged for Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, his wife, and their infant son in the main assembly hall, and one of the Tharlam seminary masters gave a maṇḍala offering with a detailed exposition following the topical scheme "the five ways in which the assembly was perfectly complete" (*phun tshogs lnga ldan*). Later a festival was held, with singing and dancing by the laypeople of Tharlam.⁷⁰⁸

Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche made generous offerings to the shrine as well as to the community of monks. For the next seven days, a group of monks performed a Mahākāla sacrificial-cake ceremony (*Mgon po'i gtor bzlog*) to avert bad influences. Leading the ceremony were the Tharlam monk Umdzay Trashi and the Sakya Pönlop Chö Phüntso.

Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche then briefly visited the nearby Thubten monastery, crossing the Drichu River in a leather coracle to reach it. Shortly thereafter he returned to Tharlam and gave to an assembly of more than two hundred monks the initiation for Vajrakīla and a long-life empowerment. The monks of the monastery performed the ritual dance of the Dgu gtor. The Sakya party stayed at Tharlam for more than a month and then proceeded northeast to Trindu Kalzang monastery.

News of the death of Dampa Rinpoche, who passed away on the twelfth day of the fourth lunar month (ca. May 25, 1953), probably reached Dezhung

Rinpoche at Tharlam in July or August.⁷⁰⁹ During this period (ca. 1953–1954), Rinpoche's distant cousin the Drukpa abbot Ngawang Yönten Gyatso (1902–ca. 1963), an old classmate of Dezhung Rinpoche from the time of his youthful studies under Shenga and Lama Gendun, and now for many years the ex-abbot of Ngor turned tantrika, also visited Tharlam. He requested Dezhung Rinpoche to record the life story of Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen, saying, "Since Jamgyal Rinpoche was your 'maternal uncle' and you studied



64. The "Bhutan abbot" of Ngor, Ngawang Yönten Gyatso.

under him for two years, you should by all means write his biography." The Drukpa Abbot was a true paternal nephew of Jamgyal, being the son of Jamgyal's younger brother Skal dga' (Skal bzang phrin las). He was a well-known and almost notorious figure. As Dezhung Rinpoche later recalled:⁷¹⁰

'Brug pa Mkhan po...was born in Sga in Kham.⁷¹¹ His family was an old and honorable one, some of whose scions had achieved great prominence as religious figures of the Sakyapa and Nyingmapa sects. His uncle was the famous Sga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen (1870–1940), the editor of the collected works of Gowo Rabjampa Sönam Sengge (1429–1489). He was related to the ruling houses of Nangchen and

Derge. Through the influence of his family and because of his intelligence and wit, he was accepted as a *shabdrung* of the Khangsar Lama palace of Ngor and proclaimed to be the rebirth of Ngorpa Mkhan po Ngawang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen [1863–1899] of the Phan khang Lama palace.⁷¹²

The young *shabdrung* soon demonstrated not only a native intelligence and wit, but also a distressing stubbornness and independence. He soon quarrelled with the aged Khang gsar Mkhan po Ngag dbang snying po [i.e., Ngag dbang mkhyen rab ’jam dpal snying po, sixtieth Ngor abbot]. As a result of this conflict, he withdrew from the Khang gsar Lama palace and set up his own separate ecclesiastical palace.⁷¹³ In order to obtain the wealth necessary to increase his prestige at Ngor, he set out for Bhutan where he attracted the attention of the King of Bhutan, who lavished upon him considerable wealth. He soon was the most wealthy of the ecclesiastical princes of Ngor.

Ngawang Yönten Gyatso, now known as the “Drukpa Khenpo” (“Bhutan abbot”), returned to Ngor and there began a crusade against the protector Rdo rje shugs ldan.⁷¹⁴ Still later he returned to Kham and gave up his monk’s vows. Living mainly in Gapa, he was known there as “Lab kha Abbot,” so called from his family home near Tharlam on the opposite side of the Drichu. He is said to have died in the early 1960s in Kham, in Communist imprisonment. Dezhung Rinpoche eventually did write a biography of Jamgyal Rinpoche as Ngawang Yönten Gyatso had requested, but not until some thirty years later.

1954

While they were in Tharlam, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Dagmo Kusho requested Dezhung Rinpoche to accompany them for one year to perform rites for the health and long life of young Minzu (i.e., as “longevity lama” or *zhabs brtan bla ma*). He gave his assent. Tharlam monastery, however, objected to Dezhung Rinpoche’s leaving again so soon. But since his purpose was to accompany and look after the young Sakya Khön “son of the old agnatic line” (*gdung sras*) Minzu Rinpoche, and since a great lama of Sakya, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, himself ordered it, they eventually had to consent.

Journey to Yilhung

The Sakya *dagchen*, Jigdral Rinpoche, and entourage journeyed on toward Lhagyal monastery in Derge Yilhung, where they planned to stay for a year. On the way they visited Trindu Kalzang monastery and then Dongtray monastery.⁷¹⁵ Here Dezhung Rinpoche and two of his sisters (Dagmo Kusho's mother and Ane Chime) joined them, and they passed the lunar New Year (March 5, 1954) together.

Soon after the New Year, they left Gakhok for Dzachukha. They reached Khangna (or Kha na) monastery, whose trulku had been a disciple of the Luding Gyalsay (1864/72–1926), the sixty-sixth abbot of Ngor. The monks asked Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche to rename their monastery, which he did. The monks also invited them to stay longer, but because of the favorable traveling conditions—not much snow—they decided to push on east and southward into the treeless, wide-open expanses of the northern Dzachukha nomad country.

In the midst of the nomad country they stopped at Se shul monastery, a Gelukpa monastic establishment in an area famous for its wild mushrooms, which the nomads gathered, dried, and exported to China. (The local people, oddly enough, did not eat any.) At this monastery they witnessed the monks practicing their debating every afternoon.

Another monastery they visited in Dzachukha or Dzakhok was called “Chu bo Glang nag” (?). The trulku of the monastery had also received teachings from Gatön and knew Dezhung Rinpoche from those times. He made generous offerings to Dezhung Rinpoche.⁷¹⁶

After several days' journey southward, they reached the Dzokchen monastery, the largest Nyingma establishment in Dzachukha and site of some of Dezhung Rinpoche's Sanskrit studies under Khunu Lama thirty years earlier. Before reaching there, they were met and respectfully greeted by Don yod, son of the Sakya *dagchen*'s main host and patron, the powerful Chagö chieftain.

Upon their arrival at Dzokchen monastery, a band of young, militant monks began throwing stones at the tent of the Sakya party's horse-keepers, who had neglected to let down the braids of their hair in the traditional gesture of respect when approaching the monastery. The hostility of the rowdy young (nomad) monks was then calmed after some embarrassment to both sides.⁷¹⁷

At Dzokchen, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited together with Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche to enter the monastery. The father of the current Dzokchen Trulku was Yab chen Ngag dbang nor bu, a former monk who had served as *khenpo* of Samye. He knew Dezhung Rinpoche from a previous occasion and received him cordially as an old friend.⁷¹⁸

They left Dzokchen after three days, upon the arrival of the Chagö chieftain Topden, governor of Derge Yilhung district, the main sponsor who had invited Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche to Kham.⁷¹⁹ He came with a large deputation of men from Derge, who accompanied the party over the brigand-infested Dzokchen Pass and into the beautiful nomadic district of Yilhung. Later about a hundred monks from Lhagyal monastery came out to meet them, swelling the party to about four hundred people. They halted for one day and two nights, camping in a beautiful spot so as to arrive at the Lhagyal monastery on an auspicious day. It was then early in the second lunar month (early April 1954).⁷²⁰

The next day they arrived at last at Lhagyal monastery,⁷²¹ which was in a beautiful spot surrounded by meadows that during the summer were carpeted with alpine flowers. They were received with great pomp by a gathering of monks dressed in ritual finery and hundreds of laypeople burning incense. At Yilhung Dezhung Rinpoche was held in high esteem by the monks and local nomads. He was invited to many of their dwellings to give blessings and minor initiations.⁷²²

After more than a month at Lhagyal monastery, including a visit to the seat of the Chagö chieftain, they traveled on to Dzongsar, where they planned to request the *Path with Its Fruit* and *Collection of Sādhana*s from the great Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Lotrö. On the way to Dzongsar, they stopped in Dzinkhok at the famous image of the protector at Dzin Namgyal monastery. They stayed ten days, conducting Mahākāla rites for the success of the upcoming teachings.

Final Studies under Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö

They arrived at Dzongsar on an auspicious day of the third lunar month (ca. May 1954), almost exactly thirty years after Dezhung Rinpoche's first visit to Derge and Mayshö as a poor student-monk. About two miles from the monastery, they were met by a formal procession of lamas, monks, and local lay residents, all on horseback. At the head of the procession, in formal

robes and with his horse in full ceremonial array, was Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö himself. Also present was Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. After the hosts slowly rode around the guests in formal greeting, the two parties alighted from their horses and exchanged scarves. They proceeded to the Rtse lha khang private quarters (*gzims chung*) in Dzongsar monastery for a relaxed meal with the great Khampa lamas.

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche had built a small residence temple at the top of the monastic complex called the Rtse lha khang, and it was here that Dezhung Rinpoche and the others in the Sakya entourage stayed.

On the seventh day of the fourth lunar month (May 28, 1954)—the first birthday of Dezhung Rinpoche's charge, Minzu—a celebration was held recognizing the infant as the rebirth of his recently deceased paternal grandfather, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk. This took place in a tent erected within the willow garden of the Dzongsar scriptural seminary. Chökyi Lotrö and many others made formal offerings for the child's long life, and costumed monks performed a ritual dance.

In the following weeks, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö bestowed the initiations and teachings of the great *Collection of Sādhana*s compilation of initiations and sādhanas, with Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche as the main requester (and Dagmo Kusho and little Minzu Rinpoche present). These teachings began on the fifteenth day of the third month, with the initiations for the "Cycle of Three White [Deities]" (*Lha mchog dkar po rnam gsum*).⁷²³ Then Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche began conferring the profound esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*).⁷²⁴ Dezhung Rinpoche was one of the main students at both teachings.

Thus Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö continued to be one of Dezhung Rinpoche's greatest masters.⁷²⁵ All in all, Dezhung Rinpoche received from him the *Collection of Sādhana*s twice; the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit*; and from the Nyingma tradition the *Tshe bdag* teachings, treasure teachings from Mchog gyur Gling pa's *Thugs sgrub rnam gnyis*, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's treasure teaching *'Phags pa'i snying thig*, the *Lce btsun snying thig*, and many others. The Sakyapa instructions he received included the Vajrayogini blessing; general instruction on the generation stage (*bskyed rim*) and perfection stage (*rdzogs rim*); and, in particular, instructions on the *rdzogs rim dbu ma chen po*; all the initiations and instructions for the Sakyapa protectors (chiefly Mahākāla Gurgyi Gönpö), including the external and secret instructions of Gurgyi Gönpö; the blessing and empower-

ment for the “Cycle of Three White [Deities]” in the common and uncommon forms from the Thirteen Golden Dharmas (*Gser chos bcu gsum*); and the text-transmission for the one-volume compilation (*be’u bum*) of the latter teachings.⁷²⁶



65. Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö of Dzongsar.

When teaching the *Path with Its Fruit* in its esoteric transmission, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö requested Dezhung Rinpoche to act as one of three assistant meditation instructors who explained the visualizations to be practiced (*khrid dpon* or *dmigs thun zin mkhan*).⁷²⁷ He tried to refuse, saying he was not qualified. Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö placed a white scarf around his neck and said, “You are Lekpa Rinpoche’s senior disciple. If you can’t do it, then who can?” This obliged Dezhung Rinpoche to assent.⁷²⁸ The other two assistants were (1) Mdo srid pa Thub bstan rgyal mtshan (1902–1971), who had four years before completed his tenure (1943–1950) as seventh seminary master of the Dzongsar Khamche seminary, and (2) Sangye Rinchen (ca. 1893–1956), former abbot of the Sakya Lha khang chen mo.⁷²⁹ Dezhung Rinpoche similarly assisted Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö when the latter gave the initiations of Hevajra, Vajrayoginī, and other great tantric *yi dam* deities.

Dezhung Rinpoche also volunteered to give the reading-transmission for the Collected Writings of the Sakya Founders (*Sa skya bka' bum*) during an early morning period before the main *Path with Its Fruit* teachings, which he then did in the upper temple called the Rtse lha khang, which Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo had built. Dezhung Rinpoche was busy during these weeks because later each day he also had to give the practical instructions for the *Path with Its Fruit* as assistant teacher.⁷³⁰ He did not accept any offerings from the main recipient of the text-transmission or from any of the ordinary monks. "This is a gift of the Dharma!" he told them.⁷³¹

Sometime during their long relationship, Dezhung Rinpoche also gave Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö the text-transmission for the collected writings of the five Sakya founders (evidently during the late 1920s) and other major Sakyapa reading-transmissions.⁷³² Chökyi Lotrö benefited from detailed conversations with Dezhung Rinpoche (among others), through which he could resolve doubts about the religious vocabulary and systems of theory and practice of the various (and here with Dezhung Rinpoche, especially the Sakyapa) traditions.⁷³³

During the late summer of 1954, in the sixth lunar month (ca. August) when the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings were well underway, a telegram arrived for Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, sent from Lhasa via Derge. It was a request from the Dalai Lama for Dagchen Rinpoche to join a group of government and religious leaders who were to meet with Communist leaders in China. He was to represent the Sakyapa tradition during these discussions. Dagchen Rinpoche much regretted leaving in the middle of the teachings, but Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö convinced him he should obey the Dalai Lama's request.⁷³⁴

During this stay at Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche is said to have given to Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö the Avalokiteśvara instruction (*Spyan ras gzigs dmar khrid*) that he himself had received from Dampa Rinpoche at Serdokchen.⁷³⁵ (Dezhung Rinpoche had, of course, also received these teachings on a special occasion from Lekpa Rinpoche at Tharlam in 1934.)

While at Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche also received—along with the young Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939–1987), who visited Dzongsar for a month—teachings that included the *Lce btsun snying thig*, *Kālacakra*, *Bsampa lhun grub*, *Bar chad lam gsal ba*, *rTsa gsum sgril sgrub*, and *Mgon po ber nag*. Then the Eighth Khams sprul, Don brgyud nyi ma (1931–1980), arrived, and Dezhung Rinpoche received together with him many Drukpa

and 'Ba' ram Kagyü teachings from Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. Dezhung Rinpoche also received the initiations for the “upper” and “lower” activities of Vajrakila (*Phur pa stod las smad las*).

Also among the main students at the *Collection of Sādhana*s and *Path with Its Fruit* teachings was Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1919–1991), who had briefly studied under Shenga at Jyekundo in 1919, at the same time as Dezhung Rinpoche. The three—Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, Dilgo Khyentse, and Dezhung Rinpoche—were very close. During the hot summer, the three lamas went up to the mountain retreat at Ösal Larigang and camped there with just a small entourage for ten days.⁷³⁶ They spent the whole time discussing religious topics, having agreed not to engage in mundane talk.



66. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. in Kalimpong, India, in 1959.

Each described to the others his own meditative attainments and realizations (*rtogs pa phul*).

They also talked much about Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, and Dezhung Rinpoche shared with the other two masters many details about the life of his great teacher. Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Lotrö, who was a devoted disciple of Gatön, was surprised and delighted to hear these new incidents, and said, “You remember so many details that are not in the biography by Dezhung Anjam! You should compose an additional biography recording these other accounts!” Later he even made a formal request with a scarf and

money.⁷³⁷ Dezhung Rinpoche began to write a new account, but before he could finish and publish it, the Chinese invaded, and it was lost when he fled from Kham.

Previously Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Lotrö had also asked him to write the biographies of some of the great masters from Ga region who appear in the most important Sakyapa teaching lineages. Khyentse Rinpoche said he would publish them from Dzongsar. Dezhung Rinpoche wrote them and presented them to Khyentse Rinpoche in 1954, but there was not enough time to arrange for their publication before Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche left eastern Tibet, and they are presumed to have been lost during the ensuing times of trouble.⁷³⁸

When in Dzongsar, hundreds of pilgrims and supplicants came to see Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche. He received them in a small tent set up in an open flat place, before which they would line up. Now, after a few days of relative peace and seclusion in Ösal Larigang, various supplicants who had come to Dzongsar to see Khyentse Rinpoche about important matters started to climb up to the mountain retreat where the lamas were staying and request audiences and blessings.⁷³⁹

1955

In winter (late 1954/early 1955), Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche returned from China before the others in his group, excusing himself because his mother had died in Sakya. Her death considerably dampened the happiness and relief at his return. He also had seen many disturbing things in China, which made him worried for the future. After completing a number of memorial rites for Dagchen Rinpoche's mother, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö continued the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings.

Finally Chökyi Lotrö finished his transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings. In the main assembly hall of the monastery, teacher and students then performed a tantric feast based on the *Path with Its Fruit* guru-yoga, after which they celebrated the lunar New Year (February 23, 1955) in Dzongsar. Then, in his own private quarters (*gzims chung*), Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche gave instructions on the meditation of White Tārā, and the secret instructions of Mahākāla (*Mgon po*).

Before the disciples departed, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö conferred on them all initiations of the protector (Mahākāla) and also the initiations for the

Three Long-Life Deities (*Tshe lha rnam gsum*). At the end there was a great ceremony in the main assembly hall of the monastery in which the disciples of Dzongsar Khyentse offered him a maṇḍala for his long life and much else. Great offerings were made at first by Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and next by the latter's tutor, Khenpo Sangye Rinchen. Then came Dezhung Rinpoche, followed by the Phyag mdzod Pönlop Phrin las bstan 'dzin, the Sakya Umdzay Chö Phüntso, and many others.

Studies at Lhagyal in Yilhung

In spring of 1955, after a little more than a year in Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya party returned to Lhagyal monastery in Yilhung.⁷⁴⁰ Soon thereafter, a message came from Dzongsar informing the Sakya party that Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö had left Kham for a pilgrimage to Lhasa. Later they learned that he had slipped away from Dzongsar incognito when he learned that all the main lamas in Derge district were being summoned by Communist officials to a meeting in China. Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö seems to have foreseen the coming political storm and catastrophic blow to the Tibetans' traditional way of life. When leaving Dzongsar, he gave his destination as the pilgrimage site of Chu bo ri in western Kham. But as soon as he reached there, he hastened on to Lhasa, where he stayed with the Bsam grub Pho brang noble family. Even when he proceeded to western Tibet and Sikkim, he never announced his plans to leave Tibet. First he merely went on "pilgrimage" to Lhokha, and then he gradually traveled onward by way of Dorjedrak, Gyantse, and Sakya.

Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö's departure from Kham greatly disturbed many of his disciples, yet it would have been still more traumatic had he made his intentions clear from the start. From Central Tibet he wrote a letter to Shechen Kongtrül explaining that he had left Kham for good, owing to the probability that Chinese Communism would take over there. He intended to make a pilgrimage to India and then settle permanently in that country. Shechen Kongtrül thought it might be wise to leave then, too, though he was later convinced to stay.⁷⁴¹

Before Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö left, Dezhung Rinpoche expressed his desire to return to Tharlam in accordance with his promise to Gatön Ngawang Lekpa to look after the monastery. But Dagmo Kusho wanted him to stay longer with the family, especially for the sake of Minzu Rinpoche.

Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö also encouraged him to stay with Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Dagmo Kusho, and family, and this prevented Dezhung Rinpoche from returning to Tharlam for the time being.

Meanwhile, back at Lhagyal in Yilhung, conditions were neither settled nor pleasant. Chinese Communist cadres posted nearby frequently inspected the monastery, noting down and later asking questions about any unusual wealth or arms they found. Just two miles away, at Manikhing, over three hundred Chinese soldiers were stationed.⁷⁴²

In late summer, on the twelfth day of the seventh lunar month (ca. August 29, 1955), the second Sakya son, Ānandavajra, was born at Lhagyal monastery. During this period, Dilgo Khyentse Trashi Paljor, or Rabsal Dawa, (1910–1991) was invited to Lhagyal and began to give teachings at the palace of the Chagö chieftain. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche had been born into the Denma Dilgo tshang, the family of one of the ministers to the Derge king, and was the younger brother of the Karma Kagyü master Sangyay Nyenpa Rinpoche. He had studied under many masters, including Khenchen Shenga, Shechen Gyaltshab 'Gyur med padma dbang rgyal, and Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. Prior to the present meeting with Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Dezhung Rinpoche, he had transmitted the *Treasury of Jewel Treasures* (*Rin chen gter mdzod*) collection of *gter ma* teachings at Amdo Re bkong and the *Treasury of Instructions* (*Gdams ngag mdzod*) collection to Drung nam Rgyal sprul Rinpoche.

During the next five or six months, Dilgo Khyentse taught them Kongtrül's *Treasury of Instructions* (*Gdams ngag mdzod*), a collection of religious instructions of all eight major spiritual traditions of Tibet. These teachings went on every day, with the bestowing of initiations, instructions, and text-transmissions. Both Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Dezhung Rinpoche received these teachings, along with many lamas from other schools in Kham. Dagmo Kusho and two-year-old Minzu Rinpoche were also among the disciples.

At the Chagö palace in Lhagyal, the lamas invited a certain "Lama Longtri" (Lama Klong khrid or Glang khrid?), a revealer of treasures (*gter ston*), to demonstrate his powers. He seemed to be able to snatch statues out of thin air as he danced and whirled about, though Dezhung Rinpoche tended to think this was a magical trick or sleight of hand. During this time, Dezhung Rinpoche also tutored his niece, Dagmo Kusho, in Tibetan spelling and grammar.

While Dilgo Khyentse was still giving teachings, an invitation came for Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche to visit the numerous Sakyapa monasteries in Minyak, chiefly Rikhü, Lhagang, Chukmo, Lha 'bri, and Kapshi. Dagchen Rinpoche refused the first invitation. Some time later a second deputation of Minyak monks came with another insistent invitation, including a supporting note from Chagö Topden, which convinced Dagchen Rinpoche to give his assent.⁷⁴³

Then, as winter was approaching, a letter arrived via Jyekundo monastery informing them of the death of Dezhung Rinpoche's brother-in-law Könyak (Dkon mchog grags pa), who had helped him so much by managing the trading business of Rinpoche's lama estate (*bla brang*) from the time of his first visit to Minyak. Könyak had died at age forty-nine in Yangpachen, northwest of Lhasa, as a result of an untreated leg wound from a horse kick. The family missed him sorely and sponsored the recitation of prayers in his memory at Lhagyal and neighboring monasteries. Dezhung Rinpoche's grieving sister Nangdzin Wangmo went back to Tharlam to settle family matters.

JUST BEFORE the Sakyapa party departed for Pal Lhagang in Minyak, where Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche planned to give the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche received an urgent message from the powerful Rikhü Kusho Jigme Chökyi Öser (1892–1956), his close disciple from his previous five-year visit there and still the most important Sakyapa lama in Minyak. The lama wrote that he was gravely ill and wished to meet his guru again. Dezhung Rinpoche left before the others and rushed to the Rikhü retreat, about half a kilometer from the main monastery of Rikhü.⁷⁴⁴ On the final leg of the journey he was accompanied by the young Minyak Rikhü Önpö Trulku (b. 1944) and several others.⁷⁴⁵

On Dezhung Rinpoche's arrival, the Rikhü Kusho seemed to improve. He laughed and joked, and was in excellent spirits. "This would be a perfect time to die," he remarked at the time. The Chinese Communists had already started instituting their "reforms," and he evidently had no regrets about not seeing further changes.⁷⁴⁶

The Rikhü Kusho requested initiations into the extraordinary form of one deity from the "Cycle of Three Red Deities" (*dmar po skor gsum*) that Dezhung Rinpoche had received in Sakya from Ngawang Kunga Rinchen,⁷⁴⁷ but Dezhung Rinpoche at first refused. "I am about to depart from this life. If you don't give it to me, it would be wrong!" the Rikhü Kusho protested. Finally Dezhung Rinpoche assented and bestowed it as requested. At the beginning of the initiation, the Rikhü Kusho said, "I can't get up to offer full prostrations to you, my revered guru, so please don't mind if I offer partial prostrations from a seated position!"⁷⁴⁸

On this occasion, Dezhung Rinpoche granted the blessing, instructions, and text-transmission for the Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma, the initiation for Rig

byed ma (Kurukulle), and also other teachings that he had promised but had not found any opportunity to give on his previous visit. The Rikhü Kusho had an excellent red paṇḍita hat that he had planned to offer to the Sakya *dagchen*. Now he felt he was about to die, so he had a high throne prepared for Dezhung Rinpoche and, calling an assembly, requested him to sit on it. He respectfully said:

I had originally intended to offer this paṇḍita hat to the Sakya *dagchen*, but I was not able to invite him here. Since you were empowered and enthroned by Lekpa Dorjechang as his regent, now I am going to offer it to you. I therefore earnestly request that you by all means be kind enough to take care to preserve and increase the Buddha's teachings in general, the Glorious Sakyapa tradition in particular, and especially the religious traditions of Ga Tharlam monastery and Rikhü monastery!

Dezhung Rinpoche, no doubt having in mind a special auspicious correlation (*rtan 'brel*), accepted this formal request, saying, "Yes, I will do just as you request," and at the same time he picked up the long-tailed paṇḍita's hat and put it on his head. The Rikhü Kusho then offered him many presents, beginning with the "supports" of enlightened body, speech, and mind.⁷⁴⁹

About a day after receiving the initiations and making the offerings, the Rikhü Kusho's health worsened and he passed away.⁷⁵⁰ The lama's death deeply saddened Dezhung Rinpoche. He performed the full funeral and cremation rites, including bathing the corpse, making offerings before the wrapped corpse, coronation of the corpse in the maṇḍala, the cremation, preparing votive tablets from the remaining ashes and bone fragments, and placing the votive tablets in a stūpa.⁷⁵¹ He stayed the full forty-nine days, leading all the ceremonies.⁷⁵² It was said that there were many auspicious signs at this time, such as a large number of small relics resembling white mustard seeds being found in the *gdung tsha* (salt used for preserving the remains?).

Dezhung Rinpoche mentioned to some of the mourning disciples how great his respect was for the deceased Rikhü Kusho, praising him as an extraordinary master with powers of clairvoyance. He told them:

When I was about to leave for Central Tibet, I asked the Rikhü Kusho to foretell how the journey would work out. He told me,

“Three negative circumstances will happen to you: first, there will be strife between servants in your retinue;⁷⁵³ second, one third of the religious offerings will go to waste;⁷⁵⁴ and third, after reaching Sakya, you will have difficulties. Therefore you must keep a very broad perspective of things. In the end, things will turn out well.” And this is exactly what happened. Therefore the great master was a great being who possessed unobstructed clairvoyance!

Before he passed away, the Rikhü Kusho asked Dezhung Rinpoche, “Do you possess a biography of Changchup Nyima, the previous birth of your prior life, Lungrik Nyima?”



67. Rikhü Kusho of Minyak as a mature master.

“Such a biography of Changchup Nyima is not to be found anywhere in the regions west of here,” Rinpoche replied.⁷⁵⁵

“I have a copy of it! It would be excellent if you could publish it through xylograph printing.”

After the Rikhü Kusho’s death, Dezhung Rinpoche requested the senior monks Lama Rdo rje dbang rgyal and Dge rgan Lhakpa to search for that book, but despite their best efforts they could not find any trace of it in the large collection of bundled Tibetan books where it was believed to be. Then Rinpoche himself came to the book room and told them, “All right, then

please fetch down a volume wrapped in such-and-such a cloth cover,” specifying the appearance of the one he wanted to see. When they brought the book he had described, it turned out to be the very one they had been fruitlessly seeking. All the students and attendants present were astonished and overcome with deep faith.⁷⁵⁶

Many of the greatest lamas in Minyak were invited for the final rites of the Rikhü Trulku. These included Dezhung Rinpoche’s revered master Bo Gangkar Rinpoche, who was delighted to see Dezhung Rinpoche again. That lama remarked that the deceased Rikhü Kusho had been kind to them, because through his passing they were able to meet once again. In the interim Gangkar Rinpoche had been pressured by the Chinese to work as a teacher of sorts in China.⁷⁵⁷ He had already lost much of his personal independence. He had many Chinese Buddhist disciples, but now the Communists were in control and he could see at first hand the changes they were making. He told Dezhung Rinpoche how the Chinese had started confiscating all arms and private wealth.⁷⁵⁸

At Rikhü, at the request of the populace, Dezhung Rinpoche performed the initiation of Avalokiteśvara and a long-life empowerment. Because some of the local people were afflicted by “nāgas” (*klu*), he also gave the initiations for *Klu dbang rgyal po* and *Klu khyung khra* (?).⁷⁵⁹ In the new scriptural seminary, he gave the initiation of the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga (*Sa ’jam sbag sgrub*) to the student-monks.⁷⁶⁰ Afterward Dezhung Rinpoche had high words of praise for this seminary.

Dezhung Rinpoche then left Rikhü for the monastery of Pal Lhagang, also in Minyak. The Sakyapa party had arrived there about four weeks previously, chartering two buses from the station at Manikhing. He took up residence with them at Pal Lhagang monastery, a local pilgrimage center standing in the midst of a nomadic plain on the main route from Derge to the great tea-trade entrepot of Dartsedo (Tachienlu).⁷⁶¹ It was the home of a famous Buddha image considered to be of almost the same sanctity and age as the Lhasa Jowo figure and said to have been brought there by the Chinese consort of the seventh-century Tibetan emperor Srong btsan sgam po. The location was then far from perfect, because the new Chinese motorable road (actually a dirt track full of deep ruts and potholes) had been built past one corner of the temple, and all night one could hear the groaning of truck engines as convoys of heavily loaded vehicles passed by.

The main purpose of Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche’s visit was to give the

exoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit*. This he had commenced to do, before a large gathering of some thirteen-hundred monks, nuns, and laypeople. The local Chinese Communist authorities noticed all the activity and sometimes came to investigate. Now and then, in the midst of a ceremony, they barged in and strolled up and down the aisles, asking questions and generally disrupting the proceedings.

During this time Dagmo Kusho went into a White Tārā retreat under the guidance of Dezhung Rinpoche, and for the next two months and three weeks he instructed her in meditation. At the end, he performed the fire-offering (*homa*) ceremony for her. During this retreat, news came that open revolt against the Communists had broken out in Lhathang. The reports of the bombing of the Lhathang main monastery and of the subsequent merciless atrocities perpetrated by Chinese soldiers against women, children, monks and nuns cast a pall of dread and gloom over the congregation.⁷⁶² A small group of young Lhathang monks came in tears and said they had been called back to defend their monastery.⁷⁶³

While at Minyak this second time, Dezhung Rinpoche gave novice or full monastic ordination to several hundred monks, perhaps to even more than one thousand. Most were ordained at Lhathang before the sacred Jowo image there, during breaks in the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings. Sangye Rinchen, the venerable former abbot of Sakya, who was then in his sixties and having difficulty walking, also played a leading role in giving many ordinations.⁷⁶⁴

At Lhathang Dezhung Rinpoche also gave other teachings, including special practical instructions to a select group of twenty-five students, headed by a number of trulkus and lamas such as Rikhü Öntül Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, Chos dar Mchog sprul 'Jigs med chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Kapshi Trulku, Dbon gcen Dga' 'khyil, Chos sprul Yongdzin Rgan Lhakpa, and Bsil khud Mkhan Ngag dge. These teachings included the extraordinary initiations for both Dpal mgon Zhal and Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma, and the related esoteric practical instructions in the Tsharpa tradition.

When giving instructions, he explained to his students how certain misspellings and corruptions in the text should be corrected, mentioning the importance of learning correct spelling and grammar. He remarked, "Thanks to my having attained a little 'eye of discriminative understanding,' I am just capable of correctly discerning what is right when I meet with such misspellings." This was later interpreted as a modest admission of the great learning which he had by then attained.⁷⁶⁵

During the transmission of the “Inconceivable” (*Bsam mi khyab*) instructions to each student individually, one at a time, Dezhung Rinpoche at one point invited in two monks together—the promising young monk Minyak Lungrik Wangchuk (Mingyur Rinpoche of Lithang) and another monk called “Lama.” “Since Lama already received the teachings once in Derge, you two can come in as a pair,” Dezhung Rinpoche instructed them. He seemed highly pleased and even took off his ceremonial hat to speak with them more informally and ask them about their lives. Lungrik Wangchuk had written a brief record of the teachings received during the *Path with Its Fruit*, and he showed Rinpoche the introductory verses he had written for it.

After reading the verses, Rinpoche asked, “Have you ever studied poetics?” When the monk answered “No,” he recommended that he later study poetics under Gangkar Rinpoche. Rinpoche himself wrote an introductory verse in ornate poetical style for that record.⁷⁶⁶

When the instructions were nearly completed, Lungrik Wangchuk recommended to his fellow senior students and vajra-brothers that they ask for still more instructions, this time on the “Great Madhyamaka” (*Dbu ma chen po*). He asked the monks who were senior to him to present the formal petition to Rinpoche.

When the older lamas came into Rinpoche’s presence and made the request, Rinpoche did not answer them but turned to Lungrik Wangchuk and gazed at him with wide eyes, thus showing that he knew it was Lungrik Wangchuk who was really responsible for the request. “Basically your request is one that should be fulfilled,” he said, though he deferred giving the instructions then. He said he hoped to do so some time in the future, saying that Minyak and all his students there were very important to him.⁷⁶⁷

1955–1956

While Dezhung Rinpoche was at Pal Lhagang, the younger Sakya son, Anandavajra (“Ani”), who was just three or four months old, fell ill with a bad cold that lingered on and on. This worried Dezhung Rinpoche, who was responsible for performing rituals for the health and longevity of the children.

Fresh news of worsening fighting came from Lithang in the west, so Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and his advisors tried to speed up the pace of the

Path with Its Fruit teachings. At the lunar New Year (February 12, 1956), the teachings were halted for a three-day celebration, though the mood was not very festive. Finally the *Path with Its Fruit* ceremonies were completed.

Dezhung Rinpoche expected to return by bus to Derge district with the rest of the party, but the Sakya family decided to go to Dartsedo (Tachienlu) to get urgent medical care for his younger great-nephew, Ani. After some trouble getting official leave to change their travel plans, the driver took the whole family on the six-hour jeep ride to Dartsedo, over two passes.

At Dartsedo, Ani (who by then probably had pneumonia) was admitted to a modern Chinese hospital for treatment. His mother stayed with him in



68. Ani Rinpoche of the Sakya Phüntshok palace at age one (1956).

the same room. One day Dezhung Rinpoche came to perform auspicious rites of purification. As he burnt his incense, rang his bell, and scattered rice, the Chinese staff peeked into the room and snickered.⁷⁶⁸ The rest of the party stayed at the home of one of Dezhung Rinpoche's old friends and disciples, A ja Bskal bzang Wasi skyabs (1925–1993), father of the Minyak Rikhü Önpö Trulku and head of the great Waschab trading house.⁷⁶⁹

Finally, after a week of treatment, Ani was much improved and was released from the hospital. After a few more days, the party headed back to Pal Lhagang, where they expected to take buses to Lhagyal but were told that the buses had been sent to China due to an emergency there. The



69. Phüntshok Phodrang family, ca. 1957. Left to right: Trinlay Rinpoche, Minzu Rinpoche, Dagchen Rinpoche, Ani Rinpoche, one Sakya nun sister, and Dagmo Kusho.

atmosphere was tense. It was rumored that an open revolt against the Chinese was imminent, but also that, as long as the Sakya party was kept at Lhagyal, open fighting would not break out.

Return to Derge and Yilhung

After five days of waiting, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's immediate family (including Dagmo Kusho and the two infants) went on to Dhongthog monastery, near Kardze in Horkhok, in the jeep of Chagö Topden, traveling for three days with stops on the way at Drago and Tawu. Dezhung Rinpoche and the others were left behind at Pal Lhagang.

When the Sakya *dagchen's* party arrived at Dhongthog monastery without Dezhung Rinpoche and the others, the monks there were very annoyed and went to complain to the Chinese officials at Kardze. There the Chinese were surprised to hear what had happened and dispatched two buses to Minyak. Three days later Dezhung Rinpoche and the rest of the group completed their bus journey and joined the others at Dhongthog.

After a brief visit at Dhongthog monastery, the party traveled on to

Nyarak (Nya brag), a nearby monastery also in Horkhok, where Gatön Lekpa had once given the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions and to which Dezhung Rinpoche had come on foot twenty-eight years before, struggling across snowbound passes from Dzongsar. The next stop was Glang nag (pron.: Longnak), where Skyabs mgon Phyogs kyi glang po (1842–1864) of the Sakya Phüntsok palace had lived until his death in a great earthquake on the fifteenth day of the third lunar month (ca. April 21) in 1864, when he was only twenty-two.⁷⁷⁰ In Horkhok the party could see how Chinese influence was already altering the old religious traditions: not only were monks forced to attend propaganda meetings and told to become “productive” members of society, but the common people were being discouraged from bringing food offerings to them.⁷⁷¹

After a one-night stay, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche’s immediate family traveled on to Lha ri sgar, the site of Chagö Topden’s palace in Yilhung, Derge. This was also the Chinese military and administrative headquarters for Yilhung district. Then they reestablished their main residence at Lhagyal.

In the summer of 1956, after his return to Derge district from Minyak and Horkhok, Dezhung Rinpoche studied at Lhagyal monastery with Dilgo Khyentse, who had invited Shechen Khenpo Kangshar Wangpo (ca. 1920–ca. 1980/81?) to come and give an exposition of the Nyingma tantra *Rgyud gsang ba snying po*.⁷⁷² Dilgo Khyentse personally requested Khenpo Kangshar to give these instructions to the disciples, who included Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche. Although Khenpo Kangshar was relatively young (about fourteen years Dezhung Rinpoche’s junior), he impressed everyone as a both a great scholar and strict monk.

After the return to Lhagyal monastery, the Sakya Khenchen Sangye Rinchen (ca. 1893–1956), who had been Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche’s tutor in Sakya and who had been serving as his main teacher and adviser throughout the journey to Kham, became ill and died. This lama had begun his tenure as abbot in Sakya during Dezhung Rinpoche’s stay there. He had both received teachings from and given minor teachings to Dezhung Rinpoche.⁷⁷³

Meanwhile, political tensions continued to mount in Nangchen and Gapa districts of northwestern Kham, areas with a long history of Chinese rule. Many local people prepared to fight. Elsewhere in Kham more revolts were breaking out in response to the repressive reforms of the Chinese.

Militarily, all Central Tibetan authority in western Kham had fallen in October 1951 with the capture of Chamdo, but this had caused little immediate unrest or dissatisfaction there, and in fact the Chinese at first had succeeded in playing off the Khampas against the Lhasa government and officials. It was only later, when the full implications of Communist policies had become clearer, that local resistance began to mount in Kham.

One day Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's younger brother, the monk Trinlay Rinpoche (Ngawang Kunga Trinlay Trashi, 1934–1998), and his sister Tshe sbyin lags arrived from Lhasa, having traveled from Central Tibet by Chinese truck. Trinlay Rinpoche had heard of the deteriorating conditions in Kham and urged his older brother and family to return to Sakya before things got even worse.⁷⁷⁴

*The Activities of Khenpo Kangshar
and the Death of Surmang Rolpay Dorje*

IN LATE 1956 Dezhung Rinpoche said farewell to the Sakya party in Lhagyal and returned to Tharlam. The parting was sad for all, but especially for his grand-nephew Minzu Rinpoche, who was now about three-and-a-half years old and had become devoted to his great-uncle.⁷⁷⁵

Sometime after reaching Tharlam, Dezhung Rinpoche entered into a strict retreat for several months. He never told others his main practice in retreats—only the monks who helped him prepare the *gtor ma* offerings were privy to this—but it is believed he did practices for ensuring his longevity.⁷⁷⁶ His brother Kunzang Nyima later said that the main practices included Garuḍa, and also asserted that Dezhung Rinpoche had a vision or sign of the goddess Tārā during this retreat.⁷⁷⁷

Late 1957: An Invitation from Shechen Khenpo Kangshar

In the summer or fall of 1957, Dezhung Rinpoche came out of retreat and received many invitations to perform rituals for local patrons. Usually he would not refuse an invitation from any sincere student or patron; he would go out of compassion.⁷⁷⁸ Accompanied by just two attendant monks, he then left Tharlam for a short break and went up into the hills to a secluded spot. He was taking a sort of rest cure that entailed ingesting a special pill made of compounded precious substances (*rin chen ril bu*). While he was staying quietly in the hills, a messenger unexpectedly arrived, bearing an urgent letter from Shechen Khenpo Kangshar, who, as Dezhung Rinpoche later learned, had written to both Dezhung Rinpoche and Sangyay Nyenpa, a Karma Kagyü master of Benchen monastery in Ga and the brother of

Dilgo Khyentse, insisting that both come to him at Thrangu monastery. The gist of the *khenpo*'s message was that he had attained realization and wanted to convey special instructions to Dezhung Rinpoche, whom he was fond of and urgently wanted to see.

Just the previous year, when they had met at Lhagyal monastery, Khenpo Kangshar had been a strict monk and highly respected scholar, but in the



70. Khenpo Kangshar (left) and Trungpa Trulku (right), imbibing the crazy wisdom. Surmang, 1950s.

intervening period he had gone through a radical transformation. News had reached Tharlam about the unusual teachings he had been giving at Surmang. He convoked large public meetings. He had also begun to practice tantric rites openly and literally, like a realized adept. Many monks and nuns who had been in retreat for years he suddenly called back into normal life. Many he encouraged, directly or indirectly, to disrobe.

Some people later interpreted these actions as showing great foresight in preparing them for the radical secularizing changes that were just around the corner; others attributed them to his enlightened siddhis. But a few remained skeptical about his behavior and strongly opposed radical breaches of the monastic rule. "The *khenpo* has gone mad!" they muttered.

Dezhung Rinpoche's first reaction was to avoid going altogether. But

one sentence in Khenpo Kangshar's letter worried him: "If you don't come here, then I will come there to Tharlam monastery to see you." Tharlam belonged to the Ngorpa tradition and its monastic discipline was strict. It would be highly disruptive if Khenpo Kangshar began to teach his new methods in the Tharlam temple. Dezhung Rinpoche therefore decided that, come what may, it was in the interests of his monastery for him to go to Thrangu. He packed a few things and left with just one or two younger monks as attendants.

Several things had apparently led to Khenpo Kangshar's sudden changes at Surmang in Nangchen. One was the ever-increasing pressure of the Chinese Communists. Their propagandizing and other activities intruded more and more. A group of Chinese soldiers had even showed up suddenly one day at Surmang Düdsithil and announced that they wanted to use the "fort" there as their headquarters. Obviously great political changes were afoot.

Then, in the summer of 1957, the *khenpo* had not been feeling well and needed a change of atmosphere. As Kangshar's close disciple Chögyam Trungpa Trulku related in his autobiography, the *khenpo* traveled up into the mountains and visited the holy snow-crested mountain Doti Gangkar.

According to legend, originally, in the golden age, the whole mountain had been covered with snow and had shone like a diamond; in the following age it became like an onyx (or *gzi* stone?) in which light and darkness were mixed; and in the final age, it would become blue-black, like iron. Then everything would be dark and the age of religion in Tibet would be over. When they reached the top of the mountain and saw that the snow-fields were melting and great expanses of dark rock were showing, this left a deep impression on the master. He became seized with the terrible urgency of preparing for the great dark age ahead.⁷⁷⁹

Khenpo Kangshar quickly recovered his health and devoted himself completely to teaching. He decided that he would no longer address only monks but would also teach the wider lay community. In the autumn of 1957, he called a large public meeting in the monastery's assembly hall. He talked from seven in the morning until six in the evening with only a two-hour break. As Chögyam Trungpa, who was present, recalled less than ten years later:⁷⁸⁰

He explained in simple terms how necessary it was to realize the times we had reached. We might no longer be allowed to perform our rituals, but this would not destroy the fundamental teachings that the Buddha had given us, nor the integrity of the Tibetan people.

He taught the *Dharmapāda* verse, “Cease to do any evil whatsoever, practice virtue in abundance, and tame one’s own mind: that is the doctrine of the Buddha.” In these and other ways he encouraged the laypeople to increase their awareness and compassion. After this, the *khenpo* held another great meeting, this one for lamas, monks, and nuns. As Chögyam Trungpa witnessed:⁷⁸¹

He told them that they must give more help to the lay people who had no opportunity to study. The divisions between the different schools must be abandoned. They must give the fundamental training on how to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha and how to develop the four “divine stations,” namely loving kindness, spiritual joy, compassion, and equanimity. Concerning equanimity, he stressed that human rights and nonviolence were particularly important in the anxious times that we were going through.

He recommended the old Kadampa tradition (of *blo sbyong*, mind-training) for developing loving-kindness, and taught that the doctrine of loving-kindness should be combined in practice with the Mahāmudrā and Atiyāna methods for meditating on the ultimate.

Already in Surmang, the *khenpo* had begun acting in unconventional ways and was not strictly observing the monk’s discipline. He then went to Thrangu monastery in southern Gakhok, where he continued his teachings, which became less and less conventional, and began to display openly the conduct of a siddha or accomplished master of tantric practice.⁷⁸²

When Dezhung Rinpoche arrived at Thrangu monastery, he found quarters there in the residence of the monk Khra rgob.⁷⁸³ Then he went to meet the master Shechen Khenpo Kangshar Wangpo and hear what he had to say. He also went to one of the public assemblies. Khenpo Kangshar was there, giving his disciples a direct introduction to the nature of mind. The master was completely changed. His eyes were alight, he was unclothed from the waist up, and he moved about airily as if transported by sublime insight.

During these teachings, the master suggested that the students remove their garments. Everyone except Dezhung Rinpoche and one senior lama of the Karma Kagyü tradition, the Sangyay Nyenpa Trulku (the brother of Dilgo Khyentse), did so.⁷⁸⁴ The master had at first turned to Dezhung Rinpoche and politely suggested, “If you wouldn’t mind just removing your robes” Dezhung Rinpoche removed his upper shirt and sat waiting, and this was enough for Khenpo Kangshar. Later Dezhung Rinpoche said, “If he had given me a further direct command, of course I would have obeyed.” Dezhung Rinpoche had studied the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* under Khenpo Kangshar the previous year and viewed him as the Buddha. He could not disobey his order.⁷⁸⁵

Khenpo Kangshar openly avowed that he had achieved siddhis. In a private moment Dezhung Rinpoche respectfully approached him, asking, “If you have achieved siddhis, Rinpoche, then please display one of the signs of achievement to me.”

Khenpo Kangshar replied, “I *have* achieved siddhi. But it is the inner siddhi of directly realizing the ultimate, Primordial Mind.”⁷⁸⁶ Such siddhis of the *mind* are not to be displayed outwardly.”⁷⁸⁷

Large numbers of people from nearby districts flocked to hear the *khenpo*’s teachings. But even with such inspired sermons, tensions continued to run high. The outer crisis brought on by the ever-increasing Chinese occupation of their district was no nearer to being resolved—in fact, it was getting worse with every passing day. Not everyone was reassured by Khenpo Kangshar’s radical and unconventional methods. Many were openly distraught. One day a man in the group finally cracked and roamed about brandishing a sword, shouting, “Today is the day!”

In winter 1957, Khenpo Kangshar returned east to confront head-on the uncertainties and dangers at his home monastery of Shechen. He was still teaching large gatherings in Dzakhok as late as the last months of 1958 or even early 1959.⁷⁸⁸ He is reported to have been afterward arrested and kept in Communist imprisonment for two decades.⁷⁸⁹

The Death of Surmang Rolpay Dorje Trulku

After two or three days at Thrangu monastery, Dezhung Rinpoche managed to excuse himself and began the journey back to Tharlam. En route to Tharlam, Dezhung Rinpoche stopped in Jyekundo to visit the pleasant home of

his younger brother, Dr. Kunzang Nyima (1916–1990), and his brother's wife, Tshe skyid yongs 'dzom.

Kunzang Nyima had originally been a monk of Tharlam. When he was a young boy there was even talk for a short while that he might be the rebirth of the Jyekundo Önpö Trulku.⁷⁹⁰ He studied medicine first under his “uncle” (a much older cousin) Josay Gelong Jamyang Gyaltzen and then continued his studies for seven years with an outstanding doctor in Jyekundo, Dbang po Tshe rgyal. The latter, a skilled doctor and also a scholar versed in other arts and fields of knowledge, belonged to the Dbang po Labrang of Jyekundo monastery. He was famous also for his knowledge of calculations and prognostication (*rtsis*), which he had learned from the master Dbang po Yon bzang (Yon tan bzang po).⁷⁹¹ After completing his main studies, Kunzang Nyima went to the adjoining town, Jyekundo, and began to practice medicine. He gave up his monk's vows and afterward was invited as adopted groom (*mag pa*) to the childless family of his landlords, the Thab g.yog tshang. He married Tshe skyid yongs 'dzom, a daughter of the Nya mo tshang, a local family of good standing.⁷⁹²

Dezhung Rinpoche also visited the Jyekundo monastery, meeting with a number of learned lamas, including Khenpo Ngakga (a kind and modest master) and Khenpo Trinlay Chöphel. Then he evidently went back into retreat at Tharlam for several months, performing a tantric propitiation retreat (*bsnyen pa*).⁷⁹³

In the spring of 1958, after the lunar New Year, while Dezhung Rinpoche was still in retreat, Karma nges don (1911–1958), the fifth successive birth of Tertön Rolpay Dorje Trulku and one of the chief lamas of Surmang Düdsithil, serving as regent-abbot during the minority of the Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, visited the general vicinity of Tharlam.⁷⁹⁴ Rolpay Dorje Trulku had left Düdsithil and was in Gakhok on a teaching tour. He had fallen ill with influenza but had chosen to continue teaching and traveling. He had reached the village of Drönda, not far from Thaklung, and here he gave his last public ceremony, a long-life initiation.

Since they already knew each other from the lama's previous visit to Gapa when he had visited their family home, Dezhung Rinpoche sent him a letter, carried personally by his sister Ane Chime, whose nunnery was in Drönda. At that time Rolpay Dorje Trulku was not seriously ill, so he sent back a normal, friendly reply. But with the passing days and hours his illness took a serious turn for the worse. He sent a monk to Dezhung Rinpoche

bearing a second letter, explaining that he was seriously sick and asking him to perform a divination to discern what was best to do.⁷⁹⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche, who had received religious teachings with the Rolpay Dorje Trulku (they were “religious friends” or *chos 'grogs*),⁷⁹⁶ quickly sent a hand-carried message from his retreat, stating that since there was a real danger to the lama’s life, he should go quickly to the *sngags pa* of Yu rug, a famed realized master (*rtogs ldan*). “But if that is not possible, then come here to me,” he wrote.

Rolpay Dorje Trulku felt he would never reach the other lama, so he decided to come to Tharlam monastery. He was given quarters in Dezhung Rinpoche’s own *labrang* and made as comfortable as possible. Dezhung Rinpoche visited his bedside often and asked if there was any way he could help fulfill his wishes or anything to be done that might lengthen his life. Rolpay Dorje replied that his work was finished and his duty done.

For a few days, the lama’s health seemed to improve; he and Dezhung Rinpoche had many long conversations. One morning he was so much better that he could get up and walk around. He told Dezhung Rinpoche what amounted to his last testament. He said, “I don’t need to specify the place of my next rebirth, the great lamas will know,” mentioning specifically Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, in whom he had deep faith.⁷⁹⁷ But then he said that he would like to be reborn near Nya lam at Tsa, the homeland of Milarepa.

Dezhung Rinpoche did not want to relay this information to Rolpay Dorje’s monks, but the senior monk in the group had to be told. The sick lama had by this time been at Tharlam for nearly a week.

Early the next morning Rolpay Dorje Trulku threw off his coverings and sat cross-legged in vajra position. He instructed his monks to read aloud the text of his daily practices. Soon after they had finished, he had difficulty breathing, and his attendants tried to help him. He told them he could manage by himself, and then he breathed his last.⁷⁹⁸

The next day, the young Chögyam Trungpa Trulku (Trungpa Rinpoche) hurriedly arrived from Surmang and immediately performed a short rite. He also gave a small talk about the great kindness of his regent and led those gathered in meditation. He remarked, “Impermanence! It’s strange: he left happy and returns a corpse.”⁷⁹⁹

As Rolpay Dorje had expressed the wish to be cremated wherever he died, they arranged to do this on the fifth day after his death, building the

cremation stūpa on the roof of Dezhung Rinpoche's own *labrang*. At the time of cremation, Trungpa and the Surmang monks performed the Vajrasattva maṇḍala and prayers. Dezhung Rinpoche and the Tharlam monks performed the Sarvavid-Vairocana maṇḍala and cremation ceremony (*ro sreg*). A group of Nyingma monks performed yet another rite.⁸⁰⁰

Dezhung Rinpoche carefully wrote down all the instructions and last wishes that Rolpay Dorje had expressed the previous week and handed them over to the lama's disciples as a long and detailed written account. The disciples were filled with gratitude. Before they left they offered to help Rinpoche procure from Surmang however much wood he might need for his planned extension on the Tharlam monastery.⁸⁰¹

Flight from Kham to Central Tibet

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE left his retreat in early or mid-1958 and invited a trulku of Lab monastery, the Gelukpa monastery on the other side of the Drichu, to come and receive Sanskrit teachings from him. The latter agreed and in return invited Dezhung Rinpoche to visit Lab later on. In the summer of 1958 a dwelling was being prepared at Tharlam for this visit.⁸⁰²

In the late summer Dezhung Rinpoche began transmitting the *Collection of Sādhanas* (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) to a large assembly of monks at Tharlam. His main disciples included the Pu ru Trulku of Trindu Dgon gsar (then in his twenties),⁸⁰³ two young trulku sons of the Trindu Ma 'das Trulku (both in their twenties, one of whom was a minor Khyentse rebirth),⁸⁰⁴ and the trulku of Bamle monastery in Denma (born in Minyak, then just eleven or twelve), each with a large retinue. All the monks of Tharlam were in attendance. Quite a few monks also gathered from other monasteries. But the times were very tense, and many monks who might ordinarily have come stayed away.⁸⁰⁵

This was the last major teaching given by Dezhung Rinpoche in Tibet, and he managed to finish only five volumes of the empowerments. In the middle of the teachings there was a break while the Tharlam monks commemorated a holy day.⁸⁰⁶ During the break Dezhung Rinpoche gave the initiations from another collection, the "Hundred Sādhanas" (*Sgrub thabs brgya rtsa*), to the monks from other monasteries. While doing so, he suddenly developed an acute sore throat and lost his voice. When the illness did not quickly improve, he sent a Tharlam monk to Dr. Kunzang Nyima at Jyekundo, asking him to come or send medicine. By that time the Chinese Communists had taken control of the Jyekundo area, and people had to

apply for official permission to travel anywhere. Kunzang Nyima explained the circumstances, and the Chinese permitted him to leave for no more than five days. He rushed north to Tharlam to treat his brother.

Three days later the Chinese Communists soldiers suddenly surrounded the Jyekundo monastery and Dra'u Pön palace. They arrested all officials of the monastery and palace, together with their close associates. Kunzang Nyima would have been captured: his name had been on their list.⁸⁰⁷ The prisoners were detained in the hilltop Jyekundo monastery; the Communists also threatened to arrest anyone who ventured too near the monastery.

Meanwhile, a convoy of forty-six Chinese army trucks approached Jyekundo. Tibetan resistance fighters ambushed the convoy, killing the Chinese soldiers and capturing the cargo, except for a single truck that managed to return to its base. Now the simmering unrest, which had erupted into violence further south in Kham (such as in Lithang) as much as two years earlier, turned into open resistance and fighting in Gakhok.⁸⁰⁸

Because the Chinese convoy had been annihilated, many of the people in villages outside Jyekundo were lulled into a false sense of security. It would be a long time before the Chinese attempted to send trucks again, they thought. Dezhung Rinpoche was deeply concerned but continued to teach.

Soon a fresh report came that ten thousand troops from the Chinese People's Liberation Army were heading for Jyekundo. Many people began to flee, and Dezhung Rinpoche halted his teachings so that the monk-students who wanted to escape could do so. It was now the seventh lunar month (August/September 1958).⁸⁰⁹

A week before this, a demented man had come to Tharlam, ranting to everybody, "We have to destroy the Chinese!" As he wandered about, he tried to smash any Chinese-made goods he came across.

The Tharlam monks and other religious students grew more alarmed at the worsening conditions, and they told Dezhung Rinpoche, "You can't stay in the monastery. The Chinese may come any day now!" With their help he moved outside to a tent in a nearby area.

The situation worsened day by day. Many fighters from the local resistance had committed themselves to a fight to the death and came to Dezhung Rinpoche, requesting protection cords and also blessing-pills to be taken if they were mortally wounded, which Dezhung Rinpoche gave to them.

Then a large contingent of Chinese troops approached from Jyekundo in the south. First in their path lay the towns Ranyak and Bamchu, on the near side of the Drichu, each with large monasteries. The monks of Ranyak rose in spirited resistance, but without modern weapons they could not hold out long against well-armed and disciplined Chinese soldiers. The Chinese used planes to bomb Ranyak, and in their final infantry assault they used the infamous tactic of putting captured Tibetan monks in Chinese uniforms and forcing them to march at the front lines. Any that turned away were shot in the back.

Other Chinese Communist troops then reached the White Stūpa at 'Bri chu kha on the far banks of the Drichu. To prevent their crossing, the resistance fighters had removed all yak-skin coracles from the area. But the Chinese just killed a large number of animals and from the fresh hides made new boats in which to cross the river.

Finally a troop of Chinese soldiers arrived on the near shore not far from Thag mda', about four miles below Tharlam in the same lateral valley. Many local monks went there to fight, but then a Chinese army plane flew by, making several passes and dropping three bombs on them. After a short battle, the Tibetans were routed. They fled in panic and disarray to Tharlam.

Though it was late in the day, Dezhung Rinpoche and everyone else who could travel loaded a few possessions on their horses or mules and fled west into the hills. One *khenpo* tried to go to his home in the other direction, but there were too many Chinese troops that way and he had to turn back. Many groups of refugees tried to cross the Thag Pass (Thag la) that same night to begin their westward escape.

The weather was bad in the hills, with thick fog and rain, causing much hardship for the refugees on the dark and slippery paths. But the bad weather may have saved their lives. Later they heard that Chinese soldiers had circled around from Ranyak and come over the Thag Pass from the opposite (i.e., western) direction that night, arriving in Thaklung the next morning. Though they must have passed within a short distance of the groups of fleeing people, somehow the Chinese soldiers did not see or hear them.⁸¹⁰

Once over the pass, Dezhung Rinpoche and the monks accompanying him headed west and north for a number of days, out onto the high nomadic plains. Their immediate destination was Goshung, a wide, open

plain of grazing ground on the main route to Lhasa. There the Dra'u Pön himself had made his encampment with a large band of armed men.

With their laden pack animals they plodded ahead slowly, being overtaken by numerous parties from Tharlam racing past on horseback. Their own group moved so slowly that some felt they would be left behind and caught. But as it turned out, many of those who fled more quickly were later captured by the Chinese.⁸¹¹

After a few days they met up with a large party of nomads who were herding hundreds if not thousands of yaks and sheep. They traveled together, both parties making only modest progress each day and stopping early in the afternoon to let their animals graze and rest. Along the path they several times came across corpses of massacred people and also the rotting bodies of many animals pointlessly killed by the Chinese. They were appalled by these brutal scenes and hastened away, hoping to escape such a fate.

Countless sheep and yaks roamed without herdsmen in the high pastures, abandoned by fleeing owners. The nomads they traveled with now and then rounded up some of the fresher, stronger animals and set some of their own weaker ones free.⁸¹²

After about nine or ten days of slow travel, Dezhung Rinpoche and his party arrived at Goshung, which was normally a mere four or five days' journey from Jyekundo. The place belonged to the Yul shul ("Yushu") division of Nangchen, and a number of Yul shul people also joined the encampment. Many other groups from Gapa were already there, so the plain was covered by the huge encampment of tents and animals from many places. Some fifteen- to twenty-thousand refugees gathered there, including many resistance fighters drawn by the knowledge that the Dra'u Pön had a lot of extra arms and ammunition. In the morning, a plume of steam rose into the air across the plain from the breath of so many animals.⁸¹³

Dezhung Rinpoche and his party stayed at Goshung about two weeks, living in the tents they had brought and eating the food they had carried with them. Dr. Kunzang Nyima was in high demand. He spent his time going from tent to tent, treating the many sick and wounded.⁸¹⁴

Soon after the Dra'u Pön had reached this encampment, his daughter died. He and his family had therefore decided to stay there and perform the funeral observances for her for the full forty-nine-day period. This was the reason he and his people, who otherwise would have slowly

headed westward toward Lhasa and out of immediate danger, remained stationary at Goshung.⁸¹⁵

On the nineteenth day of the ninth lunar month (ca. October 31), several Chinese military airplanes flew overhead, circling the large encampment. Some of the Dra'u Pön's men shot at the planes and even managed to down one of them, which lifted the spirits of the resistance fighters.

The Goshung Massacre

The next day, the twentieth day of the ninth lunar month (ca. November 1, 1958), a large band of men in maroon robes, evidently another group of refugee monks, approached the encampment from one side. When they had come closer, someone suddenly raised the alarm: "The Chinese are here! Chinese are here!"

The men in maroon were Chinese soldiers disguised as monks. Before a general alarm could be raised, the enemy soldiers charged, firing their guns. Total chaos ensued—gunfire and people shouting and crying were heard from all sides.

Groups of Chinese troops attacked from several directions at once, and nobody knew where to flee. The monk Jamyang Sherab (later *khenpo* of Tharlam) dove face-down into a mud puddle and remained lying there. Taking him for dead, the Chinese soldiers ignored him, running past and shooting at other people. One Chinese horseman came riding through the middle of the encampment, blasting away with a machine gun at anyone he saw.

When the pandemonium of the fighting reached his tent, Dezhung Rinpoche saw no chance to escape. His immediate instinct was to greet the advancing Chinese soldiers in peace. He searched for a ceremonial scarf to present.

"The Chinese are already here; we'll never get away," he told his sister, Ane Chime.

"No!" she shouted, grabbing his hand. "Better to run and perish, than to die in prison!"

As no woman was allowed to touch him (for fear of rendering his talismans against weapons ineffective), she had first covered her hand with a scarf. Grasping his hand firmly, she led him away through the noise and confusion.⁸¹⁶ They managed to find his horse, and he mounted it. By then

several of their immediate group were also trying to break away from the encampment.

To escape, they first of all had to make it over a ridge. They started in a group for the top of that ridge. At first a number of Chinese soldiers pursued them, firing their guns. They heard the strange hollow buzzing of bullets whizzing all around them. One of Dezhung Rinpoche's servants, Tshe brtan rnam rgyal, who was leading his horse, was suddenly struck in the side by a bullet and fell, wounded.⁸¹⁷ His companions had no choice but to rush on.

Dezhung Rinpoche—a large lama wearing yellow robes, mounted on a white horse—made a prime target for the Communist bullets. He recited mantras and generated a “protective circle” (*srung 'khor*).⁸¹⁸ Miraculously, he and his group managed to clear the first ridge. A little farther and they found themselves away from the worst of the fighting. They kept moving on as fast as they could until they no longer heard gunshots and were sure they were free from pursuers.

During the chaos, one of Rinpoche's mules had grabbed one of his robes and had come trotting up behind their group, dragging the maroon robe either in its mouth or snagged in its halter, so Dezhung Rinpoche had something to wrap himself up in during the night. But most of the others had only the clothes they had been wearing at the moment the Chinese soldiers made their surprise attack.

That night they spent cold and hungry. Nobody had brought food. They huddled together to avoid frostbite. A single resistance fighter came by in the dark and offered them a little piece of butter. Another came by and offered them a piece of cheese. They accepted these gifts, but how long could they live on bits of butter and cheese? Dezhung Rinpoche did not even have a cup or bowl from which to drink.

When it was still dark some of Dezhung Rinpoche's attendants decided to risk going back to the old Goshung campsite, to recover some of their food and clothing. They crept to the silent remains of the encampment and managed to salvage a few supplies, carrying them back unobserved in the darkness. They also rescued the box of Dezhung Rinpoche's most sacred religious possessions (*chos sgam*). Any Chinese soldiers who might have been left to guard the site were evidently asleep.

After this, Dezhung Rinpoche traveled westward for more than three months, not by the direct route but from one nomad encampment to another, hoping to elude Chinese pursuers. By the direct route it would

have taken only a month or so. Though he had lost most of his possessions to the Chinese, his party was not reduced to starvation, as many other refugee groups were. Since he was a lama, faithful nomads made offerings to him along the way.

While fleeing, they sometimes heard reports that a detachment of Chinese soldiers was lurking up ahead, so they suddenly changed their route. At forks in the path, Dezhung Rinpoche sometimes performed divinations to decide which way to go. Sometimes a Chinese plane suddenly appeared overhead, making them feel exposed and in danger.⁸¹⁹

Their small party consisted of fourteen people, all sharing the same cooking fire, seven of whom belonged to Tharlam: Dezhung Rinpoche, Jamyang Sherab, Trashī Tshering (business manager of the monastery), Ane Chime, and three other monks. Dezhung Rinpoche's younger brother Dr. Kunzang Nyima had become separated from them. At the moment of the Chinese attack, he had been treating a sick person on the other side of the encampment. They had no idea whether he had been killed or captured.⁸²⁰

Later they heard from other survivors that during the initial attack Khenpo Ru kho of Jyekundo Döndrup Ling had been killed.⁸²¹ It was also reported that many monks and a number of resistance fighters had been killed or captured. In particular, two of the Tharlam chant-leaders had been captured and made to carry corpses on their backs a long while before being shot on the way back to Gapa. But the Dra'u chieftain and a large number of his men had managed to escape.

Scattered groups of other refugees from Goshung went hungry or died of their untended wounds. Of those who fled on foot, many later died of starvation or exposure, for they had to leave behind their food and pack animals. One group of stragglers was attacked as many as seventeen times by Chinese patrols as it tried to find its way to Lhasa.⁸²²

1959

For over three months, through the late fall and early winter (early November 1958–February 1959), Dezhung Rinpoche traveled circuitously through the northern nomadic wastes, heading slowly for central Tibet and ultimately for Sakya. In early February 1959, he arrived in northern Phenyül, staying near the monastery of Reting, (Rwa sgren). A few days before the lunar New Year (which in 1959 fell on the eighth of February), he sent a

message to Dagmo Kusho in Lhasa informing her that he and Ane Chime were safe and were on their way to Sakya. He was cautious about coming right into the middle of Lhasa, where there were so many Chinese present.

Dagmo Kusho, who had been praying for his safe arrival in Sakya, quickly replied. Things seemed to have calmed down in Lhasa, so she urged him to come to the capital, reassuring him that it was safe. "It will take at least a year or two before the Chinese can overrun the big domain of the Central Tibetan government!" she wrote. "There is no reason to fear being recognized as one of the people from Goshung," she added, saying that if he came to Lhasa, they could all travel together to Sakya.

After all the dangers and difficulties of the last months, this letter from his dear niece moved Dezhung Rinpoche deeply. He later said that reading her hand-written message had so reassured him that he had trusted implicitly in everything she had said.⁸²³

Visit to Lhasa

Dezhung Rinpoche left his monks with the pack animals in Phenpo near Nalendra, and with a smaller group, including Ane Chime, proceeded farther southward to Lhasa, trying to avoid meeting Chinese and using divination to determine the safest routes toward the Jokhang temple in the center of the city. On February 27, 1959 (the twentieth of the first lunar month), after the Great Prayer Festival of the New Year (*smon lam chen mo*) had ended—and exactly four months after the attack at Goshung—he and Ane Chime arrived at last in the sacred capital.

His niece and other friends and relations already in Lhasa were immensely relieved to see him. Dagmo Kusho felt like it was a dream and could not speak: he was much darker, more weather-beaten, and thinner than he had been at their last meeting two years before.⁸²⁴ The family was planning to depart for Sakya in a matter of days. Dezhung Rinpoche found a room a short distance away at a Sakya residence, but during the day he joined the Sakya family at the Pönshö noble family's residence. He did go to make offerings and prayers in the Jokhang, but basically he and the others were just waiting to leave for Sakya.

Since 1958 the situation had been deteriorating even in Lhasa—about ten thousand refugees had come there to escape the fighting and persecution in Kham and Amdo. Large numbers of Chinese troops had been quartered in

and around Lhasa since late 1951, but the capital itself remained comparatively calm. By early 1959 the fighting had spread to areas much closer to Lhasa. Group after group of fresh refugees poured in, reporting fresh killings, tortures, and other outrages. About a week after Dezhung Rinpoche's arrival, tensions suddenly began to mount even in Lhasa. On the tenth of March there took place an unsettling incident of protest against Chinese propaganda. Two days later (March 12), Tibetan women held a large anti-Chinese demonstration.

Day by day, the situation grew more serious. Groups of Khampa fighters came to consult Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche. Meanwhile, Dezhung Rinpoche deeply regretted having been talked into coming to Lhasa. He was deeply concerned and remained most of the time in one of the upstairs bedrooms doing his practices.

On the morning of March 13, a group of six Khampa soldiers, soon joined by a number of others, came to see Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche at the Pönshö residence. About two hours later, six Chinese soldiers and an interpreter came to "invite" Dagchen Rinpoche away. At first they were told that he was out, but they searched the house and found him in a third-floor bedroom with Dezhung Rinpoche. "Who is this?" they asked, pointing accusingly at Dezhung Rinpoche, probably taking him for the leader of the band of Kham-pas. Meanwhile the Khampa fighters had followed the Chinese upstairs. They were prepared for battle and waited tensely for any provocation.⁸²⁵

Finally Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche managed to forestall the six Chinese soldiers, and being outnumbered by the Khampa fighters, they stalked out angrily. That day and the next, Dezhung Rinpoche was very concerned for everyone's safety. Soon the Chinese Communist authorities began to denounce the Sakyapas over their loudspeakers. Dagchen Rinpoche took to wearing monk's robes as a disguise and stayed away from the Pönshö house during the day.

They decided to leave Lhasa as soon as possible for Nalendra monastery, a day's journey away in the Phenpo valley just north of the city, and sent an urgent request for twenty horses and mules to the Nalendra head lamas. The next day the reply came: the animals would be sent, but they were grazing two days' journey away, so it would take some time to fetch them. There was nothing to do but minor packing, while waiting and praying that this one chance for escape would materialize.

At last a second message arrived: The mounts would be ready to depart

Lhasa for Nalendra on the morning of March 19. The animals would be waiting at the northern outskirts of Lhasa at the nearby great monastery of Sera.⁸²⁶

Flight from Lhasa to Bhutan and India

IN THE VERY EARLY MORNING of March 19, 1959, Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya family quietly set out from Lhasa, divided into small groups. Dezhung Rinpoche rode ahead on their one horse with a small group of monks because he was unable to walk the distance. The Sakya family disguised themselves in ordinary clothes and carried white scarves and containers of melted butter, pretending to make a normal early-morning visit to Sera monastery for making religious offerings. Dezhung Rinpoche had no choice but to leave behind the box of important religious articles (*chos sgam*) that his attendants had painstakingly salvaged from the site of the Goshung massacre, though his brother Dr. Kunzang Nyima, with whom they had been reunited in Lhasa, managed to bring some of its contents when he fled the city that evening.⁸²⁷

When they all reached Sera, they found fourteen horses waiting, but no saddles. The monks of Sera rushed about and finally came up with fourteen saddles, including some yak saddles. Many of the party were anxious and it did not soothe their nerves to see Trinlay Rinpoche spending precious time happily chatting away with his old monk comrades in the monastery.

Leaving Sera, they again avoided traveling in one big group so as not to arouse suspicion. Ane Chime and Dagmo Kusho went in the first small group, and Dezhung Rinpoche with several monks followed in the second. Slowly they made their way northward along the main path into the hills. After a long climb, they reached the top of the Go pass (Sgo la) in the late afternoon and crossed into the broad Phenpo Valley. It was not until much later in the night that they all safely arrived at the monastery of Nalendra—all, that is, except Kunzang Nyima, who arrived the following morning and reported hearing sounds of fighting in Lhasa as he had ascended the pass.

The general uprising of the Tibetans and the harsh military reaction of the Chinese Communists were underway.⁸²⁸

At Nalendra, a major Sakyapa monastery founded in 1436 by Rongtön (1367–1449), they met and were welcomed by one of the monastery's leading lamas, the seventy-five-year-old Zimwok Rinpoche Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan 'dzin (1884–1963).⁸²⁹ The main Sakya party was put up in the Zimwok lama-palace. The previous Zimwok Rinpoche, Tendzin Nyendrak, had become the teacher of the Twelfth Dalai Lama, Phrin las rgya



71. Two reincarnate lamas of Nalendra: Zimwok Trulku (left) and Tsetrül Rinpoche (right). Nalendra, 1950s.

mtsho (1856–1875), and thus had the almost unique distinction among Sakyapa lamas of being called by the title “[Zimwok] Dorjechang” by many monks of the great Central Tibetan Gelukpa convents. His successor, the present Zimwok Trulku, was also well known in Gelukpa and Lhasa circles for having become the teacher of the influential Pha bong kha pa.⁸³⁰

For the first few days, Dezhung Rinpoche and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche conferred with some of the Nalendra lamas. Dezhung Rinpoche stayed at the Chobgye Labrang and was the only one to meet the other main lama of the monastery, Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche Ngawang Khyenrab Lekshay Gyatso, who was in retreat at the time.⁸³¹ Dezhung Rinpoche at this time gave special teachings to Chobgye Tri Rinpoche on the

nature of mind, which the latter highly appreciated and remembered even twenty years later.⁸³²

It was clear that the Tibetans' uprising in Lhasa was going poorly and the danger of unrest spreading north to Phenpo increased every day. The Nalendra high lamas made plans to leave soon for the northern nomadic regions, where they had many patrons among the nomads.⁸³³ They could



72. Chogyi Trichen Rinpoche of Nalendra as a young lama. Lhasa, 1930s.

foresee that things would soon turn bad for them at Nalendra if they stayed. The Dra'u Pön and his party of thirty fighting men had visited Nalendra after making their escape from Goshung and had even left some arms and munitions in an adjoining building. Already Chinese propaganda loud-speakers in Lhasa had started to speak of Nalendra as a "nest of thieves," and soon it would be known that the monastery had been host to the escaping "rebel" Sakya Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and his party.

On the morning of the third day after their arrival, a Chinese airplane came across the Go pass from the south and then, after about fifteen minutes, returned. It circled the monastery a few times, strafing the temples with its machine-guns, though nobody was hurt.⁸³⁴

One night at midnight, the two Nalendra head lamas quietly left with just a small retinue, without informing the many monks in the large monastery of their departure. Zimwok Rinpoche was old and infirm, but Chobgye Tri Rinpoche took him, his own mother, and the other trulku of the monastery, Rtse gdong Trulku Dpal ldan ngag dbang snyan grags 'od zer (1902–1964?),⁸³⁵ westward by slow stages via the nomad lands in the north to safety in Lo Mustang, a Tibetan cultural area within the political boundaries of northwest Nepal. From there Zimwok Rinpoche was taken to Dharamsala, where he lived about four more years, passing away in 1963.

The Nalendra monastic officials who remained behind invited their distinguished Sakya guests to help themselves to anything they might need. A few days later another Chinese plane flew over and strafed the monastery, killing a few horses pastured nearby. It became clear to Dezhung Rinpoche that he had to leave soon. Some in the Sakya party were still considering staying there, or somewhere in Tibet, and trying to negotiate with the Chinese authorities. But Dezhung Rinpoche rejected that, saying that whether or not the others stayed, he was going to leave Central Tibet. He knew the kind of brutal treatment the Chinese Communists had meted out to Khampa lamas on many occasions, including hideous torture and sudden, arbitrary executions.⁸³⁶ His attendant-monks agreed. They wanted to accompany him to India, saying they had already traveled far from Kham and still wished to save his life. A number of Sakya servants wanted to head back for Sakya, however; for most of them, Sakya in western Tsang was the ultimate objective.

Flight South

On the seventeenth of the Tibetan calendar, Dezhung Rinpoche made up his mind to depart and informed his niece, Dagmo Kusho. Although she and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche were still uncertain about whether to leave, they decided after some hesitation to accompany him—at least for the first few legs of their journey. They left together on their sixth day in Nalendra (March 25, 1959), the Sakya party having been able to buy locally just fourteen horses and mules, most of them of inferior quality—either too young or too old, or mares. Dezhung Rinpoche himself was in a better position because he still had the few horses and mules that he had left to pasture in Phenpo when he had come down to Lhasa.

The entire group at first consisted of some thirty people. There was still

no agreement about which way to head. Soon after reaching the main road, two ravens circled their party, which caught everyone's undivided attention. When the birds flew east Dezhung Rinpoche interpreted this as an omen indicating the right path. It was by no means the obvious way to go because to the east and south lay the main Chinese-held road linking Lhasa and Kham. Some in their group protested, but in the end they all traveled east together.⁸³⁷

That night they stayed at the farm of a Lhasa noble, and by the next morning their party had swollen to fifty. They pushed on the next day and stayed the night on another farming estate. The following morning they were overtaken by several monks fleeing Nalendra, who reported that Chinese soldiers had come to the monastery on the night of the very day Dezhung Rinpoche had departed. Chinese pursuers could be just behind, they feared.

They hoped to travel more directly via Samye (via the Rgod dkar Pass), but the road to Ganden was in Chinese hands, and so had to continue farther east. Once, in an open area by the banks of the Kyichu River in the region of Mal gro Gung dkar,⁸³⁸ a Chinese airplane buzzed them and fired its guns, though later they learned it was attacking a group of guerillas farther up the trail. Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche told everyone to dismount. They tried to take shelter at a single isolated cottage.

Dezhung Rinpoche remained mounted on his horse, saying he was not afraid and invoking the lamas and deities. Finally the others persuaded him to join them, helping him dismount and take shelter. The plane passed over again, flying very low, and flew on.⁸³⁹

After a late lunch at a noble's estate near Mal gro, they pushed on. They had learned that there had been fighting at the Mal gro Gung dkar monastery nearby, so they hurried onward, fording the Kyichu at a shallow spot where the river branched into several streams. For about two miles they followed the main Lhasa-Chamdo highway before turning eastward through the district of Jyangmo.

One day, as they were heading for the pass between Jyangmo and Samye, they came across a group of Khampa fighters, who happened to include many men from Dezhung Rinpoche's own district of Gakhok and even a few men from Tharlam (Thaklung) itself. They had been defeated in the fighting at Mal gro and were retreating southward toward their main guerilla camp in Lhokha. After an emotional reunion and sharing their

recent experiences, the fighters gave them five horses, a provident gift, as they were about to cross a high pass leading to Samye.⁸⁴⁰

Among the guerilla fighters was a certain 'Jam bstan, an acquaintance of theirs from Gapa. He spoke with Dezhung Rinpoche, telling him, "If our cause against the Chinese Communists is lost, then I am going to America."



73. Crossing the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) river in a coracle in Central Tibet, 1935.

Dezhung Rinpoche replied, "When you go to America, be sure to tell me. I'll come along, too!" 'Jam bstan just stared at him incredulously, thinking this must have been a joke.⁸⁴¹

That night they stayed part way up the mountain and began the ascent before sunup, barely able to find the trail in the wind-driven snow. At the pass itself, Dezhung Rinpoche walked, supported by a monk on each side. Everyone had to go on foot, and they had little to eat or drink the whole day.

The next day, late in the evening, they reached Samye monastery, where they were warmly received. The abbot (Khenpo Rin chen bzang po?) had studied with Dezhung Rinpoche at Sakya and had been a student of the late Sakya throne-holder, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk.⁸⁴²

After three days of rest at Samye, they decided to head west to the important Nyingma monastery of Dorjedrak, where they could cross the wide

Tsangpo River (Brahmaputra). From Samye on, their party was led by a Khampa guerilla leader named Blo bzang and a comrade of his. The first night they stayed at Sgrags (“Drak”), where they heard that the Chinese army had already reached Gongkar, farther west and on the other side of the river in Lhokha. Some wanted to turn back, but Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche thought it better to continue, and the prognostications of Dezhung Rinpoche supported that, too. They went on and had a good lunch at Dorje-drak with the chief lama, who was still in residence.

That afternoon they crossed the great river in small boats and continued on to Gdung phud chos ’khor (or “Mdo phud chos ’khor”) in Lhokha, where they spent the night in the local monastery.⁸⁴³ While traveling through Lhokha, Dezhung Rinpoche met Önrül Rinpoche, the trulku of the monastery Yarlung Trashi Chöde,⁸⁴⁴ who invited him to give teachings at his monastery in the future, whenever the times might change for the better.

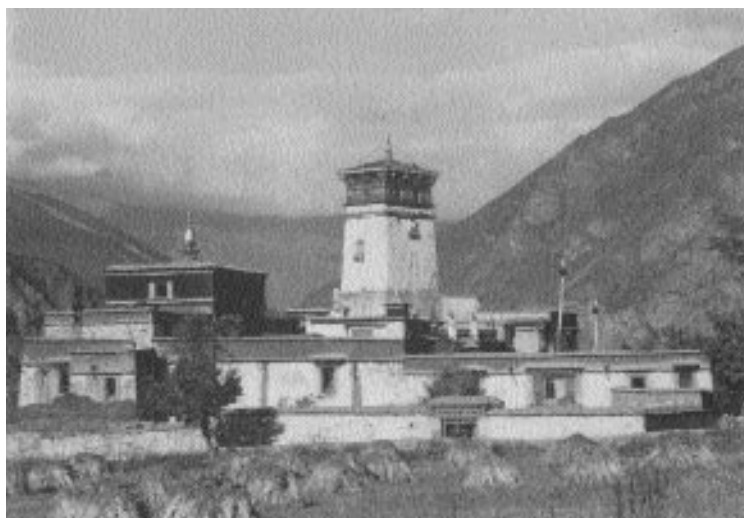
After a worried night spent in expectation of a possible Chinese attack, the group left Gdung phud chos ’khor and continued southward, crossing a pass to the area of Yamdrok Lake. They passed through the nomadic land and the marketplace of Karmoling. Dezhung Rinpoche and his little group brought up the rear because they traveled more slowly than the others. The main Sakya party pushed on quickly over a high pass to Dowa Dzong, where they planned to wait. They sent a man back with a message urging Dezhung Rinpoche to continue as quickly as possible.

Dezhung Rinpoche’s group of about seven badly needed a rest, but they were urged on by the message from Dagmo Kusho. Somehow they managed to reach Dowa Dzong the next day. Dezhung Rinpoche was tired but was able to continue on horseback. For the last six months he had mostly been on the road, sometimes in very difficult circumstances.

News came that the route to Sakya via Ralung was blocked, as Chinese soldiers had already reached Ralung (just a day and a half journey to the west), so they only had two choices: back into the hands of the Chinese Communists or south to Bhutan. They realized the urgency of leaving when the governor of the district or *rdzong* (a distant relative of the Sakya family) suddenly disappeared, leaving his office unattended. Dezhung Rinpoche was in favor of heading south toward Bhutan. The main obstacle in their path was the high Druk pass, a route that was normally open only in summer and autumn.

The first stage of the crossing took two long and difficult days. The pack

animals and mounts, which had not been able to rest, sometimes collapsed and had to be pushed and pulled. Finally their party arrived in Lhodrak, seat



74. Mila's nine-story tower in Lhodrak 1950.

of Marpa the Translator and site of the famous tower (*sras mkhar dgu thog*) constructed in the eleventh century by Marpa's student Milarepa. About an hour after their arrival, they were overtaken by some survivors from among the soldiers who had fought the Chinese at Dowa Dzong.

The soldiers' arrival and the news they brought frightened everyone but Dezhung Rinpoche. The others believed the Chinese could be close behind and wanted to leave at once. But Dezhung Rinpoche had never visited this sacred area and desired by all means to visit the home temple of Marpa and the nearby holy spots associated with Milarepa.

"I don't care if the Chinese come and kill me," he told them. "This would be a fine place to die. I have always wanted to visit here and pay my respects to the great teacher Marpa."

His niece gave up trying to change his mind, but she extracted from him a promise to follow them as soon as possible after completing his religious activities.⁸⁴⁵ Later they learned that he had indeed been close to being captured. If the Khampa Chu bzhi sgang drug resistance fighters had not delayed the progress of the Communist troops, he might well have been caught. Dagmo Kusho and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche were worried, but his

sister Ane Chime was confident he could get away in case of trouble: he did, after all, have a good horse and able servants.⁸⁴⁶

Two days later Dezhung Rinpoche and his monks attempted the long crossing over the 18,000-foot-high Me la Dkar chung, the highest and most difficult pass on their route south.⁸⁴⁷ The journey took two or three days, and in the end he just managed to make it across. In some places during the descent, the monks had to take turns supporting him.

All in all it was an extremely exhausting and harrowing twenty-seven-day journey from Nalendra to Bhutan. Dezhung Rinpoche's group was the last to make it across unmolested. The next major party to attempt the pass—a big caravan carrying tea for the Karmapa—was captured by Chinese troops.⁸⁴⁸

Thus by mid-April 1959, Dezhung Rinpoche reached Druk Tshampa, the Bhutanese border, site of a small guard post and customs station. He rejoined the Sakya party, though he was exhausted and conditions at the border were poor. Some seventeen hundred other refugees were gathered there, but the Bhutanese border guards would not let them cross. Food was in very short supply, and they were all reduced to a diet of mainly nettle soup. A few people became so discouraged that they gave up, packed their few things, and headed back north across the same horrendous pass over which they had recently come. Meanwhile the refugees learned by a radio broadcast from Delhi that the Dalai Lama had reached India safely. A great wave of relief swept through the camp.

Some Bhutanese soldiers asked the Sakya *dagchen* to give a long-life blessing and in return offered a little rice. Some soldiers from the Tibetan resistance army also offered the party a little food.

Many of the Tibetans worried that they would be caught by the pursuing Chinese soldiers at the border. Many also feared the Bhutanese would turn them back. Some Khampa soldiers wanted to overrun the Bhutanese border guards and force their way into the little country, and actually began plotting an attack. Eventually cooler heads prevailed, and they were talked out of this foolhardiness.

Finally, after about fifteen days, Jigme Dorje, prime minister of Bhutan and brother-in-law of the king, was sent to Druk Tshampa to deal with the crisis.⁸⁴⁹ After arriving he gave a public talk in which he tried to discourage people who did not really need to emigrate south to return to their homes in Tibet, explaining the hardships of life in India. "Lamas and nobles have

a good reason to leave, but poor people and ordinary monks should go back," he told them. He read an official announcement stating that the refugees, most notably the Sakya Phüntsoik palace lamas, would be allowed to pass through Bhutan to India. Groups of two hundred would be let through every other day. The first group was to be women and children and monks without food. His aides then distributed food to the hungry, and later he announced that all weapons would be confiscated.⁸⁵⁰

Meanwhile, after two weeks at the border, Dezhung Rinpoche was weak from not getting enough to eat. While waiting to cross over into Bhutan, he fell sick, starting with a high fever. With some difficulty he rode by horse as far south as Zhabs rjes thang in Bhutan, site of a famous footprint of the ninth-century Indian tantrika Padmasambhava. There he became even more ill and could no longer eat. His servants became gravely concerned and rushed ahead to visit the camp of Dagmo Kusho, a day's journey farther south. They returned with some medicine, and after he took this he was able to ride as far as Bumthang by horse.

In Bumthang the severe illness continued. His niece Dagmo Kusho made a personal appeal to the powerful Jigme Dorje, who gave some medicine that helped lower his fever.⁸⁵¹

Soon after reaching Bhutan, Dezhung Rinpoche received offers of help from two monastic patrons. One was a Bhutanese graduate from the Dzongsar seminary who was then in retreat, a monk from the Sakyapa monastery of Phang ya, located to the east of Punakha in Bhutan.⁸⁵² He sent his nephew to accompany and look after Dezhung Rinpoche. The second was another monk from the same monastery (one of just one or two small Sakyapa establishments then still existing in Bhutan), who went so far as to petition the powerful Ha drung pa (Jigme Dorje) for permission to allow Dezhung Rinpoche to stay and teach in their monastery.⁸⁵³ Permission was flatly refused.⁸⁵⁴

Dagmo Kusho and her three young children had been allowed into Bhutan as part of the very first group of nursing mothers with children. Dezhung Rinpoche was not far behind. They met at Bumthang and waited there for the others, including Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, to catch up. About a week later they all set out together as part of a group of about sixty heading south, on foot or riding, on the two-week trip to the town of Jayagang just across the Indian border.

When they left Bumthang, Dezhung Rinpoche had somewhat recovered

from his fever but was still very weak, sometimes getting dizzy and almost falling off his horse. Accompanying him were his sister Ane Chime and his personal attendant, 'Jam dbyangs chos dar. Little by little he began to take nourishment, such as the milk and butter offered by faithful herdsmen or the parched barley flour piously offered by farmers. Day by day he regained strength. As they made their way south through Bhutan, they were helped very much by the two Bhutanese Sakyapa monks. Also, Bhutanese donors along the way offered them rice (which they sold), pounded fried rice, fruits, eggs, and much else.

Except for sickness, most of the traveling after reaching Bhutan was relatively easy. The final descent to the plains of India, however, was difficult, and in places Dezhung Rinpoche had to be carried on the backs of porters while climbing down steep gorges.⁸⁵⁵

All in all Dezhung Rinpoche spent a little less than a month passing through Bhutan. Once he had somewhat recovered, he was invited to give a "consciousness transference" (*pho ba*) transmission to a congregation of faithful Bhutanese. With the last "*phat!*" he gave, several of the devoted disciples fell over in a swoon, and they said among themselves, "This Khampa lama certainly has great powers!"⁸⁵⁶

The First Year of Exile in India

NEAR THE TOWN of Jayagang was the border crossing where, with a minimum of formalities, Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya party were admitted to Indian territory. The group stayed about a week in Jayagang, in an abandoned two-story government building. Biting insects afflicted them, and the heat inside the house—the windows of which could not be opened—was unbearable.

At last they were told that a special train would take them to the town of Siliguri in northern West Bengal. It turned out to be a crowded ordinary train. When they boarded the train and Dezhung Rinpoche took his seat next to an Indian woman and continued to say his prayers aloud, she began to make a fuss. This attracted the attention of the conductor, who after a quick investigation apologized for her behavior and explained that she had never seen such a person before!⁸⁵⁷

After a long journey, they at last arrived in Siliguri, where they were met by members of the Densapa family from Sikkim. Following a reception and good meal at an air-conditioned guesthouse, they were taken by jeep to Kalimpong, which they reached on the nineteenth day of the fourth lunar month (ca. May 26, 1959).

Their good spirits at their arrival in Kalimpong ended two weeks later when they received the message that their teacher, the great master Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö (1893–1959), had passed away at the palace temple in nearby Gangtok on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month (ca. June 11).⁸⁵⁸ Dezhung Rinpoche and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche soon left by jeep for Sikkim to participate in the memorial rites.⁸⁵⁹ They had previously heard a report that Khyentse Rinpoche was ill, but they expected him to recover because he had been similarly ill many times before. Dezhung Rinpoche

also had wanted to go more directly to his master's presence, but circumstances had not allowed it.

At Dzongsar, Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö had once told Dezhung Rinpoche, "Trulku, you and I are very close. When I die, you definitely must come." Dezhung Rinpoche promised that he would. Later, when he actually heard of his master's death, Dezhung Rinpoche immediately made offerings and closed himself in his little room, forbidding others to enter. There, in a dream or vision, he saw an amazing scene of Amitābha's pure realm of Sukhāvātī. A little while later, when he was in Gangtok, the Thartse abbot told him Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö's last words and testament. Before passing away, the great master had said, "Since Khyentse, Loter Wangpo, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Sachen, and others are in Sukhāvātī, I too will go there." This agreed with Dezhung Rinpoche's dream.⁸⁶⁰

Five years earlier, during his last visit to Dzongsar, Dezhung Rinpoche had received several of the Thirteen Golden Dharmas (*Gser chos bcu gsum*) of Sakya from Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, together with many other teachings. Although he had made offerings at the time, he felt that what he had given was in no way commensurate with the precious teachings received, and had promised Khyentse Rinpoche to offer him more silver later. Khyentse had replied that, rather than silver, he needed gold to gild new images at Dzongsar.

During his subsequent travels and teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche had managed to gather some thirty ounces of gold, which he had carried on his person throughout the difficult months of travel from Kham to India. These he now brought to Gangtok and presented to the treasurer of the Khyentse Labrang for use in constructing the reliquary stūpa of the master. He did not change his mind, even though this was a small fortune at the time and he and his party were otherwise nearly destitute.

"This gold would not support us for more than a few months," he remarked to his sister. "Anyway, we probably won't go hungry. Unless we actually die, there will always be some way we can try to make a living. Better to offer it to the Lama!"⁸⁶¹ As it turned out, he was right. Though they faced many serious difficulties in the coming months, they never actually went hungry.⁸⁶²

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed in Gangtok for two weeks, during which he and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche also visited the Densapa family home, into which family his maternal aunt had married. Also in Gangtok and participating in

the rites from the beginning were H.H. Sakya Trizin, Thartse abbot Sönam Gyatso, Sakya Jetsun Chime, and others.⁸⁶³ When he met H.H. Sakya Trizin (then aged fourteen), Dezhung Rinpoche told him the story of his almost miraculous escape at Goshung and of the trying journey from Lhasa to Bhutan.⁸⁶⁴



75. Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö.

In June 1959, after staying just three or four weeks in Kalimpong, Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya family moved west to the nearby hill town of Darjeeling, where they felt more secure. While there, Khenpo Khri tsho Rin chen (ca. 1925?–ca. 1985), the Dzongsar seminary scholar and student of Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, received many text-transmissions from Dezhung Rinpoche.⁸⁶⁵ In Kalimpong Dezhung Rinpoche also met Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (1904–1987) for the first time.⁸⁶⁶

Winter 1959: Pilgrimage to India

When the weather turned cooler on the Indian plains, Dezhung Rinpoche, Dagmo Kusho, and a number of the Sakya party decided to make a two- or three-month pilgrimage to the great Buddhist holy places of India. This

winter (1959/60) the Indian government offered train transportation for Tibetans who wanted to visit the main pilgrimage spots. Their group consisted of ten people: Dezhung Rinpoche, his sister Ane Chime, his niece Dagmo Kusho, her three boys, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's brother Trinlay Rinpoche, Dagchen Rinpoche's youngest sister, Kuyang la (as interpreter), and two servants. Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche could not go because of other obligations.

They went by train to Gaya in Bihar and then by local transport to Bodhgaya, where the Buddha Śākyamuni had attained enlightenment. While there, Dezhung Rinpoche visited the Vajrāsana (the "vajra-seat," place of enlightenment), and, seated under the Bodhi tree just as the Lord Buddha had been centuries before, he entered into the full meditation of Hevajra. As he sat in rapt concentration, someone came up and spoke to him, disturbing his practice. This reminded him of how Māra the Evil One had attempted to distract the Lord Buddha on the same spot.⁸⁶⁷

Outside Varanasi (Benares) they visited the Sarnath deer garden, the site of the Lord Buddha's first sermons. There they briefly met H.H. the Dalai Lama and his two tutors, Yongdzin Ling Rinpoche and Khri byang Rinpoche. This was Dezhung Rinpoche's first meeting with the Dalai Lama. Also in Sarnath he met his old Sanskrit teacher Khunu Lama Tendzin Gyaltzen (1894–1977), then about sixty-seven years old, whom he had not seen in thirty years. Khunu Lama did not recognize him, until Dezhung Rinpoche explained who he was and recalled their meeting in Kham. Yongdzin Ling Rinpoche had been conversing with Khunu Lama when Dezhung Rinpoche came in. Soon afterward Ling Rinpoche got up and left, not wanting to disturb their conversation. They enjoyed a long, relaxed talk.⁸⁶⁸

At Kushinagara the party visited the place of the Buddha's passing away into final nirvāṇa, and then, just inside the Nepal border at Lumbini, they saw the few remains marking the Buddha's birthplace. They visited eight main sites in all, including the holy vajra-seat at Bodhgaya, the Vulture's Peak and Nalaṇḍa, Varanasi and Sarnath, Kushinagara, and Lumbini. It was difficult traveling with children, servants, and luggage, but somehow they managed it.

Spring 1960

After his return to Darjeeling, Dezhung Rinpoche began to tutor his great-nephew Minzu Rinpoche, teaching him to read and recite. He had him memorize the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti*, and the young pupil was very sharp. The two of them and several servants took up residence in a former palace two miles out of town. These surroundings were much more contemplative.⁸⁶⁹

While in Darjeeling, Dezhung Rinpoche was asked by the young monk Jamyang Gyaltsen to give instructions on the nondual clarity and emptiness of mind according to the *Path with Its Fruit*. Rinpoche instructed him for several months, thus encouraging the monk to remain ordained and continue his practice under these very difficult circumstances. Twenty years later the monk wrote to thank him for this timely inspiration.⁸⁷⁰

During the fall of 1959, the Sakyas had met Alexander W. ("Sandy") Macdonald and his wife, Ariane Spanien Macdonald, in Kalimpong. This couple, both Tibetologists based in Paris, became friends of the Sakya family, visiting them a number of times in Darjeeling and broaching the possibility of inviting Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and his immediate family (wife and children) to Paris for a research project. But the Sakya family had not been interested at first. A few months later, in March 1960, this couple, who could both speak Tibetan, brought with them the American Professor Turrell V. Wylie (1927–1984) from the University of Washington in Seattle to meet the family. Wylie was searching for learned Tibetans to act as informants and collaborators in a Rockefeller Foundation–funded research project. Through these interpreters, Wylie asked whether they would be interested in coming to the United States of America to collaborate for three years with American researchers at a university. He said he would be traveling around a bit in India and would come back later for their reply.⁸⁷¹

A few weeks after his first visit, Wylie visited them again with Alexander Macdonald, asking for an answer to their respective offers. The Sakyas tentatively agreed to go to Seattle, if the whole family—including Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's brother, Trinlay Rinpoche, and Dezhung Rinpoche—could come. Wylie said he would have to check whether a party of eight—the seven Sakyas and Geshe Nornang—would be acceptable. The paperwork was supposed to take about three months.⁸⁷²

One day in mid-summer 1960, Wylie and Macdonald came with the reply from America. The whole Sakya family—then seven members in all—

would be allowed to come, provided they passed a medical examination. Hearing this, the Sakyas decided to go.⁸⁷³ The previous year had been difficult and uncertain for them as refugees, since they had always been dependent on the generosity of others. The Sakyas lacked the means to support their large extended family and entourage of servants.

Sandy Macdonald helped the family as much as he could. By then he had been “expelled” from Kalimpong and was more or less living between the Sakya house and a small hotel in Darjeeling. He often wrote letters to get the youngest Sakya daughter out of scrapes in her Darjeeling school. He also had to cope with getting Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya family examined medically at the Planter’s Hospital by the wife of George N. Patterson.⁸⁷⁴ Macdonald had little to do with Dezhung Rinpoche, who slightly intimidated him and was difficult to speak with because of his strong Khampa dialect.⁸⁷⁵

In the meantime, Dezhung Rinpoche had found life in northern India difficult. He suffered from chronic gastrointestinal troubles and continued to lose weight. To be sure, there were much worse places to be a Tibetan refugee in those days. The announced policy of the Dalai Lama’s newly formed government was that monks such as Dezhung Rinpoche and Trinlay Rinpoche should go to the settlement of Buxadar in Assam, a notoriously unhealthy place where many monks and lamas died during the first years of exile.

At one point Dezhung Rinpoche was invited to teach at Delhi University for the salary of 300 rupees per month and with an extra allowance of 50 rupees for little Minzu.⁸⁷⁶ He evidently did not consider this offer seriously. Then, a few months before the planned trip to Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche consulted with the master Chatral Sangyay Dorje (b. ca. 1913), one of the most influential and successful Buddhist teachers around Darjeeling and Kalimpong, who strongly believed that it would be best for Dezhung Rinpoche to go to Bhutan to teach religion and the language arts (grammar, poetics, etc.) at a monastic school. There was just one restriction: he could bring no more than two or three attendants with him. But Chatral Rinpoche assured him that he would not earn any less than those lamas who were going to foreign (mostly Western) countries.

To teach in Bhutan also accorded with Dezhung Rinpoche’s own divinations, so he decided to go there, planning to take with him his brother Kunzang Nyima, his sister Ane Chime, and his young grand-nephew Minzu

Rinpoche, if that would be agreeable.⁸⁷⁷ His sister Ane Chime was also in favor of Bhutan.⁸⁷⁸ He met his niece, Dagmo Kusho, and began to tell her about his plans. But when she heard that he wanted to separate from them, she broke down and openly wept. She could not bear the thought that the family would be split up.

The sight of his dear niece in tears softened his resolve. Since she and the other family members insisted so strongly, in the end he allowed himself to be convinced to go with the larger family to Seattle.⁸⁷⁹ After these plans were settled, he paid a special visit to H.H. Sakya Trizin, also in Darjeeling, telling him about the proposed journey.

Thus it was that by early October 1960, Dezhung Rinpoche left Darjeeling for Calcutta, the first stage of a long journey to the unknown land of America. From the Tibetan point of view, he was traveling with the Sakya Phüntsook palace family as tutor to the oldest Sakya son, Minzu. On October 10, 1960, after some hectic days in Calcutta, they were issued their American visas. Soon thereafter the entire group departed by a Pan Am turboprop airplane flight from Dum Dum Airport, Calcutta, flying in stages eastward, via Hong Kong and Honolulu, to North America.

❧PART 2

Life and Travels in Exile
1960–1987

Arrival and First Months in America

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE arrived in United States territory on Columbus Day, October 12, 1960, a holiday commemorating the discovery of America by the Italian navigator in 1492. He cleared American immigration in Honolulu with the Sakya family and Geshe Nornang. The following day he and the party of nine other Tibetans landed at the international airport south of Seattle. Waiting to greet them were a delegation from the University of Washington and several people from the local news media.

A television crew had been dispatched from one of the local stations to film the arrival of the Tibetans, but it was not on hand when the airplane arrived and the Tibetans disembarked. When the team finally arrived totting camera and lights, they asked the bemused Tibetans to board another plane parked nearby and reenact their arrival for the benefit of Seattle television viewers, including stepping down the stairs from the second aircraft.⁸⁸⁰

While waiting to leave the airport, Dezhung Rinpoche and the learned monk Geshe Nornang (Nor rgyas nang pa Ngag dbang blo gros, b. 1927) of the central-Tibetan Norgyay noble family,⁸⁸¹ were addressed by one of the older Americans in the welcoming party, a man of about sixty. At first it did not register that he was trying to speak Tibetan to them, and they did not know how to react. But after a short while they realized he was addressing them in a broad Amdo nomad dialect, asking one of them: “Art thou hail and hardy? (*khyod bde mo tsha mo e yin?*)”⁸⁸² The speaker was Robert Ekvall (1898–1983), an American who had grown up in the western China borderlands as the son of missionaries.

Dezhung Rinpoche and the other Tibetans were not sure what arrangements awaited them in Seattle. Rinpoche’s companions were led to separate

automobiles and driven away, leaving him as the last. Finally he, too, was guided to a car and driven north toward Seattle, a scenic harbor city with nearly a million people in its metropolis, by far the largest city of Washington state.



76. Robert Ekvall (left), Dezhung Rinpoche (center), and Turrell Wylie (right). Seattle, October 16, 1960.

Situated between large bodies of water in the western part of the state, Seattle then boomed with trade to Alaska and the Far East, and its recent growth had been spurred by jet manufacturing at Boeing, the city's main employer. Poised for contact with Asia, Seattle had seen brutal anti-Chinese riots in 1886, and as late as 1942, summary wartime detention of its six thousand American citizens of Japanese descent.⁸⁸³ Its Asian residents mainly lived in a small Chinatown ghetto, where the Japanese community had adapted by founding a Seattle Buddhist church: a temple with Sunday school.

Rinpoche sped by car not to Chinatown but to a thoroughly white neighborhood north of the University of Washington in the district of Wedgewood. At 6551 24th Avenue N.E., he was let out before a large, nine-bedroom structure. This house had been rented by the University for the Sakyas, and there he rejoined the others.

He and the seven other Tibetans in the Sakya party settled in. Their house had previously served as a student boarding house; each bedroom door still bore a number. For the next few weeks, the Tibetans became local celebrities who were interviewed by journalists, photographed, and taken to



77. Left to right: Terry Wylie, Thrinlay Rinpoche, Dagchen Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche, and Minzu Rinpoche. Seattle, ca. 1961.

meet University staff and officials. On the day of their arrival an article appeared in the *Seattle Times* written by Byron Johnsrud featuring Dezhung Rinpoche's photograph (captioned: "Lama Labrang").⁸⁸⁴ The headline read: "Tibetans Trust in Lama's Beads for Trip to Seattle." The article reported:⁸⁸⁵

The University of Washington's Tibetan party arrived here today on the prayerful power of a Tibetan lama's beads....The lama, Kunga Nima Dezhung Labrang, 55, immediately took a calm, dignified seat on an American davenport and began telling his beads in thanks for a safe journey.

Prof. Turrell V. Wylie of the university's Far Eastern Department, who brought the Tibetans here from Calcutta, said the departure was hectic. "The lama consulted the horoscopes and auguries and said we would have troubles at the start, but all would go well later,"

Wylie said. "Well, two days before departure one of the children came down sick. It was cure him, delay the trip or leave without him. He recovered in time. The next day we had all sorts of trouble with our papers.

"A Pan American Airways official had his doubts we could leave the next day. 'How do you know you'll be ready?'" he asked.

"Because the lama says so," I answered, and so it was."

On October 16, 1960, there may also have appeared a newspaper article with a photograph showing a smiling Dezhung Rinpoche at the University, beads in hand, between the two intently beaming Americans, Ekvall and Wylie. (Only the photograph of this encounter has been traced.)

On October 14, the Tibetans also met for the first time *Seattle Times* journalist Julie Emery, who became a dear friend of the Sakya family, especially of Dagmola, as Dagmo Kusho was now called.⁸⁸⁶ In the first three months in Seattle, at least ten or eleven articles appeared in the *Seattle Times*, mostly written by her, including a series of four of her articles that ran from December 18 to 21, describing the participants in the Tibetan research project. The article on Dezhung Rinpoche (December 21, 1960, p. 3) bore the headline "Lama Continues Strict Life Here," and shows how he, in his humble way, had effortlessly established himself at once as a major figure:

Kunga Labrang's deeply religious life as a celibate Tibetan lama continues here despite the worldly pressure of researchers ever eager to tap his wisdom in the field of Buddhist theology. Labrang, 55, of the Sakyapa religious group, is the most learned of the Tibetan male refugees who are baring their minds for University of Washington research squads.

Seattleites seldom will see the lama without his 108-bead rosary or, for that matter, without the rosary in use. The clicking of the beads is audible at most gatherings he attends. While others converse, he frequently is saying prayers in a very low voice to benefit all sentient creatures. One observer, who described Labrang as "an encyclopedia of Sakyapa knowledge," estimated that he spends at least half his waking hours praying, reading religious texts or giving religious training to his grandnephew Zayang [i.e., Minzu] Sakyapa, 6.

Labrang is a remarkable scholar, in the opinion of Robert Ekvall,

a university research instructor, who has been working with the lama under a project financed by the Rockefeller Foundation. "He has a great intellectual curiosity, frequently asking the most penetrating questions," Ekvall said. "Yet he is friendly and amusing. He also has a remarkable honesty in answering questions."

Prof. Fang-kuei Li and Prof. Nicholas Poppe are co-chairmen of the project.

Although Labrang has been a part of the religious life since he was a small boy, he has not led as sedentary an existence as some other monks and lamas do, Ekvall said. "He has been on pilgrimages, has worked considerably with [illegible] groups and has taught in various places," Ekvall said. "He has been an ecclesiastic, a tutor and a religious advisor in the political Sakyapa organization. He also has traveled widely in the company of the Jigdal Sakyapa family."

. . . If the lama wishes he were back in India in more monastery-like life with his fellow refugee "men of the cloth," he has not said so. "We find him a most satisfactory collaborator in research," Ekvall said. "I am enjoying his extreme erudition."

Labrang is expected to continue to be the "eye-catcher" among the ten refugees during their three-year stay here.

Professor Wylie and the other American hosts tried to provide the Tibetans with every material need. They thought it desirable to shield the Tibetans from most casual contacts with "a sometimes overzealous public," who included not only ordinary overcurious Americans, but also a few Christians keen on proselytizing. When Christmas came, quite a few local people wanted to give presents to the children. The Tibetans had nothing against accepting such gifts, but Professor Wylie told them not to accept anything without either him or the graduate student Gene Smith being present. They also received many cards and letters, which were difficult for them to answer. Wylie discouraged people from coming or sending anything, saying (so the Tibetans believed), "Tibetans don't like to receive gifts." He gave the Asian visitors the impression of wanting to keep everything under his control.⁸⁸⁷

Within a few months, the fledgling Tibetan community in Seattle had grown by one member; Dagmola gave birth to a fourth son: Dzaya Badzra (Rgyal ba rdo rje, b. January 4, 1961).⁸⁸⁸ Their first Tibetan New Year was

celebrated in Seattle on February 16, including a naming ceremony for the six-week-old baby.⁸⁸⁹ Slowly the Tibetans took steps to become more self-sufficient. The wives Eva Ekvall and Shirley Wylie took Dagmola shopping



78. "Kitchen Conclave: Mrs. Turrell Wylie demonstrates the mysteries of an American kitchen to women in a party of Tibetans who arrived here today." From left: Lhadron Nornang Karsip, Dagmola (Jamyang Sakyapa), Konchok Sakyapa, and Mrs. Turrell Wylie.

and quickly acquainted her with American consumer goods. Dezhung Rinpoche himself received a stipend of about two hundred dollars per month, in addition to living quarters.⁸⁹⁰ On this he could easily live.

E. Gene Smith

Staying in Seattle with Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya Tibetan family from the first as their main helper was the twenty-four-year-old graduate student E. (Ellis) Gene Smith, who ended up living four years with them. He became close to the whole family, but he struck up a particularly cordial and fruitful friendship with Dezhung Rinpoche.⁸⁹¹ Smith struck the Tibetans as kind and generous. Dezhung Rinpoche, too, became fond of him, considering him diligent and energetic.⁸⁹²

Smith was born in Logan, Utah, in 1936 and grew up in various places in both Utah and California. His family were traditional Mormons with links to Joseph Smith (1805–1844); his father worked for a federal guided-missile project. After brief undergraduate studies at Adelphi College, Hobart College, and the University of Utah, he came to Seattle in 1956 with the intention of studying anthropology, joining graduate school in part to avoid military conscription. For language studies, he started with Turkish, where he got to know James E. (Jimmy) Bosson (b. 1933, later professor at University of California at Berkeley), who was already studying Mongolian with the famed Mongolist Professor Nicholas Poppe, so Smith joined in, too. When Turrell Wylie came back from Rome in the fall of 1958 and offered classical Tibetan for the first time, both Smith and Bosson took part. Smith also studied linguistics under Professors Sol Saporta and Gene Dorfmann; nights he worked at the Blood Bank, trying to stay out of debt. He slept from 4:00 p.m. to midnight and then worked the graveyard shift.

Within the first two or three weeks after the Tibetans arrived, Smith took Dezhung Rinpoche to see the Tibetan books in one of the older buildings of the large parklike campus of the University of Washington (founded in 1898 through land grants). The Tibetan collection then consisted of some forty or fifty volumes of original Tibetan manuscripts and block-prints from the Joseph Rock collection. Smith also showed him a copy of the Peking Tibetan canons, both Kanjur and Tanjur, in the Japanese Ōtani reprint edition. When Dezhung Rinpoche saw the Kanjur and Tanjur, he offered the traditional three respectful prostrations to them as embodiments of the Buddha's word and doctrine in this foreign land. Gene Smith was horrified to see him bowing down on the dusty cement floor in the basement of Thompson Hall. A few Americans standing nearby tittered at the outlandish behavior of the lama.

The main research project in which Smith and the Tibetans were meant to take part was on the history of Sakya, a project organized by Professor Wylie and on which the young graduate student Melvyn Goldstein (then twenty-two years old) also worked in its earliest stages. This and other research projects were to be carried out in the Far Eastern and Russian Institute, in room 203 of Thompson Hall on the University of Washington campus. At his home, Dezhung Rinpoche also started to read Tibetan texts with Smith, beginning with the religious history of 'Brug chen Padma dkar po, but

this was difficult going, as it was full of Kong po dialect. By 1961 they received a copy of the then very rare history *Rgya bod yig tshang* from the Barmiok Athing collection in Sikkim, and by using the (Old) *Red Annals*, the history of Dpa' bo Gtsug lag phreng ba, and the biography of Ngakchang Kunga Rinchen, some work could at least begin on Sakyapa historical themes.

Then the Karmapa biographies by Sman sdong mtshams pa Karma nges don bstan rgyas arrived, which had lots of nomadic dialect. This work was sent to Seattle by accident from the library of Hugh Richardson, who had originally obtained them at Mtshur phu monastery. Dezhung Rinpoche was delighted to be able to read this work.

Then Smith requested instruction from Dezhung Rinpoche in the theory of classical Sanskrit poetics (*kāvya*), especially the theory of poetical figures (*rgyan*: Skt. *alaṅkāra*). Rinpoche agreed to read through the second chapter of Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*, with the commentary of 'Bras ljongs O rgyan bstan 'dzin (the teacher of Khunu Lama), which they happened to have in Seattle from Joseph Rock's books. Later Smith found it more fruitful not to read a text formally with Dezhung Rinpoche, but to proceed in a less directed way of free questioning, duly writing down Rinpoche's answers in a series of blue notebooks.⁸⁹³

For their studies at home, Dezhung Rinpoche sat in a rocking chair, rosary in hand, while Smith sat at his feet. When Smith's question was a good one, Rinpoche kept muttering his mantras for a few moments, and then gave a most lucid answer in response, with well-organized subject divisions. They studied every morning for an hour between about eight and nine or nine and ten o'clock, after Rinpoche's breakfast, time that was squeezed in between Rinpoche's meditative practices. As Rinpoche taught, he often made little sketches of things he was describing: special hats, *gtorma* offering cakes, and so forth.

The great Mongolist Nicholas Poppe (1897–1991),⁸⁹⁴ Professor of Mongolian at the University of Washington from 1949 until 1968, told Smith more than once: "You are very lucky to have Dezhung Rinpoche here. But the problem is, you don't yet know what questions to ask him."⁸⁹⁵

Dezhung Rinpoche's other teaching duty at home was to his great-nephew, the young Minzu Rinpoche ('Jam dpal rdo rje, b. 1953). Within a few months, however, Minzu had become less enthused about the traditional studies expected of him. He just wanted to go out and play with his friends. He was a popular, active boy who did not want to sit at home and

memorize long prayers. When Minzu did not concentrate on his studies, sometimes Dezhung Rinpoche tweaked his ear or rapped his knuckles. Gene Smith suggested that Dezhung Rinpoche tell Minzu stories to capture the boy's interest, just as he was doing with Smith. But that was not the traditional way, Rinpoche explained. (Already in late October 1960, both the older boys, Minzu and Ane, were enrolled in Quaker elementary schools.)⁸⁹⁶

Not long after their arrival in Seattle, the adult Tibetans were each asked to write an autobiographical sketch. Dezhung Rinpoche helped write those for Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Thrinlay Rinpoche, while Dagmo Kusho wrote her own. Meanwhile Dezhung Rinpoche did not bother to write one for his own life. Instead, he let Robert Ekvall throw together in English a brief sketch of his career after several short interviews.⁸⁹⁷ Ekvall had no detailed knowledge about the religious traditions that were mentioned, and therefore



79. Dezhung Rinpoche observing the Central Tibetans working with a tape recorder. Seattle, early 1960s.

on these subjects his English translations were sometimes incomprehensible.

Smith asked Dezhung Rinpoche at the time: "Why don't you yourself write a better one?"

"Oh, it's a Tibetan custom," Rinpoche replied. "Take Jamgön Kongtrül, for example. Even though he did write an autobiography, he never said a single good word about himself!" On another occasion he explained the religious basis for humility: "In the Buddhist religion, one should hide one's

virtues and broadcast one's imperfections, since by doing so one's defects are lessened and one's virtuous acts are increased." He mentioned as an example the great master Paltrül, who had refused even to be called by the common title of respect "Rinpoche."

Another time, Smith asked Dezhung Rinpoche why he did not compose books. He answered: "Too many people are writing books. The things we need could be found in the already existing books, if we would just take the



80. Gathering of Tibetans and American scholar friends. From left rear: Geshe Nornang, Gerry, unknown, Okada-san, last four unknown. Middle row: Swami Bharati, Dezhung Rinpoche, Trinlay and Dagchen Rinpoches, Ane Rinpoche, Dagmola with infant Dzaya, Mati, Lhadrön-la, and Shirley Wylie. Front: Minzu Rinpoche, William, and Terry Wylie. Seattle, summer 1961

trouble to search in them." Numerous times he answered questions by telling Smith: "I don't know about that. You should go to India and study that subject with such-and-such a lama or scholar."⁸⁹⁸

Once he discussed with Smith frankly the chances of his being the rebirth of the previous Dezhung trulkus: "They say I'm the Dezhung trulku, but if you examine it, the first Dezhung trulku, Changchup Nyima, spent his life perfecting bodhicitta, and the second, Lungrik Nyima, spent his life perfecting learning and realization. And I...I ended up here" At this point he lapsed into silence, gesturing with his hand toward his surroundings. (Evidently he was alluding to his strange foreign residence and to what he took to be his official "position" there as tutor to a child-lama.)

Dezhung Rinpoche was, moreover, not particularly fond either of central Tibetan nobles (*sku drag*) or of the claims of high birth; what he

approved of was the merit system, especially when it came to recognizing religious teachers. He often repeated the traditional Tibetan saying: “If a beggar’s child has abilities, there’s no stopping him from becoming abbot of Ganden!” (*sprang po’i phru gu la yon tan yod nal dga’ ldan khri la bdag po med//*).⁸⁹⁹ He also said there were three ways to be recognized as a great lama (or to transmit a religious tradition). The first was by familial descent, which was worst. The second was as an “incarnate lama,” which also was very imperfect. The third way was through recognized merit and saintly achievement, which was best. In this connection Dezhung Rinpoche also repeated the view: “How much better it would be to test prospective trulkus for their knowledge after they grew up than to test them as infants for their ability to identify various objects!”

*Collaborators and Friends
at the University of Washington*

Robert Ekvall

BESIDES GENE SMITH, the closest American to Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakya entourage during their first year at the University was Robert Brainerd Ekvall (1898–1983), the man who had surprised the Tibetans by speaking Amdo nomad dialect at the airport when they first arrived.⁹⁰⁰ He was born in Minhsien, Kansu, China, the son of David P. Ekvall (d. May 18, 1912) and his wife Helen (Galbraith) Ekvall (d. June 5, 1933), missionaries of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.⁹⁰¹ As a child he learned Mandarin fluently, as well as several other Chinese dialects. He learned a great deal by growing up in the borderlands of western China during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

After his father's death in 1912, Ekvall returned with his mother to the United States for schooling at the Wilson Academy in Nyack, just north of New York City, and college in Wheaton, Illinois. After brief service in the army during World War I, he earned in 1920 a bachelor of arts degree from Wheaton College. After that he married in 1921 his first wife, Elizabeth (Betty) Fischer, who attended the Nyack Missionary Institute with him in Nyack, New York, in 1921–1922.

In 1922 he departed with his wife for China, where one son, David W. Ekvall (1925–1945, Tibetan name Dawö, spelled Zla 'od), was born. From January 1923 on, he spent much of the 1920s and 1930s working as a teacher and an “explorer” for the Christian and Missionary Alliance (an interdenominational group), investigating the possibilities for mission work in the Chinese-administrated borderlands of Northeastern Tibet (Amdo).⁹⁰² He learned the local Tibetan nomad dialect fluently, and from 1929 to 1935

he lived with his wife (Tibetan name Rdo rje mtsho) and son in the isolated village of Lhamo (Stag tshang lha mo).⁹⁰³ In 1936 they returned to the United States for a furlough, and he wrote two histories for the mission society sponsoring him: *Gateway to Tibet: The Kansu-Tibetan Border* (Harrisburg: Christian Publications, 1938) and *After Fifty Years* (Harrisburg: Christian Publications, 1940). Then he took a year off to attend the University of Chicago for graduate study of anthropology and to write his book *Cultural Relations on the Kansu-Tibetan Border* (University of Chicago Press, 1940).



81. Robert and Betty Ekvall, young missionaries in Chinese dress.

He returned with his wife and son to Taktshang Lhamo in 1939. His wife, Betty, died there of fever (anthrax) in 1940, and he left in summer 1941 for French Indochina to visit his son, thus ending his missionary work.

When Japan entered World War II in December 1941, Ekvall and his son were interred by the Japanese in Southeast Asia for about two years, but he managed to reach New York by boat in late 1943. He joined the U.S. Army as an expert on Far Eastern affairs and was made a captain. By April 1944 he was with the U.S. Army in Burma as a combat liaison officer, commanding at one time a detachment of Merrill's Marauders. Later he served

in Chungking, China, on the staff of General Albert Wedemeyer (according to one source, also on the staff of Gen. "Vinegar" Joe Stillwell).

He was severely wounded in frontline combat at Liuchow in the last months of the war while with Chinese troops. Following nine months in the hospital, he served in 1946–1947 in Peking on the staff of Gen. George Marshall, who was then attempting to reconcile the Nationalists and Communists. Afterward he was appointed one of three military attachés of the United States in China, in which capacity he served in 1947–1948.

In the late 1940s he married his second wife, Eva Kunfi, with whom he had two children, Eric and Karin. He resigned the U.S. Army in 1951 after the fall of the Kuomintang. In 1951–1952 he worked for the Committee for Free Asia to meet and help the Dalai Lama's brother. He hoped to visit India and Tibet, but this proved impossible. In 1952 he was a research associate in the anthropology department of the University of Chicago. In 1953 was called back to military service as a Lieutenant colonel to serve in the Korean War armistice talks as principal language officer for the United Nations team.⁹⁰⁴ His son David had been accidentally killed in December 1945 after the end of World War II during military service in Korea.

In 1954 Ekvall went to Paris as assistant military attaché to serve as interpreter at the Geneva Asia talks. The following year he published his novel *Tents against the Sky* (his second novel, *The Lama Knows*, would appear in 1979).⁹⁰⁵ In addition to his translation work, he served as a staff officer in the Intelligence Division of the Pentagon, 1954–1955. He left the army in 1958 on account of being overaged in grade. The same year, at the invitation of George E. Taylor, he came to the University of Washington and joined the Inner Asia Research Project, supported by a grant from the Carnegie Foundation.

Ekvall had what one of his students described as a "gregarious, sometimes bombastic, and always adventurous personality," which had stood him in good stead among the Amdo nomads in the 1930s and which the Tibetans in Seattle could also appreciate in some respects. Since he could speak with them, he was accepted as an honorary Tibetan and called by his Tibetan name "Sherab Tsondru" (Shes rab brtson 'grus). With his anthropological and military experience, he was much more broad-minded than the typical ex-missionary.

Originally the sixty-one-year-old Ekvall had been slated to go to India in early 1960, accompanied by Wylie, to select and invite the lamas for the

Rockefeller-funded research.⁹⁰⁶ Since 1958 he had served as chairman of the Inner Asia Research Project in the Far Eastern and Russian Institute.⁹⁰⁷ But in about January 1960, his application for an Indian visa was refused—supposedly because the Indian consulate found out he had worked in Korea and Geneva as a U.S. Army interpreter and he was thus suspected of having CIA connections.⁹⁰⁸ So the much junior Turrell V. (Terry) Wylie, assistant professor of Tibetan since 1959, became principal investigator for the grant and went to India and Nepal alone.⁹⁰⁹



82. Dezhung Rinpoche. Seattle, 1963.

Almost immediately after Dezhung Rinpoche arrived, Ekvall befriended him. Though Ekvall had portrayed Buddhist monks and lamas as lazy, ignorant, hypocritical, or worse in his Christian writings of the 1930s and 1940s, he seems not to have doubted the integrity of Dezhung Rinpoche.⁹¹⁰ Ekvall dropped by almost every day to see the Sakya family, notebook in hand and asking various questions.⁹¹¹

During the first three years of the Rockefeller grant (1960–1963), Dezhung Rinpoche—together with the Sakya Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, his brother Trinlay Rinpoche, and Dagmo Kusho—regularly participated in discussion groups led by Ekvall, in which they discussed the political and economic life in Sakya. Though Dezhung Rinpoche helped the group ascertain many facts, he scrupulously refrained from taking sides

on divisive historical issues such as the order of succession between the two palaces at Sakya. Dezhung Rinpoche made it clear that he was closely linked to both branches of the Sakya Khön noble house and did not intend to take sides.⁹¹²

Ekvall's work with the Tibetans in the Inner Asia Research Project during the years 1960–1962 eventually resulted in several books. The product of his work with C. W. Cassinelli on Sakya, together with that of the discussion group, was published a few years later as C. W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall's *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa Skya* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969). In the preface to that work (p. v), the authors describe how Dezhung Rinpoche was one of four informants in the “continually functioning discussion group” that provided information for the book. A brief vita of Dezhung Rinpoche (p. vii) called him “Kunga Labrang” and stated:

He became a renowned scholar of Tibetan Buddhism and for five years was in charge of a monastery of three hundred monks, a position that gave him important governmental functions in the local community of nomads. He later travelled extensively in eastern and central Tibet, lecturing on religious doctrine, closely observing Tibetan life, and giving advice on all kinds of personal problems. As a tutor to the Sa skya royal family, he saw government and politics at first hand, without being a participant.

Dezhung Rinpoche withheld his opinion about certain controversial historical and political assertions found in the book. He later said, “I never contributed a single word on those points.”⁹¹³

Another result of Robert Ekvall's work at the time was his *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Function* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1964). In the preface (p. xii), Ekvall mentions Dezhung Rinpoche as the last of his four main informants, saying: “Dezhung Rinpoche, the official tutor and man of learning of the Sakya ruling house, is a man of erudition and intellectual brilliance.” In subsequent notes, Ekvall frequently cites Dezhung Rinpoche as the source of information and explanations.

In a third book, published more than twenty years later, Ekvall described Dezhung Rinpoche similarly:⁹¹⁴

The intellectual anchor-man of the group was Sde gzhung Rin po che, the uncle of Bdag mo lags, and erudite tutor of the ruling family. He is a scholar of impressive attainments, who has combined the pursuit of learning with close observation of Tibetan society on many levels. Most importantly, he brought to the discussion an uncompromising intellectual integrity, refusing always to confound speculation, or even hearsay, with fact, as he had known it.

Thubten Jigme Norbu

Also in Seattle from January 10, 1961, for about the next half year was Ekvall's friend and colleague Thubten Jigme Norbu, elder brother of the Dalai Lama.⁹¹⁵ Norbu had come as a research associate for the Tibetan project, after spending most of the previous year in India, trying to find solutions for the pressing refugee problem. He had visited Seattle about two years earlier in March 1959 (?).⁹¹⁶ During both visits he stayed with his friend Robert Ekvall, whom he had known since 1951. Since the thirty-eight-year-old Norbu could already speak English, his presence was especially appreciated by those Americans who could not express themselves in Tibetan.

On this occasion Norbu worked primarily with Ekvall to translate the work *The Younger Brother Don yod...Being the Secret Biography, from the Words of the Glorious Lama, the Holy Reverend Blo bZang Ye Shes (dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rje bisun blo bzang ye shes kyi gsung las gsang ba'i rnam thar bzhugs so//)*, which was published in 1969 by Indiana University Press (Bloomington and London). In their introduction (pp. 8–9), the translators mention Dezhung Rinpoche's contribution:

Two of the native Tibetan scholars—Dachen Rinpoche...and Dezhung Rinpoche, the learned tutor and preceptor of the Sakya family—went over the Tibetan text phrase by phrase and line by line in a search with the translators for the true meaning.... Special deference must be paid to Dezhung Rinpoche and his views concerning certain areas of Tibetan scholarship.

And further:

The Tibetan text, printed from woodblocks and undated, was edited for typographical errors, principally by Dezhung Rinpoche, before the translation was made.

Thubten Jigme Norbu also received from Dezhung Rinpoche a small compilation of Tibetan proverbs, which Rinpoche wrote down from memory at Norbu's request.⁹¹⁷ In April 1961, before leaving Seattle, Thubten Norbu married Kuyang la, the youngest sister of Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche.

Tashi Tshering

Still another Tibetan friend of Dezhung Rinpoche in Seattle in 1961 was the twenty-nine-year-old Tashi Tshering, then a second-year student at the University majoring in history and political science.⁹¹⁸ Originally from Gur phyogs village of the Shangs valley in northern Tsang, he had been a member of the government dancing society (*gar pa*) and had more recently worked as an assistant to Gyalo Thondup, brother of the Dalai Lama. By then he spoke quite good English, having studied the previous year at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. He arrived in Seattle in July 1961, soon after Norbu's departure.

Tashi Tsering began assisting in the research projects of others. Later he wrote in Tibetan a sort of anthropological study of the customs and culture of the inhabitants of Seattle.⁹¹⁹ In late 1963 he showed great bravery and returned to Tibet via Montreal, Havana, and Canton to rejoin his family and do what he could to improve the situation there.⁹²⁰

Also working in Seattle at this time, at the Inner Asia Project on the second floor of Thompson Hall, was Pao Kuo-yi (Ünen Sečen), a Mongol. As a Central Asian, he had much insight into the problems of the Tibetans and tried to help the Sakyapas. Also in the project were a talented Manchu specialist from Japan, Hidehiro Okada, who was studying Mongol under Poppe; Shigeru Iijima, a Japanese anthropologist working on high-altitude people such as those in Dolpo in northwest Nepal; and Lilian Nakai, who studied Tibetan inscriptions and other subjects with Dezhung Rinpoche.⁹²¹ They all had desks in the one big room: seven or eight desks in all.

Almost at once, Wylie decided that Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Thrinlay Rinpoche, and Geshe Nornang should have English lessons. Experienced

graduate students from the linguistics department were found to tutor them. Dezhung Rinpoche, probably because of his more advanced age, was not seriously considered for this. Gene Smith privately tried to find a tutor for Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's wife, the clever and capable Dagmola. Smith had met in a University Japanese art class a lively American woman in her seventies named Edna Georgeson, who lived nearby. When approached, she kindly agreed to teach Dagmola not only English but also American etiquette.⁹²²

Smith volunteered to tutor Dezhung Rinpoche in English, but Rinpoche said he did not want to begin right away. Some time later, on the day of Sakya Paṇḍita's nirvāṇa, he came to Smith and made a formal request for instruction. When they began their studies, he took notes and sometimes jotted things down in his diary. (Leon Hurvitz, the professor of Buddhist studies, also taught him informally a bit in the course of their readings together.) Rinpoche's approach to the language was exactly like the traditional Tibetan approach to Sanskrit grammar—the "*Kātantra* approach," so to say. He also avidly memorized words. Smith tried to encourage him to learn phrases and sentence patterns, but without much success.⁹²³

By late 1961, Dezhung Rinpoche had for the moment stopped his English studies. As was reported in a local newspaper at the time:⁹²⁴

Although all the Tibetans remain eye catchers in any crowd, two of them—the oldest and youngest—are particularly magnetic. Lama Labrang, 56, continues to be held in adulation by his colleagues in the academic community. A perfectionist, he has temporarily halted English lessons to devote full time to cataloging Tibetan books on the campus. "He feels that Americans do too many things at a time," one of his university associates said. "He has the highest scholastic ideals."

In the mid-1960s, Dezhung Rinpoche was also tutored in English by Barbara Mahr, a kind American woman then working as secretary of the Inner Asia Project. In a letter to E. Gene Smith on June 21, 1965, she wrote: "Trulkula is still trying to teach me Tibetan, but he is far more astute than I shall ever be, and when we exchange words, he remembers the English and I forget the Tibetan."⁹²⁵ Finally this tutor discouraged him from investing

too much effort in learning English, saying, "You are getting older, and it will take you several years to master the language. Then what good will it do you? Even if you learn a little, your time would be better spent on your own studies and practices. Let the young Americans who want to study with you learn Tibetan!"

"She is right," Rinpoche thought, and gave up the idea of learning English in this lifetime.⁹²⁶ English studies had been taking precious time from his meditation practice. Nevertheless, even ten or fifteen years later, he could still remember many of the English words he had memorized during his early studies, much to the amazement of his American translators.

A decade later, Dezhung Rinpoche sometimes expressed embarrassment over his poor knowledge of English. But he said he felt vindicated by the story from the life of the Indian Paṇḍita-missionary Jowoje Atiśa, who had journeyed to Tibet as an old man and had died there, in 1054, without ever really mastering Tibetan. Once, it was said, the great master got a pebble in his shoe. Turning to his Tibetan disciples, Atiśa said: "I have a boulder in my shoe!" at which his disciples broke into howls of laughter.⁹²⁷

1961–1962: A. Bharati

Another scholar who started working with Dezhung Rinpoche and the other Sakya lamas soon after their arrival was Swami Aghehananda Bharati (1923–1991), born Leopold Fischer in Vienna, of Czech parentage.⁹²⁸ Though primarily an Indologist, he had been allowed to join the Inner Asia Research Project by early 1958. On January 9, 1958, he read before the colloquium a paper entitled "Indian Tantra and Its Relation to (Tibetan) Buddhism," the first of some seventeen or eighteen papers he gave in the course of four years.⁹²⁹ After the arrival of the Tibetans, he organized a weekly session attended by the three lamas, himself, Thubten Norbu, Hugh Richardson, Terry Wylie, Gene Smith, Lilian Nakai, and one other graduate student. The project was to translate the history of Tantric Buddhism, *Divine Lotus Garden* (*Chos 'byung lha'i pad tshal*), by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.⁹³⁰ Extensive references were recorded on cards by Gene Smith, and by the fall of 1961 a first draft of the translation was sent to Dr. Herbert V. Guenther in Varanasi for his comments. But evidently with the departure of Bharati to New York State in late 1961, the project ended, and nothing further came of this work.

Dezhung Rinpoche also tried to help Bharati on another of Bharati's interests, Indian pilgrimage, giving him a long list of pilgrimage places and holy spots in India and other information.⁹³¹ Meanwhile, Rinpoche received some tutoring in Sanskrit Devanāgarī characters from Bharati.⁹³²

Before his departure from Seattle, Bharati wrote, on August 3, a "Report on My Activities with the Tibetans" in which he listed the following areas of study: (1) study of colloquial Tibetan with Trinlay Rinpoche, (2) work on the history *Lha'i pad tshal*, (3) work with the Tibetans and Leon Hurvitz on the *Abhidharmakośa*, (4) "Teaching Sanskrit to Dezhung Rinpoche once a week, during the last five months. He is mainly interested in the transcription of Nagari texts into Tibetan scripts," and (5) "I have consulted with Tibetans whenever I could get an extracurricular hold on any of them, on matters largely on mantra and the yab yum aspect of tantric practice. But due to the restrictions set on them by their vows this portion of enquiry was not too successful."⁹³³

Leon Hurvitz

Within a short time, Professor Leon Hurvitz (1923–1992) also had an active seminar going with Dezhung Rinpoche for the study of Buddhist texts and, in particular, for his own *Abhidharma* research. Hurvitz was a philologist specializing in Buddhist studies, with greatest expertise in Japanese and Chinese, but also a good knowledge of Sanskrit, canonical Tibetan, and several other languages.⁹³⁴ He had begun his interest in languages as a classical scholar and changed orientation when he was assigned to learn Japanese during the Second World War.⁹³⁵ He had been teaching at the University of Washington since 1955. He received his doctorate from Columbia in 1959, two years after he was appointed Assistant Professor in Seattle. His orientation as a scholar was philological; his chief interest: language and words in a Buddhist (and primarily East Asian) context.⁹³⁶

Leon Hurvitz had near-perfect recall. Though he had no great synthesizing ability or particularly profound insight into the meaning, his memory was truly awesome. Gene Smith (who himself possessed a legendary memory) had been much impressed with Hurvitz when they first met, before Dezhung Rinpoche came on the scene with his still more phenomenal powers of recall.

Dezhung Rinpoche and the other Tibetans were often invited to Hurvitz's home and got to know him and his wife. The first time Hurvitz introduced his wife to them, he spoke carefully in Tibetan: "*di ni bdag gi chung ma yin noll*" ("This is my wife"). This statement was perfectly clear, but Hurvitz had phrased it in an archaic classical idiom—the sentence could have been written in the ninth or tenth century. Most of the Tibetans present broke into laughter when they heard his words, but Dezhung Rinpoche hushed them, saying, "This is absolutely correct. It shows this man is a scholar. This is how it would be said by someone who has been reading canonical texts."⁹³⁷

When offering them snacks, Hurvitz said, again in high classical idiom: *sha sna tshogs pa yod pa yin noll* ("There exist various meats"), which resulted in many smiles and stifled giggles. Afterward this sentence earned him the nickname "Various Meats" (*sha sna tshogs pa*) among the Tibetans.

Dezhung Rinpoche always referred affectionately to Hurvitz by his Tibetan name, Seng ge dbang po ("Lion-Lord"), which was Hurvitz's own translation of his name into Tibetan. Dezhung Rinpoche obviously liked Hurvitz, and



83. With Professor Leon Hurvitz and a girl. Seattle, early 1960s.

among all the professors in the Inner Asia Project, Hurvitz was the only one willing to study under Dezhung Rinpoche in a more or less traditional way. When requesting a certain teaching, Hurvitz and Smith presented a small formal offering and recited a prayer. At the start, Dezhung Rinpoche had them both memorize and recite the *Gang blo ma* praises of Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva of wisdom. Then they requested the reading-transmission (*lung*)

for the basic text, offering a traditional ceremonial scarf (*kha btags*) and a gift, after which Rinpoche read the work to them aloud. Later, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the detailed explanation (*khrid*) of each passage and verse.

As their first text, Hurvitz and Smith started studying the brief Prajñāpāramitā scripture the “Diamond Sūtra” (*Rdo rje gcod pa*). Then they studied the commentary (*bhāṣya*) on the *Abhidharmakośa*. Here Dezhung Rinpoche wanted to use the annotation-commentary (*mchan ’grel*) by Shenga, which the Sakyapas had. In 1961 Hurvitz was concentrating mainly on the *Lokanirdeśa* chapter, the third chapter of the *Abhidharmakośa*, and assisting this work until June was Thubten Norbu. After Norbu’s departure that month, Tashi Tshering came to assist as interpreter, though Gene Smith was also present. Already in 1961 they were also reading the famous introductory manual *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma’i zhal lung*) of Dza Paltrül. Later Rinpoche, Hurvitz, and Smith read Candrakīrti’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* in Tibetan translation. For Candrakīrti’s work, too, Dezhung Rinpoche wanted to use the annotation-commentary by Shenga, from the Sakyapa library. Smith took piles of notes during these teachings.⁹³⁸ Hurvitz said more than once, “With Dezhung Rinpoche around, you don’t have to look up words in the dictionary.”⁹³⁹

At the University, Smith, Leon Hurvitz, Barbara Mahr, and some others made a yellow-colored “throne” for Rinpoche to sit on while reading or teaching. He continued to use this seat during the many years he worked at the University.⁹⁴⁰

Rinpoche only went to the institute two or three days a week for a few hours (usually travelling by bus). While boarding the bus to go to the University, Rinpoche would greet the various passengers already seated.⁹⁴¹ When riding the bus, Dezhung Rinpoche would sometimes playfully point out people on the sidewalk to Gene Smith, saying about a passerby: “Look at her! She’s a cannibal witch (*sha za mkha’ ’gro ma*)!” The African-American cleaning woman who came in to help Dagmola was, in his opinion, an enlightened female spirit with special powers (*ye shes kyi mkha’ ’gro ma*). Later in the day, after completing his teaching, he normally walked home by various routes. Sometimes he would meet people and bring them home, and they would seem to be communicating. It was eerie sometimes to Smith how well Rinpoche could communicate without using language, and his passive knowledge of English was quickly becoming fairly good.

On Rinpoche's way home, sometimes when he was tired he would pause, sitting down on someone's lawn, reciting his mantras while he rested. If he met children, he would give them pieces of rock candy. Gene Smith worried that something might go wrong: maybe a parent would object. But no problem occurred.

From among the people Rinpoche sometimes picked up in Ravenna Park on the way home, one was a young American martial-arts specialist. They seemed to be able to communicate verbally, but Dezhung Rinpoche was definitely *not* speaking English, as Gene Smith was amazed to witness.⁹⁴² Another University student the Tibetans came to know was Bruce Lee (later to star in martial-arts films), who came to the Tibetan New Year's party in early 1961. He worked then at Ruby Lee's Chinese restaurant on Capital Hill and studied in the Far Eastern Institute, trying to rediscover his own Chinese heritage.⁹⁴³

Misunderstandings at the University

ALREADY IN THE FIRST YEAR in Seattle, a few major misunderstandings had occurred between Turrell V. (Terry) Wylie (1927–1984), the professor of Tibetan, and the Tibetans he had invited to Seattle.⁹⁴⁴ Wylie, a colorful tattooed ex-merchant-mariner, was then still married to his first wife, Shirley, an attractive woman from his home town of Durango, a ranching and mining town high in the Rocky Mountains of southwest Colorado.⁹⁴⁵ The first few months after the Tibetans' arrival, he devoted much of his time "to the personal adjustment and problems of the Sakya family." By late 1961, however, he felt a bit put out by the Tibetans, and his patience was wearing thin.

Aged thirty-four, Wylie was relatively young and inexperienced. Though invested with a powerful position in relation to the Tibetans, in 1961 he was much junior to most of his colleagues at the institute. He faced an immense cultural gap and could not speak directly with the Tibetans in their own language. His main formal studies at the University of Washington had been in Chinese: he had been admitted to graduate school in 1952 and had passed the general examination for the Ph.D. in Chinese language and literature in September 1955. With the support of a grant from the Ford Foundation, he went to study for twenty months under Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) in Rome, his main purpose being to write his doctoral dissertation on a nineteenth-century Tibetan geographical work. Before that, he had read three papers on Tibetan subjects before the Inner Asia Colloquium in 1953 and 1954, two in connection with the subject of his dissertation, "The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad" (University of Washington, May 1958). After leaving Rome, he went in late 1957 to India for three months, where he studied under a native Tibetan teacher. Except

for that, he had little direct contact with Tibetans, and he had limited practical knowledge of high lamas, their traditions or mentality.

By early 1961, others were already working actively with the Tibetan informants in Seattle. Ekvall, collaborating with James F. Downs, an anthropologist,⁹⁴⁶ had an active discussion group with the Sakya lamas on the politics and modern history of Sakya. Somewhat later collaborators with Ekvall and the Tibetans included the law professor Dan F. Henderson (b. 1921)⁹⁴⁷ and the political scientist C. W. Cassinelli.⁹⁴⁸ The linguists Betty Shefts and Chang Kun were working on the Lhasa dialect with their informants. Leon Hurvitz had an active seminar going with Dezhung Rinpoche as part of his *Abhidharma* project. Even Swami Bharati had a group meeting, translating a Tibetan religious history. So Wylie decided to start a similar seminar with his main informants, the Sakya lamas.

Thus in the spring of 1961, Terry Wylie dropped a bombshell, informing the Sakyapas that he wanted to do a seminar with them on the *Hevajra Tantra*, the basic text of their school's central esoteric tradition. They were to give him the initiation, he told them, and then they would all sit down and study the tantra together, with Wylie following along in Snellgrove's English translation, which had been published a year or two earlier.⁹⁴⁹ Swami Agehananda Bharati, the Hindu tantric specialist, was also interested in joining this seminar and taking part.⁹⁵⁰

Dezhung Rinpoche and the others in the Sakya family were horrified. Their religion was not for sale to people who had no intention of practicing it. They flatly refused to go along if they had to divulge tantric secrets.

Wylie reacted angrily, and it seemed to the Sakyapas that he had really been counting on doing this. "We paid for your coming all the way here. You must do what we request!" he insisted to Dagmola.⁹⁵¹

"But some instructions even I cannot receive," she said.

"Interest will develop if you teach these topics!" he persisted. Yet the Tibetans would not budge.

Wylie decided that the Tibetans were being "uncooperative" and made remarks about wanting to send them back to India, which disturbed and angered his guests. On religious grounds they felt obliged to refuse his request: Wylie by no means demonstrated the genuine respect or motivation of a true religious student. Gene Smith for many months afterward had to spend hours trying to explain "the Wylie problem" to Dezhung Rinpoche and the other Tibetans. The Sakya lamas were sure of one thing: they

had definitely *not* come to Seattle under the agreement that they would make public their treasured esoteric traditions.

In a letter written in about 1962 to the Tharlam chant-leader Jamyang Chöphel in India, Dezhung Rinpoche described the difficult position in which the Tibetans found themselves.⁹⁵² The letter began with a more general description of the situation in Seattle. The housing, water, and electricity had been taken care of by the University, and they were receiving a monthly salary, and therefore things had been pleasant for the Sakya family in some respects. Yet, as Rinpoche went on to say:

There is absolutely no hope of living the life of a Tibetan lama as in Tibet, with such religious activities as giving tantric initiations, collecting offerings, and establishing centers of Buddhist teaching and practice. In this great border country (*yul mtha' 'khob*), the Buddhist Doctrine does not exist. All the inhabitants are devoid of faith, and none of them know what should be accepted and rejected.

In the University, there are some twenty thousand students and teachers. It seems the main subjects of study are the language and literature of English, Chinese, Russian, German, French, Japanese, and Hindustani. The languages of such various lands as Mongolia, Nepal, and Tibet are only studied incidentally and not very much. Moreover, Tibet is viewed as a minor country, and people do not count it as really significant. They call the Buddhist religion “Buddha’s Dharma.”⁹⁵³ To understand it, they say it is important to know Sanskrit and Tibetan. There are nearly ten people here who can read Tibetan characters. They speak Tibetan in a gibberish. Two or three of them who know many different scripts and languages are studying Madhyamaka and Abhidharma.⁹⁵⁴ But their studies do not put that much emphasis on understanding the overall meaning. They try to ascertain the significance of each and every word and particle. Moreover, they do not do this [minute investigation] with Tibetan alone, but also with Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, and other languages, translating them and trying to ascertain the meaning, and therefore it is very difficult. What they can understand, they write down, and in this way they compose big books. These they then publish, and by selling them in various lands, they make a lot of money. They do this aiming for a kind of [scholarly immortality],

such that after they die people will say, “The great scholar so-and-so wrote this book.” Otherwise, very few people have faith in Buddhism and recite [even] a single refuge formula or a couple of *māṇi* mantras.

Last year, at the time when we had first arrived here, Dr. Wylie brought to us a book of the *Hevajra Mūlatantra* [in English translation], and since he wanted to know about the Sakyapa practices and works, he said [to the Sakya lamas], “Please teach me this!” If he had been sincerely devoted, then of course they would have initiated him into the main points of tantric practice and taught him, regardless of whatever trouble it might have cost them. But he was not requesting this out of faith. Rather, he was doing so in an attempt to find out about the Mantrayāna teachings, so that he could write a big book in which he explained: “This is how the Sakyapas give initiations and practice tantric meditation,” aiming at being able to give lectures to large groups of people and to make money by publishing and selling such a book.

Dezhung Rinpoche at this point related two instances in the early Sakyapa tradition where the open teaching of Tantra had been criticized and decisively rejected. Such things were not to be taken lightly and should not be taught without restriction, he tried to explain to Wylie. The letter continued:

We told him: “To study this subject, one first needs to be initiated. Then the teacher expounds [the Sakyapa tantric treatises] the *Rgyud sde spyi rnam* [of Sönam Tsemo] and the *IJon shing chen mo* [of Drakpa Gyaltzen]. Then, at last, one enters into the study of the Tantra itself. Therefore, let’s leave that [idea] for the time being. Later on we can consider what is needed.”⁹⁵⁵

[Then some others said] we should work mainly on the family and religious history of the Sakyapa and compose a book in connection with law and politics.⁹⁵⁶ For that, if we could just find the three volumes on Sakya genealogy—namely, the *Ya rabs kha rgyan* by Ngorchon Könchok Lhündrup, its commentary the *Gdung rabs rin chen bang mdzod* by Ameshap, its continuation, the *Rin chen ’dzad med* by Gongma Kunga Lotrö, and the further supplement by

Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen—it would be excellent to base such a study on them. But we could not locate even one of those. Nevertheless, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, his brother [Trinlay Rinpoche], Dagmo Kusho, and I have been meeting with several other people and have been composing a book in English, with maps, on the Sakyapa, mainly having to do with politics and law, and thus, though I have not been feeling too happy about it, they are going to finish that book and publish it.⁹⁵⁷

The lack of suitable Sakyapa historical materials continued to plague the Sakyapas and their American collaborators during the first three years they were in Seattle, even though Wylie's guru, Giuseppe Tucci, had in Rome a copy of the fundamental source they needed most—Ameshap's *Great Sakya Genealogy*—along with many other valuable works.⁹⁵⁸ But Tucci would not share these, no matter how desperately the scholars in Seattle needed them—this in spite of the fact that Tucci had been helped in Sakya by Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's father, Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk, and had apparently even received initiations from him.⁹⁵⁹

Meanwhile Wylie was stymied and began forming the opinion that some of the Tibetan informants whom he had brought to North America at so much trouble and expense were really not that bright.⁹⁶⁰ He was a stickler for punctuality, and it galled him to no end when the younger Sakya lamas came strolling into a meeting half an hour late.⁹⁶¹ Moreover, though he respected Dezhung Rinpoche as a highly knowledgeable lama, Wylie somehow never managed to collaborate meaningfully with him for his own historical work.

An additional problem was that Wylie's spoken Tibetan remained minimal, and he had great difficulty making sense of Dezhung Rinpoche's broad Eastern (Khams pa) dialect. Wylie and some advanced students like Melvyn Goldstein felt that Dezhung Rinpoche should make a greater effort to learn Central Tibetan since that was the dialect students in the program were learning. It seemed far easier for Dezhung Rinpoche to do this than for American students and teachers to learn the Gapa dialect of Kham on top of Lhasa Tibetan.⁹⁶²

Thus by early 1961, personal relations with the Tibetans had begun to get difficult for Wylie. The first major problem arose with the marriage on April 8 of the Dalai Lama's elder brother Thubten Jigme Norbu (b. 1923) to the youngest of the Sakyapa sisters, Kuyang, then sixteen or seventeen and

still a student at Nathan Eckstein Junior High (having been held back a grade or two as a new arrival to America). Wylie feared the newspapers might pick up the story of the marriage and put a prudish slant on it because of the bride's age.⁹⁶³ The newlyweds ended up leaving Seattle for New York in June 1961 and eventually settled happily in Bloomington, Indiana, where Norbu was offered a professorship in Tibetan at the university.⁹⁶⁴ Wylie—never a great admirer of Ekvall's close friend Thubten Norbu—was scandalized, and he was also angry with his student Gene Smith, saying: "Why didn't you tell me about it?"

The next crisis occurred over a year later, when one of the more recently arrived unmarried Tibetan women (who had come to Seattle in the fall of 1962) found a Tibetan boyfriend and became pregnant. Wylie felt personally responsible and worried what the Dharamsala Tibetan government in exile might say. Smith tried to get across to him that these were individual human beings with the right to make their own choices. The Tibetans thought the situation was bad but not quite as scandalous as the Americans were making it out to be, while their Seattle hosts felt obliged to stress how deplorable it would be for the child to be born "out of wedlock."

In the meantime, Wylie was getting some academic work done with Geshe Ngawang Nornang (Nor rgyas nang pa Ngag dbang blo gros), who otherwise collaborated mainly with the linguists Shefts and Kun. But since Wylie had failed to get his own Sakya history and *Hevajra Tantra* projects off the ground and then backed away from any meaningful collaboration with the Sakyapas, in the end he had little to show individually for the Rockefeller Foundation money spent in Seattle on Tibetan studies.⁹⁶⁵

In the next few years, Wylie faced his share of other difficulties. One of his deep personal interests was the practice of painting, and through this medium he seemed to present himself as someone who possessed special insights or powers. In these years he produced a few bizarre pieces of art: one painting portrayed a Buddha in meditation, holding a large-caliber pistol. By contrast, he sometimes also attempted paintings in an almost traditional Tibetan vein, once painting a portrait of the great founder of the Sakya tradition, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, which he presented to the Sakya family. Later in life he jokingly called himself "The Blue Shaman from Durango." In the early 1960s, to at least one of his main students in those days, it seemed Wylie actually wanted to be some kind of a guru, though not a traditional Tibetan Buddhist.

Some of the misunderstandings between Wylie and the Sakyapa Tibetans might have been avoided, because he meant well and had high standards. One of his American friends from those days, who was also close to the Tibetans, said: “Terry Wylie’s own thinking [in those days] was actually not that far from Buddhism.”⁹⁶⁶ On his own—and without the competition from his rival Ekvall—Wylie might have worked out a more fruitful relationship with the Tibetans.

Hugh Richardson

In mid-February 1961, Hugh Richardson (b. 1905) came as visiting professor to help establish Tibetan studies at the University of Washington, and he evidently stayed until early 1962.⁹⁶⁷ Richardson, a former officer in charge of the British and Indian missions in Lhasa, arrived from India by way of the Far East. He knew Tibet at first hand, having lived nine years there. He was personally acquainted with the Sakya Khön lamas from Lhasa, and he



84. Talking with Hugh Richardson. Seattle, January 1962.

knew Terry Wylie from Rome in 1957. His visit to Seattle was supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation.⁹⁶⁸

Richardson had previously worked in Tibet with Dudjom Rinpoche and the Bde chen Chos 'khor Yongdzin on ancient pillar inscriptions and knew the benefits of close collaboration with good Tibetan scholars. He therefore

tried to consult Dezhung Rinpoche on many points, but for the particular topics he was then most interested in (old stone inscriptions, early royal period, Tibetan political history, and so forth), Dezhung Rinpoche was not nearly as helpful as he had been on other subjects such as Buddhist doctrine and religious history. Richardson spent much of his time during the first months of his Seattle visit seeing his short history of Tibet through the final stages of publication.⁹⁶⁹

Richardson himself formed a high opinion of Rinpoche. Thirty-three years later he recollected:⁹⁷⁰

I was in Seattle in 1961–1962 and frequently met Sde gzhung Rin po che. He had the dignified calm and appearance of concentrated awareness characteristic of good incarnate lamas, young and old. He was very helpful and friendly, often answering questions about the meaning of words, which he would do carefully in writing—just as well because his rather rough Amdo [i.e., northwest Kham] speech was not always easy to understand and I did not like to ask him too often to repeat what he said. He generously wrote out for me a history of Amdo[?],⁹⁷¹ probably based on the *Deb ther rgya mtsho*. Unfortunately I have mislaid it—possibly given to Michael Aris.

Further Instruction of Gene Smith

IN 1961–1962, Gene Smith applied himself to learning Tibetan both at the University of Washington and privately. His classes officially included the course on Tun Huang documents (early Tibetan historical texts) offered by Richardson, but he received much further background information from Dezhung Rinpoche.⁹⁷² Already by early 1961 Smith had made considerable progress with his spoken and written Tibetan language and could benefit more and more from the proximity of Dezhung Rinpoche. In a paper he presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium on April 25, 1961 (p. 9), he mentioned:

Sde gzhung sprul sku not only has kindly discussed most of the problematical passages with me, but also has placed at my disposal a copy of the 'Khon lineage which he prepared for Sandy and Zayane [Ariane] Macdonald.⁹⁷³

One year later, in late May 1962, Smith read another paper before the colloquium in which he mentioned his indebtedness to Dezhung Rinpoche (p. 2):

We are extremely fortunate to have as a collaborator and mentor the respected Tibetan scholar Sde gzhung Rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma. The encyclopedic nature of his memory combined with his unusual facility of critical appraisal and ability to organize his material into an orderly presentation would tremendously simplify the production of a study, should we be able to obtain the necessary books. Sde gzhung Rin po che one day hopes to write a history of

the Sakya sect in Tibet along the lines of the *Bai dūrya ser po*, the ecclesiastical history of the Gelukpa, composed by the Desi Sangyay Gyatso in the late seventeenth century.

Sde gzhung Rin po che hesitates to make statements on historical problems, if he cannot corroborate his memories with reliable literary evidence. He insists that we recognize that all such uncorroborated historical data should be presented only as his opinion and, therefore, as remaining open to question.

After numerous conversations during the course of the past year, I attempted to produce a more-or-less chronological list of topics to be covered in an historical study of the Sakya sect. I showed this attempt to Sde gzhung Rin po che who, I think, considered it both sketchy and a bit premature. He indicated that he was aware that the Tibetan approach to history and Western historiography were quite different in their purposes as well as in their methods and styles, but that he was unable to judge the adequacy of the proposed outline, since our purposes in writing history are so different from the Tibetan. His one comment was that we should continue our conversations.

Another project Dezhung Rinpoche helped Gene Smith with during the first years in Seattle was the cataloguing of the original Tibetan block-prints and manuscripts in Seattle. Smith had already begun some bibliographical researches even before the arrival of the Tibetans; on August 2, 1960, he read before the Inner Asia Project the paper, "Notes on the Problems of Research in Tibetan Bibliography." He went on to a further stage of work with the help of Dezhung Rinpoche's wide knowledge and amazingly detailed memory. T. V. Wylie described the project in the foreword to Smith's *University of Washington Tibetan Catalogue, Part I* (published in Seattle by the University of Washington in 1969, without the author's corrections):

Several years ago, E. Gene Smith...began a descriptive catalogue of the Tibetan collection maintained in the Far Eastern Library at the University of Washington (Seattle). He was guided and assisted in his bibliographical work by the learned lama, Sde gzhung Rin po che Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma bla brang, Research Associate in the

Inner Asia Project of the Far Eastern and Russian Institute. Mr. Smith began a systematic cataloguing of the holdings, using as his starting point a handlist of titles prepared previously by Professor Chang Kun.

Actually, Smith's project had become wider in scope, including all accessible books in Seattle, such as the then relatively extensive collection of the Sakyas (which included some books they had on loan from Barmiook Athing Densapa in Sikkim), the books of other Tibetans in Seattle, and even the collections of the resident American scholars and students. Collaborating with Smith in this work were not only Dezhung Rinpoche but also Tashi Tshering.

The need for such cataloguing was great: one of the greatest problems facing the American researchers and their Tibetan informants was the difficulty in locating important books. In his letters to India in this period, Dezhung Rinpoche often asked to be sent important works of the Sakyapa tradition. In one letter from a slightly later time, he wrote that during the early 1960s quite a few Tibetan books could be found in Seattle, but for whatever reason (and here he saw an omen) not many from the Sakya tradition.

Another project begun by Smith at this time was a compilation of summary biographies of contemporary scholars and political figures—both still in Tibet and in exile. Perhaps the surviving one-page sketch of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's life was composed by Dezhung Rinpoche for this purpose.

During his first few years in Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche rarely gave formal Buddhist instruction. The only American to receive any sort of Buddhist teaching from him during this time was Gene Smith. Dezhung Rinpoche told him that he should study an introductory text for practice (*sngon 'gro*) and agreed to teach him the *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*) of Paltrül, but only up to a certain point because beyond a certain chapter one had to receive an initiation, and Dezhung Rinpoche did not want to give him that.

In general, Dezhung Rinpoche did not want to give teachings when the Sakya Khön lamas were nearby, living in the same house. Smith also requested instructions on the Avalokiteśvara practice of Thangtong Gyalpo's tradition. Eventually Rinpoche agreed to give them, but first he said: "Go ask Dagchen Rinpoche!" Later he also gave Smith instructions on the Avalokiteśvara practices in the Tshembupa tradition.

Dezhung Rinpoche and Smith had a warm relationship, and Rinpoche gave him the Tibetan name Jamyang Namgyal. Rinpoche used to tell Gene Smith: “If you want to do a little Buddhist practice, okay. All you need to do is recite *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ*. Don’t burden yourself like I did! Don’t collect initiations like you collect books!” He went on to tell the story of the lama who collected so many tantric initiations that he had no time left to live. “Look at me,” he said. “I have so many practices, I don’t have any time!”

Dezhung Rinpoche was surprisingly willing to explain topics that to Smith seemed highly esoteric, such as the generation stage (*bskyed rim*), the perfection stage (*rdzogs rim*), and ritual propitiation (*bsnyen sgrub*) of tantric meditative practice. But while partially open in these ways, he was completely reluctant to perform the ritual of initiation. “Be careful who you take initiations from,” he advised Smith. “Choose your lamas very carefully.” He highly recommended that Smith see Sangyay Nyenpa Shedrup Tenpay Nyima (1897–1962), for instance, for Karma Kagyü traditions, and he typically encouraged Smith (and other Americans interested in Buddhism) to study under the great lamas then newly exiled in India.⁹⁷⁴

In the early years in Seattle, just as in all periods of his life, Dezhung Rinpoche sometimes withdrew from his normal routines to do meditation retreats. For his “meditation cell” in the early 1960s, he borrowed the old one-room apartment of Gene Smith on N.E. 55th Street, which Smith continued to rent as a storage place for his books even after he moved into the house with the Sakya family. In the middle of February 1962, Rinpoche began three weeks of retreat, practicing the rituals of the longevity-bestowing goddess, White Tārā. This time corresponded to the middle and end of the first lunar month. On the twenty-ninth day of this lunar month (ca. March 15), he wrote a poem to commemorate this retreat, presenting it to his two closest American colleagues, Hurvitz and Smith, when he returned from seclusion:

Obeisance to the lord Lama!

In the holy period of the Miracle-working month in the water-tiger year, I practiced one hundred thousand recitations [of the Tārā mantra] with the ritual propitiation of the bestower of immortal life, Tārā.

At that time I again and again included you, my two close friends, within my visualization. I prayed that this excellent physical basis

[the human body] would live long, and that our aspirations would be accomplished.

There was no reason for me, born in the Ga district of Kham in Tibet, to meet with you two, born in the country of America. But we have met, and in the school of Seattle city we engage in questions and discussions about the Buddhist religion.

To do this is probably the result of the connection of deeds in previous lifetimes. It is the infallible appearance of interdependent origination. I am moved to tears by a mixture of sadness and happiness.

Henceforth, in all future lives, through these profound deeds and habits, we will certainly associate together for a long time. May we together partake of the Dharma!

May you kindly accept with forbearance this poem, which I, the one called Dezhung Trulku, have written as nonsensical prattle in a mood of wonderment on the twenty-ninth day of the Miracle-working month [the first lunar month] of the water-tiger year.

The letters he wrote from Seattle to his siblings in India during these early years, like those written during his stay in Kalimpong and Darjeeling, expressed his sadness at the destruction of the monasteries in Tibet and at so many tragic deaths, including those of many lamas. Seattle was a land of plenty—of many conducive physical circumstances—but it was a land where nobody was interested in the Buddha's teaching and no one recited even so much as a *māṇi* mantra. "In an era when I had thought to work for the Dharma, I was carried instead by my past karma to this foreign land," he once wrote his brother and sister.⁹⁷⁵

In the winter or spring of 1962, Leon Hurvitz was involved in a horrendous automobile accident. He was taken to Group Health Hospital, and nobody expected him to survive. Dezhung Rinpoche did his own prognostications and said, "No, he will live. But it will be a long time before he recovers."⁹⁷⁶ Rinpoche is said to have predicted to Hurvitz that it would be a full six years before he completely recovered. That turned out to be the case.⁹⁷⁷

The problems with Wylie continued, though for the most part they did not affect the Sakya Tibetans as directly as before. Already by 1961, Wylie

had developed an intense rivalry with the other “Tibetologist” in residence, Robert Ekvall. Though originally a missionary, Ekvall was Wylie’s more urbane and socially self-assured senior by nearly thirty years, who could speak fluently several Chinese dialects as well as the Amdo dialect of Tibetan and who thus had direct access to these informants.⁹⁷⁸ Wylie for his part never learned to speak Tibetan with any degree of fluency. Another factor was that Ekvall had no academic degree beyond a bachelor of arts, but only a background of deep personal experience from having grown up in a missionary family and having lived for years in the western Chinese borderlands. Yet even without a doctorate, he was clearly an old Asian hand, and by 1961 he already had eighteen articles and six books to his credit. For about two or three years (1958–1960), he even served as chairman of the Inner Asia Research Project.⁹⁷⁹ His knowledge of classical Tibetan, however, was limited.

Wylie, by contrast, concerned himself almost exclusively with literary Tibetan and continued to have little to do with the living culture or language. He also laid a lot of emphasis on academic formalities, and for him Ekvall lacked legitimate credentials.⁹⁸⁰ He felt justified, therefore, in attacking Ekvall as a hopeless scholar.⁹⁸¹ Meanwhile Wylie entrenched himself in August 1962 when Chang Kun resigned as co-chairman of the Inner Asia Project and Wylie was named “executive chairman.”⁹⁸²

The friction between Wylie and Ekvall came to a head when Ekvall and Cassinelli were to present a paper at a special enlarged meeting of the Inner Asia Colloquium at which the head of the Far Eastern Institute, George Taylor, was to preside. Melvyn Goldstein, then an enthusiastic and idealistic young anthropologist of about twenty-five whose spoken Tibetan (in proper Lhasa dialect) was rapidly becoming good enough to check Ekvall’s oral translations, read a copy of the paper that had been distributed in advance.⁹⁸³ Goldstein was shocked by the paper, which argued, using dubious information, that Sakya had been an independent principality.⁹⁸⁴ He therefore re-interviewed the informants Ekvall had used—mainly Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche—and found that the latter’s answers did not support the things Ekvall proposed (Ekvall having apparently asked leading questions). Goldstein had already developed serious doubts about some of Ekvall’s methods and sources; he had previously come to know, for instance, that Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche on other occasions had telephoned Tibetans from Ü Province to ask about customs and then passed on the information

to Ekvall as Sakya tradition.⁹⁸⁵ Goldstein's opinion that Ekvall's work was not up to current scholarly standards was shared by the senior professors of anthropology at the University.⁹⁸⁶

At the actual meeting, after the reading of the paper, Goldstein presented his misgivings and criticisms in some detail. His main point was not that Ekvall's thesis was necessarily wrong or that he himself was correct; rather, he meant to demonstrate that this was a difficult and complex issue and that if Ekvall and his colleagues really wanted to make a scientific contribution, they should go to India where there was no shortage of people from Sakya to interview, including the Sakya Trizin and entourage.⁹⁸⁷

Goldstein's frank critique of the much more senior scholar's work caused a real stir and generated a lot of both friends and enemies for him.⁹⁸⁸ One professor reportedly took Terry Wylie aside after the meeting and suggested that he quiet down this graduate student.⁹⁸⁹ In the Far Eastern Institute and Inner Asia Project, Ekvall was not seriously threatened, for he still had powerful friends such as George Taylor. But Goldstein's criticisms also apparently resulted in a law professor's deciding not to publish a book on Sakya law based on the same set of data.⁹⁹⁰ Through all this, the Sakyapa Tibetans maintained close links with Ekvall.

Summer and Fall 1962

The large grant from the Rockefeller Foundation in May 1960 had made it possible to invite the Tibetans to Seattle in the first place. But the University of Washington was not the only place visited by Tibetan scholars and informants at that time; indeed, other groups or individuals were also invited to the handful of centers where Tibetological scholarship was being cultivated in western Europe and Japan, namely, London, Paris, Rome, Copenhagen, Leiden, Munich, and Tokyo. In early July 1962, Terry Wylie and Gene Smith received funding to attend the meeting of Tibetan scholars held at the Rockefeller villa in Bellagio, Italy, again under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation.⁹⁹¹ This was the second such conference at the Villa Serbelloni (the first organizational meeting had taken place in 1959). Afterward Smith traveled widely in Europe, visiting universities, libraries, and individual Tibetologists. He was then able to obtain microfilms of many more Tibetan works, which he brought back to Seattle in the fall of 1962 and set about cataloguing.⁹⁹² In this ongoing bibliographical work, he

continued to consult Dezhung Rinpoche. Now and then in the published catalogue, Smith credits Dezhung Rinpoche as the source of his information.⁹⁹³ Indeed, much of the otherwise undocumented information, especially about little-known Khampa and Sakya scholars, originated with Dezhung Rinpoche.⁹⁹⁴

Dezhung Rinpoche's wealth of practically firsthand information about the great masters of the *ris med* ("universalist" or nonsectarian) movement in Derge during the late nineteenth century fired Smith's interest. Smith recorded many details about the historical background and leading scholars of this movement, which he later published in his introduction to "Kongtrul's Encyclopedia" and elsewhere.⁹⁹⁵

Already in late 1961 or early 1962, Dezhung Rinpoche and Smith had begun to read the biography of Ngakchang Chenpo Kunga Rinchen (1517–1584). They continued to work through this text in subsequent years, and in this connection Dezhung Rinpoche began to tell about the troubles between the Tsharpa and Sakya subschools of the Sakyapa. He also explained about the different traditions of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*), telling Smith what important books to look out for in India.

As Gene Smith later said: "We were incredibly lucky. Of all the Tibetans who came to the West, Dezhung Rinpoche was the most learned. Bstan 'dzin Rnam dag [b. 1926, the Bonpo slob dpon who assisted Snellgrove in London] and Dags po Rinpoche [b. 1932, Kong po, who worked in Paris] were of course also learned, but Dezhung Rinpoche was by far the most learned of all. Yet Rinpoche himself also made it clear that he disapproved of books and book-learning, though he himself had possessed many books at Tharlam monastery and also loved good books."⁹⁹⁶

In September 1962, there occurred the happy event of the birth of Dezhung Rinpoche's fifth great-nephew, the last Sakya Phüntsoḱ palace son, Sadhu Vajra (Legs pa rdo rje).⁹⁹⁷

During his first years in Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche had two major health problems. One was a continual pain in his right shoulder as a result of the many rituals he had performed after his arrival in India. Finally he was taken to the noted internist Dr. John Hagen, who searched for the exact source of the pain. Dezhung Rinpoche endured the excruciating agony of the doctor's probing. Finally, while saying, "As a nonspecialist, I shouldn't really do

this,” the doctor gave him a shot of cortisone right on the spot. Afterward, the shoulder healed quickly.

The other major problem was that Rinpoche began to lose muscle tone and coordination, and at the same time started having muscle spasms. He was taken to see a specialist, who said these were probably the symptoms of a fatal disorder that mainly shows up in younger people (muscular dystrophy being the prime suspect). The doctor told Smith that Rinpoche might not have more than a few years to live. When this was translated to Dezhung



85. Congratulating Dr. and Mrs. Charles Webber at their wedding. Seattle, November 1962.

Rinpoche, he just laughed. To relieve some of the symptoms, the doctor put him on nicotinic acid pills, which Smith explained to him was the main ingredient of snuff and cigarettes. But after taking this medicine for a while, Rinpoche one day said, “I don’t want to take this any more,” and abruptly stopped. By then the disorder, whatever it had been, had vanished.⁹⁹⁸

One of Dezhung Rinpoche’s most interesting compositions in these years was a poem in commemoration of his dentist’s marriage. Dezhung Rinpoche had been having his teeth replaced, and he became friendly with the young fourth-year dental student Charles E. Webber, who was assigned to treat him at the University Hospital dental clinic.⁹⁹⁹ Webber memorized



simple Tibetan commands, such as *kha dong* (“Open your mouth!”) and *kha ’dzum* (“Close your mouth!”), and he used them when treating Rinpoche, whom he called “Trulku-la.” With such limited vocabulary and a few other phrases, the two of them had a grand time, with lots of laughter. Rinpoche was an imposing sight in the dental clinic with his flowing maroon robes and kindly, good-natured appearance, and once he even sat cross-legged in the dentist chair. When the teeth replacement was finished, the full dentures fashioned by Webber won him the award for best prosthetics in that year.¹⁰⁰⁰

The dentistry student came to one of the Tibetan New Year’s parties with a young Seattle society lady named Dede Stocking, whom Dezhung Rinpoche also immediately liked. It was their second date. Soon Miss Stocking was Webber’s fiancée, and a year later a grand wedding was planned: their marriage was to be solemnized in November 1962, in Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church. When the time approached, Dezhung Rinpoche received a printed invitation as an honored guest. Then Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Thrinlay Rinpoche decided they wanted to attend, which complicated things. Gene Smith had to call the mother of the bride and explain that the Tibetan lamas wanted to observe the ceremony, “something like an anthropologist would observe a wedding in a different culture.” Finally the mother agreed, and several more invitations arrived at the last minute.

Dezhung Rinpoche composed a congratulatory poem for the occasion, which he presented to the bride and groom. He talked a lot to Smith at this time about Khampa marriage ceremonies, mentioning that Kongtrül and Ju Mipham had also composed marriage-ceremony (*bag ston*) pieces.¹⁰⁰¹ His verses:



86A, 86B and 86C. Dezhung Rinpoche
tutoring Minzu Sakya. Seattle, 1963.

Best wishes! May you two be watched over, until you attain enlightenment, by the compassionate gaze of the Three Jewels, the Guru, and the reverend lady White Tārā, who are unfailing protectors if one takes refuge in them.

My best of friends, who have attained the fortunate destiny of human existences in this world in the country of America—Charles Webber and Miss Dede—are joined together as loving mates.

Since the festival of the enjoying and partaking of the pleasures of desire is the chief thing striven for by all those in the fortunate destinies in this Realm of Desire (*kāmadhātu*), I greatly rejoice in your having thus attained it.

May good fortune ensue for you, so that the undying tree of your life-force be extremely firm, so that the branches of the four kinds of prosperity and well-being flourish widely [for you], and so that you always partake in immutable wealth that is enriched by the fruits of the two purposes (for yourselves and for others).

These prayers of auspicious good-wishes were offered on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month of the water-male-tiger year, i.e., the Dge-byed year, number 936 of the Tibetan system, corresponding to 1962 of the Western calendar, by Kunga Tenpay Nyima, the Dezhung trulku, a Buddhist monk from Ga district of Kham in Tibet who has reached the American city of Seattle. [Signed] Kunga Labrang.

Webber considered Rinpoche a lifelong friend and remembered him two and a half decades later as “the most kind-hearted, sincerely religious person I have ever encountered.”¹⁰⁰²

During the first few years in America, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche kept his long plaited hair and white *sngags pa* robe, but he got fed up with the traditional garb when people kept mistaking him for a woman. Once Dezhung Rinpoche was even mistaken for his husband, and this was evidently the final straw for Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche. A shorter haircut quickly followed.¹⁰⁰³

In 1963 and 1964, several plans to help the refugee Tibetans in India were reported in the local media. One was a proposal to resettle Tibetan refugees in Alaska, including an experiment to cross yaks with Galloway cattle to produce suitable cattle for that climate. The University of Washington Tibetologists supported the proposal.¹⁰⁰⁴ Another plan was to bring twenty Tibetan teenagers to Seattle for three years of vocational training—a plan proposed primarily by Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Toulouse, and supported by the American Emergency Committee for Tibetan Refugees, headed by Lowell Thomas.¹⁰⁰⁵ Youths were selected in India for the project, and in this connection the youngest sister of the Dalai Lama, Jetsun Pema, visited Seattle.¹⁰⁰⁶ In the spring of 1964, a house was rented and furnished for the expected arrival of students,¹⁰⁰⁷ but then in September the plan was dropped on advice from the State Department, which had suggested that it would be more effective to offer vocational training to Tibetans where they were—in India.

Meanwhile, Dezhung Rinpoche (as “Lama Kunga Labrang”) was again briefly in the public eye in 1963 as a result of articles by Julie Emery in the *Seattle Times*. In the first he appeared with his youngest great-nephew, Sadhu, in a photo by Josef Scaylea. This article commemorated the Tibetan New Year, stating:¹⁰⁰⁸

Two contrasting faces will stand out in the soft glow of butter lamps burning festively this weekend in Seattle’s Tibetan community. One is that of mustached, scholarly Lama Kunga Labrang, nearly 58, who will be up at 4 o’clock Sunday morning to say his first prayers of the Tibetan New Year.... The respected Labrang will smile and offer a heartfelt “Tashi Delek,” which means blessings and good luck, to

two hundred guests who will crowd the main Tibetan house at 6551 24th Ave. N.E. Saturday night.

Prominent Seattle citizens will be among those who will ring in the year 937, which is the water-female-hare year of the sixteenth cycle on the Tibetan calendar.... Legpa's daddy, Jigdal Sakyapa, will play merry tunes on the flute. Guests will overflow to a roomy basement to join in Tibetan dances.... And amid the gaiety, Labrang will be saying prayers quietly—in the presence of all—his rosary clicking away steadily.

What does the year 937 hold for the learned Labrang, who entered a monastery when he was four, [his] chubby [grandnephew] Legpa, and their refugee colleagues? Two grants for University of Washington research projects, in which the Tibetans act as informants, expire in October. Unless there are extensions or other arrangements, eleven from the community [in Seattle] must return to crowded refugee camps in India.

What does the red-robed Labrang miss in America? His monastery, to be sure. When a younger man, he would trudge through the snows of Eastern Tibet gathering food and other supplies from nomads to support his monks. "But those I miss most are my brother and sister in India," Labrang said. "They are obtainable. My monastery is not."

Were they home in Tibet, Legpa soon would have to say goodbye to his uncle. Before the Communist invasion, Labrang selected his hermitage—a wood and stone hut on the side of a mountain where at sixty he planned to retire to a solitary life of meditation and prayer.

In the Sunday supplement to the April 21, 1963, edition of the same newspaper, there appeared a photographic essay (photos again by Josef Scaylea) entitled "A Young Lama Learns," showing Dezhung Rinpoche tutoring his eight-year-old great-nephew Minzu. Here Emery wrote:¹⁰⁰⁹

After his regular third-grade classwork at Mrs. Siegl's School, and a few minutes of afternoon television cartoons, the refugee buckles down to two hours of instruction in Tibetan studies and Buddhism.... [Minzu's] tutor is his great-uncle, Lama Kunga Labrang, 58, a kindly

but strict teacher during the study sessions. Besides prayers, Sakya ritual and doctrine and some Sanskrit, [Minzu] has regular lessons in Tibetan spelling and writing. During the study break, [Minzu]



87. Dezhung Rinpoche
rewarding Minzu Rinpoche for
a lesson well learned.

listens wide-eyed as his uncle tells stories of lamas, a highlight of each session for the boy. A piece of hard-rock candy is the elder lama's reward for lessons well learned....

[Minzu] happily accepts his intended role as religious leader. For as he puts it, "I like my job."

Adapting to a Long-Term Stay

AFTER THE FUNDING from the Rockefeller Foundation ended in late 1963, only Dezhung Rinpoche and one other Tibetan were kept on at the University of Washington as permanent staff. Dezhung Rinpoche himself was retained as a research assistant of the department's Inner Asia Project for nine more years, until he retired in the summer of 1972, while Geshe Nornang was appointed by the Far Eastern and Russian Institute as a language instructor in colloquial Tibetan, a job he continued in the department of Asian languages and literature into the 1990s.¹⁰¹⁰ Rinpoche's being named to a permanent position was described by Julie Emery in a newspaper article of January 15, "Educational First: Tibetans Join U.W. Staff":

The University of Washington moved into an unprecedented position in American education today by naming a rosary-carrying Tibetan lama and a former Buddhist monk to the regular university staff.... By keeping the refugees from the Asian mountain kingdom—the lama, red-robed Kunga Labrang, 58, and the monk, Nawang Nornang, 36—a new phase of teaching and research is made possible.

"I know of no other university in this hemisphere which has Tibetans on its permanent staff," said Dr. Turrell V. Wylie, assistant professor of Tibetan language and civilization.

In early 1964 Terry Wylie wrote to the other centers of Tibetan studies that had participated in the Rockefeller-funded project, announcing that the University of Washington Far Eastern and Russia Institute was

retaining as a member of our permanent staff the Sde gzhung Rin po che, the 58-year-old incarnate lama, known as Kunga Dezhung Labrang....The Sde gzhung Rin po che's profound knowledge and scholarly attitudes are well known to those of the other Centers, who have had the pleasure of meeting him or who have heard of him from those who know his abilities. In addition to collaborating with faculty members and advanced students, the Sde gzhung Rin po che is working on his own writings in the field of philosophy and culture.

Moreover, Leon Hurvitz wanted to keep Dezhung Rinpoche at the University to help with his continuing Abhidharma and other Buddhist studies.

Definite steps to keep Dezhung Rinpoche had already been taken in September 1963, when George Taylor, as chairman of the department, had approved and submitted to the University an application for Rinpoche's appointment as "foreign staff."¹⁰¹¹ In the same month Taylor wrote a letter of attestation that Dezhung Rinpoche "is employed by the University of Washington at Seattle on a regular basis."¹⁰¹² (The letter was written to support Rinpoche's attempt to bring his siblings to America as his dependents.) On December 3, waivers were applied for at the local immigration office to avoid the need for two years of foreign residence before receiving permanent resident status. Dr. Charles E. Odegaard (president of the University from 1953–1973) then wrote a strong letter of support attesting: "Mr. Labrang has been the key Tibetan informant of these research projects and is the only living informant of this caliber available to the Center of Tibetan Studies." U.S. Senator Henry Jackson (1912–1983) also wrote to lend his personal support. Four days after the granting of the waiver on January 6, Terry Wylie wrote John Boyd of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and certified Dezhung Rinpoche's qualifications: "His competency in the written and spoken language of Tibet [and] his knowledge of religious and secular matters has proven phenomenal."

The fact that the University had overlooked in their selections the younger masters from the Sakya Khön family, however, caused some further hard feelings at the time.¹⁰¹³ Dezhung Rinpoche made it clear that he would not stay in Seattle unless the others could do so.

This was a difficult time for the Sakya family. They did not know whether they would be allowed to stay at all beyond the initial three years. Terry Wylie was a bit fed up with the extended family and did not exert a

great deal of energy to prevent their return to India. But the Sakyas did *not* want to go back to India. The two youngest boys were Americans by birth, and the other three boys had adapted well to life in the United States.

To help them stay, Gene Smith scurried around, and by January 1964 he found Dagmola a job as lab technician at the King County Central Blood Bank, where he had been working. She declared at the time: "No way do I want to go back to India!"¹⁰¹⁴ Then they were able to land Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche a job with Dr. Walter A. Fairservis, Jr., at the Washington State Burke Memorial Museum on the University of Washington campus where an exhibition of Tibetan art and artifacts was planned. (Fairservis [d. 1994, Sharon, Conn.] later went on to head the Museum of Natural History in New York.) Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche was quite good as a craftsman, and he joined the project as a consultant helping make exhibits for the new museum.¹⁰¹⁵ In the meantime, Thrinlay Rinpoche was living with an Anacortes family and found work in a restaurant in LaConner, Washington.¹⁰¹⁶ Later he worked in the confectionery department of Frederick and Nelson's department store in downtown Seattle.

The Tibetans and their friends looked into the possibility of having a "private bill" passed in the U.S. House of Representatives by their local congressman, but in the end that was not necessary. A large group of friends and students signed a petition on their behalf, so they could extend their stay through the local immigration office.¹⁰¹⁷ That the Sakya family were permitted to stay also meant that Dezhung Rinpoche agreed to remain in North America.

In about August 1963, Dezhung Rinpoche and the Sakyas moved to a new house closer to the University, at 5417 21st Avenue N.E. They stayed there for about six months, and Dezhung Rinpoche continued to go to the University of Washington, usually on foot.¹⁰¹⁸ Initially he sat in a back room in the office of the Inner Asia Project, upstairs in Thompson Hall, room 203; later he shared the office of Leon Hurvitz. His official status was "Research Associate in the Inner Asia Project of the Far Eastern and Russian Institute." As long as Gene Smith was there (i.e., until summer 1964), Rinpoche continued to work chiefly with him, sometimes writing out answers to Smith's and other colleagues' questions on note cards.

Smith sometimes drove Dezhung Rinpoche to the University seated on the back of his motor scooter. Dezhung Rinpoche on certain occasions showed the gift of prescience, one of which was in connection with Smith's scooter.

When Smith had first bought the scooter, he asked Rinpoche to consecrate it, which Rinpoche did. Then one day Rinpoche came to him and warned him: “Don’t go out on your motor scooter this week. It is very dangerous!” Smith decided (in the absence of better means of transportation) to go ahead and drive it anyway, but he did ask Rinpoche for a protection cord to wear. At that time, Smith worked the 4:00 p.m. to midnight shift at the Blood Bank. One night soon after the warning, when returning home after midnight on his scooter, Smith hit a patch of slippery road caused by the water of a street-cleaning vehicle. He took a spill and ended up breaking his arm.

On other occasions, Rinpoche surprised Smith in related ways. As Smith



88. Dezhung Rinpoche posing for a photo at home. Seattle, 1967/68.

later put it: “I don’t want to sound wacky, but Rinpoche knew when you were telling a lie or avoiding telling the truth. He sometimes seemed to be able to read your mind or understand more than he normally should have. I think it was mainly just highly developed communication skills.”¹⁰¹⁹

When Dezhung Rinpoche walked to the University in the morning, he did so slowly because of his bad knee. As he walked along, he recited mantras, especially *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ*, to the people and animals he met.

During these first years in the West, Rinpoche was no doubt aware of his somewhat analogous position with the Indian Paṇḍita Smṛtijñāna, who came to Nepal and Tibet in the eleventh century but became stranded when his translator suddenly died of a violent stomach disorder. As Butön relates in his *History of Buddhism*, Smṛtijñāna, not knowing a word of Tibetan, then wandered through parts of central Tibet and for a time lived quietly in Tanak as a simple shepherd, nobody realizing that he was a great Buddhist master, until he was finally recognized and invited to teach by Dpyal Se rtsa ba Bsod nams rgyal mtshan.¹⁰²⁰ Smṛtijñāna eventually traveled on to Denma district of eastern Tibet, where at the ancient Ldan Klong thang temple he established a seminary in which he expounded Abhidharma, and he is said to have mastered the Tibetan language. Nearby, in Dezhung Rinpoche's home region of Ga, he also built a few famous stūpas. (Rinpoche later told Smṛtijñāna's life story to his American students, but in other contexts.) Rinpoche enjoyed this simple, low-key life in Seattle, and he liked not having to live on the alms of the faithful or on wealth given to the monastic community.

In 1963 and early 1964 Smith continued to report to the Inner Asia Colloquium his research findings based on his collaboration with Dezhung Rinpoche. The paper he presented to the colloquium on May 9, 1963, was entitled "Nationalism, Innovation and the Structure of Tibetan Religious Belief." Among other things, the study investigated aspects of the trulku institution in Tibet, and it included (pp. 23–24) a brief sketch of Paltrül's life. On pp. 2–3, Smith recorded his gratitude to Dezhung Rinpoche: "It is, however, Sde gzhung sprul sku Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma to whom the author is indebted not only for the bulk of the factual material but also for innumerable penetrating insights into Tibetan culture."

On July 25, 1963, Smith read another groundbreaking paper before the colloquium: "Notes on the History of the Cult of Rdo rje shugs ldan." Like the others, this paper was never published. On page 14, footnote 2, Smith records his continuing debt to Dezhung Rinpoche:

This paper could not have been written without the patient and tireless collaboration of Sde gzhung sprul sku Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma. Much of the analysis is his original thinking. He should be listed as a co-author except for the fact that his knowledge of the English language is inadequate thoroughly to check what has been written here. It would be unfair to expect him to share the responsibility for

whatever errors there might be in this paper. The credit for whatever there is of value must go to him.

On February 6, 1964, Smith read his last paper before the Inner Asia Colloquium: "The Tradition of Philology and Literary Theory in Tibetan Scholasticism." In this paper he made a preliminary investigation of the history of the spread of Sanskrit literary and grammatical traditions in Tibet. On page 1, "A Note to the Colloquium," Smith acknowledged, "Without the encyclopedic learning and lucid explanations of Sde gzhung sprul sku Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma, this research would have been impossible. It is impossible to express my appreciation to him."

In 1964, while Gene Smith was still in Seattle, the German-born Buddhologist Edward Conze (1904–1979) first visited the University of Washington, one of two visits he made during this period. As Conze related in his autobiography, during one visit

I tried to become friendly with Prof. Hellmut Wilhelm.... I also had delightful interviews with the Dezhung Rinpoche, Gene Smith interpreting. They covered not only the Maitreya chapter of the Prajñāpāramitā, for which the material had been prepared for me by Iida in Madison and which I worked up in the Wilsonian Hotel in Seattle for my article in the Renou Commemorative Volume, but also reincarnation, astrology, Buddhist history, etc. Much could be said on this.¹⁰²¹

At first, much of Conze's conversation with Dezhung Rinpoche concerned the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures and philosophy. Every time Dezhung Rinpoche would say something he agreed with, Conze would remark, "Brilliant! Brilliant!" But whenever Dezhung Rinpoche said something he did not accept, Conze would say: "Ah! A Tibetan accretion!" Conze's real interests already lay elsewhere, and the two men got along much better when they discussed such topics as visions and prognostication.¹⁰²²

In those days Smith also wrote a number of letters for Dezhung Rinpoche to notable Buddhists or men of religion. On July 28, 1964, Smith wrote on behalf of Dezhung Rinpoche to Mr. Chen-Chi Chang (translator *inter alia* of Milarepa's songs), attempting to make contact and mentioning that

Dezhung Rinpoche had been a fellow disciple of Minyak Gangkar Trulku (as had Chögyal Rinpoche, i.e., Nam mkha'i nor bu, in Rome).¹⁰²³ Rinpoche reportedly also exchanged some correspondence with the Trappist monk Thomas Merton when the latter was writing his *Desert Fathers* book with D. T. Suzuki, though no written traces survive.¹⁰²⁴

Another thing Dezhung Rinpoche did in 1964 while Gene Smith was still in Seattle was to compose at Smith's request a brief summary and completion of the Derge royal genealogy. This was published twenty-four years later by Josef Kolmaš in his article "Dezhung Rinpoche's Summary and



89. Dezhung Rinpoche with great-nephews (from left): Sadhu, Minzu, Mati, Dzaya and Ane Rinpoche. Seattle, Sakya home, ca. 1970.

Continuation of the *Sde-dge'i rgyal-rabs*.¹⁰²⁵ The full title of this short work was *Chos ldan sa skyong rgyal po sde dge'i gdung rabs kyi mtshan phreng rin chen phreng ba*. Later in 1964, Smith sent Kolmaš a photocopy of the genealogy, appending a letter dated December 14, 1964, in which he explained to Kolmaš the origins of the work. As Kolmaš later related: "[Smith] asked [Dezhung Rinpoche] to summarize a relatively difficult text in verse of the *Sde dge'i rgyal rabs* in terms of the language and style for his own studying purposes, and to supplement it with information dating from the first half of the nineteenth century to approximately the 1940s of this century." Dezhung Rinpoche's main work was thus to summarize and simplify, though he also contributed a brief original "continuation" (*kha skong*), listing the

names of the final five rulers and their principal religious teachers. Dezhung Rinpoche also wrote out from memory at Smith's request the names of the seventy-five abbots of Ngor.¹⁰²⁶

Another brief work that Dezhung Rinpoche composed for Smith was a reply concerning the *Snying thig ya bzhi* (Four Heart-Essences), the most profound cycle of four Great Perfection teachings compiled and written by Longchen Rabjampa (1308–1363). Smith had asked him about these teachings, but at first Rinpoche could not give an exact explanation, so he wrote to Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in India, who explained the matter in a letter. Dezhung Rinpoche then rewrote this reply and presented it to Smith.

Before Smith left Seattle, he and Hurvitz decided to try to organize a *Festschrift* in honor of Dezhung Rinpoche. On June 30, 1964, the two of them wrote a letter to many colleagues, soliciting contributions to this project:

As you may know, we here at the University are honored by the presence of a very learned Tibetan, the venerable Kun.dga'.bstan. pa'i.nyi.ma (Kunga Labrang), the Third Sde.gzhung.sprul.sku. The Sprul.sku fled Tibet on the occasion of the recent uprising, was for a time in India, and finally, thanks to the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation, came to Seattle in the autumn of 1960. Since his arrival here, he has been a walking encyclopedia of information, on both the civilization of his native land and on the doctrines and institutions of his religion. The undersigned in particular have benefitted from his erudition to a degree and in a manner beyond the power of words to describe.

The Sprul.sku is soon to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of his birth. In our opinion, the most fitting monument to this happy date will be a *Festschrift* consisting of scholarly pieces, dealing with any aspect of Tibetan civilization or the Buddhist religion (or both) and contributed by those persons who know or have known him, whether directly or only through correspondence. We plan this undertaking not only because it is a recognized practice in the Occident so to mark such an event, but also in order to do honor to the Sprul.sku and, through him, to the whole tradition of Tibetan Buddhist erudition, which, albeit unbeknown to most Occidentals, was very much alive in Tibet until the uprising and maintains itself vigorously even now in exile.

It is not known what the response to this letter was. Hurvitz and Smith requested contributions before March 1965, in order to present Dezhung Rinpoche with the volume on his sixtieth birthday. In any case, the felicitation volume was never published as hoped.

Surkhang Wangchen Delek

In June 1964, Dezhung Rinpoche also got to know Surkhang Wangchen Delek (b. 1910), a nobleman who had occupied the very high rank of government minister (*bka' blon*, member of the *bka' shag* council) in Tibet from 1943 to 1959.¹⁰²⁷ The fifty-four-year-old Surkhang Zhabs pad came to Seattle (accompanied by his brother Rimshi Surkhang, age fifty) from England under the sponsorship of the Inner Asia Project. His purpose in coming was to write a book on Tibetan political institutions, especially in the recent period.¹⁰²⁸

Though Surkhang did not do much religious practice, he was very learned and often met Dezhung Rinpoche on the University campus. Almost every time they met, he treated Dezhung Rinpoche to a cup of tea in the HUB ("Husky Union Building," the student union building with its canteen), telling Rinpoche: "When I die, these little deeds will be good for my next life."¹⁰²⁹ Surkhang stayed in Seattle from 1964 until 1972, when he went to Taiwan.¹⁰³⁰

Soon after Surkhang's arrival, Melvyn Goldstein, who had worked a little on Wylie's Sakya history project at the very beginning, started to work primarily with Surkhang on land tenure, education, and other topics (also gathering, for example, material for his article on the warrior monks [*ldab ldob*]). Gene Smith also worked with Surkhang a bit on Tibetan place-names and concepts.¹⁰³¹

1965

After the end of the Rockefeller Foundation money, Robert Ekvall tried to revive his "Seminar on Tibetan Society and Culture."¹⁰³² He applied for a grant from the National Science Foundation, but by the time the grant was approved and work could be resumed, it was late fall of 1965. By then most of the Sakyas had found other work. Nevertheless they did resume some meetings, though now Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, whose work schedule was most flexible, served as main informant. Ekvall, now honorary curator

of Asian Ethnology at the Thomas Burke Memorial Museum in Seattle, also did additional interviews with Dezhung Rinpoche. As he wrote:¹⁰³³

The work of the seminar had been further supplemented on the side by a number of discussion sessions with the Sde gzhung Rin po che, as an authority of impeccable standing, on the terminology, doctrinal significance, and history of pilgrimage.

About 1966, Ekvall spent a year in Switzerland doing research among the Tibetans there, supported by the National Science Foundation.¹⁰³⁴ He contributed editorials to the *Seattle Times* opinion page: "U.S. 'Open Door' to China Proposed" (November 24, 1968) and "The 'Whys' of China's Willingness to Talk to Nixon" (December 12, 1971), the second based on a memorandum written for William Kintner at the Foreign Policy Research Institute. In his retirement, Ekvall enjoyed respect as a senior China-watcher, and he was sometimes sought out by young long-haired truth-seekers, who mistook him for an expert on Tibetan mysticism.¹⁰³⁵ He lived in a cabin in the foothills of Mt. Rainier and continued to visit Dezhung Rinpoche now and then when he came to Seattle.¹⁰³⁶ He passed away in 1983 in Washington State at the age of eighty-five.

Gene Smith, the main beneficiary of Dezhung Rinpoche's first four years in Seattle, left in the late summer of 1964 for a year of studies in Holland under Professor J. W. de Jong, supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation. In 1965 Smith traveled on to Nepal and India to conduct fieldwork, planning originally to rejoin Professor de Jong, who had by then received a professorship in Australia, and to continue studies with him.

With the Sakyapas managing to stay on in Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche himself continued his religious practice at home, as well as his low-key teaching and research activities at the University, which without Gene Smith were far less active. With Leon Hurvitz, Rinpoche continued to read the *Abhidharma* and other works on Buddhist doctrine and philosophy. To one or two other students, he gave minor instruction or assistance when requested.

Hurvitz, an outstanding scholar of Buddhist studies and a sympathetic friend of Dezhung Rinpoche, nevertheless liked to make it perfectly clear to University students that he himself was no Buddhist. Once he pounded emphatically on his desk and said to one young American, "I want to read the *Abhidharma* in every language possible, but I don't believe in a single

word of it!”¹⁰³⁷ Or as he explained it to Dezhung Rinpoche: “I appreciate [the Buddhist Doctrine], but I do not believe in it” (*nga la mos pa yod la dad pa med*).¹⁰³⁸ This approach was viewed by Dezhung Rinpoche as decidedly inferior to a genuine personal engagement, but as far better than an attitude of disinterest or hostility. (A Tibetan Buddhist master could not expect to find more in this far-flung barbarian outpost of Seattle, where Buddhism—as the Tibetans knew it—had yet to take root.) Besides, Dezhung Rinpoche



90. Dezhung Rinpoche's brother and sister, Dr. Kunzang Nyima and Ane Chime, newly arrived in Seattle, ca. August 1965.

liked Hurvitz a lot. Hurvitz was also terribly fond of Rinpoche and continued to do his best to support him, to work with him, and to keep him on at the University as long as possible as a “research assistant.”

In August 1965, Dezhung Rinpoche was finally able to invite his sister, Ane Chime, and brother, Dr. Kunzang Nyima, to join him in Seattle, bringing the number of Tibetans there to a grand total of twenty-three.¹⁰³⁹ Their coming to the United States was the culmination of many efforts on Rinpoche's part, and it was accomplished partly through the help of his doctor, the internist Dr. Hagen, who acted as financial sponsor.¹⁰⁴⁰ Their arrival preceded by about one year Rinpoche's own obtaining of a “green card”

(permanent resident status) in September 1966, together with ten other refugee Tibetans, including his Sakyapa relatives and three members of the Surkhang family.¹⁰⁴¹ This was reported in a local newspaper article that stressed Terry Wylie's role in this happy conclusion:¹⁰⁴²

Looking back, the Tibetans have a big debt of gratitude to Dr. Turrell V. Wylie, associate professor of Tibetan studies at the university who selected and brought the first colony of refugees from the "Land of the Snows" here from India for two Far Eastern Department projects. He has been their chauffeur, resettlement advisor, legal aid and filler-out of hundreds of important papers, "nursemaid," protector from a sometimes overzealous public, friend, and on many an occasion—the final source on a point of Tibetan information. "Ask Tashi-la" is what many an inquiring Seattleite has been told. Tashi is the name given Wylie by Tibet's ruler in exile, the Dalai Lama.

With his siblings, Dezhung Rinpoche rented a one-bedroom apartment near the University for ninety dollars per month. It had a living room and dining room, and it stood at or near 5620 University Avenue N.E., though the building has since been torn down. He stayed there until he bought his own house on 26th Avenue N.E. in February 1971. His brother, Dr. Kunzang Nyima, had to be treated for tuberculosis immediately after his arrival, and his blind left eye (injured during a fall in India) was replaced with a glass eye. His sister had some strong initial reservations on her arrival, seeing the almost complete Americanization of the younger children. They could hardly speak Tibetan.¹⁰⁴³

During his years in America, Dezhung Rinpoche's favorite local holiday was Halloween. He loved the chance to give away a lot of candy to the swarms of strangely dressed and excited little American witches and goblins. Well before the holiday arrived, he requested his brother and sister to lay in a large supply of candy. As his apartment in the University District stood too high above the street for many children to climb all the way up and ring the doorbell, on Halloween night itself he walked down to the sidewalk and stood there in his usual Tibetan robes, saying mantras and happily handing out sweets to passing groups of children.

*Buddhist Students and Scholars in Seattle
in the Late Sixties*

AFTER THE DEPARTURE of Gene Smith, one of the first Americans to approach Dezhung Rinpoche seriously in traditional terms about receiving Buddhist teachings was John Reynolds, a graduate student who had come to Seattle from the University of California at Berkeley in the fall of 1965. Reynolds's avowed purpose in coming to Seattle and the University of Washington was to study Tibetan. With his proper shirt, necktie, and freshly trimmed hair, he was able to convince Terry Wylie to sponsor him for a Tibetan language fellowship through the government-sponsored National Defence Foreign Languages fellowship program.

Reynolds's underlying aim, however, was to learn about Buddhism and, if possible, to get instructions from an authentic lama. The other lamas in Seattle were not particularly active when he arrived, nor was he drawn to them. The Sakya family in those days gave one big New Year's party every year where all were welcome, but not much else was offered for Americans. He therefore sought out Dezhung Rinpoche.

The first teachings Reynolds requested from Dezhung Rinpoche were the Padmasambhava initiation and the text-transmission for the *sādhana*. Dezhung Rinpoche refused him at first but finally agreed to give this, and Geshe Nornang translated. Reynolds afterward translated the *sādhana* into English. Later he also received from Dezhung Rinpoche the initiations for Green Tārā in the tradition of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Avalokiteśvara in the tradition of Thangtong Gyalpo.

All this was done secretly. The professors, especially Wylie, were *not* to know.¹⁰⁴⁴

1966–1968

Another American Dharma student to show up in Seattle and introduce herself to Dezhung Rinpoche shortly thereafter, in 1966, was Michal Abrams, who had just come back from a journey to Asia. She enrolled at the University, where her main plan academically was to study Tibetan. Later she ran afoul of both Professor Wylie (who flunked her on a language-proficiency exam) and Conze (who offended her by his cynical, elitist classroom pontifications at the expense of Americans, especially contemporary American females). But before her departure, she read, in March 1968, one paper before the Inner Asia Research Colloquium,¹⁰⁴⁵ and prior to that she succeeded in setting up at the University a secret class with Dezhung Rinpoche on the famed introductory manual for Great Perfection Nying thig practice, Paltrül's *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*). They gave the class an innocuous title like "Readings in Tibetan Literature," and Geshe Nornang translated. Just the four of them participated: Dezhung Rinpoche, Geshe Nornang, John Reynolds, and Michal Abrams.

Terry Wylie was kept in the dark. Though on a personal level he had no conflict with Dezhung Rinpoche, Wylie sometimes projected an anti-Buddhist bias, at least in an official, academic setting. As he once declared later to a student who wanted to study Buddhism: "In a state university, no religion can be taught!" Someone had at the time filed a lawsuit to ban certain religious studies in state universities (such a case was indeed about to be heard before the Supreme Court). But for Wylie, this was in part also a question of intellectual principle. Like many American academics of his generation of a primarily philological or historical orientation, he felt that a scholar would necessarily lose his or her "critical objectivity" and become ideologically tainted if he or she in any way participated sympathetically in the tradition under study.

This intellectual culture of American Asian studies in the 1950s and 1960s was described by Alan Watts well before the Orientalist critiques:¹⁰⁴⁶

The academic study of "alien cultures" has its background in missionary endeavour and colonial administration. Its attitude of scientific objectivity towards them, of description without participation or enthusiasm, reflects our habitual assumption of spiritual superiority (even when we are no longer religious) and fear of "fraternizing with the natives." Thus nothing is more troublesome to a department of

anthropology than a field-worker who “goes native” and forgets to keep his mind coldly aloof. He is said to have lost his objectivity, which is actually no more than a way of describing things in accord with the metaphysical preconceptions of Western culture, so that the following of scientific methods in Asian or African studies is not necessarily a release from narrow cultural provincialism.

Terry Wylie remained his basically well-meaning though slightly enigmatic self. By now he publicly admitted to journalists his mixed feelings about the continuing presence of the Tibetans in Seattle, and not without reason. The younger generation of the Sakyapa family—the five boys—would probably not be in any position to carry on the old traditions. Their thorough Americanization was an accomplished fact. At a party Wylie witnessed one of the Sakyapa boys irreverently making fun of the sound of traditional Tibetan songs, and he saw and heard many other similar signs of their acculturation, leading him to shrug his shoulders and say “Do you wonder that I feel ambivalent about this whole project?”¹⁰⁴⁷ The opening paragraph of a local magazine article from this period echoed misgivings of the same kind.¹⁰⁴⁸

Striding across the campus in his billowing magenta robes, Trulku-la, the U. of W.’s incarnate lama, has become such a familiar figure to students that few even turn to stare. His presence not only adds enormous color but heightens the U.’s status as a center of Far Eastern studies. The 61-year-old lama was part of a small group of Tibetans brought here by the U. in 1960—with the help of some \$150,000 in federal and Rockefeller Foundation funds—to work on a three-year project to study and preserve Tibetan culture. From an academic standpoint, the Tibetan project has been an enormous success, since many aspects of Tibet’s little-known culture have been recorded for the first time. Yet, ironically, the project killed part of what it set out to preserve, for if the Tibetans remain here, as they intend to do, it is doubtful they will even be able to pass on much of their 1300-year-old cultural tradition to their own children.

At the university, the otherwise easy-going Wylie in those years demanded a strict adherence to pedantic formalities and procedures, especially from students who were studying Buddhism with personal sympathy and conviction. He regularly failed his students the first time they attempted

the M.A. Tibetan language proficiency exam. As he remarked to one student during this period, “Nobody passes my M.A. language exam on the first try, not even Gene Smith!”¹⁰⁴⁹ He did not know what to do with the new



91. “Tibet was never like this.” Dezhung Rinpoche striding across the University of Washington campus in his billowing robes.

counterculture, Buddhist-oriented students who were beginning to turn up in his classes in search of spiritual insights. He continued to say respectful things about Dezhung Rinpoche; he believed Rinpoche was truly what he claimed to be. But he could not restrain himself from making snide remarks about the new Western Buddhists. “Is there something wrong with our own culture?” he would ask. “What is this big attraction?” Usually he was relatively benign, however, and not mean-spirited.¹⁰⁵⁰

In the American universities of the late 1960s, just as in American culture as a whole, there yawned great divisions. In particular, the generational and

cultural gap between the rustic Colorado native Wylie (b. 1927, age forty in 1967) and some of the nonconformist counterculture students was huge. This was precisely the time of the great student demonstrations, building takeovers, and campus bombings: the Vietnam War was at its height, and the University of Washington campus was a hotbed of student antiwar activism. Meanwhile the administration and staff of the Department of Far Eastern and Slavic Languages were hawkish in the extreme. The grand old Cold-Warrior George Taylor (born an Englishman) was still running the department, and he enjoyed a certain limelight as a member of President Lyndon Johnson's federal advisory committee on Far Eastern affairs, running off every now and then to Washington, D.C., for consultations.¹⁰⁵¹ He was also a personal friend of the arch-hawk from western Washington State, U.S. Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson ("the senator from Boeing").

Edward Conze

This same academic department, the Department of Far Eastern and Slavic Languages headed by George Taylor, invited the renowned German scholar of Buddhism Edward Conze (1904–1979) to Seattle in the fall of 1966. One probably oversimplistic explanation for this appointment is that even it had something to do with the war effort. Few Americans had any clue about the Vietnamese Buddhist monks who in the last three years had dramatically protested the repressive measures of Diem's government through self-immolation. It was in the American national interest to try to figure them out, and it may have been an embarrassment to the department not to have a renowned Western expert on Buddhism to consult.¹⁰⁵² The very day he began officially to work, Conze claims to have been approached unsubtly by Taylor and requested to do something to support the American war effort. When asked for advice on how to succeed in the war, Conze, with unusual sagacity, suggested: "Pull out the troops as soon as possible!" (At least that is what he later recalled.)¹⁰⁵³

When Conze came to Seattle in 1966, one of the graduate students studying under Dezhung Rinpoche, John Reynolds, quickly became attracted to his approach and was befriended and "recruited" by the crotchety German academic, then in his early sixties. The two of them often stayed after class in his office to talk and have a secret bottle of beer (alcohol was forbidden on campus, except in the faculty club), after the "straight" students such as Lew Lancaster had gone home. "Don't worry about doing an M.A.; go

straight for the doctorate,” Conze advised him. In the meantime, Wylie had found out about Reynolds’s defection to Conze’s camp and was not amused.

Conze had already developed warm feelings and respect for Dezhung Rinpoche during his earlier visits to Seattle. Now his admiration continued to grow, and he sometimes exclaimed in the presence of students: “Dezhung Rinpoche is a saint!” One of Conze’s grand schemes at the time was to buy land on Orcas Island, in the San Juan archipelago north of Seattle, and found a retreat center there, to which he would invite Dezhung Rinpoche and where students could better learn Buddhism and meditation.¹⁰⁵⁴

But this was not to be. Conze was outspoken and enjoyed courting controversy. At this delicate time of unpopular foreign war and violent internal dissent, he expressed frankly in a taped interview his objections to the war being waged in Vietnam by the Americans. The interview was prematurely aired on the underground nonprofit FM radio station, KRAB. A considerable flap ensued. An investigation of Conze’s status by the immigration service allegedly followed, which compounded his already existing visa difficulties.

Conze—by all accounts a critical, opinionated, and outspoken man—formed a poor opinion of most Tibetans he met in the West, considering them to be excessively vulnerable to the follies of Western civilization. But he was struck by Dezhung Rinpoche and considered him a great exception and “a nugget of pure gold.”¹⁰⁵⁵ In the summer of 1966, Conze prepared the final typescript for his *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature*. As he wrote in his memoirs (part 2, p. 134) “The final touches were carried out at the University of Washington where I had the good fortune to enjoy the help of my friend and colleague, Prof. Leon Hurvitz, as well as that of the Third Dezhung Rinpoche for the Tibetan terms. They removed numerous minor errors, almost unaffected by the huge noisy cranes which were then refashioning the campus.... I was in a state of perpetual irritation, though the Rinpoche was too calm to notice anything at all.” On page iii of the preface to his *Materials*, which he wrote that year, Conze stated further: “In view of the uncertainties of the Tibetan orthography I was also fortunate in being able to discuss hundreds of words with the third Dezhung Rinpoche, who has patiently eliminated a good many scribal errors.”

Already in the fall of 1967, Conze was expecting that his visa would not be granted. He wrote letters in October and November to George Taylor,

referring in one to the likelihood that the applied-for waivers would not be approved and recommending that the department hire his student Luis Gomez (later Ph.D. from Yale) as assistant professor in order to maintain continuity in the Buddhist studies program. In December he wrote a glowing letter in support of Wylie's promotion to full professor.¹⁰⁵⁶ In May 1968, he began to make noises that George Taylor (then on leave) had been conspiring to delay and hinder his pending application for a waiver of the two-year requirement of residence abroad before receiving permanent-resident status. The alleged reason: Conze's former membership in the Communist Party in Germany from 1929 to 1933.

Conze's suspicions were first made public in a front-page article in the University's student newspaper *The Daily* on May 15, 1968, under the headlines: "Indic Studies Prof. Facing Deportation." Here Conze voiced the opinion: "The U.S. involvement in Vietnam and the hawkish stand Taylor has taken concerning the war are the direct reasons for the failure of the department [i.e., of Conze's planned Indic Studies doctoral program] to become reality."¹⁰⁵⁷ His students circulated petitions and wrote supportive letters to *The Daily*.¹⁰⁵⁸

Did Conze's fears have any substance? The University officials handling of Conze's case claimed they had until then had no idea about his political past or his present antiwar stance. Certainly he was never in danger of actually being "deported," and he still had many avenues of appeal open to him.¹⁰⁵⁹

Conze left the United States for Canada on June 15, 1968, at the end of the academic year, and never again returned to Seattle.¹⁰⁶⁰ Probably he had much else to say about his experiences in Seattle and Dezhung Rinpoche.¹⁰⁶¹

What kind of impression did Conze make on Dezhung Rinpoche and the other Tibetans? His brash and outspoken ways were not received much better by the Tibetans than they had been by the Americans. The Tibetans thought that he acted too proudly for someone supposed to be so learned. When Conze arrived and let it be known that he had studied the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature for over thirty years, Dezhung Rinpoche expected some really difficult questions and was a bit apprehensive. But Conze asked little of any deep significance, and later Dezhung Rinpoche remarked, "There was not much reason to be afraid."¹⁰⁶² Dezhung Rinpoche took Conze to be an example of what happens when one studies Buddhism in a primarily intellectual way, without the guidance of a competent practicing master.

Sometimes, too, sheer mutual incomprehension cropped up between

Dezhung Rinpoche and Conze, caused by the language gap and differences in their scholarly priorities. Once Conze showed Rinpoche the scriptural passage telling the story of Rtag tu ngu, the bodhisattva who always wept. Conze seemed to be insisting: “Instead of Rtag tu ngu, the text here reads



92. Dezhung Rinpoche with Dagmola behind the Sakya home. Seattle, summer 1968.

Rtag tu du!” The characters for *ngu* and *du* look similar and are often mistaken in the Peking edition, which they then were consulting. Perhaps Conze was simply trying to point out such a case, and probably Dezhung Rinpoche was automatically correcting it from *du* to the only acceptable reading here, *ngu*. Conze did not manage to get his main point across, whatever it had been, and the Tibetans were puzzled that a man who had studied these scriptures for so many years would be troubled by such a small thing.¹⁰⁶³

Conze sometimes liked to tease Rinpoche in a straight-faced way. Once he found at the beginning of a certain Tibetan xylograph a depiction of the Indian master Vasubandhu. He made a photostat of this and handed it over to Rinpoche with the claim “I, Edward Conze, am the reincarnation of Vasubandhu.” Upon close inspection, the Tibetan wood-carved depiction of Vasubandhu did in fact bear a remarkable resemblance to Conze.¹⁰⁶⁴

Conze once asked Dezhung Rinpoche to compose a general exposition of meditative practice as found among three major traditions of Tibet. The result was one of Dezhung Rinpoche's most interesting and important works, *The Transmitted Instructions of Learned Masters* (*Mkhas pa'i zhal lung*, the full title of which was *Nges don phyag rdzogs dbu gsum gyi lta sgom gyi gnad mdor bsdus 'khrul bral legs bshad mkhas pa'i zhal lung*). This small book of fifty-two pages, which Rinpoche himself wrote out in *dbu can* script and had mimeographed at the university, summarized the vital points of the theory and meditation practiced by the Mahāmudrā, Great Perfection, and Madhyamaka systems of the main Tibetan Buddhist schools. In the colophon (p. 52), Dezhung Rinpoche refers to Doctor Conze (*sbra brab kam 'dzi*) as the person who had encouraged him to write the work, describing him as one who "is well disposed toward the philosophical tenets of Buddhism and who possesses an intellect that had long studied the basic texts of the Prajñāpāramitā" (*sangs rgyas pa'i grub mtha' la mos shing/ shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i gzhung la yun ring sbyangs pa'i blo gros dang ldan pa*). Dezhung Rinpoche's contacts with Conze in the 1960s were thus not at all unfruitful.¹⁰⁶⁵

After Dr. Conze's departure, Dezhung Rinpoche's old friend Leon Hurvitz was the main person at the University who continued to work with him, at least until about 1971, when Hurvitz left for a position at the University of British Columbia. An article in the U.W. *Daily* student newspaper of July 28, 1967, "Tibetan Lama Assists in Far East Research" (p. 37), reported: "Since that [Rockefeller-funded] program's expiration, he has remained in the Far East Department and is presently aiding Dr. Leon Hurvitz in translation of Buddhist scriptures from Tibetan to English, among other projects." The last paragraph of the article may reveal Dezhung Rinpoche's own plans at that time:

Because of the political situation in his country, it is doubtful that the Rinpoche, who is 62, will return to Tibetan monastery life. He most likely will continue with research in the department until his retirement and remain a resident of Seattle.

During this period Dezhung Rinpoche also compiled many cards on Tibetan scholastic terminology, mostly in connection with the Abhidharma. This was probably part of his work with Hurvitz.¹⁰⁶⁶

Now and then Dezhung Rinpoche was asked to attend a public function,

such as in January 1968, when he was invited to address a meeting of the Seattle Astrological Association. As the *Seattle Times* columnist Don Duncan reported a few days later:¹⁰⁶⁷

There must have been quite a few at a meeting of the Seattle Astrological Association here the other night who lump astrology with crystal balls and tea-leaf readings. Nonetheless, they were delighted to hear Mr. Kunga Labrang, former head of one of Tibet's largest monasteries [*sic*]. All—believer and non-believer—went away knowing a little bit more about the mountain people who have woven astrology into their religion and who believe someday they will return to the land taken from them by the Red Chinese.

Mr. Labrang, a wise and gentle man, was garbed in Tibetan robes. Throughout the meeting he mumbled prayers (he recites 10,000 a day) and smiled sagely. Mr. Labrang's niece, Mrs. Damola Sakyapa, translated from Tibetan into English.

Mr. Labrang listed some typical "signs." Friday is a good day on which to be born. One is better off undertaking new ventures early in the month. Even numbered days contain more pitfalls than odd-numbered ones.

Mr. Labrang said he was in his third reincarnation and had been a learned lama (priest) in his past life. Asked to predict, on the basis of astrology, when his people might return to their country, Mr. Labrang replied, "Not for many years." The return of the Tibetans would follow a huge and terrible war—"but that war will not occur soon."

There was a big sigh in the room, followed by pleased and knowing smiles. The wise elder statesman of Seattle's Tibetan community (twenty-six persons) had spoken.

At the University, the times continued to be unsettled: The protests against the Vietnam war were growing more and more vocal. During 1969–1970, Thompson Hall was seized by antiwar students and occupied for several hours. Part of the Administration Building was blown up by a protest bomber. But Dezhung Rinpoche seems not to have been perturbed.

A certain change in attitude toward the Sakyapas had also taken place among some of the more sophisticated Americans at the University in the

late 1960s. According to them, the problem was not that the Tibetans were not learning English and American culture fast enough, but that the adaptation was going too fast, so that the complete assimilation of the youngest generation was inevitable. This was brought out in a local magazine article (*Seattle Magazine*, February 1967), which recalled with regret some aspects of the early local reception of the Tibetans:

Although they could speak no English when they arrived, the Sakyapas were quickly surrounded by well-meaning admirers. "Some of the visitors were terribly condescending," recalls Dr. Walter A. Fairservis, Jr., director of the U[niversity of Washington]'s Burke Museum, who still grimaces at the memory of newspaper pictures showing nice ladies teaching the Tibetans how to use stoves and refrigerators. "Even worse," he goes on, "were the Hollywood Tibetans—the Americans who started wearing Tibetan clothes and making the lotus sign [?] when they entered the Sakyapa household." Worst of all, though, were the would-be missionaries from Seattle's more aggressive churches who harassed the Tibetans with constant efforts to proselytize them. The Sakyapas endured these encounters with unflinching patience and courtesy.

The message was now that Americanization was the family's worst long-term enemy. However well meant and accurate this assessment may have been from certain points of view, it still embodied the attitude that the Americans knew better and that they could decide what was best for the Tibetans. Meanwhile, the oldest generation of Tibetans, namely, Dezhung Rinpoche and his siblings, hardly underwent any adaptation to America at all. The same magazine article ended by reporting:

Strangely enough, it is Trulku-la who seems least concerned about his family's Americanization. When a young reporter, fascinated by the lama's talk of reincarnation, asked him if he knew where he would be reborn the next time, Trulku-la nodded. "Right here in America," he said. As the reporter was faithfully copying down the reply, the old man burst into gales of laughter. Nobody really ever *knew* about things like that, Trulku-la then explained seriously: All he meant was that he *hoped* it would be so.

Final Years at the University

LIFE WENT ON at its usual steady pace for Dezhung Rinpoche, with his own intense round of daily personal meditative practices as his interior life and the low profile he kept vis-à-vis the outside world. During the mid- to late 1960s, he did not give much religious instruction, one of the main reasons being, as before, that Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Trinlay Rinpoche were close by and he politely deferred to their superior position. Even the local Tibetans were rarely taught by him. He did, however, receive requests from both the Surkhang nobles and the Yuthok Sa dbang for Buddhist teachings. In the late 1960s or early 1970s, he taught the ninth chapter of Śāntideva's classic *Bodhicaryāvatāra* to Yuthok and bestowed the initiation for Avalokiteśvara on Surkhang Zhabs pad. These were later counted among his earlier Buddhist activities in America.¹⁰⁶⁸ But they were a transplanted extension of Tibetan traditional life; they played no role in the transmission of Buddhism to North America.

During the mid-1960s, Dezhung Rinpoche also received a number of visits from the Tibetan historian Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa (1908–1989), nobleman and former treasury secretary in Tibet.¹⁰⁶⁹ Shakabpa was trying to finish the English version of his political history of Tibet, entitled *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), working with T. V. Wylie to produce an acceptable final English text.¹⁰⁷⁰ Dezhung Rinpoche shared his knowledge of numerous historical events with Shakabpa in the course of many long conversations. Shakabpa eagerly noted down much of what he was told, but in the published book did not mention any help from Dezhung Rinpoche (nor, for that matter, from any other Tibetan scholar, except his friend T. D. Densapa in Sikkim).¹⁰⁷¹ Radha Chime Rinpoche, an old friend of Dezhung Rinpoche then in London, noticed the lack of

acknowledgments when Shakabpa's book appeared and asked Dezhung Rinpoche about it. Rinpoche just smiled and said, "That's not important. It really doesn't matter."¹⁰⁷²

1969

For a number of years, Dezhung Rinpoche had continued to have problems with his knee. When he walked to school, he had to rest often, and he usually broke his journey by sitting down to rest on the same patch of grass before a family house. The owners of the house saw him pausing there every day and, not wanting him to get damp from the lawn, put out a chair for him to sit on.

Friends of the Sakya family recommended the possibility of seeing a joint specialist to discuss orthopedic surgery. Through the internist Dr. Hagen, who had treated Rinpoche's shoulder problem, Dagmo Kusho learned of the orthopedic surgeon Dr. Mooney at Swedish Hospital, who examined him and thought there was a good chance surgery might correct the problem.

Dezhung Rinpoche followed Tibetan astrology closely, scheduling his travels and other activities accordingly, so he was disturbed to learn that they had scheduled his knee operation for a Wednesday (traditionally a bad day for undertaking something important for those born in a horse year). When he informed the hospital that he considered it a bad day, he received the reply, "We've scheduled it for three weeks already, and it is difficult to change." Out of politeness Dezhung Rinpoche decided to go along with it.

The first operation, on April 24, 1969, was not successful. Evidently the kneecap was placed too low. They had to try a second time, but this, too, failed. The whole joint became calcified. Rinpoche stayed in the hospital a total of forty-two days, mainly treated by Dr. Mooney. He finally returned home on June 3. Not all expenses of the long hospital stay were borne by his medical policy at the University—about six thousand dollars had to be paid by Rinpoche himself. The consequence of the failed operation was that his knee joint was frozen in an extended position: he could no longer bend that knee. Never again would he be able to sit in the normal cross-legged yoga position.

Some of Rinpoche's acquaintances said that the operation had gone wrong because of the doctor's mistake. Perhaps he could even sue for malpractice

and win a lot of money, they said. But Rinpoche would not hear a word of this. "This is due to my own past deeds," he stated. "I must repay them."

The doctor who had treated him, Dr. Mooney, died a few months later of cancer. "His merit was exhausted," explained Dezhung Rinpoche afterward, believing that this had also influenced the outcome of his own surgery. He sent a large bouquet of flowers to the doctor's widow in condolence.¹⁰⁷³

Dezhung Rinpoche later recalled that Lekpa Rinpoche had predicted trouble with his knee later in life, adding, "Actually, it is a good thing. Before that happened, I liked to go walking around more, visiting people, attending social functions, and so on. But now I'm forced to sit and practice!"¹⁰⁷⁴

In July 1970, Leon Hurvitz went to Vancouver for a part-time position at the University of British Columbia. Beginning in summer 1971, Hurvitz left the University of Washington for a permanent position in Vancouver, though he regularly visited Dezhung Rinpoche on his frequent subsequent visits to Seattle.

During 1969–1972, two younger Tibetans—both nominally "lamas"—were in Seattle, and both struck up close relations with Dezhung Rinpoche. One was Tashi T. Densapa ("Barmiok Rinpoche"), son of Barmiok Athing of Sikkim. The other was Thubten rgya mtsho (b. 1944), younger brother of the Jyekundo Dra'u chieftain, Rinchen Tsering.

Tashi Densapa was a first cousin of Dagchen Rinpoche (their mothers were sisters), and he ended up staying four years (1968 to 1972) in Washington State. He first came to Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma with a fellowship to study public finance and administration at the graduate level.¹⁰⁷⁵ After Densapa completed his M.A. there, Terry Wylie suggested he do a second M.A. in Tibetan studies at the University in Seattle. Densapa spent a lot of time with Dezhung Rinpoche, visiting him almost every day, reading various works with his assistance, and helping him by translating when American visitors came. He was enrolled as an M.A. student of Tibetan at the University under Wylie's supervision. Sometimes he brought other students to Rinpoche who needed his assistance, as in early January 1971, when he brought John Ardussi, who had questions about the biography of the Bhutanese mad saint Drukpa Kun legs. Densapa was writing a thesis on the historical work *The New Red Annals* of Pañchen Bsod nams grags pa, and for this he received many detailed explanations from Rinpoche. Then one day in March 1972, Wylie suddenly informed Densapa that his own guru, Tucci in Rome, had just published the same text with

English translation.¹⁰⁷⁶ Thus Densapa had to drop that project and shift his topic to a short biography of the great Sakya master Phakpa Rinpoche (1235–1280).¹⁰⁷⁷

John Ardussi

John Ardussi, the graduate student introduced to Dezhung Rinpoche by Tashi Densapa, had actually come to know Rinpoche from a distance a few years earlier. Afterward he had the chance to study regularly for about a year with Rinpoche. As Ardussi later reminisced:¹⁰⁷⁸

As a history undergraduate in the mid-1960s, I lived in a rented house several miles northeast of the University of Washington. On one corner in this quiet suburb stood a large, older home which in those days was called Sakya House, because many of the Sakya family lived there when they first came to Seattle. Driving by this house on summer mornings often presented the surprising sight of an old Tibetan lama, seated in the front lawn saying prayers on his rosary. I wonder now if it wasn't this vision of Dezhung Rinpoche, meditating on the lawn, which eventually led me to the study of Tibetan.

During those years, Thompson Hall was still home to the Department of Asian Languages and Literature and also the Far Eastern and Russian Institute. To Ardussi it seemed that there was a pecking order in the assignment of offices: while the teachers of mainstream languages (i.e., Chinese and Japanese) were comfortably ensconced on the first and second floors of Thompson Hall, the remote fourth floor was where they put most of the “exotic” language instructors, including Professor Leon Hurvitz. As Ardussi recalled:¹⁰⁷⁹

Dr. Hurvitz was one of the unsung colorful characters of that era and was a polymath of arcane Buddhist languages. During the mid-1960s he was working with Dezhung Rinpoche on Abhidharma texts, but his hearing was bad and he stuttered. As an undergraduate, I was in awe of the legendary Dr. Hurvitz, and we seldom spoke (though we later became good friends). His office door always stood open, but when you looked inside all you could see was racks of books, no

human beings. Yet, every day as I passed that doorway, from somewhere behind the books came the disembodied voice of Dr. Hurvitz conversing loudly in broken Tibetan with Dezhung Rinpoche, whose own distinctive and melodic voice I later came to know well.

In about 1968, Ardussi began his M.A. research. He wanted a topic involving native Tibetan literature. Steve Beyer, then a visiting professor in Tibetan, suggested that he work on the biography of Drukpa Kunley. With Professor R. A. Stein's assurance from Paris that his own forthcoming study would only cover the first of the four-volume Drukpa Kunley biography, Ardussi began to translate volume two.

This task proved arduous, as the language was full of colloquial wordplay and earthy vocabulary not found in any dictionary. Upon returning from sabbatical in Italy, Professor Wylie therefore arranged for Ardussi to work with Dezhung Rinpoche, whose knowledge of Tibetan literature was reputed to be unsurpassed among the Tibetans in Seattle. Ardussi began this part of his research with great anticipation and no small trepidation. He had not yet met Rinpoche formally until then, and Tashi Densapa kindly accompanied him on the introductory visit. As Ardussi recalled:¹⁰⁸⁰

Dezhung Rinpoche and his inseparable brother, Dr. Kunzang Nyima, lived in an older two-storey home on University Way, about twelve blocks north of the University. [At the time of my visit,] the weather was typical Seattle October, cold and rainy. I was introduced, and we sat in the front room on Tibetan rugs and cushions, sipping tea. There stood an elegant but modest altar on one side, with several butter lamps, a few images, and some Tibetan books in cloth wrappings. Beautiful thangkas adorned the room, which was illuminated only by the butter lamps and winter daylight filtering through the leaded glass front window. The air hung with the sweet, pungent smell of Tibetan incense. Rinpoche smiled and cracked some jokes about Drukpa Kunley, and everyone laughed. I absorbed the ambiance and searched my student vocabulary for suitable Tibetan words to make small talk. This was my first day.

I studied with Rinpoche for about one year. The atmosphere was always warm and friendly, and Kunzang Nyima served sweet tea and biscuits. The pattern came to be that I would work through as

many folios as I could on my own, then meet once weekly with Rinpoche for about two hours. I would recite a section of the text, then stop to go back through the difficult parts. Sometimes I would ask Rinpoche to write down his explanations, and he even drew a few sketches.

His knowledge of *lha chos* ["divine religion," i.e., Buddhism] and *mi chos* ["human religion," i.e., folk traditions] seemed equally vast. Though a Sakya monk, he could recite from memory, in correct order, such rarified information as the names of the "nine hierarchs of the Drukpa sect named Lion," who reigned at Ralung monastery during the 13th–14th centuries

Rinpoche was a mine of information about obscure Tibetan words and metaphors. A "red fox" (*wa dmar po*) turned out to be a derogatory term for the crafty servants of the Tibetan nobility, who wore a characteristic red garment. A *byab lo* was explained as "the seductive speech of girls who had fallen in love with Drukpa Kunley and who wished to entice him into having sex."

Dezhung Rinpoche had taken vows to repeat certain prayers [or mantras] many times a day. All the while as we worked, he would chant softly while counting off the prayers on his rosary. Reaching the end of a cycle, his voice would rise slightly as his hand flipped the string of amber beads to begin counting once again. It amazed me how he could concentrate on both tasks at once. I knew when we were onto a truly difficult (or amusing!) part of the biography, because it was only then that the chanting would briefly pause while he read.

Dr. Kunzang Nyima was Rinpoche's constant attendant and a humorous character in his own right. He was a handsome monk, with shaven head and long mustache, and he knew a few words of English. I remember one occasion in particular, shortly after we began our work together. I was looking for information on the Tibetan term *khan pa*, a kind of herb. Kunzang Nyima's elaborate explanation of the plant and its medical applications escaped me. Suddenly, he jumped up and ran out the front door, beckoning me to follow. About four inches of fresh snow lay on the ground. But Kunzang Nyima, pulling up his red monk's robes, jumped the hedge and ran through the gardens of several neighbors, sweeping snow off

bushes and pulling leaves in a fruitless search for *khan pa*. I was sure this would bring out unwanted neighborhood dogs, if not eventually the police.

Richard Sherburne, S.J.

Another graduate student from the University whom Dezhung Rinpoche helped during this period was Richard Sherburne (b. March 29, 1926), a Jesuit priest originally trained in classical philology who later became interested in Indian philosophy, Buddhism, and Tibetan. After teaching classical languages and doing four years of administrative work at Marquette University as dean of students, Sherburne wanted to earn a doctorate. He proposed to his superiors that he study Buddhist classical languages and showed them that there had been a long-standing Jesuit interest in Tibet. Telling his superiors, "This should only take a few years," he left for India in summer 1968 and began studying Sanskrit and Tibetan while also teaching at St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling. (He had already had a lot of contact with Darjeeling Jesuits at Marquette.) After some difficulties staying in India, he returned to the U.S. and started his studies at the University of Washington in late 1969.¹⁰⁸¹

Dezhung Rinpoche worked with Sherburne over the course of many years on his translation of Atiśa's *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* (*Byang chub lam sgron*), which was the topic of both his master's thesis (1972) and his Ph.D. dissertation (1976).¹⁰⁸² They also read Tsongkhapa's *Lesser Stages of the Path* (*Lam rim chung ngu*) together, meeting at Rinpoche's home once a week and occasionally twice, if Rinpoche had time.¹⁰⁸³ Sometimes, as Rinpoche and Sherburne were reading, young people of a "hippie" appearance would ring at the door. Such visitors were always cordially received and allowed to sit in the corner in rapture.¹⁰⁸⁴

Sherburne's studies under Dezhung Rinpoche were also the subject of a 1971 *Seattle Times* article by Julie Emery, who wrote:¹⁰⁸⁵

The Rev. Richard Sherburne, S.J., does part of his University of Washington classwork at the feet of a Tibetan lama. The colorful East-West gathering of scholar-clergymen takes place twice weekly when Father Sherburne, seated on a floor cushion in the cross-legged "lotus" position, reads from difficult Buddhist canonical works with

Lama Kunga Labrang. The meeting of minds is part of Father Sherburne's academic work for a seminar in Tibetan Buddhist literature. A former dean of students and professor of Greek at Marquette University, the Roman Catholic priest is on leave from the Milwaukee school to get a degree in Tibetan.

Why the floor position? "I'm more comfortable that way," Father Sherburne, 44, explained. "It's the way I study myself. Besides, I really do respect the man's knowledge and wisdom. He's a marvelous teacher—there's no doubt about that. He's very patient and utterly simple in his explanations, yet precise. He's brilliant and profound and a very holy man."¹⁰⁸⁶ Lama Labrang also has a deep respect for the priest, one of his most promising students

Lama Labrang, whose prayer beads constantly are in use during the classwork, will be 66 on Sunday. Because Ford Foundation funds are running low in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature, he will be dropped from the university payroll at the end of June.¹⁰⁸⁷

Once Sherburne wanted to write out the praises of Tārā. He asked Rinpoche to help him with this. The latter asked Ane Chime to bring in a basin of water. After he had washed his face and hands, Rinpoche proceeded to chant the complete praises from memory.

Dezhung Rinpoche gave Sherburne the Tibetan name Blo gros chos 'byor and addressed several auspicious verses to him, such as when Sherburne received his doctorate. Sherburne generously paid tuition to Dezhung Rinpoche for his private help, but the latter was reluctant to accept it.¹⁰⁸⁸ Sherburne later recollected about Dezhung Rinpoche: "When my father died—he was in his nineties—I discussed this with Rinpoche. I felt this man had utmost sensitivity to what I was feeling. When I would come in feeling a little down, I had the feeling that he could almost read my mind or heart." And further: "Usually with a Tibetan monk you feel they are so disciplined that they don't have the same emotional responses. But I always felt with Dezhung Rinpoche, 'He empathizes with me.' He had a great sense of humor as well. I would always come away feeling strengthened and reassured."¹⁰⁸⁹

Sherburne had strong ecumenical leanings and could sense a similar orientation in Rinpoche. For instance, when Rimshi Surkhang died at age fifty-seven in mid-August 1970, at the Surkhang home in the Ballard/Greenwood district of Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche was quickly called there

to perform the last rites.¹⁰⁹⁰ Just an hour or so after Surkhang's passing, Sherburne also came by the Surkhang residence, as was his usual habit. (During the early years in Seattle, Sherburne also served as the Sunday priest at St. Anne's Mission on the Tulalip Indian Reservation forty miles north of Seat-



93. "Priest studies with Tibetan lama." Dezhung Rinpoche instructing the Rev. Richard Sherburne.

tle, and every week on his way back south he would visit Rimshi Surkhang, who was dying of cancer.) When Sherburne arrived this time, Rinpoche was already there, reciting the ritual text for the deceased. A Tibetan woman who was also present thought it would be best if Sherburne—still in his clerical collar—left. But Dezhung Rinpoche put his hand on Sherburne's arm and insisted that he stay, continuing to read the text for the dead man. "I always felt that Dezhung Rinpoche was beyond organized religion or dogmatic religion, that he was a truly spiritual man," Sherburne said later. "[To him] it didn't matter what people called themselves or what religion they professed."¹⁰⁹¹

1971

On February 1, 1971, Dezhung Rinpoche moved into his newly purchased house at 6202 26th Avenue N.E. in Seattle. He named the house “Auspicious Island for Attaining Highest Immortality” (*Bkra shis ’chi med mchog grub gling*). The house was located four blocks from the main Sakya family house of his niece, which meant it was still within walking range for him if he hobbled along slowly with a cane. His one regret was that this house was located at the bottom of a hill and did not have a territorial view to speak of.

One of Dezhung Rinpoche’s American students who turned up in the period 1971–1972 was Mark Tatz, who had originally come to Seattle in the autumn of 1968 to pursue an M.A. in Buddhist and Tibetan studies. Tatz studied formally with Dezhung Rinpoche only during the 1971/72 academic year, which was the last year of Rinpoche’s connection to the University as a research assistant. When Tatz began his tutorial, Rinpoche presented him with a list of possible titles for study—all basic treatises of Indian Buddhism. Tatz selected the *Abhidharmakośa*, and Rinpoche complimented his choice. Meeting once a week, they finally finished the first book, which dealt with the “psychophysical aggregates” (*skandha*). To do this, they continued reading through the summer, at Rinpoche’s suggestion.¹⁰⁹²

Dezhung Rinpoche and Tatz sat at Rinpoche’s dining-room table and for the first month or so were joined by Tashi Densapa, who came to volunteer oral translation help for Tatz. After a while he stopped coming when he saw that the two had worked out their own modes of communication.

Dezhung Rinpoche knew the basic text by heart and also a number of commentaries. Rinpoche had before him a text of the verses with auto-commentary, but he did not refer to it often. He would ask which line of verse they had reached, and then he would recite the rest of the verse from memory. For his explanations he drew upon Tibetan commentaries. The explanations he gave were wide-ranging, incorporating not only exegesis of the text, but also comparative philosophy (*grub mtha’*). In asides, frequently written out by hand, he expounded technical terms and concepts—for example, the ten meanings of the term *dharma* (Tib. *chos*). He knew many Sanskrit technical terms.

Rinpoche’s teachings were generally accompanied by the hum of his mantras told on his rosary. Tatz could tell he had asked a good question when Rinpoche would stop momentarily to formulate his reply.

To Tatz's surprise, Dezhung Rinpoche expressed satisfaction once when Tatz questioned a difference between a statement in the commentary several pages back and the basic text. While Tatz leafed back through his typescript, Rinpoche said, "Yes, it goes such and such. The reason for the apparent contradiction is so and so. That's very good of you to notice!" He noticed approvingly when Tatz made progress with his spoken Tibetan, commending him, for instance, for using a more sophisticated grammatical construction for the first time. He must have felt constrained by the limitations of language when communicating with American students and scholars.¹⁰⁹³

*Beginnings of a Public Buddhist Teaching
Career in North America*

DURING THE 1960s, Dezhung Rinpoche had been approached by several Americans for the vows of Buddhist refuge and other religious teachings, but in most cases he had refused, preferring to send them, if they were really interested in studying and practicing Buddhism, to the great lamas then living in India and Nepal. But by 1971, things began to change. More and more North American students who had come into contact with the Dharma in India began returning to live in Seattle or nearby.¹⁰⁹⁴ The lamas in North America were also becoming more active, and major Tibetan Buddhist masters were beginning to make teaching tours in the West and found centers for Buddhist teaching and practice.

In December 1971, one of Dezhung Rinpoche's old acquaintances from Ngor, Lama Kunga (Thartse Shabdrung Kunga Gyurme, b. 1935), came with his students Janet Gyatso and Tom Trabin from Kensington, California, to visit Rinpoche.¹⁰⁹⁵ They arrived on December 18, and that night Dezhung Rinpoche dreamt of a great snowfall. The following day the visitors requested Rinpoche to give them refuge and one-day fasting (*gso sbyong*) vows, but Dezhung Rinpoche refused. He suggested that they request Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche for these teachings. Lama Kunga replied, "But we came to see you," and they all were disappointed. Dezhung Rinpoche was hesitant about what to do. Finally he agreed to impart the vows, though with some lingering reluctance. When all the preparations had been made and the ceremony was just getting underway, they heard loud knocking at the door.

"Who is it?" Rinpoche asked.

One of the students went to the door and found a strange-looking woman trying to peddle fruit door-to-door, of all things.

"It's someone selling fruit," the student reported to Rinpoche, somewhat annoyed by this unexpected delay and wanting to return to the ceremony as quickly as possible.

But Dezhung Rinpoche had glimpsed the woman and insisted on knowing what she wanted. When he learned she was selling fruit, he was delighted and invited her to come inside. He wanted to see all her wares and took a long time about it, ending up buying a lot of fruit. When the woman at last left, he proclaimed triumphantly to his students that her appearance at just that moment was a sure sign that they would achieve the excellent "fruit" of the vows. He was ecstatically happy for some time.

The following day, he bestowed upon them the meditation transmission for the meditation of Avalokiteśvara in the *'Gro don kun khyab* tradition of Thangtong Gyalpo. This was one of the first times he had agreed openly to confer such teachings upon Americans, and it marked the beginning of a new phase in his career in North America, in that he taught more and more openly.¹⁰⁹⁶ Lama Kunga and his students stayed several days and were very attracted to Dezhung Rinpoche. Lama Kunga slept downstairs (in Kunzang Nyima's basement bedroom) and was awakened in the morning by the sounds of the Ngor-tradition prayer of tea-offering booming down the stairwell from where Dezhung Rinpoche was sitting at the table in the little kitchen above.¹⁰⁹⁷

In March 1972, Dezhung Rinpoche received cards and letters from the Tharlam monastery monks in India, in which the monks expressed their hopes that he would help found a new Tharlam temple for them in India. The previous autumn (on November 30, 1971), he had also received a letter from the Tharlam monk Jamyang Sherab, asking him to come back to India and reestablish a monastic center there.

In the spring of 1972, the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, Karma rang byung kun khyab (1905–1989), came to Vancouver, Canada, during his first world teaching tour.¹⁰⁹⁸ He started a small Tibetan Buddhist center there, which became his main seat in North America.¹⁰⁹⁹ Lobsang Phuntshog Lhalungpa (b. 1926), then a Vancouver resident, acted as his translator. Dezhung Rinpoche sent his brother Kunzang Nyima as his representative to pay his respects to Kalu Rinpoche. Tashi Densapa and Dra'u Thubten also went to Vancouver and met the great master. On March 22 they returned to Seattle, bringing gifts of books, tea, and so forth for both Dezhung Rinpoche and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche.

Both Dezhung Rinpoche and Tashi Densapa then urged Mark Tatz to go to Vancouver to meet Kalu Rinpoche, which he did. Tatz returned from Vancouver and on April 21 visited Dezhung Rinpoche, informing him that he had taken refuge and bound himself also to two points of the Buddhist lay precepts. Rinpoche expressed his pleasure at Tatz's becoming a Buddhist and shook his hand. Tatz then requested Rinpoche to bestow upon him the bodhisattva vows. Rinpoche did not agree at once; he explained to Tatz that over the years he had only performed such a religious ceremony for three Americans.¹¹⁰⁰



94. Kalu Rinpoche.
Photograph from the 1970s.

To Tatz's third request over the course of several weeks, Rinpoche responded by setting a date at noon. They had lunch, as Rinpoche urged Tatz to fortify himself. Dr. Kunzang Nyima assisted and participated. The ceremony was brief, but at the end they recited three times the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna*) from the *Avatamsaka* sūtra collection.¹¹⁰¹

In the spring of 1972, at age "sixty-five" (actually he was sixty-six), Dezhung Rinpoche officially retired from teaching and research work at the University. He began receiving a small monthly retirement benefit: he had taught for only nine years, from 1963 to 1972, and his original salary had

not been high. To cover the monthly expenses of his household (which included a \$200-per-month house payment), his brother and sister had both gone to work. Ane Chime worked eight hours a day, five days a week (Mondays through Fridays) in a small sewing factory in Chinatown. Kunzang Nyima worked the remaining two days of the week (Saturdays and Sundays) at the University of Washington Hospital, caring for laboratory animals, including dogs and monkeys, that had been subjected to various medical experiments. The siblings' work schedule thus allowed someone to be in the house with Rinpoche each day.

In the summer of 1972, Janet Gyatso came again to Seattle to read with Dezhung Rinpoche the *Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions* (*S nang gsum mdzes rgyan*) introductory manual to the *Path with Its Fruit* by Könchok Lhündrup. She stayed with Rinpoche for seven weeks (July 17 to August 26). As she later recollected:¹¹⁰²

Dezhung Rinpoche was a very enthusiastic person, with a glowing face. He listened carefully to whatever anyone said, interpreting and remarking on its significance. He himself had a lot to say and always spoke about his teachers, to whom he was so grateful and of whom he was ever mindful.

During this period I really came to know him and learned to understand his Tibetan. His sister, Ane Chime, and inimitable brother, Kunsang Nyima, were living in the house, too. Understanding their accent was quite a challenge.

During that period we primarily read the *S nang gsum* but also of course discussed and studied many other things. Rinpoche loved discussing philosophy and would laugh uproariously at my questions, such as: "What happens when everyone gets enlightened?"

Rinpoche led a very regular life. In the morning he did several hours of practice before I saw him. Then we spent most of the day reading texts and talking. In the evening he wrote in his diary, on what he did that day, whom he met, and how many mantras he had accomplished.¹¹⁰³ Rinpoche was always chanting mantras. He would watch television in the evening, too, but always chanting mantras. He said that was a very good arena in which to chant mantras. He said that his teacher (Gatön Ngawang Lekpa) told him that all one had to do in order to get enlightened was to understand bodhicitta,

to have compassion and to chant *māṇis*. He was also one of those lamas who liked to chant mantras at heathens. He would ostentatiously use his mala in public and try to get everyone with whom he had contact to hear *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ* at least once.

Another thing he would do at night was to walk around the block. He felt it was good for his bad knee, and for his health in general. When I was there, I would accompany him and lend him my arm. He told me he was imagining we were circumambulating a great holy stūpa. In general, he was very careful about his health, and tried to eat well. He always had a lot of salad with every meal and avoided eating too much. He did love meat as a true Khampa, however. One time when we were invited over to the Sakya Dagchen Rinpoche's house for dinner, I saw them give him what it turns out was his favorite food: a huge raw steak, fresh out of the package from the supermarket, but frozen. Rinpoche held the huge frozen slab in his hand and pared off thin slices with a sharp knife, which he ate with gusto.¹¹⁰⁴

Near the end of her stay, Janet Gyatso wanted to take Dezhung Rinpoche out to lunch but did not know a good restaurant. She asked Kunzang Nyima's advice, and the latter, without hesitation, recommended a place called "Sippi Sahneedra." She thought it must have something to do with the Mississippi River. On the way toward town with Rinpoche and Kunzang Nyima, she asked the bus driver about such a restaurant, but he did not know the place. Kunzang Nyima remained unperturbed, and when they reached their destination it turned out to be the revolving restaurant high atop the Space Needle at the Seattle Center (a landmark built for the 1961 Seattle World Fair)!¹¹⁰⁵

Later she said that the single outstanding teaching that Dezhung Rinpoche always gave, attributing it to Gatön himself, was the importance of the mantra *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ*. All one had to do was recite this mantra and one would get enlightenment. This really impressed her. Dezhung Rinpoche strongly stressed compassion, turning everything into an occasion for experiencing compassion.¹¹⁰⁶

In the spring and summer, Dezhung Rinpoche was contacted numerous times by Kalu Rinpoche's students in Canada, who asked him to come and teach in Kalu Rinpoche's absence. On May 2, 1972, Lobsang Lhalungpa

and a small delegation from Kalu Rinpoche's Vancouver center had arrived by car to pay their respects and invite him to visit. In the next four months several more personal visits and telephone contacts followed. Finally, after at first refusing, he accepted, and on September 5, 1972, they sent a car down from Vancouver and drove him up to their center.

As one student later remembered: "The Vancouver center was packed with students when he taught. Most people there had not met another lama besides Lama Kalu. They found Dezhung Rinpoche to have another personality and teaching style altogether. Whereas Kalu Rinpoche would teach very succinctly, Dezhung Rinpoche reigned supreme over vast expanses of doctrine. Many liked the deeper and vaster meaning as Dezhung Rinpoche used to expound it.

"Kalu Rinpoche would hit the point and then let you find your own way, whereas Dezhung Rinpoche was like a kind and helpful uncle. In addition, history was not a big topic with Lama Kalu. But after a week with Dezhung Rinpoche, you would get the whole background of the history and lineage."¹¹⁰⁷

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed in Vancouver ten days, gave initiations for Avalokiteśvara and Tārā, and also gave the vows of refuge (*skyabs 'gro*) and instructions on the "foundation practices" (*sngon 'gro*) for the Mahāmudrā. Lobsang Lhalungpa helped as translator, though the young Canadians Kenneth McLeod (Sangs rgyas bsam grub) and Richard Barron (Chos kyi nyi ma) were already beginning to speak some Tibetan.

When Dezhung Rinpoche was asked questions about Dharma doctrine or practice, at first he said: "Don't ask me! Why eat dog food when you can drink the nectar of the gods?" But then he started to open up by talking about his chief teacher, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, explaining how Gatön had set himself against the usual Tibetan way, such as by becoming a strict vegetarian. He then explained meditation practice clearly and helpfully. He also warned people about the difficulties of taking monastic ordination.¹¹⁰⁸

1973

Other invitations to Buddhist centers followed. In early June 1973, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited by Thartse Shabdrung Lama Kunga¹¹⁰⁹ to his Ewam Choden Center in Kensington, picturesquely located on a hill above Berkeley, California. Rinpoche stayed there about one month, gave teachings

nearly every night, and also led a two-day fast (*smying gnas*).¹¹¹⁰ He gave the Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi (Bhūtaḍāmara; 'Byung po 'dul byed) initiations, as well as instructions on the *Parting from the Four Attachments* (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*). This was when he got to know Lama Kunga more intimately. While there, he is said to have given the initiation for Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara, and also led the fasting rite on the full-moon day of the Saga month.

One noteworthy feature of a teaching visit by Dezhung Rinpoche was the presence of his joker brother Dr. Kunzang Nyima, who almost always accompanied Rinpoche as his personal attendant. Dr. Nyima made an eccentric impression with his thrift-shop black suits, out-of-line glass eye, and impenetrable English, but he was infectiously light-hearted and had an incurable soft spot for members of the opposite sex. He loved to clown around, which sometimes brought welcome comic relief. On this occasion in California, when teaching on the second day of the fasting observance, Rinpoche was seated on an armchair with a cloth hung over the back. Kunzang Nyima quietly snuck around behind and, in full view of the students, pretended to pull the cloth out from under the seriously teaching lama.¹¹¹¹

After that rite, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited by Tharthang Tulku (Dar thang Sprul sku Kun dga' dge legs, b. 1935) to visit his center and perform a fire offering (*byin sreg*) ceremony for the latter's newly purchased house in Berkeley. Dezhung Rinpoche had known Tharthang from Dzongsar in the 1950s, when they had received teachings together from Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö.¹¹¹² In the same center, Dezhung Rinpoche also met Mdo sgrub chen Rinpoche (b. 1927). Dezhung Rinpoche performed the fire offering as requested and also gave private instruction to Tharthang.¹¹¹³

After this, Dezhung Rinpoche briefly visited the Los Angeles area, and one of the main places he wanted to go was Disneyland. His main host was Tom Trabin, but Lama Kunga and Janet Gyatso also came along. They stayed at Trabin's house in Malibu, which Rinpoche liked. At Disneyland, Trabin felt somewhat intimidated, and not knowing what else to do, took Rinpoche on some of the "nice" rides. After about a half a day in the amusement complex, Trabin asked Rinpoche whether he had seen enough. Rinpoche replied: "This has been wonderful, but there is just one thing I would still like to see."

"What is that?"

"I've heard from other Tibetans about a ride that is frightening, one on

which one sees many ghouls and spirits, something like the experiences of the post-death state (*bar do*). It is supposed to be a good place to practice recognizing the post-death visions. I'd like to take that one!"

They quickly decided that he was referring to the underground adventure ride, "Pirates of the Caribbean." Trabin was even more baffled when Rinpoche insisted on sitting in the front seat. Then, the whole way through the ride, Rinpoche recited *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ!* quite loudly at each and every scary apparition that suddenly popped up. This embarrassed his American hosts. When they reached the end, Rinpoche turned to Trabin and insisted on taking the same ride again, which they did.

At the end of the second time, Rinpoche looked over and said to Trabin, "I'm a little disappointed. It wasn't frightening enough, not nearly as scary as the real post-death 'intermediate state' will actually be!"¹¹⁴

In about 1972, the oldest Sakya boy, Minzu Rinpoche, then a down-to-earth Tibetan-American undergraduate student at the University of Washington, moved into the basement of Dezhung Rinpoche's house, so he was sometimes present in the mid-1970s when American Dharma students came to call on Dezhung Rinpoche. Minzu often challenged them bluntly about their interest in Buddhism, suspecting that they were following a temporary fad. "Don't jump on the bandwagon!" he told them. "What you need is some good old-fashioned horse sense!" he threw in, often with justification. Dezhung Rinpoche endured the behavior of his great-nephew, though with a certain exasperation and disappointment since Minzu was at that point showing no interest in learning further from him, even though one of the official reasons for Rinpoche's coming to Seattle had been to tutor him.

Though officially retired, Dezhung Rinpoche continued to collaborate with several scholars—professors Leon Hurvitz and Iida of the University of British Columbia and D. Seyfort Rugg (newly arrived as professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Washington in September 1972) in the academic year 1972/73. Together they began reading the *Madhyāntavibhāga* (*Dbu mtha' rnam 'byed*). However, after five or six months of intermittent meetings, they stopped and never finished.

About this time, Dezhung Rinpoche was contacted by Garma C. C. Chang, a Chinese disciple of Minyak Bo Gangkar Rinpoche who lived in San Francisco and knew classical Tibetan well (he had translated songs of Milarepa into English). He invited Rinpoche to come and collaborate on

translations for one or two years. Dezhung Rinpoche felt constrained (by family obligations?) to refuse.¹¹¹⁵ Chang evidently visited Seattle and received from Rinpoche the reading-transmission for the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti*.¹¹¹⁶ (Years before, in the early 1960s, Gene Smith had helped Rinpoche try to contact Chang by letter.)

In October 1973, I myself visited Dezhung Rinpoche, having recently returned to Seattle after a two-year journey to Asia (including Nepal and India) and now planning to study Tibetan at the University of Washington. I could speak some basic Tibetan and brought with me a letter of introduction from the Sakyapa lama Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche in Lumbini. Two months later I moved into a small house on 28th Avenue N.E., a few blocks away from Rinpoche's residence, and gradually became Dezhung Rinpoche's first regular American translator since Gene Smith had left, and the first to interpret for him when he gave public Buddhist teachings in Seattle. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, usually it had been Rinpoche's niece Dagmola or Tashi Densapa who translated for visitors at home, while Geshe Nornang often translated for him at the University. In early 1974, Dezhung Rinpoche began reading the *Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions* (*Srang gsum mdzes rgyan*) of Könchok Lhündrup privately with me for about an hour per week. Richard Sherburne continued to read with him (mainly works of Atiśa) once a week.

In the fall of 1973, Cyrus Stearns, then studying Tibetan at the University, visited Rinpoche at his house, receiving refuge, the bodhisattva vows, and other teachings. Soon a number of other University students also started turning up for Buddhist teachings.

Also in the fall of 1973, the high school student Chris Wilkinson showed up at Dezhung Rinpoche's front door, fifteen years old and barefoot in the autumn weather. He had been told that summer by an American woman named Tashi in New Mexico: "There is a Tibetan lama in Seattle. You ought to go see him when you get back!"

On his return, Wilkinson and a friend from school visited the house of the lama. What they found was an old man in maroon Tibetan clothes sitting by the window of his little house, watching the trees and birds out of the window, smiling. The two youths were invited in and offered tea. The lama spoke a few words of English and at the end of the visit said several times, "Come back!" Wilkinson later returned and underwent the ceremony of taking Buddhist refuge, receiving the name Jamyang Chöphel.¹¹¹⁷

In late 1973 or early 1974, a religious-studies conference took place in New York organized by Harold Talbott. Joseph Campbell (1904–1987), noted teacher of comparative religion at Sarah Lawrence in Bronxville, wanted to invite a learned Tibetan geshe from India to attend. The Dalai Lama's office recommended inviting a monk from America rather than India. The Tibetan information office in New York recommended Dezhung Rinpoche.

Dezhung Rinpoche flew to New York, expecting to lecture on Buddhism. He recited a Buddhist text to five hundred people, and then in a Baptist church on 4th Street in New York he gave the initiation of the Orange Mañjuśrī to an assembly of a hundred people, including a number of Burmese and Indian monks. He stayed two days in Joseph Campbell's house. At the gathering, Dezhung Rinpoche was one of the guests of honor.¹¹¹⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche visited Kalu Rinpoche's center Dzamling Kunkhyab in New York City for the first time, giving them an Avalokiteśvara initiation. From there he went to New Jersey and met several Mongol or Tibetan monks at a Kalmuk Mongol funeral ceremony, among whom the chief was Geshe Wangyal (Sog po Geshe Ngag dbang dbang rgyal, 1901–1983). This was the first of six or seven times they met. During this short visit to the East Coast, Jane Werner asked Rinpoche to help found a Sakya Center in New York. He replied that though it would be a good idea to do so, he could not stay a long time in New York for that purpose. Then he returned to Seattle.¹¹¹⁹

Founding a Buddhist Center in Seattle

BY SPRING 1974, a group of eight or nine students interested in Buddhism, mostly either university students or spouses, were meeting quite regularly with Dezhung Rinpoche. They did not constitute a formally founded Buddhist center—it had not occurred to them that anything more was necessary than what they were doing. After discussing with Dezhung Rinpoche, they agreed to establish a regular time to meet on Thursday evenings.

These early Seattle students included Richard Baldwin, Susan Baldwin, Cyrus Stearns, Chris Wilkinson, Lewis Hemenway, Stephanie (Prince) Volkman, Richard Volkman, Salina Stockton, and David Jackson. Other early participants were Grace and Hugh McLeod, Lisa Anderson, and Satya (Pamela) Crawford. Several were disciples of Kalu Rinpoche who had ended up in Seattle for one reason or another; one of these was Richard Baldwin (b. 1943), who had first contacted Dezhung Rinpoche in Seattle in March 1972 and had received an initiation from him later that year.¹¹²⁰

About half of the original group was studying Tibetan as a major subject at the University of Washington. Four (Jackson, Stearns, Wilkinson, and Baldwin) went on to gain a reading knowledge of the language and could also interpret at least to some extent.¹¹²¹

Dezhung Rinpoche always minimized the role he himself played in attracting students or organizing a center. Later he often remarked to his Kagyüpa students that he thought of Kalu Rinpoche's center in British Columbia as a bowl of nectar that had boiled over, a few drops from which had landed in Seattle. "I myself have no qualities for leading a religious group," he added.¹¹²²

The basic group practice Dezhung Rinpoche led was recitation of the Avalokiteśvara meditation, as at Kalu Rinpoche's center. First they met just

once a week, on Thursday evenings, and chanted the Avalokiteśvara meditation in Thangtong Gyalpo's tradition, using the translation by Ken McLeod published by the Vancouver center.¹¹²³ Several students had approached Rinpoche and asked for the initiation for this, and he agreed, bestowing on a larger group the initiations for two different Avalokiteśvara practices—the *'Gro don mkha khyab ma* of Thangtong Gyalpo and the *Mdo khamsh shar phyogs ma* of Kōnchok Lhündrup.¹¹²⁴ The first time they all recited one thousand mantras together he remarked how happy he was that



95. Gathering of Dharma students in Dagchen Rinpoche's basement. Seattle, spring 1975.

they could do it.¹¹²⁵ With his first Buddhist students in the 1970s, he normally tried to avoid receiving traditional honors such as prostrations. “Don’t prostrate to me! It will injure my merit!” (*phyag ma ’tshall nga’i bsod nams la gnod/*), he would say.

The small group of students in Seattle who had been visiting Rinpoche and doing the Avalokiteśvara meditation with him regularly at his house since early 1974 gradually evolved into an informal “Dharma center.” As time went by, more and more people came to the weekly meeting—sometimes as many as fifteen or twenty. After chanting together once a week for some months, they expanded to twice a week, Thursday evenings and Sunday mornings—the Sunday sessions to accommodate the needs of working people. On Sundays they chanted the *Mdo khamsh shar phyogs ma sādha*

by Könchok Lhündrup. Kunzang Nyima and Ane Chime rearranged the furniture in the living room, changing its character from a normal room furnished in American style to a meeting place with a small shrine erected in the center of the back wall.

Dezhung Rinpoche impressed his students with his remarkable combination of intelligence, learning, energy, and kindness, though one of his leading personality traits was his modesty. He never seemed to waste time: he was always doing practices, often reciting his *māṇis* when doing other things. He was, moreover, mindful in his conduct. He carefully guarded his vows and tantric pledges (*dam tshig*). (Though he remarked to one of his students in the 1970s: “I, too, have wild thoughts,” *nga yang rnam rtog rgod po yod*.)

The students quickly discovered that Dezhung Rinpoche was a great treasure trove of oral instructions from lamas. He had mastered the Sakyapa system, but he also followed certain Kadam, Kagyü, and Nyingma practices. He was also generous with giving teachings and almost never refused to instruct those who requested. One exception was that he never gave the great initiations (*dbang chen*) after leaving Tibet, stressing the secret nature of the tantric instructions and the importance of its commitments.

Dezhung Rinpoche was kind and encouraging to his students, praising them when appropriate. He never demanded anything in return. His students were struck by how few desires he seemed to have—and how easily he was satisfied. He willingly agreed to whatever he was offered. Once when visiting a small Kagyüpa center in Oregon, he was offered a glass of golden-yellow apple juice as a refreshment. He began taking tiny sips from the glass and had drunk about a quarter of it, when a horrified student came rushing in from the kitchen, looking for a glass of special cooking oil that had been mistaken for juice.

Rinpoche took a kind interest even in beginning students and looked forward to visits from them. Once when I had not come by for over a week, he encouraged me to visit regularly. He recounted how his own teacher, the great Gatön, had looked forward to seeing him nearly every day, asking him “What happened?” if a few days went by without their meeting.

In his diet Rinpoche was, like nearly all Tibetans, non-vegetarian. In general Khampas eat a lot of meat, but he had also lived and taught among the nomads for years, and there almost the entire diet consisted of animal products (such as meat, cheese, and yogurt). When his brother Kunzang Nyima came to Seattle, he often prepared a nomad delicacy for Rinpoche:

frozen meat, which Rinpoche ate by slicing off thin strips and dipping in a mixture of soya sauce and chilies. During his seven-year visit to Minyak in the 1940s, Rinpoche had picked up the habit of eating chili pepper with his food. There were only three foods he did not like: pancakes, watermelon, and green Jell-o.¹¹²⁶

As with most Tibetans, tea was the most important drink in Rinpoche's diet. All guests at his house were offered milk tea to drink—usually made in the kitchen by Dr. Kunzang Nyima from a black brew extracted from numerous tea bags.

After a few months, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche also began to attend the Dharma meetings, as an observer. He made a funny impression at first on the young Americans as he sat, silently watching, on an armchair in the front left corner of the room, occasionally puffing on a filter-cigarette, while the earnest American Buddhist neophytes sat on the floor, listening to Dezhung Rinpoche or doing the practices. Dezhung Rinpoche received Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche very cordially, and with his encouragement, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche gradually began to involve himself more in the activities of the group on an "official" level, though he left all teaching duties to Dezhung Rinpoche.

Finally, in June 1974, after much discussion with Dezhung Rinpoche, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche announced his decision officially to "found" a Dharma center in Seattle and to register it with the state government as a nonprofit organization.¹¹²⁷ In late June or early July 1974, the small group of students met at Dezhung Rinpoche's house and agreed to the formal foundation, complete with organizational constitution and bylaws (drawn up with the help of longtime American Buddhist Hugh McLeod). Dezhung Rinpoche named the center "Sakya Thegchen Choling" (Sa skya theg chen chos gling), though (as Tibetan custom would require) he always later credited Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche as having been the actual founder.

On the day of the first meeting to organize the official "founding," Dezhung Rinpoche received a letter from Moke Mokotoff (then in Great Neck, New York) containing a rubbing Moke had made on a cloth from a stone carving of the Buddha's footprint in Bodhgaya. This was taken to be an extremely auspicious sign by Rinpoche and the others, as Dezhung Rinpoche mentioned in the reply he wrote to Mokotoff on July 5, 1974.¹¹²⁸ In summer 1974 the first brochures were printed up and the society was officially registered as a nonprofit organization.

A few of the younger, more anti-establishment students resented these developments and had neither sympathy nor understanding for the “empire-building” aspects of establishing Tibetan Buddhist centers in North America. Moreover, the organization was quickly turning into an autocracy, bylaws or no bylaws. (In due course, the original democratic checks-and-balances provisions of the group’s first charter were jettisoned.) But most students went along with these developments for some time because Dezhung Rinpoche seemed to be giving his own strong support. Most of the students had a personal connection and allegiance to Dezhung Rinpoche, but not to any institutionalized Dharma center. As one later recalled:

In the traditional hierarchy Dagchen Rinpoche was much superior to Dezhung Rinpoche. He took command and made it clear that he intended to found a center in Seattle, with Dezhung Rinpoche as its teacher. This changed the atmosphere because previously it had been a small band of young idealists meeting together with an aged lama for the sole purpose of practicing meditation and hearing the Dharma. Now there was an *organization* to be founded, and those who wanted to stay were expected to become members of it. One of the things required by a center was a house. Acquiring property meant, of course, first acquiring money.¹¹²⁹

During this time Dezhung Rinpoche frequently met with students in his home for private interviews and advice, or to answer questions, and I often interpreted. In the following months he often gave teachings on various topics of Buddhist theory and practice, such as the “Four Thoughts for Turning the Mind” (*blo ldog rnam bzhi*), the vows of refuge and of a bodhi-sattva, all in the living room of his house.¹¹³⁰

Even those American students of Buddhism who had no deep intellectual interest were struck by his compassionate nature. As soon as he heard that someone had fallen ill or been hurt (or even when he would hear ambulance sirens), he would drop what he was doing and immediately recite mantras and pray for the sick or injured. As his niece Dagmola later said:

I was born in a family of lamas. I married a lama. All my life I have been acquainted with lamas and monks. But I’ve never seen another one like Dezhung Rinpoche. He was so compassionate!¹¹³¹

In July 1974, Dezhung Rinpoche joyfully witnessed the first visit of His Holiness Sakya Trizin to Seattle. His Holiness arrived by car from Vancouver, Canada. He met with the Sakya Phüntsoik palace family and enjoyed a number of relaxed talks with Dezhung Rinpoche. Dezhung Rinpoche privately offered to His Holiness the blessing of Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma), in response to the latter's request. On July 25, Dezhung Rinpoche and the rest of the Sakya Thegchen Choling members received from



96. H.H. the Karmapa. Photograph from the 1970s.

His Holiness the brief initiation (*rjes gnang*) for White Tārā.¹¹³² At a small reception for His Holiness in Rinpoche's own house (mainly attended by Seattle Dharma students), Dezhung Rinpoche gave an elegant speech in honor of His Holiness's visit, explaining the history of H.H. Sakya Trizin's previous lives.¹¹³³

In the autumn of 1974, His Holiness the Karmapa (the Sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpay Dorje, 1923–1981) made his first visit to Canada and to Vancouver.¹¹³⁴ Welcoming him to Vancouver was the Venerable Kalu Rinpoche, who was visiting North America for the second time. Dezhung Rinpoche went to British Columbia by car to meet the visiting lamas. A number of students also came from Seattle. In the period before the Karmapa's visit, Rinpoche told his students stories about the Kagyüpa and

Karmapa lineage, about the extraordinary black hat, and so on. He encouraged them all to receive blessings and initiations from this great master.¹¹³⁵

The Karmapa was delighted to meet Dezhung Rinpoche and called him “Dezhung Paṇḍita.” Once when both Kalu Rinpoche and Dezhung Rinpoche had an audience with the Karmapa, the Karmapa is said to have made a prediction about their longevity, saying that they would both live until their early eighties (eighty-two or eighty-four). One or two Western students who overheard this came running out, rejoicing at this statement. Afterward they brought it up with Dezhung Rinpoche, but he was not pleased that they had overheard it. He told them: “It’s better not to talk about that—it might bring obstacles.” Still later, one of his students in Seattle asked him whether His Holiness the Karmapa had really said something like this. Rinpoche replied: “Though a good disciple should always take seriously what a teacher says, even a joke, I’m not such a good disciple, and I think he may have been joking.”¹¹³⁶



97. Dezhung Rinpoche
in a relaxed moment.
Seattle, ca. 1975.

Also in the presence of the Karmapa, Kalu Rinpoche said to Dezhung Rinpoche: “It is said in the *Mā ṇi bka’ ’bum* that twenty-five sūtras extol the benefits of Avalokiteśvara meditation. You and I are both old Tibetan monks of the same age, and wherever we go, we recite our *māṇis*.”¹¹³⁷

During that same time, Dezhung Rinpoche's student, Cyrus Stearns (b. 1949), who now spoke some Tibetan, asked the Karmapa to compose a longevity prayer for Dezhung Rinpoche. Pressing his hand to his heart, the Karmapa replied: "Dezhung Rinpoche and I are of one and the same nature (*ngo bo gcig*). Come to New York, and I'll compose it for you." But Stearns was later unable to go.¹¹³⁸

Later in the fall of 1974, while Kalu Rinpoche was still in Vancouver, Dezhung Rinpoche visited there again and received the initiations and



98. Dezhung Rinpoche, Dagchen Rinpoche, and others from Seattle visiting the Victoria Dharma center of Lama Tashi Namgyal, ca. 1974/75.

instructions of Khyungpo Naljor's Shangpa tradition (*Shangs pa'i chos skor*) from Kalu Rinpoche in the house of Sarah Harding. This was the first time these Shangpa teachings were imparted in the West, with full initiations and precepts. After receiving these teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche offered Kalu Rinpoche a long-life prayer:

You who see the natural state of the great spontaneous gnosis,
 who possess deeply affectionate compassion for all living beings,
 and whose helpful and benefiting activities pervade the entire world,
 reverend master, may you live a hundred aeons!

Kalu Rinpoche requested teachings also from Dezhung Rinpoche, and Dezhung Rinpoche gave him a White Tārā initiation for his long life.

In about summer of 1974 Dezhung Rinpoche went to Victoria, British Columbia, to visit the Buddhist center of the Sakya Geshe Tashi Namgyal (b. ca. 1922). Dagmo Kusho came and acted as his interpreter. He gave novice monk's vows to two Canadians (one of whom was David Balem) and nun's vows to one.

After the Karmapa left Vancouver, Dezhung Rinpoche invited Kalu Rinpoche to Seattle. The latter came and stayed for a short while in the basement of Rinpoche's own house. This was a low-key, almost private visit. Dezhung Rinpoche requested from Kalu Rinpoche the exposition of the *Hevajra* basic tantra, the *Zab mo nang don*, the *Ratnagotravibhāga* (*Rgyud bla ma*) with Kongtrül's commentary, and also the Mahāmudrā treatise *Phyag chen nges don sgron me*. The public was invited in the evening, and at that time Kalu Rinpoche gave an Avalokiteśvara transmission of Karma Chakme and also the reading-transmission of the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*).¹¹³⁹

On December 26, 1974, Dezhung Rinpoche gave in his living room an exposition of "Impermanence and the Four Destinations" to his small band of disciples in Seattle.¹¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Dezhung Rinpoche kept in close touch with his students in Canada. Once, in about 1974/75, they asked him to teach them about meditative practice. He compiled some notes on calming and insight-wisdom meditation, which ultimately developed into his meditation manual *How to Cultivate in Meditation the States of Calming and Insight: A Lamp for the Path to Liberation* (*Zhi lhag gi ting 'dzin sgom tshul thar lam sgron me*; the 34-page *dbu-can* original was written in Rinpoche's own hand.)¹¹⁴¹ He taught this in two installments to the students—who had not really been expecting this.¹¹⁴²

Differences of culture often compounded the difficulties of translation, sometimes with comic results. Once when Dezhung Rinpoche was visiting the Burnaby, British Columbia, center of Lama Kalu Rinpoche, a young Canadian woman came to see him, elated with the discovery that she was pregnant for the first time. Ingrid McLeod was interpreting that day, and when she translated the news, Dezhung Rinpoche rocked back in his seat, all the while fingering his beads intently. Then he said, "What great suffering both mother and child will have to face at birth! So much suffering!"

The translator was taken aback. Not knowing how best to convey that depressing message, she turned to the blissfully smiling future mother and chirped: “That’s very nice!”



99. Dezhung Rinpoche in another quiet moment. Seattle, November 1975.

Dezhung Rinpoche’s students and all who knew him were amazed by his phenomenal memory. He could reel off whole lineages of lamas, name after name, and also an uncanny amount of exact detail about their lives without resorting to written sources. In the following years, quite a few complete texts and teachings were “recovered” from his memory. “I’ve never known anyone with his kind of memory,” remarked his niece, and many disciples thought the same. Sometimes he recalled to his niece details of events that had happened to them in Kham thirty years before. He could recount what each person had said and even remembered how people were dressed and the mood of each separate occasion.¹¹⁴³ Later in life, too, when a student from a distant center visited, he would ask about other members of that center by name, including even their children.

Another thing that surprised some of Dezhung Rinpoche’s younger American students in those days was that he regularly viewed television a few hours a week. Not only that, but his favorite program was the Lawrence Welk Show, an old-fashioned music, dance, and variety show

that the students would have been most unlikely to watch (it was popular among their grandparents' generation). This Rinpoche watched with his brother and sister nearly every week, all the while actively telling mantras on his beads.

*Teaching Activities in Seattle and Canada
and the First Dharma Center House*

DURING ONE VISIT to the Vancouver area (ca. summer 1975), Dezhung Rinpoche stayed almost two weeks at Kalu Rinpoche's center in Burnaby, and I accompanied him as interpreter. He was interviewed at length by Judith Hanson on the theme "The Three Bodies of buddhahood" (*sku gsum gyi rnam gzhag*).

Rinpoche had a well-developed sense of humor. As he himself put it, "I'm somebody who needs to laugh" (*nga dgod dgos mi yin*), and he could relax, especially among other monks. He particularly enjoyed a visit to Lama Kalu Rinpoche's center in Burnaby when several monks were there. He regaled them with histories and legends and all sorts of amazing or funny anecdotes, including the hilarious stories of his cousin Jampal Tendzin's antics, which reduced everyone to tears.¹¹⁴⁴

After Burnaby, Rinpoche visited in Richmond the house of Jetsun Chime Luding (Rje btsun 'Chi med phrin las, b. 1938), sister of H.H. Sakya Trizin. He stayed about a week, giving teachings to her students.¹¹⁴⁵ During this and subsequent stays at the Luding house, he performed different ritual practices (for White Mahākāla, Mahākāla, and Green Tārā). Once he also conferred upon Jetsun Chime Luding the teachings of Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma). In August 1975, at the request of Jeff Watt (Dge tshul Ngag dbang rab rgyas), he composed a long-life prayer for her in three verses entitled *Zhabs brtan smon tshig 'chi med dpal ster*.

From about April through June 1975, Dezhung Rinpoche performed at his Seattle residence a four-month retreat for the Nyingma treasure-text cycle *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus* of Jatshön Nyingpo. He had received the initiations for it from Gangkar Trulku, and recently in Vancouver he had specifically requested them again from Kalu Rinpoche. This had been the most

commonly practiced ritual cycle among the Nyingma pas in the Himalayan regions (until it was supplanted in this century by the *Dudjom New Treasure Texts* [*Bdud 'joms gter gsar*] of Bdud 'joms gling pa), and it remained the main Guru Rinpoche cycle for the Karma Kagyüpas. The retreat would therefore prepare him for giving teachings of this cycle at Kagyü centers. After the first ten days, he observed silence. Then he performed retreats for the lion-faced ḍākiṇī (*Seng gdong ma*) and Padmasambhava in the wrathful aspect of Gu ru Drag po.

During the retreat Dezhung Rinpoche began having health troubles and he was later examined by an American doctor. His leg had become swollen and he had developed red spots all over his body. The doctor described it as a circulation problem, and recommended that Rinpoche reduce his sugar and salt intake. Dezhung Rinpoche thought it might be a sign of Gu ru Drag po for the consecration of the new Sakya Center.

Dezhung Rinpoche told his students: "Nobody can gain true initiation in the *anuttarayoga* without first performing the preliminary practices." Chris Wilkinson asked to be allowed to practice the preliminary practices, saying he wanted to do them in Dezhung Rinpoche's own tradition. Rinpoche replied, "There is no text available that transmits my tradition. But I know it by heart. Anyway, I would recommend that you practice in the Mahāmudrā tradition."

"But if I practice that, will you still teach me your own tradition?" persisted Wilkinson. Rinpoche agreed.

Accordingly, Wilkinson, in the summer after finishing high school (1975), spent three and one half months in retreat on Vashon Island, and he was able to finish the main foundation practices. Dezhung Rinpoche gave him an extra line of text to add to the lineage lama prayers to unite the Mahāmudrā tradition with Dezhung Rinpoche's own.¹¹⁴⁶

Another small center of Dharma activities in those days was on Vashon Island at the residence of Paul (Brasho) Kloppenburg and Tsultrim Kloppenburg (later Allione). This couple invited Dezhung Rinpoche to the island to give a discourse on the three views that one should carry over from meditation into normal life (*khyer so gsum*). On the way there, during the ferry crossing, Rinpoche explained to Richard Baldwin that on a boat one should think: "May I reach the far shores (of enlightenment)!" This turned out to be one of the main examples he used during his Dharma lecture later that day.¹¹⁴⁷

To some of his students, it seemed that Rinpoche's own intensive contact with many outstanding religious masters had inspired him to both learning and actual practice and had also produced in him a genuine acceptance of all Buddhist traditions and their adherents. He sincerely respected anyone wearing monk's or nun's robes. (He also included the so-called "white" or reformed Bon within the compass of what he considered as Buddhist.) One of the few times he acknowledged his own spiritual success had to do precisely with this. Near the end of his life he remarked to his sister: "I have never committed the evil deed of rejecting the Dharma" (*nga la chos spong gi las med*).¹¹⁴⁸

Rinpoche always accepted invitations to teach at centers of any school, even sometimes when he was exhausted or ill. When he taught one tradition, however, he did not mix its methods or particular doctrines with those from other schools. When students from Kagyü centers, for example, came and asked for his advice, he gave answers completely in harmony with the Mahāmudrā teaching tradition. He maintained, however, that he did not know Nyingma traditions well (though surely his knowledge was fairly good), and that he had also had relatively less contact with Gelukpa teachings.

In the summer of 1975, the Seattle Sakya Thegchen Choling Dharma center—after long and difficult deliberations—finally rented its first house independent of the lamas' residences. The house stood at 2316 E. Ward Street in the upper Montlake District off 23rd Avenue, and the rent was paid by two Dharma students, John Nyquist and John Luango, who rented rooms upstairs. Regular meditations led by Dezhung Rinpoche took place twice a week, first in the living room on the main floor and then in a basement room that had been renovated to hold a shrine and more seating. The group then started to perform Guru Rinpoche tantric feasts (*tshogs 'khor*) on the tenth and twenty-fifth days of the lunar month. Julie Emery briefly mentioned the small center in a *Seattle Times* article of this period:¹¹⁴⁹

[Lama Kunga] Labrang and Jigdal Sakya are leaders of a recently established religious center from which prayer flags fly at 2316 Ward St. It is non-profit and low key. Mrs. Sakya described it as: "Come and see the doctrine. If you don't like it, leave."

Once the center was visited by a venerable Theravadin monk from Sri Lanka, whom everyone addressed simply as “Bande.” Dezhung Rinpoche and the monk had a cordial conversation. The venerable monk asked Rinpoche why visualization (which seemed strange to him) was so important in the Mantrayāna. Rinpoche answered by explaining succinctly the link between the two stages of Mantrayāna meditative practice (*rim gnyis*) and the ultimate production of the two bodies of buddhahood (*sku gnyis*). Dezhung Rinpoche was also visited briefly during this time by Karma Thinley Rinpoche (b. 1931) from Toronto, who came to the Montlake house.



100. Dezhung Paṇḍita: wearing the hat of a great scholar. Seattle residence, late 1975.

The renting of a house on the northern border of the high-crime Central Area of Seattle was not without drawbacks. Burglars broke into the house twice, the first time through a basement window. The second time they came in through the back door, taking the door off its hinges (this in

spite of the strong deadbolts the house residents had installed to increase security after the first break-in). Although the possessions of the people upstairs were stripped nearly clean, the precious objects on the shrine were neither stolen nor damaged.¹¹⁵⁰ The culprits were never identified or caught, though the police suggested it had been the teenaged neighbors. The meaning of these omens was duly considered.

Dezhung Rinpoche visited the center by car, about a ten-minute trip. As his driver executed a difficult maneuver when leaving the center (the street in front was a steep incline), he would intone the warning: “Be mindful!” (*bag yod par gyis zhig*), the same words his own teacher Jamgyal Rinpoche had uttered whenever departing.

Dezhung Rinpoche’s students quickly noticed that he loved to narrate histories, especially about the great masters of the past. Often he disparaged himself as “talkative” (*kha mang*). But he said that even great masters who normally kept quiet and as part of their discipline strictly forbade themselves any heedless talk (such as his teacher Jamgyal Rinpoche at the Gagu retreat) were not displeased by discourse with him, saying that to discuss in this way such useful and elevating things as the lives of the great masters was allowed and even fruitful.¹¹⁵¹ He said that the lives of past masters were the examples that we must try to emulate. He would often quote a verse from the *Path with Its Fruit* lineage prayer by Tsharchen, referring to the beneficial spiritual effect of hearing the life stories of past masters.¹¹⁵² He also often mentioned a saying by Paltrül about present-day practice being an imitation of the enlightened careers (*nam thar*) of past masters.¹¹⁵³

Dezhung Rinpoche also insisted on the usefulness of words. Once at his house, when someone else had complimented his interpreter’s Tibetan, the latter replied, “I know the words, but not the meaning.” Rinpoche quickly interjected: “It is essential to know the words! Based on them you will learn the meaning.” But he avoided sectarian and political talk. When others spoke of politics, he did not join in. If they asked his opinion, he usually just grunted in reply and waited until the subject was changed to something more useful. Sometimes he alluded to sectarian stupidities in jokes, but he himself did not adopt a position that denigrated or rejected other Buddhist traditions.

On August 3, 1975, Dezhung Rinpoche gave a detailed instruction on the nature of mind based on the *Mdo khamsh shar phyogs ma* Avalokiteśvara meditation.¹¹⁵⁴ In late summer or early autumn 1975, he gave, over the course

of several afternoons, at the request of a few students, the text-transmission for the collected works of Sakya Paṇḍita (*Sa paṇ bka' 'bum*). The night before beginning this teaching, he dreamt that his uncle Ngawang Nyima passed him a golden statue of Sapaṇ through a small window. He did not tell this to his students, but he mentioned it to his niece, saying: "It is seldom that I have such an auspicious dream."

Rinpoche loved to view mountains, lakes, and beautiful scenery, which for the yogi in the *Path with Its Fruit* tradition is called "resorting to the nectar of the sense objects" (*yul gyi bdud rtsi bsten*). (For this reason he was a little dissatisfied with his own house, which had no view to speak of.) During this period he did some looking and asking around to find a suitable meditation hut in which to do a retreat for several months in the mountains. This gave me an excuse to invite him on a few automobile drives into the mountains, once (summer 1975) to Paradise snowfield on Mount Rainier (a second carload of people from the Sakya family also came along for the picnic). Another time I drove him to see a cabin on Lake Rossager near Mt. Pilchuk in Snohomish County, as a possible site for a retreat.

In the fall of 1975 Dezhung Rinpoche taught Gampopa's general exposition of the Mahāyāna doctrine, the *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (*Thar rgyan*) in his own house, at the request of Kalu Rinpoche's student Lisa Anderson (d. ca. 1987), who had come down from Vancouver, Canada, to study with him, and to a small group of students from Seattle. The teachings, consisting mainly of just a clear reading of the text (*khrid lung*), were given in seventeen sessions beginning on September 9 and ending on November 11. He taught some later sessions in the shrine room in the basement of the Sakya house at 6555 28th Avenue N.E. The exposition was interrupted by a brief visit to teach at Kalu Rinpoche's center in Burnaby, British Columbia, on October 9 through 11.

Dezhung Rinpoche was an extremely conscientious and painstaking teacher, as he showed when expounding the *Jewel Ornament*. One day when one of the students arrived twenty minutes late, he halted the proceedings, backtracked to the beginning, and gave an identical exposition once again from the start.¹¹⁵⁵ Also when he received gifts from the faithful, he took pains to use them for their intended purpose. He always tried to respond to requests for prayers or ritual practices as soon as possible.¹¹⁵⁶

In his speech, Rinpoche continued to speak his home dialect from Gapa district of Kham, without trying to adapt himself linguistically to the more

standard Lhasa dialect. (He had only visited central Tibet for the first time when he was already in his forties, and then he had mainly stayed in Tsang.) His dialect made him hard to understand for many Westerners who had learned a little Central Tibetan and even by some Tibetans who were unused to Khampa dialects. But once one had learned a little of typical Ga dialect (*sga skad*) pronunciation, vocabulary, and verb endings, his language was beautiful and elegant. For his interpreters, he was a joy to listen to: what he had to say was always well organized and lucid.

His single bad habit, as far as his interpreters were concerned, was his tendency to speak until he felt he had got the real jist across, or the whole episode of a story, or the whole joke all the way to the punchline. He disliked talking in small bits and pieces. When he was inspired by his subject or audience, he talked for ten, fifteen, or twenty minutes at a stretch, much to the distress of the translator, who was trying to translate every word faithfully.

On October 30, Dezhung Rinpoche announced to the Sakya Thegchen Choling members his plans to go to New York for research work with Lob-sang Lhalungpa, mainly to raise funds for the few remaining Tharlam monks in India. Rinpoche had been on close terms with Lhalungpa since their meetings in 1972.

On November 6, Dezhung Rinpoche received a White Tārā thangka from the Tharlam monk Jamyang Sherab in India. That evening at the Dharma center, he bade his interpreter farewell, presenting me with a small statue of Sakya Paṇḍita. On November 7, a farewell party was given.

On November 13 Rinpoche gave another detailed exposition of the Avalokiteśvara meditation to his disciples.¹¹⁵⁷ Mid-November 1975 also saw a brief visit to Seattle by E. Gene Smith, who visited the small Dharma center, then still on Ward Street in Montlake. Smith heard Dezhung Rinpoche expound the “Freedom from the Four Attachments” (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*) instructions as a universalist or nonsectarian (*ris med*) discourse, showing the harmony of all four Tibetan Buddhist schools on these points. This was Smith’s first visit to Seattle in eleven years.

On November 16, 1975, I departed for India. At one of our final meetings, Dezhung Rinpoche gave me a copy of Gorampa’s *Madhyamakāvatāra* commentary, the *Lta ba ngan sel*, and recommended that I study the basic Buddhist philosophical works with Khenpo Appay in India, praising the latter highly. He also said: “It would be nice if you could stay here in Seattle, but

it wouldn't be right for me to keep you. It would be like snatching away a child from its mother's breast and then giving back one's own child to the mother for her to nurse."

After my departure, Dezhung Rinpoche's teachings at the Dharma center in Seattle were interpreted for the next few months by Cyrus Stearns. On December 6, 7, and 9, 1975, Rinpoche gave a detailed exposition of the Sakya preparatory practices (*sngon 'gro*) in Seattle. Later Stearns repeatedly asked him to set these teachings down in writing, which he finally did at his home in Seattle.¹¹⁵⁸

At about this time Chris Wilkinson decided to request from Dezhung Rinpoche the vows of a novice monk. He approached Rinpoche, making a formal request accompanied with a basket of fruit and a bundle of incense. Rinpoche replied that he needed the consent of Wilkinson's parents. Wilkinson's mother came, asked a few questions, and decided ordination would be fine.

At the time of the actual ceremony, Dezhung Rinpoche told Wilkinson, "I'd like to give you novice-monk vows, but for that I would have to give you a begging bowl."

"Couldn't you have one sent down from Canada?"

"They don't have one there. So it would be better to give you the vows of a celibate lay adherent." That is what he actually did.¹¹⁵⁹

Visit to New York as Translation Collaborator

ON FEBRUARY 1, 1976, Dezhung Rinpoche flew to New York State to collaborate with Lobsang Lhalungpa on a major translation project. At first he made his main residence at Bodhifield on Long Island, the estate of Mr. C. T. Shen. There he lived in a comfortable little cottage on the parklike grounds of the estate, accompanied by his brother, Kunzang Nyima, who served as his attendant.

In 1975, his patron, Mr. Shen, who was the president of the Institute for the Advanced Studies of World Religions at Stonybrook, New York, had offered L. Lhalungpa a grant supporting the translation of the Mahāmudrā manual *Phyag chen zla ba'i 'od zer* by Gampo Jennga Tashi Namgyal, evidently at the suggestion of His Holiness the Karmapa.¹¹⁶⁰ Mr. Shen also invited Dezhung Rinpoche to come as adviser to the project.

The first few months, Dezhung Rinpoche studied the text and the related literature intensively, borrowing from the library established by Mr. Shen at Stonybrook other important Mahāmudrā manuals, such as Padma dkar po's *Phyag chen rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*, the Ninth Karmapa's *Nges don rgya mtsho*, the *Chos sku mdzug tshugs* (?), and the Kagyüpa section from the *Gdams ngag mdzod* collection of Kongtrül. Dezhung Rinpoche stayed on the East Coast nearly two and a half years—from late winter 1976 until summer 1978—working on this translation project on and off. The total number of months he worked primarily on the translation project, however, was only nine.¹¹⁶¹

In the preface to the published translation (1986), Lhalungpa mentioned his indebtedness to Dezhung Rinpoche:¹¹⁶² “I here also express my deep respect and appreciation to the Venerable Dezhung Rinpoche, a great eclectic Lama and a teacher of the Sakyapa Order, for his advice and explanations of the difficult passages found in this text and in the many other texts I read.”

During this period Dezhung Rinpoche also helped Lhalungpa by tracing the numerous quotes from Tashi Namgyal's work in their original, mainly canonical, sources. During their free time when at Bodhifield, Rinpoche often expounded important episodes from Tibetan history, and Lhalungpa would jot these down in his notebook. The next day Lhalungpa showed his transcribed notes to Rinpoche, who proofread them to make sure the details were correct.

In March 1976, Dezhung Rinpoche visited Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1910–1991) in New York City. In a letter written on May 5 to Tshewang



101. At the Seattle-Tacoma airport
(January 1976?).

Gyurme and Phrin las grub pa in Vancouver (Lama Kalu's two monks in residence), Rinpoche reported that in March Dilgo Khyentse was invited for two weeks to a house (in Brooklyn) by Chögyam Trungpa's Dharmadhatu group. Dezhung Rinpoche went to see him there and stayed in the same house for seven days. There, together with Chögyam Trungpa (1939–1987) and about fifty of the latter's students, he received from Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche the *Lce bisun snying thig* teachings. (These students had completed their preparation practices.) Privately, Dezhung Rinpoche received a long-life empowerment from the Mchog gling *Thugs sgrub* cycle and an

initiation for Mañjuśrī. He also received text-transmissions for Ju Mipham's *Mkhas 'jug* treatise and commentaries on the *Madhyāntavibhāga* and *Dharmādharmavibhāga*, Shenga's annotation-commentary (*mchan 'grel*) on the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*, and for Kongtrül's commentary on the *Hevajra Mūla-Tantra* (*Rtsa rgyud brtag gnyis spyi don*).

From his side, Dezhung Rinpoche offered Dilgo Khyentse, as requested,



102. Sendoff by Dagmola at the Seattle-Tacoma airport.

a long-life empowerment in the *Tshe sgrub 'Chi med dpal ster* tradition of the Sakyapa, and the text-transmissions for the *Chos rgyal ma* praises of Sapaṇ and the *Sakya Paṇḍita—Mañjuśrī guru-yoga sādhana* by Lekpa Rinpoche. At the end of the teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche respectfully offered Dilgo Khyentse \$1,300.

Later during this same period, Dezhung Rinpoche met Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche again in New York. Dilgo Khyentse reminded him of Dzongsar Khyentse's request twenty years before that Dezhung Rinpoche write a supplement to the biography of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. Dilgo Khyentse now presented Dezhung Rinpoche with a vajra, bell, white conch, and one hundred dollars, formally requesting him to write it, too. Dilgo Khyentse said: "If you do not set it down in writing, the secret biography of Gatön will be lost. Please write it down!"

Dezhung Rinpoche had begun working on the biography of Gatön in the

1950s, but the written version had been lost when he fled Tibet. He told Dilgo Khyentse: “Now I am old. My hand shakes, and my vision is poor. Though I still remember everything clearly, it is difficult for me to write it down.”

Dilgo Khyentse thought for a moment and said: “Dhongthog Rinpoche is coming soon to Seattle. Probably he can help you.”



103. Dezhung Rinpoche meeting Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

“Yes, I know him from Tibet. I could ask him,” replied Dezhung Rinpoche.

Later, in about 1985–1986, Dezhung Rinpoche managed to compose the addendum in Seattle by dictating it to Dhongthog Rinpoche, who published it in early 1988, less than a year after Dezhung Rinpoche’s passing.¹¹⁶³

On this same occasion in New York, Dilgo Khyentse also urged Dezhung Rinpoche to compose the biographies of the important recent lineage lamas of Ga. Dezhung Rinpoche had previously written these and presented them to Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö at Dzongsar in about 1954, but they had been lost in Tibet before they could be printed. Dilgo Khyentse then said: “Because these lamas of Ga are in the transmission lineages of Hevajra, Cakrasamvara, Vajrayoginī, Mahākāla, and so forth, people need to know their life stories. Since they have been lost, please write them again!” Dezhung Rinpoche did relate these stories again briefly in Seattle in

1985, dictating them to Lama Kalsang Gyatsen. They survive in manuscript, and will be included in Rinpoche's collected writings.

In June 1976, Jane Werner invited Rinpoche to name and participate in the founding of a small Sakya Dharma center at her home in Greenwich Village, New York. This he did, giving the center the name "Jampal Choling."¹¹⁶⁴ He also met Matthew Kapstein for the first time. Kapstein's mother lived around the corner from Jane Werner, so he could conveniently visit Rinpoche there. That year Rinpoche and Kapstein read together Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* following the commentary of Khenchen Shenga.¹¹⁶⁵ By this time Rinpoche had also received an invitation to teach at Kalu Rinpoche's New York center, 'Dzam gling kun khyab. After this, Dezhung Rinpoche went to an American Institute of Buddhist Studies conference sponsored by Robert Thurman (Professor of Religion at Amherst College), Mr. Chen, and the Jampal Choling center.¹¹⁶⁶

In summer of 1976 (on the twenty-fifth day of the fifth lunar month) at Bodhifield, Dezhung Rinpoche also carried to completion a major revision of the biography of the Sakya throne-holder Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk of the Phüntsoke palace, which he had first composed in Seattle in fall 1974 (in the eighth lunar month). The work was now much enlarged by information submitted by the Sakya Khenpo Sangyay Tendzin and other disciples of Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk still living in India. In completing this biography, Dezhung Rinpoche was also assisted by Lobsang Lhalungpa.

Dezhung Rinpoche then sent the *dbu med* manuscript to India, where T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche edited it in New Delhi. Dhongthog Rinpoche was about to depart for America so he could not oversee the complete publishing process in Delhi, and the work had to be taken over by Sherab Gyal-tshan.¹¹⁶⁷

In New York at about this same time, Dezhung Rinpoche also composed a brief biography of Kalu Rinpoche. It was rendered into English in about 1976–1977 and distributed in the 1980s in Kagyü centers in Europe. (For this biography, see appendix I.)

In the fall of 1976 (ca. October), when H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche (Bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje 1904–1987) came to New York, he invited Dezhung Rinpoche to visit.¹¹⁶⁸ They met, had lunch, and spent the day together. At Dudjom Rinpoche's center, Yeshe Nyingpo, Dezhung Rinpoche asked to receive the initiation of Dudjom Rinpoche's main *yi dam* deity, Vajrasattva. Dudjom Rinpoche agreed to give it, and the next day

Dezhung Rinpoche made offerings and received the initiation. Other lamas in New York at this time included Gangs chen Rinpoche, Sog po Bka' 'gyur Rinpoche, Sgo mang Khenpo, and the Karmapa's Rumtek Khenpo.

On November 16, 1976, H.H. the Karmapa came to the Bodhifield estate and stayed for some two or three weeks. Dezhung Rinpoche sponsored the Black Hat ceremony there. He also accompanied His Holiness to Pullman, New York, for a ceremony at the new temple.

ON FEBRUARY 8, 1977, Dezhung Rinpoche gave an Avalokiteśvara initiation at the Asif's Gallery near 12th and 3rd in Lower Manhattan, New York City.¹¹⁶⁹ This was later counted as the informal beginning of “Jetsun Sakya,” a second Sakya center in New York organized through the efforts of Jared Rhoton.

On February 24, 1977, Lama Norlha invited Dezhung Rinpoche to Manhattan and his center, Kagyü Dzamling Kunkhyab (K. D. K.). This involved a long trip by car through snowy weather.

On March 13, Dezhung Rinpoche met again with Jared Rhoton and a few other Buddhist students, and this was counted as the “official founding” of the Jetsun Sakya Center. In the spring and summer Rinpoche mainly remained at Mr. Shen's Bodhifield estate on Long Island.

After Dezhung Rinpoche's departure from Seattle, Chris Wilkinson moved into Dezhung Rinpoche's basement in February 1977 and lived there for three years. Before he had left Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche told Wilkinson, “If you really want to practice the *anuttarayoga* tantra, you'll need protection, and for that you should propitiate Vajrapāṇi. You should recite many mantras of Vajrapāṇi Bhūtaḍāmara ('Byung po 'dul byed).” Dezhung Rinpoche had given this initiation but had not instructed Wilkinson in detail before departing for Long Island, so in the early summer of 1977, Wilkinson visited Dezhung Rinpoche at Bodhifield, staying almost two weeks as a house guest, sleeping on a mattress in the living room.

On his arrival, the earnest but young and unkempt Wilkinson felt antipathy from Lhalungpa, who resented this intrusion but could not deny Wilkinson access to his guru. Dezhung Rinpoche received Wilkinson warmly. Every day Rinpoche took out the *sādhana* and taught the American how to use it.

He did not really comment on the text in a formal way; he merely elicited Wilkinson's own understandings and then explained further as necessary, asking follow-up questions to make sure Wilkinson had understood. He took pains that every aspect of the practice was clear, including the specially inscribed stone that one needed and the special method of mantra recitation. Dezhung Rinpoche recommended that he also consult the Sakya Khön monk Trinlay Rinpoche of the Sakya Phüntsook Palace in Seattle. This monk, who was still performing his practices several hours a day, was supposed to give Wilkinson "on-site" help, especially at the end of the retreat.



104. Receiving H.H. Sakya Trizin in New York, fall/winter 1977. Left to right: Chöphuntshok (secretary to H.H.), Dezhung Rinpoche, and H.H. Sakya Trizin.

One day Dezhung Rinpoche asked, "Would you like to go see the sea-side?" Wilkinson said he would, and the two of them went walking slowly side by side down to the shore, following a winding path down a steep embankment. Wilkinson later recalled:

About halfway down to the beach I asked Rinpoche: "Why is it that the monks wear *red* as the color of their robes?" I was expecting an ordinary answer about the dyes or local customs or whatever.

Rinpoche replied: "Red is the color of the lotus family. Red is the color of Buddha Amitābha, the buddha of infinite light. Red is the color of passion...." He went on and on. As we came down

to the beach, he kept speaking about the five main colors, the meanings of each of the buddha families, the interrelationship between them, the function of a real spiritual practitioner in the world, and so on.

I was locked in a trance. I felt that I was outside of myself and outside of all things. In the distance there was the blueness of the pounding of the waves, and the words he was speaking were going deeper into me than I imagined possible. I was hypnotized. Then suddenly he changed the topic and said, "What do you think we'll have for dinner? Probably just rice and meat again."

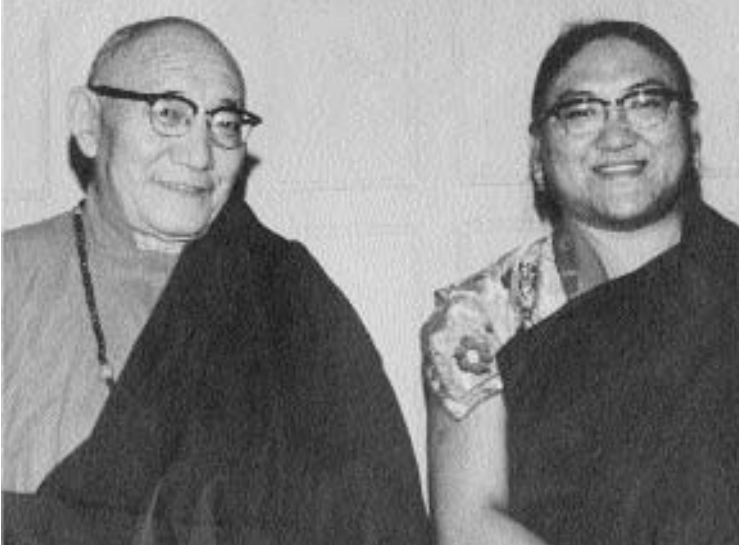
Suddenly I was just sitting on the beach on a rock, and Rinpoche was sitting on another rock holding his crutch.

Wilkinson returned to Seattle and performed the retreat as instructed, staying in the basement of Rinpoche's house. At the conclusion of the retreat, on the last day, Trinlay Rinpoche showed up in full lama regalia and performed a *homa* fire offering in the living-room fireplace.¹¹⁷⁰

The Long Island estate of Mr. Shen was idyllic in almost every respect. The property was huge, and Dezhung Rinpoche stayed with his brother in a little cottage near the back gate. The only real problem was the caretaker, an unpleasant man who made it difficult for Rinpoche to receive visitors and also gave Dr. Nyima a bad time about almost everything he tried to do. For instance, when Michal Bigger visited Rinpoche there for the first time, he was as rude as he could possibly be to the visitors. When Dezhung Rinpoche heard about this most recent episode, he laughed and shared his own experiences of the man's rudeness, adding that as perfect as a situation may seem—in this case a beautiful cottage hidden in a quiet forest—there will always be an angry, grumpy demon to remind you of *samsāra*.

Lunch was served by Dr. Kunzang Nyima, who brought out a huge platter of *mo-mos*—Tibetan-style steamed dumplings. Michal Abrams was sitting next to Dezhung Rinpoche at the table, and he noticed her quietly taking the mo-mos apart and hiding the meat filling on her plate. When she told him she was a vegetarian, he took his own mo-mos, removed the meat filling, and gave her the steamed dough wrappers. So she ended up literally eating the food off his plate, and he ate little himself.¹¹⁷¹

In August 1977, Dezhung Rinpoche visited the Jetsun Sakya Center (at 400 Riverside, Apt. 2B), the small Sakya Dharma center that he had founded at the request of, and with the help of, the American Buddhist Jared Rhoton (Sonam Tenzin, 1941–1993).¹¹⁷² Rhoton had gone to India in about 1964 and had become an intimate disciple of H.H. Sakya Trizin, starting to learn



105. Dezhung Rinpoche with H.H. Sakya Trizin. New York, 1977.

Tibetan while simultaneously tutoring H.H. Sakya Trizin in English. He studied for many years in India, eventually receiving an *ācārya* (M.A.) degree in philosophy from Sanskrit University, Benares, in 1975. Later he would earn a master of philosophy in comparative religions at Columbia University (1981) and his Ph.D. in Indic studies from the same university (1985). At this time he was a graduate student in the Buddhist Studies program at Columbia, working on a translation of the important work *General Treatise on the Madhyamaka* (*Dbu ma'i spyi don*) of Gorampa.¹¹⁷³ Later Dezhung Rinpoche worked with him on translating the *Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*) of Sakya Paṇḍita, ultimately the subject of his Ph.D. dissertation.

The idea of founding a Sakya center near Columbia was the result of a meeting one day between Rhoton and Elvin Montgomery in late 1976 or early 1977 outside the Columbia University library. The apartment on

Riverside Drive was located by Michal Bigger at Jared's request. Helping Jared found the center and arrange teachings and initiations from the summer of 1977 until summer of 1980 was a small nucleus of students who, in addition to Rhoton and the original president, Elvin Montgomery, included Helen Mendoza [Stendahl], Luis Mendoza, David Flood, Carolyn Tierney [Cather], Craig Warner, Ann Elliot (a.k.a. Tashi Dolma), Michal Bigger, Milta Torres, Susan Messenai, Carl Jossem, James Sarzotti, April Dattulo, Ken Buscher, Judy Rome, Adam Sokolov, Stephen Schoonmacher, and Abby Petty.



106. Left to right: Chöphuntshok, H.H. Sakya Trizin, and Dezhung Rinpoche. New York, 1977.

Dezhung Rinpoche next visited the Karmapa center in Woodstock. Returning to New York, he spent another two months at Lama Norlha's center, which was located upstairs in a building whose ground floor was occupied by a shop selling witch and warlock paraphernalia. He told Lama Norlha's students later that they should treasure these opportunities to study under masters of different Buddhist traditions, which even in Tibet was difficult to do.¹¹⁷⁴ (During one of his visits there, he gave a brief Kālacakra initiation.)

Rinpoche then visited Amherst, Massachusetts, after which he went to Judy Sargent's house, then to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass-

achusetts, then back to New York and Jetsun Sakya.¹¹⁷⁵ Soon there gathered around him a small group of Americans interested in Buddhism in general and the Sakyapa tradition in particular.¹¹⁷⁶

Sometime in about early or mid-1977, Dezhung Rinpoche wrote the following brief letter and progress report on his work for Mr. Shen:

To the matchless wise and kind great patron (Mr. Shen),

Through your help my residence has been pleasant and all the necessary facilities have been complete, and hence I have been very happy. I would therefore like to thank you very much again and again.

For the translation of the *Phyag chen zla zer* by Lhalungpa, I have written out many pages of explanations on the words, meanings, and profound points, and have given them to Lhalungpa. For the more than two hundred quotations from various sūtras, tantras, and treatises, I have been reading the Kanjur, Tanjur, and other texts, searching for the original passages. Those that I have found, I have written down and sent to him. Also for Sonam's (Jared Rhoton's) translation of the *General Treatise on the Madhyamaka* (*Dbu ma'i spyi don* by Gorampa), I have been instructing him to the best of my knowledge. I hope that these works will be beneficial for the Buddha's Doctrine.

Of the money you have given me, I have used some for purchasing food, drink, and necessary articles for myself and my brother, and \$1,300 I have offered to His Holiness the Karmapa for the purchase of the 103-volume collection of the Kanjur, which is to be enshrined in the temple of my own monastery in India. For purchasing the 14-volume *Compendium of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) collection, I have offered \$256. About \$3,000 has gone for offerings to lamas.

Whatever money remains will be specifically used for constructing a dwelling house for the ten monks of my monastery in India and for supporting their performance of one hundred million *māṇi* recitations; the money will surely not be wasted.

This year I have had to go to give religious teachings for several days each month at the request of faithful Buddhists in New York City. Otherwise I am staying at Bodhifield House and exerting myself in religious work.

Dezhung Trulku sends this memo with auspicious greetings.

The letter reiterates the main object of Rinpoche's having undertaken his journey to New York and translation work: to earn money for his Tharlam monks in India, in order to build them a small dormitory and temple. Partly in response to the pleas of his monks in India and partly to fulfill Gatön's last command to him, in the early 1970s Rinpoche began seriously thinking about doing something for the Tharlam monastery monks in India.¹¹⁷⁷ Now those thoughts were transformed into concrete efforts.

Once, when Dezhung Rinpoche was staying on Mr. Shen's estate in the cottage, he was visited by Helen Mendoza from the Jetsun Sakya center. In the course of their conversation, she asked him how he felt about the Chinese (Communists). He replied, "I can truthfully say that I no longer hate the Chinese. But I am to blame for not yet being able to love them!"¹¹⁷⁸

In early 1977, when His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche visited New York again, Dezhung Rinpoche received the initiation for the *Sgyu 'phrul zhi khro* from him at the Yeshe Nyingpo center. Dezhung Rinpoche gave Dudjom Rinpoche the long-life empowerment of Thangtong Gyalpo's '*Chi med dpal gter* tradition. Dudjom Rinpoche's son Trinlay Norbu also received initiations and instructions from Dezhung Rinpoche, including for Avalokiteśvara, the *Parting from the Four Attachments* (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*), and so forth. On the Tibetan lunar New Year's day, Trinlay Norbu composed a versified prayer for the long life of Dezhung Rinpoche.¹¹⁷⁹

Several times, a day or two after meeting Dezhung Rinpoche, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche would remark to Matthew Kapstein: "Dezhung Rinpoche is unbelievably learned!" (*gang min tshad mkhas pa chen po red!*). The great master seemed puzzled that so few of his own American students were studying under Dezhung Rinpoche.¹¹⁸⁰

On July 10, 1977, Dezhung Rinpoche lectured on the "four truths" at Franklin Hall, University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. On July 12 he gave a lecture again at the Asif's Gallery in New York.

Sometime in about 1977, Dezhung Rinpoche accomplished Gatön's command to practice the Avalokiteśvara meditations and recite one hundred million *māṇi* mantras. He never announced this directly at the time, not even to his siblings or his niece, Dagmola. But he did hint to Dagmola and his sister that he must surely be approaching that number "any time now." All along, he had been regularly keeping count in his diary of the number of mantras recited, conspicuously noting the completion of large units (for

example, millions and ten millions). When interviewed in Seattle in 1975 by Grace McLeod and asked about his attainments, he did mention that since reaching the number of fifty million he had been reciting at least ten thousand mantras per day. He was expecting to complete one hundred million in about two years. He also stated that up to 1975 he had spent about seven years in retreat (not counting his early years living in retreat with his uncle Ngawang Nyima).

On September 7, 1977, at the invitation of the Jetsun Sakya center in New York, Dezhung Rinpoche began to teach an introductory manual for *Path with Its Fruit* practice, the *Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions* (*Snang gsum mdzes rgyan*) by the sixteenth-century Ngor abbot Könchok Lhündrup. He gave a series of twenty-seven lectures, breaking off in the middle of the book on April 26, 1978, with the plan of concluding later. Serving as his main translator was Jared Rhoton. The English oral translation of these lectures was later transcribed from cassette tapes and became the basis for the first twenty-seven chapters of Dezhung Rinpoche's posthumous *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception* (Boston: Wisdom, 1995 rev. ed. 2003), edited by Victoria Scott.

On October 29, 1977, H.H. Sakya Trizin visited New York. Before his arrival, Dezhung Rinpoche shifted his residence from Long Island to New York City. One of the first public functions at Jetsun Sakya after His Holiness arrived was the seminar "An Afternoon with Four Great Tibetan Teachers," which included the talk by His Holiness, "A Buddhist View of Mental Pain: Its Causes and Remedy" and Dezhung Rinpoche's talk, "The After-Death Experience of the Bardo."

Dezhung Rinpoche also gave to His Holiness the reading-transmission for the collected works of the five Sakya founders (*Sa skya bka' 'bum*). This began on December 24, 1977 (in the lunar calendar, the anniversary of Sapaṇ's Mahāparinirvāṇa), and concluded on February 28, 1978 (the Mahāparinirvāṇa day of Gorampa). This was the seventh time Dezhung Rinpoche had transmitted this tradition. At that time, no Sakya lama outside of Tibet held this lineage except Dezhung Rinpoche. (In 1981 Dezhung Rinpoche transmitted it one last time to a number of lamas in Nepal, including the Ngor Luding abbot.) This lineage had been passed down from Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo to Loter Wangpo, and from him to Samten Lotrö, Dezhung Rinpoche's teacher.

Dezhung Rinpoche repeatedly told His Holiness Sakya Trizin: "I have no

[enlightened] qualities or realization at all" (*yon tan rtogs pa gang yang med*). "But," he conceded, "I have received many initiations and text-transmissions." At the completion of the text-reading, His Holiness made offerings, but Dezhung Rinpoche refused these and gently scolded him, saying: "I'm not going to *sell* this text-transmission. But I was extremely glad to have had the chance to offer it to Your Holiness. The teaching has been returned to its rightful owner (*chos bdag po la 'phrod!*)! And except for that, I will accept no offerings for it."¹¹⁸¹

H.H. Sakya Trizin gave many teachings and initiations at this time in New York, some of which were received by Dezhung Rinpoche. On the nirvāṇa anniversary of the Sakya patriarch Sönam Tsemo, Dezhung Rinpoche gave an exposition of that master's biography. During this period Dezhung Rinpoche also gave Matthew Kapstein a slow, clear text-transmission (*khrid lung*) for the general tantric exposition (*Rgyud sde spyi rnam*) of Sönam Tsemo. He also gave him the brief initiations from the Mañjuśrī section of the *Compendium of Sādhana*s.¹¹⁸²

During H.H. Sakya Trizin's visit, Kalu Rinpoche came to New York and visited Dezhung Rinpoche at Jetsun Sakya. This was Kalu Rinpoche's third world teaching tour (1977–1978). Dezhung Rinpoche requested from him the teachings on the *Mkha' 'gro gsang 'dus*, a treasure-text teaching of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo included in one of the last sections of Kongtrül's *Rin chen gter mdzod* compilation. Kalu Rinpoche gave his assent, and Dezhung Rinpoche arranged to have made all the small *tsag le* paintings needed for the initiation. Kalu Rinpoche was staying in a hotel, so he bestowed these teachings on Dezhung Rinpoche in his hotel room over the course of three days. Among the students receiving these teachings were, besides Dezhung Rinpoche, his brother Kunzang Nyima, Lama Norlha, 'Jam grags (A kong's brother at Woodstock), and Kalu Rinpoche's nephew and attendant, Rgyal mtshan. The sole American present was Matthew Kapstein, who was allowed to come through the kind intercession of Dezhung Rinpoche.¹¹⁸³

On this occasion, Kalu Rinpoche urged Dezhung Rinpoche many times to establish a new Tharlam monastery in Darjeeling, promising to help if he did so. He also told Dezhung Rinpoche:¹¹⁸⁴

So far, correct practitioners of the Dharma are very rare in the West. Some learn to read a little Tibetan and carry around a lot of books, mixing up the doctrines from many systems. They confuse the sense and make it difficult to be understood. It may happen like that here [in North America], so I hope to establish a retreat center so that bright students can learn the Dharma thoroughly.

1978

Dezhung Rinpoche continued to give instructions on the *Three Visions* in weekly lectures every Wednesday evening through the end of April.¹¹⁸⁵ In the meantime, together with His Holiness and Lex Hixon (a commentator on radio station WBAI), he participated in the discussion “Tibetan Buddhism in the West: Tension between Tradition and Modernity,” which took place at the American Buddhist Academy (331 Riverside Drive). He also gave a two-day seminar on the subject of calming meditation on January 27 and 28, and on February 5 he attended with His Holiness the Asif’s Gallery function. On February 5 (as on subsequent Tuesdays when in residence) he led the “Meditation of the Great Compassion,” and on February 10 and 15, he gave further introductory discourses in connection with the *Path with Its Fruit*. On February 10, the Jetsun Sakya center celebrated its one-year anniversary, at which time the history of the center’s founding was reviewed and new officers announced. This was the third day of the lunar year, so Dezhung Rinpoche’s birthday was celebrated, too.

At this time the board of directors of Jetsun Sakya were Geshe Lobsang Jampal as adviser; Elvin Montgomery, Jr., and Jared Rhoton as co-chairmen; David Flood as treasurer; Ann Elliot as secretary; Helen Mendoza in charge of programming; Carl Jossem in charge of publications; April Dat-tulo in charge of the library and records; Michal Bigger in charge of publicity; and Bill Dugan in charge of study and meditation.¹¹⁸⁶

The Tibetan lunar New Year was celebrated in New York with H.H. Sakya Trizin, beginning on Saturday, February 11, and lasting two days (New Year’s Day actually fell on the 8th). A few days later, Dezhung Rinpoche evidently received the Hevajra Causal Consecration (*rgyu dbang*) from His Holiness, on February 15 and 16.

A week later, on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month (February 22),

they celebrated the full-moon day on which the Buddha performed great miracles. On this day two American students, one of whom was Jared Rhoton, took novice-monk ordination, and many took lay ordination. On February 24 through 26, Dezhung Rinpoche gave three days of instructions on the Four Foundation Practices.



107. Dezhung Rinpoche with his ever-present crutch.

On February 28, Dezhung Rinpoche completed the reading-transmission for the collected works of the Sakya founders to His Holiness, and in the evening students gathered to wish His Holiness and family farewell. The following day His Holiness departed by train from Penn Station, New York.

On about March 12 and 13, Dezhung Rinpoche and Kunzang Nyima went to the Lamaist Buddhist Monastery of America founded by Geshe Wangyal in Washington, New Jersey, for a few days of study and rest. By March 23, Dezhung Rinpoche was back at Jetsun Sakya for another month, continuing his *Three Visions* lectures. On April 11 he gave an initiation for Amitābha, and two days later he left for the K.D.K. center at the invitation of Lama Norlha, where on April 15 and 16 he gave a two-day seminar on calming and insight meditation, and then on the theory and philosophy of

Buddhist meditation. On April 17 he gave an initiation for Vajrasattva and, on the evening of April 18, an initiation for Avalokiteśvara in conjunction with Mahāmudrā.

On April 19, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Jetsun Sakya for his *Three Visions* lectures, beginning the teachings on the vision of experience, the second of the three. On Sunday, April 23, he gave a seminar on “miracles in the Buddhist tradition,” and gave an empowerment for Buddha Śākyamuni. On April 25, before leading the “Meditation of the Great Compassion,” he gave an initiation for the Medicine Buddha.

On April 26, Dezhung Rinpoche gave his final teaching on the *Three Visions* (*S nang gsum mdzes rgyan*) introductory manual of the *Path with Its Fruit* before departing for Seattle. He taught the main points of how to generate love, compassion, and bodhicitta, stressing the practical applications of carrying love into practice in all aspects of one’s life. He told his students that he had “unfinished business” with them and that he intended to come back and complete his lectures on the *Three Visions* sometime in the future. Finally, he told them how to take his departure as a way to understand the nature of mind.

On Friday, April 28, Dezhung Rinpoche and Kunzang Nyima went to the K.D.K. center for a final teaching visit at the invitation of Lama Norlha. On April 29 he gave a seminar on Tibetan astrology and during the morning explained the general background of the tradition, the texts used, the calendar system, and such elements as the continents, subcontinents, directions, constellations, and days of the week according to their elements and gender, clarifying their harmonious and conflicting combinations. In the afternoon, his friend Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa (1908–1989) spoke on other aspects of astrology. Later in the day Dezhung Rinpoche gave initiations for Buddha Śākyamuni and Acala.

On the following day, Dezhung Rinpoche taught about the origins of the two astrological systems: “white” (Kālacakra) and “black” (Chinese) astrology and prognostication. He discussed three levels of the Kālacakra practice—outer, inner, and secret—mentioning the six yogas (*sbyor drug*) and comparing them to the six yogas of Nāropa. He sketched the two main Kālacakra transmissions in Tibet (through Butön and Jonangpa) and explained the surviving continuations of each. He granted initiations for Green Tārā and Wrathful Acala. On May 2, Dezhung was back at Jetsun Sakya, where the members feted him and Dr. Nyima with a farewell party.

Travels and Teachings on the West Coast

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE returned to Seattle in early May 1978 to welcome and accompany H.H. Sakya Trizin in Seattle during his second visit there. On May 4, Rinpoche therefore left Jetsun Sakya in New York for the airport, escorted by Jared Rhoton, Bill Dugan, Lobsang Lhalungpa, and Lama Norlha.

Rinpoche then flew directly to Seattle, where his students were delighted to welcome their revered teacher home. Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, too, was glad to have him back and had plans for him, saying, “Uncle Trulku has been staying away from Seattle for such a long time. Now he should stay here. I’m not going to let him go anywhere!”

Dezhung Rinpoche received H.H. Sakya Trizin and witnessed a pleasant reunion of both branches of the Sakya family. His Holiness was, however, worried because there only remained a few days left of his stay in the United States, not enough time for him to request certain essential text-transmissions from Dezhung Rinpoche. When he mentioned this to Dezhung Rinpoche, the latter replied: “Oh, that won’t be any problem!”

“But Dagchen Rinpoche said—”

“Don’t worry! I’ll come along with you to Vancouver. It’s really no problem; I’ll take care of everything.” Then Dezhung Rinpoche made the necessary arrangements and in mid-May accompanied His Holiness on the three-hour journey to Vancouver, British Columbia, by car. There Dezhung Rinpoche transmitted to him another rare reading-transmission, for the four volumes of Gorampa’s writings on tantric subjects.¹¹⁸⁷ The teachings began on May 18, 1978, and continued until May 31, which according to the Tibetan lunar calendar was the Mahāparinirvāṇa anniversary of Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo (1382–1456).

Once, during His Holiness's stay in New York, he had asked Dezhung Rinpoche for the Hevajra initiation. Rinpoche humbly replied: "I will not formally refuse, so I'll say: 'I'll offer it to you later.' But in fact, I can't give it, and I won't." Now, in Vancouver, His Holiness requested the initiation for Avalokiteśvara, to which Rinpoche replied: "Avalokiteśvara is where I direct my prayers in this lifetime, so even though I have no yogic experience or realization, I suppose it would be all right to give the Avalokiteśvara initiation."¹¹⁸⁸



108. Reunion of the great Sakya lamas in Seattle. Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche and Dagchen Jigdral Rinpoche. Sakya residence, Seattle, May 1978.

Dezhung Rinpoche thereupon gave H.H. Sakya Trizin the initiation for Avalokiteśvara. Later he also offered him the initiation of White Tārā for his longevity. His Holiness from his side bestowed on Rinpoche the text-transmission for the *Three Visions* (*Snang gsum*) and *Three Continua* (*Rgyud gsum*) manuals of Könchok Lhündrup. Dezhung Rinpoche had never received these, and he had been worried that the reading-transmission for Könchok Lhündrup's collected works had died out. When he heard that His Holiness had received the full transmission of this lineage, he was delighted and requested the reading-transmissions for these two works.

At last came the day for parting. H.H. Sakya Trizin was traveling to

New York by way of Calgary and Toronto (where he had been invited by Karma Thinley Rinpoche). Dezhung Rinpoche was invited for a few days to Lama Kalu's center in Burnaby near Vancouver. But before taking his leave, Dezhung Rinpoche gave His Holiness and his party many words of advice. He told His Holiness's wife, Dagmo Kusho (Bkra shis lha 'dzin),¹¹⁸⁹ that it was excellent that she had given birth to a son of the lineage, but that



109. Dezhung Rinpoche pausing with H.H. Sakya Trizin at a rest stop on the way from Seattle to Canada. May 1978.

she still must be kind, remain in harmony with others, and maintain exemplary behavior. "The Sakya Dagmos of the past used to do a lot of religious practice," he reminded her, "and you should do the same!"

Similarly, he had many words of advice for His Holiness. "One of my greatest teachers was your father," he said. "I have also received teachings from you, and in addition I have offered you teachings from my side, so we have many links as teacher and student. Now your son, Ratnavajra, is still just a child, but in the future if he grows up and I am still alive, I will come and receive teachings from him."¹¹⁹⁰ I received initiations from the father and then from his son. How wonderful it would be if I could receive them one day from the son's son, too!"

When speaking these words, Dezhung Rinpoche was deeply moved. Kunzang Nyima, who as usual was there as Rinpoche's attendant, also could

not hold back his tears. His Holiness and his whole small entourage were deeply saddened, thinking they would never meet Dezhung Rinpoche again. But in fact they were able to meet again briefly a few years later at the Sakya settlement in Puruwala, India.¹¹⁹¹

Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Seattle in June 1978 and began to give teachings. By this time the Sakya Thegchen Choling center had relocated to a house at 4416 Burke Avenue North, in the Wallingford district west of the University. On June 25 Rinpoche taught the Avalokiteśvara meditation in Thangtong Gyalpo's tradition, and on the next day he gave instructions on the foundation practices (*sngon 'gro*). From July 7 through 9, he gave a three-day "seminar" on the life and teachings of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, including brief histories of the subsequent four great founding masters of Sakya. He concluded with a detailed account of Sachen's passing away.

After his return to Seattle, a number of older students in Seattle met Rinpoche at his house and presented him with a beautiful thangka of White Tārā for his long life.¹¹⁹² He was especially pleased, and he later invited them to his house for a dinner.

Dezhung Rinpoche's prolonged absence in New York had been hard on his disciples in Seattle, none of whom had been able to follow him to the East Coast. In Seattle there was really no substitute for him as a source of spiritual instruction and advice, as far as many of them were concerned.

Chris Wilkinson in particular had found the attempt at being a solitary monk too difficult without the support of either monastic community or teacher. After Dezhung Rinpoche returned, Wilkinson approached him and, giving him a white ceremonial scarf, told him he wanted to give back his vows of celibacy. Rinpoche told him that was no problem. He took the scarf and put it by a painting of Tārā, telling Wilkinson, "Keep going in your practice!"¹¹⁹³

When Chris Wilkinson got married in the early 1980s, he saw Dezhung Rinpoche again in Seattle (ca. 1984) and introduced him to his wife. After meeting her, Dezhung Rinpoche told him, "When you are married, the highest Dharma you can practice is caring for your wife. There is no other Dharma." Wilkinson found it strange that a man who had been a monk all his life would say this.¹¹⁹⁴

While in New York, Dezhung Rinpoche had not been able to complete for Lhalungpa the tracing of all the numerous quotes from Tashi Namgyal's work in their canonical or other sources, so he brought his piles of hand-written cards (one for each quotation) back to Seattle with him in 1978. A number of his students (including Stearns, Jackson, and Wilkinson) helped him search through various canonical works for the remaining passages. The result of this work finally appeared on pages 476 and following of the published book, in the final section entitled "Index to Kagyur and Tangyur of Quotations in Mahāmudrā Text."¹¹⁹⁵

In spare moments, Rinpoche continued to read avidly. As Chris Wilkinson recalled: "Dezhung Rinpoche never ceased his quest for knowledge, and was never content with the knowledge he had gained."¹¹⁹⁶ Even at an advanced age he kept up regular reading and learning. Moreover, his interests and readings were remarkably wide within Tibetan Buddhism. Reading sacred literature was part of his daily routine. He hardly spent a day without some reading of the life of a saint, a philosophical treatise, or some other religious work.

In early September 1978, over the course of three days (September 2 through 4), Dezhung Rinpoche expounded the biographies of the lamas in the lineage of the transmission of fasting vows (*smjung gnas brgyud pa'i rnam thar*).¹¹⁹⁷ Though he thus did give a number of teachings in Seattle, some of his close students had the impression that his activities in Seattle were relatively limited, especially in comparison with how he taught on visits to the East Coast and Canada.¹¹⁹⁸

Teaching Visits to British Columbia

From the summer of 1978 until the spring of 1979, Dezhung Rinpoche was in Seattle most of the time, but made at least two visits to British Columbia. In early August, he traveled north by car, and on August 8 he gave a discourse on the four noble truths and the twelve links of interdependent origination at Kalu Rinpoche's Burnaby center. He also conferred the initiation of the Six-Armed Protector in the Shangpa tradition and a discourse on the *Heart Sūtra*. Cyrus Stearns interpreted.¹¹⁹⁹

In late summer of 1978, he was invited to Salt Spring Island by the Burnaby Dharma center to lead a two-day fasting retreat (*smjung gnas*) on the land of Kunzang Dechen Osel Ling (Mount Tuam Buddhist Retreat).

Many of his students from Seattle attended, and I interpreted. The disciples of Kalu Rinpoche included not only the monks Trinlay Drupa and Tshe-wang Gyurme, but also Lama Lodro, who had come up from California. Dezhung Rinpoche and a number of his students stayed overnight in a large, only partly completed wooden house. It was a particularly blessed time: beautiful weather and a highly charged spiritual atmosphere.

At the end of the fasting, when speaking was again permitted, a student asked Dezhung Rinpoche a question about Lekpa Rinpoche. When answering, the memory of his teacher caused him to weep, and after a few moments he explained: "He was so kind to me!" Only a few students were present—most were outside, getting ready to leave. One student thought something bad must have happened when he saw the lama shedding tears.¹²⁰⁰



110. Dezhung Rinpoche with David Jackson, possibly translating at the end of a teaching. Seattle, November 28, 1980.

Six months later, Dezhung Rinpoche visited Canada and Burnaby again, giving instructions on the Mahāmudrā on February 8 and on the five paths on February 9. On these or on subsequent visits, he also participated in the consecration of Kalu Rinpoche's retreat center on Salt Spring Island. Many of the leading lamas of Lama Kalu's centers came, and they together performed the rite for averting Sri spirits (*Sri zlog pa'i cho ga*) for Dezhung Rinpoche's long life. Five women students also performed a *dākiñi*-dance.

Still later, Dezhung Rinpoche taught Geshe Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind*

Training (Blo sbyong don bdun ma) for several sessions at the Burnaby center, Karma Kunkhyab Choling. On one of these visits, he gave the *Drag po gsum 'dril* initiation to Tibetan residents and others in Vancouver. On another, he taught the *Sangs rgyas lag bcang* ("Buddhahood in the Palm of Your Hand"), a nature-of-mind instruction (*sems khrid*) by Jamgön Kongtrül.¹²⁰¹

1979

Dezhung Rinpoche gave major series of Buddhist teachings in Seattle, too. On seven Thursday evenings from March 2 until May 3, 1979, at the Sakya Thegchen Choling center in Seattle on Burke Avenue North, he gave a series of instructions on the *Three Visions* manual (*Snang gsum khrid yig*) of Khyentse Wangchuk (b. 1524), a preparatory manual for the *Path with Its*



111. Dezhung Rinpoche explaining a point to Cyrus Stearns at the dinner table, with Kunzang Nyima horsing around in the background. New York, ca. 1979.

Fruit instructions in the esoteric transmission (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*). I interpreted. At the end of the teachings, he gave a brief account of his own early *Path with Its Fruit* studies. He explained to his students that he had to go back to New York soon, though he was not crazy about the physical setting

there (in comparison with Seattle). He said he would also go into retreat for awhile before leaving.

On March 10 to 12, 1979, over Mother's Day weekend, a special two-day fasting retreat took place at the Burke Avenue Sakya center, concluding with a tantric feast (*tshogs 'khor*) and a special blessing ceremony for the *thangka* of Avalokiteśvara that Dagmola had offered to the Dharma center in memory of her mother and aunt (Dezhung Rinpoche's two deceased sisters).

In late May, Dezhung Rinpoche gave privately, to a small group of students, the blessings and instructions of Vajrayoginī, at the request of Cyrus



112. Dezhung Rinpoche, ca. 1980.

and Maruta Kalnins Stearns. After conveying the initiation, he gave in Tibetan (with no immediate translation) detailed instructions on the method of meditation, following the instruction manual of Khyentse Wangchuk and various supplementary texts. These teachings were given at his house over the course of five days (May 22, 23, 24, 26, and 29). Rinpoche told Stearns that this was the first time this complete teaching had been given outside of Tibet or India/Nepal. At the end of the long teachings, on the last afternoon, exactly as the last explanations had been finished, the doorbell rang. Rinpoche stopped fingering his rosary and waited expectantly. The Sakya family friend Julie Emery came in the door, carrying a huge fruit (evidently a melon). Rinpoche was overjoyed at this auspicious

coincidence and insisted that it be cut up at once and shared by all. He then explained that if these teachings were practiced, the fruit of the result would definitely ripen.¹²⁰²

Soon thereafter, on May 30 and June 1, Dezhung Rinpoche gave at his own instigation the Avalokiteśvara practical instructions of the great Tibetan



113. Dezhung Rinpoche leaving a Kagyüpa Dharma center in Oregon, with Kunzang Nyima and David Jackson, ca. 1980.

adept Tshembupa (*Tshem bu pa'i lugs kyi dmar khrid*) at his home to a larger group of students, including most of his old disciples in Seattle. These would be the last teachings before his planned return to New York. Before that he would go on a teaching tour to Northern California.

One evening, while Rinpoche was in the midst of giving the Avalokiteśvara teachings to a living room full of students, suddenly shouting and cheering could be heard in the streets of the normally quiet residential neighborhood. The students inside also became excited and started fidgeting, causing Rinpoche to stop and ask what had happened. His interpreter explained, "Our local Seattle Supersonics professional basketball team has just won the national championship!"

"It's always like this," Rinpoche replied. "We always make the distinction

between self and other: 'My side won; I'm so glad. The other side lost; that's good for me.'¹²⁰³

Previously, in early August 1974, Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935–1984), teacher of many Westerners and founder of Kopan monastery on a hill outside Bodhnath in the Kathmandu Valley, had briefly visited Seattle. He had stayed at the home of Richard Baldwin on Helen Street, and in the first week of August had visited Dezhung Rinpoche. Now again, in early 1979, Lama Yeshe visited Seattle and received from Dezhung Rinpoche the Avalokiteśvara initiation in the Thangtong Gyalpo tradition, and also the *Thirty-seven-Part Practice of the Bodhisattva* (*Rgyal sras lag len so bdun ma*) bodhicitta instructions.¹²⁰⁴ He requested Dezhung Rinpoche to give teachings at his centers in California, especially at a small center in the city of Santa Cruz and at the Vajrapani Institute, in the mountains east of Santa Cruz.

In early 1979, Dezhung Rinpoche received two additional invitations to visit the small Karma Thegsum Choling center of Santa Cruz from an American Buddhist, Karma Sonam Dorje, who at the same time mentioned his and other local Buddhists' hopes that Rinpoche would also visit the beautiful mountain setting of the Vajrapani Institute. Rinpoche flew in June 1979 from Seattle to San Jose with Kunzang Nyima as attendant and me as interpreter. We were met at the airport and driven by car to Santa Cruz. Rinpoche and his party stayed in a small beach house, and in the evenings he gave teachings at a house on the other side of Santa Cruz where the Karma Thegsum Choling members gathered.

After teaching the *Seven-Point Mind Training* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*) and giving one or two minor initiations in Santa Cruz, he went to the Vajrapani mountain center in Boulder Creek, where construction of the main building was still going on and a number of people were staying nearby in tents. The sun shone gloriously. The students there requested the bodhisattva vows and initiations. He instructed them to arrange as many offerings of lamps, flowers, and water before the shrine as they could. Then, in a deeply moving ceremony, he conferred on a large group of local Buddhists the bodhisattva vows.

From there Dezhung Rinpoche was invited by Lama Lodro and the Kagyu Drodren Kunchab center to San Francisco. For the journey from Santa Cruz to San Francisco, he was chauffeured in a limousine chartered by the eccentric but active Dr. Ajari Warwick (d. 1993), who trailed behind

in a second chartered limousine, the two cars communicating with each other by walkie-talkie radio.

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed a few days at Kalu Rinpoche's San Francisco center and gave initiations and teachings (for Tārā and Kurukulle, and the bodhisattva vows?). His great-nephew Minzu Sakya (who was then working in California) came to visit Rinpoche at Lama Lodro's center one afternoon. Rinpoche also helped revise the translation of a Shangpa Kagyü *sādhana* at the request of Lama Lodro.

After a few days in San Francisco, Dezhung Rinpoche went to Berkeley and the Ewam Choden center of Lama Kunga in Kensington, where he gave his old friends initiations and teachings. To a more public gathering of over one hundred disciples, he gave the White Mahākāla initiation.¹²⁰⁵

In June 1979, Dezhung Rinpoche left the West Coast for New York, but he broke his journey with a stop in the Midwest, visiting the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota for the first time. At the invitation of Paul and Carol Hagstrom and others, he tried to reinvigorate a fledgling center, naming it Sakya Thubten Dargye Ling. This was the first of four times that he visited there. (H.H. Sakya Trizin had visited and effectively founded this center in March 1978, during a tour of thirteen cities of North America.)

Rinpoche stayed three days, granting the Avalokiteśvara initiation. He agreed to be their abbot and encouraged them to continue regular group meditation and studies of the Dharma.¹²⁰⁶

UNTIL THE SUMMER OF 1979, the Jetsun Sakya center remained in the small apartment at 400 Riverside Drive, a place that had been graced by visits from Dezhung Rinpoche, H.H. Sakya Trizin, and other Buddhist teachers and that was the site of several meditation retreats. But in June 1979, the Jetsun Sakya center in New York changed its location to the edge of Harlem, by the river. Its members pleaded with Dezhung Rinpoche to return to New York City from Seattle, because the center could barely continue to exist without him in residence. In early July 1979, Rinpoche came to New York in answer to their urgent request.

The new location of Jetsun Sakya was in a rough part of town, in Harlem at 623 West 129th Street, a location where many white, middle-class New Yorkers feared to tread. This was north of Columbia University, near the 125th Street subway station and across from the old Cotton Club. The loft was directly above an automobile repair shop, from which gasoline fumes and automobile exhaust would waft up from time to time. As one student from Seattle later described it, seeing Rinpoche there was “like seeing a bodhisattva in Hell.”¹²⁰⁷

H.H. Sakya Trizin had requested upon his departure in 1978 that the center find larger premises. The loft on 129th was chosen because of its large capacity, its proximity to Columbia University, and its affordable rent. (That location also allowed Rinpoche’s interpreter Jared Rhoton both to attend Columbia University classes and interpret at the center with minimum travel and stress.) When the problem of the fumes wafting up into his rear bedroom was found to be a persistent one, the members requested Rinpoche to move into the front room, where no fumes were ever present. He

declined. A second request was made, pleading, but Rinpoche was firm against moving. No one had the guts to try a third time.¹²⁰⁸

At Jetsun Sakya in early July, Dezhung Rinpoche picked up where he had left off in his exposition of the *Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions* (*Snang gsum mdzes rgyan*) introductory manual for *Path with Its Fruit* practice. He began on July 10, 1979, and completed the teaching on February 26, 1980, in twenty-nine weekly sessions. The English translation was later transcribed and served as the basis for chapters twenty-eight through fifty-six of Dezhung Rinpoche's *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception*.

Several of Rinpoche's students who had helped Paul Johnston do a retreat at the old Riverside Drive center now accomplished their own retreats after Steve Schoonmacher and James Sarzotti built two retreat rooms into the new center's sizable open loft space. Rinpoche bestowed a Vajrapāṇi initiation, and then recommended initiations for Vajrapāṇi Bhūtaḍāmara ('Byung po 'dul byed) as a protective deity to help dispel negative influences for all later meditative practices. He carefully taught the long mantra according to his distinctive pronunciation and then did rituals to protectively seal in the meditator, one of the Jetsun Sakya students who then successfully carried out the Bhūtaḍāmara retreat during forty-nine days in the summer of 1979. At least three other retreats were to follow: Michal Bigger and Carolyn Tierney did retreats on Vajrayoginī, and Schoonmacher, out from Wisconsin, did a shorter retreat.¹²⁰⁹

Once in the summer of 1979 when Dezhung Rinpoche and Dr. Nyima were at the Jetsun Sakya center on 129th Street, Michal Bigger stayed for a while at the center, too, practicing and preparing for her coming Vajrayoginī retreat. As she later recalled:¹²¹⁰

It was summer and hot, so the many windows were wide open. Quite a few bugs had wandered in, including a particularly obnoxious housefly. The fly landed on the doughnuts we were having for breakfast, headed for my eyes, and as hard as I tried to love all beings, this bug was testing my faith. Then there the bug was, walking the rim of Rinpoche's tea cup, and while I thought mean thoughts about that fly, he fell into the tea and drowned.

I was horrified that Rinpoche's tea had been ruined. Dezhung Rinpoche was horrified as well; he leaned over, scooped the fly out of the hot tea, and held him in the palm of his hand. He held that

fly as if it were his most precious child. He leaned over the fly's wet little body and said prayers. He smoothed his rumpled little wings and whispered to him. That nameless bug disappeared and I saw a little being given his Bardo instructions and all of Rinpoche's overwhelming love and compassion. I have never seen anyone treat even another person with such tenderness.

In fall 1979, Dezhung Rinpoche began to work again with Janet Gyatso, who some months before had also started a project supported by Mr. Shen.¹²¹¹ She translated for Rinpoche for about two months at Jetsun Sakya for the weekly class on the *Three Visions* when Jared Rhoton was unavailable.

At this time, Dezhung Rinpoche also read the *Mā ṇi bka' 'bum* with Matthew Kapstein. He gave Kapstein the reading-transmission (*lung*) for the whole *Mā ṇi bka' 'bum*, which he had received in his youth from the Gelukpa geshe Losang Chökyi Gawa.¹²¹² Since January 1978, Kapstein had been working on a Shangpa project with the support of Mr. Shen, and Dezhung Rinpoche helped him with his research by going through the Shangpa section of Kongtrül's "encyclopedia," the *Shes bya kun khyab*, with him. Dezhung Rinpoche had still not quite completed his work of locating all the quotations in the Mahāmudrā manual *Phyag chen zla ba'i 'od zer* that Lhalungpa was translating, so Matthew Kapstein helped by going to Columbia University to find books in the library.

During this period Dezhung Rinpoche received a visit for four or five days from his Seattle students Cyrus Stearns and Maruta Kalnins Stearns, who came to ask many follow-up questions about Vajrayoginī practice. He gave them the reading-transmission for Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen's commentary on Tsharchen's famous *Lam rim smon lam* prayer to Vajrayoginī. He was his usual self: a bottomless source of help and profound advice.

Dezhung Rinpoche had shortly before received a visit from his early American student E. Gene Smith, who had given him an image of Sakya Paṇḍita and many texts that had been recently published from India. Rinpoche had been especially delighted to receive the autobiography of Jonang Tāranātha, whom he praised as being truly Vajradhara. He told stories from Tāranātha's life and showed them certain passages from the text. In particular he related the episode in which Tāranātha met the infant future Fifth Dalai Lama and perceived through his clairvoyance the great harm this little

being would bring in the future to his own Jonang tradition. As a great adept of the Vajrabhairava practices, he could have “liberated” the boy into the *dharmadhātu* with a snap of his fingers. But knowing that the child would bring great benefit to Tibet in general, Tāranātha let him live.¹²¹³

Dezhung Rinpoche also received a visit from (two?) writers for the journal *Parabola*, who witnessed at the Jetsun Sakya center a question-and-answer session involving Helen Mendoza and Susan Mesinai as questioners and Jared Rhoton as translator. The text of Rinpoche’s thoughtful answers was published as the brief article “The Transmission of Blessings: An Interview with Deshung Rinpoche,” *Parabola*, volumes 5-1 (1980), pages 51–53.

In September and October 1979, H.H. the Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (b. 1935) visited New York City twice. During his first visit, on September 7, 1979, a reception was planned in His Holiness’s honor at the Synod



114. Dezhung Rinpoche offering a mandala offering to H.H. the Dalai Lama. New York, September 1979.

House of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. The New York representative of the Tibetan government in exile approached Dezhung Rinpoche, requesting that he make a maṇḍala offering to His Holiness in the name of the whole New York Tibetan community. At first Rinpoche refused, saying, “His Holiness is the ruler of Tibet, and when one offers him a maṇḍala, one

by all means needs to remain standing! I'm lame in one foot and am not capable of that." But finally, through repeated requests, they prevailed upon him to give the great maṇḍala offering.

Tibetan Buddhists from all the centers in New York and nearby on the East Coast were invited to this gathering as a formal "tea" and reception. When making the symbolic offering, Dezhung Rinpoche could not remain standing the whole time. But holding the maṇḍala before him, he launched energetically into a formal, detailed offering and exposition of the maṇḍala that went on for some forty minutes. The thousand Americans just sat there, silently watching and listening, many of them sweating profusely in the hot and humid "Indian summer" weather. When Rinpoche had finished, the official interpreter (who must have been completely overwhelmed), summed up Dezhung Rinpoche's exposition in about one minute of English. Some members of the audience did not know how to react, or they felt cheated,¹²¹⁴ but others sensed the great gravity and drama of the occasion, even without knowing Tibetan.¹²¹⁵

Later, Dezhung Rinpoche himself admitted that even by Tibetan monastic standards he had given a full and detailed exposition, as befitted the special occasion.¹²¹⁶ He mentioned later to a disciple in Seattle how his experience paralleled that of the forty-ninth Ngor abbot Yongdzin Paṇḍita Minyakpa Palden Chökyi Gyaltzen (ca. 1784–1854), who had been linked as tutor to an early-nineteenth-century Dalai Lama, Tsultrim Gyatso (1816–1837), after performing a detailed maṇḍala offering and exposition.¹²¹⁷

When H.H. the Dalai Lama a little later visited New York a second time, Dezhung Rinpoche was one of the first to greet him when he got off the airplane. Rinpoche had gone to the airport with a number of Jetsun Sakya students to greet the Dalai Lama, when suddenly he disappeared. Somehow he was pushed through the throngs of people; then, leaving all his students behind, limping along with his cane and ceremonial scarf, he managed to hobble his way through security and was standing there waiting when the door of the plane opened.¹²¹⁸ He later told some of his Jetsun Sakya students that when he had seen the Dalai Lama setting foot on American soil, he had not seen the Dalai Lama at all, but Avalokiteśvara, and that ten thousand tiny hairs had stood straight up on his neck.¹²¹⁹

Dezhung Rinpoche also visited His Holiness at the latter's personal invitation. One day a telephone call was received at Jetsun Sakya from the Dalai Lama's private staff, and soon thereafter a limousine arrived to pick up

Dezhung Rinpoche and take him to the Dalai Lama's hotel room. The visit was supposed to last just two hours, but it ended up taking nearly the entire day. It is said that during this time the Dalai Lama asked Dezhung Rinpoche many questions relating to meditative practice and especially about the *Path with Its Fruit*, such as about the differences between the interpretations of Khyentse Wangchuk and Mangthö Ludrup.¹²²⁰ Each time the Dalai Lama asked a question, Rinpoche humbly declined to answer, saying he was unable to explain these things. The Dalai Lama persisted and after a while became slightly exasperated with Rinpoche's extreme modesty. Finally he came over to Rinpoche, grasped him by the shoulder, and playfully shook him, exclaiming: "What is this? Are you like an old dog who has to be kicked before he barks?"

Only then did Rinpoche give in and answer the questions to the best of his ability.¹²²¹ Dezhung Rinpoche later remarked on the Dalai Lama's directness and informality during their meeting. The Dalai Lama is said to have remarked after Rinpoche's departure, "I knew he was learned and wise, but I had no idea how much so!"¹²²²

The Dalai Lama told Dezhung Rinpoche at one point, "Rather than staying here and teaching the blue-eyed 'blond-heads'¹²²³ their ABCs, it would be much better to return to India and teach the Dharma to learned monks. A nonsectarian (*ris med*) lama like you is needed there—one who can teach to all four Tibetan schools."¹²²⁴

Dezhung Rinpoche wanted to invite His Holiness to Jetsun Sakya. Though he was normally soft-spoken and circumspect in directing his American students, on this occasion he became very forceful. "I want *you* to bring him *here* to Jetsun Sakya!" he told Helen Mendoza in emphatic English (a language he normally never spoke).¹²²⁵ The Dalai Lama was sent a formal invitation, and he visited on October 14, 1979. As one center member later recalled:¹²²⁶

Our center was the result of a lot of love and devotion to our guru [Dezhung Rinpoche], but had absolutely no resources. As hard as we tried, we were completely unable to provide our Lama with the comfort he deserved. And we were sensitive about that. The center was a huge loft over an auto body shop, a bit like a vast sunny cave, with views from all sides. There was an elevator that went up the three stories, but when you got in, it was "iffy" whether you would ever get out.

On the day of the Dalai Lama's visit, we had cleaned and polished the center premises and the stairs and even the greasy street outside. Some friends of Rinpoche had created an enormous chalk maṇḍala on the sidewalk in front of the entrance. You can imagine how it felt to be presenting our odd but loving center to the Dalai Lama himself. And even though Rinpoche only praised us for our efforts on his behalf, it was uncertain how others would respond.

Some people who were not responding particularly well were the Secret Service men who had been assigned to guarantee His Holiness's safety. Bringing him into Harlem, into a rickety building perched high and exposed on all sides by big windows, was definitely high risk to them. Before he arrived they marched in, scoped out the place, nixed the elevator, and prepared to control the situation.

Then His Holiness's limousine rolled around the corner, past the wholesale chicken parts store and a few stripped cars, and pulled in front of the colorful chalk maṇḍala. The Secret Service men controlled the crowds. His Holiness did not wait for anyone but jumped straight out into the sea of waving white ceremonial scarves. The Secret Service was thrown into a panic. The driver of the limo also leaped out, slamming the door shut behind him, leaving the limo with engine running and keys locked inside. All security dissolved at that moment and the locked limo became the crisis of the day.

When His Holiness stepped into the elevator and rose into the third floor to greet Dezhung Rinpoche, he was alone with us. We had a day that was perfection. The loft held the hundreds of people comfortably, the big kitchen area cooked tea and rice and offerings for our guests, and we were truly visitors to Tushita.

When it was time for His Holiness to leave, he went down in the elevator to the Secret Service below, who as he stepped out of the front door just managed to unlock the limo.

At Jetsun Sakya, His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave a reading-transmission for the *Lamp for the Path to Awakening* (*Byang chub lam sgron*) of Atiśa to Dezhung Rinpoche, as well as the *Mā ṇi lung* reading-transmission to the whole center membership and assembled guests.

In fall 1979, Dezhung Rinpoche also met Dudjom Rinpoche and party in New York. Both of them traveled at the same time in October of 1979 to Woodstock, to see H.H. the Karmapa.

While in Woodstock and at the Karma Triyana Dharmachakra center at the time of H.H. the Karmapa's visit, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the reading-transmission for the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* and Situ Pañchen's great commentary on Tibetan grammar (*Si tu 'grel chen*) to both H.H. the Karmapa and Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche. To establish a Dharma connection with Kongtrül, he requested from him the reading-transmission of the *Amitāyus Sūtra*.¹²²⁷

To the general members of the community, he gave a talk on the Avalokiteśvara meditation, translated by N. T. Burkhar. From among the different Avalokiteśvara teachings current among the major Tibetan Buddhist traditions (including the Rgyal ba rgya mtsho of the Karma Kagyüpa and the four practical instructions [*dmar khrid*] of Tshembupa, Zla ba rgyal mtshan, Skye spong ba Rdo rje seng ge, and Dpal mo), on this occasion he taught the practices of the universally acknowledged Tibetan master and adept Thangtong Gyalpo. Most of the listeners were students of Khenpo Khathar, the resident teacher.¹²²⁸

In Woodstock at the Karma Triyana Dharmachakra center, Dezhung Rinpoche also led a monastic ordination ceremony for his American student Kunga Wangmo, who had been requesting nun ordination from him for many months. At first he had not agreed to give the vows, telling her: "You will be going to India and Nepal. If you could receive them from Chobgye Rinpoche in Lumbini, that would be wonderful—from a great lama and in such a holy place." But she insisted on receiving them from him. He then told her to start first with the vows of a celibate laywoman (*go mi dge bsnyen ma*). He also ordered her to observe the rule of not eating after noon on days when she did not have to work.

She had come from Seattle to meet him and receive nun's vows. The two of them traveled together to the Karma Triyana center in upstate New York. The day before the ordination, she lost her wristwatch at the Jetsun Sakya Center in New York City (it may even have been stolen). At first Dezhung Rinpoche could not decide whether this was a bad sign for her ordination, or just a temporary obstacle. Finally he said he supposed it was just an obstacle (*bar chad*), and the ordination went ahead.¹²²⁹

In 1979–80, the Chögyam Trungpa Tulku also came to New York and invited Dezhung Rinpoche to visit. Earlier, when Dezhung Rinpoche was young and studying under Shenga Rinpoche, Shenga had stated that he would be reborn in a non-Buddhist barbarian land to spread the Dharma. The local gods of Tibet had already arrived there, he said, adding that prayer flags would be raised on the mountains. Dezhung Rinpoche on this occasion asked Trungpa whether it was true that he had prepared a shrine-residence for the deities on a mountain near Boulder. Trungpa told him: “I saw in my prognostication-vision that the deities are there, and I prepared a house and raised the pole for a prayer flag according to Kongtrül’s *Lha tho btsugs tshul* found in the *Rin chen gter mdzod* [Kongtrül’s great compilation of treasure texts (*gter ma*)].”

Dezhung Rinpoche also asked him: “Do you plan to stay in the United States?”

Trungpa Rinpoche replied: “In my prognostication-visions I have seen that many lamas and bodhisattvas have taken birth in Canada. So I am going to settle there, as that will be of greater benefit for the Buddhist religion.”¹²³⁰

1980

Dezhung Rinpoche finally finished his main exposition of the *Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions* (*Snang gsum mdzes rgyan*) preparatory manual at Jetsun Sakya in January 1980. In January and February he gave additional teachings in connection with the *Path with Its Fruit*, concluding on February 28. On February 19, Rinpoche conferred at Jetsun Sakya the empowerment for White Tārā and the reading-transmission for the related texts. Five days later he gave seventy Jetsun Sakya members and guests the initiation for Vajra Garuḍa belonging to the “Thirteen Golden Dharmas” of Sakya.¹²³¹

On March 1, 1980, Rinpoche’s niece, Dagmo Kusho, and sister Ane Chime came to New York to visit, and Dagmo Kusho offered him an image of Jambhala. “This is the third such image of Jambhala I have received in my life,” he said, “and it is a good sign for raising funds [for Tharlam monastery].”¹²³² Dagmola also presented the center with a rare thangka of Twelve-Armed Gaṇeśa. A welcoming reception took place that included Tibetan dancing by the Orgyen Cho Dzong troupe of the Yeshe Nyingpo center. This day corresponded with the fifteenth of the first lunar month,

the holy day of the Buddha's displaying many miracles, and Rinpoche gave a short talk describing the origin of this holy day.

From the beginning of March until late April, Rinpoche gave a series of instructions on how to practice the Four Foundation Practices (*sngon 'gro 'bum bzhi*). Dagmo Kusho interpreted for one session, on March 2.

Rinpoche at this time expounded from his book *The Excellent Path of the Two Accumulations*, which had been published with Tibetan text and an English translation in 1979 from the Singapore Sakya center, Sakya Tenphel Ling. This work supplemented Rinpoche's detailed descriptions with its precise accounts of the practices and graphic schemata for making the maṇḍala offering, showing where each rice heap should go and what each one signified. Supplementing his instructions with accounts of the nearly superhuman foundation-practice feats of his own teacher, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Dezhung Rinpoche prompted many Jetsun Sakya members to embark on their own foundation practices, some in retreats. At least one refuge and prostration retreat of III,III repetitions was undertaken at the Jetsun Sakya center under Dezhung Rinpoche's close supervision (with some compassionate drill-sergeant-like assistance from Lama Norlha), and was completed shortly after Rinpoche's departure to Seattle in September 1980. In addition to the refuge and prostration retreats of Sarzotti and Biggar, David Flood went on to complete, several years later, all his foundation practices in a remote cabin in New Hampshire.¹²³³

On March 12, Dezhung Rinpoche, accompanied by Dagmo Kusho, conducted for the first time at the Jetsun Sakya center a "tantric feast" (*tshogs 'khor*) ceremony for Padmasambhava. The next day, March 13, the center celebrated the birthday of Sakya Paṇḍita, which coincidentally was also the third anniversary of Jetsun Sakya itself. On this day he gave an empowerment for Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of Wisdom, in the tradition of Bari Lotsāwa. At the end of the ceremony, Dagmo Kusho was presented with a long silken scarf decorated with the eight auspicious symbols. Members of Jetsun Sakya took this opportunity to present Rinpoche with almost four thousand dollars in support of his Tharlam monastery building project in India or Nepal, in gratitude for all the teachings he had been giving for many months.¹²³⁴

On April 10, Dezhung Rinpoche lectured at Columbia University on the differences between Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna Buddhism. On April 19, he gave the initiation for Green Tārā at Jetsun Sakya. The next day,

April 20, saw his visit to the Ch'an Zen Buddhist Center in Queens, where he gave a talk about the special features of Vajrayāna practice and bestowed the initiation of Amitābha. This was one of his last public teachings before leaving New York.¹²³⁵

In May 1980, Dezhung Rinpoche visited the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul in Minnesota a second time, giving a one-day seminar on "Tibetan Buddhist Teachings on a Fearless Death and Reincarnation" on May 17 at the Bell Museum Auditorium of the University of Minnesota, and two subsequent public teachings.¹²³⁶ During his one-month stay at the invitation of the Sakya Thubten Dargye Ling center, he gave sixteen empowerments and seven lectures.¹²³⁷

*Establishment of the Cambridge Center
and Further Teachings*

IN EARLY JUNE 1980, Dezhung Rinpoche visited Cambridge, Massachusetts, for the first time, invited by a small group of students led by Paul Johnston and David Rich. Johnston, who was later profoundly influenced by Dezhung Rinpoche, had been a disciple of His Holiness Sakya Trizin since the early 1970s and had received from him the exoteric *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras tshogs bshad*) instructions in Rajpur in winter 1975/76. He had first met Dezhung Rinpoche in the summer of 1976, when briefly returning to the United States from India. H.H. Sakya Trizin had told him shortly before he left India, "You must meet this lama, Dezhung Rinpoche. He is really Buddha! He is really Buddha!" So when Johnston was back in Boston, Jared Rhoton came up to see him, and the two of them traveled in late August back to New York to see Dezhung Rinpoche at Bodhifield House on Long Island.

Johnston found it wonderful to meet Dezhung Rinpoche, though their first meeting was jarring. Johnston had seen Tibetan monks touching their foreheads together (in respectful greeting) in India, but all the lamas he had met had always blessed him with their hands. So after doing prostrations, he ducked in to receive Rinpoche's hand on his head. Rinpoche, however, leaned forward at this moment to touch foreheads, and they collided with a resounding thump. Johnston saw stars, and he was humiliated beyond belief until he looked up and saw Rinpoche holding his head between his hands, laughing with all his might.¹²³⁸

After this meeting, Jared Rhoton went back to New York City to try to get the Jetsun Sakya center rolling, and Johnston returned to India for several more months, to study further under His Holiness Sakya Trizin. Johnston was preparing to go into Hevajra retreat when Indira Gandhi declared

her Emergency. The C.I.D. officers in Dehra Dun with whom he had good connections were transferred, and he ended up walking into a hostile C.I.D. office and being told he had three days to quit India.



115. Dezhung Rinpoche in a Boston Garden, June 1980.

Johnston's expulsion occurred just prior to His Holiness Sakya Trizin's second trip to America (in autumn 1977). So shortly after he returned, His Holiness was in New York receiving teachings from Dezhung Rinpoche. Johnston came down to New York from Boston, and His Holiness kindly arranged for him to study Tsharchen's detailed exposition of the outer stage of generation of Hevajra (the "Light-Rays of the Sun," *Nyi ma'i 'od zer*) with Dezhung Rinpoche.

Following the completion of his main teaching programs in New York, Dezhung Rinpoche flew back to Seattle (May 1978), and Johnston arranged for His Holiness to come briefly to Boston. Lee Post and Madelin Nolte of the Kagyu Trinlay Kunkhyab center arranged with the Boston Dharma-dhatu center for His Holiness to teach the "Parting from the Four Attachments" (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*) mind-training instructions there and give the Arapacana Mañjuśrī empowerment. This two-day program of His Holiness in Boston was the first time Sakyapa teachings had been given there. About

a hundred and fifty people attended. Through these teachings, David Rich, Johnston's close friend, became involved in Dharma. Rich played a vital role in all the later happenings in Boston/Cambridge.

Rich, Mary Anne Dower, and Johnston formed the nucleus of first Sakya students in Boston. Mary Anne Dower was Johnston's girlfriend at the time, and she went on to become a disciple of His Holiness Sakya Trizin's sister, Jetsun Kusho Chime Luding.

Johnston returned to New York City in late 1978 or early 1979 and ended up doing the 400,000-mantra retreat there. He had hoped to do it under Dezhung Rinpoche's guidance, but Rinpoche had been invited back to Seattle to teach and felt that as long as some activity continued at Jetsun Sakya, he didn't have to be present.

Disappointed at Rinpoche's absence, Johnston also found the conditions at Jetsun Sakya, then at 400 Riverside Drive, difficult. His Holiness had asked Johnston to help Dezhung Rinpoche in New York City, but Johnston felt forced to write to His Holiness explaining how difficult he found it to remain long-term in New York City, adding that if Dezhung Rinpoche ever wanted to come up to Boston, he could help. Johnston made the offer just to get out of living in New York, "in that roach motel of a Dharma center, surrounded by—egad!—New Yorkers."¹²³⁹

By New York standards, the Dharma center's apartment at 400 Riverside Drive was not that bad, and it would later become expensive. (Any denizens of the lower realms that it sheltered enjoyed immunity from extermination thanks to their hosts' fledgling vows to refrain from taking life.) Johnston's performing, under Rinpoche's support, the 400,000-mantra retreat there provided Rinpoche's students with a significant opportunity to help a meditator in retreat and sow the seeds for their own future retreats. The center members and their translator, Jared Rhoton (Sonam Tenzin), had discussed this. They accomplished their meritorious service through daily cooking, serving Johnston his meals, and then cleaning up the kitchen. During Johnston's meal-time breaks, one of Rinpoche's students was regularly present to talk and carry out requests or favors. One retreat assistant later considered this to have been one of the center's more fruitful projects, both for the meditator and for those who took valuable time from their lives to cook and clean.¹²⁴⁰

Johnston's offer to help in Boston caught up with him later, because His Holiness then wrote a letter to Dezhung Rinpoche, setting other wheels

rolling. Johnston promptly forgot his own letter. Several months later (in July 1979) Dezhung Rinpoche came back to New York City, and a few disciples from Boston began to commute regularly to receive teachings from him. Johnston could continue studying Tsharchen's detailed Hevajra *sādhana* exposition (the "Light-Rays of the Sun") with him, staying three days a week and returning to Boston for four.

After Dezhung Rinpoche finished teaching the *Three Visions* and related introductory teachings in New York in spring 1980, he told his Boston students, "Since I have finished my work here in New York, why don't I come up to Boston? It would be quiet, and we could spend a lot of time working on Tsharchen's Hevajra *sādhana* exposition."

Paul Johnston liked the idea. The Boston students brought Dezhung Rinpoche to Cambridge in June 1980. The second day Rinpoche was in their house at 41 Harrison Street in Somerville, a suburb of Boston, he surprised them by naming it "Sakya Shedrup Ling" and turning it into a Dharma center.

Dezhung Rinpoche taught from June 1 to 30, and Jared Rhoton interpreted. Nearly every day was filled with Dharma events. Rinpoche gave four main public lectures at the Harvard Divinity School (one each Sunday), one of the most successful lecture series the center ever sponsored. The very first lecture, on ultimate and conventional reality ("The Two Truths"), was stunning. Rinpoche was in peak form, and Rhoton's interpreting seemed perfect. At one time Dezhung Rinpoche spoke for forty minutes, which Rhoton translated in forty-five minutes. Rhoton's translation was awe-inspiring. Rhoton himself later said that he could actually see the letters written in the air in front of him. Dezhung Rinpoche also gave talks on the Bardo (June 15) and on the Three Yānas (June 22), which was really a general introductory talk on Dharma. Then he gave a brilliant and lengthy exposition of the "Parting from the Four Attachments" (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*) mind-training instructions, from a practical standpoint, based on the commentary of Gorampa.

The Harvard program attracted large audiences. For the first program two hundred people were present, which remains the most that ever attended a Sakya lama's lecture in the Boston area. The subsequent three lectures were attended by one hundred fifty, one hundred, and one hundred listeners. Meanwhile the program at Johnston and Rich's house had thirty-five to forty people in attendance each evening.¹²⁴¹

Dezhung Rinpoche gave vows of refuge and the bodhisattva vows to numerous disciples, and also initiations, including those for the bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and Vajrapāṇi; Śākyamuni Buddha; Green Tārā; Jambhala; and Mahākāla.¹²⁴²



116. Dezhung Rinpoche with a child, seated before a small shrine in Somerville, Massachusetts, June 1980.

Rinpoche also gave a three-day seminar on the *Three Visions*, in which he summarized the entire text. He gathered together a group of students and instituted weekly practice sessions. Two of Rinpoche's students from this time later distinguished themselves. Liz Wick went on to be Lama Pema Wangdrak's first translating partner, and she has done several other translations of liturgical works. Susanne Fairclough labored mightily for Dezhung Rinpoche in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles, and became one of his premier students. In all, seven students of his from Cambridge would go to receive the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* in India in winter 1980/81.¹²⁴³

During July 1980, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to New York State and visited Lama Norlha at the country retreat center of Kagyu Thubten Choling at 127 Sheafe Road, Wappingers Falls. The main building was situated not far from the Hudson River, and in years gone by it had been a brush factory. There he and Lama Norlha performed a long fire-offering ceremony and other rituals to consecrate the land, assisted by some members of both Kagyü and Sakya centers in New York City.¹²⁴⁴

Return to Seattle

Early in September 1980, Dezhung Rinpoche finally returned to Seattle. When he arrived, he found residing at the Seattle Sakya Center the outstanding Sakyapa scholar Trehor Dhongthog Trulku Tenpay Gyaltsen (b. 1933), better known outside Tibet as T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche.¹²⁴⁵ The two became close and in the following years collaborated on such important projects as writing the biography of Dezhung Rinpoche's teacher Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen and the supplement to the biography of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. Dezhung Rinpoche dictated much of these works, and Dhongthog Rinpoche later arranged and edited them, even calligraphing them for printing.

At the Sakya Thegchen Choling center on Burke Avenue in Seattle, Dezhung Rinpoche gave a three-day discourse on the Six Perfections, Cyrus Stearns interpreting. Later, on the last three days of November 1980, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the *Seven-Point Mind-Training* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*) teachings, using the manual of Gyalsay Thokmay Sangpo, at the invitation of Richard Baldwin and the Shamar Rinpoche's small center in Seattle. The first night was held at the Theosophical Society and interpreted by Lisa Anderson. The next two nights the lecture was held at the Dharmadhātu center in the University district, and the teachings were translated by Stearns. Professor David Seyfort Ruegg, Dhongthog Rinpoche, and many others attended. At the end, Rinpoche spoke about the Trungpa Tulku lineage.

Dezhung Rinpoche also visited Vancouver several times during this period—he said after his final visit there that he had visited and taught at Lama Kalu's center in Vancouver twenty-one times in all.

In about early 1981 he visited Victoria, British Columbia, and gave a series of teachings on the *Three Visions* (*Snang gsum*), preliminaries to the main *Path with Its Fruit* practices, with Cyrus Stearns interpreting. (Six tapes of

these teachings exist.) He used the *Jo lcags ma* manual, a work of Jetsun Drakpa Gyalsen that is the earliest manual on the *Three Visions* and *Three Continua*. The first night he gave a wonderful exposition on the lives of the *Path with Its Fruit* masters. Then for the next few days he taught the main topic. He also gave an initiation for Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara.¹²⁴⁶



117. Dezhung Rinpoche attending a party hosted by Seattle students.

While Rinpoche was preparing to leave for India and Nepal, Cyrus and Maruta Stearns requested the explanation of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche's text on the "Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa" (*'Khor 'das dbyer med*) theory of the *Path with Its Fruit*. He taught it to them privately at his house.¹²⁴⁷

*Return to India and the Beginning
of the Tharlam Temple in Nepal*

IN SPRING OF 1981, in about March, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to India for the first time in twenty years, planning to reestablish a monastery for the remaining Tharlam monks. He brought with him his life savings, together with whatever money his two siblings had been able to gather. He flew to Delhi and stayed for a few days in New Delhi, in South Extension, Part II, at the house of his old student Gene Smith, who was based there as deputy field director of the U.S. Library of Congress office for South Asia. He was accompanied by his brother Dr. Kunzang Nyima and an American student of long standing from Seattle, Lew Hemenway. Soon after his arrival in India, his American disciple the nun Ane Kunga Wangmo came and offered him seven statues for the future Tharlam monastery: those of the five Sakya founders and one each of Ngorchon and Tsharchen. This he interpreted to be an excellent omen.

Gene Smith kindly arranged for a large and comfortable American car to drive Dezhung Rinpoche four or five hours north to the Sakya settlement of Puruwala, near the southeastern border of Himachal Pradesh state. Dezhung Rinpoche arrived near the end of the teaching of the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* by H.H. Sakya Trizin. When the car reached the riverbank, it was met by a large formal welcoming party including Traruk Trulku, Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku, Chiwang Trulku, Gyalsay Trulku, Zimwok Trulku, the Luding Shabdrung, Sangs rgyas lags (the chamberlain of H.H. Sakya Trizin), and the Dra'u chieftain Rinchen Tsering, who greeted him most cordially and offered tea and other refreshments.

Then Dezhung Rinpoche drove on to the Drölma Palace, residence of His Holiness Sakya Trizin, where he was greeted with great ceremony

amidst the blaring of long ritual trumpets and the wailing of shawms (*rgyagling*) by H.H. Sakya Trizin, Chobgye Rinpoche, and Luding Khen Rinpoche. He was invited to stay at the palace.



118. Dezhung Rinpoche teaching at the great *Path with Its Fruit* convocation. Puruwalla, India, March 1981.

On the Mahāparinirvāṇa anniversary of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen (the twelfth of the second lunar month), Dezhung Rinpoche gave the Avalokiteśvara initiation to the whole assembly, which numbered about fifteen hundred, and he also expounded the biography of the Sakya founding master Drakpa Gyaltsen. Then he gave one hundred thousand rupees in all (ten thousand to His Holiness and twenty-five to each individual), as well as tea and food to all. The Western students present gave a welcoming party for him at the palace. He was also greeted by a welcoming committee of five monks, including Luding Gesar and Lama Kargyal.

Among the teachings Dezhung Rinpoche received at the time were the initiation of Vajranairātmyā from Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche Ngawang Khyenrab Lekshay Gyatso (b. 1919), and the Vajrayoginī blessing from Ngor Luding Khenpo Jamyang Tenpay Nyima (Luding Khenpo, b. 1931), which were also received by the whole assembly. He himself gave the initiation for White Tārā on two separate occasions, once for Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche and once to the Dra'u chieftain Rinchen Tsering. He also gave at the palace initiations for Bhūtaḍāmara and Arapacana Mañjuśrī to Bir and

Mundgod monks, and a long-life empowerment to the people of the Puruwala settlement.¹²⁴⁸

For several weeks before Dezhung Rinpoche's arrival, his American students at the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings had been excited about his possible appearance. All sorts of rumors went around about whether he would come. When one day an automobile rolled up and Rinpoche got out, all his Western disciples rushed to greet him. A shock awaited them because, from the moment he alighted from the vehicle, he became the "Great Lama." In the West his students were so used to his low-key "Uncle Trulkula" persona that it seemed that Rinpoche was only now revealing himself for who he truly was—a great abbot, master of Buddhadharma, inheritor of the Buddha's teaching. Some students fell back from the vehicle in awe and disbelief. He had put on the mantle of grandeur, and it was amazing to witness. Seeing the hundreds of Tibetans bowed low, with robes covering their mouths, displaying utmost reverence, his American disciples were struck by the utter respect that Dezhung Rinpoche commanded.

Several of Dezhung Rinpoche's Western students rejoiced at seeing him as the Great Lama, because for many years they had introduced people to him, only to have him say, "Oh, I'm just an old monk!" The unknowing Westerners had believed him. Now Rinpoche was revealed as the great bodhisattva and lord of Dharma he truly was.

Rinpoche's stay in Puruwala was eventful. When he gave, as expected, the Avalokiteśvara empowerment to the entire assembly of a thousand monks and three to four hundred laypeople, he asked Jared Rhoton to interpret it into English. He asked the Tibetan monks to have patience during the translation, explaining that his Western students always had to sit through lengthy translations from Tibetan into English, and that Tibetans should have a little patience too!

That evening the young lama Jamyang Khyentse (Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku) and Rinpoche's Western students hosted a dinner for Dezhung Rinpoche. Rinpoche's Chinese and Western students were invited to attend, and they gave speeches about Rinpoche and his activities at the various centers in North America. It was a wonderful occasion. A photograph exists from this party, showing the two lamas together.

The young Jamyang Khyentse requested the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti* reading-transmission from Dezhung Rinpoche for their initial religious

connection at this, their first meeting. He was seeking to establish a disciple-guru relationship with Dezhung Rinpoche. Rinpoche agreed to give the transmission, but suggested that David Rich and Paul Johnston also be present.

Johnston was on his way back to America at this time and requested Dezhung Rinpoche's blessing. In response, Dezhung Rinpoche said some mantras and placed his rosary atop Johnston's head. Johnston's hair was long, and since many counters and other things dangled from Dezhung Rinpoche's rosary, somehow the rosary and Johnston's hair became completely entangled. Rinpoche kept saying prayers and mantras, all the while busily trying to unknot the tangles of beads and hair. He was extremely patient and kept praying on and on; meanwhile Johnston's face turned ever deepening shades of red. This went on for so long that everyone present began laughing, and even Rinpoche emitted bursts of laughter between mantras. Finally, after a full fifteen minutes of patient work, Rinpoche disentangled the last strand. "Don't worry," he told Johnston. "It's a good sign that we have a strong connection and will meet again!"

Johnston later reflected that Dezhung Rinpoche was, for him, the very image of the Nirmāṇakāya Buddha. As he said, "Even as in old age Dezhung Rinpoche became more wizened and thinner, he shone with even greater radiance. If anyone embodied the three vows thoroughly, it was Dezhung Rinpoche."¹²⁴⁹

The remaining original monks from Tharlam who had made it to India—then barely four or five survivors—came from Mundgod and Bylakuppe in south India, from Kamrao (the Gapa settlement) and elsewhere to meet Dezhung Rinpoche. The leader was their abbot, or *mkhan po*, Jamyang Sherab, a good scholar of grammar and composition, who had received half of the *Compendium of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) empowerments from Rinpoche at Tharlam in 1958 before escaping with him to Lhasa and India, and who in recent years had taken up residence at a temple in Taiwan. The monks were happy to know that Rinpoche had definite plans to found a new monastery in South Asia.

The Tharlam monk Damchö Nakpo in fact urged Rinpoche to build one immediately at the Mundgod Tibetan settlement in south India. But when Dezhung Rinpoche talked with Traruk Rinpoche (a senior Ngorpa lama, also from Gapa in Kham, then settled outside Kathmandu), the latter

encouraged him to come to Nepal and build his monastery there. Traruk Rinpoche told him, “Nowadays, most lamas are building monasteries in Nepal. It is a holy place. It is convenient for going to Tibet and also for contacting foreign students and patrons. In case you decide to come to Nepal, we can try to help you. I cannot support the building project financially, but whatever moral support I can give, I will.” Dezhung Rinpoche was favorably impressed by this offer and said he would consider it.

“Moreover,” said Traruk Trulku, “if you can come to Nepal, then Luding Khenpo, Khyentse Rinpoche, some others and I would like to request several important teachings from you.”¹²⁵⁰ So please come to Nepal before you make your final decision.”¹²⁵¹

After the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings had concluded, H.H. Sakya Trizin requested and received from Dezhung Rinpoche the text-transmission for the biography of Ngor Thartse abbot Champa Kunga Tenpay Gyaltzen (1829–1870) composed by Khuna Choktrül Jamyang Sherab Gyatso (d. ca. 1893/94). Dezhung Rinpoche had received this transmission from both Gatön and Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö. Dezhung Rinpoche also taught His Holiness the Great Vajrakilaya Commentary (*Phur pa'i stod smad rnam bshad*) of Ameshap and also the Lesser Vajrakilaya Commentary (*Phur chung rnam bshad bdud rtsi'i snying thig*). He had received these teachings from the father of His Holiness, Ngawang Kunga Rinchen. When he passed on these instructions to Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche was the last person alive known to possess them. His Holiness was deeply grateful to receive this precious transmission.

Other teachings that Dezhung Rinpoche bestowed on H.H. Sakya Trizin at this time were the *Mkha' spyod* “*Gtom kam*” instruction manual (in volume 2 of the addenda to the *Rgyud sde kun btus*), which he had received from Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö; the reading-transmission for the biography of Gatön by Anjam Rinpoche; the *Sa stod byin brlabs rgya mtsho*; and the blessings of Vajrayoginī (*Rnal 'byor ma'i byin brlabs*) as a mad-woman, transmitted to Dezhung Rinpoche through the lineage of Khyabdak Ngawang Samten of Jyekundo. This last teaching was an oral transmission (*snyan brgyud*) that Dezhung Rinpoche had received from Gatön. As the book had been lost, Rinpoche had to teach it from memory. He also gave His Holiness the “Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa” (*Khor 'das dbyer med*) instructions of Gatön: the text *Bskal bzang snying gi bdud rtsi*.¹²⁵²

At the end of the teachings, Gene Smith sent a car to bring Rinpoche back from Himachal Pradesh to Delhi. In all, Dezhung Rinpoche stayed about one month (most of March?) at Puruwala.

Journey to Nepal

As soon as he had given all the teachings requested of him at the Sakya settlement, Dezhung Rinpoche prepared to leave Himachal Pradesh and journey farther east in India to the Kalimpong-Darjeeling-Sikkim area and to Nepal. His aim was to go to Rumtek in Sikkim to expound the Hevajra Tantra (*Rgyud brtag pa gnyis pa*), as His Holiness the Karmapa had previously (in America) requested. Moreover, Kalu Rinpoche had urged him to come to Sonada near Darjeeling to establish the new Tharlam monastery, promising to help him if he did so.

But in the meantime Traruk Rinpoche strongly requested Rinpoche to come to Nepal, so he decided to visit Kathmandu before going to the Kalimpong-Darjeeling area in northern West Bengal. Nepal was a country he had never seen before, and it possessed many holy spots for a Buddhist pilgrim. Moreover, Traruk Rinpoche and others had formally invited him to come and give the reading-transmission for the collected works of the five Sakya founders (*Sa skya bka' 'bum*). He knew that if he gave this transmission there to many lamas, the lineage would be unlikely to die out soon (he had already given it in North America to H.H. Sakya Trizin). The lamas inviting him to come to Traruk Rinpoche's temple to give this transmission were Traruk Rinpoche, Luding Khenpo, Luding Shabdrung, Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku, and Tharlam Khenpo Jamyang Sherab.

For the trip to Nepal, two old Tharlam monks (the two Damchö: "Dkar po" and "Nag po") escorted Dezhung Rinpoche to Delhi. Dr. Kunzang Nyima and Lew Hemenway also came as personal attendants on the journey to Nepal. When he arrived at Kathmandu Tribhuvan Airport (in April 1981), he was respectfully received by Traruk Rinpoche, Luding Khenpo, Luding Shabdrung, and others.

Dezhung Rinpoche took up residence at the monastery of Traruk Rinpoche, brTse chen bshad sgrub gling, in Bodhnath and in mid-April began giving the requested reading-transmission of the works of the Sakya founders. When he was reading the first volume of the works of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, 'Khrul zhig Rinpoche of Solu Khumbu as well as Dilgo

Khyentse's grandson, Shechen Rabjam, joined the group of listeners. Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and Mchog gling Trulku, the sons of Trulku Orgyan (b. 1920), also came, making seven trulkus in all.

After completing one volume, Dezhung Rinpoche fell ill with a digestive complaint. This forced him to suspend the teachings for three weeks. But he recovered and, in about May 1981, completed the reading-transmission for the full fifteen-volume collection. During the transmission for the collected writings of Sakya Paṇḍita (three volumes), a number of Nyingma



119. Gathering of notable Sakya lamas at Traruk Rinpoche's monastery in Nepal (from left): Luding Shabdrung, Luding Khenpo, Chobgye Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche, and Traruk Trulku. Bodhnath, Nepal, January 10, 1982.

lamas also came, including Khetsun Sangpo (Mkhas btsun bzang po, b. 1921) and his seminary students. Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche also came especially to hear the text-transmission of Sapaṇ's collected writings. The transmission of the complete collection took about a month (excluding the sick period). Then the original group of lamas asked Dezhung Rinpoche to impart the text-transmission for the eleven volumes of the collected writings of Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen, which he did.

While staying in Traruk Trulku's monastery, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the complete "Ten Wrathful Deities" (*Khro bo bcu*) initiation and Brag

rdzong ma instructions for Mahākāla practice to a group of about forty lamas, monks, and laypeople in the upstairs room of the monastery. The main requesters were Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche, Luding Khenpo, Traruk Rinpoche, Luding Shabdrung, and Dzongsar Khyentse. Then the two younger lamas went to Pharping to do the Mahākāla retreat to qualify them for receiving the secret instructions (*gsang khrid*) for Mahākāla Gurgyi Gönpö and Shalshipa. He gave those instructions at Pharping to a group of five, including Luding Khenpo and Luding Shabdrung, Dzongsar Khyentse, Traruk Rinpoche, and Ri seng ge (an attendant of Luding Khenpo).¹²⁵³

During this visit to the holy shrine of Pharping, the residence of the Newar Pham thing brothers, disciples of Nāropa, he gave the blessings and meditation instructions of Vajrayoginī in the special transmission of Khyabdak Ngawang Samten to a number of lamas, including Luding Khenpo, Luding Shabdrung, and Traruk Trulku.¹²⁵⁴ A few minutes after he had finished giving this blessing, a Gelukpa geshe who had completed eleven years of intensive Vajrayoginī practice came and gave them a tea offering of rich, milky tea and small *tsha tsha* molded images of Vajrayoginī. Dezhung Rinpoche was delighted at this excellent sign, saying: “This is a definite sign that one will achieve success, if one practices.”¹²⁵⁵

In Bodhnath, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the “Freedom from the Four Attachments” (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*) mind-training teachings to Dilgo Khyentse and several of the latter’s students, including the doctor-lama Trogawa Rinpoche (b. 1932). For this he used the commentary by Gorampa.¹²⁵⁶

Some Bhutanese lamas had heard others saying that Dezhung Rinpoche had received teachings from Khenchen Shenga. “Impossible!” they replied. “Shenga passed away too long ago, and none of his direct students is alive!” But when they met Dezhung Rinpoche, they were surprised to learn that he had indeed been a student of Shenga some sixty or sixty-five years before. Later Chatral Sangyay Dorje (whom Dezhung Rinpoche had known from Darjeeling in 1960) visited Rinpoche and invited him to give an exposition of the *Entrance into the Bodhisattva’s Career* (*Bodhicaryāvatāra*) in Shenga’s tradition. Rinpoche agreed, but these teachings never took place. Chatral Rinpoche praised him highly to others, saying, “Such a lama is very hard to find these days.”¹²⁵⁷

Dezhung Rinpoche still had not decided where to build his monastery. The three most promising possibilities were the Darjeeling-Kalimpong area

(including Sonada), the Kathmandu Valley, and south India. He asked H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche to perform a *mo* divination. Dudjom Rinpoche did so and reported, “The divination indicates three places in descending order: best of all is Nepal, second best would be Sonada, and third best would be south India.”¹²⁵⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche also asked the advice of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, who replied: “Nepal is best if we rely on the predictions of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava. I myself am establishing my monastery here.” Meanwhile Dezhung Rinpoche did his own divinations and examined his dreams and other signs. Again Nepal was indicated. He reached his final decision to build in Nepal in the Kathmandu Valley.

After deciding, Rinpoche recalled to his disciples the favorable omens that had occurred one day in New York in 1979 at the Jetsun Sakya center. It had been the holy day of Sakya Paṇḍita’s passing (the fourteenth day of the eleventh lunar month). On this day Gene Smith had arrived from Washington, D.C. and offered him a fine statue of Sakya Paṇḍita that he had found for him in Nepal. Sonam Tenzin (Jared Rhoton) at that time had asked Dezhung Rinpoche to allow all students to practice the Sakya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga (*Sa ’jam sbag sgrub*) daily and had distributed the *sādhana*. Then Sogyal Lhakhar phoned, offering to show for free a film at Jetsun Sakya that night. The film was made in Traruk Rinpoche’s monastery, and especially depicted was the rite of Tārā to dispel war and dissension. Later, Dezhung Rinpoche said: “These signs meant that it was good to meet Traruk Trulku (whom he had previously not known personally), who will help establish Tharlam monastery in a place protected by Tārā.”¹²⁵⁹

At this point Dezhung Rinpoche approached Traruk Rinpoche, explaining his hopes and his own not very strong financial position. “So far, I have been able to save up only thirty-five or forty thousand American dollars. Will that be enough?” he asked.¹²⁶⁰

“It won’t be enough, but that is a very good beginning,” replied Traruk Rinpoche. “I myself started my monastery here with only eight thousand Nepali rupees in hand. So in comparison, thirty-five thousand American dollars is a lot!”¹²⁶¹

In November 1981, soon after the passing of His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa Rangjung Rikpay Dorje (b. 1923, d. November 5, 1981),¹²⁶² Dezhung Rinpoche received a visit from Cyrus Stearns and Maruta Kalnins

Stearns. They found him to be very sad. When they tried to say something less gloomy, mentioning the fact that the Karmapa would surely be reborn again, Rinpoche replied: “Yes, we need not feel sad for him. Great beings



120. Diphu (Dephuk) Rinpoche late in life in Nepal (1980s).

such as he just go higher and higher. But we have reason to be sad. We will never see that face again or hear again that voice.”¹²⁶³

When Rinpoche was still looking for a building site for his monastery, he told Paul Johnston that he intended to build the monastery, finish one hundred million *Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ* mantras, and then die. He added that not only did he have no fear of dying and no regrets, but he was actually looking forward to his death. He hoped he would go to Sukhāvātī, because he had some questions for the five great founding masters of Sakya about the *Path with Its Fruit*. He said that although he had faith for the entire Buddhist dharma, he had a particular attachment to the *Path with Its Fruit* and still had a few questions he needed answered.¹²⁶⁴

In late 1981, after many months of searching, Dezhung Rinpoche was able to finalize the purchase of a small plot of land for his monastery. He had considered several other plots, but then decided on this one, though there

remained several nagging problems such as that the land had no right-of-way for a driveway. It was completely cut off. Some people joked at the time, “Dezhung Rinpoche will have to build his monastery with a helicopter!”¹²⁶⁵ In addition, this was only about one-fourth of the desired plot (the end of the plot, where his residence was built), and it was by no means sure the owners would ever sell as much as they needed.¹²⁶⁶

The day of the purchase, Dezhung Rinpoche was elated. That night, in a dream, he saw himself home in Tharlam monastery, sitting on Gatön’s throne. When he awoke, he immediately wrote down two supplementary verses of the supplication (*gsol ’debs*) to Gatön. He left these on his writing table, saying to his attendant, “I wrote these lines for Gatön, but they can be added to the prayers to any lama.”¹²⁶⁷

At some point during his first year in Nepal, Rinpoche sponsored the whitewashing of the three holiest stūpas in Nepal: Swayambhunāth, Bodhnath, and Nāmo Buddha (Tib. *Stag mo lus shyin*). He also offered new canopies for each stūpa.

1982

For many months, Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku (b. 1960) had been insistently requesting that Dezhung Rinpoche give the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit*, but Rinpoche never assented. When asked why he was not willing to give these teachings, Rinpoche would answer: “Look in the *Path with Its Fruit* biographies!”¹²⁶⁸ He also said: “I was given a command by Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö to give the *Path with Its Fruit*. But according to my knowledge, the teacher must fulfill certain requirements [*dbang, byin brlabs*, and so on], and from this point of view, I am unable to transmit it.”¹²⁶⁹ He also quoted Dza Paltrül many times to the effect that “I don’t give the initiations because I realize the full implications of what is entailed for both master and disciple”—that is, that the tantric vows (*dam tshig*) are so holy and important, but most people don’t keep them.¹²⁷⁰ He was also hesitant to give it because he only performed the full Hevajra *sādhana* (*Lam dus*) once a day. But that, at least, was not an insuperable obstacle. Dezhung Anjam Trulku had once asked Gatön precisely this question, and Gatön had explained: “The four times a day mentioned by Virupa in the *Vajra Verses of the Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam ’bras rdo rje tshig rkang*) is for attaining buddhahood in this life. But if one does it once per

day and if one is careful not to transgress the times, then that is enough for not breaking the lineage of the empowerment (*dbang gi brgyud pa*) and the force of blessing (*byin brlabs gyi nus pa*).¹²⁷¹

One day in mid-January 1982, the young Khyentse trulku visited Dezhung Rinpoche again and implored him with all his heart, breaking down in tears. Rinpoche finally could not turn him down. “You are the rebirth of my lama,” he said. He agreed to give the instructions over the course of the next six months and even fixed a date to begin: four days later.

But just before the teachings were to begin, many Chinese Buddhist patrons from Malaysia and Singapore suddenly arrived in Nepal on pilgrimage. The main person in the party was the wife of Mr. Ah Sang, a tin-mining magnate. She and her husband had been devoted and generous patrons of Tibetan lamas. When she came on this occasion to see Traruk Trulku, he introduced Dezhung Rinpoche to her and praised him highly.

After this introduction, for which he thanked Traruk Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche asked the great patroness whether she could support the building of the new Tharlam temple. She replied: “I cannot donate to the monastery directly on a big scale, but if Rinpoche can come to South-east Asia, there are many Buddhists there. If you would like to visit, I will be glad to offer the air ticket!”

Dezhung Rinpoche was pleased by this kind gesture and decided to go, since his main priority was still fundraising for the planned temple building.¹²⁷² He then abruptly called off the planned *Path with Its Fruit* teachings, remarking to his disciple Cyrus Stearns: “I have considered what will be of the most benefit. I vowed to Lekpa Rinpoche to care for and maintain Tharlam monastery. Many others can give the *Path with Its Fruit*.¹²⁷³

So instead of beginning the hoped-for teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche and several other lamas and attendants prepared to go separately to Malaysia. He left behind a number of extremely disappointed disciples. But it was important to gather funds if he were to succeed in his big project. In those days he used to joke: “I am Gayadhara; I need a lot of gold!” (*nga ga ya dha ra yin/ nga gser mang po dgos kyi 'dug!*).¹²⁷⁴

The Journey to Southeast Asia

IN MID-JANUARY 1982, Dezhung Rinpoche departed from Kathmandu by air for Southeast Asia, mainly at the invitation of Chinese Buddhist patrons and centers in Malaysia. After a stopover in Bangkok, he flew on to Malaysia. (Also invited, but flying separately, were the lamas Luding Khenpo and Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku.) Cyrus Stearns came soon afterward as interpreter, at the invitation of the Singapore and Kuching centers. Dezhung Rinpoche arrived first in Ipoh, the town in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula where his main patrons, Mr. and Mrs. Ah Sang, had their home.

On January 22, Dezhung Rinpoche gave private advice to Cyrus and Maruta Kalnins Stearns on how to deal with people who are treating one badly. “One must train oneself in dealing with situations without liking or disliking,” he instructed them. “Look at the nature of mind! This is all just the magical manifestation of mind, and as such there is nothing to be attached to or to hate. It’s insubstantial, just like a dream or a mirage. There is no telling who is a friend or enemy, anyway—often it turns out to be just the opposite of what you had thought before. It’s very changeable!”

Rinpoche spent the Chinese lunar New Year in Ipoh (it began on January 24) and there gave a long-life initiation. On the evening of January 24, he explained that one could experience transitory wisdom sometimes, but without real wisdom, it would not last. To have it continuously is to be in a state of equanimity, without attachment to friends or hatred toward enemies. Talking about instructions like the Great Perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po*), which can cause enlightenment in an instant, he said: “That is so for someone whose karma has matured just to the point where it can happen. That’s the hard part.”

In the cave temple at Ipoh, Rinpoche gave minor initiations for Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and other deities, and, in a ceremony accompanied by many beautiful shrine offerings, conferred the bodhisattva vows upon numerous students. On February 5 he gave the initiation for the White Mahākāla. His students Cyrus and Maruta Kalnins Stearns picked a lotus for him from the pond outside his bedroom window. The evening of February 6, he told stories about the mad adept Champa Tendzin, followed by ghost stories—for which the children were permitted to stay up. On February 7, he began the extensive Avalokiteśvara practical instructions in the tradition of Tshembupa for Mr. Ah Sang, a teaching given in Rinpoche's room at the Ipoh cave monastery. These teachings concluded on February 12.

On February 9, Rinpoche consulted with his students Cyrus Stearns and Maruta Kalnins Stearns, who had decided to leave for Singapore on February 17 to meet Luding Khenpo there and to continue with him to Kuching, East Malaysia, to interpret for him. There had been inexplicable jealousy and ill-will toward them on the part of one of Rinpoche's Tibetan attendants, who had also influenced some of the Chinese patrons against them. They had been discussing this for over two weeks with Dezhung Rinpoche and came to tell Rinpoche their decision as he sat at the dinner table at Mr. Ah Sang's home. "We are going back to the cave," they finally said, with glum expressions.

Rinpoche quoted at once a yogic song of Milarepa about sitting in the cave, feeling depressed. He added: "This is excellent, because without sadness and renunciation, there would be no practicing of religion. The sudden deaths of Lekpa Rinpoche's father and teacher spurred him to enter his fifteen-year retreat, during which he attained realization. Eating good food and sitting around comfortably is no good," he said, gesturing at the opulent surroundings of Mr. Ah Sang's house.

Later, in Kuching, while staying in the home of Mr. Joseph Ling, Rinpoche told them in a similar vein: "There's nothing easy about practicing Dharma. You have to sit up, holding the body straight, perform the practice, and then dedicate the merit; you cannot just lie around. Moreover, you don't have to do it just a little, but every single day!"¹²⁷⁵

On February 12 and 15, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the full teachings of Dza Paltrül's Great Perfection instructions, *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg*. This was given to Mr. Ah Sang in Rinpoche's room at the monastery on February 12 and at Ah Sang's home on February 15, interpreted by Cyrus Stearns.¹²⁷⁶

While in Ipoh, Rinpoche also performed memorial prayers for a deceased Chinese nun. During the stay at the cave temple at Ipoh, Dezhung Rinpoche dictated to Cyrus Stearns from memory a Mahākāla *bskang gso* liturgy composed by Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe. He later checked Stearns' text for accuracy. He could remember not only the main text, but also every word of the colophon. After Stearns had recopied it in the form of a nice new Tibetan-style book, they began to recite it in the evenings. Later, Rinpoche had it photocopied and had his monks recite it regularly at the new Tharlam monastery in Nepal. He joked then that if the text was ever recovered from Kham, they would see how bad his memory really was!¹²⁷⁷

While Rinpoche was in Malaysia, he received the good news that a slender strip of land had been purchased for the driveway (and sole right-of-way) to the temple building site in Nepal. This had been accomplished in his absence through the strenuous efforts of Traruk Rinpoche, who had purchased it in his own name and had used his own money.¹²⁷⁸ Now the monastery building plans could definitely go forward. A Chinese patron had donated 100,000 Nepalese rupees for the strip of land, and this turned out to be nearly enough to buy it.¹²⁷⁹ Then gradually, through two or three further purchases, more land could be bought.

From Ipoh, Dezhung Rinpoche traveled to Taiping, and from there to Penang. In Malaysia, at the request of his disciple Miss Yong Sue-Chen, who accompanied him everywhere in Southeast Asia, he taught the Hevajra *sādhana* (*Lam dus*) in several sessions.

During February and most of March, Rinpoche remained in West Malaysia, including Ipoh, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur. Once, in Penang, he was approached by a kung-fu master in his fifties. The master gave an impressive demonstration of his physical powers, ordering his students to punch him with great force in the stomach. He told Rinpoche: "Though I am strong in the rest of my body, my voice has deteriorated and lost its former good qualities. Can you give me instructions for this?" He marveled that Rinpoche's voice was still so strong, clear, and supple even at the age of seventy-six.¹²⁸⁰

On March 30, 1982, Dezhung Rinpoche and his party left West Malaysia and went to Kuching in Sarawak, East Malaysia. He stayed at the beautiful home of Mr. Joseph Ling, his main sponsor there, giving almost daily

teachings and initiations. The major teaching he gave in Kuching was the Tshem bu—tradition practical instructions of Avalokiteśvara. In private he also gave to a small group the Dur khrod Bdag po initiation, as well as initiations for two of the “Cycle of Three Red Deities” (*Dmar po skor gsum*).¹²⁸¹

On March 31, Rinpoche gave an initiation for the Medicine Buddha and, on April 1, an initiation for the protector Mahākāla Gurgyi Gönpö. On April 3, he gave an initiation for the combined practice of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāmudrā. On April 4, he gave a long-life blessing (Thangtong Gyalpo and Padmasambhava, *’Chi med dpal gter*); on April 19, an initiation for Red Jambhala (from the *gter ma* tradition of Grwa pa Mngon shes); and on April 21, the blessings and instructions for the Sakya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga in great detail. On April 24, he gave the reading-transmission for Lekpa Rinpoche’s Mahākāla *gser skyems* ritual and for the one he himself had written. He also gave an explanation of the Amitābha sleep-yoga practice. Other initiations he gave included those for the Multicolored Garuḍa and for Seng dgon ma in the Gongkar tradition. He taught a meditation on Śākyamuni Buddha composed by Ju Mipham but written down on this occasion by Rinpoche from memory without consulting any text. Cyrus Stearns interpreted throughout.

Visit to Singapore

In early May 1982, Dezhung Rinpoche left Malaysia for Singapore, where he spent most of that month at the Singapore Buddha Sasana Society, then at 9 Topaz Road. On May 6, he taught as his first public teaching Mahāmudrā in the Avalokiteśvara meditation, that is, the *Mdo khamshar phyogs ma* Avalokiteśvara *sādhana* by Könchok Lhündrup. On May 8, the holy day of Vesak, he gave initiations for Buddha Śākyamuni and the Sixteen Elders (*Gnas brtan bcu drug*).

On May 10, Rinpoche gave the initiation of the Multicolored Garuḍa. On May 13, at the urgent request of the students in Singapore, he taught the Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa (*Khor ’das dbyer med*) view of the *Path with Its Fruit* (but only to those who had already received the *Lam ’bras*). In the past, he had refused to teach this, but this time he agreed. He used for his text the *Bskal bzang snying gi bdud rtsi* of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa.¹²⁸² On May 15 he gave initiations for Samantabhadra and Red Jambhala and, on the evening of May 19, the initiation for Cundi Bodhisattva

to a large group of three or four hundred people. This was the only teaching planned for the evening, but since he completed the ceremony within one hour, the resident lama (Lama Tashi Tenzin) stood up and requested that he teach the consciousness-transference practice (*'pho ba*). Rinpoche immediately assented, to the surprise of some of the students, who had not seen this given to large groups (believing that students were normally expected to go into retreat after the teaching).

Several center members were deeply impressed by the efficaciousness of Dezhung Rinpoche's teachings. "Dezhung Rinpoche seemed ordinary, but you could clearly see the results of his teachings," said Mr. Ng Goo Teck later. At the time Dezhung Rinpoche gave the *'pho ba* teachings, for instance, Ng nearly lost consciousness and afterward was disturbed by this. He asked Jay Goldberg (Rev. Ngawang Samten) about it, who said they should ask Dezhung Rinpoche. When they did so, Rinpoche had Dr. Kunzang Nyima examine Ng, and Dr. Nyima, who was joking around the whole time, finally discovered a tiny bump on the top of Ng's head. Dr. Kunzang Nyima then said a short prayer and pressed it back down. Mr. Ng could not understand how merely by listening to and hearing the teachings he could be so strongly affected. It seemed scientifically impossible.¹²⁸³

Rinpoche also led a two-day *smyang-gnas* fasting retreat that had surprising results for some disciples. The same student, Mr. Ng Goo Teck, felt like he was burning inside on the second night. He wanted to ask Dezhung Rinpoche what this meant, but Jay Goldberg (Ngawang Samten) told him they should not speak yet, so he had to wait until the following day. That night he had to take a bath in ice-cold water just to cool down.

The next morning Dezhung Rinpoche explained the possible results of such practices, including that some might feel a burning hot sensation, such as those who as fisherman had caught fish and left them to die in the hot sun. Jay Goldberg began laughing and pointed to Ng. Dezhung Rinpoche then questioned Ng, asking if he might have done anything similar in his youth. Ng thought back and suddenly remembered as a child catching little fish, putting them in a can, and then boiling them over a fire.¹²⁸⁴

One afternoon when the center had no heavy schedule (a Wednesday, probably after the fasting retreat), when Dezhung Rinpoche was resting, he received a visit from a young woman from East Malaysia who had come mainly out of curiosity, wanting to see what a lama was like. Rinpoche

asked his interpreter, the American Jay Goldberg, to find out who the woman was.¹²⁸⁵ As Goldberg later recalled:¹²⁸⁶

It was during Dezhung Rinpoche's first tour of Southeast Asia when he visited Malaysia, Singapore and East Malaysia (i.e., Borneo). He was accompanied by Dr. Nyima, Kargyal (now known as Lama Kalsang), and one other attendant whose name I cannot now recollect. Cyrus and Maruta [Kalnins Stearns] had translated for him in Kuching, East Malaysia, and I was to translate for him on the next leg of his tour in Singapore. It was a busy time, with several Sakya lamas coming through the area at the same time. Rinpoche stayed in Singapore for about three weeks, giving teachings and initiations and raising funds for the soon to be built Tharlam monastery.

One afternoon everyone was gone from the Sakya Tenphel Ling center. The resident lama—Lama Ponlop Tashi Tenzin—and Rinpoche's entire party went out shopping, leaving Rinpoche by himself at the center. I and a woman, who was cooking for the center at the time, were the only other people there. It was a quiet afternoon and I was sitting with Rinpoche listening to some of his inexhaustible stories about the lives of past lamas. The cook was outside in the kitchen.

A little later one of the young, high-school-age members of the center came to visit Rinpoche, accompanied by a young friend of his. She was an eighteen-year-old woman from Sabah, East Malaysia, who was studying in Singapore at the time. Another young woman friend also came with them.

The young woman explained that for the past couple of years she had been waking up in the middle of the night with marks on her arms and legs. She described these marks as black and blue spots that appeared in the form of fingerprints. Rinpoche immediately responded that he thought the girl was possessed by a *gdon*, an evil spirit. I translated accordingly.

When asked what would be best to help the girl, Rinpoche said that it would be good for her to recite the mantra of Guru Rinpoche. I mentioned that she did not know that mantra and requested Rinpoche to give her the transmission so she could recite it. Rinpoche recited the mantra *Oṃ aḥ hūṃ vajra guru padme siddhi hūṃ* one

time and then asked the girl to repeat it after him. On the next recitation, as the girl was trying to recite it with him, suddenly her arms and legs shot out straight, her eyes began to bulge tremendously, and she let out the most piercing, horrifying scream I had ever heard. Rinpoche looked at me and said, “Well, I was right. She is possessed by a *gdon*.”

The girl continued screaming, and I asked Rinpoche what should be done. He requested me to get some bread. He applied the bread to the girl’s body and chanted offerings to the *gdon*, requesting it to take these offerings and leave the girl. As Rinpoche touched her body with the bread, she let out another scream each time. Rinpoche thought it best for her to have a Severance (*Gcod*) ritual performed, and he mentioned that Dr. Nyima could chant this ritual very melodiously. So he asked her to rest in another part of the temple, and we would wait for the evening when Kunzang Nyima returned to assist in the ritual.

That evening he called Kunzang Nyima and all the monks together. Then he invited the young woman in with several lay friends, posting Ng Goo Teck at the door to keep other people out.¹²⁸⁷ As Jay Goldberg, who participated in the ceremony, witnessed:¹²⁸⁸

That evening, Dr. Nyima first examined the girl. He thought that she was definitely possessed, but by a *shi dre*, i.e., the spirit of a dead person. This commenced a heated debate between Rinpoche and Dr. Nyima as to which one of them was correct in his assessment of the type of spirit. I remember saying at that time, “Well, in any case, can’t we just start the ritual and get rid of whatever is bothering her?”

The girl was asked to lie down, and her friend sat next to her. The lights were turned off, and Dr. Nyima started the chanting. As the drum was beat and the chanting was done in the “Severance-Ritual” *gcod* style and tone, the girl commenced to scream louder and louder. She was writhing on the floor, as if she were in great pain. She continued in this mode throughout the entire ritual. When the lights were turned back on I saw what really looked like fingerprint marks on her arms and legs. It did really appear as if

someone had been pressing her in those spots. Rinpoche asked her to go home and relax and said that she would be better.

However, the next evening she returned, complaining of great fear and discomfort in her body. As she sat before Rinpoche, she started to moan again. Rinpoche, the epitome of compassion incarnate, was beginning to get frustrated and angry with the spirit possessing her. He began chanting the *Heart Sūtra* and tried to get up from the bed he was sitting on. His face turned incredibly wrathful as he chanted the repelling verses of the *Heart Sūtra*. His eyes glared, and his appearance transformed into a wrathful manifestation the likes of which I had never seen in Rinpoche before. Unfortunately, because of his bad knee, he wasn't able to get up. He gave his holy rosary that he was going to hit the girl with to Dr. Nyima and asked him to strike her with it. Dr. Nyima hit her gently with the rosary, but the girl screamed and writhed with each stroke. At that point Dr. Nyima started pressing his hand into the solar plexus of the girl. She screamed more and more. He then grabbed the ring finger of her left hand and applied pressure to it while sliding his fingers until they reached the last joint of the girl's finger. The tip of her finger was bright red. He lifted the finger in front of the girl's eyes which bulged larger and larger. He then brought that finger over to the right side of her neck and applied it there. At that moment, the girl instantly became subdued and fell quiet. As he continued to apply her fingertip to her neck the girl actually fell asleep. They let her lie there sleeping for some time. After awhile, she awoke, and Rinpoche asked her to leave the temple and rest in her home.

I later asked Rinpoche if the spirit had left her. He said that he wasn't sure, since it had been within her for such a long time. He felt that if she hadn't come for help from some lama, she would have either died or gone insane. As it was, he felt she had a good chance of getting better, but that it would take some time.

Over the next several weeks, during the remainder of Rinpoche's visit to Singapore and Malaysia, the girl came for blessings. Later, in Malaysia, Rinpoche and Luding Khen Rinpoche together performed a ritual on her behalf. The members of Sakya Tenphel Ling, under the guidance of Lama Tashi Tenzin, also recited the mantra of Guru Rinpoche one hundred thousand times. During that recitation, a

few of the members remarked of hearing screams just outside the center (I was one of the people to hear those screams).

I later learned that the girl returned to East Malaysia and was doing well. She told a friend that she felt fine except when someone would bring up the subject. Then she would feel an uneasy sensation come over her, like a dark cloud, but the fingerprints and other signs were completely gone.

Dezhung Rinpoche continued his busy teaching schedule. On May 20 he gave another initiation for four-armed Avalokiteśvara. On May 22, which corresponded to the anniversary of Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche's passing, he called four or five close disciples to teach them the very short Hevajra *Lam dus sādha* by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.¹²⁸⁹ He told the story of Lekpa Rinpoche's life, breaking down in the middle and openly weeping many times at the remembrance of Lekpa Rinpoche's kindness. This confused his Chinese students until the reason for this was translated to them.¹²⁹⁰ At the end, Rinpoche's Tibetan attendant told the interpreter to explain to the disciples: "Actually what Rinpoche is trying to show you is the importance of devotion to the guru. What you are actually seeing is guru-devotion in action!" On May 24, Dezhung Rinpoche gave at the Buddha Sasana Society a more formal talk on the life of Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche, which was later transcribed and published.¹²⁹¹ Cyrus Stearns served again as interpreter.

Return to Malaysia

Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Malaysia in late May 1982, flying from Singapore to Kuching in Sarawak state of East Malaysia, on the island of Borneo. From there he flew to Kuala Lumpur. During these travels he met the Shamar Rinpoche, who requested the Sixteen Elders (*Gnas brtan bcu drug*) initiation from him. In return, Dezhung Rinpoche requested the text-transmission of the *Amitāyus Sūtra*.¹²⁹² After Kuala Lumpur, he returned to Ipoh, making a brief side trip for one or two days to the tea plantations of the Cameron Highlands. Altogether he stayed some four months in Southeast Asia—one month in Singapore and about three months in Malaysia.¹²⁹³

Dezhung Rinpoche's journey to Southeast Asia was a success. His patrons had given him many generous donations.¹²⁹⁴ Everyone in his entourage felt

encouraged and relieved, thinking that now the main construction expenses for the Tharlam monastery could surely be met.

Return to Nepal

On his return journey from Ipoh to Nepal (early June 1982), Dezhung Rinpoche traveled by airplane with Luding Khenpo and Luding Shabdrung. On their way back, they broke their journey in Bangkok. Dezhung Rinpoche and the other lamas made a brief pilgrimage to several of the most important monasteries and shrines in the Thai capital, including the Emerald Buddha. Mr. Ah Sang accompanied the lamas back to Nepal, and during the stop in Bangkok he paid all their hotel expenses.¹²⁹⁵

Upon his arrival in Kathmandu, Dezhung Rinpoche made offerings of money and tea to all the monks at Traruk Trulku's monastery, as well as at fourteen other monasteries. Dezhung Rinpoche also visited Phar phing again. There he stayed in retreat for several weeks at the meditation center (*sgrub grwa*) of Traruk Rinpoche. He seems to have engaged in long-life-generating practices (*tshe sgrub*) during this time. When he came out of retreat he gave instructions to his attendants to prepare to return to North America. His "green card" (U.S. permanent residency permit) would expire in August, so he had decided to return to keep it valid and also to revisit several Dharma centers in North America. He asked Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen to accompany him as attendant and interpreter, and the latter agreed.¹²⁹⁶

Return to North America and a Visit to Taiwan

ON AUGUST 18, 1982, Dezhung Rinpoche boarded a Thai Airlines jet at Tribhuvan Airport, thus starting the journey back to North America. About three days later (he made a one-day stopover in Bangkok), he reached Seattle. At the airport he was met by a large group that included his niece Dagmola, several of his great-nephews, Mangtho Gyatsho, and a number of Sakya Thegchen Choling members. Once back in his old home, he rested and conducted his private practices for about two months.

During these months he visited an American doctor for a thorough medical examination. His blood tests came out well. The doctor told him: “You are in excellent condition! We expect you to live to be one hundred years old!”¹²⁹⁷

Visit to California

By the third week of October, Dezhung Rinpoche had sufficiently regained his strength to begin a teaching tour to California and other parts of the United States. In particular, he had been invited to Los Angeles for the first time to teach. His host was the Drogön Sakya Centre for Buddhist Studies and Meditation (7284 Fountain Avenue), a newly formed center, and his visit spanned from October 22 until November 10, 1982. One of his purposes for undertaking this journey was to raise funds for building the monastery in Nepal, but he also hoped to help this fledgling center. Traveling with him were his brother Dr. Kunzang Nyima and the monk Kalsang Gyaltsen (acting as interpreter). Active in organizing the visit were Jared Rhoton, David Rich, Stephanie Johnson, and Susanne Fairclough.

Dezhung Rinpoche departed Seattle for Los Angeles in mid-October. On the way he stopped in the San Francisco area for about one week at Ewam Choden center at the invitation of Lama Kunga and there gave bodhisattva vows and several minor initiations (*rjes gnang*) such as for Avalokiteśvara. Kalu Rinpoche was in the Bay Area at the time (during his fourth visit to America), so the two venerable lama friends could briefly meet once again, this time in San Francisco. (Kalu Rinpoche said that if Dezhung Rinpoche accepted the previous invitation to Europe made by Sogyal Rinpoche in New York, then he would invite Dezhung Rinpoche to his own centers in Europe and instruct his students to assist him.) Situ Rinpoche was also in the Bay Area then.¹²⁹⁸

After arriving in Los Angeles, Dezhung Rinpoche first stayed at the home of Ruth Dennison in the Hollywood Hills (at 2796 Creston Drive, Hollywood) and visited a number of centers. On October 24 in the morning and afternoon he gave two different Avalokiteśvara initiations: the *Mdo khamshar phyogs ma* and the Thangtong Gyalpo tradition, the latter at Ananda Hall, International Buddhist Meditation Center (920 S. New Hampshire Ave.). On October 25 he visited the Dharmadhātu center and lectured on “Freedom from Attachment: The Path of the Bodhisattva,” expounding Gorampa’s commentary on the Parting from the Four Attachments. He gave initiations for Mañjuśrī on October 27 at Ananda Hall, and explained the Avalokiteśvara meditation at his residence on October 28. On Saturday, October 31, and Sunday, November 1, he led a two-day seminar at Ananda Hall: “Meditation for Joyous Living and a Fearless Death,” including a Vajrasattva initiation on Sunday evening. Meantime, on Sunday morning, Dr. Kunzang Nyima gave a talk on the mental origins of physical disease according to Tibetan medicine.

On November 4 and 5, Rinpoche gave two introductory discourses on the *Path with Its Fruit* meditation system and the “Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa” (*Khor ’das dbyer med*) view at the East-West Center, sponsored by Kagyu Do Nga Choling (Bka’ brgyud Mdo sngags chos gling). The following two days he led a seminar at Ananda Hall: “Ground and Path: Essentials of Tantric Meditation,” which included a general exposition of the philosophical foundation, the two stages of meditation, and the Mahāmudrā view, concluding with an initiation for Vajrāsana Śākyamuni. On November 8 he gave the Sapaṇ empowerment at Josephine Cheney’s. On November 9 he imparted vows of refuge and the bodhisattva vows.¹²⁹⁹

During the latter part of this visit, Rinpoche stayed at Josephine Cheney's home on Sunset Plaza Drive, also high in the Hollywood Hills. Rinpoche's room had large windows looking out over Los Angeles, and at night he took delight in the colored lights of the city extending endlessly before him like a marvelous maṇḍala. He noted that one needed a lot of merit to live in a high location such as that.

Rinpoche fell ill with a bad sore throat and nearly every visitor brought some kind of remedy or medicine. He gargled with goldenseal and tried various other potions over a period of a week or so. It seemed to his attendants that he let himself be ministered to in this way, compassionately allowing others to accumulate merit through their kind intentions. None of the remedies seemed, however, to have much effect.

His humility and great faith in Gatön were brought home forcefully to his attendants as he denied that he himself possessed any spiritual qualities, besides an unshakable faith in the Three Jewels. He said that he would pray for their benefit to Gatön Rinpoche, since his own prayers otherwise would not be effective. Moreover, he was quick to mention things he perceived to be his own faults. One evening he had dinner with his host, Henry Dennison, who had recently become enamored of the teachings of Ram Dass and wanted to find fault with Tibetan presentations of the Dharma. He questioned Rinpoche about his eating of meat.

Rinpoche, chagrined to find himself the object of his criticism, immediately acknowledged this to be a fault. (He never tried to defend meat-eating, especially since Gatön Rinpoche had been a vegetarian.) Another time the theme came up, Rinpoche sighed and said, "I'm just an old ghoul!" His attendants felt that if this was a fault—for he always preceded his meals with extensive offering prayers—it was the only one they observed in the many months over many years they served and learned from him.

On this visit to southern California, Disneyland was once again on Rinpoche's list of priorities. Stephanie Johnson arranged the visit, and Boston student David Rich was to be the driver. David, whose Tibetan name was Sherab Jungnay, was late in picking Rinpoche up, and Rinpoche, Dr. Kunzang Nyima, and Lama Losang Drakpa, after waiting a while, finally grew impatient, Rinpoche stamping his cane on the floor to the rhythm of "Sherab Jungnay! Sherab Jungnay!"

Rinpoche was interested in going on all the rides, of which the Space Mountain was the newest and most exciting. Though in his late seventies,

Rinpoche was still game for this, and his students wheeled him in his wheel chair through the lengthy wait in line only to find out that people with restricted mobility were not allowed on. Dr. Kunzang Nyima and others did take the Space Mountain ride, and afterward Dr. Kunzang Nyima's eyes seemed to spin from shock, which made the students glad Rinpoche had not been along. Rinpoche did, however, take the Wild West roller coaster, and he especially enjoyed the Pirates of the Caribbean and the Haunted House rides, noting that these were chances to practice for the experience of the intermediate state (*bar do*) between death and the next rebirth. As always, he said the *māṇi* mantra to everyone he saw.¹³⁰⁰

Visit to the Midwest and East Coast

After his teaching tour of California centers, Dezhung Rinpoche headed east. He first flew to Minneapolis, Minnesota, at the request of the small Sakya center there. This was his third visit. There he conferred the Avalokiteśvara initiation and bodhisattva vows. He taught in a school and also at a Hindu yoga ashram.

After a stay of a few days in Minneapolis–St. Paul, Rinpoche flew on November 15 to New York and was welcomed that evening at La Guardia Airport by a number of disciples and friends. He stayed at the new Jetsun Sakya premises in Harlem (623 W. 129th St.) again. On November 17, he spoke on “The Path of the Bodhisattva” and gave an Avalokiteśvara empowerment and teachings at the Center for Higher Consciousness (at 116 West Houston, 5th Florida). The next day he spoke on love and compassion at the center of Lama Norlha (Karma Thegsum Choling, 412 West End Ave. 5N).

On the weekend of November 20–21, Rinpoche gave a series of lectures on “Ground, Path and Result: Essentials of Tantric Meditation.” This took place at the Samaya Foundation (75 Leonard) and included four major segments, including a Vajrapāṇi empowerment and introduction to Mahāmudrā meditation as the ultimate view. On Monday, November 22, he spoke at Dharmadhātu (49 East 21st St.) on “The Five Jetsuns”—a history of the great founders of the Sakya Order.

On November 26 he gave the teaching “Empowerment of the Medicine Buddha: Sangye Menla” at the Samaya Foundation. The following day at the same place, he led a one-day seminar on “The Bardo.” After expounding

about the after-death states, he gave the text-transmission for Vajrasattva, “Bodhisattva of Purification.”

On Monday, November 29, at 3:00 p.m. he gave a basic Dharma talk on “Precious Human Birth and the First Noble Truth” at the History of Religions Department of the Union Theological Seminary at the request of Kosuke Koyama, Professor of Ecumenics and World Christianity. On Wednesday, December 1, he gave at the Washington Square Church (133 West 4th St.) his last scheduled talk in New York: “Kālacakra: The Wheel of Time.”

1983: Visit to Boston and Cambridge

After two weeks in New York, Rinpoche traveled in early December 1982 to Boston and Cambridge, where he met up again with the translator Jared Rhoton (who had stayed behind for several weeks longer in Los Angeles). The program the Sakya center planned for the weeks before Christmas was poorly attended, though then everything turned around in January. The organizers learned it was best not to schedule such a program the month before Christmas.

In general, people seemed not as keenly interested in Sakya as in Kagyü teachings at the time. The center rented a large hall in Boston and arranged to have Dezhung Rinpoche speak, but only forty people came. However, the first part of the program was a series of public talks and empowerments intended to lure people in for the main part of the program, a series of teachings that commenced after the New Year 1983. The later program was highly successful by the center’s modest standards.

The centerpiece of Rinpoche’s public program was an exposition of Sakya Paṇḍita’s *Elucidation of the Sage’s Intent* (*Thub pa’i dgongs gsal*), a graded exposition of the bodhisattva’s path. Rinpoche taught this lengthy work over a six-week period three evenings a week, with mandatory attendance. The organizers believed this was the first time the work had been taught publicly in North America by a master of the tradition.

At the end of the teachings, Rinpoche was kind enough to bestow the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga empowerment (*Sa ’jam sbag sgrub*) on the thirty-five people who took the entire course. He had been leery about giving it to anyone who had not had the two-day Hevajra initiation before. But he said that at Ngor it was given like a *rjes gnang* minor initiation, so that is what he did in this case.

This transmission was remembered by member Paul Johnston as a high point of his life. Rinpoche spent over three hours giving the history of the tradition, including a life history of Sakya Paṇḍita and an overview of the Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna, plus teachings on guru-yoga.

Dezhung Rinpoche also taught extensively at the center's house. At this time he gave his commentary on how to practice the Hevajra *sādhana* (*Lam dus*). By this time Johnston was in retreat in the house, and Dezhung Rinpoche suggested that they resume their studies of Tsharchen's Hevajra *sādhana* exposition. However, since several students of the center had attended the *Path with Its Fruit* in India, Johnston requested that Dezhung Rinpoche teach the main Hevajra *sādhana* to them as well. Only nine people attended this teaching—Paul Johnston, David Rich, Susanne Fairclough, Abby Petty, and Liz Wick, with Jared Rhoton translating and Lama Pema and Lama Kargyal in attendance. Dezhung Rinpoche actually gave his own gloss on the text, and he may have used the manual of Khenchen Ngawang Chödrak as well. (The main thrust of the explanations stayed within the Tsharpa tradition, and in fact all the tantric transmissions that Dezhung Rinpoche gave extensive explanations on in Boston were from the Tsharpa tradition.) Following this, Rinpoche gave the initiation for Nāropa's tradition of Vajrayoginī, explaining Khyentse Wangchuk's commentary in its entirety, including the uncommon meditation "Beyond Thought" (*Bsam gyis mi khyab pa*). These Vajrayoginī teachings included a seven-day instruction on meditation practice.

At this time Abby Petty arrived from New York to take up residence at the center and pitch in. She started the *Sakya Satellite* newsletter, which was the newsletter of the center for many years. Lois Peak, too, came on the scene; she was later to take nun's vows and start the center in Washington, D.C., with Lama Kargyal. Susan Campbell and Jeff Webster (who would help Jetsun Kusho found a center on San Juan Island, Washington) also arrived during this period.¹³⁰¹

To some students Rinpoche seemed frail from his travels, but when he taught he would grow more and more energized. He never neglected to explain in detail the proper steps of studying religion, including proper preparation and conclusion (through merit dedication); his thoroughness was recognized and highly appreciated by many of his students who studied under him then. During his visits to the Sakya Shei Drub Ling center, Rinpoche always performed a Tārā pūjā every morning, accompanied by

Dr. Kunzang Nyima, Lama Kargyal, Lama Pema Wangdrak, and whomever else was able to attend.¹³⁰²

Visit to Taiwan

After completing his teachings in Massachusetts, Dezhung Rinpoche flew home to Seattle, where he rested for some weeks, giving no public teachings. Then he made preparations to depart for a teaching trip to Taiwan at the invitation of Mingyur Rinpoche, a Sakyapa trulku from Mingyur monastery in Lithang district of Kham, who had been originally identified as a trulku by Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. Mingyur Rinpoche had been told that



121. Reception by Mingyur Rinpoche and other Buddhists at Chiang Kai-Shek airport, Taipei, March 1983.

Lekpa Rinpoche, before passing away, had appointed Dezhung Rinpoche his successor, so Mingyur had always wanted to meet and receive teachings from Dezhung Rinpoche. Moreover, in the 1970s, Mingyur Rinpoche had heard many good things about Dezhung Rinpoche from Surkhang in Taiwan and, later, from the Sakya Phüntsook palace Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and Dagmola. Thus he had visited Seattle in the late fall of 1979 at the invitation of the Sakya Dharma center in order to meet and receive religious

teachings from Dezhung Rinpoche, and the two had met in Seattle several times since.¹³⁰³

Dezhung Rinpoche departed for Taiwan on about March 8 or 9, 1983, flying with a small group of Seattle Tibetans (including Dagmo Kusho, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Kunzang Nyima, Jetsun Chime, and some others)



122. Dezhung Rinpoche giving an initiation. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Huang Wu, Taipei, March 19–20, 1983.

to Taipei. Most of them remained in Taiwan just a few days, but he stayed to give teachings and initiations to many keenly interested and devoted Chinese Buddhists.¹³⁰⁴

Rinpoche's main residence in Taipei was on the seventh floor of an eight-story building owned by his Chinese patroness Mrs. Huang Wu, Yü-Len (wife of the late Mr. Huang The-Hran). Upstairs on the eighth floor was a large meeting area that extended over both wings of the building, and there, on about March 18 to 20, Dezhung Rinpoche gave his first two teachings, with Mingyur Rinpoche assisting and interpreting. The room proved much too small—some seven hundred people came, and many faithful patrons waited in line outside, unable to get a seat and peering in through the windows from outside. (Dezhung Rinpoche was one of the first Tibetan

lamas to visit Taipei and give Mantrayāna teachings.) Mingyur Rinpoche had to apologize to those who could not get in and promised, “We will rent a bigger hall next time and invite you all!” So many people crowded onto the top floor of the building that some people worried whether the building could bear the load.



123. Conferring initiation, flanked by Mingyur Rinpoche and Kunzang Nyima. Home of Mr. and Mrs. Huang Wu, Taipei, March 19–20, 1983.

Subsequently they arranged for a meeting hall at Ling Chi monastery in Taipei, and there Dezhung Rinpoche gave a public one-day minor initiation (*rjes gnang*) for Kālacakra. The audience of faithful Chinese who gathered there much exceeded one thousand people.¹³⁰⁵ At the same monastery he afterward gave the bodhisattva vows to a group of more than thirteen hundred Buddhists. Dezhung Rinpoche also gave initiations for Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, and Mañjuśrī in Taipei. One of the main people helping organize these teachings (along with Mingyur Rinpoche) was Dr. Chan Chuan-An.¹³⁰⁶

The four main places that Dezhung Rinpoche visited were Mingyur Rinpoche's center in Taipei and the centers in Taichiung, Tainan, and Kaushong. He reached the city of Kaushong after a six-hour journey south by car and stayed there for about six days, accompanied by Mingyur Rinpoche, who

interpreted and also served as a second personal attendant. In Kaushong were many Buddhist temples, and Rinpoche gave an Avalokiteśvara initiation. When visiting different places locally, he was taken around in a wheelchair.¹³⁰⁷ During this period Dezhung Rinpoche also stayed two weeks in an Avalokiteśvara retreat at Ya Min Tshang, performing the rituals in connection with making *māṇi* pills (*mā ṇi ril bu*).¹³⁰⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche stressed the need for mindfulness to Mingyur Rinpoche, saying, “It is necessary even for simple activities like walking—otherwise you might slip and fall! So of course it is necessary for religious activities and meditations.” Whenever he saw beautiful flowers in gardens, he would immediately offer them mentally to the Three Jewels and then recite a prayer that all sentient beings might also be able to enjoy these things (just as he used to do with Mingyur Rinpoche when seeing beautiful Christmas lights in Seattle).¹³⁰⁹

Dezhung Rinpoche stayed a little more than two months in Taiwan. His teachings were well received by his Chinese patrons, who generously supported his plans for building a new Tharlam monastery.¹³¹⁰

Return to North America

When Dezhung Rinpoche returned to the United States, he stopped first in Los Angeles and visited for a week Dr. Wei Chi Huang (Huang Wei-Chi), the son of Mrs. Huang Wu, his main Chinese disciple and patroness in Taiwan. Mrs. Huang Wu wanted her son, too, to receive the same teachings. Rinpoche also stayed briefly at the home of another of their relatives.

In Los Angeles, Dezhung Rinpoche gave teachings sponsored by the Chinese community and briefly visited two or three of the Tibetan Buddhist centers. At Kalu Rinpoche’s center (with the monks Lama Tashi and Rangyal), he gave a Mahākāla initiation and other teachings. At the Dharmadhātu center of Trungpa Rinpoche, he gave a Bhūtaḍāmara initiation. To the members of the Drogön Sakya center (at the East-West Center), he gave the Sakya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga blessing to a group of about eighty people. His talk “Buddhism without Sectarianism” was translated by Jared Rhoton and transcribed by Jacqueline Nalli (ca. June 1983).¹³¹¹ Jetsun Kusho (Rje btsun ’Chi med phrin las Luding, b. 1938), sister of His Holiness Sakya Trizin, came to Los Angeles at this time from British Columbia, Canada. She received teachings from Rinpoche there, including

the Jambhala initiation. In all, Rinpoche stayed about eighteen days in Los Angeles on this occasion.¹³¹²

In June 1983, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Seattle and donated five hundred dollars toward the purchase of the *Kanjur* (Tibetan Buddhist canon) by Sakya Thegchen Choling, the Seattle Sakya center. On the last weekend of June (Friday, June 24, until Sunday, June 26), accompanied by Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Dagmola, and more than thirty others, he made a three-day camping trip to Mount Rainier. On Friday night, after the tents had been set up and a hot meal served, he instructed the group in the methods of dream yoga (according to the *Path with Its Fruit* in its esoteric transmission), which he said would work better in seclusion. During the next two days he gave a discourse on the lives of the five Sakya founders, as well as of Ngorchon and Tsharchen. Before the group retired on Saturday night, he thrilled them with a number of spine-tingling ghost stories. Cyrus Stearns accompanied him as interpreter.

Rinpoche then returned to Seattle, where on successive Friday evenings from July 1 until August 5 he expounded in great detail, at Sakya Thegchen Choling, the twelve great deeds of the Buddha (*ston pa'i mdzad pa bcu gnyis*), Cyrus Stearns interpreting. He taught in a new building that the Seattle Sakya center had rented since December 1981, located a few blocks north of the university campus at 5042 18th Avenue N.E. As sources for his lectures, Rinpoche used Situ Pañchen's catalogue to the Derge *Kanjur* as well as a short work by the fifteenth-century scholar and powerful local ruler Byang bdag Nam rgyal grags bzang (known as "Rgyal po Paṇḍita"). When Stearns first showed him one available version of the *Kanjur* catalogue, Rinpoche said, "This is not the one I need. Another longer, more complete version is found in Situ Pañchen's collected works." Rinpoche himself had a photocopy of that longer version, which Stearns enlarged to make easier for Rinpoche to read.¹³¹³

During the lectures, when expounding the Buddha's great deed of miracle-working (in the first lunar month), the occasion when the Buddha through displays of magical power overawed six Indian sectarian masters, Dezhung Rinpoche told of how the Buddha—manifesting the form of Vajrapāṇi according to the Vajrayāna tradition—scared all these opponents into fleeing. Some went insane, some leaped into a lake and drowned, and others fled into a dense jungle where they perished, eaten by tigers or bitten by poisonous snakes.

Suddenly Rinpoche broke into laughter and could not stop. He kept trying to control his laughter, but he simply could not. His body heaving and tears running down his face, he took off his glasses and covered his face with his hands. The interpreter, Stearns, had meanwhile begun to laugh along with him, though mainly at the whole hilarious scene in the Dharma center, because nobody in the audience had a clue about what was going on. Everyone just smiled in bewilderment, waiting for the hilarious joke, whatever it was, to be translated.

When Stearns attempted to convey the supposedly funny story, it fell completely flat. A few among the audience of pious American Buddhists tried to force a laugh, but they were bewildered. After all, every one of them was thinking, “Those poor Indian teachers had been killed!” When one of the students finally got up his nerve and asked about this, Rinpoche lost his composure again and broke into fresh gales of laughter, accompanied by Stearns. He tried to save the situation and told the story a second time, again accompanied by uncontrollable bursts of laughter, and again met with the same stunned, uncomprehending response.

Finally Rinpoche explained that what had seemed to him so hilarious and ludicrous was that all the Brahmanical masters had believed so strongly in the mirage-like projection of the deity Vajrapāṇi that their own deluded perceptions had killed them. This was like us all, he explained further. We believe that everything in our lives is real—all these mirage- and dream-like appearances—and we act in ways that destroy our own lives.¹³¹⁴

On August 12 and 19, Dezhung Rinpoche taught the *Parting from the Four Attachments* (*Zhen pa bzhi bral*) instructions. Then on August 26 and September 2, he gave a series of lectures on the “three trainings” (*lhag pa'i bslab pa gsum*) of Mahāyāna Buddhism: moral discipline, insight, and meditative absorption.

As a concluding teaching for that summer, at the request of Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche gave the initiation for Vajra-Akṣobhya. This took place at the Sakya Thegchen Choling on Sunday, September 4. At the conclusion of the initiation, he was presented with a maṇḍala offering and the traditional offerings of the “supports” of enlightened body, speech, and mind (*sku gsung thugs rten*), for his long life. The students recited his long-life prayer and presented a teaching offering, which he returned to them as a donation to the new temple. Later in the month,

on September 25, a dinner was held in his honor, with prayers for his long life, a speech of thanks, and songs.

Meanwhile, on September 19 and 20, Dezhung Rinpoche privately taught at his own residence the Six Yogas of Ni gu ma, using the instruction text by Thangtong Gyalpo and the *Phyag chen ga'u ma*. He taught only Richard Baldwin and Cyrus Stearns. The teachings were given completely in Tibetan—the students met again later to listen to the tapes. For several sessions in late September, Rinpoche at the request of Ken Hockett also gave, over the course of several days, instructions on Vajrapāṇi Bhūṭaḍāmara ('Byung po 'dul byed) practice. He taught this at his own house, and a number of people came (it was interpreted by Cyrus Stearns).¹³¹⁵ During this period he also met with Vana [Ivanka] Jakic and Cyrus Stearns, trying to answer Vana's questions on Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind Training* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*) and related "mind-training" traditions, the subject of her master's thesis at the University of Washington.

Sometime between the summer of 1983 and fall of 1984, the great Nyingma scholar Smyo shul Khenpo Rin chen rdo rje came to visit Dezhung Rinpoche at his Seattle home one afternoon. He requested the transmission of Dezhung Anjam Trulku's *Prayer for the Stages of the Path of the "Path with Its Fruit"* (*Lam 'bras lam rim smon lam*, from the *Lam 'bras slob bshad*). Rinpoche gave this, and Cyrus Stearns was lucky enough to also have been there.¹³¹⁶

Visit to Canada

In late September 1983, Dezhung Rinpoche departed for British Columbia, Canada, to visit the Kunzang Dechen Osel Ling retreat center (Mount Tuam Buddhist Retreat) on Salt Spring Island. Kalu Rinpoche, the center's founder, had written a letter expressing his concern that obstacles might arise at the retreat center and had requested Dezhung Rinpoche to go there and give initiations and special Mahāmudrā instructions.¹³¹⁷

Dezhung Rinpoche went with his brother Kunzang Nyima as attendant and stayed in retreat on Salt Spring Island for nearly two months. He lived in the house of Lama Drubgyud (Tony Chapman) just outside the gate of the retreat, high on the bluff with a big glass window.¹³¹⁸ He spent much of his retreat in days of silence and vegetarian diet, practicing mainly the meditation of White Tārā.¹³¹⁹ It was an excellent retreat, and he was delighted with the place and its residents. For two weeks he gave daily teachings on

Mahāmudrā to the retreat meditators at Naroling. As he taught, he told many traditional Tibetan stories and personal anecdotes, which kept the students attentive and often in fits of laughter.¹³²⁰

Kalu Rinpoche encouraged his students to request the Milarepa empowerment/blessing from Dezhung Rinpoche to enable them to perform the Mila guru-yoga, explaining that Dezhung Rinpoche possessed the bodily blessing (*sku'i byin brlabs*) of Lord Mila, since he had visited and worshiped in so many holy places of Mila's austerities and meditations. Kalu Rinpoche had evidently had dreams and seen signs to this effect. The meditators at the retreat center also requested from Rinpoche the initiation of the Six-Handed Mahākāla (*Mgon po Phyag drug pa*).¹³²¹

Dezhung Rinpoche left the Mount Tuam retreat in early December 1983 and visited another retreat center on Vancouver Island. Afterward he visited Kalu Rinpoche's Dharma center in Burnaby and there gave the initiation for Jatshön Nyingpo's treasure-text cycle *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus*. He also visited Jetsun Chime Luding for a few days, giving her the Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma) blessing and performing the rite for attracting good fortune (*g.yang 'gug*). She sponsored the renting of the hall of the local Dharma-dhātu center and invited all the local Tibetans to a long-life initiation. The whole Tibetan community in southern British Columbia came, as did a few Canadian Buddhists from the Vancouver Dharmadhātu and Kalu Rinpoche centers.

1984

Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Seattle on January 24, 1984. He was met by the steering committee of Sakya Thegchen Choling on the following evening, who respectfully welcomed him back and requested further teachings. He said he was unable to accept for the moment, but that he would later give them an initiation for a wealth deity with whom he had a strong connection. A welcome-home dinner was planned in his honor for February 18.

On February 12, Dezhung Rinpoche granted the long-life initiation of Amitāyus-Hayagriva in the lineage of Thangtong Gyalpo. The lunar New Year of the wood-rat was celebrated in Seattle on March 3. On March 4, to help the new Sakya Monastery flourish, Dezhung Rinpoche gave an initiation into the practices of the wealth-deity Yellow Jambhala. A week later a ground-breaking ceremony was performed for the newly purchased church

building at 108 N.W. 83rd Street, which was to be transformed into the Sakya Monastery.

Dezhung Rinpoche possessed an amazing historical sense. Although Tibet in general was a land with one of the most detailed historical records in Asia, he was still remarkable in his knowledge of history. To some extent this was not surprising, given his wide reading and highly retentive mind. As a teacher, he used history to transmit the whole Buddhist worldview through examples and stories. His knowledge of the history of the Sakyapa tradition was unparalleled among his contemporaries, and his familiarity with the Kagyüpa traditions was so extraordinary that the historian Dhongthog Rinpoche could remark: "I believe he was also the greatest scholar of Kagyüpa lineages."¹³²²

Rinpoche demonstrated his inexhaustible historical knowledge many times, but one remarkable occasion which stayed in the memory of his interpreter Cyrus Stearns occurred in March 1984, when he went to Portland for a short visit to Kalu Rinpoche's center at the invitation of Lama Trinlay Drubpa. There he gave instructions on calming and insight meditation (*zhi gnas dang lhag mthong*). One evening he was invited to dinner at one of the local Tibetan families with Lama Thrinlay Drubpa. After dinner, Lama Thrinlay Drubpa asked a simple question about the Karmapas. For the next forty-five minutes to an hour, Rinpoche spoke about all the Karmapas one by one, beginning with Düsum Khyenpa and going all the way to the sixteenth Karmapa. He named each one's parents, his birthplace, his date of birth, described the area, recounted the vision which had led to the discovery of his rebirth, *quoted* verbatim each letter that had been left by the previous Karmapa (if one had been found), and so on. After a few minutes of this, Thrinlay Drubpa's jaw dropped, and for the rest of the long discourse, he and Cyrus Stearns just stared at each other across the table and shook their heads as Rinpoche continued on and on. It was an unbelievable display.¹³²³

Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Seattle, and on March 17, which was the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, he gave the vows of limited duration (*gso sbyong sdom pa*) to about twenty people at Sakya Thөгchen Choling. After lunch, during the fasting period, they performed together the meditation on Thousand-Armed Avalokiteśvara.

On March 31, Rinpoche expounded privately to Cyrus and Maruta Kalnins Stearns Tsangnyön Heruka's *Great Song of Madness*. On April 4 he

related to a small group the life of Kongtrül in connection with the Ni gu ma teachings. On April 9 he gave teachings to an elderly gentleman, Gerald Brill, who had come from Los Angeles to request the teachings of the Clear Light (*'od gsal*) from among the Six Dharmas of Naropa in the Karma Kagyüpa tradition. Rinpoche had received the complete teachings long before, in the 1940s, from Bo Gangkar Rinpoche in Minyak. At that time, Bo Gangkar Rinpoche had told him that he would one day need to teach them. Dezhung Rinpoche decided that this was the time and agreed to Mr. Brill's request. He based his teachings on the manual by the Sixth Shamar Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630). These teachings were given privately at his own residence, Stearns interpreting.

On April 14, Dezhung Rinpoche participated at the Sakya Thegchen Choling observances in honor of the nirvāṇa day of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltzen, also attended by Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Dge legs Rinpoche (b. 1923), and Mingyur Rinpoche (b. 1934). Wealth vases were handed over to their patrons at the end of the ceremony. Six days later, Dezhung Rinpoche with Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and several attendants performed the consecration rites for some hundred statues and sacred objects in a ceremony at the center lasting over four hours.

On April 26, three days before Rinpoche's planned departure for New York, Sakya Thegchen Choling center held a dinner in Rinpoche's honor. While still in Seattle in April 1984, he also received a short visit at his Seattle residence from me, as I had briefly returned from India and Japan to the University to complete my dissertation on the *Entrance Gate for the Wise* (*Mkhas 'jug*) of Sakya Paṇḍita. He welcomed me and presented me with an elegant French maroon-and-gold pen in a case.

Final Visits to the East and West Coasts

IN MAY THROUGH JULY OF 1984, Dezhung Rinpoche visited New York City again. On arrival, he stayed for about two weeks at the house of Mary Bowen, a disciple of Dudjom Rinpoche. The Tibetan nobles W. D. Shakabpa (1907–1989) and Samdrub Phodrang Jigmela visited him and invited him to the Tibet Center to lecture and conduct prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama on behalf of all the Tibetan residents. This he gladly did. He also gave the initiation for the Medicine Buddha (sponsored by Helen and Luis Mendoza), Tārā, and Guru Rinpoche (sponsored by Terry Clifford).

While giving a long-life (Amitāyus) initiation on May 3 at 440 Riverside Drive, the home of Nicolas Vascek, Dezhung Rinpoche first encountered difficulties reading. He was diagnosed as having cataracts and later, at a New York hospital, had an operation to remove the cataract in his right eye. It was a success.

Rinpoche moved to the Jetsun Sakya center, whose elevator had now been repaired. He stayed for a month and, beginning on May 6, gave numerous extensive discourses on important aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism. On May 6 he taught the four recollections and the benefits of the preparatory practices (*sngon 'gro*). On May 8 he addressed the Tathāgata-garbha doctrine (commenting on Sakya and Nyingma understandings) and spoke on two types of refuge precepts. On May 10 he explained the three preeminent characteristics (*dam pa gsum*) of Mahāyāna practice: the enlightenment thought as preparation, nonconceptualizing as the main practice, and dedication of merit as the conclusion. On May 13 and 15 he gave wonderful teachings on interdependent origination. On May 17, 20, and 22 he explained the “Four Essentials for Dharma”—faith, compassion, endurance, and wisdom. On Thursday evenings in May he also gave a series of initiations:

Amitāyus (May 3), Green Tārā (May 10), Vajrapāṇi (May 17), and the Medicine Buddha (May 24).

In July 1984, Rinpoche gave extensive explanations of the Vajrapāṇi *sādhana*. This same month, beginning on July 3 and lasting about three weeks (until perhaps July 22), he gave special instructions on Avalokiteśvara practice in the Tshembupa tradition. On July 30, he also gave the reading-transmission for several important Mahāyāna prayers and sūtras.¹³²⁴ In New York he also visited the Samaya Foundation and gave the Garuḍa initiation.¹³²⁵

In August 1984, Dezhung Rinpoche was invited to the Kagyu Thubten Choling center of Kalu Rinpoche, a meditation retreat under the direction of Lama Norlha at Wappingers Falls, New York State. There he visited and



124. Dezhung Rinpoche at Karma Thubten Choling. Wappingers Falls, New York, August 1984.

instructed the two retreat groups, Naroling and Niguling, giving initiations for Phag mo, White Tārā, and Mgon po Bernakchen; he had previously refused to give the Mgon po Bernakchen initiation, until, that is, he had seen the sign of two black ravens at Salt Spring Island, British Columbia.¹³²⁶ Jamgon Kongtrül arrived and asked for an initiation for Orange Mañjuśrī (*Jam dbyangs dmar ser*).

When giving the initiations, during the intervals when monks would

normally play ritual music, Rinpoche turned on an old-fashioned portable record player and played an LP recording of Tibetan ritual music. This looked absurd at first, but somehow the effects produced were convincing. Whereas before Dezhung Rinpoche had been very low-key, now on this final visit he struck many of the center residents with his Buddha-like presence. "It was as if the whole property had become transformed," one later said. "Clearly he was a highly realized being."¹³²⁷



125. Dezhung Rinpoche with Lama Norlha.

Once, in New York, Dezhung Rinpoche dreamt that a rich patron came and gave Lama Norlha much money and then gave him some money, too. Later he interpreted this dream as a sign of the likely future success of the two retreat groups in Wappingers Falls.¹³²⁸ He stayed at Wappingers Falls for several weeks, giving public teachings only on the weekends. One weekend Dr. Kunzang Nyima also gave an afternoon seminar on Tibetan medicine.

While there, Lama Norlha invited Rinpoche to perform a large number

of water offerings, as Rinpoche had done some thirty-five years previously at Sakya. He agreed, and after Kunzang Nyima and several volunteers had collected one hundred and eleven bowls and other necessities and arranged them on a makeshift wooden altar outside, he began the prayers. As one witness remembered:¹³²⁹

Since Rinpoche was unable to walk, he sat in a chair by the large picture window that opened out to the wooded area behind the shrine room. Dr. Nyima and the volunteers would empty and fill the offering bowls outside the window as Rinpoche recited the prayers from his chair inside. Filling and emptying the one hundred and eleven bowls one thousand times over a ten-day period in hot, humid weather was a wet and athletic activity. A few people there at Lama Norlha's retreat house seemed a bit stressed out and grumpy by the time a few of [Rinpoche's Sakyapa students from New York] arrived around the middle of the offerings to help out, so evidently it had been quite a feat to accumulate the numbers of offerings they had, with as few people as they were. And of course the water bill was going through the ceiling.

While Rinpoche looked as though he could go on forever, at night he began to suffer terrible pains and stiffening in his knee, as well as other weaknesses. It seemed the Māras had begun to work on everybody, and soon we newcomers felt their negative influences as well. At one point a very Americanized Tibetan showed up and upon witnessing our rather absurd-looking industry, appeared embarrassed by it, saying, "How Tibetan!" But Rinpoche, not being one to quit a Dharma activity before its completion, persisted, and we tried our feeble best at the end of each day to relieve his knee pain with some well-intentioned massage.

Finally the moment came—the last prayers were uttered, one hundred and eleven thousand, one hundred and eleven water offerings had been made, and we stood there outside our accomplished Rinpoche's window, soaking wet in the stillness of a hot summer's sun. But barely had the last prayers passed through Rinpoche's lips when a tremendous wind rose up out of nowhere. The many offering bowls lining the tiered altar were blown with such force that they flew off in all directions. We ran inside to Rinpoche, who sat

calmly by the open window and watched the altar swept clean by the sudden windstorm.

We moved to the central hall, and taking a seat at a large table, Rinpoche began to recite prayers of merit dedication. The room suddenly turned dark and lightning flashed outside. Our recitations were then punctuated with torrential rain and booming thunder. To us, it was miraculous, and while Rinpoche seemed unaffected by such a coincidence, the auspiciousness of this extraordinary occasion seemed one with his bodhisattva's resolve to turn over some very hard-won merit. So we sat there, eyes as big as plates, huddled around a being who had to be the Buddha—until the sun broke through and the unreliable calm returned. It had lasted maybe ten minutes. When we went back outside to pick up the wooden altar, it looked like it had been ripped apart by bears.

His Third Visit to Cambridge

In about early September 1984, Dezhung Rinpoche went to the Boston area for the third time. The first important thing he had planned was to complete the medical treatment of his eyes. In the next few weeks, he had his second operation, to remove the cataract from his left eye. He was also fitted with a new pair of glasses, which greatly improved his vision. This benefited him much as a teacher, since reading played such an important role in his teaching.

Everything went remarkably well. Susanne Fairclough arranged for the ophthalmologist, who, they found out, had a Buddhist symbol (evidently a crossed vajra on a small Tibetan carpet) in his consulting room, though they had not known that he was Buddhist. Rinpoche was pleased with his treatment. He said that had his eyes failed, it would have meant the end of his teaching career, and he would have simply gone into retreat for the rest of his life.¹³³⁰

The centerpiece of the public teachings Rinpoche gave on this visit was the Tshembupa-tradition Avalokiteśvara practices (*Tshem bu pa'i dmar khrid*) in the Tsharpa transmission, including a highly detailed explanation of the preparatory practices. The teachings were divided into part I, preparatory lectures and ceremonies, and part II, the main instructions. The first session of the preparatory lectures was given on October 21, and the next

four sessions followed on October 24, 26, 28, and 31. At the end of the first part, he conferred on November 2 an empowerment for Avalokiteśvara and on November 4 the bodhisattva vows. Part II, the main meditation practices, consisted of a series of teachings twice a week from November 9 through December 14. More than thirty people took the entire course. On six successive Wednesday evenings (November 7 through December 12) he gave initiations for Vajrapāṇi, Mañjuśrī, Green Tārā, Golden Jambhala, the Medicine Buddha, and Mahākāla.¹³³¹ He is also said to have given instructions on the *Seven-Point Mind Training*.

In addition to his brother Kunzang Nyima, who was also in attendance, as usual, Lamas Pema Wangdrak and Kalsang Gyaltsen served as attendants



126. Kunzang Nyima as dashing monk attendant. Cambridge center, 1984.

in Cambridge. Both lamas had separately received from him in Seattle a reading-exposition (*bshad khrid*) of the important Sakyapa tantric treatises *Rgyud sde spyi rnam*, *Mngon rtogs ljon shing*, and *Tshul gsum gsal byed*.¹³³²

During his second visit to Cambridge, Dezhung Rinpoche had surprised his students by offering to teach the eleven-deity Mahākāla transmission of

Mal Lotsāwa. This had been almost a shock, since on this occasion Rinpoche himself had actually broached the subject. On that particular day, his Tibetan monk-attendants had gone off for the afternoon to the Museum of Science, and David Rich cooked dinner that evening. So it was that Dezhung Rinpoche, Dr. Kunzang Nyima, David Rich, and Paul Johnston had dinner together that night (Johnston was still in retreat). In the conversation after dinner, Dezhung Rinpoche said to Johnston, “You know, if you are really going to continue in retreat, you need this Mahākāla of Mal Lotsāwa.”

Johnston could hardly believe that Rinpoche had brought this up. In India these instructions were extremely difficult to get, and Johnston later was told that even in Tibet many monks at Sakya had never received them. But here Rinpoche himself had suggested it at the dinner table.



127. Dezhung Rinpoche with students at Boston/Cambridge center, 1984.

His American disciples made the necessary formal request, and Rinpoche immediately started back-pedaling, saying, “You know, we don’t have the book, it may be difficult to find,” and so forth. (The necessary text turned out to be available in the *Rgyud sde kun btus* compendium.) His disciples realized they still had to go through the proper formalities of repeatedly requesting it. So they made one more formal request to him in person, and another request later by letter, accompanied by an offering. When Rinpoche came back for his third visit, they made yet another request, and

Dezhung Rinpoche consented. He also agreed to teach the completion-stage practices for Hevajra.

Rinpoche's students in Cambridge also asked him at that time to give the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions, this last request actually at the suggestion and instigation of His Holiness Sakya Trizin. Dezhung Rinpoche retorted that he was not qualified to give it. When this was later related to His Holiness, the latter remarked, "If Dezhung Rinpoche is not qualified, then nobody is!" But Dezhung Rinpoche insisted, saying, "With all the great Khön emanations living in this world, who would want to receive the *Path with Its Fruit* from me?"¹³³³

Thus at the end of his stay, to a small group of disciples, male and female, some lay and some ordained, but all previous recipients of the *Path with Its Fruit*, he gave the "external" Mahākāla practical instructions of the "Vajra-Rock Fortress" (i.e., the *Khro bo bcu* initiation and *Brag rdzong ma* instructions) in the transmission of Mal Lotsāwa.¹³³⁴ These teachings lasted eleven days and were interpreted by Ngawang Samten (Jay Goldberg). The teachings also included some other esoteric practices that were not a part of that instruction, but which Rinpoche had received from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa or Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö.

Before giving these teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche dreamt of meeting his guru Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö, who was holding a thangka of Mahākāla. This convinced him to go ahead and teach. As he remarked to his attendants: "I think this is a sign it is all right to teach. I think it will help them."¹³³⁵ One disciple heard that Rinpoche had dreamt of seeing the thangka of Mahākāla hanging in Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö's room at Dzongsar. He could see the mantras spinning in the heart of the deity, the vision was so clear. Rinpoche also dreamt at this time of Ngawang Lekpa, but the details were unfortunately not recorded.¹³³⁶

In addition, Rinpoche gave the instructions on the Hevajra perfection-stage practice (of the *Path with Its Fruit* esoteric transmission), using the text by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Lama Pema translated (Jared Rhoton was not in Boston on this trip).

Founding of a Retreat Center in Barre

In November 1984, while he was in Cambridge and giving detailed instructions on Avalokiteśvara practice, Dezhung Rinpoche encouraged

his students to look for a place to do retreats. From the time he arrived, he intended to establish a retreat center. He considered it essential. Paul Johnston had never been arm-twisted by Dezhung Rinpoche before, but now Rinpoche really applied the pressure.

On the first exploratory trip, some key members learned of an available plot of land located next to the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts.¹³³⁷ By good fortune the property was perfectly suited for the needs of a small retreat center. It even had a main building small enough to be affordable yet large enough to include a room suitable as a shrine room, and it also had several outbuildings that could be used as retreat cabins.

His disciples asked Rinpoche whether they should buy that land for the proposed retreat center. Some students, including Abby Petty and Susan Campbell, had already gone out to see the land and had liked it. The next night, in Rinpoche's dream, a man gave him a *thangka* of the five Sakya founders (*gong ma lnga*), saying, "This was the personal icon (*thugs dam*) of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa."¹³³⁸ The following morning, Rinpoche also did his own divinations. Two or three times in a row the result came up number 13, which according to the divination work (*mo gzhung*) for Dpal ldan lha mo Dmag zor ma indicates the lines "When the lion prowls in the glacier [mountains], the other predators need have no fear" (*seng ge gangs 'grims pa la// sder chags gzhan skrags mi dgos//*). Rinpoche explained that if this result comes up for an ordinary person, there is often a danger of being too good. But since the subject of the divination was a religious project, he saw little possibility of that.

"I am settling it!" Rinpoche said. "You should buy the land. It would be good for a retreat center, so use the land for that purpose." He said that he could see that the causes and conditions were present for a retreat center to be founded, but that in the future these conditions would not arise, so it was essential to secure the property. He said they should buy it quickly and gave some of his own money to help with the down payment.

"I am building my own monastery in Nepal, but as a sort of blessing I am going to donate five hundred dollars. You all pay what you can. Collect donations and use the money together as a down payment, buying it as a group and not in one person's name."

David Rich, Paul Johnston, and Susanne Fairclough each pledged to give ten thousand dollars, saying, "If others can give too, that will be fine. Otherwise we three will take responsibility for seeing that the deal goes through."¹³³⁹

"If this sale is no good, then I'm no good," Dezhung Rinpoche also remarked at the time. When making the title search on the property, their lawyer advised them not to buy the property because the title included three rights of way.¹³⁴⁰ Another obstacle arose when several successive perk tests for a sewage permit failed at various spots on the 180-acre plot. The students came to him, doubtful that the purchase would be worthwhile. But Rinpoche insisted, "Buy the land! I don't know about things like perk tests, but I do know that Tārā never lies."¹³⁴¹ So they went ahead and closed the deal.

Rinpoche was asked by his disciples to name the land, but he deferred, saying H.H. Sakya Trizin should be asked to visit and give a name (His Holiness afterward named it "Sakya Chos 'khor yang rtse"). He then visited the land and (according to a rite described by Thangtong Gyalpo?) buried relics and soil gathered from many holy places of pilgrimage on the site.

In the Boston center, Dezhung Rinpoche clearly stressed meditation and retreat, perhaps more so than anywhere he taught. He gave more Vajrayāna instructions there, and more students were actively involved in doing retreats. In Cambridge and Barre, several people did retreats for Vajrapāṇi Bhūtaḍāmara and the Sakya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga. A three-year Hevajra retreat was accomplished (by Paul Johnston?). David Rich did a year of Hevajra retreat in Barre. Susanne Fairclough did a year of Tshembupa Avalokiteśvara retreat, a three-month Vajrayogiṇī retreat, and a three-month Tārā retreat. Susan Campbell did a five-month Vajrayogiṇī retreat. Four retreats of four, four, five, and six months were performed for Mahākāla.

Rinpoche thus emphasized here gaining liberation through meditation and practice. He gave his students all the necessary initiations, text-transmissions, and instructions for this. Dezhung Rinpoche had been more reticent about giving Vajrayāna teachings in many other places, so this center can be considered Rinpoche's main retreat place. He stressed retreats to his students, and they responded. It was Rinpoche himself who arranged for the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions to be given here. During this third visit, when His Holiness the Sakya Trizin was in France, Dezhung Rinpoche spoke to His Holiness on the telephone, requesting that His Holiness come to Cambridge and give the *Path with Its Fruit*. Later on, Sakya Trizin Rinpoche was asked by His Holiness the Dalai Lama to come and perform for him some special prayers, which prevented his planned visit to Massachusetts. But His Holiness requested the Ngor abbot, Luding Khenpo, to come and give the *Path with Its Fruit* in his stead. Luding

Khenpo did come, and he bestowed the exoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras tshogs bshad*), the Vajrayoginī, and many other instructions, in May and June 1985.

Even though Dezhung Rinpoche himself did not return to Boston after this, his activities thus continued. Moreover, his students invited Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche to come in 1987 and give the Kālacakra and the Six Yogas of the Kālacakra. He also granted the Hevajra cause and path empowerments, and several other instructions related to the *Path with Its Fruit*, such as the *Rin chen snang ba* and *Brda don gsal ba*.

In 1989, the center hosted His Holiness Sakya Trizin's visit. He gave the Tshembupa instructions for Avalokiteśvara practice in Cambridge and then instructions on the Hevajra *sādhana* in Barre, in a retreat format. These teachings, too, are held to be direct extensions of Dezhung Rinpoche's own activities.

However, in 1990 major changes took place. After Dezhung Rinpoche's passing, His Holiness Sakya Trizin sent a much younger Sakyapa monk from India to administrate the Boston/Cambridge center. The lama took charge in 1990 and found it very difficult to make the payments on the retreat land in Barre, and it was even thought necessary to sell the land. Several of the old students managed to retain half of the land privately, in the hope that retreats would be able to continue in Barre as Dezhung Rinpoche intended. They also plan to build a stūpa in Dezhung Rinpoche's memory on this spot.¹³⁴²

1985

Dezhung Rinpoche departed from the East Coast in January 1985 and visited Minneapolis for a few days, his fourth and last visit there. From there he flew to Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the request of Sarah Harding, to give teachings and to bless a big stūpa under construction there at Kalu Rinpoche's "K.S.K." (Kagyü Shenphen Kunkhyab) Center at 751 Airport Road. He stayed about two weeks, giving the Avalokiteśvara initiation on January 7, a sermon on the Four Noble Truths on January 9, Refuge and Bodhicitta on January 11, and two teachings on Mahāmudrā on January 13 and 15. One of his main teachings was the initiation and instructions for Padmasambhava practice according to the *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus* tradition.¹³⁴³ He donated five hundred dollars toward the completion of the stūpa, and

also wrote a letter accompanying his donation. (Later Kalu Rinpoche came and performed the full final consecration ceremony of the stūpa.)

A group of translators from the Nalanda translation committee (Vajradhātu) came from Boulder, Colorado, and Rinpoche talked to them extensively about the self-empty (*rang stong*) and other-empty (*gzhan stong*) theories within Tibetan Madhyamaka philosophy. They were all amazed at the facility with which he could present both views, and above all with the confidence and respect he displayed for both while doing so. He also met with students from the local Zen group, students of Kapleau Roshi. He delighted them by memorizing and then explaining all fifteen of their Sanskrit names.¹³⁴⁴

Rinpoche then went to southern California, where he stayed from late January until March 16, 1985. He stayed several weeks at Kalu Rinpoche's center after his arrival in Los Angeles, giving instructions there on the *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus* on January 27, and instructions on Mahāmudrā.¹³⁴⁵

Lama Losang Drakpa, Ngawang Samten (Jay Goldberg), the American Dharma student Kunga Lhadron (Dale Pickering), and her husband, Peter Gries, had requested that they begin a new Sakya center in Los Angeles (in place of the moribund "Drogön Sakya"), complete with new name. He granted their request, naming it Thubten Dondrup Ling (Thub bstan Don 'grub gling). "This is the same as the name of the Jyekundo monastery," he remarked at the time. He visited the center (located in Lama Losang Drakpa's apartment at 938 South Berendo), though the public teachings were given at Dale and Peter's place, a loft/light-industrial space at 2233 South Barry Avenue in which they had constructed a relatively large shrine room for the center.

On February 20, Rinpoche celebrated the Tibetan New Year and there was no public program. On February 21 and 27, he gave two lectures on "The History of the Sakya Tradition." On the first weekend (February 23 and 24), he led a discussion and meditation concerning concentration and insight. On March 2, he gave the Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga blessing, which he explained in some detail the next day. He also gave initiations for the White Mahākāla (March 6), the combined practice of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāmudrā (March 9), the four-armed Vajrapāṇi (March 13), and Green Tārā (March 16), followed by question-and-answer periods. On Sunday, March 10, he led a group practice of the Avalokiteśvara *sādhana* with a recitation of one hundred thousand mantras.

Rinpoche next went to San Francisco, staying for one week at Kalu Rinpoche's center Kagyu Drodren Kunchab, overseen by Lama Lodro Chophel. He also visited Ewam Choden in Kensington, staying for about ten days.¹³⁴⁶ After that he traveled north to Oregon.

In Oregon he first visited centers near Eugene. At the Kagyü retreat center of Lama Lodro Chophel (b. 1942) he gave initiations for *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus* and Mahākāla, and also instructions on Mahāmudrā. At the center of Chagdud Trulku (b. 1930), Dechen Ling in Cottage Grove, he gave a White Tārā initiation. Then he went to Kalu Rinpoche's center in Portland, Kagyu Changchub Ling, where Lama Thrinlay Drubpa resided, and imparted bodhisattva vows and the Avalokiteśvara initiation.

In spring 1985, Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Seattle. On April 28, the Sakya Monastery held a "celebration in honor of Venerable Dezhung Rinpoche's eightieth birthday." After his return to Seattle, Dhongthog Trulku invited him to his house, but Rinpoche delayed accepting, saying, "Because all my students and all the centers are thinking that I might not come back, I have been accepting each and every invitation while I was gone, and so I have fulfilled all their wishes. Now I am exhausted and would like to take about one month's rest before accepting any more invitations."

During this period he received a visit from me, just returned to the University of Washington to finish the last formalities for my doctorate. Both Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen and Lama Pema Wandrak were present as personal attendants.

On June 29 at his home, Dezhung Rinpoche taught the Seven-Day Amitāyus practice (*Tshe sgrub zhag bdun ma*) of Tsharchen. On July 9, he gave the Great Perfection instructions of Paltrül's *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg* to three intimate old disciples (Ken McLeod, Cyrus Stearns, and Richard Baldwin). Afterward he related many stories about the life of Paltrül. A month later, on August 9, Cyrus Stearns visited him and asked him many questions about *ḍākiṇis* that Judith Hanson had sent in a letter.

After he had rested most of the summer at home, not giving many public teachings, Rinpoche was invited to teach for the first time at the new Sakya center, the Sakya Monastery on N.W. 83rd Street, where he gave the Mañjuśrī initiation on the morning of September 29. On Wednesday, October 2, he bestowed the Twenty-One Tārās initiation, followed two days later by detailed explanations of the practice. On the morning of Sunday, October 6, he gave the Avalokiteśvara initiation. He followed that

with three evenings of detailed explanations of the practices (on October 7, 8, and 11).

Rinpoche's usual Seattle interpreter, Cyrus Stearns, was in Tibet at the time, so when he taught on this occasion every night for a week, Maruta Kalnins Stearns interpreted. Her daughter Anna was four months old, so Kalnins Stearns was nursing her throughout. The last night, at about 10:30, after more than three solid hours of teaching and translating, Dezhung Rinpoche at last completed the announced lecture.

Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche thanked him, saying, "That was wonderful, Uncle Trulku! Thank you! Now, for our new members, could you please explain how to do the Avalokiteśvara meditation?" The already exhausted interpreter could not believe her ears, but Dezhung Rinpoche just took a breath and started in on a detailed exposition of the meditation. He was going fast, and Kalnins Stearns was straining to keep up. When they got to the visualization for taking refuge, imagining the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the sky, Dezhung Rinpoche began to list each and every buddha, bodhisattva, and deity by name. He was going at top speed and must have reeled off the names of at least a hundred buddhas, bodhisattvas, protectors, and *ḍākiṇīs*. Kalnins Stearns could not believe it and just stared at him with her mouth hanging open.

Rinpoche took one look at her and began chuckling, which soon developed into such strong laughter that his body shook and tears started rolling down his cheeks. The laughter was contagious, and soon Kalnins Stearns could not control herself either. For two or three minutes they both sat there, racked by convulsive fits of laughter. Then Rinpoche collected himself and calmly finished the teaching.¹³⁴⁷

Later in the fall of 1985, Dezhung Rinpoche gave a public exposition of Sakya Paṇḍita's great Mahāyāna treatise *The Elucidation of the Sage's Intent* (*Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*). This he began at the Sakya Monastery on October 15, 1985, and continued for a total of twenty-four sessions, completing the exposition of the final verses on December 22.¹³⁴⁸ Cyrus Stearns acted as interpreter throughout. This was Dezhung Rinpoche's last teaching at the Sakya Monastery in Seattle. He had originally planned to conclude these teachings on November 26, but he postponed his departure for Nepal in order to impart this series of teachings in full. He emphasized to his students that it was important, both for him and them, that he complete this teaching before he left.

In November 1985, many of the meditators from Kalu Rinpoche's retreat

center on Salt Spring Island had completed their three-year retreat, and in the weeks that followed they came in twos and threes to Seattle to request individual teachings from Rinpoche. At about this time, during about a week of afternoon sessions, he also dictated the lives of several Gapa lamas to Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen. The latter had been accompanying the Ngor abbot, Luding Khenpo, during his North American visit, but when Luding Khenpo went to visit his relatives in British Columbia, Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen received permission to return to Seattle to attend Dezhung Rinpoche. In the following weeks he reminded Rinpoche of Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö's request to write down the Gapa lamas' biographies.

"I can't see clearly enough to write them myself," he replied.

"If you tell them orally, Rinpoche, I'll set them down in writing," volunteered his attendant.

At this suggestion Rinpoche relaxed and with an easy heart recounted the biographies, one by one, every afternoon over the course of about a week.¹³⁴⁹ Then Rinpoche started making serious preparations for his return trip to Nepal.

1986

In Seattle, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, who had been making good progress in founding a Sakya "monastery" there, was not pleased that Dezhung Rinpoche was returning to Nepal. He told Dezhung Rinpoche more than once, "You should not go to Nepal and build a temple. Anyone can build a temple. You know a lot; you should stay here and write books!" Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche was also convinced that Dezhung Rinpoche did not have the right people as helpers for building a temple and was somewhat displeased with Dr. Kunzang Nyima and Ane Chime for going along with the building plans. Yet he respected Dezhung Rinpoche as a pure religious teacher and practitioner. As he later said, "Dezhung Rinpoche was very good, though he did not know politics."¹³⁵⁰

On January 27, 1986, Dezhung Rinpoche expounded the *Mañjuśrī sādhanā* by Dpal ldan don grub to a small group at home. He passed the lunar New Year in Seattle and then began his eighty-first year by Tibetan reckoning. It was a fixed tenet of Tibetan astrology that eighty-one was a highly inauspicious number and that this year in a person's life was most unlucky. It was considered the combination of all bad circumstances (9

times 9 = *ngan pa rgu 'dzom*, just as near the end of each year there is one such bad day in the Tibetan calendar). Before beginning this year, Rinpoche mentioned this to some relatives, and he also told the story of his early teacher Nyiga Dorjechang, who according to another lama's prediction was to have died in his eighty-first year. But not wanting to die then, Nyiga had passed away instead on the holiday of the Buddha's descent from the heavens (the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month) in his eightieth year, just before reaching the inauspicious eighty-first year.



128. Dictating the life of Ngawang Lekpa to Dhongthog Rinpoche. Seattle, 1985.

One day, a Seattle disciple of long standing, Chris Wilkinson, came by Dezhung Rinpoche's residence for a visit. Rinpoche told him that he had been able to raise a considerable amount of money for the building of the new Tharlam monastery, and that if he did not go back to Nepal to complete that project, his life's work would not come to fruition. He told Wilkinson he was confident about the people helping him in Nepal.

Wilkinson pulled out a shiny gold coin, a Canadian maple leaf, and offered it to Rinpoche, saying, "This is some gold, Rinpoche, for gilding the main image of the temple."

Rinpoche took the coin and looked at it for a moment, saying, "A gold maṇḍala!" Then his hand suddenly started shaking violently, and the gold

coin flew across the room and disappeared before anyone could see where it had gone.

Dr. Kunzang Nyima, who was present and had witnessed the gift, jumped up at once and scurried around the room, looking under all the cushions and chairs, anxiously trying to locate the lost coin. Dezhung Rinpoche sat there smiling and said, "It's not good to touch gold!"¹³⁵¹

Finally, after about ten minutes of bustling about, Dr. Kunzang Nyima found the coin and put it in an envelope. Dezhung Rinpoche remarked, "I leave it to him to take care of things like that!"

When the time for parting came, it was hard for Wilkinson to say good-bye. He was convinced he would never see Dezhung Rinpoche again and that Rinpoche's people in Nepal would never let him come back to the West.¹³⁵²

Before Dezhung Rinpoche left for Nepal, he told his student Vana Jakic in Seattle in January 1986, "I am like a young man from the waist up." He felt fit, and only his leg was causing problems. With the passing years, the leg proved to be the source of other difficulties (circulation and digestion) since it impeded his mobility. Many times he was in discomfort, even while teaching. Yet even though he was obviously troubled by his leg, he did not complain.¹³⁵³

In spite of his relatively good health and the lack of any obvious sickness, Rinpoche was preparing for death. He was not planning to return to America. During the last year he had been giving away personal possessions to close disciples, saying: "This is something to remember me by," or, in English, "Keep this!" He would recite many prayers and blessings for disciples before they left.¹³⁵⁴

For the benefit of his students he said sometimes, "I'll be back. We'll meet again." But then he would tell his personal attendants, "I'm old. This is probably the last time I'll meet them. Though I doubt I'll see them again, I've said this as an auspicious interconnection (*rtan 'brel*). But this will probably be the last time." To a few of his students he may have been more frank, for some left his presence for the last time openly weeping.¹³⁵⁵ Others wept even without his having said anything about his death.

Before leaving the United States for Nepal, he said to certain of his close attendants:¹³⁵⁶

I am now an old man. As it has been taught, “One cannot be sure when one will die, and the conditions bringing about death are uncertain,” so I cannot know definitely where I will die. But if it is up to me, I would like to die in Nepal.

On another occasion, he expressed this wish even more explicitly, saying (as his brother Kunzang Nyima later recollected):¹³⁵⁷

I would like to die in Nepal. Why there? Because the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future appear there; it is a place for the gathering of *ḍākiṇīs*, and a meeting place of many masters and disciples. There are about one thousand monks and patrons to help in accomplishing Dharma works. My students and patrons have made large and small offerings in the hope of establishing a new Tharlam monastery there, and the embodiments of enlightened body, speech, and mind are already present there.

Meanwhile, many others of Dezhung Rinpoche’s students in North America were worried that he might be leaving permanently. A few days before his departure, Dhongthog Trulku and others received a long-life initiation from Dezhung Rinpoche. Dhongthog Trulku reminded Rinpoche how common it is to get sick in Nepal and referred to Dezhung Rinpoche’s own illness during his previous stay. “Therefore, please come back if you fall ill,” he requested.

For their sake, Dezhung Rinpoche replied that if his health remained good, he would stay in Nepal, but if he became seriously ill, he would try to come back.¹³⁵⁸

The last words heard by his students in Seattle as he was boarding the airplane for Nepal were the mantra of Tārā: “*Oṃ tare tutare!*”¹³⁵⁹

The Second Journey to Nepal

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE began his return trip to Nepal in early February 1986, after spending the Tibetan New Year in Seattle with his family. Accompanying him were Kunzang Nyima and Lama Kalsang Gyaltsen. After leaving Seattle, he made a one-week stop in Hawai'i, teaching at two Buddhist centers of Kalu Rinpoche's students. At the Dharma center on the Big Island, Hawai'i, he gave an Avalokiteśvara initiation, bodhisattva vows, and the *Dkon mchog spyi 'dus* and Mahākāla initiations, as well as a long-life empowerment. At the Honolulu center, he gave bodhisattva vows and other initiations.¹³⁶⁰ On February 8, he gave a teaching on sleep and dreams, in this case an Amitābha sleeping-yoga following a text by Chögyal Phakpa.¹³⁶¹ On February 15, he expounded some of Milarepa's songs and also a Mañjuśrī *sādhana*.¹³⁶² It was fitting that he visited Hawai'i last before leaving the United States, for Honolulu had also been his port of entry when he had first come to the United States twenty-five years earlier, in late 1960.

His flight from Hawai'i to Asia was routed via Bangkok, and there Rinpoche and his attendants made a brief stop to buy needed ritual items for the new temple. James Sarzotti met the party in Bangkok and assisted in shopping and carrying the purchases on to Nepal.¹³⁶³

Before departing from the United States, Dezhung Rinpoche had said: "When I arrive in Nepal, I want to recite the *Prayer of Beneficial Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*) because whatever virtues I have achieved through teachings and other activities in North America, and whatever virtue my students and friends have achieved, such as through offerings for Tharlam monastery, must not be wasted, but should be dedicated to the highest, complete enlightenment." So when he reached Kathmandu, one of the first

things he did, starting the day after his arrival, was to organize the reciting of dedication of merit prayers on a vast scale in Traruk Trulku's monastery. For several days he and his assistants made preparations. Then from the fifteenth day of the first lunar month (*Cho 'phrul bstan pa'i dus chen?* February 24, 1986) until the twenty-sixth day of the same lunar month, the birthday of Sakya Paṇḍita, he and the monks recited the prayers. For the first days of the prayers, the Venerable Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche, Traruk Trulku, and monks from all four major traditions were invited to Traruk Rinpoche's monastery. At the end, they completed the recitation of the *Prayer of Beneficial Conduct* a hundred thousand times—which, to ensure completeness, was actually reckoned at one hundred eleven thousand, one hundred and eleven recitations.¹³⁶⁴

After completing these prayers, Dezhung Rinpoche expressed his pleasure at the beginning that had been made on constructing the temple. The shell of the main structure was completed, but work on the interior was only beginning. His own two-story residence in the back corner of the monastic compound was already finished, and he made his quarters in one of its upstairs rooms overlooking the fields.¹³⁶⁵

In March, while the prayers were being recited, James Sarzotti made a trip to Tibet, for which Rinpoche prepared him through a rather unusual ritual. As Sarzotti later recalled:¹³⁶⁶

While pressing a vajra against my skin in different places, [Dezhung Rinpoche] visualized countless tiny vajras filling my body. He did this while reciting a protective mantra. Then he pressed his forehead against mine for an unusually long time. Before I left, he asked me to look for some rare Sakya texts. I left his room giving profound thanks, clanking silently with those invisible vajras.

The trip was spur-of-the-moment, with a set return date, and I was traveling overland in March without gear for cold weather. Despite these apparent hindrances, all went relatively well until the end. But while I did make it to many holy places, including Lhasa, Sakya seemed an impossibility at the time and I failed to secure the texts.

On the return trip overland to Nepal, a late winter storm hit and my party was detained and extorted by the P.L.A. for several days in an unheated army barracks while the road was supposedly being

cleared of an avalanche. One night when it got particularly cold—about ten below zero F. [= minus 23 degrees centigrade]—I started shaking violently and crawled into my lightweight mummy bag, preparing to die. I practiced the guru-yoga, and while doing so, Rinpoche appeared before me in an unusual manner, much more radiant and golden than ever before. At my navel a life-saving heat began to fill not so much my body as my mind. This was something truly new to me.

Arriving back at Tharlam ten to fifteen pounds thinner, but ecstatic to be there, I bounded the stairs up to Rinpoche's room and found myself in the middle of a mysterious candle-lit dinner. Dr. Kunzang Nyima told me that Rinpoche had been very concerned over my late return and had been saying lots of prayers for days. I immediately connected this with the saving heat that had saved me from those convulsive chills. Later it seemed that the heat and the chills had been part of the same thing, simply the strength of Rinpoche's blessings. Whatever the case, I was again very thankful to my guru, but deeply disappointed that I had failed to make it to Sakya and find the desired texts. After all, he had certainly fulfilled his part of the bargain. Of course, little was ever said about it, and I soon became their mealtime entertainment by consuming bowl upon bowl of delicious hot Tibetan noodle soup (*thug pa*), drinking noodles and broth down in a steady stream, unaware even then of my acute dehydration.

On March 10, 1986 (the twenty-ninth day of the first lunar month), Dezhung Rinpoche and his old teacher and friend Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche participated in one of the opening ceremonies for the Great Maitreya Temple (*Byams chen lha khang*) built next to the Bodhnath stūpa by Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche (the ceremony was also briefly attended by Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Nepal).¹³⁶⁷ Dilgo Khyentse at this time personally offered Rinpoche an image of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava as a "body support" (*sku rten*). He also offered a complete set of Kongtrül's collection of discovered works, the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, as "speech support" (*gsung rten*). The two of them passed a pleasant day together in conversation. Thartse Shabdrung Rinpoche came from California in about March and was present at the *Prayer of Beneficial Conduct* recitation. He made a video

of Dezhung Rinpoche at the consecration of the great Maitreya, and of the relaxed proceedings afterward.

Once settled, Dezhung Rinpoche gave in his Tharlam residence a detailed exposition of the Hevajra *sādhana* by Könchok Lhündrup to the assembly of Tharlam monks. These teachings were imparted in six sessions over the course of two weeks, from April 15 to 24.

In April 1986, the trulku of the Dhiḥ phu Chöje monastery, the largest Sakya monastery in Amdo, arrived from Tibet. He visited Dezhung Rinpoche and requested the initiation of White Tārā as his first religious connection (*chos 'brel*).¹³⁶⁸ At about this time Dezhung Rinpoche also received a visit from his teacher Ngor Kangsar abbot Ngawang Khyentse Thubten Nyingpo (1913–1988), who had given him the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions at Ngor in 1949 and who since leaving Tibet had been staying for the most part in a monastery in Spiti in the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. The abbot was then on his way to Ngor in Tibet to contribute to the rebuilding of that monastery. He requested a long-life empowerment from Dezhung Rinpoche and offered him the three “supports” (*rten*) of body, speech, and mind for his longevity.

At Tharlam House (as his residence was known), Dezhung Rinpoche gave to the Tharlam monks initiations for Kurukulle, Sakya Paṇḍita-Mañjuśrī guru-yoga, Bhūtaḍāmara, White Tārā, and Avalokiteśvara, with instructions for how to practice their respective *sādhana*s. Elizabeth Dorje, an American student from New York, came and requested the blessings and practical instructions for Vajrayoginī in Nāropa’s tradition, and this lasted seven days.

During this time, Dezhung Rinpoche explained in some detail to his students and assistants his plans for finishing the murals of the monastery’s main assembly hall. He described his plans for depicting the *Avadāna-kalpalatā* (Tib. *Dpag bsam 'khri shing*) series of *avadāna* tales in wall paintings, just as Gatön had commissioned at Tharlam in the 1920s. This project, however, has only recently been completed.¹³⁶⁹

Also crucial to his plans was a great central Buddha figure of gilt copper and two smaller figures to the right and left, just as in the original Tharlam monastery. Che mo Shi log (b. 1921) of Rtse gdong, one of the greatest living artisans of gilt-copper images, accepted Rinpoche’s commission for making the main Buddha statue. But he found the envisioned size of the figure to be too large in relation to the temple building. Moreover, for erecting very

large gilt-copper images, it would be necessary to construct a wooden supporting framework beneath the copper outer surface, and for this the Tibetan artisan would have to rely on the help of some ordinary Indian woodworkers, the only carpenters then available. The size Dezhung Rinpoche desired was enormous: one face-unit (*zhal tshad*) of the image would equal three feet. (These were the same proportions as the large image of Maitreya [Byams chen] in Chobgye Rinpoche's monastery nearby, but there the image had been made of reinforced concrete.) When the expert artisan raised repeated objections about the size, Dezhung Rinpoche remained firm, insisting that it be this large, the same size as the main statue in the original Tharlam monastery.

In spite of the technical difficulties, the resulting image turned out to be magnificent. The master artisan Che mo lags himself later said, "This Buddha is the best main image among all those in the new monasteries here in Nepal." When making it (it was constructed only after the passing of Dezhung Rinpoche), he was helped by two Bhutanese students—Trashī and Rta mgrin—who had been sent to study under him for five years by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and the Bhutanese government. The two smaller images to the right and left of the central Buddha image, namely, those of Ngorchon and Sapaṅ, were made by the old Rtse gdong artisan 'Jam rdor lags (b. ca. 1916), older brother of the Dharamsala Che mo lags.¹³⁷⁰

In early spring of 1986, Dezhung Rinpoche also received a visit from his student John Nyquist, a registered nurse and old disciple of Rinpoche's from Seattle in the 1970s, who was then working nearby in Bodhnath at a tuberculosis clinic. Nyquist asked Rinpoche when he was next going back to Seattle, and Rinpoche replied "I'm not going back to Seattle. I'm going to die here." "What's holding you here in saṃsāra is that you believe in all this!" he also told Nyquist, encouraging him always to increase insight.¹³⁷¹

In late April another old student from Seattle, the nun Kunga Wangmo, came to see Dezhung Rinpoche. She had been living and working in Rumtek, seat of H.H. the Karmapa in exile, and this was their first meeting in many years. Before she was ushered into his presence, Kunzang Nyima told her: "Now you have to ask Rinpoche whether to stay or to go back to Rumtek." She therefore felt Kunzang Nyima and maybe Rinpoche himself were expecting her to stay and help organize life a little better at his residence.

When she talked with Rinpoche and asked about his health, he was very guarded in his speech. Then, when one of the new attendants from Kham

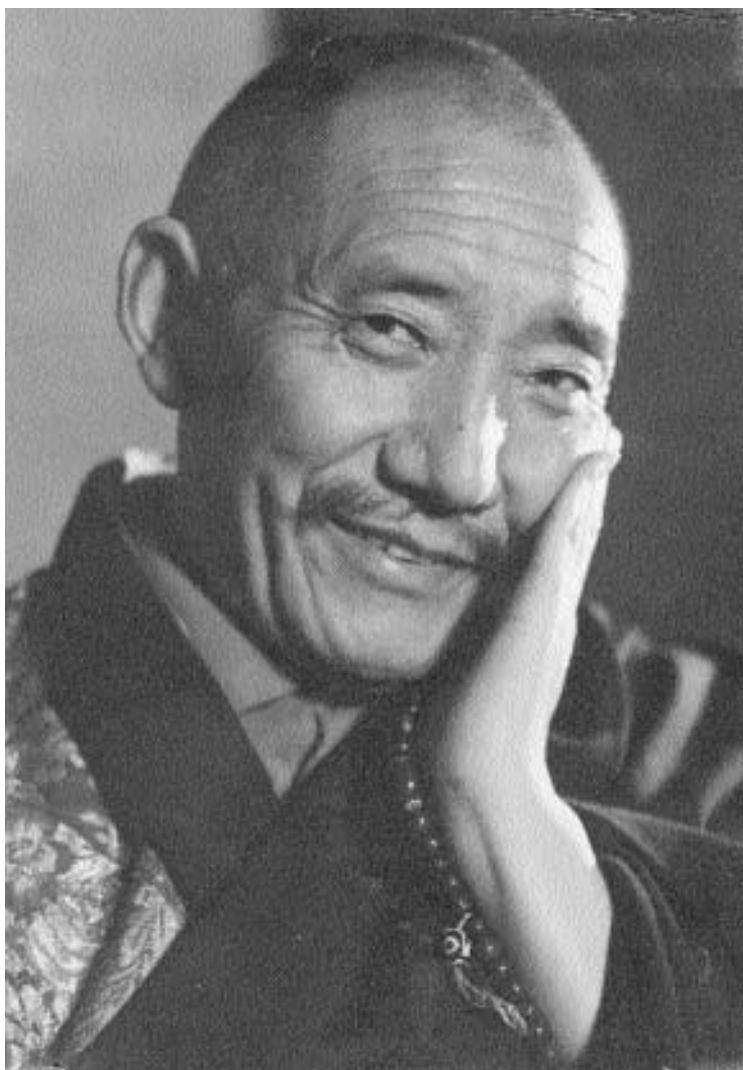
left and shut the door, he called her over to his bedside. Speaking in a low voice, he explained his health problems. Kunga soon enlisted the help of Martine Héau, a French language teacher at the French Cultural Centre who had known Kunga from her association with Kongtrül Rinpoche and who had first met Dezhung Rinpoche in 1985 after his return to Nepal.

After introducing Martine to Rinpoche, Kunga Wangmo explained her plans to return to Rumtek, where she had been working. Upon hearing this, Rinpoche showed some signs of displeasure. Normally he used the respectful verbal forms when speaking with or about her, but now he spoke plainly, telling Martine “Now you will have to look after me, because Kunga here is going to run away” (*rgyugs 'gro gi red*).¹³⁷²

In June, Dezhung Rinpoche fell ill, with severe swelling of his leg (to nearly double its normal size) and constipation. The digestive problems might have been caused by an amoebic infection. He had been given a diuretic to reduce the swelling, but not the required potassium supplement.¹³⁷³ At the insistence of his student John Nyquist, he was admitted into the Bir Hospital.¹³⁷⁴ There he was treated by Dr. Jean-Yves Robins, doctor for the French Embassy. Rinpoche perceived dangers in his situation. Once in the hospital, after the doctor had left, he grabbed the arm of Cyrus Stearns (who had been interpreting to the doctor) and strongly insisted: “No matter what they say, don’t let them operate on me! I have had tantric initiations.”¹³⁷⁵

John Nyquist also came and treated Rinpoche to relieve his digestive conditions, and this had good results. Drukpa Tsheju Kusho, the head of the Nepal Buddhist Society and member of the Rajsabha national assembly of Nepal, was a student of Rinpoche, and he also came to visit Rinpoche in the hospital. After this visit, Dezhung Rinpoche got noticeably better care from the hospital staff.¹³⁷⁶ The swelling of his leg slowly went down, though it remained a darker color than usual. Gradually he recovered, and after two days he was well enough to be released.¹³⁷⁷

As soon as Dezhung Rinpoche felt a little better, he began giving long teaching sessions again. He always pushed himself hard, and this worried those nearby who were trying to keep him healthy. He would not slow down.¹³⁷⁸ To some of his American students, at least, it also seemed that he was sacrificing himself for the sake of the Tharlam temple, and that in so doing, he was falling victim to the manipulation and carelessness of a small



129. What is holding you here is that you believe in all this.... Dezhung Rinpoche smiling. Seattle, 1962/63.

number of his servants, in this case primarily one or two new arrivals from Kham. One of the biggest troubles for his American disciples at the time was to convince these new attendants that cleanliness—especially with food, water, and eating utensils—was of utmost importance for keeping Rinpoche

well in Nepal. It seemed impossible to convince them that, after twenty-five years of living mainly in the West, Rinpoche was in some respects physically like an American and that his system was not as tolerant as those of ordinary Tibetans and Nepalis. No explanations had any lasting effect. A half an hour later, a monk-attendant would serve drinks in glasses still dripping wet with tap water. All this caused tension among the disciples and increased the worries of his Western students.¹³⁷⁹

Still, whatever his health and other problems, Dezhung Rinpoche always stayed true to the Dharma. He never lost sight of it, and even when he was sick he stayed on his chosen course. Those caring for him were deeply impressed with what an incredible religious practitioner he really was. He also continually amazed them with how warm and accepting he was of others.¹³⁸⁰

In August 1986, Rinpoche's sister Ane Chime and his great-nephew Sadhu arrived from Seattle. They stayed with Rinpoche at the Tharlam residence house. Dezhung Rinpoche expounded at this time the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and the *Madhyamakāvatāra*.

On August 8 he wrote a letter to the five Sakya centers in North America that were under his care (those in New York, Boston, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and Seattle), encouraging them to continue in their religious practice and, in particular, requesting everyone to help as much as possible in the founding of the new Sakya Phuntsok Ling center in Washington, D.C., which would be led by his student Ven. Kalsang Gyaltzen, for whom he had high esteem. He also sent a much more detailed message to this same effect recorded on audio cassette, saying, among other things, that he had examined his dreams as a prognostication and that the leadership of Lama Kalsang was positively indicated.¹³⁸¹

During the last week of August 1986, he received a brief visit from me, just returning from a journey to central Tibet and on my way back to Japan via Nepal. I presented him with a small woven image of the Buddha Śākyamuni, which he accepted reverently and touched to his head, saying, "It is always good to meet a Buddha." He seemed still somewhat weak and subdued—though he was well enough to receive visitors, and his mind was clear. In October, Rinpoche received a visit from yet another old Seattle student from the 1970s, the Jesuit priest Richard Sherburne, professor of history of religions and Eastern religions at Seattle University since 1977.

At about this time, Dezhung Rinpoche began to teach the Sanskrit grammar treatises *Sarasvatī*, *Candrapa*, and *Kālapa* in the traditional Tibetan

manner to a small group of Bhutanese disciples. He had been urgently asked to give these instructions by Drukpa Tsheju Kusho, who had received an official letter from Bhutan requesting this. A high Bhutanese lama requested Rinpoche to give these teachings for the sake of Bhutanese traditions of learning. (Some said it was the Rje Khenpo of Bhutan himself who made the request—though it may have been just the head teacher [*slob dpon*] of the small government-supported school for the study of the traditional language arts.)

As a young man, Dezhung Rinpoche had memorized and studied the three basic Sanskrit grammatical texts (one for each of the main systems) under Palyul Lama and Khunu Lama. Later in Tibet he said, “Though I’ve studied Sanskrit grammar so much, nobody wants to learn it from me.” In fact a small revival of interest took place in Kham in the late 1950s, but by then conditions had become too unstable for him to transmit what he had learned. When he was first requested to teach Sanskrit grammar in Nepal, he said he had forgotten all that he had learned. But finally, after the Bhutanese monks persisted strongly (saying that the lineages had been lost in India and Tibet), and after Rinpoche had considered the matter more, he agreed to teach. He said in fact, “Before, when I was young, my master Gatön always insisted I study Sanskrit. He must have foreseen that in the future the lineage would fail. So it is his intention that I teach.”

The Bhutanese lama did not come himself. Instead, he dispatched a small deputation of bright students to learn under Dezhung Rinpoche. Six or seven Bhutanese students attended, including some staying in a nearby scriptural seminary in Bodhnath. Everyone at Tharlam monastery begged him not to waste his time and health on this. “But this is my guru’s intention!” he replied.

When Dezhung Rinpoche began to teach, he found after a short while that he could remember his previous studies.¹³⁸² First he taught the *Sarasvatī* grammar (*Dbyangs can ma’i sgra mdo*). The teachings lasted about two months and mainly involved a slow, clear reading of the text (*khrid lung*). After finishing, he gave each student a special grammarian’s name (as was the custom), his own picture, and a small present of one dollar to create a good auspice. Next he started to expound the *Kātantra* grammar, but after a short while he fell ill and could not finish it. Two of the main Bhutanese students also fell ill and returned to Bhutan. The grammar teachings were then suspended.

In mid-December 1986, though he was still not strong, Dezhung Rinpoche gave at his Tharlam residence house a detailed exposition of Geshe Chekawa's *Seven-Point Mind-Training Instructions* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*), using Ngülchu Thokmay Sangpo's commentary to members of the local Westerner community as well as to numerous Tibetan monks. Cyrus Stearns interpreted, and the teachings lasted for three days, December 13 through 15.

IN ABOUT DECEMBER 1986, Dezhung Rinpoche's niece, Dagmo Kusho, came to Nepal and received the Kurukulle initiation from him. She came with two of her younger sons; the three of them were on their way to Tibet for an eighteen-day journey to Sakya and Lhasa. On their return to Nepal, they visited Dezhung Rinpoche again. They were worried about his health and requested him to come back to Seattle. At this time he had a medical examination, and except for his foot, his health was adjudged to be good. Dr. Robins said, "His heart is good and strong."

Dezhung Rinpoche continued to see visitors, greeting them with generous hospitality. Normally he gave them religious photos as gifts, either of the Buddha Śākyamuni at Bodhgaya (especially a certain color photo taken by the Yuthok [?] Sa dbang chen mo), of four-armed Avalokiteśvara, or of White Tārā. As before, in Seattle and elsewhere, he was never stingy, and to poor or mentally disturbed visitors he was especially kind. During the years in Seattle, when any of his family members objected to his giving, he used to tell them, "Don't make obstacles to my practicing of the first perfection (*phar phyin*, *pāramitā*: i.e., giving, *sbyin pa*) or to my keeping the Hevajra pledge: 'Always give gifts.'" In Seattle if someone knocked at his door soliciting money for a charity, he would call out happily from his seat, "Give something! Give something!" (*sbyin! sbyin!*).¹³⁸³

Now at his new house in Bodhnath, he placed a bowl on the table with many single rupee notes to be given to the poor. Beggars would come and cry out "Guruji!" and ring the bell. This displeased some of the attendants in his house, but Dezhung Rinpoche was glad to give, and when he heard them outside he did not fail to send his monks to distribute alms. Even long after his passing, the beggars still came and called out to him.

On February 28, 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche celebrated the lunar New Year, thus surviving his unlucky eighty-first year and beginning his eighty-second year. In mid-January 1987, on the day commemorating the passing into nirvāṇa of Sakya Paṇḍita (the fourteenth day of the eleventh lunar month), he had led a daylong assembly in the temple. He then performed the consecration of five statues, including those of the Buddha Śākyamuni, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe, and one of himself that had been made in Singapore (modeled after a photo taken at age thirty-seven in Minyak). At about this time he told visitors that he had thirty monks staying at his monastery.

In about March 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche gave at Tharlam House what were to be his final teachings. These were the meditation instructions (*khrid*) for the *Mdo kham*s *shar phyogs ma* Avalokiteśvara practice, and initiations and instructions for the Mahākāla “Rock Fortress” (*Mgon po khro bo bcu brag rdzong ma*) practices. At this time his eyes were failing, he felt weak, and he seemed to be at the onset of an illness. When he gave the initiation for the Protector (Mahākāla; *Mgon po*), he described himself:

Some get realization spontaneously by virtue of past good deeds, some get realization if they practice, and some get no realization even if they practice. I belong to the second category.

Near the end of his life, Rinpoche often mentioned the three main commands that Gatön had given him. The first had been to study poetry, grammar, and the Buddhist doctrines of both sūtra and tantra. The second had been to perform on a vast scale activities for Sakya and Ngor monasteries, in order to accumulate merit through giving and through teaching. The third had been to look after Tharlam monastery, both spiritually and materially. This last order had been the most difficult to keep. “I had hoped to be able to do this, too,” he said. “But the Communist Chinese invasion created an obstacle.” With the founding of the new Tharlam monastery in Nepal well underway and making good progress, he could say, “Now I have almost accomplished his third command.”

A plan soon developed among his servants and disciples to take Dezhung Rinpoche to Taiwan for medical treatment and giving teachings. Rinpoche was not overjoyed about this, but money for the new Tharlam monastery was running short, and it seemed important to go there for the good of the

monastery.¹³⁸⁴ He had been invited to Taiwan by the Mingyur Buddhist center (the center of Mingyur and Dge legs Rinpoche). Once there, if his health and strength allowed, he would also be requested to give teachings on the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) or the *Thirteen Golden Dharmas of Sakya* (*Gser chos bcu gsum*), Mingyur Rinpoche translating. Before leaving Seattle for Nepal, Dezhung Rinpoche had accepted an invitation from Mingyur Rinpoche to come again to Taiwan. Now final preparations were made, including the arranging of air tickets.

During this time, Rinpoche went to visit Dge legs Rinpoche (a Gelukpa trulku from Lithang Göñchen who was Mingyur Rinpoche's elder brother and co-sponsor of the invitation to Taiwan) at his house behind Bodhnath, on Mahankal Road. While in the car he felt unwell, and when climbing the steps he felt weak.

In mid-April 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche fell seriously ill. Dr. Robins was summoned and thought the two most likely possibilities were hepatitis or a gallstone. They did an ultrasound scan, but found nothing. Rinpoche's condition worsened. Coincidentally, Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche and his son Dzaya arrived from Seattle, as part of a previously planned trip.

Dezhung Rinpoche's sickness became worse. He could not eat, so they gave him a drip and stomach pipe. For eight days he did not talk, and during the last two or three days he was in a real coma, seeming to be completely unresponsive. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche came with Dzongsar Khyentse, performed a Vajrasattva initiation, and gave Rinpoche instructions from the "Primordial Wisdom" instruction manual *Khrid yig ye shes bla ma*.¹³⁸⁵ Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche performed a long-life empowerment for him, and told Dr. Kunzang Nyima, Ane Chime, and the main Tharlam monks to take Dezhung Rinpoche to the hospital. They refused because they feared he might pass away in the hospital. At this point Dezhung Rinpoche seemed to nod slightly to indicate he did not want to go to the hospital.

The family asked whether there was some way he could be treated at his residence. It was decided that Jamyang Tsultrim would visit the clinic regularly, fetching medicines and supplies. Dr. Robins brought a Frenchwoman, the nurse Isabelle Robert (known as "Elizabeth"), who stayed with Rinpoche, working night and day for more than two weeks. She was new to the Dharma, having more of a medical interest. She administered injections and intravenous foods. Martine Héau, the teacher at the French Cultural Center, orchestrated doctor visits, monitored Rinpoche's condition,

and bought medical supplies as needed, carrying things on her motorbike. Rinpoche's personal attendant and distant relative, Dawa Zangpo, and his student Lama Pema Wangdrak from New York worked hard, staying in the house and serving Rinpoche the best they could.

Rinpoche's brother and sister made formal offerings and requests for his longevity (*brtan bzhugs*), petitioning Rinpoche to stay longer in this life. Traruk Trulku visited and presented him with a White Tārā statue. Gelek Rinpoche also came and requested that he not pass away. All these lama visitors earnestly requested him to remain longer in this life, but added that if he had to go, then to return soon. Also at this time a Chinese physician, Dr. Lee, arrived from Taiwan. A disciple of Mingyur Rinpoche, he had planned to accompany Rinpoche on the plane journey to Taiwan. (He waited in Nepal three weeks, before finally going back alone.)

When Rinpoche was most ill, Dr. Kunzang Nyima gave him the blessing pills (*byin rten*) from the amulet box that Rinpoche always kept with him. Dezhung Rinpoche had on many occasions instructed his brother to be sure to put these in his mouth when signs of certain death arose. Now, it seemed, the moment had come. (The Western doctors, too, thought he would never regain consciousness and that death was imminent and inevitable, giving him one chance in a hundred to recover.)

Then one day, early in the morning, Dezhung Rinpoche showed signs of regaining consciousness. Suddenly he uttered, "*Oṃ māṇi padme hūṃ!*" The previous day, Dr. Kunzang Nyima had given him some Tibetan medicine supposed to help patients recover their speech. Also the day before, Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche had visited, performing the Vajrabhairava self-generation (*bdag bskyed*) and leaving in Rinpoche's room a photo of an ancient appliqué thangka of Vajrabhairava. This was also believed to have helped rouse him from his deep state of unconsciousness.¹³⁸⁶

After hearing Rinpoche's voice, Dawa Zangpo rushed out and suddenly burst into the room of Dr. Kunzang Nyima, who was conversing with Cyrus Stearns. Another nearby attendant was dispatched to bring a paper and pen, in case Rinpoche wanted to dictate any final instructions.

Soon after Rinpoche came out of the coma, he addressed his nurse Isabelle for the first time in English, saying, "You are my friend. Thank you." Ane Chime and Dawa Zangpo then came rushing back into the room and asked if he had anything to say. After a few minutes, he said, "What do you think of my condition?"

The doctors were utterly astounded that Rinpoche had come out of the coma. Later it became clear that he had not completely lost consciousness, though outwardly he had appeared to be unconscious and had lain motionless with a feeding tube in his nose.¹³⁸⁷ Rinpoche afterward stated to Cyrus Stearns that he had not broken his daily Hevajra *sādhana* meditative practice during this time. When asked what the experience had been like, he smiled and referred to the biography of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, in which the story is related of how the first Khyentse, at about the age of fourteen or fifteen, had fallen so ill that everyone assumed he was dead. When he regained consciousness, Khyentse told others of his experiences of traveling to the pure lands and similar things.

“Was it like that for you?” asked his student.

“No,” Rinpoche replied with a smile, “But I didn’t break my Hevajra *Lam dus* meditation practice.” He looked tired but ecstatic, as if he had returned from death to life.¹³⁸⁸

Dr. Kunzang Nyima teasingly called Dezhung Rinpoche “a man returned from death” (*das log*), and asked if he had brought back any tales or messages from the other side that he would care to relate. “I certainly did!” Rinpoche replied jokingly. “If you called in ten secretaries for dictation, I could tell enough stories to keep them all busy!”

That day and the next, Rinpoche continued to make dramatic improvement. The second day after he emerged from the coma, his niece Dagmo Kusho arrived from Seattle with her son Sadhu. She had been informed on the telephone about his illness and had rushed there as soon as she could. She brought him a cluster of tiny blue flowers from Thailand. He was delighted to see her, and they happily talked. But others were forbidden by the doctor to meet or talk with him for fear of exhausting him.

For one month Rinpoche continued to recover and soon was talking and eating normally. He was even getting up and walking around a little. Everyone assumed he was now becoming well, and some returned to North America, greatly relieved that the worst danger was now past.

On April 20, he dictated a letter to his students at Sakya Phuntshok Ling in Washington, D.C., thanking them for their letters and gifts sent through Lama Pema. He said, “I am feeling better and hope [to] recover soon. Once regaining my strength, I am planning to come back to the States and see you all.”

During this month Rinpoche received a visit from the Khyentse Mkha’

'gro Tshe ring chos sgron (the late Chökyi Lotrö's consort), who had come from Gangtok, and from Sogyal Rinpoche with some of his students.

Then one day airplane bookings were made to fly to Taipei on May 21, and the tickets were bought. That same evening, his condition slightly worsened.

He began to feel weaker. During the days when the final travel arrangements were being made (May 10 to 14), Rinpoche once commented, "How can I go there, when I have to be supported by two people just to stand?"

On May 13, Dezhung Rinpoche received a visit from the Dra'u chieftain Rinchen Tsering, lord of Jyekundo, who came with his wife, older son, and daughter. The Dra'u chieftain had requested an interview before, but had been made to wait for four or five days by the servants, who said Rinpoche was too weak to meet anyone. When he finally was allowed to see Rinpoche (and this only as a special courtesy to him), the servants were very strict, insisting that he keep the meeting brief.

When the visitors came into his presence and offered prostrations, Dezhung Rinpoche was delighted to see them and enjoyed a happy and relaxed talk with them. Rinchen Tsering did not want to tax Rinpoche's strength. He first politely inquired about Rinpoche's health.

Rinpoche replied slowly, speaking pleasantly and in a well-organized, step-by-step presentation, just as was his usual way.¹³⁸⁹ He expressed how happy he was to meet the Dra'u chieftain. When the latter asked about how he was eating and sleeping, Rinpoche replied that he could eat everything except meat. (The doctors had advised him to avoid meat, and also he himself found he did not like meat at all anymore.)¹³⁹⁰

Rinchen Tsering then asked about his dreams, to which Rinpoche replied, "I had a dream last night. The door to my private room opened and in peeped a strikingly beautiful lady. She wore five big yellow pieces of amber in her hair (*khra mgo ma*) and also other beautiful ornaments.¹³⁹¹ I felt the scene was real, not like in a dream. I have not dreamt much before of such a woman, but when I did, it was usually a good sign, but then, who knows."¹³⁹²

Dezhung Rinpoche then switched back to more ordinary talk and joked with Rinchen Tsering, telling him that the dream was probably an indication of his coming visit. "You have come today, and maybe it was a sign of that. Anyway, I'm feeling very happy today. We have family ties and our families both propitiate the same goddess (Dmag zor ma).¹³⁹³ The Dra'u chieftains have been very kind to us. Our close spiritual link remains intact,"

he added. "We are deeply indebted to the Behu Tendzin Gyaltzen for his kindness, and I am delighted you could come while I can talk with you."

Then Rinpoche told of another dream he had had that same night: "These days I have lots of dreams, and I can't decide whether they are good or bad. First I dreamt of seeing what I thought to be a certain Bonpo maṇḍala. But then, when I came closer to it, it turned out to be a Buddhist maṇḍala. Then suddenly the maṇḍala was underneath my feet. 'What's going on?' I wondered, 'Why am I here?'"

Rinchen Tsering asked him what it had been like when he was in the coma. Dezhung Rinpoche replied, "I had no pain in any part of my body. I was aware of things, especially what the visiting lamas such as Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, Traruk Trulku, and Dilgo Khyentse did. I could hear Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche's long-life empowerment and also Dilgo Khyentse's voice when he was giving teachings." He added that Dilgo Khyentse had instructed him on how to compose his mind at the time of death, saying that in this way, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche had made him ready to go. "Then I heard the faraway voice of Ane Chime and came out of the coma. When I regained full consciousness, I thought all that had just happened yesterday, but actually five days had passed."¹³⁹⁴

"These days I am recovering. Also others are helping and taking care of me, so it is pleasant. But while I was in the United States, I was invited to Taiwan and I agreed to go there. The same people are now asking when I can come. If I say I cannot go, it would be breaking a promise. If I say I will come, my strength won't actually allow it. So it is difficult to decide what to do."¹³⁹⁵ He added, "Several Taiwanese are still pressing for a reply. I will give my decision after three days."

Dezhung Rinpoche mentioned that he had been examined by Trogawa Rinpoche, a noted Tibetan physician. His diagnosis was the same as that of Dr. Kunzang Nyima. Trogawa Rinpoche offered to give him some special medicine, but Rinpoche did not ask for it.¹³⁹⁶ Rinchen Tsering wanted to talk more, but Lama Pema, the attendant, gave a sign for him to break off the conversation.

On May 15, Jamyang Tsultrim, who was then accompanying Rinpoche and planning to be his attendant on the journey to Taiwan, went with the American nun Ane Kunga Zangmo (from the Cambridge sangha) to Kathmandu to arrange the official traveling permission for Rinpoche and his

attendants.¹³⁹⁷ Ane Kunga Zangmo signed a number of forms, acting as one of the official sponsors for the journey.

On the same day (May 15) Dezhung Rinpoche asked, “Is Dilgo Khyentse here?” He was told that Khyentse Rinpoche had gone to Shar Khumbu in the Sherpa Himalayan region. His condition worsened suddenly in the afternoon, at about 3:00 p.m. He mentioned to his attendants that (the practice of) Vajrayoginī was the fast path.

All Dezhung Rinpoche’s Tibetan students were still very optimistic, believing he had fully recovered. Meanwhile, to Rinpoche’s French nurse, Isabelle Robert, it was apparent that his condition was rapidly worsening. When she had first come to nurse him during his coma, her intuition had been that his condition was not critical, even though the monks and people around him were very distraught, convinced of his impending death. But now, when everyone else was saying he was getting better, she felt the opposite. His face had completely changed. The day before, she had informed Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche that his condition was worsening and had recommended that Khyentse Rinpoche should visit him, if possible.

That day someone came and took a posed picture of Rinpoche between two vases with a polaroid camera. When Isabelle saw it, she laughed, and his attendant Dawa Zangpo did, too. Rinpoche asked her why they had laughed, and she explained, “The picture was exactly the sort of photo that is taken at a funeral.” Somehow to her the approach of death then seemed to be a small event, even a laughable thing.¹³⁹⁸

On the evening of May 15, before dusk had fallen, Rinpoche said to the attendants Pema Wangdrak and Dawa Zangpo, “Today some people came and requested a Dharma connection. Why don’t we now recite the *Prayer of Beneficial Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*) together three times. I will listen carefully; you two recite it slowly.”¹³⁹⁹

After they had completed this, Dezhung Rinpoche said three times, “The teachings of Sakya Paṇḍita possess a truly great blessing.”

Pema Wangdrak asked, “Is Rinpoche speaking of the guru-yoga of Sakya Paṇḍita—Mañjuśrī, or of some part of his teachings?”

Rinpoche replied, “I am not referring to the guru-yoga but to Sakya Paṇḍita himself. Sakya Paṇḍita’s teachings are no different than the word of the Buddha.”¹⁴⁰⁰

Those were Dezhung Rinpoche’s last words. He placed his hand on the heads of Pema and Dawa, and then remained sitting upright.

Unknown to them, Dilgo Khyentse had already returned to Kathmandu on the evening of May 15. Early on the morning of May 16, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche sent a monk to inquire about Dezhung Rinpoche.¹⁴⁰¹ Then, after a difficult night, Dezhung Rinpoche's arms became cold, and Jamyang Tsultrim and another monk hurried to summon Khyentse Rinpoche himself.

Dilgo Khyentse arrived at about 8:00 a.m. He touched Dezhung Rinpoche's forehead with his own, gave him again the Primordial Wisdom instructions of the *Khrid yig ye shes bla ma*,¹⁴⁰² and bade him keep his mind inseparable from that of his teacher, urging him not to become distracted.

A short while later, after Dilgo Khyentse had left, his nurse Isabelle felt the urge to sit at Dezhung Rinpoche's feet (instead of in her usual position seated at his side). It was evident to her that he was about to die, and she prayed fervently at his feet: "Rinpoche, come back quickly! Come back quickly!" Then something made her feel very uncomfortable, and she wanted to leave the room. She went next door to the cooking room for a cup of tea.¹⁴⁰³

A few minutes later, at about 9:45 a.m., Dezhung Rinpoche breathed heavily and exhaled. Then his breathing stopped. Dilgo Khyentse was summoned again immediately. Meanwhile, Traruk Trulku arrived and did the Vajrayoginī "inconceivable" (*bsam gyis mi khyab pa*) rite. Then Dilgo Khyentse arrived and placed paper and cakras at Dezhung Rinpoche's heart and other parts of his body. He placed the body in meditation position and said prayers. "Now he is in meditation" (*thugs dam la bzhugs*), he told others.

For three days, Dezhung Rinpoche was left sitting in his room in "meditation" (*thugs dam*), dressed in his robes. Nobody was allowed in. On the third day, his posture changed, indicating that he had left the body completely. That afternoon his remains were bathed, dressed in robes, and placed in sitting posture with crossed vajra and bell in his hands. The Tharlam monks performed the rite of paying veneration to the remains (*gdung mchod*).¹⁴⁰⁴

On the fourth day (May 19) at noon, in a stūpa specially built on the roof of Tharlam House, Dezhung Rinpoche's remains were cremated, and rites were performed according to three cycles. Traruk Trulku and his monks arranged the corpse over three maṇḍalas. From bottom to top, these were the maṇḍalas of Avalokiteśvara, Sarvavid-Vairocana, and Hevajra. Traruk

Trulku led the monks of his monastery in the Hevajra funeral rite. Khenpo Jamyang Sherab led the Tharlam monks in performing the Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig*) funeral ritual. Evidently Dzongsar Khyentse led the third rite (based on Avalokiteśvara practice).

In the morning, many Tibetan lamas, monks, and laypeople had come to pay their last respects, including numerous monks from nearby Kagyü, Nyingma, and Sakya temples. Many students from other continents and countries also came. Lama Padma Wangdrak (representing his American students) and several other monks performed the Avalokiteśvara recitation and meditation. Many performed circumambulations of the stūpa.

In the afternoon, the fuel was brought and the cremation fire was lit. It burned fiercely, and high above in the sky, seven vultures appeared.¹⁴⁰⁵ After the cremation, the whole stūpa was covered with mud and left until the auspicious day when it should be opened. All those monks present also recited the *Prayer of Beneficial Conduct* and many other prayers. People remained and circumambulated the cremation stūpa late into the night.

For the next three weeks, gentle showers of rain are said to have fallen on the site at regular intervals. Three weeks after the cremation, the stūpa was opened, at which time a rainbow appeared clearly to the east of Tharlam House, seeming to arc over the stūpa.¹⁴⁰⁶

Special rites and prayers were done throughout the forty-nine days after Dezhung Rinpoche's passing. The ashes and remaining bones were taken from the stūpa by seven Hevajra retreat practitioners. A part of them was pulverized, mixed with special substances and clay, and molded into *tsha tsha* tablets or figurines of Avalokiteśvara.¹⁴⁰⁷ They were distributed to each monk and disciple who requested one. Some were taken back to Tibet and Kham. (The remaining ashes were meant to be placed in the two stūpas being built in his memory: one in Tharlam monastery in Nepal, and the other in Seattle.) All this was accomplished during the first forty-nine days after his passing. During this time all the monks in the assembly recited many times the *Prayer of Beneficial Conduct*.

Since that time, a stūpa has been constructed for Dezhung Rinpoche's relics in the Tharlam monastery near Bodhnath, Nepal. Another has been built outside the Sakya Monastery in the Greenwood district of north Seattle.¹⁴⁰⁸

THE NEWS OF Dezhung Rinpoche's passing hit all his students and friends—old and new, near and far—very hard. As one longtime friend, disciple, and countryman, Randa Chime Rinpoche, later recalled:

I was a great admirer of Dezhung Rinpoche. After my retirement I planned to go and study full-time under him, just to absorb a little of all that he could teach.

I've actually never known another lama like Dezhung Rinpoche. He knew everything! Whenever I would ask him a question, he would pause and then say, "Look in volume so-and-so on page such-and-such of this or that collection. There you will find it." Then he would say, "But you know, Chime, you only call me when you have a question to ask me!"

Once in British Columbia, Canada, at a Kagyüpa center, one of the monks there asked him: "Rinpoche, what is the importance of Drakkar Taso?" He began to speak [about this famous site of Milarepa's meditation], and he continued for more than two hours continuously on just the significance of the place and all the events and holy objects connected with it. At that time I thought to myself, "And these people call themselves Kagyüpa!"

When I heard the news of Dezhung Rinpoche's passing, I had a heart attack. I just sat there silently for half an hour, completely stunned. Nobody knew what had happened to me.¹⁴⁰⁹

Soon after Dezhung Rinpoche's passing, Tharlam Khenpo Jamyang Sherab composed a prayer for the blessings of Dezhung Rinpoche and for his timely rebirth. The first three quatrains were the verses of Rinpoche's long-life prayer composed by Gatön, with a few slight modifications. The last two verses were (as translated by Cyrus Stearns, May 18, 1987):

May the dancing new moon of your emanation shine once again on
the seat of our devotion, and may the manifest reflections of its
threefold activities quickly emanate in an unceasing celebration!

May the Ganges current of the Dharma Lord Rabjam's tradition,
with rippling waves of activity in explanation and practice, perme-
ate the sandalwood sea of this world, expanding forever auspicious
good fortune!

On the forty-ninth day after Dezhung Rinpoche's passing, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche also composed a prayer for his rebirth. H.H. Sakya Trizin, too, composed such a prayer, at the request of Dr. Kunzang Nyima:

Compassion is the essence of your mind,
and so we request you not to remain
in the realm of the absolute for your own sake,
but to reappear for the sake of others
in the realm of matter,
for the sake of living beings and the Doctrine!

On his passing, Dezhung Rinpoche did not leave any letter or any sort of special indication of when or where he might be reborn. His niece, Dagmo Kusho, recalled that once, in the 1980s, he had told his disciple and friend Gapa Tshe dga' (now settled in British Columbia), "Oh, my! I've stayed twenty years in America, and now I will have to be reborn again soon!"

"Where will you be reborn, Rinpoche?" Gapa Tshe dga' asked.

"Well, I have no power to decide that myself. But by the force of my 'habit impregnations' (*bag chags*) from past deeds, I may be reborn somewhere around here in Seattle."¹⁴¹⁰

He had also made similar remarks (in a jocular vein) when interviewed by a Seattle journalist in 1967.

Tharlam monastery never had a trulku before Dezhung Rinpoche, who

specifically discussed this in the years before his death, saying, “According to Gatön Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche, there are no trulkus in our Tharlam monastery’s tradition. But from time to time a good monk appears who belongs to the lineage of bodhisattvas and who, with good wisdom and practice, can set an example. My family and lama estate (*bla brang*) will look after the monastery after I am gone. If a good monk appears among the Tharlam monks, then let him lead. The monastery itself belongs to the Sakya order.”¹⁴¹¹

The monastery which Dezhung Rinpoche had begun in Nepal was completed by his loyal monk-disciples Damchö and Trashi Tshering, with the great support of Tharlam Khenpo Jamyang Sherab (now residing in Taiwan) and assisted in many ways by his siblings, Ane Chime and Kunzang Nyima. The temple was formally inaugurated on the morning of December 27, 1993 (the death anniversary of Sakya Paṇḍita following the lunar calendar), at the start of the transmission of the great *Sgrub thabs kun btus* collection of initiations and *sādhana*s by H.H. Sakya Trizin.

On the morning of the March 8, 1994, at the new Tharlam monastery in Bodhnath there took place the formal recognition and enthronement of a young boy as the next Dezhung Trulku.

APPENDIX A

Dezhung Rinpoche on Buddhism without Sectarianism

A talk given by Dezhung Rinpoche in Los Angeles in 1983,
translated by Jared Rhoton.

IN UNDERTAKING THE STUDY OF DHARMA, we need to understand that there is a right way to do it. As you listen to this exposition of the Buddhist teachings, put aside all distractions and focus your mind with single-minded intent upon its words and their meanings. This, too, should be done in an attitude of remembrance of all those beings who are unable to hear the teachings of enlightenment. Bring them to your mind with thoughts of love and compassion, and with a resolve that on their behalf you will learn the Dharma rightly, remember it, experience it, and realize it through your own efforts.

In order to purify the mind of ordinary conceptualizations about the nature and value of Dharma, you should also think of your teacher as being none other than Śākyamuni Buddha himself. For if the Enlightened One himself were here before you, he would not teach other than this Dharma.

Visualize your teacher in the form of Śākyamuni Buddha and imagine that boundless rays of golden light shine forth from his body to touch all living beings. These lights remove from them and oneself obstacles to the experience of the Dharma Realm and establish them in the pure joy of liberation. As these rays of light touch your heart, think that there arises in your mind insight into the true sense of the Dharma that is being expounded.

Think of yourself as being none other than the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī, who in fulfillment of his vows tirelessly seeks out all the teachings of the Dharma on behalf of suffering beings. Imagine that you are receiving this Dharma in the pure realm of the buddhas. There, all things are seen not as substantial and real in the way that we see them through delusion, but as similar to the images that appear in a mirage or in a dream. Without

grasping at anything as real, allow your mind to dwell in the state of emptiness. In these ways, your efforts to learn here and now will approximate the transmission of Dharma as it takes place on the level of ultimate reality.

All such opportunities as this to hear, to learn, and to integrate within one's own consciousness the teachings of enlightenment taught by Śākya-muni Buddha are extremely rare. Very few beings have such an opportunity. Many live their lives cut off from the Dharma. They have no access to the path of liberation. As a result, they suffer and, through delusion, create more suffering for themselves and for other beings. This suffering goes on and on; it is endless and manifold in its manifestations.

It was truly spoken in the sūtras that it is rare for beings to hear even the name of the Buddha. Throughout countless lifetimes, most beings do not have even that much of a chance for liberation from their delusion and pain. Every teaching should, therefore, be valued as rare and cherished while one still has the opportunity to receive it.

Fortunate beings such as ourselves, who now have the advantages and leisure of human life at a time when the teachings are present, should be mindful of our situation. Human life is extremely short. It passes away more rapidly than the falling waters of a mountain stream. Our life is passing away swiftly, and death lies ahead for each of us. In this world, distractions are many and obstacles are rife. It is hard to find the will to practice Dharma. It is hard to awaken within our minds the resolve to win enlightenment, hard to apply ourselves rightly to this resolve in a way that truly benefits ourselves and others.

Yet we must find strength to awaken this resolve within ourselves through reflection upon the facts of our human existence and the facts of existence as a whole. For we, like other beings, are being carried along by the great river of karmic propensities (mental habits arisen from past deluded actions). At the time of death, the propensities of our mind will determine the future: whether we shall again find such an opportunity to receive and practice the Dharma or whether we shall have lost it for good, whether we shall suffer in the lower realms among the hell-beings, hungry ghosts, and animals, or find ourselves bereft of Dharma among the gods and titans.

The law of karma that turns the great wheel of interdependent origination, the inexorable cycle of deluded mental processes, will carry us from this unique opportunity to take hold of, and be rescued by, the saving Dharma. If we remain under the control of this round of delusion, the evolution of

the twelve links of interdependent origination will cause us helplessly to roam about from one state of existence to another. If we do not break free from the wheel of delusion through wisdom and right understanding of the Way, we are sure to continue to experience pain. If we do not make this break, the three kinds of pain—of impermanence, of pain itself (in the lower realms), and of conditioned existence—will continue to plague us. This is the future that awaits each one of us who fails to pause, reflect, and make a sincere effort to realize these Dharma truths.

In a situation such as ours, what are we to do? This was the matter upon which the Enlightened One, Śākyamuni Buddha, pondered for years, and it was through his great compassion for beings like ourselves that we have had revealed to us a way whereby we might free ourselves from our plight.

The Buddha taught a path of liberation based upon purity and morality, a path of experience that consists of right study, reflection, and meditation, a path that has at its end the attainment of the great happiness of freedom. Through his skill in means and knowledge of the various kinds of beings and the various karmic propensities which cause beings to differ from each other, he expounded several systems of practice.

First, he taught the system of Hinayāna Buddhism, with its concept of individual salvation. For others of greater spiritual capacity, he taught the noble doctrines of the Great Way of Mahāyāna Buddhism, with its concept of universal salvation. In the Mahāyāna system, one takes the bodhisattva's vows to liberate all living beings as well as oneself. It has as its result the attainment of the three kāyas, or aspects of perfect enlightenment. However, this path of Mahāyāna practice requires that three incalculable aeons be spent in perfecting the qualities of bodhisattvahood.

For those whose compassion for the world is intense, who find it intolerable that beings be kept waiting so long before one is able to free them from suffering and establish them in the happiness of liberation, Lord Buddha expounded the swift path of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Because of the superior meditative techniques of this system, it becomes possible to attain buddhahood in a very short while.

If one preserves one's vows and meditates diligently, one will attain perfect enlightenment—buddhahood—in this very lifetime. But this system does require that one be endowed with superior mental faculties: one must be extremely intelligent and diligent. Yet one can be assured of enlightenment in either the bardo state or in the next lifetime if one is only of mediocre

abilities, understanding, and diligence. Even if one has very little spiritual development and is unable to practice at all, one is still assured of the attainment of buddhahood within not more than sixteen lifetimes.

This last system taught by the Buddha is, therefore, extremely effective. Buddhists who are moved by intense compassion for the world, who have resolved quickly to free beings from suffering and to establish them in happiness, should apply themselves to this system of practice. The qualities that are required here are courage, diligence in practice, and enthusiasm for virtue.

These three systems of Dharma expounded for beings of different capacities are all of great benefit to the world. Through them, all beings may find a way to liberation. Whoever receives the Dharma receives benefit, for it was taught by the compassionate Buddha to help us achieve our aims. We all seek happiness and try to avoid pain. The Dharma shows us the way to remove the causes of pain and to attain the experience of supreme well-being.

Yet there is the danger of taking hold of the Dharma wrongly. If this danger is not avoided and one's approach to Dharma is faulty, "Dharma" becomes a cause of harm instead of benefit. This is not the intent of the enlightened ones, nor of the masters who have entrusted it to us.

Recognize and avoid this danger: it is called "narrow-mindedness." It manifests itself in Saṅgha circles in the form of sectarianism: an attitude of partiality, a tendency to form deluded attachments to one's own order and to reject other schools of Buddhism as inferior.

I have seen this narrow-minded spirit detract from Buddhism in my own land of Tibet, and, during the past twenty years of my stay in America, I have also seen it grow among the many Dharma centers founded here by Tibetan teachers and their disciples. It is always with sorrow that I observe sectarianism take root among Dharma centers. It is my karma, as a representative of Buddhism and as a Tibetan, to have the opportunity and responsibility to speak out, when asked, against this "inner foe."

It was common in Tibet for the least spiritually developed adherents of each of the four great orders to nurture this spirit of sectarianism. Often monks and lay disciples of one order would refuse to attend the services of other orders. Monks would refuse to study or read the literature of others simply because they were the writings of masters who belonged to another lineage—no matter how good the literature might be.

The great Nyingma order—the order of the Ancient Ones—has its own special pride. Some of its followers feel that, as members of the earliest

school, they have profound doctrines unknown to the later schools of Tibetan Buddhism. They maintain that somehow their doctrine of “Great Perfection” is superior to the “Mahāmudrā” perception of ultimate reality. They make this claim even though, by logic and the teachings of the Buddha himself, we know it is not possible that there could be any difference in the realization of ultimate reality. They also claim that theirs is a superior path endowed with secret teachings and levels of Dharma unknown to the other schools.

The Gelukpa school, founded by the great Tsongkhapa, has its proud adherents, too. They think they are sole guardians of the teachings that were transmitted into Tibetan by the great pandit Atiśa, even though these are available and commonly practiced in the other orders. They have pride in proclaiming a superiority in moral conduct. They feel their observance of the monastic discipline and their custom of devoting many years to study before finally turning to the practice of meditation constitute a superior path to Vajrayāna practice. They consider themselves to be superior both in deportment and learning.

Certain followers of the Sakya order also have their conceit about learning. They believe that only their school understands and preserves the profound teachings that were introduced into Tibet from Buddhist India. It is common for these Sakya scholars to look down on the practitioners of other orders, thinking that other Tibetan Buddhists are ignorant practitioners whose practice is not supported by right understanding of the Dharma’s true meaning.

Some Kagyü adherents have their own special pride. They claim that their lineage of masters is so superior that they themselves should be considered superior—as heirs of Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa, and Dagpo. These masters, it is true, were very great, but it does not necessarily follow that one who claims to be an adherent of their tradition is also great. The greatness of these masters depends on their realization. Blind allegiance to these masters cannot make Kagyü practitioners superior.

All these attitudes are commonly found among Tibetan Buddhist monks and laypeople. These attitudes may be common, but they are not Buddhist. The great Kagyü master and proponent of the Nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement, Kongtrul Rinpoche, stated that a wise person will have faith in the teachings of all orders and will love the Dharma found in each, just as a mother cherishes all her children. A wise person’s mind is vast like the sky,

with room for many teachings, many insights, and many meditations. But the mind of an ignorant sectarian is limited, tight, and narrow, like a vase that can only hold so much. It is difficult for such a mind to grow in Dharma because of its self-imposed limitations. The difference between the wise Buddhist and the sectarian Buddhist is like that between the vastness of space and the narrowness of a vase. These are the words of Kongtrul Rinpoche.

The great sage of the Sakya order Sapaṅ wrote in his *Three Vows* that in his youth he had studied extensively the literature of all the orders of Tibet under different masters. He had made special efforts to learn, understand, and realize the doctrines of these different schools and never despised any of them. He cherished them all. Longchen Rabjampa, the great scholar of the Nyingma order, practiced similarly. He received transmissions of Dharma from masters of all four orders without discrimination. From the biography of the great Tsongkhapa we learn that he, too, studied extensively under masters of all orders.

The great Khyentse Wangpo, foremost teacher of the Nonsectarian movement, wrote in his autobiography that in his youth he had studied under one hundred and fifty masters of all the four orders of Tibetan Buddhism. Kongtrul Rinpoche, another Nonsectarian master, included all the essential doctrines of each of the four orders, as well as of the minor traditions, in his great masterpiece, the *Treasury of Practical Instructions*.

All these great masters, the greatest minds that Tibetan Buddhist history has produced, agreed that there is no place in the pure Dharma for a sectarian attitude. The Buddha himself taught in the *Discipline* scriptures and in various sūtras that those Buddhists who form attachments to their own school of Buddhism and despise the teachings, masters, and followers of other schools create great harm for themselves and for the Buddhist community as a whole.

First of all, one who despises another Buddhist school despises the Buddha. He impairs the transmission of the Dharma. The presence of the Dharma is jeopardized by such an attitude, and one becomes cut off from its transmission. This is so because one's refuge vows are based upon reliance on the Enlightened One, his Teachings, and the Holy Community. If one rejects Dharma, one breaks one's refuge vow and thereby becomes cut off from the Dharma. By rejecting this Dharma that is the only door to happiness for beings and oneself, one accumulates inexhaustible sin.

Therefore, the Buddha taught that one should also not despise the

Dharma of non-Buddhists, for it is their source of happiness and benefit. One should not despise or harbor contempt for the doctrines of the Hindus, Christians, or other non-Buddhist religions, because this attitude of attachment to one's own side while rejecting the possibility of differences is harmful to one's own spiritual career.

Those people who harbor voiced or unvoiced contempt for the teachings and lineages of other schools incur great sin and terrible consequences. Worst of all, this attitude is as unnecessary as it is harmful.

Students of Dharma ought to be moved by faith in the teachings of the Buddha to renounce the distractions, delusions, and bonds of the world and to direct their efforts toward purifying their minds of obstacles, obscurations, and sins. They should devote themselves to efforts in accumulating those virtues and realizations that bring about buddhahood and great benefit for themselves and others. This is the real task that each Buddhist has before him or her. Our work is not one of competing or vying with other Buddhist practitioners, thereby creating obstacles for them and for ourselves. This was not the responsibility set before us when we took upon ourselves the vows of refuge and the vows of bodhisattvahood.

Faith is the foundation of Dharma. It is faith in the authenticity and truth of Buddhist teachings and confidence in the efficacy of the path to enlightenment that impels us to take upon ourselves the commitments of vows. It moves us to take upon ourselves the commitments of [full] monastic vows, novice vows, or the precepts of the lay householder.

In all these, our faith in the authenticity of the Three Jewels is the cornerstone of the vows and trainings to which we commit ourselves. If we reject the Dharma of other Buddhists, we destroy our own commitment to Dharma. We impair our standing in the Dharma and create an obstacle to its reception. We destroy the cornerstone of our own spiritual career.

For these reasons, always keep in mind the great value of Dharma. Reject within yourself and others any attitude that promotes the lessening of faith. We strive always for pure faith—faith that is intelligent, based upon the understanding that we must cherish these Three Jewels as the foundation of our own hopes for buddhahood.

People who adopt this narrow-minded attitude of sectarianism are usually ignorant of the doctrines that other orders possess. Instead, they base their sectarianism upon lineage. They reject the teachers, rather than the teachings, of the other schools.

The lineages of each of the three systems of discipline that form the structure of Dharma training for all Buddhists are derived directly from Śākyamuni Buddha himself. The Pratimokṣa vows originated with the Buddha and were transmitted in succession through the great Indian sages to the Tibetan patriarchs. They have continued in a pure and unbroken succession down to the present time.

The same is true of the profound doctrines and precepts of the bodhisattva's vows, which were also taught by Śākyamuni Buddha and transmitted through the great sages of Buddhist India and Tibet. From the master Nāgārjuna we have the "Mañjuśrī tradition" of the bodhisattva's vows, and from the master Asaṅga we have the "Maitreya tradition."

Similarly, in the Vajrayāna all the tantras were expounded by Buddha in his tantric form, Vajradhara. These tantras and their instructions were transmitted from Vajradhara to various masters of Buddhist [India and] Tibet. These same tantras and instructions have been transmitted purely, without interruption, down to the present time. They are common to all the four orders. Though the lineage of masters may vary from order to order, there is no flaw in the purity and continuity of their transmission.

These three sets of vows provide the framework or structure that enables each one of us to progress on the path to liberation. Thus, there is no fault in any school, or in its doctrine or lineages. Where in all of these could an intelligent person find justification for sectarianism?

It is certainly natural and permissible that we might feel a special affinity with one or another school or be drawn to a particular system of practice, to a particular circle of meditators, or to a particular teacher. But when we do this, we must also be sure to watch our mind and weed out from it any feelings of contempt for, or aversion to, other schools of Buddhism. We should not shun their teachings or their teachers. Whenever we act simply out of attachment to our own order or from a wish not to be receptive to the teachings or teachers of other orders, we are indulging ourselves in this very harmful attitude of sectarianism.

One whose Dharma career is tainted by narrow-mindedness and attachment to one's own interests while rejecting those of others will never overcome the many obstacles to the attainment of wisdom or insight.

Sectarianism turns the pure Dharma into a poison; through it, one accumulates great sin. In this life one will be frustrated in one's own Dharma efforts. Upon death, one will fall into hell as swiftly as an arrow shot from

a bow. These are the consequences of spending a lifetime in rejecting others' spiritual efforts on such narrow-minded grounds.

Therefore be mindful not to indulge in this attitude that brings so much unsought harm upon oneself. Do not create obstacles to your own Dharma. Strive instead for pure faith and maintain that faith in all manifestations of the Three Jewels, no matter whether they are represented in one school of Tibetan Buddhism or in another. Painstakingly nurture your refuge vows and pure faith and thereby grow truly in the Dharma.

APPENDIX B

Previous Attempts and Main Biographical Sources

A NUMBER OF STUDENTS or friends of Dezhung Rinpoche tried in one way or another to record his life story. Several encouraged him directly to set down the main facts of his life. In Seattle in the 1960s, for instance, a friend of the Sakya family named Edna George-son offered him a beautiful bound notebook and requested him to write the story of his life, though he declined to do so. A decade or so later, in 1975, Mrs. Grace McLeod interviewed him in Seattle with the help of his niece, which resulted in eleven pages of notes.¹⁴¹² Finally, near the end of his life in late 1985, his attendant and student Lama Kalsang Gyaltsen begged him to expound his own biography, and his own sister Ane Chime also fervently hoped at this time that he would. This was the time when he was dictating the life stories of many earlier lamas of Ga. But when it came to his own life story, he said, “What a terrible idea! A biography of me would be utterly pointless!”¹⁴¹³

Until the end of his life he did not change his attitude. In early 1986, when he went from North America to Nepal for the last time, he carried among his papers a small bundle of his own letters, autobiographical writings, and other notes. He confided to his attendant at that time, “I really must guard these things carefully! It would be terrible if these fell into the hands of our monastery’s ‘abbot’ (*mkhan po*). He would just exaggerate the story of my life beyond recognition!”¹⁴¹⁴

Attempts at Compiling a Biography in Tibetan

Still, Dezhung Rinpoche did at least keep some brief autobiographical notes in his possession, though until now these were never edited or filled out into a more complete account in Tibetan. Not long after his death, his brother, Dr. Kunzang Nyima (1916–1990), tried in Nepal to commission a

capable lama to write Rinpoche's life story. First he and some others petitioned Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, who was so busy he had to refuse them flatly—he never even looked at the notes and diaries. Dr. Nyima then requested Khenpo Aphey to undertake this work, but he, too, could not take on the project, especially in the absence of detailed records as a starting point. "A proper biography," Khenpo Aphey said, "requires direct experience through many years of close contact with the master, or, failing that, it requires at least the master's record of teachings received and a written outline of his life."

Dezhung Rinpoche's daily diaries for the later years were almost impossible to make headway through: they contained too many details, few of which were applicable to a traditional biography. As a last resort, Dr. Kunzang Nyima requested the venerable Phende Lhakpa (ca. 1922–1995), a knowledgeable older monk and distant cousin originally from Tharlam monastery, to work the surviving materials into a biography. The monk sat down with Kunzang Nyima and Tharlam Khenpo Jamyang Sherab for three days and tried to extract usable facts from the diaries and other papers. But he, too, found these materials to be unmanageable,¹⁴¹⁵ so when Kunzang Nyima died in the spring of 1990, the work on a Tibetan-language biography came to a halt.

Beginnings of a Biography in English

In the meantime, in the fall of 1987, a few months after Dezhung Rinpoche's death, his American student and translator Jared Rhoton (1941–1993) began compiling a biography in English. Though he had access to some of Rinpoche's autobiographical writings, his chief source was Rinpoche's brother Dr. Kunzang Nyima, whom he interviewed with the help of the young Geshe Jamyang Tsultrim (the latter acting as a sort of translation assistant and referee, since Dr. Nyima's idiolect was notoriously difficult, even for Tibetans).¹⁴¹⁶ The result was one hundred and eleven pages of handwritten notes that Carolyn Cather typed up about 1990 and that Victoria Scott made available to me in 1992. These notes were valuable, though I have used them cautiously, especially when there are other authoritative sources. Dr. Nyima's accounts are usually reliable for the main thrust of events, and he witnessed many important happenings. But he was definitely *not* endowed with an exact memory for names, places, and other details as his

older brother, Dezhung Rinpoche, was. Moreover, he did not accompany his brother during several crucial periods. Nevertheless, he was Rinpoche's closest companion during the last two decades of life and no doubt heard Rinpoche on various occasions discussing his past experiences.

Due to unfavorable circumstances, the project begun by Rhoton never advanced beyond the note-gathering stage. To my knowledge, nobody else in the West has compiled a detailed biography in English. There are, however, at least four very brief published accounts of his life:¹⁴¹⁷

- (1) Julie Emery, [obituary] "Lama Kunga Labrang dies at 82; holy man, noted Tibetan scholar," *Seattle Times*, May 19, 1987, p. G3.
- (2) A brief sketch of his life appeared in one of the issues of the *Vajradhātu Sun* (Boulder), spring/summer 1987, in the "Buddhist News Watch" section. This account was based on information provided by Dagmo Kusho, his niece.
- (3) Stephanie Prince, "In Recollection of the Venerable Dezhung Rinpoche," *Sakya Monastery Chronicles 1986–1988* (Seattle, 1988), p. 6. Stephanie Prince wrote this memorial based on an interview with Dagmo Kusho and Ane Chime.
- (4) Graham Coleman, ed. (1993), *A Handbook of Tibetan Culture: A Guide to Tibetan Centres and Resources throughout the World* (London: Rider). This useful resource book contains on p. 240 a brief sketch of Dezhung Rinpoche's life.

None of these is reliable in every detail. In addition, there is a much longer biographical sketch by Victoria Scott in the introduction to *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception* (Boston: Wisdom, 1995, 2003, pp. xxxiv–lxiii), Dezhung Rinpoche's exposition of the "Three Visions" based on his lectures in New York, Jared Rhoton translating. Even this last sketch—though it is much more detailed than the others—contains a number of inaccuracies. It was based mainly on the reminiscences of Kunzang Nyima and like the others is no full-length biography.

Beginnings of the Present Biography

My own interest in Dezhung Rinpoche's life history began some two decades ago, when I worked closely with him as his student and translator

for several years between 1973 and 1981, during those periods when he mainly resided in Seattle. I came to know him well, living nearby and often serving as his interpreter. I tried then to learn about his life, sometimes jotting down notes about interesting events, which he usually related not about himself, but as an episode from the life of one of his teachers. Later I asked him more than once to tell about his own teachers and life, but while he gladly spoke at length about his teachers, he hated putting his own activities, accomplishments, or experiences at the center of the story. However, once in early 1979 he told a bit about his studies of Sanskrit under Palyul Lama, of which I noted down the main points. In June of the same year, while visiting the Drodon Kunkhyab Kagyü center in San Francisco, Lama Lodro and I pressured him to tell of his life and studies as a young man. Though he voiced strong reservations, finally he relented and gave us the names of most of his main teachers, mentioning briefly (in a self-critical and ironical way) some of the events of his early life and studies, up to his return to Tharlam monastery in 1930 after seven years of studies in Derge district.

I made the mistake then of asking for his *rnam thar* (literally, “life of liberation”), which displeased him. He was too modest to formulate his life story in such exalted terms. On another occasion, when he had astonished me again with his knowledge, I praised him as being “greatly learned,” using the common Tibetan expression “*yon tan chen po*,” but this displeased him, and he corrected my terminology, saying, “While I have knowledge of religion (*chos rgyus*), I lack enlightened qualities (*yon tan*).” A short while later, evidently in response to my request, he gave me a little sketch of his life that he had written out on two pages of green, ruled spiral-notebook paper, entitled “The Spontaneous Accomplishment of the Two Benefits” (*Don gnyis lhun grub*).¹⁴¹⁸ I have presented its translation in appendix C, as a summary of his life.

My main point of departure for the present biography was thus notes I had taken in the 1970s and also a few brief writings of Dezhung Rinpoche. Already in late 1987, before learning of Jared Rhoton and Kunzang Nyima’s project, I had begun to collect the available writings of Dezhung Rinpoche, and as an outgrowth of this, I also began in 1992 to gather more information on his life. In 1993 I visited his residence in Nepal and went through the extensive miscellaneous writings and notes from his “nachlass,” which is preserved in his old leather briefcase. A number of short though important

accounts could be sifted out of those hundreds of jumbled handwritten pages. I now realize that some of his students (probably led by his brother Kunzang Nyima) had already gone through his papers soon after his death, numbering each page with large black arabic numerals. Anything of obvious biographical importance they had removed, without any indication. What I found when I began my work was thus just the leavings—though some very helpful leavings! That I could gain access to these papers at all was made possible by the kind help of his sister Ane Chime.

Autobiographical Notes

The most important sources I eventually discovered were several terse accounts of his early life that Dezhung Rinpoche himself had set down in writing. Mainly these sources record just the Buddhist teachings that he received, though occasionally they give interesting digressions. Already in 1991 I had heard that there existed a somewhat longer autobiographical account, amounting to some ten pages, written in Dezhung Rinpoche's own hand. This was how Jared Rhoton described it at the beginning of his nearly complete rough English translation of one part of it. But when I searched in Nepal for this source, I found it had disappeared from Dezhung Rinpoche's briefcase. Further enquiries put me on its trail, and I finally obtained a photocopy from North America in late 1994 through the help of one of Rinpoche's former attendants.¹⁴¹⁹ Although these papers included, in fact, *two* fairly detailed, incomplete autobiographical sketches (of two pages each) and several other pages of letters and other important historical jottings, they never constituted a real autobiography. Still, they are the closest thing to one that we will ever have, especially for the period before 1960.

Autobiographical Sketch 1

The longest of the three incomplete autobiographical sketches amounts to just a single sheet of paper covered on both sides with tiny *'khyug yig* script. It bears no title, but it was the main sketch that Jared Rhoton translated. It was later marked with a number 1 (circled) by the attendants who found it among his surviving papers. I have called it "Autobiographical sketch 1" and have given it the Tibetan title [*Rje nyid kyi rnam thar mdzad 'phror lus pa*]. Its account of teachings received goes up to the year 1947. The account of

Dezhung Rinpoche's travels and teachings, however, ends abruptly soon after his departure for Minyak in approximately 1942. This is the most detailed and important autobiographical sketch.

Autobiographical Sketch 2

The second incomplete and untitled autobiographical work, which I call "Autobiographical sketch 2," fills only one side of one page. Its account ends when Dezhung Rinpoche was in his early twenties and still studying in Derge. The original was marked as number 55 in his surviving papers. I have given it the Tibetan title *Rang rnam mdor bsdus pa mdzad 'phror lus pa bkra shis bde legs ma*.

Autobiographical Sketch 3

The third brief and incomplete autobiographical source, which I call "Autobiographical sketch 3," covers the life story only as far as his youthful studies. Unlike the other works, it does bear a title: "The Story of the One Called Dezhung Trulku, a Picture of a Waxing Crescent Moon," *Sde gzhung sprul ming pa'i byung ba brjod pa dkar po tshes kyi zla ris (zla ba tshes pa'i ri mo) zhes bya ba*. Dezhung Rinpoche wrote it on the front and back of a single sheet in Seattle in the period 1960–1962, evidently attaching the title later to the top of the first page (a later addition dated 1962).

Several other precious accounts from letters and notes were preserved together with the three autobiographical sketches, and I have tried to extract and relate their contents in full in the narrative of his life. Though brief, these autobiographical notes and jottings were invaluable. Together they provided a sound chronological and historical framework for the first four decades of Dezhung Rinpoche's life.

Other Historical Writings of Dezhung Rinpoche

Another group of important sources is the biographies that Dezhung Rinpoche wrote, including the published lives of his teachers Gatön Ngawang Lekpa and Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen. I used these to provide background information on his teachers and have also tried to find those episodes where he himself turns up in the narrative.

Diaries

For the later period of his life (the early 1960s on), I was also able to consult to a limited extent his daily diaries, a nearly complete set of which has survived in his residence in Bodhnath, Nepal. (He is believed to have kept diaries also in Tibet, but these were left behind in Kham or Central Tibet.) I have used the later diaries mainly to date events in the 1970s.

These diaries were a sort of detailed daily logbook; in them he recorded his prayers, practices, and even very mundane events such as meals, visits, and telephone calls. But they are also a priceless source for determining where and when he went, and what he did there during these years. The trouble is that they form (for me at least) too vast a corpus of materials to use systematically and thoroughly, consisting as they do of some eight or nine thousand pages of records written in a tiny hand. The diaries are also fraught with other problems—with increasing age his already minuscule script becomes even more difficult to read because of failing eyesight and a shaky hand. Several highly qualified Tibetan scholars gave up in despair after trying to use these daily records, no doubt overwhelmed by the sheer volume of everyday minutiae. The difficulties for a non-Tibetan are even greater. Still, I tried to make at least sporadic use of them for establishing some of the main movements in his teaching career in the 1970s.

Interviews

Since a number of Dezhung Rinpoche's relatives, later students, and colleagues were still alive, I tried to supplement the above written sources through the oral accounts of reliable living informants. I began doing this more systematically in March 1992, when I was able to meet and interview his sister Ane Chime several times in Bodhnath, Nepal. I interviewed her further several times in Seattle in September 1992, in addition to Dagmo Kusho, Cyrus Stearns, and others.

In early 1993, after working through the notes of Jared Rhoton and Kunzang Nyima and also finding among Dezhung Rinpoche's papers a number of letters and other sources, I began pursuing several follow-up investigations. In February 1993, I journeyed to Asia to collect materials and conduct further interviews. Among the most important sources located then were certain writings and notes of oral explanations dating from the early 1960s

kept by Mr. E. Gene Smith in Jakarta. In March 1993 I again interviewed Ane Chime several times at the new Tharlam monastery in Nepal, as well as met and talked with several other students, attendants, and colleagues.

In September and October 1993, I visited Seattle again and interviewed a number of old students and friends there. While still in Seattle, I also located on microfilm a number of articles published in the local newspapers, especially the *Seattle Times*. Furthermore, I was able to locate in the University of Washington archives the records of the long-defunct Inner Asia Project. Both sources provide interesting contemporary accounts about Rinpoche's academic activities in Seattle in the 1960s and 1970s. During seven weeks in January through March 1994, I visited Nepal again, conducted follow-up interviews with Ane Chime, and also interviewed for the first time a number of other Tibetan disciples and friends, trying to clarify doubtful points and fill out the historical account. I conducted a few more interviews in March 1995 in Nepal, in April 1995 in Singapore, in September 1995 in Seattle, and in March 1996 in Nepal, India, and Singapore, during which time I also located several important photographs of Rinpoche and his teachers. A final visit to Nepal and India in 1999 enabled me to make a few final interviews and to find more photos.

Summary

Thus I have tried to supplement my own notes and memories, and the reminiscences of Kunzang Nyima, by interviewing living witnesses and by locating accounts in Dezhung Rinpoche's own writings and in other trustworthy written sources. A preponderant weight has of course been given to his own autobiographical writings, especially for the period before 1948. For the later years, his diaries should have been the great authority, though for lack of time I could not read through them all. To my regret, they remain only superficially used. Where there were discrepancies, I have followed his writings when possible, unless there was good reason to suspect that he had omitted something out of modesty.

APPENDIX C

A Brief Autobiography of Dezhung Rinpoche: “The Spontaneous Accomplishment of the Two Benefits” (*Don gnyis lhun grub*)

THE ONE KNOWN AS DEZHUNG TRULKU, am said to have been born in the year 1906, on the third day of the first lunar month of the fire-horse year in the fifteenth sixty-year calendar cycle.

From an early age I became a monk. From the lord master Vajradhara, the most esteemed Ngawang Lekpa, I received all three vows. I received numerous teachings on Sūtra, Mantra, and the other fields of knowledge from about forty masters and religious teachers from the four traditions—Sakya, Ganden, Kagyü, and Nyingma—without sectarian exclusion, including from such masters as: Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku Dorjechang Chökyi Lotrö, Shenphen Chökyi Nangwa, Ngawang Samten Lotrö, Jamyang Gyaltzen, Geshe Blo bzang ’od zer, Dampa Rinpoche, Lama Kalu Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, two Sakya Trichen Rinpoches, the Rgyal ba Karmapa, Gangkar Rinpoche, Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche, and Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen. I passed some seven or eight years at various periods of my life practicing the preparatory practices and the propitiation of several *yi dam* deities [in meditation retreats].

While I was in Tibet, I visited many places, from Mang yul Kyirong [in the far west] to Dartsedo on the Tibet-China border. I made a religious connection with some ten thousand people in the many monasteries and towns. I made offerings and prayers before numerous blessed images, chief among which were the three Lord Śākyamuni images in Lhasa. I was able to give at least not inadequate shrine offerings, assembly teas, and money distributions in such monasteries as Sakya and Ngor, and at my home monastery of Tharlam.

After the destruction of the Buddhist Doctrine in Tibet, I just barely escaped with my life. I arrived in the foreign land of America. There I have passed about nineteen years. I give religious instruction to those who are

applying themselves to that. Now I am staying here reciting *māṇis*, having taken Avalokiteśvara as my *yi dam* deity.

This was a brief account of my experiences, written by myself.

[Written by Dezhung Rinpoche in autumn 1979, Seattle]

APPENDIX D

Dezhung Rinpoche's Influence on Non-Tibetan Scholars

IN ADDITION TO his influential contact with numerous Tibetan lamas, monks, and lay patrons, Dezhung Rinpoche also entered into fruitful collaboration with a large number of Western scholars. Many Americans studied under or were helped by him during the years 1960–1987, and quite a few mentioned their indebtedness to him in publications. For lack of a better approach, I list here by author—not in alphabetical but roughly in chronological order (i.e., by first relevant publication date for each scholar)—the acknowledgments I have come across so far:

- E. Gene Smith (1961). “The History of the ’Khon to the Birth of Sa-chen Kun-dga’-snying-po according to the *Rgya bod yig tshang*.” Unpublished paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on April 25, 1961. (U.W. Archives, acc. no. 85–42, box 6.) On p. 9, Smith mentioned: “Sde-gzhung-sprul-sku not only has kindly discussed most of the problematical passages with me, but also has placed at my disposal a copy of the ’Khon lineage which he prepared for Sandy and Zayane Macdonald.”

In the footnotes to this paper, Smith quoted in Tibetan many brief explanations by Dezhung Rinpoche on the Sakyapa passage in the *Rgya bod yig tshang*.

- E. Gene Smith (1962). “The Era of ’Gro-mgon ’Phags-pa and the Apogee of Sa-skyapa Power: A Preliminary Report.” Unpublished paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on May 31, 1962. This was an outgrowth of the Sa-skyapa History project of T. V. Wylie, under whom Smith and Melvyn Goldstein were then working. On p. 2 Smith wrote:

We are extremely fortunate to have as a collaborator and mentor the respected Tibetan scholar Sde-gzhung Rin po che Kun-dga'-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma. The encyclopedic nature of his memory combined with his unusual facility of critical appraisal and ability to organize his material into an orderly presentation would tremendously simplify the production of a study, should we be able to obtain the necessary books. Sde-gzhung Rin po che one day hopes to write a history of the Sa-skyā sect in Tibet along the lines of the *Bai dūrya ser po*, the ecclesiastical history of the Dge-lugs-pa, composed by the Sde-srid Sangs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho in the late 17th century.

Sde-gzhung Rin po che hesitates to make statements on historical problems, if he cannot corroborate his memories with reliable literary evidence. He insists that we recognize that all such uncorroborated historical data should be presented only as his opinion and, therefore, as remaining open to question.

After numerous conversations during the course of the past year, I attempted to produce a more-or-less chronological list of topics to be covered in an historical study of the Sa-skyā sect. I showed this attempt to Sde-gzhung Rin po che who, I think, considered it both sketchy and a bit premature. He indicated that he was aware that the Tibetan approach to history and Western historiography were quite different in their purposes as well as in their methods and styles, but that he was unable to judge the adequacy of the proposed outline, since our purposes in writing history are so different from the Tibetan. His one comment was that we should continue our conversations.

Smith also appended three genealogical charts of the later Sakya Khön lineage (pp. 14a–14c), stating: “These charts are solely the product of the phenomenal memory of Sde-gzhung Rin po che.”

- E. Gene Smith (1963a). “Nationalism, Innovation and the Structure of Tibetan Religious Belief.” Unpublished paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on May 9, 1963. On pp. 2–3 Smith stated: “It is, however, Sde-gzhung sprul-sku Kun-dga'-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma to whom the author is indebted not only for the bulk of the

factual material but also for innumerable penetrating insights into Tibetan culture.”

- E. Gene Smith (1963b). “Notes on the History of the Cult of Rdo-rje-shugs-ldan.” Unpublished paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on July 25, 1963. On p. 14, footnote 2, Smith wrote: “This paper could not have been written without the patient and tireless collaboration of Sde-gzhung sprul-sku Kun-dga’-bstan-pa’i-nyi-ma. Much of the analysis is his original thinking. He should be listed as a co-author except for the fact that his knowledge of the English language is inadequate thoroughly to check what has been written here. It would be unfair to expect him to share the responsibility for whatever errors there might be in this paper. The credit for whatever there is of value must go to him.”
- E. Gene Smith (1964). “The Tradition of Philology and Literary Theory in Tibetan Scholasticism.” Unpublished paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on February 6, 1964. On p. 1, “A Note to the Colloquium,” Smith wrote: “Without the encyclopedic learning and lucid explanations of Sde-gzhung sprul-sku Kun-dga’-bstan-pa’i-nyi-ma, this research would have been impossible. It is impossible to express my appreciation to him.”
- E. Gene Smith (1968). Introduction to “The Autobiography and Dairies of Si-tu Paṇ-chen.” Śatapiṭaka Series, vol. 77. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture. On p. 20 Smith stated: “I would like to express my thanks to the Tibetan scholars who have helped compile these lists: the Dezhung Rinpoche of the Inner Asia Project of the University of Washington.”
- E. Gene Smith (1969). *University of Washington Tibetan Catalogue, Part I*. 2 vols. Seattle: University of Washington. These two volumes were published without the approval of Smith after he had left the University of Washington for research in India. As T. V. Wylie explained in the foreword: “Several years ago, E. Gene Smith...began a descriptive catalogue of the Tibetan collection maintained in the Far Eastern Library at the University of Washington (Seattle). He was guided and assisted in his

bibliographical work by the learned lama, Sde-gzhung Rin-po-che Kung-dga' bstan-pa'i nyi-ma bla-brang, Research Associate in the Inner Asia project of the Far Eastern and Russian Institute. Mr. Smith began a systematic cataloguing of the holdings, using as his starting point a handlist of titles prepared previously by Professor Chang Kun."

- E. Gene Smith (1970). Introduction to *Kongtrul's Encyclopedia of Indo-Tibetan Culture*. Śatapiṭaka Series, vol. 80. New Delhi. On p. 1, Smith stated: "It was in 1960 that I first heard of the *Śes bya kun khyab* from my guru, Dezhung Rinpoche. He described this treatise as one of the greatest masterpieces of later Tibetan scholarship. During the subsequent course of my studies, he told me much of the nineteenth-century cultural renaissance, the finest flower of which was the eclectic (*ris med*) movement of Eastern Tibet. As the names and achievements of Koñsprul, Mkhyen-brtse, Mchog-gling, 'Ju Mi-pham, Gzhan-dga' and Rdza Dpal-sprul flowed from his mouth, I became convinced that this group of scholar saints had had enormous significance for the cultural history of Tibet."

At Smith's request, Dezhung Rinpoche also compiled a list of the Derge kings (later published by Kolmaš in 1988) and a list of the Ngor abbots (published in D. Jackson 1989b).

- E. Gene Smith (2002). *Among Tibetan Texts*. Boston: Wisdom. In his preface, p. xiii, Smith included the following paragraph:

Each of the papers pays tribute to the incredible knowledge of my teacher Deshung Rinpoche Kunga Tenpai Nyima, with whom I had the great privilege of studying on a daily basis from 1960 to 1965. Deshung Rinpoche had an encyclopedic mind. He was interested in the entire range of traditional Buddhist culture, from Tibetan and Sanskrit grammar to Mādhyamika philosophy, from ritual to the arts. Rinpoche had a special interest in history and was an authority on the nonsectarian (*ris med*) movement in which his practice was rooted. Although he was a Sa skya pa and a student of Gatön Ngawang Legpa, clearly in the tradition of the Lam 'bras, he was interested in all of the other

wisdom traditions that had come to the Tibetan lands, including Bon. He told stories of Lama Tashi Gyaltzen, the Bon po master who began to phrase Bon teachings in *ris med* terms. This stood me in good stead when I first met the remarkable teachers of this tradition, Sangye Tenzin and Tenzin Namdak. Among Deshung Rinpoche's embodiments were a Rnying ma pa and a Bka' bgyud pa, and he sometimes joked that his next might be a Dge lugs pa. I sat with him most mornings for an hour or two while he was doing his morning prayers and asked him questions. The answers to these childish questions were written in series of blue notebooks in which I still find interesting insights. These notebooks formed the basic content of the forewords, prefaces, and introductions that appeared to the Tibetan books published under the PL480 program and reprinted here.

Robert B. Ekvall (1963). "Seminar on Tibetan Society and Culture." *Current Anthropology* (October). This was Ekvall's description of the seminar in which Dezhung Rinpoche worked as learned informant under the Rockefeller Foundation funding.

Robert B. Ekvall (1964). *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Function*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. In the preface, p. xii, Ekvall mentioned Dezhung Rinpoche as the last of his four main informants as follows: "Dezhung Rinpoche, the official tutor and man of learning of the Sakya ruling house, is a man of erudition and intellectual brilliance." In subsequent footnotes Ekvall frequently cites Dezhung Rinpoche as the source of information and explanations.

C. W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall (1969). *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa Skya*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. The preface (p. v) described how Dezhung Rinpoche was one of four people in a "continually functioning discussion group" resulting in the book. A brief vita of Dezhung Rinpoche is found on p. vii, where he is called "Kunga Labrang." There it is said: "He became a renowned scholar of Tibetan Buddhism and for five years was in charge of a monastery of three hundred monks, a position that gave him important governmental functions in the local community of nomads. He later traveled extensively in eastern and central Tibet, lecturing on religious doctrine, closely

observing Tibetan life, and giving advice on all kinds of personal problems. As a tutor to the Sa skya royal family, he saw government and politics at first hand, without being a participant.” Dezhung Rinpoche never gave his personal approval to the historical contents of the book.

Thubten Jigme Norbu and Robert B. Ekvall, translators (1969). *The Younger Brother Don yod*. Being the Secret Biography, from the Words of the Glorious Lama, the Holy Reverend Blo bZang Ye Shes (*dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rje btsun blo bzang ye shes kyi gsung las gsang ba'i rnam thar bzhugs sol*). Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1969. In their introduction, pp. 8–9, the translators mentioned Dezhung Rinpoche’s contribution: “Two of the native Tibetan scholars—Dachen Rinpoche...and Dezhung Rinpoche, the learned tutor and preceptor of the Sakya family—went over the Tibetan text phrase by phrase and line by line in a search with the translators for the true meaning.... Special deference must be paid to Dezhung Rinpoche and his views concerning certain areas of Tibetan scholarship.” And further: “The Tibetan text, printed from woodblocks and undated, was edited for typographical errors, principally by Dezhung Rinpoche, before the translation was made.”

Robert B. Ekvall (1974). “Tibetan Nomadic Pastoralists: Environments, Personality, and Ethos.” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 118–6 (December), p. 519, footnote, mentioned the help he received from the “Seminar on Tibetan Society and Culture,” in which Dezhung Rinpoche participated.

Robert Ekvall and James F. Downs (1987). *Tibetan Pilgrimage*. Tokyo: Institute for the Study of the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa. The authors mentioned Dezhung Rinpoche’s contributions.

Agehananda Bharati (1965). *The Tantric Tradition*. London: Rider. Bharati thanked Dezhung Rinpoche on p. 12, mentioning him as “Lama Kunga Labrang, Senior abbot of the Jekundo monastery [*sic*] in Central Tibet, now with the Inner Asia Project at the University of Washington.”

Agehananda Bharati (1978). “Actual and Ideal Himalayas: Hindu Views of the Mountains.” In James F. Fisher, ed., *Himalayan Anthropology: The Indo-Tibetan Interface*. Paris: Mouton Publishers. On p. 81, Bharati

remarked, “The highly learned Saskya lama, who has been in Seattle for the past fifteen years, gave me a long list of places of pilgrimage, which I cross-checked with Buston’s and Tāranātha’s *Histories*. Over two-thirds of the places mentioned in the texts and by the lama are nonexistent, or they are obscure places, allegedly connected with Buddhist hagiography, or their names are so garbled as to be unintelligible.” On p. 79 he also mentioned having taught Sanskrit Nāgari characters to Dezhung Rinpoche.

Edward Conze (1967). *Materials for a Dictionary of the Prajñāpāramitā Literature*. Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation. On p. iii of the preface, which he wrote in Seattle in August 1966, Conze stated: “In view of the uncertainties of the Tibetan orthography I was also fortunate in being able to discuss hundreds of words with the third Dezhung Rinpoche, who has patiently eliminated a good many scribal errors.”

Lawrence Epstein (1968). “The Biography of the Second Rgyal-dbang Karma-pa, Karma Bagsi: Translation and Annotation.” M.A. thesis, University of Washington. Epstein received some help from Dezhung Rinpoche, and he indicated these explanations in his notes with “DR.”

Ho-Chin Yang (1969). *The Annals of Kokonor*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. On p. 74, note 105, the author credited Dezhung Sprul-sku “research associate of the Inner Asia Project of the University of Washington” with a written explanation of the *bkral ba’i zhing bcu*. Yang consulted Rinpoche in Seattle in the 1960s.

John A. Ardussi (1972). “Brug-pa Kun-legs, The Saintly Tibetan Madman.” M.A. thesis, University of Washington. Ardussi received much help from Dezhung Rinpoche, and mentioned on p. vi of his introduction: “I have gained immeasurably from reading various parts of the text with a number of Tibetan informants. In particular, I spent several months reading the text in minute detail with the Sde-gzhung Lung-rigs-sprul-sku Kun-dga’-bstan-pa’i-nyi-ma, tutor to the Sa-skya Bdag-chen rin-po-che [*sic*], residing in Seattle. As he, however, is planning to wait for his next rebirth to learn English fluently, and as my own grasp of spoken Tibetan is not what it could be, I am afraid that there still remain parts of the text which are not entirely clear to me.”

- Tashi T. Densapa (1972). "The Biography of 'Gro-mgon Chos-rgyal 'Phags-pa, Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan," M.A. thesis, University of Washington. Densapa received much help from Dezhung Rinpoche, and indicated these explanations in his notes as "DTKN."
- Richard Sherburne, S.J. (1972). "Historical and Textual Background of the *Lamp of the Enlightenment Path* and Its Commentary by Jo-bo Atiśa." M.A. thesis, University of Washington (Seattle). This was written with the assistance of Dezhung Rinpoche.
- Richard Sherburne, S.J. (1976). "A Study of Atiśa's Commentary on His *Lamp of the Enlightenment Path* (*Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma'i dka' 'grel*)." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington (Seattle). This was written with the help of Dezhung Rinpoche."
- Richard Sherburne, S.J., translator (1983). *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary of Atiśa*. London: George Allen and Unwin. At the beginning of the book, Sherburne dedicates the work first of all "To my lama and *kalyanamitra*, Tulku Kunga Labrang, the Dezhung Rinpoche: for his patient guidance and tutelage."
- Mark Tatz (1977a). *Rebirth: The Tibetan Game of Liberation*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday. The book was dedicated: "To the Dezhung Rinpoche, learned and accomplished, who has given his gracious blessing to the publication of this game ('It will bring great benefit')."
- Mark Tatz (1977b). "Translation of the *Bhadracaripraṇidhāna* (*bZang spyod smon lam*)." In L. Chandra, ed., *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, vol. 5, pp. 153–176.
- [Lama Lodro et al.], translators (1979). *Radiant Wisdom: A Practice of the Glorious Shangpa Kagyu Lineage, In Which the Four Deities Are Achieved in Conjunction* by Jamgon Kongtrul. San Francisco: Kagyu Drodren Kunchab Publications. The introduction, pp. 11–12, mentioned Dezhung Rinpoche's help in revising the translation while in San Francisco in June 1979.

Cyrus R. Stearns (1980). "The Life and Teachings of the Tibetan Saint Thang-stong rgyal-po, 'King of the Empty Plain.'" M.A. thesis, University of Washington. In the acknowledgments at the start of this thesis, Stearns mentioned prominently his indebtedness to Dezhung Rinpoche: "I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my lama, the Ven. Sde-gzhung Rinpoche, Kun-dga'-bstan-pa'i-nyi-ma, a true embodiment of Avalokiteśvara's kindness. It is he who made me aware of the astonishing life and profound teachings of Thang-stong rgyal-po. From him I first received Thang-stong's Avalokiteśvara's *sādhana*, the '*Gro don mkha'* khyab ma, and his '*Chi med dpal ster* methods for achieving longevity. Since I began the study of Thang-stong rgyal-po's life and teachings, Rinpoche has provided continual inspiration with stories from the oral tradition and his own unique ability to make the most difficult teachings accessible."

Cyrus Stearns (1999). *The Buddha from Dolpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen*. Albany: State University of New York Press. On p. ix of his preface Stearns wrote: "My teacher, the late Dezhung Tulku Rinpoche, was at first somewhat reticent to speak about Dolpopa's theories, no doubt in large part due to my obvious lack of the necessary skills to engage in such a discussion. Rinpoche was a peerless example of the nonsectarian approach to realization, and as the years passed I was fortunate to learn from him an appreciation of the wide range of views contained in all the ancient traditions of Tibet, including that of Dolpopa's Zhentog lineage. I am deeply grateful for Dezhung Rinpoche's inspiring example."

Cyrus Stearns (2001). *Luminous Lives: The Story of the Early Masters of the Lam 'bras Tradition in Tibet*, Boston: Wisdom. On p. xiii of the preface Stearn noted that "For years I have been inspired by the unforgettable stories from the Lam 'bras tradition, told with peerless eloquence and humor by the late Sde gzhung sku Rin po che (Dezhung Tulku Rinpoche, 1906–87) and by Bco brygad Khri chen Rin po che."

Janet Gyatso (1981). "A Literary Transmission of the Traditions of Thang-stong rgyal-po: A Study of Visionary Buddhism in Tibet." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley. On p. viii of the preface the

author mentioned: “The erudite assistance of the Tibetan scholar Sde-gzhung Rin-po-che is gratefully acknowledged.”

David Jackson (1983). “Notes on Two Early Printed Editions of Sa-skyapa Works.” *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 8–2, pp. 3–24. This work depended on the vital information that Dezhung Rinpoche had conveyed to the author in a letter in spring 1980. As stated on p. 10: “Who then was Grwa-Inga-rgyal-po or Kun-dga’-rnam-rgyal? Grwa-Inga-rgyal-po, as I was informed by the Venerable Dezhung Rinpoche, was the name of Gong-dkar Rdo-rje-gdan-pa Kun-dga’-rnam-rgyal (1432–1496) in his youth. Having learned the identity of this figure, it was easy to locate more information on his life.”

David Jackson (1984). *The Mollas of Mustang: Historical, Religious and Oratorical Traditions of the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderland*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. This was the revised publication of the M.A. thesis submitted in 1979. In the preface to the 1984 publication, p. xi: “I am likewise deeply indebted to the Venerable Dezhung Trulku Rinpoche for his kind and learned explanations.” The account of dedication of merit, as well as numerous details about speech-making traditions, derived from Dezhung Rinpoche. His contributions are mentioned on pp. 34, note 32; 44, note 24; 54, note 11; 56, note 16; 57, note 23; 58–60; 71, notes 4 and 6–8; 74–75, note 38; 91, note 7; and 153, note 11.

David Jackson and Janet Jackson (1985). *Tibetan Thangka Painting Methods and Materials*. London: Serindia Publications; revised edition 1988, (in collaboration with J. A. Jackson). In the preface, p. 1: “During the preparation of this book we also had the good fortune to study with the venerable lama Dezhung Rinpoche. Although he is not a painter, he opened our eyes to many of the figures and symbols appearing in thangkas, and to the religious culture that is the basis of Tibetan art. Here we would like to express in a small way our great gratitude to him.”

David Jackson (1987). *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III): Sa-skyapa Paṇḍita on Indian and Tibetan Traditions of Pramāṇa and Philosophical Debate*. Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, no. 17, 2 parts. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für tibetische und buddhistische Studien

Universität Wien, 1987. In acknowledgments, p. xi: "I must also record here my special thanks and gratitude to the Venerable Dezhung Rinpoche (Sde-gzhung sprul-sku)." In the work are cited Dezhung Rinpoche's history of Ga, Ldan, and Kyura (pp. 79–80), and also his biography of 'Jam-rgyal Rin-po-che (p. 227, n. 36).

David Jackson (1989). "Sources on the Chronology and Succession of the Abbots of Ngor E-waṃ-chos-ldan," *Berliner Indologische Studien*, vol. 4/5, pp. 49–94. On pp. 74–77 is presented "A List of the Ngor Abbots Compiled by Dezhung Rinpoche." This list was largely based on the brief compilation of names entitled *Ngor e waṃ chos ldan gyi gdan ran nor bu'i phreng ba'i mtshan grangs rin chen za ma tog* that Dezhung Rinpoche made for Gene Smith in the early 1960s, with a few additional bits of information provided in square brackets, based on Dezhung Rinpoche's oral explanations.

David Jackson (1997a). "Rngog Lo-tsā-ba's Commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*: An Early-20th-Century Lhasa Edition." In H. Krasser, M. T. Much, E. Steinkellner, and H. Tauscher, eds., *Tibetan Studies*, Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Vol. 1, p. 31, note 31, referred to information given by Dezhung Rinpoche to Gene Smith on the printing of Könchok Lhündrub's collected works in Derge in 1924.

David Jackson (1997b). "A Reviver of Sa-skya-pa Scriptural Studies in 20th-Century Central Tibet." In S. Karmay and P. Sagant, eds., *Les habitants du Toit du monde*. Recherches sur la haute Asie 12. Nanterre: Société d'ethnologie, 1997. Page 139, note 1, referred to information given by Dezhung Rinpoche to Gene Smith on the life of Khenchen Shenga.

David Jackson (2001). "The 'Bhutan Abbot' of Ngor: Stubborn Idealist with a Grudge against Shugs-ldan." In R. Vitali, ed., *Aspects of Tibetan History*, special issue of *Lungta* [Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamshala], no. 14 (Spring 2001), pp. 88–107. Based in part on information about Ngawang Yönten Gyatso given by Dezhung Rinpoche to Gene Smith in the 1960s.

Ilze Maruta Stearns (1985). “The Life of Gtsang-smyon Heruka: A Study in Divine Madness.” M.A. thesis, University of Washington. In her acknowledgment, the author stated: “First and foremost, I wish to express my great debt of gratitude to my lamas the Ven. Dezhung Rinpoche and the Ven. Chogay Trichen Rinpoche. Without the benefit of their wisdom and realization expressed in many teachings and words of advice through the years, I would have had no hope of understanding Gtsang-smyon.”

Jared D. Rhoton (1985). “A Study of the *Sdom gsum* of Sa-paṅ.” Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University. In his acknowledgments, Rhoton stated: “The venerable Dezhung Rinpoche, abbot of Tharlam Monastery, generously gave of his time and knowledge to clarify the text’s more difficult passages in light of Go rams pa’s commentaries.”

Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, translator (1985). *The Life of Milarepa*. Boston and London: Shambhala. In the introduction, p. xxx, Lhalungpa stated: “Lama Dezhung Kunga Tenpai Nyima III informs me that he saw the second and perhaps only other copy of this manuscript [of the biography of Mila by Zhi byed Ras pa] when it was in the possession of Lama Kayguepa Rinpoche at Horse Tooth White Rock [i.e., Drakkar Taso].” (This version speaks of Mila’s visits to Ü and Kham provinces after his enlightenment, something not mentioned in other biographies.)

Lobsang P. Lhalungpa, translator (1986). *Mahāmudrā: The Quintessence of Mind and Meditation* by Takpo Tashi Namgyal. Boston and London: Shambhala. In the preface (p. xviii) to the published work, Lhalungpa mentioned his indebtedness to Dezhung Rinpoche: “I here also express my deep respect and appreciation to the Venerable Dezhung Rinpoche, a great eclectic Lama and a teacher of the Sakyapa Order, for his advice and explanations of the difficult passages found in this text and in the many other texts I read.”

Ivanka Jakic (1986). “A Study of the Life and Works of Bya ’Chad kha ba Ye shes rdo rje.” M.A. thesis, University of Washington. In her acknowledgment, p. xi, she wrote: “I would like to express first and foremost my profound gratitude to Venerable Kun dga’ Bstan pa’i nyi ma, the Third Sde gzhung Sprul sku.” In writing this work of nearly three hundred

pages, she consulted Dezhung Rinpoche many times—usually with Cyrus Stearns interpreting .

Judith Hanson, translator (1986). *The Torch of Certainty*, by Jamgon Kongtrul. Boston and London: Shambhala. In her preface, pp. xiv–xvi, she sketched the life of Dezhung Rinpoche, up to the time of his stay on Long Island with L. Lhalungpa. She mentioned the interesting fact that he studied with the Kongtrul during his time in Derge. On p. xvii she acknowledged again her gratitude to Dezhung Rinpoche. Then she presented answers from Dezhung Rinpoche (culled from interviews) in the section “Practice of the Four Foundations,” pp. 9–24.

Lobsang Dagpa, Ngawang Samten Chophel (Jay Goldberg) and Jared Rhoton, translators (1987). *The Beautiful Ornament of the Three Visions*, by *Ngorchen Konchog Lhundrup*. Singapore: Golden Vase Publications: (2nd ed., Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1991). On pp. xviii–xix, the translators stated: “First and foremost we wish to sincerely thank the most venerable Dezhung Rinpoche, abbot of Tharlam monastery, for clearing up many doubts we had concerning various points of the text, as well as for expanding our knowledge of the Buddha’s teaching and the Path.”

Josef Kolmaš (1988). “Dezhung Rinpoche’s Summary and Continuation of the *Sde-dge’i rgyal-rabs*.” *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, vol. 42, pp. 119–152. This was a paper read at the fifth Csoma de Koros Symposium (1987), in which Kolmaš reproduces Dezhung Rinpoche’s summary of the Derge royal genealogy. Kolmaš described the book as follows (p. 122):

“The last of the Tibetan sources for the history of Derge is the above-mentioned *Sde dge’i gdung rabs kyi mtshan phreng*. The full title of the book is *Chos ldan sa skyong rgyal po sde dge’i gdung rabs kyi mtshan phreng rin chen phreng ba*.”

In his article, Kolmaš gave a brief biographical sketch of Dezhung Rinpoche, and then mentioned that it was E. Gene Smith who in 1964 sent him a photocopy of this work. Kolmaš also quoted from a letter by Smith (December 14, 1964) in which the origin of the work was explained: “[Smith] asked him to summarize a relatively difficult text in verse of the *Sde-dge’i rgyal-rabs* in terms of the language and style for his own studying purposes, and to supplement it with information dating

from the first half of the 19th century to approximately the 1940s of this century.”

In order to produce the text in a more easily readable *dbu-can* script, Kolmaś had it transcribed by T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche in New Delhi in 1978, and this was reproduced on pp. 134–143. Based on the work, Kolmaś also presented a summary list of the Derge kings, including Dezhung Rinpoche’s contribution: a brief “continuation” (*kha skong*), listing the names of the final five rulers and their principal religious teachers.

Matthew Kapstein (1992). “Remarks on the *Maṇi Bka’-’bum* and the Cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet.” Chapter 5 (p. 79 ff.) in S. D. Goodman and R. M. Davidson, eds., *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*. Albany: State University of New York Press. In his acknowledgment note to this article (which he wrote in spring 1980), p. 163, Kapstein stated: “I am particularly grateful to the late Dezhung Rinpoche for his learned counsel when I first read the *Maṇi bka’-’bum* with him in 1979.”

APPENDIX E

Dezhung Rinpoche's Ancestry

AS BRIEFLY MENTIONED in chapter 1, Dezhung Rinpoche was descended from farmer, “sorcerer” (*sngags pa*), and doctor families of a middle social and economic standing who had intermarried in recent generations with local gentry. Some of his recent ancestors on both maternal and paternal sides had been doctors, and his uncles and cousins included several outstanding meditators and religious masters.

Paternal Descent

Dezhung Rinpoche's father, Namgyal Dorje (ca. mid- or late 1880s–1922), was a doctor. He had been made a monk by his parents but later reverted to lay life. As a doctor, he did not charge for his services and worked hard trying to cure the sick. He was not long-lived; he died in about his mid-thirties, when Dezhung Rinpoche was about sixteen.¹⁴²⁰

Namgyal Dorje was born in the Ra'ok Jokhor (pron. Chokhur) family and married into the Lower Khangsip family at Tharlam as an adoptive groom (*mag pa*). The Ra'ok Jokhor family traced its paternal line back to the old Gökar lineage.¹⁴²¹ Namgyal Dorje's paternal grandfather may have come from Gökar to Jokhor as a *mag pa*.

One tradition has it that the name Gökar tshang (“White-silk-garment family”) could be traced back to the semi-legendary figure Kun mkhyen nyi ma, the private physician to Gling Ge sar and who was said always to wear a white silk garment (*gos dkar*).¹⁴²² The family is otherwise said to have been descended from high military officers (*dmag dpon*). According to the latter tradition, the white clothing they put on was either a special white garment worn under armor, or a sort of military insignia—a part of the warrior's uniform that enabled all in their group to identify one another in battle. The old Gökar family seat was south of Tharlam at the farm of Chos zhing mda' ma.¹⁴²³

Namgyal Dorje's parents had at least four sons and two daughters. Here they are listed in an arbitrary order:

- (1) Ra'ok 'Jam bzang (d. mid-1940s), who was the main layman of the family and who stayed at the Jokhor house,¹⁴²⁴
- (2) Ngawang Nyima (1872/3–1951) the meditator, known in his younger years as Ra'ok Grags seng,
- (3) Namgyal Dorje (ca. mid-1880s–1922), father of Dezhung Rinpoche,
- (4) Rdo rje blo gros (died before 1922),
- (5) A daughter, married into the Me si (Kha ma tshang?) family, and
- (6) A daughter, died of disease as a young woman.

Josay Gelong Jamyang Gyaltsen (ca. 1880–1949/50), the Tharlam mediator and doctor, was also a close relation on Dezhung Rinpoche's father's side.¹⁴²⁵ He was evidently the first cousin of Dezhung Rinpoche's father, being the son of Dezhung Rinpoche's paternal grandfather's sister.¹⁴²⁶ The family home was located north of Thaklung at Ra'ok Josay.¹⁴²⁷ His father may have been one Josay Phyang rdor.¹⁴²⁸

More distantly related were a number of Tharlam monastery chant-leaders (precentors, *dbu mdzad*) from successive generations of the Ra'ok lTag ma tshang: Umdzay Rin chen rdo rje (d. 1930s?), his nephew Umdzay Trashi, and the latter's nephew Umdzay Rdo rje.

Maternal Ancestry

Dezhung Rinpoche's mother, Pema Chödzom (1884–1950), was born in the Lower Khangsip family (Khang srib tshang 'Og ma), a family of moderate means in Thaklung that in recent generations had produced one or two local monastic functionaries. The name Khangsip seems to have derived from the word *khang srib* ("house shade").¹⁴²⁹ The Khangsip 'Og ma family house was a three-storied, square structure of stone and adobe, with a nearly flat roof.¹⁴³⁰ The family had both fields and grazing animals.

The father of Pema Chödzom (Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal grandfather) was evidently one (Khangsip) A myes rta mgrin tshe skyabs. He is believed to have been born in the old Khangsip or Khangsip lTag ma family and is said to have set up the Khangsip 'Og ma family as a separate unit when his wife (Bsod nams sgrol ma, b. 1860s? d. 1935, from the Dzinda Be

cang A myes tshang) did not get along well with her mother-in-law. This couple is said to have had only one son and one daughter:

- (1) Pema Chödrom (1884–1950), Dezhung Rinpoche's mother, and
- (2) Ngawang Gyaltzen (1896–ca. 1931).

The latter was about twelve years younger than his sister. At first he was a Tharlam monk, and for a while in the early 1920s he served as Dezhung Rinpoche's attendant in Derge. But then in the mid- or late 1920s he left the monkhood and became a layman. He died in about 1931, during the fighting in Ga between China and Tibet.¹⁴³¹

Dezhung Rinpoche's first cousin was "A zhang" Byams pa rin chen (b. 1906) of the Khangsip tshang lTag ma. The latter had a paternal uncle, the old Tharlam chant-leader ("Khangsip Dbu rgan") who died in or around 1926 or 1927. He was probably either the brother or uncle of Khangsip A myes rta mgrin tshe skyabs. His full name was evidently Ngag dbang chos 'phel.¹⁴³² This uncle was a strong friend and supporter of Jamgyal Rinpoche during the latter's troubles as a young man at Tharlam when he was serving as chant-leader and trying to institute certain reforms there. Afterward he stayed for a long time at the Rgya nag wall of *māṇi* stones (engraved with the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara) and performed many fasting observances (*smiyung gnas*) there. His young nephew Byams pa rin chen accompanied him there for some time.¹⁴³³

Pema Chödrom's father's mother is said to have been born in the Gad thog tshang family of nearby Drönda. Earlier ancestors of this family also included famous doctors: among others, according to Dr. Kunzang Nyima, a certain Byang sman dpal legs, one of the eight chief disciples of the semi-legendary Tibetan doctor G.yu thog Yon tan mgon po.¹⁴³⁴ In the mid-1800s the Gad thog tshang family received a bride from the Dra'u chieftain Tshe skyabs tshang (maternal grandmother of A khu Blo gsal or Jamyang Losal [1862–1949] of the Dzinda A myes tshang?). Her mother was from the Dra'u 'Brog pa Pön Tshang.¹⁴³⁵

The mother of Pema Chödrom (i.e., Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal grandmother, Bsod nams sgrol ma, d. 1935) was from the Dzinda Be cang A myes tshang, a family of local chieftains (*be cang*) whose seat was at nearby Dzinda. The aged monk Phende Lhakpa Tshering (1922–1995), himself of the Dzinda A myes tshang, stated that his paternal great-grandfather A myes Chos grags (d. ca. 1917 or 1918) was the older brother of Dezhung Rinpoche's

mother.¹⁴³⁶ But it is more likely that A myes Chos grags was the brother of Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal grandmother, as Ane Chime insisted. Some more recent descendants of this Dzinda noble family included tantric practitioners and sorcerers capable of stopping hail and making rain, hence their name Dzinda "A myes" (*a myes* = *sngags pa*).

Through his mother, Dezhung Rinpoche was thus also related to two of his early teachers, the lamas Jamgyal Rinpoche and Gendun Zangpo of Dzinda. Jamgyal's father was Nor lu, the Dzinda chieftain (*be cang*), a scion of the Nangchen Sdom pa Behu noble lineage, said to be descended from the legendary warrior Dpa' thul Mi spyang dkar po. Nor lu and his wife Rin lu had nine sons in all: (1) Jamyang Gyaltzen (1870–1940), (2) A pho Legs grub, (3) Lhun grub, (4) Ngag dbang tshe ring, (5) Skal dga', or Skal bzang phrin las, (6) Gendun Zangpo, or Lama Gendun (ca. 1880–1939/40), (7) Tsultrim Rinchen, (8) Tshe dbang rin chen, and (9) Dpal mchog blo ldan (monk, died young).¹⁴³⁷ Ngor Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup (b. 1811), one of the teachers of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892) for Ngorpa traditions, was a "[great]-uncle" of this family and had been born in Lab mda'.¹⁴³⁸

Dezhung Rinpoche was apparently also related more distantly to Jamgyal Rinpoche and Lama Gendun through the Gad thog tshang mother of his maternal grandfather. Jamgyal's mother was Rin lu, a daughter of one of the Ngor Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup's brothers. She was evidently closely connected with the Drönda Gad thog tshang (and 'O rdzong Bru pa tshang).¹⁴³⁹

Dezhung Rinpoche's mother's family thus had noteworthy relatives in nearby Dzinda and also in the village of Trindu to the northeast. Through these connections Dezhung Rinpoche was also distantly related to at least three locally born monks who went on to serve as Ngor abbots in the first half of this century: the late Phende abbot Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso (1917–1969), the Kangsar ("Drukpa Khenpo") Ngawang Yönten Gyatso (1902–ca. 1963?), and the slightly earlier Ngor abbot Phende Ngag dbang kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (d. ca. 1930, Derge). The present Ngor Phende Shabdrung (b. 1934/35 into the Thaklung A gnyan tshang family, now living in France) is also Dezhung Rinpoche's distant cousin, both on his mother's and father's side.

It is a great pity that nobody asked Dezhung Rinpoche to describe in detail his ancestry, for he was the unrivaled expert on the subject. The above is just what could be reconstructed from the memories of his youngest sister, Ane Chime, and his distant cousin, Phende Lhakpa.

APPENDIX F

Gakhok, Dezhung Rinpoche's Place of Birth: Historical Notes

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION has been gathered in an attempt to make the historical and geographical background of Dezhung Rinpoche's life in Tibet a little clearer.

The place of Dezhung Rinpoche's birth was Thaklung village west of the Drichu Gser Idan River in Gapa district of northwest Kham. It was the village nearest the monastery of Tharlam.

Tharlam monastery and Thaklung village were located about thirty kilometers due north of the trading and administrative town of Jyekundo, in a side valley to the west of the Drichu. The Thaklung Valley lay west of and roughly across the Drichu River from where the ancient "White Stūpa of Ga" (*sga mchod rten dkar po*) stood.¹⁴⁴⁰ In the fifteenth century and probably earlier, a great trade market existed there, near the confluence of the Thag and Lab rivers into the 'Bri River, in the vicinity of the Ga White Stūpa.¹⁴⁴¹ This market shifted south sometime in about the first half of the eighteenth century to its present location at Jyekundo.¹⁴⁴²

Thaklung village was about a mile from the Tharlam monastery. It lay about four miles off the main road from Jyekundo to Sining, but directly on the main road to the nomadic regions in the north. By horse the journey from Jyekundo to Tharlam took one day, and the direct route led through Jyeku La rgan La (one of two major passes that had to be crossed), 'Dan mda', Dzinda, Drönda, Thag mda', and Thag phu.¹⁴⁴³ Also lying roughly between Tharlam and Jyekundo, though to the east of the direct path, were the towns of Ranyak and Bamchu, which each had a fairly large Gelukpa monastery. North of Tharlam lay the small Ngorpa monastery of Rdzong mgo. To the southwest, on the far side of the Thag Pass, stood the Gelukpa monastery Mgar ra Bde chen gling.¹⁴⁴⁴

The village of Thaklung lay, according to some sources, in the lower part of Ga district (*sga smad*). Other sources place it in upper Kyura district. In

any case, it definitely lay near the border between the old Ga and Kyura districts, which in olden days were two of three affiliated territories in the upper Drichu watershed: Ga, Denma, and Kyura (*sga ldan skyur gsum*).¹⁴⁴⁵ Originally Ga is said to have consisted of the high, mostly nomadic territory from the mountain Ga Jo bo ri down to 'Ba' res (?), where the junipers grow to the length of a yak's tail.¹⁴⁴⁶ Kyura included the territory from there down to the Ldan Khra bo Pass. Denma included the land from the latter down to the Ldan phu Pass.¹⁴⁴⁷ Later Ga and Kyura came to form the single district of "Gapa" and were political dependants of the kingdom of Nangchen, which adjoined Gapa to the southwest.¹⁴⁴⁸

In general, Ga, Kyura, and Denma districts belonged, according to traditional usage, to "upper Kham" (*mdo stod*), and their western areas were part of the upland of 'Bri zla Zal mo sgang, one of the "six uplands" (*sgang drug*) of Kham (*mdo khams*), between the two rivers Drichu and Zla chu. Ga originally acquired its name because most of its inhabitants belonged to the Ga tribe, one of the six ancient great tribes of Tibet (*rus chen drug*).¹⁴⁴⁹

In more recent centuries Gapa, as comprising both old territories of Ga and Kyura, belonged politically to the twenty-five tribes (*nyi shu rtsa lnga*) with their twenty-five "chieftains" (Tibetanized Chinese title: *be hu*) subject to the kingdom of Nangchen. The total population of all twenty-five tribes of Nangchen in the 1930s was estimated to be about twelve thousand families, or more than seventy-one thousand people.¹⁴⁵⁰ According to one informant, the seven leading "tribes" of Gapa, each with its own "chieftain" (*be hu*), were: (1) Dra'u, (2) Randa, (3) Buchen, (4) Rong po, (5) Atro, (6) Gur tsha, and (7) Rakshül.¹⁴⁵¹ Since the 1720s, moreover, Nangchen had been subject to the Chinese *amban* in Sining. Nangchen thus came to belong to the huge Sino-Tibetan border territory of Tsinghai (Ching-hai), and therefore it came under the same administration as Amdo, as did its dependency, Gapa. The king (*rgyal po*) of Nangchen held the Chinese title *ching-ru* (Tib. *stong dpon*, "battalion commander"). In the 1930s and 1940s, for instance, the governor of Tsinghai was the Chinese Moslem warlord Ma Pu-fang, who ruled from Sining and enjoyed a great deal of independence from the Kuomintang government. Yet off the main paths of travel the direct authority of the Tsinghai administrators was practically unfelt in the villages of Gapa,¹⁴⁵² and even the Nangchen king was in later times for the most part a mere figurehead for the people of Ga.

Though politically subordinate to Nangchen, Gapa region (Ga and

Kyura together) had in other respects since early times enjoyed close cultural and other ties with the neighboring district to the southeast, Denma, although in recent centuries Denma had itself come under the administration of the kingdom of Derge. It may be that Ga, Kyura, and Denma at some time in the past formed a single political entity (centered in Denma?).¹⁴⁵³

In recent centuries the real local power in southern Gapa was exercised by the Dra'u (or Gra'ur)¹⁴⁵⁴ chieftain, whose official title was the Chinese *bai hu* or "lord of a hundred" (district governor, Tibetanized: *be hu*) and whose main residence was at Jyekundo. A *be hu* chieftain could have in theory eighteen subordinate chiefs (*be cang*) beneath him, though in actual practice many had just three or four subordinates and a few had none at all. Under the Dra'u Behu, there were said to be thirteen subchieftains (*be cang*).¹⁴⁵⁵ This family had been very powerful locally (in southern Ga and Kyura) since the mid-1400s, at least. Originally three of the *be hu* in southern Gapa had stemmed from the same Dra'u 'Broga tshang family. The first split occurred between the Dra'u and an older son. The latter's patrimony became the land of the Buchen ("Eldest son") Behu. Then the Buchen family, too, divided into Buchen and Randa.¹⁴⁵⁶

The power of the Dra'u chieftain remained great in recent centuries. In the 1860s, when the forces of Nyag rong Mgon po rnam rgyal threatened to invade this area, for instance, it was the Dra'u Behu who is said to have organized the resistance at the border of Gakhok and Denma. (Fortunately, the Nyag sked forces never turned up.)¹⁴⁵⁷ In the twentieth century their wealth and power did not decrease, especially as Jyekundo became increasingly important for the Tsinghai government.

The Dra'u chieftain family in the 1920s and 1930s had close links with Tharlam monastery, and its most important members in this generation received the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) teachings there from Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (1864–1941). At Tharlam was also a palace (*pho brang*), a protector's chapel (*mgon khang*), and other possessions of the Dra'u chieftain.¹⁴⁵⁸ Also, an official "representative" (*sku tshab*) of the Dra'u chieftain resided there, all of which would seem to indicate that at some early period Tharlam (Thaklung) had been a seat of the Dra'u chieftain.¹⁴⁵⁹

The main seat of the Dra'u lord's power was in the old district of Kyura. This is an area of relatively good land and mild climate that probably was from ancient times the site of human habitation. The oldest known fortress in the area of Jyekundo—probably predating the Dra'u chieftains—was

Nag po dgra 'dul, the ruins of which still can be located. A few very old ritual implements bearing its name survived in local monasteries until the twentieth century.¹⁴⁶⁰

The Dra'u chieftain family evidently descended from the family of Dra'u (or Gra 'ur) Dpal ldan rgya mtsho and his eight brothers, who established themselves at Dpal thang Khra mo in Kyura in or about the early fifteenth century. Dpal ldan rgya mtsho married Drung Kun dga' dbang mo of the Ga A gnyan noble family, younger sister of the master Drung Kunga Rinchen.¹⁴⁶¹ Their two sons were Kundun Rinchen Chokdrup and Zhang Lha skyabs. The former became a monk and afterward acted as the main patron for the founding of the Döndrup Ling monastery at Jyekundo in 1470, during the journey of Dagchen Gyagarwa of the Sakya Khön to Kham. During this time, Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe (the founder of Tharlam monastery) came and taught for ten years at Döndrup Ling.¹⁴⁶² One or more sons of each generation traditionally took ordination, and thus there appeared a line of Dra'u noble-lamas that included Bsod nams mchog grub, Rin chen chos legs, Dpal ldan rin chen, Rdo rje rgyal po, and others, down to the more recent Phüntshok Gyaltsen.¹⁴⁶³

The male line of the family came to an end with Phüntshok Gyaltsen, who remained a ruler-monk and never married. His sister rta mgrin sgrol ma was the mother of the next generation, including Dra'u chieftain 'Jigs med, who was the main layman in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁴⁶⁴ At first their uncle Phüntshok Gyaltsen had all four boys take monk's vows, and then he asked for a Sakya hierarch to perform a divination to decide which of his nephews would be best as secular ruler. The divination indicated that the youngest, 'Jigs med, was best suited to be chieftain. The three older brothers remained monks, the most prominent being the eldest, Tendzin Gyaltsen. Thus the males in this generation were:¹⁴⁶⁵

- (1) Lama Tendzin Gyaltsen (1884–1944),
- (2) Lama Dpal ldan tshul khrim (1887–1944),
- (3) Lama Byams pa rgyal mtshan (1892–1949), and
- (4) Dra'u Behu 'Jigs med kun dga' rnam rgyal (1907–1952).

The sons of Dra'u Pön 'Jigs med and his wife (b. ca. 1915) were:

- (1) Dra'u Behu Rinchen Tsering (b. 1931), and
- (2) Thubten rgya mtsho (b. 1944)

Under the Dra'u chieftain and the other six main chieftains in Gapa, the following traditional territories and monasteries were grouped:

- (1) Dra'u. This included, as mentioned above, the town and great monastery of Jyekundo. Other Sakyapa monasteries within its territories were Thag lung Dga' ldan sa bzang gling (= "Tharlam monastery"), Thub bstan Dar rgyas gling, and possibly Rdzong mgo Bsam gtan gling. This was also evidently the location of the She'udo monastery, an institution which in the past claimed to have some thirteen branches (*sde dgon bcu gsum*).¹⁴⁶⁶
- (2) Buchen. This area, a bit southeast (?) of Jyekundo, contained the Karma Kagyü monastery Thrangu dgon, as well as Sakyapa monastic establishments.
- (3) Randa (Ra brda). Still further south and east, before one reached Denma, was the territory of the Randa chieftain. Here one found the important Kagyüpa monastery of Benchen.¹⁴⁶⁷
- (4) Rong po. This included the area of 'Dan chu khog pa. Here were found the large Gelukpa monasteries of Ranyak (Ra nyag or Rwa nyag) and Bamchu. Also here was the Sakyapa monastery mDzo nyag Samdrup dgon pa. Under the Rong po chieftain the underlings included the 'O rdzong Be cang, head of a cultivated district, and the Rong stod Be cang, whose district was nomadic.
- (5) Atro (or A gro). This district lay in northern Gapa below Gur tsha. It contained in its territories the monastery Ye rgyas Dar rgyas gling. Ye rgyas stod ma and Ye rgyas smad ma were two nomadic districts. Here was also A yang, the location of a Drikung monastery.
- (6) Gur tsha. This was a mixed agricultural and nomadic area in the upper Drichu, below the nomadic region of Gnyan tsho (site of the Gelukpa monastery Se khar dgon). Its monasteries are said to have included Gnam phu dgon, Gnam Spu rong dgon, and Glang chen dgon. Spu rong dgon received also some monks from Gnyan tsho.
- (7) Rakshül (Rag shul). This nomadic area in upper Ga included in its territories the Sakyapa monastery Traruk dgon as well as the Gelukpa establishment Klung shod dgon. Housing some one thousand monks, Klung shod dgon was the biggest monastery in Gapa.

Outside of the Dra'u chieftain's territory, Trindu in northern Gapa was

the seat of a *be hu* chief, one of the twenty-five dependant chiefs of the Nangchen king. Trindu was a place of great importance, and its lord was previously from the Kho 'jo tshang family, and more recently has been from the Trindu tshang. In its territories one found the important Sakyapa monasteries Kalzang dgon, Dongtray dgon, and Dgon gsar dgon, as well as the Karma Kagyü monastery Zhe 'dzang dgon (Shedzang).¹⁴⁶⁸ Even as far back as the Yüan or Sakyapa period, Trindu had been a major political center—probably the main seat of the local governor, just as in more recent times it became the location of a *sa 'go* (and county seat, *rdzong*).¹⁴⁶⁹

Under Communist Chinese administration, Gapa falls within the Tibetan autonomous prefecture of Yushu, which is part of the province (*zhing chen*) of Mtsho sngon (Qinghai or Ching hai). Within Yu shu prefecture (Tibetanized Chinese: *kru*), there are some six or seven counties (*rdzong*, Chin. *shen*), including:¹⁴⁷⁰

- 1) Yu shu (southern Gapa, county seat Jyekundo)
- 2) Trindu (northern Gapa, county seat Trindu)
- 3) Nangchen
- 4) 'Bri stod (upper Drichu)
- 5) Chu dmar (also in the upper Drichu watershed)
- 6) 'Dza stod (adjoining territories of the upper 'Dza chu watershed)

The Chinese name *Yushu* for lower Gapa (covering more or less the same territory as old Kyura?) is a later corruption and is difficult to account for etymologically. Two possible explanations for the name are that it derives from the name of the nomadic region Yul shul or G.yul shul, a place to which the “remnants” (*shul*) of (1) other “lands” (*yul*) or of (2) [lost] “battles” (*g.yul*) used to flee.¹⁴⁷¹

Religious History of Ga: A Few Notes

Since the earliest recorded times, that is, from the seventh or eighth century, the regions of Ga, Kyura, and Denma contained important centers for the teaching and practice of Buddhism. Ga was traditionally said to be rich in six different endowments, each corresponding to one of its districts, and the first of these was the Buddhist religion: “The 'Bri klung (the upper Drichu Valley), rich in the Holy Dharma” (*'bri klung dam pa chos kyi phyug*).¹⁴⁷²

Kyura was the site of early (eighth-century?) rock carvings attributed to the patronage of the Chinese princess Gyim shing Kong jo: a figure of Vairocana, figures of the eight bodhisattvas, the text of the *Vajrachedika Sūtra*, and of the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*).¹⁴⁷³ At Ga Dzonyak was a stūpa that had been erected by the Indian paṇḍita Smṛtijñāna (fl. early eleventh century), and at Denma Dran thang there stood the stūpa enshrining the same paṇḍita's remains. Nearby at Denma Glang thang stood the ancient temple of Tārā, the Glang thang Sgrol ma'i lha khang. Other great religious treasures of the land included the White Stūpa of Ga (*sga'i mchod rten dkar po*), the Buddha's relics in the Buddha statue at Stag mgo, and the so-called Bskal bzang Jowo, a golden image of Śākyamuni Buddha offered to Chögyal Phakpa (1235–1280) by the Mongolian ruler (Khublai?), and given by him to his disciple Ga A gnyan Dam pa.

From an early time many realized yogis or saintly teachers were born in Ga, such as the early masters Denma Rtse mang (who was counted among the twenty-five main disciples of the eighth-century Indian master Padmasambhava and renowned for his remarkable memory), Se btsun (master of Dromtön Rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas, 1004–1064), Geshe Dgon pa ba (1016–1082, disciple of Dromtön),¹⁴⁷⁴ A ro Ye shes 'byung gnas (of the Great Perfection tradition), and Drikung skyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po (1143–1217, disciple of Phagmotrupa and founder of the Drikung Kagyüpa).¹⁴⁷⁵ Also famed within Ga were the “Eight Great Adepts of Ga” (*sga yul gyi grub chen brgyad*).¹⁴⁷⁶ A certain 'Dan sgom Chos kyi dbang phyug is also counted among the main disciples of Longchen Rabjampa.

Among the great masters of the Sakyapa tradition born in Ga, the following names are preserved: Skyu ra A skyabs (a teacher of Sachen, 1092–1158); his nephew A seng Rdo rje brtan pa (the first *Path with Its Fruit* disciple of Sachen); Dge ba'i bshes gnyen A thengs (a disciple of Sachen); Gatön Rdo rje grags (a disciple of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen, 1147–1216); Ga Anyen Dampa Kunga Drak (a disciple of Sakya Paṇḍita [1182–1251] and Phakpa [1235–1280]); Drung Kunga Rinchen (a descendant in Ga Anyen Dam pa's lineage, disciple of Ngorchén [1382–1456] and Rongtön [1367–1449]);¹⁴⁷⁷ Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe (likewise a descendant in Ga Anyen Dam pa's lineage and disciple of both Ngorchén and Rongtön); and Drung Tsultrim Gyaltsen (a nephew and disciple of Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe).¹⁴⁷⁸

Ga Anyen Dampa Kunga Drak (ca. 1230–1303) was an especially famous and important teacher from Gapa.¹⁴⁷⁹ Not only was he a great master of the

Mahākāla traditions and a teacher at the Yüan court,¹⁴⁸⁰ but he is also said to have been appointed political ruler over much of northwest Kham during the late thirteenth century.¹⁴⁸¹ Later he tired of the distractions and intrigues of the court and official life, and for a time he resigned from his position (or was sent into retirement), retaining the rule of just the environs of his main seat at Ga Trindu.¹⁴⁸²

Later masters from Gapa and Denma included Ldan ma Yon tan dpal (disciple of Tsongkhapa, 1357–1419); Sangyay Nyenpa Drupchen Trashi Paljor (teacher of the Karmapa Mi bskyod rdo rje, 1507–1554);¹⁴⁸³ Dul mo Bkra shis 'od zer;¹⁴⁸⁴ Ldan ma Sangs rgyas dpal (fl. fifteenth century);¹⁴⁸⁵ Shuchen Paṇḍita Tsultrim Rinchen (1697–1769); and Ngor Khenchen Ldan ma Sangs rgyas dpal bzang, who served as thirty-fifth Ngor abbot (tenure 1740?–1741, or only 1741).¹⁴⁸⁶ The Ninth Dalai Lama Lung rtogs rgya mtsho (1805–1815, b. Ldan Chos 'khor); Ldan ma Sha khrid Grub chen; and the more recent Sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rikpay Dorje (1922–1981), were also born in Denma.¹⁴⁸⁷ Denma and nearby places were also visited numerous times by Sakya Khön *dagchens* in the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries, and many of these visits are mentioned by Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen in his autobiography.¹⁴⁸⁸

One traditionally spoke of twenty-one monasteries of the Sakyapa school in Denma (*ldan dgon*), whose monks went to Ngor monastery in Tsang for ordination. In recent times the following twenty-four monasteries could be enumerated (the first eighteen in Gapa and the final six in Denkhok): (1) Skye rgu Don grub gling (Jyeku Döndrup Ling), (2) Khri 'du Bskal bzang dgon (Trindu Kalzang), (3) (Trindu) Dgon gsar Bshad sgrub gling, (4) (Trindu) Gdong sprad (Dongtray) Bsam gtan gling, (5) Thag lung Dga' ldan sa bzang gling (= "Tharlam monastery"), (6) Thub bstan Dar rgyas gling, (7) Mdzo nyag Bsam 'grub dgon (Dzonyak Samdrup), (8) Rdzong mgo Bsam gtan gling, (9) Gnam phu dgon, (10) (Gnam) Spu rong dgon, (11) Glang chen dgon, (12) Ye rgyas Dar rgyas gling, (13) Spang shar dgon, (14) Zhe'u'i mdo dgon (She'udo), (15) Seb phu dgon, (16) Seb mda' dgon, (17) Rag shul Khra rug (Rakshül Traruk) dgon (= Gsang sngags chos rdzong), (18) (Ldan ma) Rin chen gling, (19) 'Dam thog dgon (Damthok), (20) 'Bam le dgon, (21) Rag co dgon, (22) Chos sde dgon, (23) Shug rab dgon, and (24) Sa dkar Bsam grub gling.¹⁴⁸⁹

Some more recent Sakyapa masters who came from the Sakyapa monasteries in these parts included: from Dongtray monastery, A yang Chos rje

Trashi Paljor (or Bkra shis rgya mtsho?) and Grub dbang Mtsho skyes rdo rje; from Spang shar monastery, Shar khang pa Sherab Gyaltzen; from Trindu Kalzang monastery, Lho drung Byams pa tshul khrims dpal bzang (disciple of Sharchen Mingyur Gyaltzen, b. 1717) and the Ngor Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup (b. 1811);¹⁴⁹⁰ possibly Khuna Choktrül Jamyang Sherab Gyatso (d. ca. 1894?); Snaang rtse Ri khrod pa Kun dga' chos kyi dbang po; Kun dga' chos lha (a great yogi of Vajrayogini); from Jyekundo Don grub grub gling monastery, Tshe mtshams pa Ngawang Samten;¹⁴⁹¹ Grub dbang Kun dga' dpal 'byor;¹⁴⁹² and also from Trindu monastery, the siddha Champa Tendzin (fl. late 1800s).¹⁴⁹³

Trulkus from Sakyapa monasteries in Gakhok included the following: at Jyekundo Döndrup Ling, the Dra'u Sprul sku Ngag dbang byams pa chos dar and his successors, Dbon Bstan bdag Sprul sku 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' chos dar and his successors,¹⁴⁹⁴ and the Rgya nag rTogs ldan yang srid (or Rgya nag Bla brang Sprul sku) Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan;¹⁴⁹⁵ the Trindu Dongtray Bsam gling pa's A yang Sprul sku; the Lho rung Sprul sku of Kalzang dgon (said to be one of the earliest Sakyapa trulku lineages in Gapa); the Khra rug Sprul sku (Traruk Trulku) of Traruk Gsang sngags chos rdzong;¹⁴⁹⁶ and the She'udo bla Sprul sku.¹⁴⁹⁷

The main Karma Kagyü monasteries in Gapa were (1) Khra 'gu (Thrangu), (2) 'Ban chen (Benchen), (3) 'Dam dkar dgon (its main building was destroyed by the Mongols), (4) Zhe 'dzang (Shedzang or Zhe rdzong) dgon (in Trindu rdzong), (5) La bro dgon, (6) Rdo dgon (in the direction of Surmang), (7) Gnas bzang and (8) Lha rtse in upper Ga, and (9) Sgar gzhung dgon. The most important Drikung monasteries there were A yang dgon (or A yung dgon), Nyi 'dzang dgon (or Nyi rdzong dgon), and Ga Sgrub brgyud dgon pa. The Drukpa Kagyüpa had one monastery near A yang dgon. Other Kagyüpa monasteries in Gapa and Denma included Zhang 'gu, Bkra shis sgang, Lha khang, Zur mgon, Chos mdzad, Kham 'jo, 'Ba' dgon, 'Ge'u, Rtse re, Glos gyes, 'Bru Mkhar mgo, and Tshe bhrüm dgon.¹⁴⁹⁸

Lineages of Kagyüpa trulkus in Gakhok included the following: at Benchen monastery, the successive rebirths of Sangyay Nyenpa Drupchen; at Thrangu monastery, the rebirths of Khra leb Nyi ma 'gyur med, the Thrangu Sprul sku,¹⁴⁹⁹ the Zu ru Sprul sku (the first master was from the Mtshur phu Zu ru grwa tshang), and the Blo gros nyi ma Sprul sku (started by a Surmang master); and at Zhe 'dzang (Shedzang) monastery the Rnam dag Sprul sku and Lcags mdud Sprul sku.

The chief Gelukpa monasteries of Gapa and Denma were (1) Zel dkar dgon, (2) Lab chos sde dgon,¹⁵⁰⁰ (3) Rwa nyag Theg chen gling,¹⁵⁰¹ (4) 'Bam chu (or 'Bam bcu), (5) 'Bam bu, (6) 'Gag la, (7) Rag shul Klung shod dgon (the largest monastery in all Gapa), (8) Yu shul dgon gsar, (9) Sha ri, (10) Sgyogs deng, (11) 'Bal dgon, (12) 'Bam sgang, (13) Mgar ra Bde chen gling, (14) 'Ba' mda', (15) Gru pa, (16) Smar 'gris Byang chub gling, and (17) 'Dan Chos 'khor dgon (with its branch monasteries).¹⁵⁰² To mention just a few of the many lineages of Gelukpa trulkus in Gakhok: at Rwa nyag monastery there were the two Rong tha Sprul sku lineages including (I) (1) Bskal bzang phrin las lhun grub, (2) Blo bzang chos 'byor lhun grub, and (3) Blo bzang rin chen rgyal mtshan, and (II) (1) Tenpay Gyaltsen and (2) Blo bzang dam chos rgyal mtshan (or rgya mtsho);¹⁵⁰³ at Lab monastery were the rebirths of Skyabs mgon Mdo rgyud rgya mtsho;¹⁵⁰⁴ and at Bamchu monastery were the two Spug bla Sprul skus.¹⁵⁰⁵

Oral tradition has it that until the mid-seventeenth century hardly any Gelukpa monasteries were in Gapa. A number of that school's monasteries are said to have been founded after their forcible conversion from other—especially Kagyüpa—schools by Mongol armies.¹⁵⁰⁶ It remains to be seen to what extent this oral tradition can be confirmed from written sources.¹⁵⁰⁷

The Monastery of Tharlam or Thaklung

Dezhung Rinpoche's home monastery of Tharlam (Thar lam dgon pa) was founded in the mid-1400s by the above-mentioned Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe.¹⁵⁰⁸ He was an outstanding local monk (and descendant of the same patrilineal line as Ga A gnyan Dam pa) who had gone to study in Central Tibet primarily under Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo (1382–1456), though he also studied under Rongtön Shes bya kun rig (1367–1449). He was said to have been a rebirth of the famous Indian paṇḍita Smṛtijñāna, who had been active in Denma in the early eleventh century. As already mentioned, Dagchen Gyagarwa Sherab Gyaltsen (1424–1477) of Sakya is said to have founded Jyeku Döndrup Ling monastery in 1470, under the sponsorship of the Dra'u Lama Kundun Rinchen Chokdrup.¹⁵⁰⁹ At that time the *dagchen* appointed Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe as the chief religious leader over all the Sakyapa establishments in Ga, Kyura, and Denma, bestowing on him a letter of investiture, a seal, a horse, a seat-mat, and robes. Kunga Yeshe then

dwelled at Döndrup Ling for ten years, engaging alternately in teaching and meditative practice.¹⁵¹⁰ His main seat, however, was at Tharlam monastery.

The full name of the Tharlam monastery in later times was Thar lam Dga' ldan sa bzang rnam rgyal gling. Originally both the town and monastery of Tharlam were named Thaklung, meaning "Thag Valley." This was a western side valley of the upper Drichu through which the Thag River (*thag chu*) flowed. In the late seventeenth century, during the regency of Desi Sangyay Gyatso (1653–1705), some official letters were written to the monastery by the Central Tibetan government in which the monastery was called *Thar lam* ("Path to Liberation") instead of *Thag lung*, and in subsequent official communications this form continued to be used. Therefore the monks and officials of the monastery, too, began to use that name, and that spelling appears on the official seals of the monastery.

During the last three centuries, Tharlam was an affiliate of Ngor monastery in Tsang. Its monks traditionally went to the mother monastery of Ngor for full monastic ordination, as well as to receive the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions from the abbot.¹⁵¹¹ At Ngor, they belonged to the Denma kham tshan, which was the largest and strongest regional dormitory there.¹⁵¹² At an earlier time, a few traditions from the Gongkar tradition (originating from the Central Tibetan Sakyapa monastery of Gongkar Rdo rje gdan) had also been adopted at Tharlam. Some of the monastery's ritual music and dances were performed following this tradition, rather than in a pure Ngorpa style.

Two other early great masters at Tharlam were the late-fifteenth-century teachers Drung Tsultrim Gyaltsen, a disciple of Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe, and Dam pa Kun dga' rnam rgyal, a nephew of Kunga Yeshe. Tshultrim Gyaltsen was a great scholar, especially skilled in poetical composition. He composed a partially versified biography of Ga Rabjampa and was compared in his writing expertise to the great Sanskrit poet (*kavi*) Aśvaghoṣa.

In more recent centuries, two lama estates (*bla brang*) became established at Tharlam, each belonging to a different lama-palace of Ngor. They were situated to the east and west of the Tharlam main assembly hall (which faced south). To the east was the Shar gling bla brang, which belonged to the Luding lama-palace of Ngor. The lama in residence during the 1930s and 1940s was Dam chos tshe 'phel. To the west was the Mkhargsar bla brang,

belonging to the Phende lama-palace of Ngor. In the 1940s no lama lived permanently in the latter *bla brang* (the previous lama, Mkhar gsar Lama Kun dga' from Dongtray dgon pa, had left and no successor had come),¹⁵¹³ but it possessed a house, fields, and so on.

Tharlam had a special relation with the Phende lama-palace at Ngor. In general, monks of the Denma kham tshan were said to “belong” in some sense to the Phan khang. A lama from their number was not normally allowed, for instance, to become a candidate for the abbacy (*zhabs drung*) in any other Ngor lama-palace, as was shown by the case of 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan.¹⁵¹⁴ Although abbatial candidates and abbots of the other Ngor lama-palace did also visit Gapa and Denma, the Phende lamas enjoyed a close and long-standing relation with the region. There were correspondingly many branches of the Phende lama-palace in the various monasteries of Gapa.¹⁵¹⁵ These included:

- (1) The Mdo bla tshang at She'udo dgon
- (2) The Phan bde bla brang at Ga Jyeku dgon
- (3) The Mkhar gsar bla brang at Tharlam (residence of the “Mkhar gsar Lama”)
- (4) The Yar kha che ba bla brang at Kalzang dgon
- (5) The A yang bla brang at Trindu Dongtray dgon pa
- (6) The Drung pa Mkhar gsar bla brang at Dgon gsar dgon
- (7) The Dung 'khor Bka' 'gyur sgar at Thub bstan dgon (long time residence and place of death of Phenkhang abbot Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros)
- (8) The Dziphu Phan khang bla brang (also called Nya re dung 'bud Bla ma'i sgar sa)
- (9) The Spang shar bla brang
- (10) The Phan bde bla brang at Glang chen dgon pa

There was a custom for these *bla brangs* to be visited—sometimes for long periods—by great lamas of Ngor.¹⁵¹⁶ It is said that the lamas who did so included: Bkra shis lhun grub (1668/71?–1739; thirty-first Ngor abbot), Bstan 'dzin lhun grub (fl. early 1700s),¹⁵¹⁷ the latter's disciple Palden Chökyong (1702–1769; thirty-fourth abbot), Palden Lotrö Gyaltsen (1840–1900; fifty-seventh abbot),¹⁵¹⁸ and Byams pa dpal ldan chos mdzad (d. Dziphu, ca. 1915).¹⁵¹⁹ The latter stayed a long time at Dziphu and is said to have expressed

a special liking for that part of Gapa. He found it an excellent place, all the monasteries on both sides of the Drichu being endowed with pasture lands in their upper valleys and cultivated fields lower in the valleys.¹⁵²⁰

The close relations between Ngor and Tharlam were exemplified by the third lama in the above list, Palden Chökyong, who often visited the monastery both before and after his tenure as Ngor abbot in 1733–1740.¹⁵²¹ He was a main teacher of the Derge king Bstan pa tshe ring and founder of the Phende lama-palace at Ngor. The close links with the Phende lama-palace persisted until recent times, and two twentieth-century Phende abbots were born within the territory under Tharlam monastery.

The monastery of Tharlam had from two hundred fifty to three hundred monks. Traditionally it had no reincarnate lama (*sprul sku*). Any monk of great sanctity and learning could rise to become its leader, and during its history many outstanding and learned monks appeared in its midst. Some of the monastery's greatest monks in the eighteenth through twentieth centuries included¹⁵²² Tharlam Grub chen Kun dga' rnam rgyal (fl. 1700s);¹⁵²³ Lama Rab dkar lhun grub;¹⁵²⁴ Lama Bkra shis chos 'phel; Sgrub brtson Kunga Nyima (Nyiga Rinpoche, 1846–1925);¹⁵²⁵ the great Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (1864–1941); the latter's colleague the meditator-monk Jamyang Losal (1862–1949);¹⁵²⁶ the outstanding scholar and Vinaya upholder Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen (1870–1940); his younger brother Gendun Zangpo (ca. 1880–1940); the adept Josay Jamyang Gyaltsen (ca. 1880–1949/50), who at death achieved the rainbow body;¹⁵²⁷ and the two Ngor Phende abbots 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (abbot 1917–1921, d. ca. 1930) and Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso (1917–1969).¹⁵²⁸

Preserved at the Tharlam monastery were a number of religious treasures, which included a “self-originated” image of Mahākāla;¹⁵²⁹ a reliquary box, previously owned by Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe, containing relics of the Buddha, the Sakya founders, and other great saints; books of the monastery's founder, Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe, such as a fine old manuscript sixteen-volume set of the *Collected Works of the Sakya Founders* (*Sa skya bka' 'bum*), which was used during the editing of the Derge printed edition in the 1730s;¹⁵³⁰ several hundred volumes of treatises by Indian and Tibetan masters in old-style scripts; a very sacred Chinese cast-metal image of Mahākāla in a fine style, which was said to have been the personal object of worship of Phakpa Rinpoche; the skull-cup of the Indian adept Nāropa, together with a written history of it; many cast images and images of other sorts; two

holy images of Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe containing his relics and other sacred objects, erected by his disciple Drung Tsultrim Gyaltzen; and the great gilt-copper images of the Buddha, Sakya Paṇḍita, and Ngorchon Kunga Zangpo erected by Gatön Ngawang Lekpa in the new temple.¹⁵³¹

A few other treasures of the monastery are said to have been “inherited” from three early monasteries in nearby Dziphu that had been demolished by a Mongol army in the 1640s. The first of these was the La rtsa Rdo rje gdan in upper Dziphu, which was the birthplace of the great adept Sangyay Nyenpa (fl. late 1400s/early 1500s) and formerly the site of a Karma Kagyü monastery. Here was located the paternal estate of that great Kagyüpa master, and even in recent times there survived a small “Mdo bla tshang” occupied by a lama appointed from Benchen monastery. Below that, on the side of a mountain at the confluence of two streams, was the seat of two of the greatest early Sakyapa masters in Gapa: Skyu ra A skyabs (a teacher of Sachen, 1092–1158) and his nephew A seng Rdo rje brtan pa (the first *Path with Its Fruit* disciple of Sachen).¹⁵³² Also in the vicinity had once stood another monastery of the Karma Kagyü where the master Dul mo Bkra shis ’od zer (fl. early 1500s) resided. All three sites were destroyed by armies of fanatical Mongols,¹⁵³³ probably in the early 1640s during the campaigns against the Beri king (whose main seat was west of Gapa in Lha thog) or a few years later during the suppression of the Karma Kagyüpa school by the Mongol allies of the First Paṇchen Rinpoche and the Fifth Dalai Lama, after the overthrow of the Tsang king, Karma bstan skyong.¹⁵³⁴

Tharlam monastery had five communities that supported the monastery and furnished its monks (*grwa rtsa mchod sde khag lnga*): Thag lung grong, Thag mda’ grong, Drönda grong, Dziphu mda’ grong, and Ra’ok grong. Dezhung Rinpoche was born in the first village (Thag lung grong), which was closest to the monastery and which consisted of some thirty-five families in the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, six nomadic pasture areas were controlled by the monastery, and nomads staying there had to pay the monastery a grazing fee as well as supply dung. These six were Mgon chu lung pa, Ka tho lung pa, Na ge lung pa, Gnyan lung pa, Slas ra lung pa, and Gzhe khri lung pa.¹⁵³⁵

Politically, the area around Tharlam came under the domain of the local Dzinda *be cang* and (for military purposes) the Lab mda’ *be cang*. Both of these were subordinate to the Dra’u chieftain at Jyekundo, who sometimes took a direct interest in the affairs of the monastery when serious conflicts

arose. The Dra'u chieftains even had a "palace" (*pho brang*) at Thaklung (Tharlam), where taxes were collected locally. In the 1930s and 1940s, Dezhung Rinpoche's "uncle" (*a zhang*) Bstan 'dzin, a distant senior relative on his mother's side from Dzinda, worked for the Dra'u chieftain at Thaklung and had a lot of power on the local level.¹⁵³⁶ In the eighteenth century, a great minister of the Dra'u lord had made his seat at Thag mda'. His name was A pho Don yod, and he was a powerful patron of Sakya Dagchen Kunga Lotrö (ca. 1717–1783?, thirty-second throne-holder), and of many other great religious masters of the eighteenth century.¹⁵³⁷

Since about 1870, the monastery had had a retreat center (*ri khrod*) at Dzinda Naysep, in which resided many illustrious meditators, about whom more has been said elsewhere. This retreat was located on the mountain above the village of Dzinda near Thaklung, from which it took about three hours to reach on foot. Otherwise there were no branch monasteries as such for Tharlam monastery. In the early 1930s, under the sponsorship of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, a modest seminary for scriptural and philosophical studies (*bshad grwa*) was founded at Tharlam, as an outgrowth of the famous Dzongsar Khamche seminary near Derge and the teaching traditions of Khenchen Shenga. Two local monks were appointed masters of studies (*mkhan po*) to head the seminary.¹⁵³⁸

APPENDIX G

Dezhung Rinpoche's Daily Schedule of Meditation

EVERY DAY Dezhung Rinpoche practiced eleven *sādhana*s.¹⁵³⁹ This was a heavy schedule of practice in addition to his other activities such as teaching and studying. He used to repeat the comment made once by an astonished Nyingma lama: “Sakyapa lamas have a lot of regular practices to recite!” (*sa skya pa'i bla ma la kha ton mang*).

- (1) Every morning he would arise at 2:00 a.m., and from then until 4:00 a.m. he would practice the long version of the Hevajra *sādhana* (*Kye rdor lam dus*). He would also do the Vajrayoginī (Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma) *sādhana*, then return to sleep.
- (2) He would rise again at dawn and, before having breakfast, he would recite the *sādhana*s of Black Mañjuśrī and White Tārā.
- (3) Before morning tea and breakfast, he would recite prayers to the lineage lamas of all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and to his own main teachers. (He wrote out the full prayer once in Seattle, and a copy survives.) He also recited the Ngor tradition's prayer of offering, the *Dgos 'dod kun 'byung*.
- (4) In the morning he received visitors. If there were none, then he would study.
- (5) He ate lunch at about 11:30 a.m. or 12:00. Before each meal he made an offering prayer.
- (6) In the afternoon he received visitors, or else meditated. His daily practices included:
 - a. Reciting the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*) five times a day;
 - b. Reciting one hundred and eight times a praise of the Buddha (*bla ma ston pa bcom ldan 'das...*) and the refuge formula, along with the Śākyamuni mantra (*oṃ muni muni...*);

- c. Practicing such *sādhana*s as those of the Sakya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga (*Sa ’jam sbag sgrub*), White Tārā, Vajrasattva (108 recitations), and the short version of the Hevajra *sādhana* (*Kye rdor lam dus*) by Gatön;
 - d. The *sādhana*s of Avalokiteśvara (by Ngorchon Könchok Lhündrup and by Thangtong Gyalpo), including at least 10,000—but often as many as 20,000—*māṇi* mantras per day.
- (7) He had dinner at about 7:00 p.m.
- (8) In the evening, before retiring to his room, he would recite verses from the *Seven-Point Mind Training* (*Blo sbyong don bdun ma*), as Jamgyal Rinpoche had done. His evening and night practices included:
- a. Making water offerings and performing the *sādhana* of Yellow Jambhala;
 - b. Reciting the short or long version of the offerings to the protectors, according to the circumstances;
 - c. Practicing the *sādhana* of Mgon po Mahākāla, Brag rdzong ma (Khro bo bcu), or, if time was short, the briefer version.
- (9) Just before sleeping he would perform the Amitābha sleep-yoga by Sapaṇ.

In general, Dezhung Rinpoche practiced without fail the four practices known as “the four that should not be broken” (*chag med rnam bzhi*) of the Sakya tradition: (1) Hevajra (*Kye rdor lam dus*), (2) Vajrayoginī (*Nā ro Mkha’ spyod ma*), (3) Virūpa (*Bir srung*), and (4) Guru-yoga (*Lam zab*).

While traveling, he recited special prayers. These included (1) the sūtra called *Phyogs bcu mun sel* (“Removing the Darkness of the Ten Directions”), which removed confusion in the all directions (he had also memorized an abbreviated version attributed to Padmasambhava, the *’Phags pa phyogs bcu’i mun pa thams cad rnam par sel ba’i mdo*); (2) the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*); (3) the twenty-one praises of Tārā; and (4) some verses from the tenth chapter of the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* that remove obstacles for travelers.

APPENDIX H

Invitations to Teach the Path with Its Fruit

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE was requested by at least six different disciples to give the complete *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) initiations and instructions. The first time was in Minyak in the 1940s, when he refused, saying his guru Gatön had not instructed him to do so. The other five times he always formally agreed, but never actually did. The five later requests were:

- (1) Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö requested him to teach it in the mid-1950s, and he assented. However, Khyentse Rinpoche left Kham before Dezhung Rinpoche could teach it.
- (2) H.H. Sakya Trizin requested him to teach it. He formally gave his agreement, but the occasion never arose.
- (3) Khenpo Appey Yönten Zangpo requested him at Puruwala in the spring of 1981 to come to the Sakya College and give the *Lam 'bras*. He assented, but afterward never visited the Sakya College.
- (4) The Dzongsar Khyentse Trulku made repeated requests in Kathmandu in late 1981, during Dezhung Rinpoche's first stay in Nepal. He assented, and was just four days from actually beginning the teaching (in mid-January 1982) when he was invited to Malaysia and Southeast Asia, and he went there instead, much to the disappointment of his students.
- (5) Mingyur monastery in Taiwan invited him in Seattle in late 1985 or early 1986 to come and give the *Lam 'bras*. Mingyur Rinpoche was to interpret the teachings. Preparations had been made and even the tickets were arranged by early May 1987. He passed away a few days before he was scheduled to go.

He never gave the Hevajra Path Consecration (*lam dbang*), and even the Causal Consecration of Hevajra he gave only once or twice: once at Tharlam when Gatön was giving the *Lam 'bras*, when his master instructed him to give this initiation. In Minyak he gave a Hevajra initiation once in the 1940s, but that was evidently from the *Vajrāvali* collection of empowerments.

Dezhung Rinpoche gave the “Inseparability of Saṃsāra and Nirvāṇa” (*'Khor 'das dbyer med*) instructions in Singapore in 1982, using Lekpa Rinpoche’s text. (He had given it privately at least once before, in Seattle, to Cyrus and Maruta Kalnins Stearns.) According to Kunzang Nyima, he also gave the exposition of the Three Continua (*Rgyud gsum*) once at Jyekundo around 1954. However, he taught on many occasions the Three Visions (*Snang gsum*) introductory manuals for *Lam 'bras* practice.

APPENDIX I

The Life of Kalu Rinpoche

DEZHUNG RINPOCHE composed a brief biography of Kalu Rinpoche, the Tibetan text of which has not been located. It was rendered into English in about 1976–1977 by an anonymous translator and distributed in the 1980s in Kagyü centers in Europe, included on pages 21 through 26 of the twenty-eight-page pamphlet of Kalu Rinpoche’s teachings entitled *Die tantrische Belehrung Buddhas* (“The Tantric Teachings of the Buddha”).¹⁵⁴⁰ The main contents are as follows, with a few corrections and additions:

The Biography of Ven. Kalu Rinpoche *As Told by Ven. Dezhung Rinpoche*

The Venerable Lama Kalu Rinpoche is, in fact, the Great Vajradhara in person—embodying his outer, inner, and secret qualities and activities in a manner we ordinary beings can perceive according to our individual capacities. I have felt a great need for his life story to be written and great hope that it would be done. Rinpoche has now given us, his followers and disciples, his permission to write it. If the biographies of the noble persons in this world are not clearly told, it is our great loss. Thus I pray that you will all bear this in mind.

Before I now recount something of what I myself have seen and heard, I must beg not only the permission of the master and the *ḍākiṇīs*, but also their forgiveness for any illusions arising in my mind through my impurity.

[To tell the story of Kalu Rinpoche’s life,] there exist both the stories of his former lives and the story of the present life of the venerable lama himself. [To briefly mention something about his previous lives:] Of the many miraculous wisdom emanations of Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche Lotrö Thayey, he is recognized to be the Activity Incarnation for training living

beings. Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche was previously incarnated as the Buddha's personal disciple, the arhat Ānanda. [Then] he was [successively incarnated as] the great translator Vairocana, the learned and accomplished Khyungpo Naljor, Sakya Paṇḍita, Jonang Tāranātha, and Gter bdag Glingpa. Their minds were all one emanation, prophesied by Lord Buddha in the *Samādhirāja Sūtra* and the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, and in many treasure-texts of the great master from U rgyan, Padmasambhava.

Jamgön Kongtrül was born in Derge in Kham. From Shechen Paṇḍita 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal, from the all-seeing Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, and from his root lama the extraordinary Situ Padma nyin byed, as well as from more than fifty other teachers, he received the great intellectual ocean of Sūtra and Mantra teachings, which he fully heard and contemplated. In his meditation experience, he vividly received signs of imminent accomplishment. His works include [the Five Treasuries, *mdzod lnga*]: the Treasury Pervading All Objects of Knowledge, the Treasury of Tantric Teachings, the Treasury of Practical Instructions, the Treasury of Precious Treasure Texts, and the Extraordinary Treasury, which included a "Treasury of Vast Teachings." Through his continual ripening and liberating work in teaching these, the Five Great Treasury compilations, he resuscitated doctrines that were on the point of perishing of the Old and New traditions, without distinction. He accomplished great benefit to the Doctrine and to sentient beings. At age eighty-seven he passed away into the realm of peace. There exists a sizable [auto]biography of him.

This present incarnation, Kalu Rinpoche, was born into the Ratak family of Be ru, in Hor Tre she. Ratak Trulku, Padma nor bu by name, was a disciple of both Jamyang Khyentse and Kongtrül Rinpoche. To this holder of the luminescence of the secret Tantras, Rinpoche was born as a noble son in the wood-female-snake year [1905]. To his venerable father there came many signs in his dreams that Kalu Rinpoche was an incarnation of Kongtrül Rinpoche. In particular, the Fifth Dzokchen Rinpoche, Thubten Chökyi Dorje, presented many spiritual offerings, the three "supports" of enlightened body, speech, and mind, an excellent horse, and other offerings. He told Ratak Trulku there was no doubt that his son was Jamgön Kongtrül's incarnation and that he should be offered to the Dzokchen monastery. Ratak Trulku did not agree to this, but kept the presents. Rinpoche said that the horse was of great benefit to him and that he rode him everywhere.

From childhood, Rinpoche was unlike other children. Everyone found him attractive. He had devotion and renounced all worldly interests. He was very compassionate and intelligent. From his venerable father and others he learned writing and spelling, and he memorized liturgies and rituals. By the power of his perfect memory he was able to learn by heart forty pages per day.

At about age fifteen, he went to the great Kagyü seat, Palpung monastery, where he was taken into the compassionate care of the Situ Rinpoche Pema Wanchok Gyalpo, who proclaimed him to be a wisdom emanation of Jamgön Kongtrül. He was instructed in the various fields of knowledge and in the practice of Sūtra and Tantra teachings by Jamgön Kongtrül's direct disciple Kes ong Bkra shis chos 'phel and others. From the lord of meditators Nor bu don grub he received the complete ripening and liberating teachings (i.e., initiations and practical instructions) of the Karma Kagyü and Shangpa Kagyü traditions. From many masters, including Situ Rinpoche, Gyalsay Mkhjen brtse'i 'od zer, and Palpung Khyentse Rinpoche, he continuously and completely received the teachings of (Kongtrül's) *Five Great Treasuries*. After completing the three-year, three-month retreat in the Palpung retreat center, he went to Bengen monastery in Horkhok, his homeland.

Beginning at the age of twenty-five, Rinpoche spent thirteen years wandering in solitude among many uninhabited meditation spots. Enduring hardships, with great energy he completed the preliminary practices of purification and also the main practices of the production and perfection stages of meditation. The fame of his accomplishments spread in all directions. At the order of Situ Rinpoche, he was appointed vajra-master (*rdo rje slob dpon*) of the great meditation center of Palpung monastery, where for many years he continually gave ripening empowerments, liberating instructions, and scripture-transmissions, and thereby created many accomplished disciples.

Rinpoche went on pilgrimage to Ü province of central Tibet at the same time that Situ Rinpoche Pema Wanchok Gyalpo also came on pilgrimage. At Situ's order, Rinpoche taught the entire initiations and instructions of the Six Doctrines of Niguma of the Shangpa Kagyü to the great incarnate lama and Gelukpa doctrine-holder, Kar dor Rinpoche [Khardo Trulku of Sera Je, close adviser to the regent, Radreng Trulku], to Lha btsun Rinpoche [of Sera Smad], and to many Gelukpa geshe, from whom he received vast offerings made in great reverence. At the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, Kalu Rinpoche made great offerings of gold before the Śākyamuni image, and he recited numerous times the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct*.

While he was still on pilgrimage in the four main districts of Ü and Tsang (*dbus gtsang ru bzhi*), Rinpoche once stayed at the home of a rich patron in the Gyantse area. In a dream a white-skinned boy appeared before him and said with great sadness that he was Khyung po Tshul khrim mgon po, but that in this Age of Darkness he could benefit neither the Doctrine nor sentient beings. Rinpoche dreamt that in his own robes he had a *gri-gug* curved-knife and a skull-bowl. These he took out and gave to the boy, saying: "If you will always remain with these implements, you will accomplish your purpose. You need not worry." The next morning he saw a son of the family who was really identical with the boy in the dream. Rinpoche told the parents that without a doubt this boy was a holy being and that he should be treated with great purity and given ordination. The parents were greatly pleased and Rinpoche gave the child empowerments and ordination.

While at the seat of Jetsun Tāranātha, (Jonang) Dga' Idan Phüntshokling in Lhatse of Tsang, Rinpoche gave a great assembly of monks the complete empowerments, teachings, and text-transmissions for the Six Doctrines of Niguma. They gave him great offerings.

When Rinpoche was in Lhasa, (the regent) Radreng Trichen (regent of Tibet 1933–1941) and many other people seemed desirous of requesting deep spiritual teachings from him. But Situ Rinpoche told him it would be better not to stay there. On this advice, Rinpoche departed in company with the messenger sent by Situ Rinpoche and returned to Kham.

Rinpoche has performed one hundred million recitations of the mantra of Six-Armed Mahākāla. And all together, over three hundred thousand recitations of the *Prayer of the Benevolent Conduct* have been carried out, including recitations by Rinpoche himself and those sponsored by him through offerings.

Noble persons accomplish benefit to the Doctrine and to sentient beings through three cycles: the cycle of "reading," which includes learning and reflection; the cycle of meditative concentration; and the cycle of activities. A small part of the first two of Kalu Rinpoche's three cycles has been explained here. Consequently we can know that the qualities of his mind's experience and realization are inconceivably great. But being a great "hidden yogin," he has guarded the secrets of his meditation, and these secrets we have not seen or heard. Yet we know where there is smoke, there is fire, and where there are waterfowl, there is water.

In a dream Kalu Rinpoche met the Lord Buddha and his eight close disciples and dreamt that he offered them the Seven-Branch Prayer (*yan lag bdun ma*). Again in a dream he himself actually became U rgyan Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) and received musical offerings of melodious songs and prayers from the twelve protective goddesses of Tibet (*brtan ma bcu gnyis*) and other *ḍākiṇīs*.

In another dream, Kalu Rinpoche met with the first Jamgön Kongtrül, who played his bell and drum, and bestowed on him the four complete empowerments before finally dissolving into light and becoming absorbed into Rinpoche. In another dream he met Holy Tārā and heard many words of prophecy from her. On another occasion he recognized his dream and saw a dance in the heavens and heard this song:

Born in the upper part of Hor,
 Then by meditative experience
 Accomplishing the aim of Mahā-Ati,
 Finally at the place of death
 Dying at Samye, Town of Sand,
 Then again taking birth
 Between Mdo khams and Kong bu,
 Born as a beggar's son,
 Ripening and liberating many beings,
 Then leaving that life
 To be born in a lotus flower
 In the Western Pure Land,
 In Saṃsāra to be born no more.

Through the cycle of his activities, Kalu Rinpoche rebuilt the old meditation center of Jamgön Kongtrül at Palpung into a fine structure, made new with canopies and hangings of brocade, parasols and victory banners. He put much money and goods into a fund to maintain the monks there in retreat. To help Situ Rinpoche construct a Maitreya and other images for their temples, Rinpoche traveled throughout Horkhok raising funds and made great offerings of brocade, money, and many sacks of barley grain. Before his own root lama, he presented three times maṇḍala offerings of absolutely everything he owned.

While in Tibet, wherever this lama stayed he had constructed thousands

of *māṇi* stones, stūpas, votive tablets (*tsha tsha*), and large prayer wheels. He had no attachment to his own possessions.

When many Tibetans escaped to India for fear of the Chinese Communists, he established two meditation halls in Bhutan. He established five meditation centers in India. Then at Sonada he taught three successive retreats at his meditation center. He established Naroling and Niguling in France and began opening the door to Tantric practice in foreign countries of the world. He has established many Dharma centers and continues to establish more.

We should only increase our appreciation of the enlightened intentions and supreme deeds of this great bodhisattva. Whoever has the previous deeds and good fortune to have a strong appreciation for the Holy Dharma should take the precepts and three vows from this venerable precious lama, and then devote his life to meditative practice. Or next best, do the three year, three month retreat. Or next best, do a retreat of some years or months to obtain experience of Dharma. Or next best, at least take refuge and precepts and the empowerment of the Greatly Compassionate One. If one then practices the meditation of the Greatly Compassionate One even once, then one's human existence will have meaning, and one will truly have done oneself a great kindness. Therefore, please take this to heart.

May there be good fortune! May there be happiness!

*Written by the one named Dezhung Lungrik Trulku,
who has been sustained by the [speech-]nectar spoken by the
Protector Kalu Rinpoche. May all we sentient beings be blessed!*

[Note appended later, in the mid-1970s, under a photograph of Dezhung Rinpoche:] VEN. DEZHUNG RINPOCHE, a reincarnate lama of the Sakya sect, is revered among Tibetan lamas as one who truly embodies “the wisdom of Manjushri and the compassion of Chenrezig [Avalokiteśvara].” Renowned for his comprehensive learning and accomplishment in all lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, he currently resides at Bodhi House in Long Island, N.Y.

APPENDIX J

The Writings of Dezhung Rinpoche

THE FOLLOWING is a tentative list of the writings of Dezhung Rinpoche (1906–1987), compiled to aid the publication of his works. His main works are doctrinal, biographical, and historical, though some minor writings of other genres have also been located and listed below.

Titles appearing between square brackets have been newly given when no title was found at the beginning of that work. The new titles were based, as much as possible, on the colophon.

I. Works in Tibetan

A. Works Connected with Dezhung Rinpoche, His Teachers, and Their Tradition

(*rtsa ba'i bla ma rnams dang 'brel pa yod pa'i gsol 'debs zhal gdams sogs*)

1. *Rje bla ma sga ston rdo rje 'chang la gsol ba 'debs pa sga ston nyid kyis mdzad pa*. A prayer of supplication to Dezhung Rinpoche's main master, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (1864–1941), composed by Gatön himself in response to a request for such a prayer by the monks of Dezhung:

ngag gi dbang phyug 'jam dbyangs sa skya pa'i// zab gsang snyan brgyud rgya mtsho'i mdzod bzung nas// legs bshad dga' ston 'gyed la zla med pa// dpal ldan bla ma'i zhabs la gsol ba 'debs//

ces pa'ang/ sde gzhung ma'i grwa tshang spyi nas bskul ba'i ngor/ shākya'i dge slong ngag dbang legs pa rang nyid kyis bris pa'o//

2. *Rje bla ma sga ston rdo rje 'chang la gsol ba 'debs pa zhal skong gi tshigs bcad gnyis bcas*. Two supplication verses added to the prayer to Ngawang Lekpa, composed by Dezhung Rinpoche at the monastery of Traruk

Rinpoche in late 1981 at the purchase of the land for the monastery's building site in Bodhnath:

*ngag gi dbang phyug 'jam dbyangs sa skya pa'i// zab gsang snyan brgyud rgya
mtsho'i mdzod bzung nas// legs bshad dga' ston 'gyed la zla med pal// dpal
ldan bla ma'i zhabs la gsol ba 'debs//
rgyal ba kun dngos rje btsun bla ma la// rtse gcig gus pas gsol ba btab pa'i
mthus// bdag blo'i las nyon dri ma kun byang nas// gsang gsum byin rlabs
rgyud la smin par shog//
'gal rkyen kun bral srid zhi'i dpal yon rgyas// bstan 'gro'i don chen yid bzhin
'grub pa yis// zag med thugs kyi dgongs pa yongs rdzogs tel// don gnyis phun
sum tshogs pa'i bkra shis shog//
sho lo ka dang po rje bla ma'i zhal gsung la phyi ma gnyis sde sprul bhu su
ku pas gsol ba btab pa si ddhir astu// //*

3. *Rje btsun bla ma byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma'i gsol 'debs byin
rlabs myur 'jug smon lam.* Prayer for the rapid entry of Dezhung Rinpoche's blessings, based on his long-life prayer (*zhabs brtan*) by Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, with two new verses added by Tharlam Khenpo Jamyang Sherab. Written in 1987 soon after Rinpoche's passing, at the request of his business manager, Damchö lags. The text begins: *na mo gu ru mandzu gho ṣā ya/ byams mgon gnyis pa rab 'byams chos kyi rjel*. The colophon begins: *ces pa 'di ni phyag mdzod dam chos lags nas sku gdung rin po che'i mdun du smon gsol 'don rgyu 'di lta bu dgos zhes phebs pa ltar/ shri thar lam sa bzang rnam rgyal gling gi mkhan ming....* An English translation by Cyrus Stearns dated May 18, 1987, Kathmandu, exists.
4. *Sga ston ngag dbang legs pa'i gsung/ sde gzhung rin po che kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma'i zhabs brtan/.* Prayer for Dezhung Rinpoche's long life by Gatön. The text begins: *na mo gu ru mandzu gho ṣā ya/ byams mgon gnyis pa rab 'byams chos kyi rjel*. The colophon: *ces pa 'di ni shākya'i dge slong ngag dbang legs pas re smon bden tshig snying gi dkyil nas zhus pa de de bzhin du 'grub par gyur cig/.* An English translation for recitation by Seattle Dharma center members also exists.
5. *Dil mgo mkhyen brtses mdzad pa'i sde gzhung rin po che'i zhabs brtan gyi tshigs bcad gcig/.* Prayer for Dezhung Rinpoche's long life by Dilgo Khyentse. The text begins: *lhar bcas 'gro ba kun dga'i slab gsum gyis//.* No colophon.

6. *Bdud 'joms rin po che'i sras phrin las nor bus mdzad pa'i sde gzhung rin po che'i zhabs brtan gyi tshigs bcad gcigl.* Prayer for Dezhung Rinpoche's long life by Trinlay Norbu. The text begins: *'jam pa'i dbyangs dngos kun dga' rgyal mtshan gyi//*. The colophon: *ces gnam lo gsar du tshes pa'i rten 'byung dge ba'i zhabs brtan smon tshig tu rmong rdul phrin las nor bus snying nas gsol ba btab pa'o//*
7. [*Sga ston rdo rje 'chang gi zhal gdams ka bshad mal.*] Gatön's verses of instruction in the form of a *ka-bshad* poem. The text begins: *ka ca'i gsog 'jog spangs pa'i bya bral lags//*. The colophon begins: *ces pa'ang/ tshul ldan gyi btsun pa blo gros rab brtan gyis/ sems phan pa'i gdams pa dgos...*
8. [*Mkhan chen gzhan dga'i gsung/*] *Gzhon nu dkon mchog lhun grub la gdams pa.* Advice given to the youth Könchok Lhündrup (Dezhung Rinpoche) by Khenchen Shenga Rinpoche (1871–1927) in about 1920. This work was not published with the minor writings of Shenga Rinpoche. 8 pages in a small notebook. It begins: *sangs rgyas kun gyi ye shes sgyu ma'i gar//*. Colophon: *zhes pa'ang/ gzhan phan snang bas smras pa dge'o//*.
9. *'Dzi mda' ri khrod pa rnams kyi gsol ba 'debs pa bla ma rgyang 'bod.* Reverential supplication of the masters in the Dzinda Retreat composed by Nor phyug rin chen. The text begins: *bslu med dkon mchog gsum gyi ngo bo...* The colophon begins: *zhes pa 'di ni...*
10. [*"Phud mchod chen mo."*] A long offering prayer, including supplications of all his main lamas, that Dezhung Rinpoche recited every morning before his first cup of tea. 12 pages in a small notebook. It begins: *om āḥ hūm/ rin chen 'brug brgya yid 'ong ldan pa rull.* Followed by a small offering prayer by the Ngor abbot Könchok Lhündrup, *Phud mchod dgos 'dod kun 'byung.* It begins: *dgos 'dod kun 'byung ye shes ka pā lar//*.

B. Prayers of Various Types

(*zhabs brtan dang brgyud 'debs sogs smon lam skor*)

i. Long-Life Prayers (*zhabs brtan skor*)

1. *Dpal ldan bla ma'i zhabs brtan 'chi med tshe mchog grub pa'i dbyangs snyan.* Long-life prayer for Dilgo Khyentse Bkra shis dpal 'byor 'gyur med theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan composed in Seattle in the late

1970s at request of the Sakya Thegchen Choling members. The text:

*om swa still/ bkra shis dge legs yon tan 'bum gyi gter// rab 'byams rtsa gsum
'chi med tshe yi lha'i// mkhyen brtse nus pa'i byin rlabs rmad byung bas//
skye 'chi'i 'jigs bral dpal gyis 'byor gyur cig//
'gyur med kun bzang rdo rje 'chang dbang gil// smin grol lam ston theg
mchog bdud rtsi'i char// mtha' klas bstan 'gror sman pa'i phrin las bcas//
sku tshe'i rgyal mtshan mi nub brtan gyur cig//
rig 'dzin bla ma'i zhabs pad bskal brgyar brtan// dad ldan skal bzang slob
ma'i 'du tshogs rgyas// bshad sgrub las kyi 'khor lo gsum ldan gyis// ris med
rgyal bstan phyogs brgyar 'phel rgyas mdzod//
ces pa'ang gangs can rdo rje 'dzin pa'i gtsug rgyan sa skya phun pho bdag chen
rin po che'i thugs bskyed dang phrin las kyi snang bas nub phyogs a ri'i
grong khyer du dpal sa skya'i chos tshogs theg chen chos gling nas skyabs mgon
mchog gi bka' dang/ dad slob kun nas ched bskul mdzad pa bzhin rang nyid
kyis bris pa bstan 'gro'i dpal yon 'phel rgyas brtan pa'i rgyur gyur cig//*

2. [Rje bla ma ka lu rin po che'i zhabs brtan.] Long-life prayer for the venerable Kalu Rinpoche. Composed in 1975 after he had received the Shangpa teachings from Kalu Rinpoche in Vancouver. The text:

*na mo gu rul rang 'byung ye shes chen po'i gnas lugs gzigs// 'gro ba kun la
brtse chen thugs rje ldan// phan bde'i phrin las 'dzam gling yongs la khyab//
rje btsun bla ma bskal brgyar zhabs brtan gsol// spyi lo 1975 lor skyabs rje ka
lu rin po che'i zhabs brtan gsol 'debs 'dis/ sa skya sde gzhung mkhan po nas
smon pa'o//.*

3. Zhabs brtan smon tshig 'chi med dpal ster zhes bya ba bzhugs sol/. Long-life prayer for Jetsun Chime (Sakya Luding) in August 1975 at the request of Jeff Watt (Dge tshul Ngag dbang rab rgyas).

*zhabs brtan smon tshig 'chi med dpal ster zhes bya ba bzhugs sol/ om swa
still/ 'chi med tshe lha rgya mtsho'i byin brlabs kyis// 'od gsal lha rigs bde
chen dpal ster ball rig 'dzin sngags kyi 'phrin las rab 'byams lal/ dbang
'byor dā kī'i gto mo 'tsho bzhes gsol//
'chi med grub pa yongs kyi 'khor lo bsgyur// bstan pa'i nyi ma rje btsun sa
skya pa'i// rigs dang chos las 'khrungs pa'i bstan 'gro'i mgon// don gnyis
mdzad drin rtag tu rgyas par shog//*

'chi med thar pa'i lam la rab zhugs nas// rang rgyud smin cing sgrol ba'i skal bzang thob// chos nyid bden pa'i rang zhal mngon sum rtogs// phan bde'i bkra shis mi nub rtag brtan shog// ces pa'ang/ dge tshul ngag dbang rab rgyas kyis bskul ba'i ngor/ sde gzhung lung rigs sprul ming pa/ kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi mas bris pa dge legs su gyur cig//

4. [Tre hor gdong thog sprul sku ngag dbang theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi zhabs brtan.] Long-life prayer for Dhongthog Trulku Ngag dbang theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, b. 1934). Composed (in the 1940s when in Kham?) at the urgent request of the Dhongthog monk Phur bu tshe ring. The text:

ngag dbang 'jam mgon dgyes pa'i thugs kyis sras// theg mchog snyan brgyud bstan pa'i mdzod bzung nas// chos kyis rgyal mtshan 'dzin la zla med pa// mchog gi sprul sku bskal brgyar 'tsho gzhes gsol// ces gdong grwa phur bu tshe ring nas nan bskul ltar/ sga thag lung dgon gyi sde gzhung lung rigs sprul ming pas bris pa dgel

5. [Mi nyag ri khud dgon pa'i] dbon sprul rin po che 'jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi zhabs brtan. Long-life prayer for Öntül Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltzen of Minyak Rikhö monastery composed in the mid-1940s in Minyak. The text:

bkra shis mtshan bzang yid la dran tsam gyis// 'chi bdag bdud kyis g.yul las rnam rgyal zhing// phul byung ring 'tsho'i dga' ston stsol mdzad pa'i// 'chi med lha mchog gsum gyis shis par stsol//.

'jam pa'i dbyangs dngos rje btsun sa skya pa'i// mkhas kun dga' ba'i zab rgyas chos kyis tshul// mdo sngags bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan bsgreng slad dull/ bskal brgyar zhabs brtan 'phrin las rgyas gyur cig// rnam dag tshul khrims rgyan gyis spras pa'i skul/ legs bshad chos kyis sgra dbyangs sgrog pa'i gsung// rim gnyis ting 'dzin dpal gyis mdzes pa'i thugs// mi bshig rdo rje'i ngo bor 'tsho gzhes gsol// thos bsam sgom pa'i yon tan mthar phyin tel/ mkhyen brtse nus pa'i dpal la dbang 'byor zhing// mkhas tshul gsum gyis 'phrin las mtha' yas pas// bstan 'gro rgya mtsho'i phan bde rgyas gyur cig// rtsa brgyud dpal ldan bla ma'i thugs rje dang// chos srung rab 'byams rgyal ba'i byin rlabs dang// bstan srung mthu rtsal ldan pa'i nus mthu yis// ji ltar smon pa'i don kun 'grub gyur cig//

ces sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che kun dga'i mtshan can gyis mdzad pa'o//

ii. Dedicatory Prayers from Colophons (*par ma'i smon byang*)

1. [*Kye rdor lam dus bsdu pa'i par byang smon lam.*] Printing colophon to the *Kye rdor lam dus bsdu pa* by Gatön Ngawang Lekpa. Xylograph Edition, Tharlam monastery. This brief work was written by Dezhung Rinpoche to explain the origin of the Tharlam block-printed edition of this work. He wrote it in about 1935, the time Gatön gave the *Lam 'bras slob bshad* to the Thartse shabdrung, and Dezhung Rinpoche acted as meditation instructor. The text:

gdod nas spros bral stong chen chos dbyings dang// rnam dag bde chen ye shes zung 'jug las// srid zhi'i rnam 'gyur mtha' klas spro ba'i bdag// bla ma dges mdzad rdo rjes ring du skyong//

gang gi mngon rtogs lus dkyil lam dbang bcas// blo chung dang po'i lam can 'jug bde 'di// brtse chen snying po'i snyan brgyud bstan pa'i bdag// rje btsun rdo rje 'chang de'i mthu las byung//

'di nyid bstan 'gro'i dpal du yun gnas phyir// e waṃ thar rtse'i 'jam mgon zhabs drung rjes// dbur mdzad slob bshad 'dus sde'i thugs bskyed las// chos sbyin par gyi 'phrul 'khor gsar du skrun//

dge des mtshungs med bla ma'i zhabs pad brtan// bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho'i gos can kun khyab pas// tshad ma bzhi ldan snyan brgyud gdams pa'i sroll// mi nub phyogs dus kun tu rgyas gyur cig//

tshul 'dir rgyu sbyor 'brel thog kyis gtsos pa'i// 'gro kun gsang chen lam bzang 'dir zhugs nas// rnam dag dbang bzhi'i nyams len mthar phyin tell zung 'jug sku bzhi'i rgyal srid thob par shog//

ces pa'i par smon tshig 'di'ang sde gzhung lung rigs sprul ming pas gus pa'i yid kyis smon pa dang chabs gcig rje bla ma'i gdan sa dga' ldan sa bzang gling du bzhugs su gsol ba bcas dge zhing bkra shis par gyur cig//

2. [*Mi nyag bka' bzhi pa rigs pa'i seng ge'i rnam thar gyi par byang smon lam.*] Printing colophon to the xylograph edition of the biography of Minyak Kapshipa Rikpay Sengge. Xylograph Edition, Minyak (Bka' bzhi dgon pa?). Most probably he wrote this while in Minyak in the 1940s. (This was reprinted ca. 1980 by the Sakya Center, Rajpur.) Incipit (fol. 49a, p. 97.6): *om swa stil// dri med bka' dang dgongs 'grel gangs ri'i spor// rmad byung blo gros.*

Just before this appear four verses he wrote to bring up to date the prayers of supplication to the abbots of the monastery *Bsam 'grub nor bu'i* gling entitled *Bsam 'grub nor bu'i gling gi mkhan brgyud gsol 'debs dad pa'i shing rta*, fols. 48b–49a (p. 96f.). The colophon he wrote (49a.4): *zhes bsam 'grub nor bu'i gling gi mkhan brgyud gsol 'debs dam pa gong ma'i gsungs mjug cung ma tshang ba'i kha skong sho lo ka bzhi bshes gnyen blo bzang rab 'byor gyi gsung bzhin/ sga thar lam sprul ming kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi mas gsol ba btab pa dgell*.

iii. Addenda to Lineage Prayers

(*gsol 'debs dang brgyud 'debs kha skong skor*)

1. *Thugs rje chen po 'gro don mkha' khyab ma'i brgyud 'debs byin brlabs mchog rtsol*. Lineage prayer for the '*Gro don mkha' khyab ma* Avalokiteśvara practice in Thangtong Gyalpo's tradition. The text begins: *rgyal kun thugs rje gcig bsdu spyan ras gzigs/*. No separate colophon (see the following work). This lineage prayer has been used in the Seattle Sakya Thegchen Choling center and in Dhongthog Rinpoche's center (Seattle), and both were published in the centers' books for regular recitation.
2. *Blo chos su skul ba'i tshigs bcad bcu gnyis*. Twelve verses urging the mind toward religion. The text begins: *'khor ba'i 'khrul snang sdug bsngal kunll*. The colophon [added by Dhongthog Rinpoche] begins: *ces thugs rje chen po 'gro don mkha' khyab ma'i sgom bzlas kyi brgyud 'debs byin brlabs mchog rtsol zhes bya ba dang/ blo chos la bskul ba'i tshigs su bcad pa bcas sde gzhung mchog sprul kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi mas mdzad pa'oll*. These verses have been recited in the Seattle Sakya Thegchen Choling center and in Dhongthog Rinpoche's center in connection with the '*Gro don mkha' khyab ma* Avalokiteśvara practice in Thangtong Gyalpo's tradition. They were also published in the centers' books for regular recitation.
3. *Spyan ras gzigs dmar khrid tshem bu lugs kyi brgyud 'debs kha skong*. Completing verses to the *Spyan ras gzigs* instructions in the tradition of Tshembupa. The text:
spyan ras gzigs dmar khrid tshem bu lugs kyi brgyud 'debs kha skong nil mkhas shing grub brnyes ye shes dpal 'byor dangll grub pa'i dbang phyug blo gsal bstan skyong zhabsll 'jam pa'i dbyangs dngos mkhyen brtse'i dbang po lall/ gsol ba...ll zab gsang snyan brgyud rgya mtsho'i mnga' bdag chell/ rdo

rje 'chang dngos ngag dbang legs pa sogs// skyabs gnas kun 'dus rtsa brgyud bla ma lall/ gsol ba...//

4. *Mdo khamshar phyogs brgyud 'debs kha skong*. Completing verses to the *Spyan ras gzigs Mdo khamshar phyogs ma* meditation by Kōnchok Lhündrup. The text:

mdo khamshar phyogs ma'i brgyud 'debs kha skong nil/ ngag dbang legs grub 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang// blo gter dbang po kun dga' 'jam dbyangs zhabs// bsam gtan blo gros bstan pa'i dbang phyug mtshan// chos kyi nyi ma rnams la gsol ba 'debs// ngag gi dbang phyug legs pa rdo rje 'chang// 'jam dbyangs bla ma chos kyi blo gros zhabs// rmad byung mkhyen brtse nus pa'i dpal mnga' ball gzhan phan snying po'i zhabs la gsol ba 'debs//

5. *Tshar chen blo gsal rgya mtsho'i rnal 'byor ma'i brgyud 'debs kha skong*. Completing verses to Tsharchen Losal Gyatso's *Rnal 'byor ma'i brgyud 'debs*. The text:

Nā ro mkha spyod brgyud 'debs kha skong nil/ snyan brgyud gdams pa'i gter mdzod rmor chen rjel// snyan brgyud mnga' bdag kun dga' legs 'byung zhabs// snyan brgyud spel mkhas kun dga' blo gros lall/ gsol ba 'debs so lhan skyes ye shes rtsoll// sa gsum skye rgu'i gnyen gcig thar rtse rjel// sa bstan nyin mor byed pa'i nam mkha' legs// sa bcu'i dbang phyug bstan pa'i nyi ma lall/ gsol ba ... // grub pa'i sar bzhugs ngag dbang rin chen dang// grub pa mchog brnyes kun dga' bstan 'dzin zhabs// grub gnyis dpal ster 'jam dpal bzang po lall/ gsol ba ... // 'jam dpal dbyangs dngos mkhyen brtse'i dbang po dang// 'jam dpal grub pa ngag dbang legs pa'i zhabs// 'jam dbyangs rnam 'phrul chos kyi blo gros lall/ gsol ba ... // rigs dang dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i khyab bdag mchog// dran pas srid zhi'i gdung ba sel mdzad pal// bka' drin mnyam med rtsa ba'i bla ma lall/ gsol ba ... //

6. *Dpal rdo rje nag po chen po'i bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs kha skong*. Completion to Tsharchen's *Brag rdzong ma mgon po'i brgyud 'debs*. The text: *Dpal rdo rje nag po chen po'i bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs kha skong nil kun dga' bkra shis kun dga' bsam gtan dang// rin chen chos skyong ngag dbang bsam gtan mtshan// grub pa'i dbang phyug 'jam dpal bstan 'dzin lall/ snying nas ... // zab gsang snyan brgyud rgya mtsho' 'i 'byung gnas chell/ mkhas grub dbang po ngag dbang legs pa'i zhabs// 'jam dpal dbyangs dngos chos kyi blo gros lall/ snying nas ... // grub pa mchog brnyes kun dga' nyi ma dang// 'dren mchog bla ma gsum gyis rjes su bzung// smin grol rgyun 'dzin*

rtsa ba'i bla ma la// snying nas ... // rang nyid kyis thob pa'i brgyud pa ltar sde gzlung lung rigs sprul ming pas gsol ba btab pa'o//

C. Biographies (*rnam thar skor*)

- i. Biographies of His Own Gurus (*rtsa ba'i bla ma'i rnam thar skor*)
 1. *Rje btsun bla ma rdo rje 'chang 'jam mgon ngag dbang legs pa rin po che'i rnam thar ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba'i zhal skong rin chen rgyan mdzes*. New Delhi: T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, 1990 (published in *po-ti* format, 55 folios (109 pages) and a 1-folio preface by the scribe). The biography of Dezhung Rinpoche's teacher Gatön Ngawang Lekpa (1864–1941), to supplement the biography written by Dezhung Anjam, *Rje bla ma rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba* (New Delhi: Gonpo Dorje, 1981).
 The work begins: *rab 'byams rgyal ba'i ye shes gcig bsdu 'jam dbyangs ngur smrig gar gyis rol//...* Colophon begins (p. 107, fol. 54a): *byang chub bar gyi skyabs gnas bslu med rje bla ma bka' drin sum ldan sga ston rdo rje 'chang...*
 2. *Rje btsun bla ma 'jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan gyi rnam thar mdor bsdu bskal bzang rna rgyan*. The biography of his teacher Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltsen (1870–1940), more commonly known as Jamgyal Rinpoche. New Delhi: T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, 1983 (published in *po-ti* format, 61 pages). It begins: *'jam dbyangs rnam 'phrul rje btsun sa skya pa'i//*. Colophon begins: *ces pa'ang rgya chen chos kyi spyen ldan tre hor gdong thog sprul sku...ngag dbang theg mchog bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi zhal snga nas/ skyes bu dam pa'i rnam thar nub la phongs pas 'di 'dra zhib 'bri dgos gsung bskul gnang ba dang/ ches snga mo'i dus nas sku dbon dpal e wam khang gsar mkhan po ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho'i zhal snga nas kyang gnang...*
 3. *Shri sa skya pa sngags 'chang bla ma khri chen rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug drag shul yon tan rgya mtsho bkra shis grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa mdor bsdu bkra shis skye ba lnga pa'i sgra dbyangs*. Rajpur: T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, 1980 (published in *po-ti* format, 203 pages). Biography of the Sakya Phüntsook Palace Dagchen Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk (1900–1950). The work

begins: *na mo gu ru manydzu gho śā ya! dag pa gnyis ldan zag med spros bral chos kyi skull*.

Dezhung Rinpoche completed the first version of this work in Seattle in fall 1974 (in the eighth lunar month). He then revised the work substantially in spring and summer 1976, finishing it on the twenty-fifth day of the fifth lunar month at Bodhi House, New York, adding in this version much information submitted by the Sakya Khenpo Sangyay Tendzin and other close disciples of Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk who were then still living in India. L. Lhalungpa gave editorial assistance.

Dezhung Rinpoche then sent the cursive (*dbu med*) manuscript to India, where it was edited by T. G. Dhongthong Rinpoche in New Delhi, who was then about to depart for America. Since Dhongthog Rinpoche could not oversee the complete publishing process, Sherab Gyaltsan saw the project through to completion. Some misspellings were introduced into the text when the cursive original was copied by the scribe.

4. *Sde gzhung mchog sprul a 'jam rin po che'i rnam thar mdor bsdus*. A brief biography of Dezhung Trulku Anjam (1885–1952) Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen. Manuscript, text begins: *mkhas btsun grub pa'i yon tan mtshungs dang bral ba!*

ii. Gurus of the Transmission Lineages (*brgyud pa'i bla ma'i skor*)

a. Histories Relating to the Sakya Founders

1. [*Rje btsun sa skya pa chen po 'khon gyi gdung ji ltar bzung ba'i gtam*.] History of the conception of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo. *dbu-can* MS, 7 pages. The text begins: *om bde legs su gyur cig! rmad byung brgyud pa kun gyi bka' babs shing!*. No colophon. This was no doubt written for E. Gene Smith in connection with his unpublished research paper, "The History of the 'Khon to the Birth of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po according to the *Rgya bod yig tshang*," a paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on April 25, 1961.

b. Ten Hagiographies of Lineage-Lamas from Gapa
(*Sga pa'i brgyud pa'i bla ma bcu'i rnam par thar pa*)

The following are ten hagiographies of lamas important for the transmission of Sakyapa lineages in Gapa (mostly masters who were natives of that district). Some of these biographies had been previously written by Dezhung Rinpoche and presented to Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö at Dzongsar in 1954 for printing. But they are presumed to have been lost during the destruction of the Chinese Communist takeover and Cultural Revolution. In Seattle in late 1985, he passed them on a second time by dictation to Lama Kalsang Gyaltsen. All are cursive script manuscripts.

1. [*Sgrub brtson rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug kun dga' nyi ma'i rnam thar.*] The Biography of Kunga Nyima or Nyiga Rinpoche (1846–1925), 19 pages. Begins: *sgrub brtson rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug kun dga' nyi ma'am/ yongs grags su nyi dga' rin po che zhes bya ba'i skyes chen dam pa del.*
2. [*Grub thob byams pa bstan 'dzin gyi rnam thar.*] The Biography of the Trindu adept Champa Tendzin, 19 pages. Begins: *grub thob byams pa bstan 'dzin nil sga yul khri 'du pad lung zhes/ ra shog grong dul grong smad tshang zhes pa la/ rab byung 14 pa'i nang la 'khrungs pa/.*
3. [*Khyab bdag ngag dbang bsam gtan gyi rnam thar.*] The Biography of Khyabdak Ngawang Samten, 27 pages. Begins: *khyab bdag ngag dbang bsam gtan nil rab byung 12 pa'i 'jug tsam nas sga khog skye dgu mdo dang thag nyel.*
4. [*Tshe 'tshams pa byams pa dar rgyas kyi rnam thar shin tu bsdu pa.*] The Biography of Byams pa dar rgyas, 1 page. Life of a disciple of Kun dga' dpal 'byor and of Pönlop Loter Wangpo (1847–1914), mentioned in several passages of the latter's biography. Two versions of this sketch are found, one incorporating spelling corrections. Version 1 begins: *shel dkar [sic] tshang la 'khrungs pa'i tshe mtshams byams pa dar rgyas zhu ba de nil.* Version 2 [the earlier, uncorrected version] begins: *shel dkar tsha tsha tshang la 'khrungs pa'i tshe bsam [sic] byams pa dar rgyas zhu ba de nil.*
5. [*'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin phrin las kyi rnam thar.*] The Biography of 'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin phrin las. The subject, 'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin phrin las, was ordained at Ngor under Palden Chökyi Gyaltsen

- (1784?–1854?) whose abbatial tenure was ca. 1823–1829. Cursive (*dbu med*) MS, 11 pages. Begins: *om bde legs su gyur cig// sa skya'i bstan 'dzin chen po 'jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po'i zhal nga nas/ yi dam rdo rje btsun mo....*
6. [*Kun spangs sems dpa' chen po ngag dbang bshad sgrub rgya mtsho'i rnam thar.*] The Biography of Ngawang Shedrup Gyatso. The subject, Ngawang Shedrup Gyatso, was ordained at Ngor under Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin, whose abbatial tenure was 1842–1849. 14 pages. Begins: *kun spangs sems dpa' chen po ngag dbang bshad sgrub rgya mtsho nil rab byung 14 pa'i....*
 7. [*Mthu stobs dbang phyug nyi ma chos 'phel gyi rnam thar bsdu pa.*] The Biography of Nyi ma chos 'phel. Nyi ma chos 'phel was perhaps born in about 1810–1815? and was ordained at Ngor by Byams pa dpal ldan bzang po ca. 1830–1835. 6 pages. Begins: *mthu stobs dbang phyug nyi ma chos 'phel nil rab byung bcu bzhi pa'i nang....*
 8. [*Sga skye rgu dgon pa'i grub pa'i dbang phyug kun dga' dpal 'byor gyi rnam thar.*] The Biography of Kun dga' dpal 'byor of Ga Jyeku monastery. 8 pages. The text begins: *sga skye rgu dgon pa'i grub pa'i dbang phyug kun dga' dpal 'byor nil....*
 9. [*Khri 'du skal bzang dgon gyi snang rtse ri khrod pa kun dga' chos kyi dbang po'i rnam thar bsdu pa.*] The Biography of Lhang rtse Ri khrod pa or Ri 'go Rdo rje 'chang Kun dga' chos kyi dbang po of Trindu Kalzang dgon. 6 pages. Begins: *'khri 'du skal bzang dgon gyi snang rtse ri khrod pa kun dga' chos kyi dbang po'am/ yongs grags bla ma ri 'go rdo rje 'chang zhes bya ba de nil.*
 10. [*Rje bla ma sga ston ngag dbang legs pa'i gsung/ kun dga' chos lha'i rnam thar.*] The Biography of Kun dga' chos lha. (1) Previous life: Chos rgyal rab brtan (p. 2ff.); (2) Present life: Kun dga' chos lha. 23 pages. This is a biography originally written by Gatön and retold from memory by Dezhung Rinpoche. Begins: *kun khyab zab gsal dbyings nas ma g.yos bzhin// 'gro la phan bde'i dga ston spel slad dull.* Colophon: *ces pa 'di ni rje bla ma 'di la dad gus mchog dang ldan pa dge slong kun dga' rab brtan gyis yang yang bskul ba'i ngor/ rje bla ma nyid kyi zhal gyi bdud rtsi slong ba shākya'i dge slong ngag dbang legs*

*pas/ slob dpon rin po che bsod nams rtse mo 'ja' lus zang thal du gshegs
pa'i nyin/ nges gsang chos kyi dga' tshal thub bstan bshad sgrub gling du
grub pa bgyis pa'ol/.*

iii. Biographies of Recent Sakyapa Masters

(phyis byon sa skya pa'i rnam thar lo rgyus skor)

The following three biographies are ostensibly autobiographies, each written by their main subjects soon after their arrival in Seattle in 1960. But Dezhung Rinpoche, as the only highly literate person in the group, assisted each of them. He was, to use the traditional term, the “scribe” (*yig ge pa*), which in this case included the role of assistant and ghost writer, especially of the opening and concluding verses.

1. *Shrī phun tshogs pho brang pa'i 'khon rigs 'jigs bral ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams kyi byung ba mdor tsam brjod pa sna tshogs rin po che'i phreng ba.* Biography of Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche of the Phüntsoke palace (b. 1929) written in Seattle in late 1960. The text begins: *om swa stil/ spangs rtogs yon tan rgyal kun dang mnyam yang/*. This brief biography of his niece's husband includes at the end discussions of a number of related terms and subjects. The present text is based on a 29-page *dbu-can* manuscript written in Dezhung Rinpoche's hand.
2. *Shrī sa skya pa 'khon rigs dge sbyong theg chen ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis phrin las kyi byung ba brjod pa rnam gsal nor bu'i me long.* Biography of Trinlay Rinpoche of the Phüntsoke palace (b. 1934) written in Seattle in late 1960. The text begins: *om swa stil/ rab mdzes sku ni mtshan dpe'i rgyan gyis spras/*. The present text is based on a 11-page *dbu-can* manuscript written in Dezhung Rinpoche's hand.
3. *[Sa skya'i bdag mo 'jam dbyangs padma dpal gyi bu khrid kyi byung ba brjod pa mtshan dpe'i mdzes sku ma.]* Biography of 'Jam dbyangs padma dpal gyi bu khrid (b. 1934), wife of Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche of the Phüntsoke palace. The text begins: *om swa stil/ mtshan dpe'i mdzes sku yid la dran tsam gyis/ dus min 'chi ba'i 'jigs las dbugs dbyung nas/ 'chi med tshe yi dngos grub stsol mdzad pal/ lha mchog myur ma dpal mos rtag tu skyongs/*. This brief biography of Dezhung Rinpoche's niece was written in Seattle in late 1960. The available text is based on an [incomplete?] 6-page

dbu-can manuscript written in the subject's own hand. The opening verse displays the literary skills of her maternal uncle, who no doubt assisted her elsewhere, too. The final verse was written in Dezhung Rinpoche's own hand: *spangs rtogs yon tan mthar phyin bslu med skyabs// dkon mchog gsum zhes srid na lhan [?] par grags// gang gi byin brlabs nus pa'i bden pa yis// rang gzhan don gnyis lhun grub bkra shis shog// dge'ol dge'ol dge'ol*.

E. Buddhist Doctrinal and Liturgical Writings

(*nang pa'i lta sgom dang cho ga phyag len skor*)

1. *Nges don phyag rdzogs dbu gsum gyi lta sgom gyi gnad mdor bsduś 'khrul bral legs bshad mkhas pa'i zhal lung*. A comparative exposition of the theory and meditative practice of three main traditions within Tibetan Buddhism. Written in Seattle in 1967 at the request of Edward Conze. An *dbu-can* MS in the author's own hand, 52 pages. It begins: *zla med 'gro ba'i 'dren pa shākya'i tog//*.

An English translation of the Nyingma section by T. V. Wylie was presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington on October 4, 1968; at the same time Wylie announced forthcoming translations of other sections (which evidently were never completed). In his first footnote Wylie states that the work was composed by Dezhung Trulku in 1967.

2. *Zhi lhag gi ting 'dzin sgom tshul thar lam sgron me*. A manual for calming and insight meditation practice. Xerographic copy of 34-page *dbu-can* original in author's own hand. It was translated into English in the 1980s by Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima), as cited in the bibliography of Deshung Rinpoche (1995), p. 517: "'A Light for the Path to Liberation: A Way to Cultivate a Profound Absorption of Tranquil Abiding and Penetrative Insight,' translated by Richard Barron, unpublished ms., 1985." A French translation is said to have been published. This work was written ca. 1974 or 1975 in reply to the requests of Lama Tshewang Gyurme and a number of his Canadian students from Lama Kalu Rinpoche's Vancouver center. Begins: *bla ma dang 'jam pa'i dbyangs la phyag 'tshal lol/ de la gang zag las dang skal ba ldan pa/ theg pa bla na med pa'i lam la zhugs pa rnam kyis//*. Colophon: *zhi lhag gi ting 'dzin sgom tshul thar lam sgron me zhes bya ba 'di nil bka' brgyud kun khyab chos gling gi chos grogs rnam kyi nyams len la phan phyir/ mkhas grub gong ma*

rnams kyi gsung zin gces btus su sde gzhung lung rigs sprul ming pa kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi mar 'bod pa'i 'du gsum pas bris pa'i dge bas 'gro kun rnam mkhyen ye shes 'thob par gyur cig// ll.

3. *Bstan pa'i bdag po dpal sa skya pa'i phyag bzhes ltar sngon 'gro'i bsags sbyong gi nyams len ngag 'don rgyun khyer bya tshul tshogs gnyis lam bzang.* A manual for the introductory practices (*sngon 'gro*) according to the Sakyapa tradition. This was written ca. 1976 (?) at the request of Sakya Thegchen Choling members in Seattle who wanted to practice the “foundation” practices in the Sakya tradition. Photocopy of the original 16-page *dbu-can* manuscript in author's own hand. It begins: *om swa sti/ spang rtogs yon tan rgyal kun dang mnyam yang//*. Colophon begins: *de ltar rje btsun sa skya pa'i phyag bzhes ltar/*.

The work was slightly expanded and translated into English by H.H. Sakya Trizin Rinpoche and Ngawang Samten Chopel at Puruwala in March 1979. It was calligraphed by Ven. Thubten Chodar and published in a bilingual version, Singapore: Singapore Buddha Sasana Society (Sakya Tenphel Ling Temple), 1979. The Sakya Monastery in Seattle has brought out a modified xerographic reprint with a different final lineage on pp. 99–102.

4. *Bstan pa'i chos srung rnams kyi gtor ma dang skong ba mdor bsdu phrin las myur 'grub.* A manual for Mahākāla ritual practice (*Mgon po'i bskang gso*), being mainly a compilation of brief works by early great Sakyapa masters. It was first published (with an English translation by Cyrus Stearns) from the Sakya Thegchen Choling center, Seattle, in 1981. It was reprinted with some revisions in *The Swift Accomplishment of Action: An Abbreviated Torma and Fulfillment Ritual for the Reliable Dharmapalas* (Seattle: Sakya Monastery, 1991), pp. 15–48. The text begins (p. 15): *chos skyong srung ma rnams la mchod gtor 'bul bar 'dod pas/*. The colophon begins (p. 48): *ces pa 'di'ang bstan 'gro'i dpal mgon mtshungs med/ sa skya...*
5. *Blo sbyong don bdun ma'i bka' chos skabs kyi dka' ba'i gnad 'ga' zhiḡ zin bris su bkod pa.* Explanations of the Mind-Training Teachings of Chekawa given by Dezhung Rinpoche in Seattle. Notes by Dhongthog Rinpoche dated November 28–30, 1980. It begins: *blo sbyong don bdun ma'i bka' chos skabs/ (rgyal sras thogs med kyi 'grel pa'i steng nas).*
6. *Nying thig ya bzhi'i rnam bshad.* An explanation of the *Nying thig ya*

bzhi. This was written in Seattle in the early 1960s in reply to a question from Gene Smith. In order to clarify doubtful points, he first wrote to Dilgo Khyentse, who also later checked this and added a few supplementary notes. It begins: *bla ma la phyag 'tshal lol snying thig ya bzhi zhes bya ba/...*

7. (A Work of Doubtful Authorship, *the tshom can*)

Bzhag brag gi bsang mchod. This ritual for offering juniper incense to a *gzhi bdag* deity in Minyak is said by Minyak Rikhü Trulku to be by Dezhung Lungrik Trulku Kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma. The name of the author as it appears in the colophon is that of Dezhung Anjam, though the colophon is a later addition. The work was based on a similar work by the nineteenth-century Ngor abbot (and Minyakpa) Yongdzin paṇḍita Palden Chökyi Gyaltzen. It begins: *bla ma dang lhag pa'i lha la phyag 'tshal lol/ yul lha'i bsang mchod bya bar 'dod nal bsang rdzas mchod pa....* The colophon: *zhes pa 'di ni 'go zhi kha'o tshang nas sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la bzhag brag bsang yig gsung rogs zhus nas khong gis ngor yongs 'dzin dpal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan nas bzhag brag bsang mchod ltar gzhir bzhag bris te mdzad pa'o//.*

8. *Mā ṇi'i rnam bshad shin tu bsdu pa*. Explanation of the six syllables of the *Om maṇi padme hūṃ* mantra of Avalokiteśvara, written in Seattle (in the 1960s?) on six note cards. Begins: *om sangs rgyas la skyabs su 'grol smon pa byang chub kyi sems bskyed/...*

F. Minor Writings (*gsung thor bu*)

i. Incomplete Autobiographical Writings (*rang rnam zin bris skor*)

1. [*Sde gzhung mchog sprul sku sku phreng dang po dang gnyis pa'i lo rgyus mdzad 'phror lus pa.*] The beginning of a history of the Dezhung trulkus. This incomplete work was found among Dezhung Rinpoche's papers. It begins: *bla ma dang gnyis su med pa'i bcom ldan 'das 'jam dpal ye shes sems dpa' la phyag tshal lol/ thar lam sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che de nyid kyi sku phreng dang po nil.*

2. [*Sde gzhung rin po che rang nyid sprul skur ngos 'dzin gnang tshul skor.*] History of Dezhung Rinpoche's recognition as the Dezhung Lungrik

Trulku. Written in Seattle for Gene Smith in the early 1960s. This work survives as a typed romanized text, 3 pages. The text begins: *[sku phreng dang po] (grub dbang byang chub nyi ma) de'i sprul sku'am yang srid snyan grags lung rigs nyi ma de'i sprul sku kho bo kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma yin par grags sol.*

3. *[Rang rnam shin tu bsdus pa] Don gnyis lhun grub.* A very brief autobiographical sketch entitled “The Spontaneous Realization of the Two Aims.” Composed in Seattle in 1979 for Ngag dbang skal ldan. It begins: *om sva still/ bdag sde gzhung sprul sku'i ming can/ spyi lo 1906....*
4. *Rang rnam mdor bsdus pa mdzad 'phror lus pa sngon las rnam dkar ma.* A brief, incomplete autobiographical sketch. 3-page *khyug*-script manuscript edited by Dhongthog Rinpoche. The narrative goes up to his early studies under Gatön before leaving for Derge. The text begins: *phran gyi lo rgyus mdor tsam// sngon las rnam dkar gyi mthus bka' drin mnyam med sga ston rdo rje 'chang....* This was evidently part of a letter he wrote in approximately 1970, a little more than a year after he could no longer go to the University of Washington following his unsuccessful knee operation. It was to someone who had been sending him books. The original letter draft begins: *bkra shis/ don 'grub/ dge legs/ phun tshum tshogs/ nyid kyis nga phyi phran la....*
5. *[Rje nyid kyī rang rnam mdzad 'phror lus pa]* [= “Autobiographical sketch no. 1”]. An undated, incomplete autobiography, which nevertheless gives the most complete account of his life since it covers his studies up to the year 1940 and his travels up to 1942. The original was written on both sides of a single sheet of paper and was number 1 (circled) in his surviving papers. Evidently it was written in Seattle in the early 1960s, but never completed or submitted. The text begins: *bdag sde gzhung lung rigs sprul ming pa kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma ni/ kham sga skye dgu mdo nas byang phyogs....*
6. *[Mi nyag slob mchog lung rigs dbang phyug gi ljags rtsom] [Khams mi nyag tu byon pa'i rnam thar zhal skong.]* An account of Dezhung Rinpoche's activities in Minyak in the 1940s written in 1995 by one of his younger disciples at the time, the Rikhü monk Minyak Lungrik Wangchuk. Manuscript, 13 pages, written on Minyak Rikhü monastery stationery. The text begins: *rigs brgya'i khyab bdag kun dga'i bstan pa'i srol//.* The

colophon: *ces bod rab rgyan shing mo phag gi gro bzhin zla ba'i dbang phyogs kyi rdzogs pa gnyis pa mar ngo'i tshes bcu thog mar 'char ba'i dus bzang por rdzogs par bris/ zhes slob dman lung rig[s] dbang phyug gis soll.*

7. [*Rang rnam mdor bsdus pa mdzad 'phror lus pa bkra shis bde legs ma.*] [= "Autobiographical sketch no. 2."] A brief, incomplete autobiography, which takes the narrative as far as his assisting as a young monk his master Gatön on the murals of the rebuilt Thaklung temple in the early 1920s. The original was written on one side of one page (number 55 in his surviving papers). The text begins: *bkra shis bde legs/ dge'ol nga rang tshe sngon rnam dkar gyi las 'phros/ sga ston rdo rje 'chang gi gdan sa thag lung dgon...*
8. *Sde gzhung sprul ming pa'i byung ba brjod pa dkar po tshes kyi zla ris (zla ba tshes pa'i ri mo) zhes bya ba* [= "Autobiographical sketch no. 3"]. An unfinished autobiography written on the front and back of a single sheet, with the above title on a slip of paper attached to the top of the first page (a later addition dated 1962). The work was written in Seattle in the early 1960s, but evidently never completed or submitted to his American hosts. The text on the attached sheet begins: *om swa sti/ bslu med skyabs gnas dkon mchog rnam pa gsum// 'jig rten dbang phyug rje btsun sgrol ma'i zhabs//*. The original autobiography begins: *phran sde gzhung sprul ming pa nil gangs can bod yul mdo kham sgang drug las/ 'bri zla zal mo'i sgang skye rgu mdo nas byang phyogs ngos nyi ma gcig gi lam/ la gnyis brgal nas 'bri chu'i 'gram/ thag lung zhes pa'i lung pa ha cang phu thag mi ring ba'i snyed? par/ sa skya'i chos sde thag lung dgon pa zhes grwa pa nyis brgya lhag*. The narrative goes up to his departure for Derge and the beginning of his studies of Sanskrit under Palyul Lama, and it contains some rare details.
9. [*Rang rnam shin tu bsdus pa 'phags yul va ra na si la bzhuks pa'i bla ma bsam grub kyi ngor mdzad pa.*] A very brief autobiographical sketch written probably in the 1960s in a letter to Lama Bsam grub in Benares. It begins: *bla ma bsam 'grub la/ yig don/ rje bla mas thugs brtses bzung tshull.*
10. [*Gsan sbyong mdzad tshul bsdus pa mkhan chen zhig la gsungs pa.*] A brief account of his studies in a letter written to the grand abbot (Sakya Ghoom Khenchen Sangyay Tendzin?). It begins: *phran nas/ sa skya'i snyan brgyud 'dzin pa kun gyi gtsug nor/ sga ston rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang legs pa mchog gi zhal nga nas....*

- II. (*Sga ston gyi zhal gdams rnam gsum gyi skor*.) An account of the three main commands that Gatön gave Dezhung Rinpoche, extracted from the draft of a letter dated March 29, 1977 (old number 31 in his unedited papers). It begins: *bdag gi rnam 'dren bla ma rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang legs pa rin po che'i zhal snga nas/ phran chung la lugs gnyis bka' drin 'khor thabs brall/ nga la bka' ljid che ba phebs donl....*
- ii. Histories (*lo rgyus sna tshogs skor*)
1. *Bod ljongs mdo kham sga ldan skyur gsum gyi byung tshul nyung bsduḡs gtam gyi sa bon*. A brief history of Gapa, Denma, and Kyura districts of Kham. Xerographic copy of *dbu-can* original in author's own hand, 54 pages. Written in Seattle (ca. 1965) in reply to the request sent to him by letter by the Dra'u chieftain Rinchen Tsering. Begins: *om swa stil/ dri med ye shes thugs rje'i gzi 'bar basll/ shes bya'i gnas la rmongs pa'i mun bsal nasll*. Colophon: *ces pa 'di'angl lugs gnyis mkhyen pa'i spyang yangs/...sga gra'ur dpon mi rje lha sras rin chen tshe ring zhang dbon gyi zhal snga nasl....*
 2. [*Sde gzhung lung rigs sprul sku kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma'i zhal nas snga rjes thos pa'i lo rgyus sna tshogs gdong thog sprul skus zin bris su btab pa.*] Various histories recorded by T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche: *sde gzhung lung rigs sprul sku kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma'i zhal nas snga rjes thos pall* (1980/11/23 la kho bo [gdong thog sprul sku]'i shag la gsol tshigs phul).
 3. *Ngor e waṃ chos ldan gyi gdan rabs nor bu'i phreng ba'i mtshan grangs rin chen za ma tog*. A list of Ngor abbots compiled by Dezhung Rinpoche from memory at the request of Mr. E. Gene Smith in Seattle in the early 1960s. Published as a romanized list in Jackson (1989b), pp. 74–77.
 4. *Chos ldan sa skyong rgyal po sde dge'i gdung rabs kyi mtshan phreng rin chen phreng ba*. A brief summary and addendum to the Derge royal genealogy, compiled by Dezhung Rinpoche from memory in 1964 at the request of E. Gene Smith. A text copied in *dbu-can* script by Dhongthog Rinpoche, published in Josef Kolmaš (1988), "Dezhung Rinpoche's Summary and Continuation of the *sDe-dge'i rgyal-rabs*," *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, vol. 42, pp. 119–152.
 5. *Bod shar phyogs kham khul gyi sa dgon mtshan tho che long tsam bkod pa*. A list of the main Sakyapa monasteries in Kham, written in Seattle at the

request of Dhongthog Rinpoche. Cursive (*dbu med*) manuscript, 4 pages. Begins: *bod shar phyogs khams khul gyi sa dgon mtshan tho che long tsam bkod pal sde gzhung sprul sku rin po cher bka' 'dri zhus las zin thol*. Colophon: *ces sa dgon mtshan grangs rags rim tsam yin gsung/ gdong thog sprul ming bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyis reg zig tu bris pa dgell*.

6. (A Work of Doubtful Authorship, *the tshom can*)

Bod kyi rdo rje gdan dpal na lendra gzim 'og rin po che'i sku phreng rim gyis rnam thar shin tu bsdu pa dad pa'i sa bon. A brief history of the Zimwok incarnate lamas of Phanpo Nalendra monastery. Cursive (*dbu med*) manuscript, 7 pages. Begins: *om swasti/ dus gsum rgyal ba ma lus gshegs shul lam/ rigs gsum 'phags pa skyed par byed pa'i yum/*. No colophon.

This history of the Zimwok Trulkus was found among Dezhung Rinpoche's papers after his passing. Because this history is not known to the main Nalendra lamas (such as Chobgye Rinpoche and Nalendra Geshe Tsultrim Gyaltzen), it may have been written by Dezhung Rinpoche, who definitely knew a great deal about the lineage in question. One does find in the work, moreover, a mention of the Ga Tharlam dgon founder Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe among the disciples of Rongtön, as would be expected if Dezhung Rinpoche had been the author.

7. *Rgya 'dre nag po g.yag zhon gyi lo rgyus*. A Tibetan ghost story set down in writing in the early 1960s in Seattle at the request of Geshe Ngawang Nornang. Cursive (*dbu med*) manuscript, 2 pages. Begins: *om swa sti/ dar rtse mdo na rgya 'dre nag po g.yag zhon zer ba zhis yod pa red*. Colophon: *rgya 'dre nag po g.yag zhon gyi lo rgyus rdzogs sol/*.

iii. Verses of Benedictions and Other Minor Writings

(*bkra shis smon lam sogs*)

a. Letters (*chab shog skor*)

Dezhung Rinpoche kept up a voluminous correspondence over the years with various teachers, disciples, and friends. It has not been possible for me to gather more than a few of his ordinary letters, and they have not been described here, though it would be good if future editors could publish some. A few letters or cards containing auspicious verses (*bkra shis kyi tshigs bcad*) are presented in a separate section below.

b. Answers to Questions (*dris lan skor*)

A number of cards and notes exist that record the answers he gave to his students about particular points or vocabulary. These have not been described here, though I hope they can be included in the future.

c. Quotations and Lama's Sayings

(*bla ma'i zhal gdams dang gsung sgros skor*)

When teaching or when asked a question, he often quoted pertinent verses from scriptures or from the sayings of famous lamas. A few of these that he wrote out for his disciples have been preserved. I hope they can be included in a future edition of his works.

d. Diaries (*nyin deb skor*)

Nyin deb chen mo. His daily diaries, from 1960 until 1986. He regularly kept a daily diary, except on the rare occasions late in his life when he was unwell or completely overwhelmed by other obligations. The diary entries mainly recorded very briefly his daily prayers and meditations, and numbers of mantras recited, along with many mundane events such as meals, going places, visitors dropping by, and so forth. About twenty-five bound volumes survive at the Tharlam House in Bodhnath. Diaries for the period 1960–1963 on loose pages also survive among his miscellaneous papers. These were not found suitable for publication.

e. Various Auspicious Verses (*bkra shis kyi tshigs bcad sna tshogs*)

1. [*Chu stag lo'i nyams mtshar snyan ngag.*] A poem written on Dezhung Rinpoche's return from three weeks of religious seclusion on Monday, March 5, 1962, and presented to Leon Hurwitz and Gene Smith. It begins: *bla ma rje la phyag 'tshal lol/ chu stag cho 'phrul dus bzang por//*.
2. [*Bag ston kyi bkra shis smon lam.*] A congratulatory poem written by Dezhung Rinpoche in connection with the marriage of his dentist, Charles Webber, to Dede Stocking in Seattle in November 1962. It begins: *om swastil/ gang la skyabs na bslu med pa'i ngon// dkon mchog gum dang bla ma rje btsun mall.* The colophon mentions the Tibetan date of composition as the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month of the water-male-tiger year, i.e., the Dge-byed year,

number 936 of the Tibetan system, corresponding to 1962 of the Western calendar.

3. Three auspicious verses were addressed to Richard Sherburne, S.J., who studied under Rinpoche in Seattle in the 1970s. Sherburne was given the Tibetan name Blo gros chos 'byor by Dezhung Rinpoche, and it is by this name that he is addressed in them:

(A.) A Christmas/New Year's card sent to Richard Sherburne:

*blo ldan shes bya'i gnas la mkhas// gros bzang khrims bcu'i gtam snyan
pos// chos mos skye dgu dga' bar skyed// 'byor pa bzang pos mchod la
bstod//*

*blo chen rgyal ba'i sras po a ti sha'i// gtan gyi 'dun gros lam gyi sgron ma
dang// chos rje bla ma'i byang chub bstan bcos lal// rnam dpyod 'byor pa
mnga' khyod bsngags par 'os//*

*lugs gnyis khrims kyi shing rta la zhon nas// blo gros snang ba'i dpal bzhi
ldan bzhiñ dul// bsam sbyor chos mthun lam gyi gzhung bsrang stel//
phan bde nor bu'i 'byor pas phyug par shog// //*

*bkra shis dpal 'bar 'dzam gling rgyan du byon/ sde gzhung sprul sku
kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi mas soll*

(B.) Another Christmas card sent to Richard Sherburne:

*rgya chen blo gros nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor nil// thos bsam brtson pa'i mkha'
la rab gsal zhing// dpal ldan sde bzhi'i chos kyi pad tshal rgyas// 'chi med
bcud 'byor ldan khyod rgyal gyur cig//*

*dza ya dza ya su dza ya// //rmañ byung mkhyen brtse'i dpal mnga' blo
gros chos 'byor mchog gi drung dul/ Christmas dus ston chen mor/ bkra
shis bde legs zhu mtshon/ [one phrase not legible] sde gzhung sprul sku
ming sring thun mong nas phul ba dgel//*

(C.) A card sent to Richard Sherburne on the occasion of his completing his Ph.D. ca. 1975:

*om swa sti/ shes bya'i mkha' la blo gros dkyil 'khor rgyas// lugs gnyis chos
kyi 'od stong rab 'phro bal// gdul bya'i pad tshal skyong la zla bral bal//
yon tan 'byor ldan mkhas mchog nyin byed dbang//*

*'dzam gling yul gyi lha lam mdzes pa'i rgyan// mi mthun chu 'dzin
sgrib g.yog dang bral zhing// phun tshogs sde bzhi'i bkras mdangs mi*

*nyams par// bgrang yas bskal pa rgya mtshor rtag brtan shog//
ces grogs mchog mkhyen brtse'i dpal ldan gang der dag lam PH.D. kyi
go 'phang brnyes skabs/ shis brjod smon tshig rab dkar lha rdzas a'u shi
yid 'ong pu'i 5 mdzes pa'i skyes dang bcas/ bod yul gyi bla ma'i ming
'dzin sde gzhung sprul sku kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma zhes bya bas phul
ba dge'ol//*

4. A card sent to D. Jackson in early 1974 on the occasion of a house-warming party:

*rnam mang gzhung lugs smra ba'i ngag la dbang// mdo rgyud man
ngag thos pa'i skal ba ldan// kun dga'i lam bzang zhugs nas chos nor
'dod// thar pa'i bde skyid 'thob pa'i bkra shis shog// nyams dga' zhing
spro ba'i gnas khang gsar thob dga' ston thog mar 'char ba'i skabs sul legs
sbyar zas bcud 'byung ba'i yol gor gyi snod dpus legs kyi rten dang chabs
gcig shis par brjod pa'i thig sde gzhung bla brang nas phul// (signed)
Kunga Labrang and Family*

f. Works Not Yet Located or Presumed Lost

(ma dpe ma thob nas da dung 'tshol rgyu'i gsung rtsom skor)

1. His original detailed record of teachings received (*thob yig*). This was left behind when he fled from Lhasa in March 1959.
2. A brief biography of Ven. Kalu Rinpoche (*Bla ma ka lu rin po che'i rnam thar mdor bsdus/*). Sometime in the mid-1970s, Dezhung Rinpoche composed a brief biography of Kalu Rinpoche. A rough English translation was made in about 1976 or 1977 and distributed in the 1980s by Kagyü centers in Europe, such as in Germany as pages 21–26 of the 28-page pamphlet of Kalu Rinpoche's teachings entitled *Die tantrische Belehrung Buddhas* (no place, no date). See appendix I.
3. A long-life prayer for Amipa Sherab Gyaltzen in Switzerland. (According to Kunzang Nyima, this was actually composed by Dezhung Rinpoche.)
4. *Dmag zor ma'i sgrub thabs la brten pa'i pra phab pa* (?). A prognostication ritual based on the goddess Dmag zor ma. According to his brother Kunzang Nyima, he had written such a work in Sakya in the late 1940s.

5. *Tshe dbang bla ma zhi khro* (*mkhyen brtse dang 'jam rgyal rin po che'i phyag len ltar du bris pa*). According to his brother Kunzang Nyima, he had written a long-life–bestowing ritual of the *Bla ma zhi khro* tradition, based on the practice of Khyentse and Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen.
6. *Sa skya 'khon kyi gdung rabs shin tu mdor bsdus*. A brief summary of the Sakya Khön genealogical lineage compiled at the request of Sandy and Zayane Macdonald (ca. 1960). Not yet located. A very short excerpt was presented by E. Gene Smith in appendix 4 of his unpublished paper, “The History of the 'Khon to the Birth of Sa chen Kun dga' snying po according to the *Rgya bod yig tshang*,” paper presented to the Inner Asia Colloquium, University of Washington, on April 25, 1961. One page of the Tibetan text survives.
7. *Lo rgyus zhal rgyun sna tshogs sku ngo lags kyis zin bris su btab pa*. Histories Recorded by Lobsang Lhalungpa. A number of histories related by Rinpoche are said to have been set down in writing by Lobsang Lhalungpa in New York, but none of these have yet become available.
8. *Skye rgu tshe mtshams pa rnal 'byor pa ngag dbang bsam gtan la rjes sa bzung ba'i rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i byin brlabs*. Initiation for Vajrayoginī in the form of a Madwoman, according to the visions of Ngawang Samten of Jyekundo. Gatön had compiled the *brgyud 'debs* and *byin brlabs* for this, but later the book was lost and the tradition imperiled. In 1981 at Puruwala, Dezhung Rinpoche wrote it out from memory and conferred the blessing upon H.H. Sakya Trizin and numerous others.
9. Other additions to the verses of supplication (*brgyud 'debs kha skong*) are said to exist, but these have not yet been located:
 - (A) Addition to the verses of supplication for White Tārā (*sgrol ma dkar mo'i brgyud 'debs zhal skong*)
 - (B) Addition to the verses of supplication for Bhūtaḍāmara (*'byung po 'dul byed kyi brgyud 'debs zhal skong*)
 - (C) Addition to the verses of supplication for White Mahākāla (*mgon dkar yid bzhin nor bu'i brgyud 'debs zhal skong*)

(D) Addition to the verses of supplication for the seven-day Amitāyus
(requested by Drukpa Tshe bcu in Bodnath)

(*tshe sgrub zhag bdun ma'i brgyud 'debs zhal skong*)

(E) Addition to the verses of supplication for Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig cho ga'i brgyud 'debs zhal skong*)

II. Works in English

A. Works in Translation

1. Dezhung Rinpoche's manual for the introductory practices (*sngon 'gro*) according to the Sakyapa tradition (entitled *Bstan pa'i bdag po dpal sa skya pa'i phyag bzhes ltar sngon 'gro'i bsags sbyong gi nyams len ngag 'don rgyun khyer bya tshul tshogs gnyis lam bzang*) was slightly expanded and translated into English by H.H. Sakya Trizin Rinpoche and Ngawang Samten Chopel at Puruwala in March 1979. It was calligraphed by Ven. Thubten Chodar and published in a bilingual version by the Singapore Buddha Sasana Society (Sakya Tenphel Ling Temple), Singapore, 1979. The Sakya Monastery in Seattle has brought out a modified xerographic reprint with a different final lineage on pp. 99–102.
2. His manual for Mahākāla ritual practice (*Mgon po'i bskang gso*), being mainly a compilation of brief works by early great Sakyapa masters. The work, entitled *Bstan pa'i chos srung rnams kyi gtor ma dang skong ba mdor bsdus phrin las myur 'grub*, was published with an English translation by Cyrus Stearns from the Sakya Thegchen Choling center, Seattle, in 1981. It was reprinted with some revisions in *The Swift Accomplishment of Action: An Abbreviated Torma and Fulfillment Ritual for the Reliable Dharmapalas* (Seattle: Sakya Monastery, 1991), pp. 15–48.
3. “Rdzogs pa chen po: The Doctrine of the Rnying-ma-pa Sect,” an English translation by T. V. Wylie (Inner Asia Project, October 4, 1968) of the Nyingma section of Dezhung Rinpoche's *Nges don phyag rdzogs dbu gsum gyi lta sgom gyi gnad mdor bsdus 'khrul bral legs bshad mkhas pa'i zhal lung* (a comparative exposition of the theory and meditative practice of the main traditions within Tibetan Buddhism). In his foreword Wylie wrote: “The proposal is to translate the remaining sections on

the Bka' brgyud pa, Sa skya pa, and Dge lugs pa and prepare an article for publication. The Bka' brgyud pa section should be ready this quarter, or the next at the very latest." But it seems no other section was completed.

4. *Zhi lhag gi ting 'dzin sgom tshul thar lam sgron me*. This manual for calming and insight meditation practice was translated into English, evidently in the mid-1980s, by Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima). It is cited as such in the bibliography of Deshung Rinpoche (1995), p. 517: "A Light for the Path to Liberation: A Way to Cultivate a Profound Absorption of Tranquil Abiding and Penetrative Insight," translated by Richard Barron, unpublished ms., 1985." A French translation has reportedly been published.
5. A brief biography of Ven. Kalu Rinpoche. Sometime in the mid-1970s, Dezhung Rinpoche also composed a brief biography of Kalu Rinpoche, though the Tibetan text has yet to be located. A rough English translation was made in about 1976 or 1977 and distributed in the 1980s by Kagyü centers in Europe, such as in Germany, as pages 21–26 of the 28-page pamphlet of Kalu Rinpoche's teachings entitled *Die tantrische Belehrung Buddhas* (no place, no date). See appendix I.

B. Transcripts of Translated Lectures

A large number of lectures and teachings (with immediate translation into English) have been preserved on tape. Some recorded lectures have served as the basis for publications, including one book:

1. *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception* (Boston: Wisdom, 1995; revised 2nd ed. 2003), edited and with introduction by Victoria Scott. The transcribed texts of his teachings on the *Lam 'bras* introductory text the *S nang gsum mdzes rgyan* of Könchok Lhündrup. These lectures were given in New York at the Jetsun Sakya center between September 1977 and February 1980, and were translated mainly by Jared Rhoton.
2. "Short Biography of His Eminence Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche," transcript of a talk given by Dezhung Rinpoche in Singapore at the Buddha Sasana Society on May 24, 1982, translated by Cyrus Stearns. It appeared in the center newsletter *The White Conch*, vol. 4, no. 3 (August 1984), pp. 6–16.

3. *On Realization of the Nature of Mind. From the Teachings of Lama Dezhung Rinpoche*. Translated by Ken McLeod, edited by Thomas Quinn. Vancouver, B.C.: New Sun Books, 1979. This 11-page booklet was published in a numbered first edition of 300 copies, and is distributed by Kagyu Kunkhyab Chuling Publications, 4939 Sidley St., Burnaby, B.C. V5J 1T6 Canada. Text begins: “When you come to approach the dharma you should do so with the attitude that is for the benefit of others; the concern should be for all sentient beings.”
4. “Buddhism without Sectarianism, The Venerable Deshung Rinpoche.” 1983, translated by Jared Rhoton, Los Angeles, California. Posted by Paul K. Seaton at the website: quietmountain.com/links/teachings/non-sect.htm. Its full text is given in appendix A.
5. “Talk by Dezhung Rinpoche at Vancouver Dharma Festival” (translated by Ken McLeod). 15-page typescript. (The lecture was given in about 1975 or 1976, one year after Kalu Rinpoche’s second visit to Canada.) This function was also attended by Prof. Guenther and Chime Rinpoche. Text begins: “Rinpoche started with an invocation, first, an offering to the Buddhas, and then....”
6. Numerous unpublished transcripts of lectures from the late 1970s and early 1980s—based on the oral translations of Jared Rhoton—have been preserved by Victoria Scott, the Sapan Fund.

Abbreviations

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| AC | Ane Chime |
| CL | Chime Luding |
| CS | Cyrus Stearns |
| CW | Chris Wilkinson |
| DK | Dagmo Kusho (Sönam Tshedzom, later Jamyang Sakya of the Sakya Phüntsok palace) |
| DR | Dezhung Rinpoche |
| EGS | E. Gene Smith |
| GN | Geshe Ngawang Nornang |
| GM | Grace McLeod |
| JE | Julie Emery |
| JG | Janet Gyatso |
| JN | John Nyquist |
| JR | Jared Rhoton |
| JS | Jamyang Sakya, the name used by DK in her published autobiography |
| KA | Khenpo Appey |
| KKW | Khenpo Kunga Wangchuk |
| KN | Kunzang Nyima |
| LK | Lama Kunga, Thartse Shabdrung Kunga |
| LKG | Lama Kalsang Gyalsen, or Lama Kargyal |
| MK | Matthew Kapstein |
| MRT | Minyak Rikhü Önpotrulku |
| MT | Mark Tatz |
| PhLh | Phende Lhakpa |
| RB | Richard Baldwin |
| RS | Richard Sherburne, S. J. |
| ST | H.H. the Sakya Trizin |

List of Interviews

Richard Baldwin: Seattle, October 1993.

Ane Chime: Bodhnath, March 1992; Seattle, September 1992; Bodhnath, February–March 1993, February–March 1994, February–March 1995, March–April 1996, March–April 1999.

Chime Rinpoche: Graz, June 1995.

Dagmo Kusho (Jamyang Sakya of the Phüntsook palace): Seattle, September 1992, October 1993.

T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche: Seattle, October 1993; Bodhnath, February–March 1994; Singapore, April 1995.

Julie Emery: Seattle, 1993.

Lawrence Epstein: Seattle, October 1993.

Gelek Rinpoche of Lithang Göncen: Bodhnath, March 1993.

Janet Gyatso: Bodhnath, February 1994.

Vana Jakic: 1992.

Maruta Kalnins: Kathmandu, March 1993; 1994.

Matthew Kapstein: Kathmandu, March 1993.

Khenpo Appey (Kuse Appey Yönten Zangpo): Bodhnath, February 1994, March–April 1996.

Khenpo Chöga: Bodhnath, February–March 1994.

Khenpo Kunga Wangchuk: Bodhnath, February–March 1994.

Kunga Wangmo: Bodhnath, 1994.

Lama Dorje of Minyak Rikhü: Singapore, April 1995.

Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen: Bodhnath, February–March 1994.

Lama Kunga, Thartse Shabdrung Kundga: Bodhnath, February–March 1994.

Lithang Athar: Dharamsala, March 1993.

Minyak Rikhü Önpö Trulku: Bodhnath, February 1994.

Mingyur Rinpoche of Lithang: Lynwood (Seattle), September 1995.

Mkhan po Tshul khrims rgya mtsho: Bodhnath, 1993.

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- Geshe Ngawang Nornang: Seattle, October 1993.
John Nyquist: Seattle, October 1993.
Ng Goo Tek: Singapore, April 1995, April 1996.
Phende Lhakpa: Lumbini, March 1993; Bodhnath, February–March 1994.
Radha Chime: Graz, June 1995.
John Reynolds: Fagernes, Norway, September 1992.
Rinchen Tsering, Dra'u Pön (Dra'u dPon): Dharamsala, March 1993.
Isabelle Robert: Kathmandu, March 1993.
H.H. the Sakya Trizin: Rajpur, March 1993.
Richard Sherburne, S.J.: Seattle, October 1993.
E. Gene Smith: Jakarta, February 1993; Singapore, August 1993.
Cyrus Stearns: Seattle, September 1992, October 1993, September 1995; 1994.
Tashi Densapa: Oxford, 2003.
Thrangu Rinpoche (Khra 'gu Rinpoche): Bodhnath, February–March 1994, March 1995.
Trogawa Rinpoche: Essen, Germany, 1993.
Dede Webber: Seattle, August 1998.

Notes

- 1 Anthony Mockler (1976), p. 13.
- 2 Anthony Mockler (1976), p. 15f. The decree to destroy the old biographies was carried out diligently, and only a handful of manuscripts of the earlier works survive.
- 3 M. Kapstein (1992b), in Buswell and Gimello, eds., p. 219, n. 10, quotes Kong sprul, plate 89, who gives a long explication of the usual Tibetan term for “hagiography,” *nam thar*.
- 4 Cf. S. Batchelor (1994), p. xiv; J. Snelling (1992), pp. 215 and 238f.; and R. Fields (1992), pp. 280 and 289f.
- 5 Deshung Rinpoche, *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception* (Boston: Wisdom, 1995, 2003).
- 6 See E. Gene Smith (2001), p. xiii.
- 7 DR 1979.
- 8 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 9 AC 1993, or, according to his mother, at age three! In DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a, he states “about five.”
- 10 According to DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1, Ngawang Nyima died in his seventy-fourth year. If so, his date of birth would have been ca. 1878. But the writing is unclear and it may state in fact “seventy-ninth.” According to AC 1996, he died in approximately his seventy-eighth year.
- 11 DR 1979.
- 12 DR 1975 (GM notes). According to DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1, “Many spoke words of praise and marveled at the fact that such a young child would be sent away by his parents to live in a monastery.”
- 13 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1.
- 14 PhLh 1994.
- 15 DR August 1978 (CS notes).

- 16 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1.
- 17 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1, writes that on this occasion his uncle was sealed up in his retreat house for a retreat lasting “sixteen” (i.e., fifteen?) years. Dezhung Rinpoche spent the last five of these years with his uncle.
- 18 According to what Dezhung Rinpoche related in August 1978 (CS notes), Ngag dbang nyi ma also performed the two-day fasting ritual two hundred times in his life. Through his mastery of inner yogic processes, he could do remarkable things. After eating and drinking a great deal, for instance, he could sit down and meditate for an hour, “transforming” those substances. Sometimes he would say, “I’m cold!” and then sit down to do heat-generation yoga (*gtum mo*). Then when one reached out and touched his hands, they were very warm. Sde gzhung Sprul sku A ’jam regarded him highly and considered him to be a remarkable yogi. He also practiced *Gcod* (the “Severance” precepts of Ma gcig Lab sgron), and he could see nonhuman spirits that appeared when people died.
- 19 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1.
- 20 DK 1992.
- 21 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 22 DR August 1978 (CS notes).
- 23 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 24 DR August 1978 and October 1985 (CS notes). Dezhung Rinpoche later said, “The fact that I can read now very well is solely due to the kind discipline enforced by my uncle.”
- 25 DR October 1985 (CS notes).
- 26 DR 1979.
- 27 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 28 The six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara.
- 29 AC and DK 1992.
- 30 Gyurme Dorje (1996), p. 531f., refers to “Tarlam monastery (4000 m)” as situated near the main modern road that follows the Yangtze north to Labda township.
- 31 Dezhung Rinpoche composed a brief history of this region, and one can also find a brief summary in DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 6a–b. For more details on this area and its history, see appendix F.
- 32 According to CS, September 1992, Dezhung Rinpoche recounted this story later in his life in Ipoh, Malaysia, on January 26, 1982, saying that in this life he had a connection with the wealth deity Yellow Jambhala.
- 33 AC March 1992.

- 34 The text as quoted by JR and KN 1987: *sga nas 'ongs [pa] rta lo pa// bstan pa dar rgyas mtha' klas 'byung//*.
- 35 KN and JR 1987. A similar prediction of the birth of Dezhung Rinpoche's main teacher, Sga ston, found in the prophecies of G.yon ru Gter ston 'Chi med, is mentioned in 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 78.5 (39b).
- 36 AC 1994: "Born in the spre'u year (1884), she died in her sixty-seventh year."
- 37 For more details on Dezhung Rinpoche's ancestry, see appendix E.
- 38 An "adopted bridegroom" (*mag pa*) is a groom who resides matrilocally, that is, with the bride's family, and assumes the name of her family like an adopted son.
- 39 According to PhLh 1994, the Ra 'og Jo 'khor family was divided into two branches, the Ra 'og Jo 'khor Ltang ma and the 'Og ma.
- 40 On the life of Mi pham, see S. Goodman (1981), "Mi-pham rgya-mtsho: An Account of His Life," *Wind Horse* vol. 1; D. Schuh (1973c), introduction; and John W. Pettit (1999), pp. 19–39.
- 41 MK 1993. The presence of Mi pham in Sga pa between at least September 1905 and April 1908 is attested to by colophons of his works; see D. Schuh (1973c), p. xxxiii.
- 42 DR October 1985, Seattle (CS notes).
- 43 According to KN and JR 1987, at the time of the initiation, Dezhung Rinpoche offered a fine red cloth to the master, and this was interpreted to be a sign that he himself would one day become a great teacher.
- 44 DR October 1985, Seattle (CS notes).
- 45 DR May 1979 (CS notes). Nyi dga's two chief practices were Rnal 'byor ma and Hevajra. He died on the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month, the holy day of the Buddha's descent from the heavens.
- 46 DR biography of Nyi dga': *sa skya pa'i bstan pa rnam dag sga khog la 'dug/*.
- 47 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a. According to DR, *Nyi dga' rnam thar*, Nyi dga's main disciples included numerous Ngor *mkhan pos* (abbots) and *zhabs drungs* (candidates to the abbacy), including chiefly Phan khang Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (b. ca. late 1870s?; d. ca. 1930; Ngor abbot ca. 1917?–1921?); Klu sdings Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs thub bstan lung rtogs rgya mtsho (1896–1952, "A khro Mkhan po"; Ngor abbot 1942–1945); and Khang gsar Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho (1902–ca. 1963? "Brug pa Mkhan Rinpoche"; Ngor abbot 1933–1936); and the lamas, *sprul skus*, and *mkhan pos* of most of the monasteries in Khams, including Gzhan dga' Rinpoche; Sde gzhung Sprul sku A 'jam; Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa; Nyi dga's own fraternal nephew 'Jam dbyangs blo gsal; 'Jam rgyal Rinpoche; and Bla ma Dge 'dun bzang po.
- 48 DR May 1979 (CS notes).

- 49 According to KN 1987, Legs pa Rinpoche also recommended that Dezhung Rinpoche recite the *Gang blo ma* praises of Mañjuśrī for a month to increase his powers of intellect and understanding.
- 50 DR October 1985 (CS notes).
- 51 DR Autobiographical sketch 4, fol. 1a.
- 52 KN and JR 1987. There existed a Derge print of the work *Sangs rgyas byang chub sems kyi mtshan sna tshogs phyogs bsdu rin chen phreng ba* (by Mi pham?) and also a similar compilation by Blo gter dbang po.
- 53 AC 1992.
- 54 DR October 1985, Seattle (CS notes).
- 55 DK 1987.
- 56 Grub thob Sangs rgyas rab brtan was originally from the Dgon gsar monastery of Khri 'du. According to PhLh, unpublished ms., p. 28, he was also a disciple of the Ngor Phan bde Mkhan po Byams pa dpal ldan chos mdzad (died ca. 1915). It is said that he manifested magical powers but that these led literally to his downfall. He attempted to fly from the top of a large rock. After floating through the air for a very brief while, he crashed to the ground and died (PhLh 1994).
- 57 DR autobiographical sketch no. 2?, fol. 1a.
- 58 Jo sras Dge slong 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan was evidently the son of a Ra 'og Jo 'khor sister who went as a bride to the Jo sras family. Thus he was Dezhung Rinpoche's first cousin once removed.
- 59 AC 1994.
- 60 KN and JR 1987.
- 61 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 28a.
- 62 DR (CS 1994).
- 63 Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros was the fifty-third abbot of Ngor; his tenure was ca. 1849–1851.
- 64 Ngag dbang blo gros snying po served as the fifty-ninth abbot of Ngor. His tenure was about ten years long—that is, most of the 1880s.
- 65 Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa's other teachers included: (Khu na) 'Jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho, Sa khri 'Jig med dbang rgyal, Mkhan chen Byams pa chos bkra shis, Rab 'byams pa Shes rab chos 'phel, 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892), and Kong sprul Yon tan rgya mtsho (1813–1899). See Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p. 580.
- 66 On the life of Kong sprul, see E. Gene Smith (1970) and D. Schuh (1976), introduction.

- 67 Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa also received many teachings from Kong sprul. For example, he received the *Sa 'jam sbag sgrub* (Sa skya Paṇḍita–Mañjuśrī guru-yoga) blessing from both Mkhyen brtse and Kong sprul.
- 68 DR, “Short Biography of His Eminence Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche,” *The White Conch* (Singapore), vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 10–13.
- 69 DR, *Sde dge rgyal rabs*, p. 17 (Kolmaś [1988], p. 142).
- 70 KN and JR 1987.
- 71 At this time Legs pa Rinpoche mentioned that he himself had the greatest faith in five Tibetan masters: Sa skya Paṇḍita, Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po, Mi la Ras pa, Rgyal sras Thogs med bzang po, and Sga Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes (DR 1985; CS notes).
- 72 DR October 1985 (CS notes). According to KN and JR 1987, Legs pa Rinpoche also recommended the “Three Visions” treatise *Snang gsum mdzes rgyan* by the Ngor abbot Dkon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557), an introductory manual to the *Lam 'bras tshogs bshad*.
- 73 Nyi dga' was a great sponsor of the printing of books, but he did not keep them. Using offerings from faithful donors, he had many of the great sets of scriptures printed from Derge, such as the Esoteric Transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*), and then donated them to local monasteries.
- 74 DR October 1985 (CS notes).
- 75 AC September 1992.
- 76 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 77 AC September 1992.
- 78 KN and JR 1987.
- 79 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 80 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 28a–b.
- 81 Earthquakes of magnitude 6 1/2 occurred 250 km and 200 km northwest of Sga pa on April 28 and May 25, 1915, in nomadic areas west of Chu dmar leb and 'Bri stod. Sga lay on a major earthquake fault line that continued southeast through Denma, Horkhok, and Minyak.
- 82 KN and JR 1987.
- 83 DR 1975 (GM notes). According to AC 1994, Dezhung Rinpoche never did actually join the Tharlam monastic curriculum and rules (*sgrig*). He knew many of the required prayers but had not learned all the rituals in detail (spending his time instead on the study of other things).
- 84 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 29a, lists the disciples: Sa skya 'og ma Bla ma Ca pa Bla ma from Khri 'du Bskal bzang Monastery; Seb phu Dgon A gnyan Bla ma;

Dge slong 'Phags mchog, Bla ma Rig 'dzin dbang rgyal, Mkhan po 'Jigs dga', and dbu mdzad Mgon po from Bskal bzang Monastery; the Lab mda' be rkyang (be cang?) Dkon mchog tshe ring, dbu mdzad Dkon mchog rgya mtsho, brTson 'grus chos dar, and others from Thub bstan Monastery; Gu tsha (or Gur tsha) mtshams pa Ngag dbang chos rje from Dgon gsar Dgon; four monks, including Mkhan po Nyi grags and Mkhan po Skal ldan rgya mtsho, from Skye rgu Dgon; dbu mdzad Dkon mchog dpal ldan and Dge Smon lam bzang po from Bsam grub Dgon; Mu sug mtshams pa from Ye rgyas Dgon; several monks from Gdong sprad Dgon; and a large number of Tharlam monks.

- 85 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 30a–b.
- 86 Blo bzang chos kyi dga' ba is evidently the lama also referred to as “Blo bzang 'od zer” in one of Dezhung Rinpoche's brief autobiographical writings.
- 87 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 14b.3. 'O rdzong Dge bshes was also famous in Khams as an expert physician. A sketch of his life appears in a recent compilation of biographies of great Tibetan doctors.
- 88 DR Autobiographical 3, fol. 1a; KN and JR 1987. According to KN and JR 1987, Legs pa Rinpoche sent someone to find out who had blown the horn and why. “It was the monk named Bsod nams rin chen ('Merit Jewel'), and he was blowing it to summon the monks,” was the reply.
- 89 The year 1917 also saw a military confrontation between Tibet and China at Chab mdo, further southwest in Khams.
- 90 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 30b–31a.
- 91 DK 1992. Grub thob Ngag dbang stobs bcu is evidently the lama referred to in DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1, as “Rag shul 'Brug pa Stobs bcu Rinpoche,” one of Ngag dbang nyi ma's teachers.
- 92 DR, ca. 1979 (CS notes), spoke about this when giving the thought-transference (*'pho ba*) transmission of the Maitreya tradition.
- 93 According to PhLh 1994, Zla ba nor bu's mother was from the Mgron zla Bskal dga' tshang, so perhaps her father was Bskal dga' himself?
- 94 DK and AC September 1992.
- 95 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 32a–33a.
- 96 DR Spring 1979.
- 97 DK and AC September 1992. 'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin remained a monk—he never married. For many years he disappeared to foreign parts, traveling northeast to Sining in the Chinese borderlands and to other places. Later he turned up again in Tharlam, practicing medicine and staying with a nephew.
- 98 On Rdzogs chen Mkhan chen Gzhan dga', see now Achim Bayer (1999), “The Life and Works of mKhan-po gZhan-dga' (1871–1927),” M.A. thesis, University

of Hamburg. Gzhan dga's other names were, according to Dezhung Rinpoche, 'Jigs med thub bstan dge legs and Dbyangs can dgyes pa'i rdo rje. For sketches of his life in Tibetan, see Chos kyi nyi ma, *Rgyal dbang mdo khams rdzogs chen dgon gyi lo rgyus nor bu'i phreng ba* (Delhi: Konchog Lhadrepa, 1986), pp. 162–166, and Smyo shul Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs rdo rje, *Rang bzhin rdzogs pa chen po'i chos 'byung*, pp. 382–399 (fols. 191b–200a). The first (?) source gives his birthplace as “Brog Ru ma” and his family lineage as “Rgyal sgong.” Cf. the brief account in Blo gros phun tshogs's history of the Rdzong gсар Khams bye seminary, “Khams bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa,” *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992), pp. 119–121; and the same author's longer history of Rdzong gсар, *Rdzong (g)Sar*, pp. 183–188 (fols. 91b–94b). Gzhan dga's disciple Mkhyen rab chos kyi 'od zer was said to have written a biography of his master, which Dezhung Rinpoche had never actually seen but had only heard about (DR May 1962, EGS notebook). According to Khenpo Chöga 1994, Gzhan dga' himself ordered his disciples, “Don't write my biography!” He always preferred the biographies of Indian masters and tended to look down somewhat on Tibetan lamas and scholars.

- 99 According to Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse (information recorded by Matthieu Ricard), Gzhan dga' had been born “near Yongs gсар, a nomadic area between Dzachu and Jyekundo, into the Rgya sde family.” He was said to be related to A yang Thub bstan, a *sprul sku* connected with Sgrub brgyud Dgon, one of the 'Bri gung monasteries in Sga pa.
- 100 The Dge lugs pa monastery at Khang na is mentioned in J. Sakya and J. Emery (1990), p. 160.
- 101 DR May 1962 (EGS notebook). According to Dzogchen Khenpo Chöga (Mkhan po Chos dga') 1994, Gzhan dga's father was named Rgyal khang Dkon mchog rnam rgyal. (Khenpo Chöga is from the same Rgyal khang family.) The Rgyal khang Dpon Nyi ma don grub (Bodhnath 1994), now residing at Rdzogs chen, stated that Gzhan dga' was the son of Rgyal khang Dpal ldan. He further stated that Gzhan dga's brothers were the previous Rdzogs chen Dpon slob Rinpoche and Rgyal khang Dpon Rnam grol. The latter's two sons were Thub bstan zla (father of Chöga) and Padma dam chos. Rgyal khang Dpal ldan's brother was Rgyal khang Dbang rgyal, who was the father of the three sons Bskal bzang (a chieftain), Bzang po, and Karma (also a chieftain). Also present in the Rgyal khang family ca. the 1870s was a *mag pa* named Bsod nams rnam rgyal.
- 102 Khenpo Chöga 1994. He heard these accounts from the old lama of Rdzogs chen monastery Bde chen rnam grol (b. ca. 1898).
- 103 According to Matthieu Ricard, Bodhnath 1994, O rgyan bstan 'dzin nor bu's two main disciples besides Gzhan dga' were: (1) Mkhan po Yon tan rgya mtsho (Yon dga'), author of very lucid commentaries on the *Yon tan rin po che'i mdzod*, *Rgyud gsang ba snying po*, *Sdom gsum rnam nges*, and *Dbu ma rgyan*; and (2) Mkhan po Kun bzang dpal ldan, author of a number of works, including a *Spyod 'jug* commentary and a biography of Dpal sprul. Both of these *mkhan pos* had also been disciples of Dpal sprul.

- 104 This information on Gzhan dga's teachers was told to Gene Smith by Dezhung Rinpoche in the early 1960s. See E. Gene Smith (1969), vol. 2, p. 202. Further interesting information is given in DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fols. 8b–9a and 10a–b.
- 105 According to Khenpo Chöga 1994, the Gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba who sponsored the carving of Rong zom's works onto blocks was not Gzhan dga', but rather the Gzhan phan mtha' yas Sprul sku, a lama who spent most of his time in retreat.
- 106 Khenpo Chöga 1994.
- 107 Gzhan dga's thirteen commentaries have been reprinted more than once. One set was published by Konchog Lhadrepa from Delhi in 1987 in seven volumes, under the title "The Thirteen Great Treatises of Mkhan po Gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba."
- 108 According to Dezhung Rinpoche, the best student of Gzhan dga' among the Bka' brgyud pa was 'Bo Gangs dkar Rinpoche, who had also studied under Kong sprul's student gNas gsar Bkra shis chos 'phel, the *mkhan po* of Dpal spungs monastery. His most outstanding Sakyapa student was Sde gzhung A 'jam Rinpoche. Among his Rnying ma students, the most outstanding was Gser mkhar Chos grags, who was one of the main disciples when Sga ston gave the *Lam 'bras* in Mi nyag in 1928. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a. Some said he was even more learned than his teacher. Other outstanding Rnying ma students included the *mkhan pos* Lha rgyal, Padma theg mchog blo ldan, and Thub bstan snyan grags of Rdzogs chen.
- 109 Gzhan dga' himself composed a verse expressing these sentiments. One version of this verse runs (as quoted by Bsam gran blo gros in Blo gter dbang po's biography, p. 318.4, 41b), "Ah! I began religious life in the esoteric Old-Translation Tradition. I studied a bit of the learned masters of India. By examining with an impartial mind, I gained trust in the doctrine of glorious Sakya." *e ma gsang chen snga 'gyur chos sgor zhugs// 'phags yul mkhas pa'i gzhung la cung zad sbyangs// phyogs lhung med pa'i sems kyis brtag byas pas// dpal ldan sa skya'i chos la yid ches skyes//*.
- 110 Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho'i*, p. 182.3 (91b).
- 111 DR 1985.
- 112 See the biography of the Tai Si tu pa by Zur mang Bstan 'dzin Sprul sku and Ku se Gser ljongs Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs dge legs (Gangtok, 1976), pp. 53.1, 54.1, and 56.1ff.
- 113 EGS notebook from the early 1960s. On Bkras thong Mda' dpon 'Gyur med rgya mtsho, see L. Petech (1973), *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, p. 90f.
- 114 EGS notebook from the early 1960s. On Thon pa Don 'grub rgyal po, see *ibid.*, p. 69.
- 115 DR Autobiographical sketch 2. On the *'Dul ba lnga bcu pa*, cf. Peking 5630: *Dge*

sbyong gi kā ri kā lnga bcu pa'i tshig gi brjed byang du byas pa (Skt. *Śramaṇapañ-cāśatkārikā Padābhīsmaraṇa*) by Kamalaśīla.

- 116 Also studying at Jyekundo under Gzhan dga' that year was the young Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse, then just ten years of age.
- 117 Dge 'dun bzang po was possibly Dezhung Rinpoche's first cousin twice removed.
- 118 Dam pa Rinpoche had sponsored the printing of the Gzhan dga' *mchan 'grel* of the *Pratimokṣasūtra* (*So sor thar pa'i mdo*), with a printing colophon by Rgya mkhar tshang Bsod nams dpal grub, a *gnyer chen* of Derge (a layman paṇḍita who died ca. 1910–1920, when in his forties).
- 119 PhLh 1994. After completing his tenure as *mkhan po*, Bla ma Dge 'dun went to the 'Dzi mda' hermitage. Being a brother of the “banned” 'Jam rgyal Rin po che, he did not go to the Tharlam assembly. ('Jam rgyal as a young monk had attempted to institute a stricter monastic rule at Tharlam and insisted on the usual financial support from the local political administrator. His reforms were resisted by a group of older recalcitrant monks, and his frank dealings with the local political administrator antagonized his opponents so much that they overpowered, beat, and locked him up—with the support of the Dra'u Dpon chieftain in Jyekundo. 'Jam rgyal fled and was banned from the monastery. Many years later, the Dra'u Dpon formally apologized.)
 In this period there is said to have arisen a doctrinal controversy between the Sakyapa and Dge lugs pa fanned by letters circulated by the Ldan ma Blo chos Sprul sku. Bla ma Dge 'dun consulted Sga ston, who was then also at the retreat. The latter said, “If he makes such mistakes in his wording of the argument, then of course he will make mistakes in the meaning.” To defend the Sakyapa doctrines, Bla ma Dge 'dun went to debate at the nearby Dge lugs pa monastery of Ra nyag. This he could arrange through his first cousin from the 'O rdzong Bru pa tshang, then a powerful monk at Ra nyag. At the debate he defeated one of the monastery's best geshes, and in victory he rode around the courtyard on the shoulders of his disgraced opponent. He said, “This being able to ride on the nape of a first-class geshe from the great Central Tibetan seminaries is due to the grace (*bka' drin*) of Go rams pa!”
- 120 PhLh 1994. For lineages transmitted to Bla ma Dge 'dun from the Sa skya nun 'Chi med padma phrin las and from Bla ma Dge 'dun bzang po to Ngag dbang blo gros rin chen of Nā lendra, guru to H.H. the Sakya Trizin, see for instance Ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen dpal 'bar, vol. 2, pp. 83f., 88, and 90.
- 121 Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho was the son of Bla ma Dge 'dun's brother Skal bzang phrin las (Skal dga'). More details on his later activities are given in a subsequent chapter. He was later called “Brug or 'Brug pa Mkhan po” in Central Tibet and Gtsang but he was known as the “Lab kha Mkhan po” in the Sga district of Khams. According to PhLh 1994, another co-disciple under Bla ma Dge 'dun at this time was another cousin, the Zhe 'dzang monk Dbang 'dus, who was the son of Dge 'dun's brother Lcags khra.

- 122 DR Spring 1979.
- 123 DR Spring 1979.
- 124 AC September 1992.
- 125 AC 1994.
- 126 The future 'Brug pa Mkhan po (see note 121 above) was originally a monk of Thub bstan Dgon, a monastery on the other side of the 'Bri chu in the territory governed by the Lab Be canḡ, subchieftains under the Dra'u Dpon. The Lab Be canḡ's territory included the so-called Ma gsum sde khag brgyad.
- 127 DK and AC September 1992.
- 128 DR Spring 1979.
- 129 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 130 DK and AC September 1992.
- 131 KN and JR 1987.
- 132 According to KN and JR 1987, Gzhan dḡa' Rinpoche also gave him extensive instructions and advice, which Dezhung Rinpoche set down in writing, the teaching being entitled "Instructions to the Youth Dkon mchog lhun grub" (*Gzhon nu dkon mchog lhun grub la gdams pa*). A copy of this survives thanks to the efforts of Cyrus Stearns. In the accessible minor writings of Gzhan dḡa', *Kun gzigs mahā paṇḡi ta rje bla ma gzhan phan chos kyī snang ba'i gsung thor bu las zhal gdams*, fols. 11b–13b, there also exists a similar brief instruction to Sde gzhung A 'jam, in the colophon to which Gzhan dḡa' mentions the latter as "the trulku of Lithang Sde gzhung, highly distinguished by learned, pious, and kind qualities, the youth Kun dḡa' rgyal mtshan" (*li thang zla gzhung sprul pa'i sku mkhas btsun bzang po'i yon tan gyis mngon par mtho ba gzhon nu kun dḡa' rgyal mtshan*).
- 133 According to MK 1993, the *mkhan po* was teaching the whole cycle at the time. Dezhung Rinpoche presented himself and explained that he was a Sakyapa monk. The master asked him whether he had received any of the initiations of the *Rgyud gang ba snying po* or *Snying thig*. Dezhung Rinpoche answered that he had not. "You should have received some major initiation," said the teacher. "What else have you received?" "The *Lam 'bras*." "Well, that would be enough." According to DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 1, Dezhung Rinpoche's uncle Ngag dbang nyi ma also received precisely these teachings from Gzhan dḡa', as well as Dpal sprul's introductory instructions on the *Snying thig* cycle entitled *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*) and the Rdzogs chen instruction *Khrid yig ye shes bla ma*.
- 134 AC 1994.
- 135 DR 1975 (GM notes).
- 136 According to Phan bde Lhag pa 1993, there had already been some talk that

Dezhung Rinpoche was the rebirth of the Phan bde Mkhan po Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1863–1899), sixty-first abbot of Ngor in 1895–98. But these rumors were squelched when the Sakya prelate Drag shul phrin las rin chen recognized one of his sons (probably Ngag dbang kun dga' rgyal mtshan, ca. 1903 or 1905–ca. 1940) as the latter's rebirth. Later, Dezhung Rinpoche's distant cousin the "Brug pa Mkhan po" Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho repeatedly claimed to have been the rebirth of the short-lived Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.

- 137 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 108 (54b), explains A 'jam Rinpoche's other reasons for going to Central Tibet and Na lendra. Rab brtan dbang rgyal had also gone previously to Central Tibet ca. 1886, as recorded in DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 12b. At that time the family had made a stop at Rdzong gsar along the way.
- 138 The autobiographical writings of Drag shul phrin las rin chen have been published: *Rdo rje 'chang drag shul phrin las rin chen gyi rtogs brjod* (Dehra Dun: Sakya Centre, 1974), 2 vols. On this source, see Janet Gyatso (1992), p. 478, n. 51. A good picture of Drag shul phrin las rin chen and his entourage ca. 1935 has been published in S. Batchelor, *The Tibet Guide* (London: 1987), p. 338.
- 139 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 111f (56a–56b). For references to Drag shul phrin las's "Great Procession to Ü" (*dbus phebs chen mo*) in the summer of 1920, see the latter's *Sa skya gdung rabs kha skong*, pp. 843–848. He returned to Sakya on the twelfth day of the twelfth lunar month.
- 140 KN and JR 1987. Evidently Drag shul phrin las also sent Dezhung Rinpoche a ceremonial scarf and gift of felicitation.
- 141 Also in 1921, the Panchen Rinpoche fled to China via the northern nomadic route, following his dispute with the Dalai Lama's government.
- 142 KN and JR 1987.
- 143 A 'jam Rinpoche himself was also a trulku, as well as a noble monk from the Sde gzhung ma chieftain's family.
- 144 Dam pa Rinpoche had been a co-disciple of A 'jam during their studies under Mkhan chen Gzhan dga'. Many years later, in 1949, Dezhung Rinpoche met again and received numerous teachings from Dam pa Rinpoche at Gser mdog can in Gtsang.
- 145 The *Tiyya* "Archer" or *Pusya* "Flower" asterism corresponds to the constellation Cancer and is also called *Sidhya* "Auspicious" in Sanskrit.
- 146 KN and JR 1987.
- 147 This forms part of a brief account about the Dezhung trulkus that he wrote in reply to a question from E. Gene Smith.
- 148 For a sketch of Sde gzhung Chos 'phel's life, see Blo gros phun tshogs's history of the Rdzong gsar Khams bye seminary, "Khams bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa," *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992), p. 123.

- 149 Once Sde gzhung Chos 'phel had sold a number of books in order to finance the carving of new blocks. A thief made off with this money before he could have the blocks carved. Later, when someone had found out who the thief was, he did not go back to collect the money because, according to the Vinaya, if you have mentally given up hope of reclaiming a stolen article, you may not go back later to collect it. (The money was later recovered through the efforts of A 'jam Rinpoche.) KA 1994.
- 150 KA 1994. According to Dezhung Rinpoche, Sde gzhung Chos 'phel wrote several commentaries, at least three of which were printed at Rdzong gsar: the *Kun rig rnam bshad*, *Spyod 'jug 'grel pa*, and *Spyi ljon gsal byed*.
- 151 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a: "Saying, 'Your intelligence is a good one!' he was very kind and affectionate" (*khyed rang go rig legs po zbig 'dug gsungs mnyes mnyes mdzad*!).
- 152 DR September 1978 (CS notes) described how Sga ston often ate rock candy, and how his cheeks used to bulge with a piece of it when he was giving initiations and other teachings. Sometimes he would doze off while performing recitations, and a piece would fall from his mouth to his chest. He never drank tea because it was too strong and would disturb his body's equilibrium.
- 153 The monk Mgron zla Dge slong 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan was also a faithful servant and disciple of Sga ston. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 4b.
- 154 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 35a–37a.
- 155 It is assumed the Sga ston had been Drung Tshul khirms rgyal mtshan. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 4a–b. According to DR August 1978 (CS notes), there had been a very large image of Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes in the old main temple of the monastery. Legs pa Rinpoche had made offerings and performed one hundred thousand prostrations before this image, and had made sincere supplications for his blessings. In this way he was favored by Kun dga' ye shes and remembered receiving the *Lam 'bras* from him.
- 156 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 36b–37a.
- 157 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a.
- 158 AC 1993.
- 159 KN and JR 1987. This was later interpreted to have been a prediction of his subsequent journey to North America.
- 160 JS and JE (1990), p. 20.
- 161 DK 1987. But surely some change for the better must have attended the marriage of Dezhung Rinpoche's sister to the *sa 'go* (= *rdzong dpon*, "rdzong-administrator" or "district magistrate") official at Jyekundo.
- 162 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 37a–b.
- 163 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a.

- 164 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 37b.
- 165 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 38a.
- 166 KN and JR 1987 stated that during the Sarvavid-Vairocana (*Kun rig*) retreat, Dezhung Rinpoche had a peculiar dream: A round airplane landed and many white people emerged, who commenced to take blood samples and extract substances from Tibetan people's bodies. When he asked Legs pa Rinpoche what the significance of this dream was, the latter told him, "It is a sign of purification." Later in his life in America when he had blood tests done, he remembered that dream.
- 167 KN and JR 1987.
- 168 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 38b.
- 169 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 38b.
- 170 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 2: *rdor dril rgya tsha nyag dpus dag*. DR August 1978 (CS notes) mentions a vajra and bell of Sga ston.
- 171 KN and JR 1987.
- 172 The text: *mchog sprul rin po che byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma'i zhabs brtan bden tshig grub pa'i dbyangs snyan zhes bya ba bzhuḡs sol // na mo mañjughoṣāya// byams mgon gnyis pa rab 'byams chos kyi rjel// kun dga' ye shes bstan pa gsal mdzad pa// mkhyen brtse nus pa'i dbang phyug 'gro ba'i mgon// yongs 'dzin smra ba'i nyi ma zhabs brtan gsol//*
rnam dag sdom pa gsum gyis rgyud phyug cing// rnam mang thos bsam sgom pa'i pha mthar son// rnam kun 'chad rtsod rtsom pas dus 'da' zhing// rnam dkar phrin las rtag tu rgyas gyur cig//
mchog gi sprul sku bskal brgyar 'tsho gyur cig// thugs kyi bzhed don ma lus lhun grub nas// mkhyen rab dbang phyug rje bisun sa skya pa'i// bstan pa'i nyi ma srid na 'bar gyur cig//
ces pa 'di ni shākya'i dge slong ngag dbang legs pas re smon bden tshig snying gi dkyil nas zhus pa de de bzhin du 'grub par gyur cig//
- 173 According to DR September 1978 (CS notes), Sga ston started the prayer with the words "illuminator of the teachings of Kun dga' ye shes, the second Maitreya, great religious scholar and master of the Dharma" (*byams mgon gnyis pa rab 'byams chos kyi rjel// kun dga' ye shes bstan pa gsal mdzad pa//*) in the hopes that Dezhung Rinpoche would continue the teaching traditions of Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes.
- 174 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 40a. According to KN and JR 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche wrote several such verses of celebration or song lyrics. One was composed at the end of the *Lam 'bras* teaching when he was about twenty-eight. It was structured around the three concepts of "basis, path, and fruit" (*gzhi lam 'bras bu*). He wrote it in difficult six-syllable lines, and it was recited back and forth between two groups (as a *shags glu*). Some years later, at the completion of the great images at Tharlam and the celebration ceremony after their consecration, he is also said

to have composed a song. On the important role of song and dancing in the local lay culture, see JS and JE (1990), p. 30.

- 175 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 40a.
- 176 As Dezhung Rinpoche explained (DR Autobiographical sketch. 1, p. 2), “Since the monastery of Ngor E waṃ Chos Idan is the head monastery of most Sakyapa monasteries in Khams and Central Tibet, we monks at Tharlam also had to go there [for ordination and teachings]. Each of the heads of the four abbatial palaces occupied the abbot’s throne for three years each, and every year the abbot would kindly bestow the three classes of vows on all the incoming monks from other regions. But apart from that, due to the declining times, studies in sūtra, tantra, and the general fields of knowledge were not offered there in a big way. Therefore I postponed for a while my journey to Ngor in order to study [in Khams].”
- 177 DR Spring 1979.
- 178 Since the beginning of the answer included the powerful syllable *hūṃ*, it was an excellent sign.
- 179 In the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti* commentary in the Tanjur (Peking ed. no. 2114), *’Phags pa ’jam dpal gyi mtshan yang dag par brjod pa’i ’grel pa dri ma med pa’i ’od*, vol. 48 (*rgyud ’grel ca*), fol. 219b.2, the phrase is so explained: *lha yi bla ni gza’ phur bu’i gzugs yin pa’i phyir!* “the teacher of gods since he has the nature of the planet Brhaspati.” The main commentaries in the Peking edition are in volume *rgyud ’grel ca*, works 2111–2116.
- 180 DR Spring 1979.
- 181 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 2.
- 182 DR Spring 1979.
- 183 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 14b.3, describes Sga ston’s earlier studies of Sanskrit grammar, metrics, and poetics under ’O rdzong Dge bshes in the 1880s. At that time the latter had taught Sga ston the Kālapa system (following A kya yongs ’dzin’s commentary) as well as the *Snyan ngag me long* (*Kāvyaḍarśa*) and *Sdeb sbyor rin ’byung* (*Chandoratnākara*). Later, because Sga ston had found Sanskrit grammar so difficult, he studied it by himself for six months and then approached the *dge bshes* again with his questions, some of which the latter could not answer completely.
- 184 DR Autobiographical sketch 2, p. 2.
- 185 KN and JR 1987. The Glong thang ’Jig rten sgrol ma lha khang was one of the ancient Ru gnon temples erected by Srong btsan sgam po, and it turns up also in lists of the Dharma-colleges in the ninth century. See Helga Uebach (1990), “On Dharma-Colleges and Their Teachers in the Ninth-Century Tibetan Empire,” p. 404. See also R. A. Stein (1961), *Tribus*, pp. 72–77. In the early eleventh century the Paṇḍita Smṛtijñāna founded a school for Abhidharma studies at this temple, after living incognito for years as a shepherd.

- 186 KN and JR 1987.
- 187 According to CS 1994, A 'jam Sprul sku requested Sga ston to compose an abridged text (based on that of the Ngor Mkhan po Dkon mchog dpal ldan) for the benefit of the older men and women of Sde gzhung who could not do the longer practice. The text, entitled *'Pho ba'i ngag 'don nyung bsdu phrin las mkha' khyab*, survives and was taught by Dezhung Rinpoche privately in Seattle in the early 1980s.
- 188 DR Ipoh, January 1982, (CS notes).
- 189 DR Spring 1979.
- 190 For 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros's biography, see Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho'i khyab bdag rje btsun bla ma 'jam dbyangs chos kyi blo gros ris med bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gtsug lag lung rigs nyi ma smra ba'i seng ge dpal bzang po'i rnam thar cha shas tsam brjod pa ngo mtshar yongs 'dus dga' tshal*, fol. 217ff. (pp. 1–414). A less detailed biography by Kun dga' dbang phyug is found in Chos kyi blo gros's *Collected Works*, vol. 9.
- 191 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros's main teachers included Kaḥ thog Si tu, Zhe chen Rgyal tshab, A 'dzom 'Brug pa Sna tshogs rang grol, Rdo grub chen 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma, Gter chen Las rab gling pa, and Dpon slob Blo gter dbang po. See the brief biography in Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet*, vol. 10, p. 583.
- 192 Nam mkha'i nor bu is said to have written a biography of Mkhan po Mkhyen rab chos kyi 'od zer (unpublished). In the brief autobiography of Nam mkha'i nor bu in the latter's work *Gzi yi phreng ba* (Dharamsala, 1982), p. 51, it is stated that Mkhan po Mkhyen rab was born in 1901. Dezhung Rinpoche, however, stated several times that he was indeed born in an ox year, but twelve years earlier in the earth-ox year. That would have made him thirty-five years old in 1924, instead of twenty-three. Mkhan po Mkhyen rab was still alive in the early 1960s.
- 193 Mkhyen rab chos kyi 'od zer also served as *mkhan po* of Dbon stod monastery in Sde dge, a Sakyapa establishment of about two hundred monks. For a sketch of his life, see Blo gros phun tshogs's history of the Rdzong gсар Khams bye seminary, "Khams bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa," *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992), p. 121. Cf. T. G. Dhongthog (1974), *Dus kyi sbrang char*, p. 48. He wrote a long gloss-commentary on Dignāga's *Pramāṇasamuccaya* that was printed at Rdzong gсар. He also wrote a biography of his master Mkhan chen Gzhan dga', which Dezhung Rinpoche had never actually seen but had heard about (EGS notebook, May 1962).
- 194 KN and JR 1987; these particular studies are not noted in the autobiographical writings. Dezhung Rinpoche studied under four of the first five seminary masters (*mkhan po*) of the Rdzong gсар Khams bye bshad grwa, and had other links with some of the remaining ones. Based on the article "Khams bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa," *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992), the first nine "seminary masters" were:

- 1) Rdzogs chen Mkhan po Gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba (Mkhan chen Gzhan dga'; 1871–1927), tenure ca. 1918–1919
 - 2) Dbon stod pa 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab (Mkhan po Mkhyen rab; 1889–1960s, in Chinese prison?), tenure ca. 1920–1929
 - 3) Sga Bla ma 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan (1870–1940), tenure late 1929–1930
 - 4) Brag g.yab Blo gros rgya mtsho (d. early 1960s, in Chinese prison?), tenure ca. 1930–1935
 - 5) Sde gzhung Kun dga' rnam rgyal (= Sde gzhung Chos 'phel; 1880s–mid-1950s), tenure ca. 1936–1940
 - 6) Khang dmar ba Rin chen, tenure 1940–late 1943
 - 7) Mdo srid pa Thub bstan rgyal mtshan (1902–1971, d. in Chinese prison), tenure late 1943–1950
 - 8) Mi nyag pa Dam chos (b. 1908?, d. 1960s?), tenure 1951–1955
 - 9) Brag g.yab pa Mkhyen rab seng ge (b. 1911), tenure 1956–1958
- (Cf. the slightly different order in T. G. Dhongthog [1974], p. 48.)
- 195 DR 1979; AC 1994.
 - 196 KN and JR 1987.
 - 197 Dran 'khor was one of the seven main noble families of Ldan ma.
 - 198 Grong nyin Tshe dbang bla ma was a learned secretary and tutor for grammar, poetics, etc., to the Dpal spungs Si tu. According to KA 1996, he was from Ku se Gser ljongs in Derge district, and was the nephew of the famed Sanskrit scholar Yongs 'dzin Lhag bsam rgyal mtshan and uncle of the Gser ljongs Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs dge legs.
 - 199 The Tibetan: *rgya gar bla ma de rgya gar gyi a tsa ra redl*.
 - 200 Evidently the Dpal yul Bla ma had originally belonged to the Rnying ma monastery of Dpal yul.
 - 201 Probably Sde gzhung Kun bzang was (Lithang Skya shul) Sprul sku Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma, whom Sde gzhung Rinpoche would meet in Derge and Sde gzhung.
 - 202 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a, described these studies as: *sgra ka la pa'i ri mo'i go khrid*.
 - 203 DR Spring 1979.
 - 204 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 22b.
 - 205 On the Mnga' ris Sprul sku and Mnga' ris Bla brang at Rdzong gsar, see Blo gros phun tshogs, *Rdzong gsar bkra shis*, p. 57f. (29a–29b). 'Jam dbyangs shes rab rgya

mtsho (Byams pa kun bzang shes rab, 1877–1942) was the first Mnga' ris Sprul sku. Before that the lamas were often appointed by Ngor as successors to Mnga' ris rab 'byams pa Tshul khriims 'od zer, founder of the *bla brang*. In 1884 (?) Sga ston had been the student of the Mnga' ris Chos rje Kun dga' 'jam dbyangs at Rdzong gsar, receiving the whole *Collection of Sādhana*s (*Sgrub thabs kun btus*) compilation from him. See A 'jam, *Bla ma rdo rje 'chang*, p. 11 (6a). This lama succeeded 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po as head (*khri pa*) of Rdzong gsar monastery, and he was also a disciple of Dpon slob Blo gter dbang po. The second Mnga' ris Sprul sku, Dil mgo Tshe ring bkra shis, was born in 1945. The death of a previous Mnga' ris Bla ma of Rdzong gsar in 1856 is recorded in D. Schuh (1973c), p. lix.

- 206 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 4ob.
- 207 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, gives Dezhung Rinpoche's own account of 'Jam rgyal's life. For a briefer sketch of his life, see Blo gros phun tshogs's history of the Rdzong gsar Khams bye seminary, "Khams bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa," *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992), p. 121. See also note 119.
- 208 Dezhung Rinpoche always referred to 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan as his *a zhang* or, loosely, "maternal uncle," but he was not his maternal uncle or even great-uncle. It seems that Dezhung Rinpoche used this flexible term to indicate a similar senior, distant relationship on his mother's side, such as that of first cousin twice removed.
- 209 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 14a.
- 210 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 4a.
- 211 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 10a.
- 212 DR, *'Jam rgyal*, pp. 36.6–37.1.
- 213 DR (ca. 1962) notebook of EGS. One informant said that eventually because of these extensive block-carving activities, a section of the Derge printery was named the "'Jam rgyal Room" (*'Jam rgyal khang*) after 'Jam rgyal Rinpoche. If so, no trace of such an arrangement still exists at the Derge Par khang, according to a recent visitor there.
- 214 'Jam rgyal Rinpoche later requested his attendant to speak the name Blo gter dbang po into his ears at the time of his death. Blo gter dbang po's biography by Bsam gtan blo gros, entitled *Gsang bdag rdo rje 'dzin pa 'jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po'i rnam par thar pa cha tsam brjod pa mchog sbyin sgo gsum rang grol dge legs nor bu'i ljon bzang skal bzang lha yi dga' ston*, was published with the *Lam 'bras slob bshad* (Derge ed.), vol. 8 (*nya*). Blo gter dbang po's collected works came to thirteen volumes.
- 215 According to DR 1975, Brag ri Chos rje 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi nyi ma was the elder half-brother of Dam pa Rinpoche, having the same father but a different mother. He was a major disciple of Blo gter dbang po and a teacher of Dam pa Rinpoche.

- 216 See DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 22b.5. See also T. G. Dhongthog, *Dus kyi sbrang char*, p. 48, and Blo gros phun tshogs, "Kham's bye bshad grwa'i lo rgyus mdo tsam brjod pa," *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig*, vol. 18–1 (1992), pp. 121–122.
- 217 JR and KN 1987.
- 218 DR, *Sde dge rgyal rabs*, p. 17 (Kolmaś [1988], p. 142).
- 219 Evidently the "greater and lesser *Vinayakārikā*" are the *'Dul ba gsum brgya pa* of Śākyaprabha and the *Śramaṇera kārikās* of Nāgārjuna.
- 220 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 20b.
- 221 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, p. 47.5.
- 222 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 22a.
- 223 Founded by the fifteenth-century master Thang stong rgyal po, the great monastery of Lhun grub steng contained within its structure not only the various halls and temples of the monastery, but also the royal palace and Derge printing house.
- 224 Ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros's biography by Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros was entitled *Mkhan chen rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros kyi rnam par thar pa bkra shis 'dod 'jo*. It was published from Derge Dgon chen blocks, and was reprinted by the Sakya Centre (Dehra Dun: 1983). According to DR (EGS notes), this master was said by some to be the rebirth of the Sde dge Yab chen. He reportedly composed a biography of Mañjuśrī in poetical verses, which was printed at Derge. He also sponsored at Derge the carving of the blocks for the collected works of the Ngor Mkhan po Dkon mchog lhun grub (1497–1557). The text was based on a manuscript from Ngor, and the work was completed in the wood-rat year (1924). According to Dezhung Rinpoche, the edition was quite poor, never having been properly corrected. The work had been directed by nephews of Ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros, stingy young men who did not treat the block-carvers properly.
- 225 As Dbyar gnas Mkhan po ("abbot of the rainy-season retreat"), Bsam gtan blo gros was an incumbent of one of several major ecclesiastical offices at the Derge Dgon chen, whose occupants changed from time to time: (1) Shar Bla ma ("Eastern Master"), (2) Nub Bla ma ("Western Master"), (3) Dbyar gnas Mkhan po, and (4) Rgyal mtshan Bla ma ("Victory-Banner Master"). The Shar Bla ma and Nub Bla ma were each in charge of a protector's chapel (*mgon khang*), one to the east and one to the west. In one chapel the rituals of the Tshar pa tradition were performed; in the other, the Ngor pa rituals. After serving as head lama of one of these chapels, one could go on to become the Rdo rje Slob dpon, head of the whole Dgon chen (KKW 1994). According to Dezhung Rinpoche (who heard this from Bsam gtan blo gros), the first Shar Bla ma was Grub dbang Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (fl. eighteenth c.), one of the outstanding disciples of Rmor chen Ngag dbang kun dga' lhun grub (1654–1726). (See also E. G. Smith [1969], vol. 1, p. 49.) The first Nub Bla ma was Zhu chen Bkra shis dbang phyug. During Dezhung

- Rinpoche's studies in Derge, these Dgon chen lamas were: (1) Shar Bla ma Kun dga' dbang phyug, (2) Nub Bla ma 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab (d. by early 1960s), (3) Dbyar gnas Mkhan po Bsam gtan blo gros, and (4) Rgyal mtshan Bla ma Chos grags rgya mtsho. Also at the monastery was the Dgon chen Mkhyen brtse 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi dbang phyug (1910–1960s?), a devoted meditator originally recognized as the Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse incarnation. He left Rdzong gsar after troubles from the business manager of Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros. His teachers included Brag ri Chos rje 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi nyi ma, Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros, 'Jam rgyal Rin po che, and Bsam gtan blo gros. After further troubles at the Dgon chen, this master withdrew to the high retreat center of Sga len steng, where he became known as Sga len steng Mkhyen brtse. His nephew was Chos rgyal Sprul sku, Nam mkha'i nor bu.
- 226 DR, *Sde dge rgyal rabs*, p. 17 (Kolmaš [1988], p. 142).
- 227 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 40b. According to KN and JR 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche at this time in Derge also received other empowerments and instructions from Mkhan chen Ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros, including for *Dur khrod* (*bdag po?*) and for the goddesses Red and White Sarasvati.
- 228 The name “Mus pa Mkhan po” derived from the fact that after serving as Ngor abbot he settled on an estate in Mus district of northern Gtsang.
- 229 PhLh 1994. Zla ba nor bu was born in Gtsang Mdo mkhar, east of Rta nag.
- 230 AC 1993. Ngor Khang gsar Dam pa Rinpoche later remarked that he regretted that Dezhung Rinpoche had not become Phan bde zhabs drung and abbot. “Such an abbot would have been very good for the Ngor pa tradition!” he said.
- 231 AC 1994. This was also the end of Ngag dbang rgyal mtshan's role as Dezhung Rinpoche's attendant. He evidently returned to Sga pa in the next few months.
- 232 A brief biography of Khu nu Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan exists in Tibetan, written by Dngos grub Ga sha ba: *Khu nu rin po che'i mdzad rnam snying bsdud* (1990), and also a longer one: *Khu nu rin po che'i rnam thar thar pa'i them skas*, which includes a list of his works (p. 76f.). Dngos grub Ga sha ba gives Khu nu Bla ma's birth year as 1894, whereas Dezhung Rinpoche stated several times that his birth year was the fire-monkey year (1896). See also the biographical sketch in English in K. Anrup and S. Lall (1987), “Negi Lama and His Contribution to Buddhism,” *Tibetan Review*, vol. 22, no. 8 (August 1987), pp. 15–16, and the unpublished biography in Hindi by Roshan Lala Negi they cite. This Khu nu Bla ma is also discussed in an unpublished study of Kinnaur scholars by Mr. Tashi Tsering Josayma.
- 233 Dezhung Rinpoche in 1962/63 related to E. Gene Smith one lineage of 'Bras ljongs O rgyan bstan 'dzin for the study of the Sanskrit lexicon (the *Zhe drung skad dod prajñā*), which probably is a main lineage also for the related Sanskrit grammar and poetic studies: Zhu chen Tshul khirms rin chen (1697–1769), Zhe chen drung yig Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan, Dge rtse Paṇḍita 'Gyur med tshe dbang

- mchog grub (b. 1764?), Zhe chen Dbon sprul 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal, Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899), Yongs 'dzin Lhag bsam rgyal mtshan (tutor to the Karma pa Mkha' khyab rdo rje), and 'Bras ljongs O rgyan bstan 'dzin. (On Yongs 'dzin Lhag bsam rgyal mtshan's involvement ca. 1895 in the Demo Affair, see E. Gene Smith [1970], note 56.) An alternate lineage was from Zhe chen Dbon sprul 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal to 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892), Ngor Dpon slob Ngag dbang legs grub (b. 1811; named also 'Jam dbyangs smra ba'i nyi ma tshangs sras rgyas pa'i lang tsho, he was actually older than Mkhyen brtse and was his master for other teachings), and then 'Bras ljongs O rgyan bstan 'dzin. Dezhung Rinpoche later (in the mid-1940s) received this lineage also from 'Bo Gangs dkar Rinpoche in Mi nyag, who had studied under Yongs 'dzin Lhag bsam rgyal mtshan's student gNas gsar Bla ma Bkra shis chos 'phel. According to Dezhung Rinpoche, 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po had written a history of Sanskrit grammar studies in Tibet and perhaps in India (*Sgra chos 'byung*). A similar history, the *Tha snyad rig gnas lnga'i byung tshul*, by Dngos grub rgya mtsho, a disciple of Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho (1523–1596), has appeared in the *Gangs can rig mdzod* series (no. 4, 1987, pp. 253–322).
- 234 Chos 'phel rdo rje (1985) mentions, p. 37, Khu nu Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan's having been specially invited by the Panchen Chos kyi nyi ma to teach at Tashilhunpo's school. See Chos 'phel rdo rje (1985), "De snga'i bod kyi slob grwa'i slob gso'i skor che long tsam gleng ba," *Bod ljong zhib 'jug*, vol. 1985, no. 4, pp. 30–42.
- 235 In that period, Derge district had come under the control of the Central Tibetan government.
- 236 Called a "tho le," this very small donkey, according to AC, had been brought to Derge and given him by Uncle Ngag dbang nyi ma.
- 237 AC March 1992. Dezhung Rinpoche's mother went back first to Derge and Rdzong gsar and then traveled home with others. From Rdzogs chen the Rdza chu kha route would have been much easier. The "direct" route from Derge to Sga khog (to Tharlam, a fifteen-day journey on foot) was said to consist of crossing "nine gorges and nine rivers," a very difficult route, unlike the flatter, more easterly route through the nomadic regions of Rdza chu kha. According to AC, his mother only went once to Derge, but this is difficult to harmonize with the chronology as I now have it.
- 238 Originally founded in 1159, Kaḥ thog monastery had been restored and expanded in 1656, and eventually held some eight hundred monks and seven incarnate lamas. On the lamas of this monastery, see H. Eimer (1979), "Äbte und Lehrer von Kaḥ thog," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, vol. 13. The rebirths of the Kaḥ thog Si tu have been given by E. G. Smith (1968), p. 22.
- 239 Khu nu Bla ma was the author of an annotation-commentary (*mchan 'grel*) to the *Dag yig ngag gi sgron me*, known as the "annotation-commentary of the Indian

- Lama" (*Rgya gar bla ma'i mchan 'grel*). See T. G. Dhongthog (1974), p. 40. He wrote this commentary evidently in connection with his teaching at the Derge court. It was printed at Derge.
- 240 DR July 1979.
- 241 Zur mang Bstan 'dzin Sprul sku and Ku se Gser ljongs Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs dge legs, *Tai si tu pa'i nam thar*, p. 80.6. According to Khenpo Chöga 1994, a great snowfall occurred at the time of his death. The party coming from Dpal spungs had to throw down felt mats over the deep snowdrifts to make a path for the yaks. They brought his remains to Dpal spungs, where they were cremated using sandalwood for fuel.
- 242 LKG 1994.
- 243 LKG 1994.
- 244 Zur mang Bstan 'dzin Sprul sku and Ku se Gser ljongs Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs dge legs, *Tai si tu pa'i nam thar*, p. 79.4, "[Dpal spungs Si tu] had numerous stūpas built, the chief among which was the three-storied reliquary stūpa of the Mañjuśrī-lord, the omniscient Gzhan phan snang ba" *'jam mgon kun gzigs gzhan phan snang ba'i gdung rten bcas thog tshad gsum gyis gtsos mchod rten grang mangl*.
- 245 DR 1979.
- 246 AC March 1992.
- 247 DR 1979.
- 248 DR, *'Jam rgyal nam thar*, fol. 24a.1. Bsam gtan blo gros, according to Dezhung Rinpoche, was a very staunch Ngor pa and was not really a "Ris med pa." According to Dezhung Rinpoche, he passed away at Dngul phu near Derge Dgon chen in Dezhung Rinpoche's twenty-sixth year (1931). In the biography of Bsam gtan blo gros by Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros, *Mkhan chen rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros kyi nam par thar pa bkra shis 'dod 'jo*, p. 62 (31b), there is a reference to these teachings given in the fifth lunar month of the fire-hare year (1927): "In the fifth month of that year, [Bsam gtan blo gros] went to Grwa sgang. To a gathering of about seventy lamas, trulkus, and monks, headed by Yang srid Mchog sprul [Chos kyi blo gros?], 'Jam rgyal Rinpoche, and Sde gzhung Mchog sprul of Sga Tharlam, he gave the text-transmission for the *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, the initiation and practical instructions for Vajrabhairava in the Tshar pa tradition, and the Rwa lo collection (*rwa pod*)." The Tibetan: *lo de'i zla ba lnga pa'i nang grwa sgang du phebs/ yang srid mchog sprul dang/ 'jam rgyal rin po chel sga thar lam sde gzhung mchog sprul sogs/ bla sprul dge 'dun bdun cu skor la sa skya bka' 'bum gyi ljags lung/ tshar lugs 'jiigs byed dbang khrid/ rwa pod bcas gsungl*.
- 249 Indeed, in the 1960s and 1970s the transmission lineage became very rare, especially outside of Tibet, and Dezhung Rinpoche did later pass on the transmission to H.H. the Sakya Trizin and many other important Sakyapa lamas, becoming a central transmitter of the tradition.

- 250 ST 1993.
- 251 DR 1979.
- 252 AC 1994. The lineage for the *Sa skya bka' 'bum* transmission descended to Bsam gran blo gros from Mkhyen brtse'i dbang po, by way of Blo gter dbang po.
- 253 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 24a. DR, Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a, mentions that he received these 'Jigs byed teachings, including the *Rwa kbrid mkha' 'gro'i snyan brgyud*.
- 254 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a.
- 255 DR September 1978 (CS notes). When Dam chos brtan pa was a boy, he was sent by his family to herd the family's sheep and yaks in the mountains. Once the animals became separated from him and he could not find them at sundown; he had no choice but to go home without the animals. His parents were furious with him, and he was so disappointed and angry with their behavior that he tore his clothes and cried. He then looked at himself and his great anger, and could find no true reality in that—seeing it all as just an insubstantial product of mind.
- Years later, when he was in the presence of his teacher Blo gter dbang po (1847–1914) and that master was giving instructions on the nature of mind, Dam chos brtan pa described this childhood experience to him. The master was delighted, called in the other monks, and told them, “Here is a man who experienced this insight naturally, as a child.” (This was believed to have been a carry-over from a previous life as a meditation practitioner.)
- 256 Dam chos brtan pa was not very learned and was a bit eccentric. He sponsored the carving of the Wara Kanjur in 206 volumes (short format). He much preferred shorter books. He began carving the Tanjur on short blocks, too. Masters such as Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros and 'Jam rgyal requested him to print with longer blocks, but he did not let this influence his own preference.
- 257 Wa ra monastery was one of numerous Sakyapa monasteries in Khams said to have been founded by Chos rgyal 'Phags pa (1235–1280).
- 258 AC 1994.
- 259 AC March 1992.
- 260 KN and JR 1987.
- 261 According to KN and JR 1987, Rgya gar Bla ma Khu nu Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan at some point also visited Gwa gu and studied under 'Jam rgyal. He and Dezhung Rinpoche are said to have studied as fellow students the *Sdom gsum rab dbye* of Sa paṇ.
- 262 AC March 1992.
- 263 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 40b–41a.
- 264 DR 1979.

- 265 AC March 1992.
- 266 AC 1993.
- 267 AC 1994.
- 268 DR 1979.
- 269 AC March 1992.
- 270 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 42a.
- 271 Other main disciples present at Sga ston's 1928 *Path with Its Fruit* teachings included Nya brag Sprul sku 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Rdzong gsar bshad grwa'i Mkhan po Mkhyen rab, Gdong sprul Sku dbon Phu mgo Sprul sku Gsang bdag dpa' bo, Dar mdo Phur pa Bla ma Bkra shis rgya mtsho, Glang sna Dgon Phur pa Bla ma, Mkhar nang Bla ma Rnam rgyal, the learned Padma tshe ring of Gdong thog monastery, Tshe dbang dpal ldan, Nya brag Khri pa Tshe dbang, Khri zur Don grub tshe ring, Yon tan, Ya ma Dar rgyas, Kun dga' bzang po, the Mkhan po Dpal ldan tshul khriims of Do mdo monastery, Mkhan po Sengge bzang po, Sde gzhung Mkhan po Chos 'phel, and the Sde gzhung chieftain's son Mdo sngags bstan 'dzin. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 42a.
- 272 AC 1994. Nya brag Kun dga' chos 'phel (ca. 1880s–ca. 1960/61) had previously received teachings under Sga ston. According to a Nya brag monk visiting Nepal in 1994, Kun dga' chos 'phel was very learned and later served as monastic head (*khri pa*) of the monastery. He was a very good yogi for Mgon po practice.
- 273 AC March 1992.
- 274 DR 1979.
- 275 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 42b.6.
- 276 According to Lithang Athar 1993, formerly there had been two other such districts, So lo (*sog log*) and 'Ba' nag shod pa, but these had been absorbed into the other districts, So lo then forming part of 'O thog.
- 277 Lithang Athar 1993. The "Sog log" tribe, for instance, is believed to have been a nomadic group that came into the area after a military defeat in A mdo. Other groups are thought to have come originally from there, too, in or around the (early?) seventeenth century, though exact records are lacking. The Lithang 'Brog pa are said to have sent their monks to the following institutions in Central Tibet: 'Bras spungs, Sgo mang, Har gdong Kham tshan, A shu Mi tshan; Dga' ldan, Byang rtse, Rdo ra Kham tshan; and Se ra, Byes pa (Har gdong Kham tshan? Sha re Mi tshan?). By contrast, the farming communities of Lithang sent their monks to: 'Bras spungs, Blo gsal gling, Spom bo ra (= Spo 'bur) Kham tshan; Dga' ldan, Byang rtse, Gser khar Kham tshan; and Se ra, Smad pa, Spom bo ra Kham tshan. At Na lendra, the Sde gzhung ma monks belonged to the A mdo Kham tshan.
- 278 Grags med, "Li chu sngon po'i 'gram gyi gnam rgyud," *Gangs dkar ri bo*, 1985–1,

- p. 59. This source also lists the names of seven consecutive chiefs of Yönrü, from Wa shul Bsod nams bzang po to Bsod nams dbang rgyal.
- 279 Greater Lithang also included such districts as Mo la, Tsho gsum, 'Dabs, Cha 'phreng, Ra rgyal, Shog drug, Sga Bzhag G.yang gsum, and De'u Mgo Ngag gsum. *See* Tashi Tsering (1985), p. 202, n. 31.
- 280 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 24.5 (12b). Spo 'bur was evidently pronounced "Pom bu ra."
- 281 Lithang Athar 1993.
- 282 Grags med, "Li chu sngon po'i 'gram gyi gtam rgyud," *Gangs dkar ri bo*, 1985–1, p. 59.
- 283 Lithang Athar 1993.
- 284 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 31a.2. This Mkhyen brtse rab brtan was from the Lce lineage and was considered to be the emanation of the master Gnas gsar ba Mkhyen brtse'i dbang phyug. He was the Na lendra Bco brgyad Khri chen who was nephew and successor to Mkhyen rab byams pa ngag dbang lhun grub (1633–1703) at Na lendra.
- 285 On this tribe, see R. A. Stein (1961), pp. 31–41.
- 286 This high Chinese title entitled its holder to the third Tibetan official rank. *See* L. Petech (1973), p. 8.
- 287 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 20 (10b).
- 288 This is related in the biography of Bskal bzang rgya mtsho, *'Khrungs rabs*, vol. 3, p. 25. *See also* Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje's biography of the Seventh Dalai Lama (Mtsho sngon: 1990), pp. 38–39. According to 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 28 (14b), the actual place of refuge was near Sde gzhung, and it was called Gtsang sku.
- 289 DR ca. 1962 (EGS notebook).
- 290 KA 1994.
- 291 Elsewhere, in the account of the first two Sde gzhung Trulkus' lives, Dezhung Rinpoche called this noble by the name Bsod nams dar rgyas. It seems he was known by both names.
- 292 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 22 (11b), relates the story of how Sde gzhung Lung rigs nyi ma, when he was still a little boy, in his rambunctious play took the talisman from his mother's neck and opened it. He found a simple hand-written prayer to the protective deity Pehar. After that, no more sons were born to his mother, it was said.
- 293 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 33ff. (17a–), explains several other reasons why Sprul sku A 'jam was considered to be the Gzims 'og Rinpoche's rebirth.
- 294 DR 1979.

- 295 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 34.2 (17b).
- 296 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 34f. (fols. 17b–18a).
- 297 DR 1979. Kun dga' rab rgyas would have been alive at about the time the monastery of Sde gzhung ma was founded.
- 298 In addition, A 'jam's nephew Mdo sngags bstan 'dzin received the *Lam 'bras* from Sga ston at Nya brag in 1928.
- 299 According to 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 21.5, Dpon po Bla ma Blo gros dbang phyug composed the biography of Mtsho phu Grub chen, which was highly praised by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po for its excellent poetry.
- 300 Ibid., p. 21 (11a). Sde gzhung Bla ma 'Phrin las rab rgyas was a disciple of Ngor Thar rtse Mkhan po Byams pa nam mkha' 'chi med (1765–1820), who was in Sde gzhung and G.yon ru ca. 1818. See Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan in *Lam 'bras slob bshad* (Rajpur: Sakya Centre), vol. 7, pp. 118.6 and 133.1. 'Phrin las rab rgyas was also a disciple of Ngor Thar rtse Mkhan po Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin (1776–1862); see *ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 293.6.
- 301 See E. Gene Smith (1969), vol. 2, p. 200f. Rdzogs chen Mkhan po Padma rdo rje, otherwise known as Mkhan chen Padma vajra, was one of the chief students of Rgyal sras Gzhan phan mtha' yas.
- 302 The Sde gzhung chieftain Rab brtan dbang rgyal had evidently been named after the two *rgyal po* protective deities of Na lendra: Lha mo Rab brtan ma and Rgyal po Pe har.
- 303 A print of the Derge edition of the full-length biography of A 'jam Rinpoche by 'Phrin las chos 'phel was located in Khams by Mkhan po A pad. Its full title is *Rje bla ma 'jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan gyi rnam par thar pa byin rlabs rgya mtsho ngo mtshar gter mdzod*. It was carved onto printing blocks at both Jyekundo and Derge, and the Derge edition has been republished by Ngawang Topgyal (New Delhi: 1992).
- 304 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 50 (25b). At the time of the *Lam 'bras*, Brag ra Rinpoche 'Jam dbangs chos kyi nyi ma, an intimate disciple of Blo gter dbang po, acted as assistant teacher. See *ibid.*, p. 60 (30b).
- 305 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 50 (25b).
- 306 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 49 (25a). Regarding the death date of Lung rigs nyi ma, the autobiography of Ngag dbang legs pa, repeated in A 'jam's *Rje bla ma rdo rje 'chang*..., pp. 12–13 (6b–7a), states that Legs pa Rinpoche's own father had died in his thirty-sixth year (= 1899), and that at about that time Sga ston had thought to go to see Lung rigs nyi ma, but that the latter had died.
- 307 Some said that no Sa skya disciple of Gzhan dga' was more learned than A 'jam Rinpoche. See Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p. 582.
- 308 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 45 (23a). Also according to Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p.

- 582, A 'jam's early teachers included the Dge bshes Bstan 'dzin dbang grub, who was the Sde gzhung Dar rgyas gling abbot.
- 309 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 58 (29b).
- 310 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 59 (30a).
- 311 Under his uncle, Lung rigs nyi ma, A 'jam studied grammar, the poetical treatise *Kāvyaḍarśa* of Daṇḍin, and the *Madhyamakālaṃkāra*, a Madhyamaka treatise of Śāntarakṣita. See 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 45 (23a). As a very young boy he had also traveled with Lung rigs nyi ma to receive the *Nāro chos drug* teachings from Kong sprul Rinpoche. See *ibid.*, p. 48.4 (24b).
- 312 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 71 (fol. 36a), wrongly gives A 'jam's age at the time as "twenty-eight."
- 313 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 71 (fol. 36a).
- 314 'Phrin las chos 'phel, pp. 71–74 (fols. 36a–37b).
- 315 See also 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 74 (fol. 37b): Sga ston later reported, "When visiting eastern Khams for the first time, when I reached Rdzogs chen I asked knowledgeable people many times who were then the most learned among Gzhan dga's disciples. There was a universal agreement that the two most learned were A 'jam and Gser kha Chos grags. This trulku of ours is such a greatly learned scholar, even among the disciples of Gzhan dga'!"
- 316 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 34 (fol. 17b).
- 317 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 72 (fol. 36b).
- 318 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 68 (fol. 34a).
- 319 See Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p. 582.
- 320 KA 1994.
- 321 According to A 'jam's student Mkhan po A pad, A 'jam Rinpoche actually taught thirty-eight basic works.
- 322 A number of A 'jam's works have been published in Delhi by T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche. In addition to his biography of Sga ston, *Rje bla ma rdo rje 'chang ngag dbang kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa ngo mtshar nor bu'i phreng ba* (1981), these are: *Bla ma'i rnal 'byor gyi don 'grel* (1967), *Lam 'bras bsduḥ don smon lam* (1968), *Sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che kun dga' rgyal mtshan gyi gsung skor* (1976), and *Miscellaneous Writings of 'Jam-dbyangs Kun-dga'-bstan-pa'i-rgyal-mtshan* (1977).
- 323 The senior monks who acted as *gsang te ston pa* and the other offices during the ordination are not known for sure, but two likely candidates are Mkhan po Mkhyen rab and Sde gzhung Chos 'phel.
- 324 DR Spring 1979.

- 325 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a.1. According to DR August 1978 (CS notes), the surviving photographs of Legs pa Rinpoche date to this period. They were taken in Dar rtse mdo (Chin. Tachienlu) when he was sixty-five years old, which would have been ca. 1929. It is said that one or both were taken by Rgya Bla ma, one of his disciples, during the Vajrayoginī initiation he gave at gLang chen 'Jigs ra. His youthful appearance was due to his having perfected the Thought of Awakening (*byang chub kyi sems*).
- Elsewhere in Khams in 1928, Spo bo Ka gnam Sde pa Bdud 'dul rebelled against the Central Tibetan government. The following year a Tibetan army was dispatched, which defeated him and forced him to seek exile in India.
- 326 KN and JR 1987.
- 327 DR Spring 1979.
- 328 'Phrin las chos 'phel. DR in a letter referred to him once by his full name, Byams pa bstan 'dzin zla 'od. Evidently Mkhan po Zla 'od used Gzhan dga's commentary on this occasion, the text-transmission for which Dezhung Rinpoche had previously received from Gzhan dga' himself.
- 329 KN and JR 1987. KN later stated that one of the robes received then by Dezhung Rinpoche was still at the latter's residence in Nepal.
- 330 Except as otherwise noted, this account is based on a sketch of the lives of the previous Dezhung Trulkus by Dezhung Rinpoche.
- 331 Lung rigs nyi ma's father had until then been childless. Besides the future lama, the sons of O rgyan skyabs included Rab brtan dbang rgyal, A kar, and A lhun.
- 332 Dezhung Rinpoche in some other unpublished writings calls Lung rigs nyi ma's father "Bsod nams dar rgyas" or "A bsod."
- 333 Blo gter dbang po wrote in his addenda to the Ngor abbatial history (*Ngor gdan rabs kha skong*), p. 638 (72b.2): *khrom sde gzhung mkhas grub chen po lung rig[s] nyi mas gtso skal ldan grangs mang la sgrub btus dang slob bshad sogs...*
- 334 In lists of Kong sprul's disciples, Lung rigs nyi ma is mentioned as "Sde gzhung Dbon po Snyan grags lung rigs nyi ma."
- 335 Lung rigs nyi ma and his family may in fact have been among the thousands of refugees who poured into the Lhasa area from Khams in 1860–1865 as a result of the wars of Nyag rong Mgon po rnam rgyal (see Shakabpa [1967], p. 187). Sde gzhung ma was a not far from Nyag rong and indeed was situated between Nyag rong and Li thang. L. Petech (1973), p. 178, notes that by 1848 Nyag rong Mgon po rnam rgyal had already encroached as far as Li thang. Zhwa sgab pa Dbang phyug bde ldan (Shakabpa), *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, vol. 2, p. 47, refers to the lawless conditions in Khams (including Lithang) in the mid- and late 1860s, after the fighting and destruction. On the violent life of Nyag rong Mgon po rnam rgyal, see Tashi Tsering (1985), and L. Petech (1973), p. 178f.
- 336 Presumably Lung rigs nyi ma would have belonged to the Har gdong dormitory of the Sgo mang college. See note 277.

- 337 The title *chos mdzad* could be gained by making a large offering to the monk assemblies on the different levels of the great monastery. In the fifteenth century it was a title for influential monks or lamas from noble families.
- 338 The title *ho thog thu* or *hu thug thu* indicated trulkus whose titles had been officially granted and specially registered by the Manchu court.
- 339 Ganden Nari Khenchung was called Dga' ldan Rna ring ("Long-ear") by PhLh 1994, who knew substantially the same story. According to Tashi Tsering (Dharamsala: 1996), this was the usual name among Khampas for the powerful monk-official and minister Dpal ldan don grub. Spyi mkhan Dpal ldan don grub was from Rmi li, and at Dga' ldan he belonged to the Rmi li mi tshan, Rdo khang khang tshan, Shar rtse college. See Zhwa sgab pa Dbang phyug bde ldan (Shak-abpa), *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, vol. 2, p. 48. A possible link with Lithang is that rMi li monasteries are branches of Lithang Dgon chen. Dpal ldan don grub became the *phyag mdzod* of the Shar rtse abbot and chief agent of Bshad sgra. He was supported by the officials and monks of Dga' ldan and also had many powerful supporters at 'Bras spungs.
- 340 Dezhung Rinpoche, unpublished history of the first two Sde gzhung Sprul skus.
- 341 See Zhwa sgab pa Dbang phyug bde ldan, *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, vol. 2, p. 53, who relates that the government troops were supported voluntarily by many Se ra monks with old scores to settle. They laid siege and cut off the monastery's food and water. Finally Dpal ldan don grub and his brother Mgron gnyer Mgon po jumped from the roof of the Nyag re khang tshan and made their way some miles eastward before being cornered by their pursuers. Dpal ldan don grub is said to have ordered his brother to stab him to death. His corpse was brought to Lhasa displayed on a wooden cross. Dga' ldan monastery surrendered and many monk-officials were arrested; the Dga' ldan abbot Grags pa bsam grub interceded on their behalf. Ya Han krang, *Paṇ chen sku rim byon gyi mdzad nam* (a translation from the Chinese; Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1992), p. 416, tells of a Chinese amban report (of 1871) mentioning the coup attempt by the Dar han Spyi khyab Mkhan po Dpal ldan don grub, together with the Dga' ldan monk A brtan, Dza sag Bla ma Grags pa bshes gnyen, and Tre hor Dge zur Tshe ring sangs rgyas. It was reported later that Dpal ldan don grub had been killed by gunshot.
- 342 PhLh 1994. L. Petech (1973), p. 220, states that about 1867 Dpal ldan don grub, "then all-powerful at the court of the Dalai Lama, received an appointment as joint minister; of course the post lapsed with the execution of Dpal ldan don grub after the failure of his coup in 1871."
- 343 According to PhLh 1994, after the death of Rna ring Mkhan chung, the Lhasa government invited the leading Sa skya lama of the day to come and perform exorcisms. The latter performed a fire dance and finally had to use force to push the head of Rna ring into the hole when it got stuck half-way in and would not drop down. That the Sa skya Khri pa Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams (1842–1882) was in Lhasa at this time and did perform ceremonies at the request

- of the government immediately after the trouble was put down violently is recorded by the Sa skya history supplement of Drag shul phrin las rin chen, p. 635, who mentions the Dar han Spyi khyab Mkhan po, Tre'o Dge bskos, Tsha ba A brtan, and several other 'Bras spungs monks as the main culprits.
- 344 Dezhung Rinpoche, unpublished history of the first two Sde gzhung Sprul skus. According to the oral tradition remembered by PhLh 1994, Lung rigs nyi ma taught at Na lendra for some two or three years before leaving for Khams.
- 345 In the record of teachings received (*gsan yig*) of H.H. the Sakya Trizin, Ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen dpal 'bar, *Dpal sa skya pa...*, vol. 1, p. 568, Sde gzhung Lung rigs nyi ma appears in one of Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa's lineages for Red Yamäri (Gshed dmar) after 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po.
- 346 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 15a.
- 347 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fols. 7a–8a. At this time Lung rigs nyi ma also advised 'Jam rgyal to study first and then meditate, which spurred the latter to leave retreat and seek out Gzhan dga' as his teacher.
- 348 Lung rigs nyi ma's visit to uncle Ngag dbang nyi ma's residence has already been described in connection with Dezhung Rinpoche's first enthronement ceremony.
- 349 DR 1963 (EGS notes).
- 350 T. G. Dhongthog, September 1993. According to Dhongthog Rinpoche, Dezhung Rinpoche once told him that Lung rigs nyi ma had stayed a long time at Hor khog (especially at Gdong thog monastery), saying that Hor khog was the most pleasant of all the districts he had visited during his wanderings. This was presumably in the mid- or late 1880s.
- 351 T. G. Dhongthog, *Dus kyi sbrang char*, p. 23. These three were (1) Mkhyen rab lhun grub rgya mtsho, (2) Rin chen bsod nams chos 'phel, and (3) Ngag dbang kun dga' bkra shis (d. ca. 1885?). The original lama in the lineage was, however, Rgyal ba seng ge, a Jo nang pa master from the monastery of 'Dzam thang.
- 352 *sDe gzhung sprul sku rin po che 'jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan la sogs pa'i zhal gdams khag* (Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2003), pp. 67–69.
- 353 Blo gter dbang po, in his addenda to the Ngor abbatial history (*Ngor gdan rabs kha skong*), fol. 77a.6, lists Snyan grags lung rigs nyi ma as one of the main teachers of Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1863–1899).
- 354 This Hor Nya brag Sprul sku may be the Nya brag Sprul sku 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan who was the main patron of Sga ston at Nya brag in 1928, or, as seems more likely, that trulku's predecessor.
- 355 According to T. G. Dhongthog, September 1993, this was probably the Fourth Sdong thog Sprul sku, Ngag dbang kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *alias* Kun dga' 'chi med rdo rje, *alias* 'Jam dpal rig pa'i ral gri (1885–1933), who would have been very

- young at the time. The latter's works made up three volumes, including some Rnying ma visionary works. See T. G. Dhongthog, *Dus kyi sbrang char*, pp. 15 and 20f.
- 356 A 'jam was later told that the reason for Lung rigs nyi ma's relatively early death was that he had neglected to properly propitiate minor deities such as *rgyal po* and *btsan*. See 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 54.2 (27b): *khyod kyi khu bo lung rigs nyi mas rgyal btsan la skyon du bltas te gsol mchod tshul mthun ma byas pas khong mkhas pa chen po yin yang sku tshe thung tsam du song ba yin*.
- 357 KN and JR 1987.
- 358 Except as otherwise noted, this account is based on an unpublished sketch of the lives of the previous Dezhung Trulkus by Dezhung Rinpoche.
- 359 According to KN and JR 1987, one of his sayings was *byang chub sems kyis dbang bsdu mkhan// 'gro don mi byung ka med byung//*. "The one who subdues through bodhicitta definitely has success achieving the welfare of beings."
- 360 DR 1963 (EGS notes). According to Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug 1995, a copy of the biography of Byang chub nyi ma survived until the 1950s at Mi nyag Ri khud monastery. Perhaps other writings survived there, too.
- 361 Could this be a reference to Gling Kha gshid pa or Kha gshis pa, a place (in Sa dmar rdzong?) lying not far away, to the west of Sde gzhung ma?
- 362 It was good Dezhung Rinpoche left Sde gzhung because in the next year, 1929, a violent territorial dispute erupted between Sde gzhung ma and the Gling Kha gshis pa. The Sde gzhung nomads lost, and many of their men were killed in the fierce fighting. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43b.
- 363 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 24b.6.
- 364 AC 1994.
- 365 Dezhung Rinpoche was presumably traveling or studying elsewhere when Khu nu Bla ma gave his other students such names.
- 366 KN and JR 1987.
- 367 This name was used by Dezhung Rinpoche in the 1960s in the colophon to his work *Khrul bral legs bshad mkhas pa'i zhal lung*. According to KN and JR 1987, however, the name received from Khu nu Bla ma was "Ngag dbang dbyangs can zla ba gdong drug snyan pa'i lang 'tsho tshangs sras bzhad pa'i sde." Either he received two such names or the latter is erroneous.
- 368 According to KN and JR 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche then received from Chos kyi blo gros the reading-transmissions of the collected works of Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po (1382–1456), founder of Ngor. But according to AC 1994, it was probably the other way around.
- 369 DR March 5, 1963 (EGS notes). In his *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1951*

- (Berkeley: 1989), M. Goldstein devotes a section (pp. 221–224) to “The Sino-Tibetan Conflict in Khams, 1930–1932.” Based on Zhwa sgab pa’s two-volume history (1976), p. 300, he describes the fighting as involving a “Nyarong Lama”—though the latter was the Nya brag Sprul sku from Tre hor and not from Nyag rong, as would seem to be implied. According to Goldstein, p. 221, the origin of the dispute was the seizure by the Be ri chief of “the estates of the incarnate lama of Nyarong monastery in Beri, forcing the lama to stay in Targye monastery in a different principality.” Zhwa sgab pa’s account may well go back to an oral account of Dezhung Rinpoche; it is known that Zhwa sgab pa consulted Dezhung Rinpoche in Seattle during the 1960s, though he did not acknowledge him as a source.
- 370 According to Chinese Communist accounts of the dispute (see Ya Hanzhang, *History of the Dalai Lamas* [Beijing: 1991], p. 349), Nya brag Sprul sku (from Be ri) sided with Dar rgyas Dgon pa and was against the Be ri headman. This *sprul sku* supposedly gave Dar rgyas monastery fifteen households previously offered to Nya brag Dgon pa by an earlier Be ri chief. When the Be ri chieftain objected, Dar rgyas used force and attacked Be ri on June 18, overrunning the place. This may well have been the account given by the Be ri headman to convince the Chinese to intervene. In the Tibetan translation of Ya Hanzhang’s work, *Tā la’i bla ma’i rnam thar* (Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986), p. 758ff., the name “Nya brag Sprul sku” is rendered as “Nya rag Sprul sku.”
- 371 This was the great *Sa ga zla ba* holy day of the Buddhist religious calendar, and it was a great profanity to initiate fighting on this day.
- 372 See L. Petech (1973), p. 90f.
- 373 L. Petech (1973), p. 69.
- 374 The Mdo smad spyi khyab at this time (whose name is not known to me) was originally from the Snye lung family and married into the Nga phod family as a *mag pa*. He died at his post in Chamdo in 1932 after being defeated. See L. Petech (1973), p. 102.
- 375 According to Ya Hanzhang (1991), p. 349.
- 376 M. Goldstein (1989), p. 223, who cites T. T. Li (1960), *Tibet, Today and Yesterday*, p. 164.
- 377 KN and JR 1987.
- 378 Could this “Drung yig Tshe chos” have been the skilled scribe Grong nyin Tshedbang bla ma of Ku se who was a tutor of the Dpal spungs Si tu and was mentioned as a possible teacher of Sanskrit for Dezhung Rinpoche?
- 379 KN and JR 1987. The Eleventh Si tu was an important student of Mkhan chen Gzhan dga’, and he had also received some teachings from Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa. For a brief sketch of this master’s life in English, see the Twelfth Tai Si tu pa (Lea Terhune, ed.), *Relative World, Ultimate Mind* (Boston and London: Shambhala, 1992), p. xxiv. His two-part biography, by Zur mang Bstan ’dzin Sprul

sku and Ku se Gser ljongs Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs dge legs, was carved onto blocks at Dpal spungs and has been published as a reprint by Sherab Gyaltsen (Gangtok: 1976).

380 DR 1979.

381 This evidently refers to a guru-yoga focusing on Legs pa Rinpoche written after the latter gave the *Lam 'bras* in Derge. Dezhung Rinpoche once mentioned it privately to Cyrus Stearns in Malaysia in 1982. He recited it from memory, right down to the final colophon. Stearns then tried to write it down. In Portland, Oregon, in 1984, he explained it in detail to Stearns alone. He is not known to have taught it otherwise.

382 According to KN and JR 1987, during this period Dezhung Rinpoche also studied *Abhidharma* further with Mkhan po 'Byor Idan of Kaḥ thog monastery, said to have been a famous scholar of this subject. No other record of this has yet been located, and while Kunzang Nyima (then aged about fourteen) was indeed accompanying Dezhung Rinpoche at this time, I suspect a confusion with Sde gzhung Mkhan po Bstan 'dzin zla 'od, under whom Dezhung Rinpoche did study *Abhidharma*.

383 KN and JR 1987. During the time of Dezhung Rinpoche's final studies in Derge district, i.e., during his stays at Rdzong gsar and Dpal spungs and on the way back to Tharlam, he was accompanied by his younger brother, Kunzang Nyima, then a young monk. The latter had come to Rdzong gsar twice while young, and on the second occasion (in 1930) had received from the Rdzong gsar seminary Mkhan po Brag g.yab Blo gros the Mahāyāna teachings *Byang chub sems dpa'i lag leg so bdun ma*.

384 AC 1995. Spelling: Hor G.yu sgron?

385 Hugh Richardson, personal letter, January 31, 1995, recounting the tale as told to him by EGS in Seattle in 1961. According to Richardson, this episode happened near Jyekundo, before Dezhung Rinpoche left to study in Derge.

386 KN and JR 1987.

387 Before Ye shes nyi ma and Ngag dbang rin chen began to teach, the Sde gzhung Mkhan po Tshul khirms (Sde gzhung Dbyar gnas Mkhan po Tshul khirms 'od zer) had begun teaching at Tharlam in a very modest way in the early or mid-1930s. Similarly, the monk 'Dzi mda' A myes Kun dga' dpal bzang (1886–1950/51?), an uncle of the Phan khang zhabs drung, had also taught a bit, though without great result. The conditions of the *bshad grwa* were very humble: just teacher and a few students meeting in whatever empty room they could manage. AC 1994.

388 AC 1993.

389 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.

390 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.

- 391 KN and JR 1987.
- 392 The Dbu mdzad Lhun grub dpal ldan was not a high lama, but rather a Sakya monk who served as precentor at Bsam grub monastery. DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a, seems to refer to him as “Khri ’du Dbu mdzad.”
- 393 KN and JR 1987. I have not yet found any mention of this trip to Sde gzhung ca. 1931/32 in Sga ston’s biographies.
- 394 AC 1993.
- 395 The spring of 1932 saw political troubles in nearby areas administered by Jyekundo. According to a Communist Chinese account (Ya Hanzhang, *The History of the Dalai Lamas*, pp. 353–354), there had been a dispute between the Dga’ ldan-administrated Zur mang monastery and the Bdud rtsi ’khyil monastery together with the Zur mang tribe. The Central Tibetan government–appointed *mkhan po* of Zur mang supposedly provoked the local people to rebel by his oppressive behavior. Then he took to confiscating their crops, which the people in Zur mang protested to the authorities in Jyekundo, who decided the case in their favor. In late 1931 the Dalai Lama deputed the *drung yig chen mo* Dngos bzhi pa (Bkras mthong Thub bstan dge ’dun Thub bstan kun mkhyen, 1893–1941, see Petech [1973], p. 109) to be in charge of military and administrative affairs in Jyekundo. On March 24, 1932, the Tibetan forces attacked Greater and Lesser Zur mang, driving out the troops of the Jyekundo commander Ma Biao. The Tibetan troops pressed on to Nang chen, whose Chinese defenses fell on April 3. The Tibetans then laid siege to the Chinese forces in Jyekundo. Ma appealed for reinforcements, and a large counterattack was begun on July 14. The siege was broken in a battle on the night of August 20. Four days later they overran ’Dam thog (Damthog) monastery, and by September 4 all the territory between there and Nang chen had been seized by the Chinese. Peace was not negotiated until October 1932, and the final border agreement not until June 15, 1933.
- According to AC 1994, the fighting in Sga pa was intermittent but sometimes fierce. First the Central Tibetan troops arrived and, after a few days of fighting, gained the upper hand, killing and imprisoning many local men. Dezhung Rinpoche’s Uncle Ngag dbang rgyal mtshan (1896–1932) was killed in this fighting. He had been called up to fight against the Central Tibetans under the local military commander of Tharlam, the Lab mda’ Be cang. Some time later the Si ling side counterattacked and won, killing many opposing troops. In this traditional style of fighting, the armies used to engage each other for a few days at first, and then they would take a long break during which life could go on more or less normally for the local populations. They would not usually harm the monasteries.
- Seen from a broader perspective, this fighting in Nang chen and Jyekundo by troops under the Moslem warlord of Sining, Ma Pu-fang, created a second front of fighting for the already hard-pressed Central Tibetan forces in Khams. See M. Goldstein (1989), p. 222, and the sources cited by him in note 20.
- 396 These well-known lines formed the verse of invocation in Sa paṅ’s *Tshad ma rigster* and had been recited countless times by Sga ston here in the same retreat. The

verse: *shes bya thams cad gzigs pa'i spyan yangs pall 'gro kun dge legs sgrub pa'i thugs rje can// bsam yas phrin las mdzad pa'i stobs mnga' ball 'jam mgon bla ma'i zhabs la mgos phyag 'ishall//*.

397 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fols. 2b–3a.

398 According to Dezhung Rinpoche, August 1978 (CS notes), when Legs pa Rin po che returned, Dezhung Rinpoche asked him how many prostrations he had done while in retreat. Legs pa Rin po che replied that he had performed five thousand prostrations per day from about nine or ten o'clock in the evening until very early the next morning (at which time he could hear the villagers climbing the mountain opposite his retreat hut, going up to gather wood). He kept up the rate of five thousand per day until some signs in his dreams indicated it was too much. He then reduced the number to three thousand per day. He continued to perform many prostrations daily until he was in his mid-fifties.

399 KN and JR 1987. Perhaps this illness is the same as the combined blood and “wind” disorder *khrag rlung* mentioned in the dictionary *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*.

400 KN and JR 1987. According to his sister Ane Chime, Dezhung Rinpoche's first knee swelling was caused by *'ham nad* (thrombosis?).

401 KN and JR 1987.

402 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 44a–b. The month of the Virgo Spica asterism (Nag pa) is said to be the second half of the second lunar month and the first half of the third lunar month. The year also saw the passing of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

403 The previous 'Go zi Zhabs drung had been the older brother of Dam pa Rin po che known as the 'Go zi Zhabs rgan ma. Since at least the 1830s, abbatial candidates (*zhabs drung*) from the Ngor Khang gсар Bla brang had gone to reside at 'Go zi monastery north of Derge in the nomadic district of Gling. Since the mid-1800s, for the Thar rtse Bla brang there had been a similar “Wa ra Zhabs drung” (beginning with Zhabs drung 'Jam dbyangs nam mkha' rgyal mtshan) who resided mainly at Wa ra dgon pa in southern Derge territory.

404 As listed in DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 44b, the other main disciples present included: Zhe'u mdo bla Sprul sku 'Jam dpal ye shes bzang po, Rin chen gling Gdan sa Sprul sku, Bis ru Bla chen Sprul sku, the greater and lesser Khye'o Glang sna Sprul sku, Skal bzang dgon Lho drung Sprul sku, Gdong sprad dgon Sprul sku Skal ldan, Khri 'du Spu ru Bla ma Dam chos bzang po, Thar lam Bla ma Dam chos tshe 'phel, Skye rgu dgon Mkhan po Mkhyan rab blo ldan (=Ngag dga'), Mkhan po 'Phrin las chos 'phel, Mkhan po Zla kho, Sde gzhung Mkhan po Wa kho A 'jam, Sde gzhung dgon dbyar gnas Mkhan po Tshul khri ms 'od zer, Sde gzhung Chos 'phel, the two sprul sku of Seb mda' dgon, Rab brtan dgon Mkhan po Thub bstan phel rgyas, Snyan grags rab rgyas, 'Dan Ra co sgrub brtson Ngag dbang shes bya, and Sakya gong Dga' ldan Dpon slob.

405 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 44b.

- 406 In his biography of Sga ston Legs pa Rin po che, p. 88, Dezhung Rinpoche did not mention his serving in this capacity, probably out of modesty.
- 407 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 45a–b.
- 408 'Phrin las chos 'phel, p. 120 (fol. 60b).
- 409 On the history of the *Spyan ras gzigs dmar khrid* tradition of the adept gNyan Tshem bu pa Dar ma 'od zer, see G. Roerich, transl. (1949/1953), *The Blue Annals*, p. 1043f.
- 410 DR, Seattle, June 1979.
- 411 DR, Singapore, May 24, 1982.
- 412 DR, August 1978 (CS notes).
- 413 DR, "Short Biography of His Eminence Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche," *The White Conch* (Singapore), vol. 4, no. 3, p. 14.
- 414 Zur mang was also the site of the teaching activities of the great scholastic Zur mang Pad nam, one of the outstanding students of Gzhan dga'. Later, ca. 1958, there was a seminary at Zur mang headed by one Mkhan po Bzang ldan. See Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 128.
- 415 KN and JR 1987. As mentioned above, Zur mang had been the location of severe fighting between the Tibetans and Chinese in 1932.
- 416 KN and JR 1987.
- 417 DR 1979.
- 418 KN and JR 1987.
- 419 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 35b.2.
- 420 Li pha tshang Karma rgya mtsho's wife was an aunt or cousin of the 'Dzi mda' A myes tshang.
- 421 AC 1994. The Rnam dag Sprul sku said of Dezhung Rinpoche, "If I were so knowledgeable, I would be conceited!"
- 422 AC 1994.
- 423 KN and JR 1987.
- 424 According to PhLh 1994, the Khri 'du Dpon tshang family had a "black" (lay) and "red" (religious) branch (*kha dmar nag gnyis*). The "red" branch was at Zhe 'dzang monastery.
- 425 PhLh 1994.
- 426 KN and JR 1987.
- 427 AC 1994.

- 428 AC 1993.
- 429 KN and JR 1987. According to AC 1994, this artist was Nam mda' Kar 'brug from A khro, and PhLh 1994 confirmed he was probably the Kagyudpa monk Kar 'brug, a very skilled sculptor from gNas bzang dgon pa, the monastery of the gNas bzang Sprul sku, son of the A khro tshang chieftain. In the *Khams stod lo rgyus*, p. 150, he is said to have been the student of the famous artist Sga stod gNas bzang ba Dge 'dun (1830–1900).
- 430 KN and JR 1987.
- 431 This Thar rtse abbot was probably the sixty-seventh Ngor abbot, Thar rtse 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1903–1960), who in 1933 had already received the *Path with Its Fruit* instructions from Sga ston. He was only four years older than the candidate: he was thirty-two years old in 1935 and five years previously had already completed his three-year term as abbot (ca. 1927–1930).
- 432 On the Zhabs drung Byams pa nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan's parentage and early life, *See also* D. Jackson (1989a), p. 93.
- 433 KN and JR 1987.
- 434 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 35b.5.
- 435 KN and JR 1987. Once the Thar rtse Zhabs drung is said to have told Dezhung Rinpoche that he should come to Ngor one day and eventually act as abbot.
- 436 AC 1994. AC added that in the 1960s, in Seattle, the G.yu thog minister remarked to Dezhung Rinpoche, "You know our family background better than I do!" Rinpoche had learned this information from conversations with the Ngor Thar rtse Zhabs drung during this visit.
- 437 AC 1994.
- 438 KN and JR 1987.
- 439 KN and JR 1987.
- 440 JS and JE (1990), pp. 20–21. It is recorded in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* chronology table that in 1938 there were revolts by the Tibetans in Golok district against the Kokonor Dmag shed can.
- 441 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 36a–b. Presumably the death of the Ninth Paṇ chen Rinpoche Chos kyi nyi ma in *me glang* 1937 (December 1) at the nearby Ra nyag monastery between Tharlam and Jyekundo occurred when Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa was away from Tharlam. The Paṇ chen Rinpoche had been in Jyekundo since December 1936.
- 442 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 36b.
- 443 KN and JR 1987.
- 444 This is the same arrangement as in the new Tharlam temple at Bodhnath.

- 445 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 46b–48a, describes the main images at Tharlam and their sacred contents. According to Kun bzang nyi ma, the consecration took place again on the highly auspicious *rgyal-phur* conjunction.
- 446 KN and JR 1987.
- 447 AC 1994.
- 448 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a.
- 449 DR September 1978 (CS notes).
- 450 KN and JR 1987.
- 451 Perhaps as a fourth command one could count Sga ston's instructing Dezhung Rinpoche to practice the Avalokiteśvara meditation and to recite one hundred million *māṇis*, which he did complete in about 1977.
- 452 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 453 AC 1994.
- 454 DR September 1978 (CS notes). This auspicious verse was written by the great Tibetan siddha Thang stong rgyal po (who flourished in the fifteenth century). The Tibetan: *dpon slob mi 'bral lhan cig 'grog/s/ sku tshe mi 'gyur sra zhing brtan// ja bzang bzhes spro rgyun mi 'chad// skyid la chos 'phel bkra shis shog//*.
- 455 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 456 DR, 'Jam rgyal rnam thar, fol. 27b.6, states that 'Jam rgyal Rin po che passed away on the sixteenth day of the third lunar month (= April 23, 1940).
- 457 KN and JR 1987.
- 458 KN and JR 1987.
- 459 KA 1994.
- 460 The Sde gzhung chieftain brother of Sde gzhung A 'jam had three sons, of whom his main temporal successor was Dpon 'Jam dbyangs rdo rje. His second layman son was named Mgon po bsod nams mchog ldan (?). The monk of this generation who followed in the footsteps of his uncle Sprul sku A 'jam was Mdo sngags bstan 'dzin, who became the head of the Sde gzhung monastery. Like his uncle, he was a disciple of Sga ston. KA 1994.
- 461 KN and JR 1987.
- 462 AC 1994.
- 463 Sga ston had composed verses in praise of him entitled *Byin brlabs nyin byed 'dren pa'i shing rta*. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 49a.
- 464 CS 1994. Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge (1429–1489) was the greatest scholar among all abbots of Ngor, being equally proficient in both tantric and non-tantric subjects. His writings (which were carved onto blocks at Derge in the

early twentieth century by Dezhung Rinpoche's uncle 'Jam rgyal Rin po che) were accepted as authoritative by the later Sakya and Ngorpa traditions.

- 465 DR, Singapore, April 1, 1982 (CS notes).
- 466 AC 1994.
- 467 KN and JR 1987.
- 468 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 469 AC 1994.
- 470 DK September 1992.
- 471 The twenty-ninth day of the third lunar month was also the death anniversary of the masters Thar lam grub chen Kun dga' rnam rgyal and Klu sdings 'Jam dbyangs thub bstan lung rtogs rgya mtsho.
- 472 DK September 1992.
- 473 DR August 1978 (CS notes).
- 474 DK and AC September 1992.
- 475 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 52a–b.
- 476 DR August 1978 (CS notes). Sga ston had said in his later years that he would be born in the pure land of Sukhāvātī, and that he hoped to benefit sentient beings from there. He hoped to receive the *Path with Its Fruit* teaching in Sukhāvātī, if such a thing existed there. He also had many questions for Sa chen, Grags pa rgyal mtshan, Ngor chen, Go rams pa, and other great masters who would be there.
- 477 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 52a–b. According to DK and AC 1992, for a long time afterward, the place Sga ston had sat while passing away was kept separated from the rest of the courtyard and honored as a holy place.
- 478 Back in Tharlam, Sga ston's disciples made great offerings to Sakya, Ngor, and other great monasteries. Then, with what remained of Sga ston's wealth, they had built on the roof of Tharlam monastery some large gilt-copper victory banners (*rgyal mtshan*) and other metal decorative objects. AC 1994.
- 479 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 52b–53a.
- 480 DR August 1978 (CS notes).
- 481 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 482 On Li thang Dgon chen monastery, see Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *Bai dū rya ser po*, p. 296, no. 7.
- 483 The two noble families of Sde gzhung and 'O thog had become linked through marriage two generations before. Sde gzhung Lung rigs nyi ma's brother Rab brtan dbang rgyal had married the 'O thog lady Nor bu sgron ma (d. 1887).

- 484 This same river, the Nyag chu, became the Rdza chu upstream, which flowed through the Rdza chu kha nomadic region.
- 485 The itinerary of Dezhung Rinpoche's journey from Sde gzhung as far as Bka' bzhi was remembered by Dge legs Rin po che of Li thang Dgon chen, (Gelek Rinpoche, Bodhnath, 1993), who had heard it from Dezhung Rinpoche.
- 486 Ri khud Sku zhabs had been Sga ston's main patron and student when Sga ston gave the *Path with Its Fruit* at Ri khud in 1928/29. He was considered the latest in a line of incarnate lamas going back to Gser mdog Paṇ chen Shākya mchog ldan's disciple Shākya bsam grub, who was sent by his master soon after the founding of Ri khud to reside and teach there. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a. According to MRT 1994, this master was born in the (water-)dragon year (1892) and passed away in his sixty-fifth year (1956).
- 487 Ri khud Dar rgyas gling was the mother monastery of twelve main branch monasteries in Mi nyag. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a. As listed by Dezhung Rinpoche in his enumeration of Sa skya pa monasteries in Kham, these twelve were: (1) Dpal Lha sgang, (2) Phyug mo dgon pa, (3) 'Bum 'gag dgon, (4) Ma lu gshis dgon pa, (5) Spe 'dze rong dgon pa, (6) Sba nu rong dgon pa, (7) Mi'ung rong dgon pa stod, (8) Mi'ung rong dgon pa smad, (9) Si'u rong dgon pa, (10) Khams gsum grags dgon pa, (11) 'Jig rten rong dgon pa, and (12) Be gsum chung tshang dgon pa. In another list, provided by Mr. Tashi Tsering, these monasteries were: (1) Dpal Lha sgang, (2) Chu mo dgon, (3) Ka bzhi dgon (?) [=Bka' bzhi], (4.) 'Bu khug dgon, (5) Khu si brag dgon, (6) Sug gu dgon, (7) Spe rtse dgon, (8) Mi stod rong dgon, (9) Mi smad rong dgon, (10) Ji ti rong dgon, (11) 'Ba' ni rong dgon, and (12) Ma li shi'i rong dgon. Among the monasteries visited by Sga ston ca. 1928, one finds listed other monasteries, including: Lha 'bri, Ka bzhi (= Bka' bzhi) and Gzi ri sbug, and in Dar rtse mdo itself, the two monasteries Sa dgon and Rdo brag dgon. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a. Elsewhere Dezhung Rinpoche listed the following Sakya monasteries of Mi nyag: Ka bzhi dgon (= Bka' bzhi), Lha 'bri, Thub pa dgon, Be'u Sa dkar dgon, and 'Bra ya gdong dgon pa. These were independent of Ri khud, and Thub pa dgon, for instance, was a branch of Mi 'gyur dgon in Li thang. According to MRT 1994, the monasteries Gzi ri sbug and Lha 'bri (and the Sa dgon in Dar rste mdo?) had their head lamas appointed directly from Sakya itself, unlike the other Sa skya pa monasteries of Mi nyag.
- 488 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 489 Sprul sku Kun bzang was held to have been the rebirth of Mi nyag Kun bzang bsod nams, otherwise known as Thub bstan chos kyi grags pa (d. ca. 1908). Originally a Dge lugs pa, Kun bzang bsod nams became the devoted student of Mkhyen brtse, Kong sprul, and Dpal sprul. He composed a *Bodhicaryāvatāra* commentary and sūtra commentaries that were printed at Derge in his collected works. (See also E. G. Smith [1969], pp. 206–207.) His reincarnation Kun bzang tshul khriṃs received the *Path with Its Fruit* from Ngag dbang legs pa in Mi nyag in 1928/29 as a youth of nineteen (DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a). In the early

- 1960s, Trulku Kun bzang was induced to occupy the post of secretary for a Communist committee in Dar rtse mdo. He died at about age fifty-eight during the worst turbulence of the “Great Cultural Revolution.”
- 490 Sprul sku Blo gsal thub bstan had been present as a boy when Sga ston gave the *Path with Its Fruit* in 1928/29 at Ri khud. His dates were given as “early 1920s?–1957” by Mi nyag Sprul sku Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Bodhnath, February 1994. (That informant was more recently [1994] a researcher in Chengdu. He was born in 1946 and was recognized by ’Jigs bral Bdag chen Rin po che as the trulku of Lha sgang monastery, which previously had no trulku, and given the name Thub bstan mkhas grub rgya mtsho.)
- 491 One of the other great lamas of Mi nyag (though not in attendance) was the Skyid lde dgon pa Sku zhabs. He was one of two trulkus in the Skyid lde monastery, and there was big trouble between these two in 1949/50, when one lama was supported by the Chinese and another by the Khams pas. (The “Jile Kosho” is still alive in Dartsedo, working for the Chinese.) Still another great Dge lugs pa lama of Mi nyag was the “Gewakar Trulku” (Dge ba dkar Sprul sku?). MRT 1994.
- 492 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b. According to KN and JR 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche also gave the *Snar thang brgya rtsa* collection of sādhanas at this time.
- 493 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 494 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a.
- 495 MRT 1994.
- 496 KN and JR 1987.
- 497 Phyug mo had been founded by the early Mi nyag scholar Mkhan chen Gzhon nu ston pa. Evidently this was the “Chumagon” visited by P. Goullart in about 1941. See P. Goullart (1959), pp. 211–214.
- 498 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 499 Lama Dorje of Minyak Rikhü, Singapore, 1995.
- 500 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 501 KN and JR 1987.
- 502 Dezhung Rinpoche later said, “Ri khud had one of the best libraries I have ever seen!” MRT 1994.
- 503 Elsewhere at this time, World War II was in full swing, as was the Japanese aggression against China many miles to the east. Sometimes even Dar rtse mdo, which was so near the border, felt threatened by rumors of possible Japanese air attacks.
- 504 I was able to copy the larger photograph from prints loaned to me by Ane Chine and CW. The much smaller one (taken on the same occasion) was given to me by the Tharlam monk Dri med gzhon nu at Bodhnath on March 15, 1995.

- 505 KN and JR 1987.
- 506 Brag g.yab Byang chub was a disciple of Gzhan dga' Rin po che.
- 507 Lama Dorje of Minyak Rikhü, Singapore, 1995. Lama Dorje was from Zhag nang village.
- 508 A paṃ Gter ston's story is found in Smyo shul Mkhan po Rin chen rdo rje's *Rdzogs chen chos 'byung*, vol. 2, pp. 374–380 (187a–190b). He was a Rdzogs chen disciple of of Tre hor Mchog sprul Blo bzang bstan 'dzin. The prophesy of his next birth is referred to on p. 380 (190b).
- 509 LKG 1994. H.H. the Sakya Trizin, b. 1945, is considered by many to have been his rebirth.
- 510 According to MRT 1994, Bka' bzhi dgon previously possessed a very old printed Kanjur—possibly the earliest Peking edition (1412). The local monks used to say it dated from the time of Chos rgyal 'Phags pa. Bka' bzhi dgon also had a small branch monastery, called Bka' bzhi chags, where a single volume of that Kanjur was kept.
- 511 Though Bka' bzhi was not a branch monastery of Ri khud, its official mother monastic seat (*gdan sa*) was Sakya, as was Ri khud's. It was said that at a certain point in the early 1900s the Dge lugs pa-trained monks were growing so numerous that the monastery was verging on changing its whole curriculum. In order to retain the basically Sa skya pa tradition of the monastery, the Ri khud Sku zhabs is said to have recognized and sent the Bka' bzhi Sprul sku there as a stabilizing force.
- 512 The notes of KN and JR 1987 seem to give the place name as “Ti tse,” but informants from Mi nyag have not been able to identify this. Ri rtse is within a day's journey of Ri khud.
- 513 For a description of the town of Dar rtse mdo in the years 1941–1942, see Peter Goullart (1959), pp. 13–21. Goullart had lived in China for many years and had studied Buddhism and become a Taoist. His views partly reflected his Sinicized approach, but they were no doubt also influenced by his main hosts in Dar rtse mdo, the Cunningham missionary family of the China Inland Mission.
- 514 On Dar rtse mdo, Mi nyag, and the tea trade, see George A. Combe (1926), pp. ix and 135ff., for the reminiscences of Paul Sherab (Dorje Zödba) of Tachienlu.
- 515 Peter Goullart (1959), p. 14.
- 516 LKG 1994.
- 517 According to AC 1994, Kun bzang nyi ma accompanied Dezhung Rinpoche for about three or three and a half years in Mi nyag.
- 518 According to AC 1994, Dkon yag had already taken one lot of tea from Dar rtse mdo during the first year of Dezhung Rinpoche's visit to Mi nyag and had sold it in Lhasa. Then he had bought Indian goods and sold them in Khams. On the

trading in Dar rtse mdo, including the packing of tea in hides for transportation on yak caravans to Central Tibet, *See also* the observations in Goullart (1959), pp. 19–20.

- 519 KN and JR 1987. The Gsang Bla ma was an ordinary monk who had risen to a position of influence over the local ruling nobles primarily due to his expertise in astrology. His full name seems to have been Gsang Bla ma (pron.: Song lama) Dpal ldan ye shes.
- 520 An uncomplimentary description of the Gsang Bla ma is found in P. Goullart (1959), p. 30, who called him the “Soong Lama.” Goullart, perhaps influenced by his missionary host, Mr. Cunningham, did not like him, stating for instance, “He was immensely wealthy, powerful, and unscrupulous, and possessed an importance out of all proportion to his real status in the councils of state.”
- 521 Possibly this was the Lcags la rgyal po A skya Phun tshogs (d. ca. 1954/55). His father had been assassinated by Nationalist Chinese warlords.
- 522 This was the inn and entrepot of the powerful Waschab family. The old Wa se skyabs nobles were formerly chief ministers of the Lcags la rgyal po, the chief among forty-eight ministers. Originally the family was Bon po and Rnying ma. The spelling *wa se skyabs* is attested to in the biography of Mdo Mkhyen brtse Ye shes rdo rje, who was royal chaplain to the Lcags la rgyal po in the nineteenth-century. MRT 1994.
In Dar rtse mdo one of Dezhung Rinpoche’s disciples was the powerful noble Aja Waschab Kasang (Wa se skyabs Bskal bzang). Goullart met his mother-in-law, Madam Waschab, in 1940 (see Goullart [1959], pp. 24–25). He described her as the owner of the most splendid trading establishment there and as “the grand dame of the town.” He stated that she was the mother of two trulkus and added that she was then a widow. (She had given birth to three sons and one daughter. Both trulkus—one being the Yangs ’phel Sprul sku—died in their twenties, while studying at ’Bras spungs in Central Tibet. The single daughter married an adopted groom [*mag pa*] from the Mi nyag Kha’u tshang family after her family’s own male line had come to an end.) The great Waschab trading family derived its income from the 2-percent commission it charged on all business conducted by its clients. The head of the family was, as of 1994, in Sikkim.
- 523 As mentioned in note 489 above, Sprul sku Kun bzang was the rebirth of the Mi nyag Bla ma Kun bzang bsod nams, a great scholar who was a disciple of Mkhyen brtse, Kong sprul, and Dpal sprul. *See* DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43a.
- 524 KN and JR 1987.
- 525 ’Bo Gangs dkar Sprul sku’s dates are given as 1903–1956 in the brief autobiography of Nam mkha’i nor bu in the latter’s work *Gzi yi phreng ba* (Dharamsala: 1982), p. 52, presumably based on Nam mkha’i nor bu’s memory. Probably the birth year should be twelve years earlier, i.e., the iron-hare year, 1891. Nam mkha’i nor bu is said to have written a biography of this master (unpublished). According to Mi nyag Ri khud Dbon po Sprul sku (Bodhnath, 1994), Gangs dkar Rin

- po che died in early 1957, at about the time of the lunar New Year. He was then sixty-five or sixty-six years old.
- 526 KN and JR 1987. Goullart (1959), p. 29, describes a meeting with 'Bo Gangs dkar Sprul sku ca. 1940: "I was ... presented to a middle-aged lama who was sitting in the place of honour. He was extremely fat and his stomach seemed to overflow over his crossed legs. It appeared he was her uncle [i.e., the uncle of Madame Waschab] and was the Incarnation of the Minya Kongka lamasery situated right at the foot of the famous peak. He was an intelligent man and we had an interesting conversation over a bowl of butter tea and cakes. I saw him again several times. The last time I met him was years later in Likiang in Yunnan, where ceremonies were being organized in his honour."
- 527 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 43b, states that the teachings he received included the *Rnam 'joms bir lung* and *Lam zab byin brlabs*.
- 528 According to Dezhung Rinpoche, Gangs dkar Sprul sku was one of the most widely learned students of Gzhan dga'—no doubt the most learned among the Bka' brgyud pa. He composed the xylograph colophons for several of Gzhan dga's commentaries that were printed from blocks at Dpal sungs.
- 529 LKG 1994.
- 530 AC 1992.
- 531 See, for instance, the translation by the Padmakara Translation Group, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996).
- 532 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 533 KN and JR 1987.
- 534 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 535 AC 1993.
- 536 LKG 1994.
- 537 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 538 KN and JR 1987.
- 539 For full bibliographical details, see below list of Dezhung Rinpoche's published works. The biography of Bka' bzhi Rigs pa'i seng ge was one of a collection of five biographies of great Buddhist scholars from Mi nyag. This rare compilation was mentioned in the bibliographical list of A khu Ching Shes rab rgya mtsho (Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature no. 10980) as the *Biographies of the Five Learned Men of Mi nyag* (*Mi nyag mkhas pa mi lnga'i rnam thar*) by Ri khud Bla ma Shākyā kun dga', and it has since been published.
- 540 MRT, Bodhnath, 1994.
- 541 Gelek Rinpoche of Li thang Dgon chen, Bodhnath, 1993.

- 542 MRT 1994. Before this, a smaller (approximately two-foot-tall) image of Sga ston had been erected as the last figure in the series of *Path with Its Fruit* gurus. According to Mi nyag Sprul sku Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Bodhnath, February 1994, the senior and most knowledgeable disciple of Dezhung Rinpoche still alive was the old monk Derang Gonpo, who lived at Ri khud.
- 543 The little boy whom Dezhung Rinpoche recognized grew up to become the Mi nyag Ri khud Dbon po Sprul sku (MRT, b. 1944). In 1994 he worked in the National Museum in Paro, Bhutan, and kindly shared his knowledge about Mi nyag and its lamas.
- 544 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995, quoting Phyag mdzod Mgon po.
- 545 AC 1995.
- 546 KN and JR 1987.
- 547 AC 1995.
- 548 Nyi dga' Rdo rje 'chang died on the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month.
- 549 Dezhung Rinpoche tells about this at the end of his unpublished *Nyi dga' rnam thar*.
- 550 This was the third day of the first lunar month, wood-dog year.
- 551 JS and JE (1990), p. 6.
- 552 According to PhLh 1994, there were three *sa 'go* in territories of the Nang chen king: (1) at Nang chen, (2) at Khri 'du, and (3) at Jyekundo.
- 553 Kru is evidently a transcription of his family name. "Shan-krang" is apparently a title equivalent to *rdzong dpon* (*sa 'go*), "district administrator."
- 554 According to PhLh 1994, when Phun tshogs sgrol ma's husband Mgon po tshe brtan concluded his service, he wanted to take his wife and child with him to Sin-ing. At this time (ca. 1938) her younger brother, the sixteen-year-old monk Kun bzang nyi ma, went to the Dra'u Dpon and petitioned the latter to block this, saying that if his sister and child went away, the family line would die out.
- 555 According to PhLh 1994, some time after Mgon po tshe brtan's departure Phun tshogs sgrol ma considered marrying again and was assiduously courted by Dbang grags of the Zhe 'dzang Ya dzog tshang (son of Gara Khri pa A gnyan Rta mgrin dbang rgyal). Dbang grags, however, soon met with a fatal accident, and Phun tshogs sgrol ma is said to have finally taken nun ordination before the Lhasa Jo bo while on pilgrimage to Central Tibet. She is believed to have died in about 1962 or 1963 while imprisoned by the Chinese Communists in Lhasa.
- 556 KN and JR 1987.
- 557 For the three main routes from Kham to central Tibet (Dar rtse mdo to Lhasa), see George A. Combe (1926), p. 145ff. and 202f., based on the reminiscences of

Paul Sherab (Dorje Zödba) of Tachienlu. In appendix II one finds the main stages listed for (1) the northern (“merchant’s”) road, (2) the pilgrim’s road, and (3) the southern road (“Chinese amban’s road”).

- 558 The *dus bzhi* were four days of the month especially sacred to the protectors, namely, the eighth, fourteenth, twenty-third, and twenty-ninth days of the lunar month. On this particular day, there was a ritual masked dance led by the Sgrol ma *bdag chen*, with the Sa skya *khri pa* witnessing the performance and playing the cymbals. AC 1994.
- 559 AC 1993.
- 560 ST 1993.
- 561 This master’s full name was Ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug drag shul yon tan rgya mtsho, and he was the son of ’Dzam gling che rgud dbang sdud (1855–1919) and the Thon pa daughter Tshe dbang lha mo. A biography of this master, compiled and written mainly by Dezhung Rinpoche, is cited below as the *Khri chen rnam thar*. The Khri pa Ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug and his wife Bdag mo Mus Shang Bya rigs pa Bde chen sgrol ma (1901–1954) had two sons who survived to adulthood: Ngag dbang kun dga’ bsod nams (’Jigs bral Bdag chen Rin po che, b. 1927), and Ngag dbang kun dga’ phrin las bkra shis (Phrin las Rin po che, 1934–1998); another son, born between 1927 and 1934, died in childhood. They had five daughters: Rje btsun Thub bstan dbang mo, Rje btsun Skal bzang chos sgron (married Nye zhabs Sangs rgyas chos ’phel, living in Taiwan), Rje btsun Tshe sbyin lha mo (b. ca. 1936), Rje btsun ’Chi med dbang mo (b. ca. 1938), and Dkon mchog dbyangs byed (b. ca. 1945). Dkon dbyangs married in 1961 Stag ’tsher Rin po che Thub bstan ’jigs med nor bu (b. 1922)—children: Lhun grub (b. 1962), Kun dga’ (b. 1963), and ’Jigs med (b. 1965).
- 562 The Sgrol ma pho brang (“Tārā palace”) was also called the Phun tshogs dpal ’bar bla brang, as Drag shul phrin las mentions at the end of his *Sa skya gdung rabs* supplement, p. 852.
- 563 Ngag dbang kun dga’ rin chen’s full name was Ngag dbang kun dga’ rin chen bkra shis grags pa rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po. His mother (d. ca. 1938?) was from the Shab Rdo zur noble family. His two wives, (1) Phrin las dpal ’byor bzang mo and (2) Bsod nams sgrol dkar, were sisters from the Bon grong shod pa family, a Gtsang noble family with estates in Rin spungs and Pa snam districts. Tshe brtan rdo rje (1889–1945) of this family was an extremely powerful man in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He was made a *bka’ drung* in 1915 and was appointed minister (*bka’ blon*) in 1934. On this family, see L. Petech (1973), p. 122f.
- 564 Āyurvajra was the fourth child of this *bdag chen* and his second wife. The first three were: (1) the daughter ’Chi med phrin las (b. 1938), (2) a son (b. ca. 1940?; died in infancy), and (3) the daughter ’Jam dbyangs bzang mo or “A dbyangs” (ca. 1942–1950). See H.H. the Sakya Trizin’s autobiography, Khetsun Sangpo (1979), vol. 10, p. 468.

- 565 On the preparations for the *Dbus phebs chen mo*, See also DR, *Khri chen rnam thar*, p. 101.
- 566 During the “Grand Procession to Dbus” (*Dbus phebs chen mo*), the Sakya throne-holder (*khri ’dzin*) would be received in Lhasa with full ceremony and honors by the Dalai Lama, who bestowed robes on him. The throne-holder was expected to perform wonders at this time.
- 567 On these disturbances, see M. Goldstein (1989), pp. 471–521.
- 568 AC 1993.
- 569 Bshad sgrub yar ’phel is mentioned in DR, *Khri chen rnam thar*, p. 152.
- 570 According to AC 1994, Dpon slob Smon lam was then approaching his eighties, and he was then one of the most powerful officials in the Phun tshogs pho brang. He was believed to have met Lung rigs nyi ma in central Tibet (Dbus or Gtsang).
- 571 J. Schoening (1983), p. 236, n. 645.
- 572 AC 1993.
- 573 ST 1993.
- 574 Bde phug Rin po che Klong chen ye shes rdo rje, alias Dbyings rig byang chub dbang po, was the successor to Gter ston Bde ba’i rdo rje (d. ca. 1930), though not his direct disciple, according to M. Kapstein, Bodhnath, 1993. According to his maternal nephew and sometime servant, the painter Lha rtse Sgang zur Dar rgyas (interview Bodhnath, March 1995), Bde phug Rin po che Dbyings rig byang chub dbang po was born in the wood-dragon year (1904). He died in his eighty-sixth year (ca. 1989? or possibly in the next year, 1990?) in Shar Khumbu (Nepal). This nephew served him for about eight years after coming out of Tibet in the early 1960s. The photograph of Sde phug Rin po che from the 1970s shown here is from Hugh Downs (1980), p. 167.
- As a young man, Bde phug Rin po che received training as a Tibetan doctor. Then he ran away to practice religion, fleeing to Khumbu. He was learned in grammar and other fields of knowledge (*rig gnas*). Later in life he was a great Rdzogs chen yogi. His monastery and main seat was near Byang Ngam ring, but most of the year he spent moving from place to place, performing rituals for patrons.
- 575 DR 1979.
- 576 CS 1993.
- 577 Kaḥ thog Si tu, *Gangs can dbus gtsang*, pp. 452–453 (226b–227a).
- 578 According to Dezhung Rinpoche, the rift between the main Sakya tradition and the Tshar pa originated because of a war between the lords of the ’Dar Valley and the neighboring Gdong Valley, to which the Tshar pa and Sakya lamas were separately allied. This rift lasted until the ’Khon master Kun dga’ blo gros (1729–1783 or ca. 1790) requested the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam ’bras slob bshad*), Nā ro Mkha’ spyod ma, and other key teachings from Gnas gsar

- ba Kun dga' Legs pa'i 'byung gnas. Nevertheless, some great Sakyapa masters (though not from the Sakya 'Khon family) had already received and transmitted the esoteric transmission of the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras slob bshad*) teachings in the previous century, a noteworthy example being Mkhan chen Ngag dbang chos grags (1572–1641).
- 579 DR (CS notes, undated).
- 580 AC 1994.
- 581 As a *ru dpon*, this official's rank was directly below that of *mda' dpon*, or "general."
- 582 This *brgya dpon* was the rank just below *ru dpon*.
- 583 The Glang sgo Klu dug rdzong and the others are "secret caves" of Mi la's meditation, mentioned in L. Lhalungpa (1985), p. 147f., and in Karma C. C. Chang, p. 257.
- 584 AC 1994.
- 585 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b, calls him "Brag dkar Rin po che Bka' brgyud bstan 'dzin." This lama updated the Brag dkar rta so history at the request of Gzhan dga's student Sangs rgyas bzang po. At one point he visited the great Bodhnath stūpa outside of Kathmandu and also had a controversy with a Dge lugs pa dge bshes. The writings of this lama have been recovered and published by Dr. Franz-Karl Ehrhard, who has kindly also given me the lama's photograph and other information. In particular, an autobiography has appeared: *Gdan rabs lo rgyus drang srong dga' ba'i dal gtam gyi kha skong*, in *The Collected Works of Dkar-Brgyud Bstan-'dzin Nor-bu, a Recent Lama of Brag-dkar-rta-so*, Smantsis Shesrig Spendzod (Leh: D. L. Tashigang, 1996), vol. 142, pp. 1–68.
- 586 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1b.
- 587 Cf. E. Gene Smith (1969), p. 226. A copy of this rare biography of Mila (a seventeenth-century manuscript from A mdo?) has been discovered in the Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.
- 588 L. Lhalungpa (1985), p. xxx.
- 589 According to Dezhung Rinpoche and old tradition, this ancient wooden Jo bo ("Lord") image of Avalokiteśvara in Skyid rong was one of four self-originated statues of the Ārya, forming a group of "four brother [statues]" (*rang byon 'phags pa mched bzhi*). These were the Skyid rong jo bo 'Phags pa Wa ti, the Jo bo Lokeśvara of Lhasa (in the Potala), and two in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal, the Jo bo Jamali and Jo bo "Dbu gang" (U khang = Matsyendranāth in Patan). See T. V. Wylie (1970), p. 155, n. 20, quoting a written communication from Dezhung Rinpoche dated October 4, 1965.
- 590 There were fifty-three such *rdzong* ("district" or "county") political districts in early twentieth-century Tibet, each with a fort (*rdzong*) and governor, or "fort-lord" (*rdzong dpon*).

- 591 AC 1994.
- 592 In western Gtsang (La stod), instead of monks, one found many half-lay, half-ordained people (*gser khyim*), especially of the Bo dong pa tradition, who, while following a religious vocation like monks, nevertheless kept a spouse and household. A somewhat similar situation was found in Nang chen district of Khams.
- 593 AC March 1992.
- 594 This year had two seventh lunar months. The second began on the fourth of September.
- 595 AC 1994. Dezhung Rinpoche had been requested to do this before the throne-holder's return by an older nun from the Phun tshogs pho brang, the sister of the late 'Dzam gling che rgu dbang sdud (1855–1919). Known as Zhal khro Rje btsun (from the Zhal khro Lha khang where she had her residence), she had been serving as regent (*khri tshab*) in the throne-holder's absence. She may have been sister number four, 'Jam dbyangs, who resided at the "Zhal lha" (Zhal khro Lha khang?).
- 596 According to AC 1994, Dpon slob Bshad sgrub was from Sakya itself. He had visited Khams and had been present at the first teaching of the *Path with Its Fruit* by Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa. He died, probably in his sixties, a few years after Dezhung Rinpoche returned to Khams in 1949.
- 597 Dezhung Rinpoche himself performed this water offering much later, in North America, at Wappingers Falls, New York.
- 598 KN and JR 1987.
- 599 Bsod nams sgrol dkar had been suffering for a long time from a disease traditionally diagnosed as "blood-wind" (*khrag rlung*). See ST in Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p. 474.
- 600 KN and JR 1987.
- 601 Tsi'u dmar po was a protective *rgyal po* spirit.
- 602 ST 1993.
- 603 KN and JR 1987. See also ST in Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p. 474.
- 604 Kaḥ thog Si tu, p. 429.3 (215a). On how the *Lam 'bras tshogs bshad* was usually conferred in recent times by a Ngor abbot, See also R. Davidson (1992), p. 127ff. On the Ngor pa tradition in general, see R. Davidson (1981).
- 605 AC 1994. Some of the main offerings were made at the Go rum and Rin chen sgang temples, and before a holy stūpa called the Rnam rgyal mchod rten. At the end, Dezhung Rinpoche said that he had visited and performed offerings and prayers at 108 of the 130 shrines mentioned in the Sakya pilgrim's guidebook. Ane Chime accompanied him throughout, learning many recitations and prayers by heart.

- 606 The winter session normally let out on about the eighteenth day of the first lunar month. See Kah thog Si tu, *Gangs ljongs*, p. 429.3 (215a).
- 607 AC 1994.
- 608 AC 1993.
- 609 LK 1994.
- 610 AC 1993; LK 1994.
- 611 For a photograph of Shud khud Sras sku zhabs Bsod nams dbang rgyal taken about two years later, see Sumner Carnahan (1995), p. 79.
- 612 Bsod nams rgya mtsho later served as seventy-fourth abbot of Ngor; his full ordination name was 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. After living many years in Japan, he was given Japanese citizenship and took the Japanese name Hiroshi Sonami. He later moved to Oakland, California, where he died in 1987.
- 613 For photographs of Bsod nams rgya mtsho and Zhabs drung Kun dga' 'gyur med (b. 1935) taken several years later, see Sumner Carnahan (1995), pp. 142–143.
- 614 Khang gsar Mkhan chen Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po had served his first tenure as abbot in 1945–1948. He died in 1988 on the ninth day of the third lunar month.
- 615 AC 1994.
- 616 For a more detailed account of Dezhung Rinpoche's offerings at Sakya, see DR, *Khri chen rnam thar*, pp. 152–153.
- 617 JS and JE (1990), p. 68.
- 618 AC 1994.
- 619 KN and KR 1987. This work is not known to survive.
- 620 JS and JE (1990), p. 67.
- 621 AC September 1992.
- 622 Dezhung Rinpoche related the details of this to Cyrus Stearns on August 23, 1978.
- 623 AC September 1992.
- 624 See the autobiography of H.H. Sakya Trizin in Khetsun Sangpo (1979), vol. 10, p. 474.
- 625 Evidently this was the Chos rje Lha sa tshang Sprul sku Mkhyen rab kyi dbang phyug 'Jigs bral phyogs las rnam rgyal (1908–ca. 1960). There were also two younger trulkus of the monastery: Rje dkar mchog sprul Ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen (b. 1919), who was a disciple of Bco brgyad Khri Rin po che of Na lendra, and Chab mdo Rin po che Smra ba'i seng ge (b. 1930s), a later disciple of Mkhyen

- brtse Chos kyi blo gros at Rdzong gsar in the 1950s. The latter two trulku lines were reportedly descended from the two trulkus of the eighth master in their trulku lineage. According to two older monks of the former Dhiḥ phu Chos rje branches Dge legs gter mdzod gling (“Derge Gonpa”) and Bsam gtan ’phel rgyas gling (“Sa sgang Dgon pa”), the main seat in Dhiḥ phu derived its name from a large, naturally occurring letter *Dhiḥ* found in the vicinity. It was located in Mdzo dge district, and is now about one hour by car from Mdzo dge rdzong.
- 626 Trulku Kun bzang is said to have stayed about five years in central Tibet (Dbus and Gtsang). In the 1960s he enjoyed the favor of the Chinese Communist authorities. Besides Trulku Kun bzang, another disciple of Dezhung Rinpoche from Mi nyag who was in Sakya at this time was the young Bka’ bzhi Sprul sku.
- 627 H.H. Sakya Trizin in Khetsun Sangpo (1979), vol. 10, p. 474.
- 628 In the 1980s, when he transmitted it to H.H. Sakya Trizin at Puruwala, Dezhung Rinpoche was the last known possessor of the text-transmission for the *Phur pa nam bshad* of A mes zhabs.
- 629 KN and JR 1987.
- 630 CL 1987. Originally Rje btsun ’Chi med phrin las had been meant to attend, but by some mix-up her younger sister went instead. Also present at the time was her “nun ordination abbot” (*a ne mkhan po*). The Mi nyag lamas were at Sakya because that was their “home monastery” (*grwa sa*) to which they went for ordination and teaching. The “three red deities” are Red Gaṇeṣa, Dakṛirāja, and Kurukulle.
- 631 AC 1993.
- 632 In his addenda to the *Sa skya gdung rabs* written in 1932, p. 851, Drag shul phrin las rin chen mentions his sister Padma phrin las, saying that she then was taking no interest in propagating the teachings.
- 633 That is the basis for calculating Padma phrin las’s birth year as 1871 or 1872.
- 634 KN and JR 1987.
- 635 AC 1993.
- 636 KN and JR 1987.
- 637 DR Autobiographical sketch 1, fol. 1a.
- 638 ST 1993.
- 639 ST 1993.
- 640 AC and DK 1993.
- 641 AC 1994.
- 642 ’Jam dpal bzang po (1901–1961) was the son of a Sa skya steward (*mgron gnyer*) from the Dpal ’byor sgang family. He was the disciple of Drag shul phrin las rin

chen, Dam pa Rin po che, Brag g.yab Bla ma Thub bstan bzang po, and others. See J. Schoening (1983), p. 328f. By this time he had completed his tenure as abbot of the Lha khang chen mo. According to ST 1993, later, in India and America, Dezhung Rinpoche said that 'Jam dpal bzang po was a very holy teacher, with whom he had an important connection. Dezhung Rinpoche said, "The Buddhist doctrine slowly spread in Tibet from the west to east, so that in more recent times, most of the great masters were born in eastern Tibet. Still it was very hard to find a master of greater attainments than 'Jam dpal bzang po, even in Khams."

643 According to CL 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche's leg troubles flared up after he had performed many rituals for the present Sakya Trizin's maternal aunt when she was seriously ill (see above). "It was as if he had taken her sickness upon himself." Such knee problems were common among lamas, and Dezhung Rinpoche certainly had suffered from them before.

644 ST 1993.

645 AC 1994.

646 CS 1993.

647 AC 1996; cf. JS and JE (1990), pp. 79–80.

648 JS and JE (1990), pp. 80–82. Much to the chagrin of his mother, 'Jigs bral Rin po che had recently ended abruptly an arranged marriage with a young lady named Sgrol dkar lha mo, daughter of a high Central Tibetan nobleman of the Khri smon family (evidently the Khri smon minister Nor bu dbang rgyal). She and other members of her influential family were very irate about this, and this cannot have helped his later bid for appointment as Sakya throne-holder in 1951.

649 JS and JE (1990), p. 81f.

650 JS and JE (1990), pp. 81–83. The Phun tshogs pho brang *rgyal yum* (= *bdag mo*) was still actively planning the next marriage for her older son, either to a daughter of Barmiok Athing by his first wife, or to an adopted daughter of the king of Sikkim. Evidently the prospective bride of her choice even accompanied the family when they returned from Sikkim to Sakya.

651 ST 1993.

652 JS and JE (1990), pp. 83–84.

653 AC 1994.

654 KN and JR 1987.

655 AC 1996.

656 A brief biography of Dam pa Rin po che, entitled *Rje btsun bla ma dpal e wan khang gsar mkhan chen ngag dbang blo gros gzhan phan snying po'i rnam thar mdor bsdus dad pa'i dbyangs snyan*, was composed by T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche and

- has been published with the *Lam 'bras slob bshad* biographies (Derge ed.), vol. 8 (*nya*), pp. 389–414.
- 657 Gdong thog Sprul sku Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, *Rje btsun bla ma*, p. 393 (*nya*, fol. 3a).
- 658 Gdong thog Sprul sku, *Rje btsun bla ma*, p. 394f. (fols. 3b–4a).
- 659 Gdong thog Sprul sku, *Rje btsun bla ma*, p. 395 (fol. 4a).
- 660 Gdong thog Sprul sku, *Rje btsun bla ma*, p. 396.5 (fol. 4b). Maybe it was Gzhan dga' who had teased him, since he was not known to have stressed *Tshad ma* studies, and even played down their importance at times.
- 661 Gdong thog Sprul sku, *Rje btsun bla ma*, p. 396.2 (fol. 4b).
- 662 Gdong thog Sprul sku, *Rje btsun bla ma*, p. 400 (fol. 6b).
- 663 Dezhung Rinpoche's master Sga ston received at least two major initiations from Dam pa Rin po che in Khams. See DR, *Sga ston nam thar*, fol. 16a.5.
- 664 AC 1994.
- 665 Ye shes bstan 'dzin was the name of Zhabs drung Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin snying po in his youth. He was from the Shud khud pa family and was the older brother of the two younger Shud khud pa Thar rtse Zhabs drungs whom Dezhung Rinpoche had recently met at Ngor. For a photograph of Ye shes bstan 'dzin taken about two years earlier, see Sumner Carnahan (1995), p. 140. Ane Chime remembers him as a kind young lama who became very fond of Dezhung Rinpoche. Though short-lived, he became an important teacher of H.H. Sakya Trizin after Dam pa Rin po che's passing, visiting Sakya and conferring many teachings in 1954. See H.H. Sakya Trizin in Khetsun Sangpo (1979), vol. 10, p. 500.
- 666 According to AC 1994, G.yon ru Rab gsal was a monk from Li thang G.yon ru who was a very devout disciple of Sga ston Legs pa Rin po che and who had offered full prostrations before Sga ston's residence at the gNas gseb retreat until his feet bled. He also performed prostrations the whole way from Khams to the Lhasa Jo bo. After Legs pa Rin po che's death in 1941, he gave many butter-lamps and other offerings. Though he was poor, two comrade monks from Jyekundo helped support him. He had been acting as the head of the small scriptural seminary at Ngor in the period from ca. 1946 until his death, which may have occurred soon after this meeting with Dezhung Rinpoche. The previous seminary master had been G.yon ru Rab gsal's old comrade Bo dar Rgyal mtshan (d. 1946). According to T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche 1994, G.yon ru Rab gsal had served as assistant teacher at the Rdzong gsar seminary during the tenure there of Sde gzhung Chos 'phel (i.e., during the years 1936 to 1940).
- 667 AC 1993.
- 668 The manual in question was probably an instruction by Blo gter dbang po on the '*Khor 'das dbyer med* theory of the *Path with Its Fruit*. Its title was: *Zab mo'i don*

- la mos pa rnams 'khor 'das dbyer med kyi lta ba nyams su len tshul*. This esoteric work was never published from Derge with the rest of the *Lam 'bras slob bshad*.
- 669 This was the Rdzogs chen instruction *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg* composed by Rdza Dpal sprul. Its full title was *Tshig gsum gnad brdeg mkhas pa shri rgyal po'i khyad chos 'grel pa dang bcas pa*. This was a commentary on the final three sentences of posthumous Rdzogs chen instructions given by Dga' rab rdo rje to 'Jam dpal bshes gnyen. Dezhung Rinpoche had previously received it from Gzhan dga' and 'Bo Gangs dkar Sprul sku.
- 670 DR 1985. Some said Dam pa Rin po che was strongly influenced by the Rnying ma (probably by way of his studies under Gzhan dga' Rin po che).
- 671 DR 1979. Dezhung Rinpoche had learned about these murals from reading the autobiography of Si tu Paṇ chen.
- 672 KN and JR 1987.
- 673 CS 1993. Dezhung Rinpoche once told of a dream he had at Lcags po ri: He went into a large building in which there stood a high altar-like structure of ornate layered woodwork. There he saw the young Sa skya *gdung sras* Āyurvajra, then about three years old, who had somehow gotten up on top of the structure (where sacred figures and offerings would normally stand) and was running back and forth. At the time Dezhung Rinpoche was unable to interpret the dream, though after Āyurvajra's enthronement as throne-holder it was taken to be an auspicious sign. The following day he went to see the Lhasa Jo bo for the first time.
- 674 AC 1996.
- 675 AC 1996.
- 676 AC 1993.
- 677 For a critical biography of the interesting and tragic figure Dge 'dun chos 'phel, see Heather Stoddard, *Le mendiant de l'Amdo* (Paris: 1985). Most of his surviving works have been published from Tibet in the *Gangs can rig mdzod* series, vols. 10–12 (1990).
- 678 AC 1994.
- 679 DR 1979; MK 1993. Dezhung Rinpoche used to tell a number of outrageous stories about Dge 'dun chos 'phel. He said he had liked Dge 'dun chos 'phel's Madhyamaka treatise the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, though he also stated that it had met with strong disapproval among the Dge lugs pa scholars (CS 1994). On this treatise, see D. Lopez Jr. (1994), "Dge 'dun chos 'phel's *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*: A Preliminary Study," in P. Kvaerne, ed., *Tibetan Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 491–500.
- 680 Possibly this was Shar rtse Bkra shis stong 'dus, the ninety-fifth abbot of Ganden, tenure 1947–1953.
- 681 AC 1994.

- 682 AC 1996.
- 683 AC 1994.
- 684 According to his daughter, Chime Luding, Ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen had contracted an influenza-like disease that had spread as an epidemic in Sakya, causing many deaths. On one day he performed a funeral ritual for eleven people at once, then he himself passed away two or three days later. With his death, the epidemic suddenly came to an end. It was said that he had foreseen the inevitable arrival of the Chinese Communists in Tibet, and that he was not interested in living to see that day. The passing of this master is also briefly mentioned by his son H.H. Sakya Trizin in Khetsun Sangpo (1979), vol. 10, p. 477.
- 685 AC 1994.
- 686 AC 1994.
- 687 KN and JR 1987.
- 688 According to KN and JR 1987, one of Dezhung Rinpoche's family also asked Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros what he should do to ensure the best possible rebirth for her. Mkhyen brtse Rin po che replied, "You should sponsor the recitation of the *Prayer of the Benevolent Conduct* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*) or the 'Liberation Sūtra' (*Thar mdo*) one hundred thousand times." They then sponsored the recitation of the *Prayer of the Benevolent Conduct* in many monasteries in Sga pa and Sde dge.
- 689 JS and JE (1990), p. 109.
- 690 AC 1993.
- 691 AC 1994.
- 692 AC 1996.
- 693 M. Goldstein (1989), p. 679.
- 694 M. Goldstein (1989), p. 690.
- 695 M. Goldstein (1989), p. 696.
- 696 The Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile*, p. 78f.
- 697 AC 1994.
- 698 AC 1994. The group of nuns included his niece Ane Chime, and they were joined from time to time by others who wanted to practice with them.
- 699 JS and JE (1990), p. 121.
- 700 See also Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, pp. 486–487.
- 701 JS and JE (1990), p. 120. For a more recent Phun tshogs Pho brang account of events leading up to the decision, see *ibid.*, pp. 115–120. This family held that the Bon shod "Thejei" (Bskal bzang phun tshogs [b. 1897]?) had been mainly

responsible for opposing their candidate, and that the “prime minister” (*srid blon*) Klu khang Tshe dbang rab brtan (1896–1965) had been induced to approve the succession in the absence of the Dalai Lama, who was in the Chumbi Valley from January to July 1951. Other informed sources relate that the Dalai Lama himself personally approved the Sgrol ma palace candidate after the latter had demonstrated his capability through an examination.

Ironically, the most serious obstacle to the Phun tshogs Pho brang was caused from within by the senior lady (*rgyal yum*) of that palace, Bde chen sgrol ma. According to JS and JE (1990), pp. 116–118, she wished to pass over her first-born and substitute in his place her younger son, 'Phrin las, with whom she was living separately in the Spro khang palace, and who she hoped would marry a daughter of the Bon shod family (a relative of the two Sgrol ma pho brang *bdag mo*). Many objections were raised to this, and 'Phrin las Rin po che himself spoiled the plan in 1949 by running away and taking novice-monk ordination at Ngor from Dam pa Rin po che.

- 702 For the autobiography of H.H. Sakya Trizin up to 1977, see Khetsun Sangpo (1979), vol. 10, pp. 467–561. For a brief English biography see, for instance, Peter Meyer, *H.H. The Sakya Trizin and the Sakya Tradition* (London: Orgyan Choling, 1978).
- 703 AC 1993. It may have been in this period that Sde gzhung Mchog sprul A 'jam Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1885–1952) passed away. He is said to have died on the twenty-second day of the eleventh lunar month.
- 704 Dbang sdud snying po, alias Dpal ldan chos skyong, was the thirty-third Sa skya throne-holder, tenure 1783–1806.
- 705 JS and JE (1990), pp. 149–150.
- 706 Mañjuvajra (“Minzu Rinpoche”) was the first of five sons born of this union, the other four being: (2) Anandavajra (b. Kham, 1955), (3) Mativajra (b. Lhasa, 1957), (4) Dzayavajra (b. Seattle, 1961), and (5) Sadhuvajra (b. Seattle, 1962).
- 707 JS and JE (1990), pp. 151–152.
- 708 'Jigs bral Bdag chen, *Dpal sa skya'i*, p. 17.
- 709 According to KN and JR 1987, at about this same time (ca. 1954), Dezhung Rinpoche taught at Jyekundo monastery the *Rgyud gsum* manual of the *Path with Its Fruit* for those monks who had already received the Hevajra Path initiation (*lam dbang*). He gave the text-transmission (*lung*) and practical instructions (*khrid*). This, however, is not mentioned in other available sources.
- 710 The following reminiscences of Dezhung Rinpoche about the 'Brug pa Mkhan po were set down by E. G. Smith, unpublished paper “Notes on the History of the Cult of Rdo rje shugs ldan,” Inner Asia Colloquium, July 25, 1963, pp. 7–9. For more details on his life, see now D. Jackson (2001).

- 711 'Brug pa Mkhan po's place of birth was the village of Dung 'khor and his family was the La kha tshang.
- 712 Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan was the sixty-first abbot of Ngor and his tenure was from 1895 to 1898.
- 713 During the second year of his term, the senior Khang gsar abbot at that time, Ngag dbang mkhyen rab 'jam dpal snying po of the Zhwa lu Sku zhang family, was very disappointed at Ngawang Yönten Gyatso's behavior and succeeded in temporarily removing him from the position of abbot, saying, "I put him up as abbot, and I can take him down!"
- 714 According to Dezhung Rinpoche (as recorded in E. G. Smith, unpublished paper "Notes on the History of the Cult of Rdo-rje-shugs-ldan," Inner Asia Colloquium, July 25, 1963, pp. 7–9), the 'Brug pa Mkhan po lived as a sort of "holy madman" (*chos smyon*) and was subject to ecstatic trances in which deities would enter his person. On numerous occasions, when bestowing the initiation of Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma, he would rise and begin dancing and whirling about. He intensely disliked the particular tradition within the Dge lugs pa represented by Pha bong kha pa, and his main wrath was directed against the cult of the protector Rdo rje shugs ldan. Sometimes it seemed as if he were physically struggling with another deity for the possession of his body. That deity was Shugs ldan. As Smith also recorded (pp. 7–8):

It was at Ngor that he began his "war" on Rdo-rje-shugs-ldan. One of the most important mgon-khang of Rdo-rje-shugs-ldan was the rTen-mkhar at Ngor. Having made significant gifts to the various politically significant personages and to the monastic community, he assessed the climate to be ripe for the destruction of the mask of Shugs-ldan and the institution of the worship of a rival bstan-srung. His iconoclastic successes at Ngor made him only more eager for more victories against Shugs-ldan, whom, it seems, he actually viewed as a physical enemy.

He set out for Khams where he embarked upon a crusade against this deity. He visited the monastery of 'Dam thog in Ldan ma and there destroyed the images and ritual objects of this cult. Then he came to Tharlam in about 1948, in the absence of Dezhung Rinpoche (who was at Sakya on pilgrimage).

He called the monks together and told them of his crusade against Shugs ldan. He told them that Shugs ldan was not a protector of religion, but that he was an evil spirit who would cause the doctrine to perish. He told them that this deity had caused him great obstacles in his previous incarnation as the Phan khang Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1863–1899), and that Shugs ldan had then actually caused his early death at age thirty-six. He proposed to destroy, if they would agree, the mask of this deity the following morning.

Many of the monks feared the consequences of so provocative an act, and they were afraid of reprisals from the angered deity. But being

the disciples of 'Brug pa Mkhan po, they felt bound to follow his wishes. The next morning, after prolonged prayers, he led a procession of monks into the Protector's Chapel (*mgon khang*). He took down a revered mask of the deity from its shrine and carried it outside. He then hurled it into a fire, and then drew a pistol and shot at the mask numerous times. After the mask had been destroyed, he reentered the Protector's Chapel and removed all the ritual articles associated with that deity. These he had the monks carry down to the banks of the 'Bri chu and hurl into the river.

After this, he reconsecrated the chapel to the deity Beg tse. He defied Shugs ldan to take revenge. When nothing happened, the frightened monks lost their faith in Shugs ldan and accepted the new protective deity.

- 715 See 'Jigs bral Bdag chen, *Dpal sa skya...*, p. 19.
- 716 AC, Bodhnath, 1995.
- 717 JS and JE (1990), pp. 160–164.
- 718 AC 1995. Yab chen Ngag dbang nor bu was said to be very learned in Abhidharma. He met his consort, a woman of Rtsa ri, while in Central Tibet.
- 719 According to KA 1994, Bya rgod Stobs ldan was, along with the Dra'u Dpon, one of the two biggest strongmen in Khams in the mid-twentieth century. At one point in the 1930s or 1940s they came into conflict. Bya rgod Stobs ldan died in the 1980s in Bir (his wife was still alive as of the late 1980s).
- 720 JS and JE (1990), p. 164.
- 721 Yid lhung Lha rgyal monastery was founded in 1767 by the Klu sdings Mkhan po Rin chen mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan (b. 1717). It had also been the seat of the more recent Ngor abbot Klu sdings Rgyal sras 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi nyi ma (1872–1926, sixty-sixth abbot), whose rebirth 'Jigs bral Bdag chen Rin po che was recognized to be. This connection was one of the reasons for the insistent invitations to Dagchen Rinpoche.
- 722 AC 1995.
- 723 The “three white deities” were White Amitāyus, White Tārā, and White Sarasvatī.
- 724 Other teachings given by Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse at this time are listed in 'Jigs bral Bdag chen, *Shri phun tshogs pho brang pa'i...*, p. 7.
- 725 Dezhung Rinpoche is listed together with Sde gzhung A 'jam among Chos kyi blo gros's greatest students. See Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho'i*, p. 216 (108b).
- 726 'Jigs bral Bdag chen, *Dpal sa skya...*, p. 24, also lists among the teachings given by Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse at this time the four transmissions of Hevajra, the

seven maṇḍalas of Ngor (*Ngor lugs dkyil 'khor bdun*)—namely, three traditions of Hevajra and two each of Cakrasamvara and Guhyasamāja—and the initiation for Sarvavid-Vairocana.

- 727 It was said that the learned students in the assembly all came to hear Dezhung Rinpoche's explanations. Among the students present then was Mkhan po Tshul khrims rgya mtsho, then just a young monk. During the explanation of the *rtsa rlung 'khrul 'khor*, Dezhung Rinpoche told his students that there was also a special transmission of such teachings among the Bka' brgyud lamas in Khams. On this basis Tshul khrims rgya mtsho first felt faith in the Bka' brgyud tradition and later sought out Bka' brgyud pa masters from whom he received these teachings.
- 728 DR August 1978 (CS notes).
- 729 AC 1993.
- 730 AC 1993.
- 731 According to Mkhan po Tshul khrims rgya mtsho, Bodhnath, 1993, who also was present and received the transmissions at that time, Dezhung Rinpoche said he had promised himself to give these teachings (there had been no main patron who had originally requested it). He had himself bought a new temple gong for this occasion. At the same time of day as these teachings, Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse was giving other students the *lung* for the collected works of 'Ju Mi pham rgya mtsho.
- 732 Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho'i*, p. 109 (55a), states that Chos kyi blo gros received many teachings from Dezhung Rinpoche, including the *lung* for the collected writings of the Five Great Sakya Founders, Ngor chen, and Zhu chen: *sga stod thar lam sde gzhung sprul sku mchog las sa skya gong ma rnam lnga/ ngor chen rdo rje 'chang/ zhu chen ma hā paṇḍi ta'i bka' 'bum lung sogs rgya cher gsanl*.
- 733 Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho'i*, p. 132 (66b): *sga ston 'jam pa'i dbyangs/ sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che rnam pa gnyis.... sogs grub mtha' so so'i rgyun 'dzin rnam las chos lugs de'i chos skad dang lta grub kyi rnam gzbag sogs dogs dpyod bka' mol zhib tu gnang zhingl*. Here I take "*sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che rnam pa gnyis*" to refer to "the two Sde gzhung mchog sprul Rin po ches," i.e., including Sde gzhung A 'jam Rin po che.
- 734 JS and JE (1990), pp. 170–171.
- 735 KN and JR 1987.
- 736 Also present at La ri sgang were a few servants, the Mkhyen brtse Gsang yum, the Sa skya Bdag mo Sku zhabs, and several others, according to AC 1995. For a biography of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, see M. Ricard (1996), *Journey to Enlightenment*.
- 737 Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, in his biography of Chos kyi blo gros, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho'i*, p. 133 (67a), also mentions how Sga ston always spoke a lot about the biographies of the earlier masters, about genuine religious histories,

and about how the signs of realization appear in the minds of separate individuals. Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros appreciated this highly and requested both Sde gzhung A 'jam Sprul sku and Dezhung Rinpoche, as Sga ston's main students (*thugs sras gts'o bo sde gzhung mchog sprul rnam pa gnyis*), to record these things in writing.

- 738 Dezhung Rinpoche did, however, dictate his memories of each biography to Lama Kalsang (Bla ma Bskal bzang rgyal mtshan) some thirty-one years later, in 1985.
- 739 AC 1995.
- 740 That spring or summer of 1955, the Dalai Lama passed through Derge on the way back to Tibet from China. 'Jigs bral Bdag chen Rin po che went to meet him. Also in Derge at the time was the Karma pa, whose visit is vividly described in Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 103.
- 741 See Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 109f.
- 742 JS and JE (1990), pp. 179–180.
- 743 Evidently Ri khud Sku zhabs Rin po che was among those who invited Dagchen Rinpoche, though he died before the beginning of the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings at Lha sgang.
- 744 According to Lama Dorje of Minyak and other eyewitnesses, Dezhung Rinpoche came to Ri khud from Rdzong gsar and not from Lha sgang.
- 745 According to MRT 1994, by this time the Ri khud Sku zhabs had taken a consort and had left the monastery to live in the nearby retreat (*ri khrod*). In the retreat he had built a remarkable three-story structure. The top (*rtse*) and middle floors (*bar khang*) were filled with books, while the ground floor housed a well-stocked medical dispensary, with all the medicines systematically organized in many boxes and drawers.
- 746 Lama Dorje, Singapore, 1995.
- 747 JR and KN 1987. Probably this refers to Dezhung Rinpoche giving the initiation for Rig byed ma (Kurukulle), as mentioned below.
- 748 Lama Dorje, Singapore, 1995.
- 749 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995, based on the reminiscences of Phyang mdzod Mgon po.
- 750 Lama Dorje, Singapore, 1995.
- 751 KN and JR 1987.
- 752 Lama Dorje, Singapore, 1995.
- 753 According to AC 1996, this probably referred to some jealous tension between Dkon yag and an attendant.

- 754 AC April 1996 said some wealth was lost through bad business deals, such as by one of Rinpoche's lay business managers who had a drinking problem. But these were not such big losses, and Rinpoche did not take them very seriously.
- 755 This is the only known mention of such a biography of Byang chub nyi ma. Dezhung Rinpoche did say at one time or another that certain of Byang chub nyi ma's writings had been xylographed.
- 756 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 757 *See also* in the interview article "I Have Many Tibetan Friends," *Tibetan Review*, vol. 18, no. 12 (December 1983), p. 13, the account of Wang Yao, who studied under Gangs dkar Rin po che for a year and a half in the early 1950s and who was instrumental in inviting the Rin po che to a professorship at the Institute of Nationalities in Beijing.
- 758 AC 1993.
- 759 *Klu*, or nāga deities, lived in water and, if disturbed, were believed to cause several diseases, including leprosy.
- 760 JR and KN 1987.
- 761 Evidently this was the "Lhakon" visited by P. Goullart ca. 1941. *See* Goullart (1959), p. 206f.
- 762 *See also* Dalai Lama, *Freedom in Exile*, p. 121.
- 763 JS and JE (1990), pp. 182–184.
- 764 Lama Dorje, Singapore, 1995.
- 765 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 766 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995. The verse was afterward lost.
- 767 Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug, 1995.
- 768 JS and JE (1990), pp. 185–189.
- 769 *See* chapter 12 for more on this family and town. According to MRT 1994, A skya Bskal bzang dbang phyug was originally from the Mkhar 'og noble family. He married the Wa si skyabs daughter po po Rdo rje (b. 1923). The element "A skya" or "A ja" in a name denoted birth outside the family of residence, while "po po" indicated birth in the home-family, a naming custom peculiar to Mi nyag. In Dar rtse mdo in particular, a number of customs existed that were not known in the rest of the Tibetan cultural zone. Except for lamas, the dead were buried. Grave monuments were kept, and big families had mausoleums with memorial tablets and Buddhist images erected as meritorious works to cause a better future life for the deceased (*skyes rtags*).
- 770 A brief account of Skyabs mgon Phyogs kyi glang po's life is given by Drag shul phrin las rin chen, *Sa skya gdung rabs yang skong*, p. 641f.

- 771 JS and JE (1990), pp. 191–194.
- 772 According to Khra 'gu Rin po che, February 1994, Mkhan po Gang shar dbang po was born in about 1920 in Zhe chen. His mother was 'O mtsho, a niece of Zhe chen Rgyal tshab. Zhe chen Kong sprul said Mkhan po Gang shar was the rebirth of a certain Indian adept and afterward looked after him very well. For scholastic studies, his main master had been Kaḥ thog Mkhan po Nus Idan. According to M. Kapstein, 1993, Mkhan po Gang shar wrote a subcommentary on Mi pham's commentary on the *A ma ngos 'dzin gyi glu* by Lcang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje, as well as a manual, *Nges don dbu ma chen po'i kbrid yig*, instructions on the ultimate view (*lta kbrid*), and songs of realization (*mgur*). Some of these writings survive, gathered into one volume and published on a very limited scale by an old disciple in Sikkim. These writings are said to have a very strong impact, similar in this respect to some of 'Jig med gling pa's *Dris lan skor* on meditation.
- 773 DK 1992. Sangs rgyas rin chen was born in the Ha mo ba noble family at Sakya. He had been a student of Sga Bla ma Dge 'dun bzang po and Brag g.yab Thub bstan bzang po, both disciples of Gzhan dga'. For more details, see J. Schoening (1983), p. 330.
- 774 JS and JE (1990), p. 199.
- 775 During his travels with the Sakya party, Dezhung Rinpoche had taught Dagchen Rinpoche a little Sanskrit grammar from the Candrapa system, and also a prognostication rite based on the goddess Dmag zor rgyal mo. This is recorded in an unpublished "autobiography" of 'Jigs bral Bdag chen, *Shri phun tshogs pho brang pa'i 'khon rigs 'jigs bral ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams kyi byung ba mdor tsam brjod pa sna tshogs rin po che'i phreng ba*, p. 12.
- 776 AC 1994.
- 777 KN and JR 1987.
- 778 AC 1994.
- 779 Chogyam Trungpa (1966), pp. 120–121.
- 780 Chogyam Trungpa (1966), pp. 120–121.
- 781 Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 121.
- 782 Mkhan po Gang shar was believed to have reached the very high level of tantric practice and realization called *rig pa'i rtul zhugs la spyod pa*. Numerous astounding stories are told about his behavior during this period.
- 783 Khra 'gu Rin po che, February 1994.
- 784 This other master was the Ninth Sangs rgyas mnyan pa Sprul sku, Bshad sgrub bstan pa'i nyi ma (1897–1962), whose biography was written by his brother, Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse. Sangs rgyas mnyan pa is said to have told Mkhan po Gang shar on this occasion: "If you think that doing this is necessary for increasing the

insight into the nature of mind, of course I will do it. But being an upholder of the Vinaya, I should not. Of course I will do as you say....”

- 785 Later Dezhung Rinpoche explained (January 28, 1982, Ipoh, Malaysia; CS notes) that at the stage of teaching called *'khor 'das ru shan* in some Rnying ma systems, as well as in Thang stong rgyal po's *Snyan brgyud*, at the time of introducing the nature of mind, the student is told to take off his clothes to create an auspicious interrelation (*rtan 'brel*) for the removal of the subject-object dichotomizing that covers the mind. Legs pa Rin po che had said that it was not necessary for a monk to remove all clothing at this time.

- 786 The Tibetan: *gnyug sems gnas lugs mngon sum du rtogs pa'i dngos grub?*

- 787 Later masters stated that Mkhan po Gang shar had indeed manifested signs of great realization. He had been able to radically alter the thinking and view of his students. To be able to have them take off their clothes without shame and do other tantric acts was indeed a great sign, they maintained.

- 788 The continued activities of Mkhan po Gang shar dbang po at Zhe chen monastery in late 1958 or even early 1959 are mentioned in the memoirs of Aten. See Jamyang Norbu (1979), p. 124:

The abbot of Shichen [Zhe chen] monastery, a venerable old monk called Gongshar [Gang shar], gave a special initiation called the *Mani Lung* to all the people in the area. After this initiation, and at the behest of some devotees, he also initiated the people into the mysteries of the *Sem Tri* (guide for the mind), the most sacred Tantric initiation of the Ancient Order. Normally the people are only permitted this initiation after they have completed the five preliminaries ... but the old abbot decided that the people needed this sacred rite in these terrible times, and he wisely dispensed with the normal requirements. Thus even in our misery we were granted this great teaching, and thereafter felt we would be able to die with less bitterness in our hearts.

- 789 According to MK 1993, the Dngul chu Mkhan po said that although many presumed that Mkhan po Gang shar had died in prison between 1956 and 1961, he had in fact survived. In 1978 Trungpa Trulku received a letter from Gang shar, who was then free after surviving twenty-two years of prison. But he died in about 1980 or 1981, before any of his old students in India and Nepal could contact him.

- 790 PhLh 1994—who added that the “official” Skye rgu mdo Dbon po Sprul sku turned out to be a child born into the Thag lung A gnyan tshang. The boy's father, Rta mgrin rdo rje (“Rta rdo”), had come as a *mag pa* to the Thag lung A gnyan tshang from the 'Dzi mda' Bar grong tshang. His mother, Bsod nams lha mo, was from the Thag lung A gnyan tshang and was the sister of the Phan bde Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan.

- 791 PhLh 1994.

- 792 AC 1996. He lived in the first floor of the family house, where he had a clinic and thriving dispensary.
- 793 AC 1994.
- 794 According to Dezhung Rinpoche (EGS notebook 1963), the full name of the Rol pa'i rdo rje Sprul sku was Karma nges don chos kyi go cha dri med 'od zer rgyas pa'i sde. He died in his forty-eighth year. Some historical information about the Rol pa'i rdo rje Sprul sku is given in Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 29.
- 795 AC 1994.
- 796 According to Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 129, Dezhung Rinpoche had received teachings from the Tenth Trungpa Trulku. Possibly he received very minor instructions from him, which were not otherwise recorded.
- 797 AC 1994.
- 798 Chogyam Trungpa (1966), pp. 129–130.
- 799 KN and JR 1987.
- 800 According to KN and JR 1987, when Dezhung Rinpoche met Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche years later in New York (ca. 1977), Dezhung Rinpoche told him, “The Gter ston Rol pa'i rdo rje must have been reborn. It would be good if you searched for him.” Trungpa Rinpoche replied, “Yes, I will.”
- 801 According to AC 1994, Zur mang had many more woods than Sga pa. Dezhung Rinpoche was then planning to build an extension to accommodate the increased number of monks and to have a place for performing the *bsnyen sgrub* propitiation ceremonies for the seven main maṇḍalas of Ngor.
- 802 AC 1993. This sprul sku of Lab monastery was the half-brother of Sprul sku Bsod nams rtse mo, both being sons of the Lab skyabs mgon (b. Glang, 1889?), though by different mothers (Bsod nams rtse mo assumed religious and temporal leadership of Lab monastery at the death of his father). They had met in 1953/54 when Dezhung Rinpoche accompanied 'Jigs bral Bdag chen Rin po che to Khri 'du Bskal bzang dgon. They had liked each other and exchanged invitations, the Lab Bla ma being very keen to study Sanskrit grammar.
- 803 The Pu ru Sprul sku's previous rebirth had been an ordination mate at Ngor of Dezhung Rinpoche's maternal uncle, Ngag dbang rgyal mtshan.
- 804 According to KN 1987, these were the Mdo Mkhyen brtse Sprul sku (?) and the (otherwise unknown) Dpal khyim A gnyan Bla ma.
- 805 AC 1994.
- 806 I am not sure which holy day this was. Death observances for important Tharlam lamas included those for Sga Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes, who had died on the thirteenth day of the second lunar month; Thar lam grub chen Kun dga' rnam rgyal, died on the twenty-ninth day of the third month; Thar lam Ngag dbang legs

- bshad rgya mtsho, died on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month; and Thar lam Rab dkar lhun grub, died on the fifteenth day of the tenth month.
- 807 According to AC 1996, this would have been because of Kun bzang nyi ma's close friendship with the rich merchant A khu Blo yag (Blo gsal), the steward (*phyag mdzod*) of the Dra'u Dpon.
- 808 KN and JR 1987.
- 809 According to DR 1975 (GM notes, p. 9), Dezhung Rinpoche left Tharlam on the tenth day of the seventh lunar month. This might refer to when he left Tharlam monastery. He probably fled from Sga khog later, in about the second half of the eighth lunar month (early October 1958?).
- 810 AC 1993.
- 811 AC 1996.
- 812 AC 1996.
- 813 Rinchen Tsering 1993.
- 814 AC 1993.
- 815 Rinchen Tsering 1993.
- 816 The fact that Dezhung Rinpoche enjoyed nearly thirty more years of life was probably due to his sister's insistence at this moment. Many others did surrender, expecting punishment but hoping at least to be spared their lives.
- 817 Tshe brtan rnam rgyal was captured and taken back to Sga pa, where he died in captivity of his wounds.
- 818 Some say Dezhung Rinpoche practiced the *sādhana* of White Tārā, envisioning himself as the deity, surrounded by a protective shield of six-colored light-rays. According to AC 1996, their cousin Byams pa rin chen who was in their group was indeed practicing the White Tārā *sādhana* while fleeing. His horse was struck by a bullet but he himself escaped unscathed.
- 819 AC 1994.
- 820 AC 1992.
- 821 AC 1994. Mkhan po Ru kho died immediately of the gunshot wounds he received. When he had met Dezhung Rinpoche while they were both on the way to Goshung, he stated, "If we fall into the hands of the Chinese, I am praying that I die immediately." Most of the refugees shared the opinion that it was better to die than to be imprisoned and tortured by the Chinese.
- 822 The Goshung massacre was also briefly described in Chogyam Trungpa (1966), p. 182. *See also* JS and JE (1990), p. 262f.
- 823 DK 1992.

- 824 JS and JE (1990), p. 271.
- 825 JS and JE (1990), pp. 278–279.
- 826 JS and JE (1990), pp. 280–281.
- 827 Kun bzang nyi ma had become separated from his wife, Tshe skyid yongs 'dzom, when fleeing from Jyekundo in 1958, but was reunited with her in Lhasa in early 1959. During the March 1959 disturbances in Lhasa, they were separated again, and she was arrested by the Communists and sent back to Jyekundo, where she died in the early 1960s after being tortured. Much later, in the mid-1980s, he heard that he could inherit their old house in Jyekundo, but he was not interested.
- 828 JS and JE (1990), pp. 283–286.
- 829 For more on this monastery and its lama lineages, see D. Jackson (1989a), *The Early Abbots of 'Phan-po Na-lendra*.
- 830 The two main Na lendra lamas of the early 1900s had ties with certain important Dge lugs pa masters of the main Lhasa-area convents. The Bco brgyad Khri pa Byams pa rin chen mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1869?–1927) had given teachings, including the “Cycle of Three Red Deities” (*Dmar po skor gsum*), to the Stag brag Sprul sku Ngag dbang gsung rab mthu stobs (1874–1952) of 'Bras spungs Sgo mang (regent of Tibet in the 1940s) and the Lha btsun Sprul sku Ngo mtshar gzhan phan of Se ra Smad. Meanwhile, Gzims 'og Sprul sku Kun dga' bstan 'dzin (1884–1963) became the teacher of the Se ra lama Pha bong kha pa Byams pa bstan 'dzin phrin las rgya mtsho (1878–1941, also called Bde chen snying po), with whom Lha btsun Rin po che had strained relations. Gzims 'og Rin po che gave him the “Cycle of Three Red Deities” (*Dmar po skor gsum*) initiations. Actually they had been friends since their youth, when they had heard together the text-transmission for the Fifth Dalai Lama's collected writings. Later people marveled over the fact that these lamas had risen to such power and eminence after receiving initiations from the Na lendra lamas.
- 831 The Bco brgyad Khri chen Rin po che, then forty years old, was from the Zhwa lu Sku zhang family and was the younger half-brother of Dezhung Rinpoche's dear friend the late Thar rtse Zhabs drung (and very briefly Ngor abbot) Byams pa nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan. His main teachers included Gzims 'og Rin po che, Ngag blo Rin po che, and Dam pa Rin po che.
- 832 Deshung Rinpoche (1995), *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception*, p. 451.
- 833 Gzim 'og Rin po che himself was from a nomadic chieftain family, and Na lendra traditionally had many nomad patrons.
- 834 JS and JE (1990), pp. 286–287.
- 835 The Rtse gdong Sprul sku was the fifth of his lineage, and his predecessors were (1) Rtse gdong Bdag chen Yongs 'du dbang po, (2) Mkhyen rab bstan 'dzin lhun grub (b. in 'Phan po on a Bco brgyad Bla brag estate, he was the paternal uncle

- of Gzims 'og Bstan 'dzin snyan grags), (3) Rig 'dzin Phyogs las rnam rgyal alias Dge 'dun bkra shis dpal 'byor, and (4) Snyan grags blo ldan dbang phyug (d. ca. 1901?).
- 836 DR 1979.
- 837 JS and JE (1990), p. 283.
- 838 Mal gro Gung dkar (Medro Gungkar) is the strategically important junction where the road from Chamdo meets the Lhasa-Drigung road (which follows the river Skyid chu north).
- 839 JS and JE (1990), p. 291.
- 840 JS and JE (1990), pp. 293–295.
- 841 AC 1993.
- 842 If this abbot was Rin chen bzang po, he was also a student of Gzhan dga's student Brag g.yab Thub bstan.
- 843 JS and JE (1990), pp. 296–298.
- 844 The Bkra shis chos sde Dbon sprul was an important trulku lineage of the Tshar pa subschool of the Sakyapa. According to Dezhung Rinpoche, the lineage was (1) Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho (1502–1566), (2) Bka' 'gyur ba Mgon po bsod nams mchog ldan (1603–1659), (3) gNas gsar ba Kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas, (4) Byams pa nam mkha' legs pa'i lhun grub (1761–1820), (5) Byams pa dngos grub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, and so on, down to the present. This is confirmed for the most part by the official list of *sprul skus* in the modern compilation *Bod kyi gal che'i...*, p. 310, which calls him the “Bkra shis chos sde Dbon Rin po che'i Sprul sku,” and adds that the fourth trulku of the lineage passed away on the twelfth day of the first month of the iron-dragon year (1820), his sixtieth year. The biographies of the first three masters in the lineage are found in the *Lam 'bras slob bshad* biographies (Derge edition).
- 845 JS and JE (1990), pp. 299–304.
- 846 AC 1993.
- 847 This same route had been taken about a week or two before by H.H. the Karma pa. *See also* the account of Rinchen Dolma Taring (1970), p. 243f., who also made this difficult crossing shortly before Dezhung Rinpoche did so.
- 848 AC 1993.
- 849 'Jigs med rdo rje was more commonly known among Tibetans as “Ha drung pa” or “Ku ma sa.”
- 850 JS and JE (1990), pp. 311–314.
- 851 AC 1993.
- 852 The monastery of Phang ya or Pangye was in Shar, in the Wangdi Phodrang region of Bhutan. “Phang Ya” is indicated as a Sakyapa monastery of fewer than

- 100 monks in Bhutan on the map of C. W. Cassinelli and R. Ekvall (1969), p. 31. On this monastery, called “Phang ye dgon pa in the Shar district,” see M. Aris (1979), p. 196, who mentions it and a number of other Sakyapa establishments founded in about the fifteenth or sixteenth century. The other previously Sa skya pa institutions include (1) Spyi zhing (Pchishing) in Wangyul on the left side of the Thimphu River; (2) Spa sgar (Pagar) in Wang; (3) Shar dbang (Sharwang) in Nagnying; and (4) Lha lding (Hedi) in the Paro valley.
- 853 These Sakyapa monasteries were reportedly converted to the ’Brug pa Bka’ brgyud sect since 1959.
- 854 AC 1993.
- 855 AC 1993.
- 856 DR 1979. Dezhung Rinpoche told this anecdote with amusement, poking fun at himself.
- 857 JS and JE (1990), pp. 320–323.
- 858 Some say that Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros died on the sixth day of the fifth lunar month.
- 859 Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho’i*, p. 268 (134b): *sa skya phun pho’i skyabs mgon gdung sras sku bgres rin po che dbur bzugs! thar rtse mkhan pol sga thar lam mchog sprul rnam kyis kye rdor sgrub mchod bdun phrag!*
- 860 KN and JR 1987.
- 861 AC 1993.
- 862 AC 1995.
- 863 Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba, *Rigs dkyil rgya mtsho’i*, p. 267 (134a).
- 864 ST 1993.
- 865 KN and JR 1987.
- 866 KN and JR 1987.
- 867 KN and JR 1987.
- 868 AC 1993.
- 869 As his official address for the period May 1959–October 1960, Dezhung Rinpoche gave “I-B Tenzing Norgay Road, Darjeeling,” when later applying for his permanent U.S. residence.
- 870 Deshung Rinpoche (1995), *The Three Levels of Spiritual Perception*, p. 45of.
- 871 In an unpublished report entitled “A Synopsis of a Preliminary Report on the State of Tibetan Studies in South Asia” (ca. March 1960), T. V. Wylie mentions that the University of Washington originally proposed selecting three Tibetans—one Dge lugs pa, one Bka’ brgyud pa, and one lay official—for the

research project. This proved impossible, and during his visit to India in February and March 1960, Wylie had problems locating any suitable learned Tibetans. H. V. Guenther, whom Wylie met in Benares on March 5, did not have high praise for the Phun tshogs pho brang *bdag chen* in Darjeeling as a scholar, but said that his younger brother (whose name was unknown to Guenther) was a fully ordained monk (*dge slong*) and was "quite good." Subsequently, in Kalimpong, both John Driver and the Macdonalds recommended the same Sakya group, so out of necessity Wylie changed the thrust of the project to include Sakya themes. After meeting them, Wylie reported: "There are three in the group, one is about fifty-two. He is a learned incarnate lama from a monastery near Jyekundo in Kham. Densapa (about whom ask Franz, for Densapa is probably the most knowledgeable Sikkimese Tibetan scholar in Gangtok) says this man is the best in learning he knows of around the Gangtok area. He is a Sakya lama and the teacher and maternal uncle by marriage to (2) the Sakya gong ma, a man of about thirty-two.... [The latter's] younger brother (number 3 of the men) is about twenty-six and is the one recommended by Guenther as being learned."

- 872 In his unpublished report for the Inner Asia Project, "A Synopsis of a Preliminary Report on the State of Tibetan Studies in South Asia," T. V. Wylie listed some of the potential advantages he saw in working with the Sakya group: "(1) Already being a family group, they can live together in one house near the campus in harmony. (2) Between them, we have speakers of Gtsang, Dbus and Khams dialect. (3) Numbers 1 and 3 are reportedly very learned in Sa skya pa teachings, a sect neglected up to this time as regards any serious study in depth of their philosophy. (4) Number 2 being a high official was at the 1954 Peking meeting when all the high officials and lamas were summoned there with the Dalai. (5) Numbers 2 and 3 have started working on a history of the Sakya sect from the non-religious side. (6) A study of the divisions of the Sakya ruling houses and their formerly vast estates can be made...."
- 873 JS and JE (1990), pp. 330–331 and 336.
- 874 George Patterson was author of several books and articles about Tibet published between 1954 and 1974.
- 875 A. W. Macdonald, letter of June 12, 1993.
- 876 In 1960 the Indian government had a program for giving scholarships to selected learned Tibetan lamas. H. V. Guenther, then (since early 1959) in Varanasi, was a key adviser to the Indians in this connection and had with him at Benares Sanskrit University the learned *dge bshes* Ngawang Nyima, who was paid Rs. 300 per month, including accommodations. (The salary of a reader at the university then began at Rs. 350.)
- 877 AC 1993.
- 878 AC 1995.
- 879 DR 1979. From the beginning the Americans had considered Dezhung Rinpoche

to be a very important member of the Sakya group. But Dezhung Rinpoche had not included himself in these plans.

880 GN 1993.

881 Some years later, Geshe Nornang told something about himself and his experiences to Julie Emery for the *Seattle Times* article "Seattle Tibetans to Celebrate," February 9, 1967.

882 GN 1993.

883 Seattle was named after a Duwamish Indian chief who is said to have predicted, "Perhaps we will all be brothers in the end. We will see. One thing we know, and the white man will discover it one day: our God and your God are—intrinsically—the same." Quoted from Elisabeth Keesing (1981), *Hazrat Inayat Khan: A Biography*, p. 68. Hazrat Inayat Khan visited Seattle in 1911 to perform in a musical concert, and Seattle has been home to Sufi students ever since. The American rascal-yogi Pierre Bernard (later based in Nyack, New York), who founded a "Tantrik Order in America" in 1906, had visited Seattle and taught there for some months around 1904 or 1905.

884 The reason Dezhung Rinpoche was called "Lama Labrang," "Kunga Dezhung Labrang," or "Kun dga bstan pa'i nyi ma Bla brang" is that when he was asked at the Indian border what his "last name" or "family name" was, somebody said "Sde gzhung bla brang," at which point the clerk wrote down *Labrang* ("Lama Palace"). *Kunga Dezhung Labrang* remained his legal name during his stay in America, and his Seattle telephone number was always listed under the last name *Labrang*.

885 Page B of the same issue showed a photograph captioned "Tibetans See Seattle Kitchen," with Mrs. Turrell Wylie demonstrating the wonders of the modern American kitchen appliances to three newly arrived Tibetan ladies.

886 Later Julie Emery became co-author of JS and JE (1990).

887 DK 1993.

888 Dzaya's birth was reported in an article by Julie Emery in the *Seattle Times*, January 5, 1961, p. 6.

889 This was reported in a front-page article by Julie Emery in the *Seattle Times*, February 16, 1961. Next year the child's first birthday party was similarly reported on the front page of the January 5, 1962, paper, with a darling photo by Ron De Rosa. On the front page of the January 10, 1965, edition appeared an article with a photo showing Dzaya, age four, and his younger brother Sadhu, age two.

890 This was the amount mentioned on the certificate of eligibility for exchange visitor status, dated August 22, 1963.

891 An article entitled "Home Shared: Tibetan, [Age] 6, Tutors U. Student" by Julie Emery in the *Seattle Times* (October 25, 1960) briefly described Smith's studies

and role with the family. A later *Seattle Times* article of October 29, 1961, p. 20, by Julie Emery, entitled “Student’s Tibetan ‘Homework’ Goes to His Heart,” sketched Smith’s situation one year later.

892 DK 1993.

893 Information recorded in these notebooks would later form the foundation for many of Smith’s legendary introductions to Tibetan books published in India between 1969 and 1973 and acquired by American libraries through the PL480 program. See E. Gene Smith (2001), p. xiii.

894 For one obituary notice of N. Poppe, see the *Buddhist Studies Review*, vol. 9–2 (1992), p. 193.

895 EGS 1993.

896 EGS 1993.

897 Ekvall, however, in his “Report on Research Activities Involving Members of the Sakyapa Family” [1961], stated as his first item: “After compiling biographic data on Dezhung Rinpoche from November 1960 through January 1961, an average of nine hours per week were spent in intensive discussions with him and Dagchen Rinpoche.” See U.W. [University of Washington] Archives, W.U. [Washington University] Inner Asia Colloquium, accession no. 85–42, box 1, general correspondence, miscellaneous. If Ekvall’s statement is accurate, there may survive more notes on Dezhung Rinpoche’s life in the papers of Ekvall.

One or more of the surviving incomplete autobiographical sketches may have been written by Dezhung Rinpoche at this time. He did not give them to his hosts.

898 According to AC 1995, Dezhung Rinpoche typically recommended Dil mgo Mkhayen brtse Rin po che and Bdud ’joms Rin po che to potential Dharma students in the mid- and late 1960s.

899 EGS 1993. Literally the second part of the saying reads: “then the throne of Ganden has no owner.” Ganden (Dga’ ldan) was the head monastery of the Gelukpa order, and its abbot was traditionally selected largely on the basis of the qualities of the candidates (however, a more seniority-based system was introduced more recently). To become its abbot was to reach the highest possible position in the dominant religious tradition of Tibet.

900 Some details of Ekvall’s colorful life and career are found in the “Appreciation” by James F. Downs and S. Iijima (pp. v–x) in the book by Robert B. Ekvall and James F. Downs, *Tibetan Pilgrimage* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, 1987). A biographical sketch is also found in the *Seattle Times*, February 22, 1959, Sunday supplement, p. 8, from which I have drawn some details. Other details derive from the archives of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, through the kind help of Mike Saunier. Ekvall died in Seattle in May 1983. Further important data were derived from two taped interviews (1979 and 1980) preserved in the archives of the Billy Graham Center,

Wheaton, Illinois, "Interviews with Robert Brainerd Ekvall—Collection 92." Brief biographical citations are found in *American Men of Science: The Social and Behavioral Sciences* 1968; *Who's Who in the West*, 12th edition, 1970–71; *The Writer's Dictionary* 1974–1976; *Men of Achievement* 1973–74; *The World Who's Who of Authors* 1975; and *The Dictionary of International Biography* 1975.

- 901 For references to David Ekvall and the Christian and Missionary Alliance, see William S. Martin (1998), p. 14. See also R. Ekvall (1938a), his history of this mission.
- 902 Ekvall's life during this period is to some extent recorded in his travel memoirs *Tibetan Skylines* (London: 1952) and in his ethnographic novel *Tents against the Sky* (New York: 1955).
- 903 R. Ekvall's book *Tibetan Skylines* (1952) is a fascinating, even if partly fictionalized, account of his experiences during the years 1930–1935.
- 904 Ekvall relates the story of his experiences at this time in the volume *The Faithful Echo* (New York: 1960).
- 905 According to R. Ekvall (1968), p. 99, his novel *Tents Against the Sky* was reviewed in the *New York Times* as being "of indifferent quality as fiction but most excellent ethnography."
- 906 Both Ekvall and Wylie had attended the first conference on Tibetan studies in the U.S. held at the office of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York City, on September 22–23, 1959. It was proposed that both conduct a survey of the current situation in South Asia. The first Bellagio meeting was held October 24–25, 1959. An article in the *New York Times* (May 15, 1960, p. 119:5) reported that the Rockefeller Foundation had made a grant of \$250,000 to bring Tibetan refugee scholars to the U.S. and to foreign centers, to contribute to "Western understanding of their unusual country and its culture." Before the founding of the National Endowment for the Humanities in the mid-1960s, the Rockefeller and Ford foundations were the two main sources for funding such projects.
- 907 In Robert B. Ekvall and James F. Downs (1987), p. 4, James Downs states that Ekvall was chairman of the Inner Asia Research Project from 1958 until being relieved of administrative responsibilities to devote himself fully to research (ca. 1960?). In surviving correspondence from this period, Ekvall signs himself as chairman of the project. See U.W. Archives, W.U. Inner Asia Colloquium, accession no. 85–42, box 1, general correspondence, Ekvall. His occupying this position in 1958–1959 is also mentioned in the contemporaneous biographical sketch in the February 22, 1959 *Seattle Times*, Sunday supplement, p. 8.
- 908 John Reynolds, Fagernes, September 1992.
- 909 It is said that Franz Michael, then second only to George Taylor in the Far Eastern and Russian Institute and the author of political studies, had also wanted to do the job, but had not been able to go to India.

- 910 R. Ekvall (1938a), p. 169f.; (1938b), pp. 20–22; and (1946), pp. 10ff., 19ff., and 28ff.
- 911 DK 1993.
- 912 EGS 1993.
- 913 KN and JR 1987.
- 914 R. Ekvall and James F. Downs (1987), p. 7.
- 915 Thubten Jigme Norbu's arrival was reported in the *Seattle Times* of January 11, 1961, p. 5.
- 916 Thubten Jigme Norbu first came to the U.S. in 1955 and was generally believed to have been the first Tibetan to see North America. However, according to Thubten Samphel, "Tibetans in New York: Life between Two Cultures," *Tibetan Review*, vol. 14 no. 12 (December 1989), p. 11: "The first Tibetan to immigrate to America is Tenki Tentuf Davis, who studied medicine at Columbia University. She came to the U.S. in 1951. She's now [1989] the director of a medical establishment in northern California. Tenki Tentuf is the granddaughter of S. W. Laden La, who organized the Tibetan police force in Lhasa in 1923." See also Ernest Dale, "Tibetan Immigration into the United States," *Tibet Society Bulletin* (Bloomington: 1969), no. 3, pp. 42–45.
- 917 An English translation of this collection of traditional sayings was published by Thubten Jigme Norbu and Dan Martin as "Proverbs," *The Tibet Society Newsletter*, no. 12 (Fall 1984), pp. 4–7.
- 918 Tashi Tsering's arrival was reported in a *Seattle Times* article of July 3, 1961, p. 24. For his autobiography, see Melvyn Goldstein, William Siebenschuh, and Tashi Tsering (1997), particularly pp. 74–80, which briefly describe his experiences in Seattle at this time. The third photo after p. 88, captioned "Tashi (left) with friends in Seattle [in 1963]," shows Dezhung Rinpoche as one of the central figures, *mālā* in one hand but with the other arm draping over his neighbor.
- 919 This book is a potentially valuable source on the experiences of the Tibetans in Seattle in these years, but I have so far been unable to consult it. It was published in Darjeeling in 1963. See also Melvyn Goldstein, William Siebenschuh, and Tashi Tsering (1997), p. 78, where the English title is given as *My View of the American Way of Life*.
- 920 Tashi Tshering survived the Cultural Revolution and as of the late 1990s was still living in Lhasa.
- 921 EGS 1993. Lilian Nakai also studied Kham pa dialect with Dagmola.
- 922 EGS 1993. See also JS and JE (1990), p. 348. The same authors, in the acknowledgments to their book, p. xi, mention their great debt to Edna Georgeson.
- 923 EGS 1993.

- 924 Julie Emery, "Seattle's Tibetan Lamas Make Concessions to U.S. Customs," *Seattle Times* article of October 29, 1961, p. 20.
- 925 U.W. Archives, W.U. Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85 42, box 1, general correspondence, miscellaneous.
- 926 DR 1979. Evidently Leon Hurvitz, too, had advised him not to spend too much time on English.
- 927 RB 1993.
- 928 Agehananda Bharati's autobiography, *The Ochre Robe* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962; 2nd ed. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), is a fascinating account. Bharati later taught anthropology in Syracuse and in the 1970s served as editor of the *Tibet Society Bulletin* for a few years. Several of his articles (against "Rampaism" in that same bulletin, vol. 7, 1974; on the future of tantra in 1975; and on H. V. Guenther in *Kailash*, vol. 5-2 [1977]) make for lively reading, though he had no deep knowledge of things Tibetan. See also A. Bharati (1987b). An obituary notice for him is found in the *Buddhist Studies Review*, vol. 8-1/2 (1991), p. 157.
- 929 Bharati gives a description of his academic work at Seattle in the period 1958-1960 (before the Tibetans arrived) and of the intellectual and cultural atmosphere prevailing there for Asian classical studies in his book *The Ochre Robe*, pp. 268-271. He states (p. 268) that he was then working on the book *Indian Tantra and Its Relation to Tibetan Buddhism*. Perhaps this developed into his later publication, *The Tantric Tradition* (London and New York: 1965).
- 930 Bharati, Smith, Nakai, and others presented the paper "Preliminary Report on Mkhyen brtse's History of Tantrism, 'The Lotus Grove of the God,' 'Lha'i pad tshal,'" before the Inner Asia Colloquium on May 9, 1961.
- 931 This help is mentioned by A. Bharati (1978), p. 81. I am grateful to Franz-Karl Ehrhard for this reference.
- 932 A. Bharati (1978), p. 79.
- 933 See U.W. Archives, W.U. Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85-42, box 1, general correspondence, miscellaneous.
- 934 Hurvitz knew quite a few European languages. He used to amaze the older Sakya boys by picking up a household object and then reeling off its name in ten or twelve languages.
- 935 Leon Hurvitz was born in Boston on August 4, 1923, and did his undergraduate studies at the University of Chicago (BA 1949, studies interrupted by war).
- 936 A brief appreciation of Leon Hurvitz, written by Sonja Arntzen on the occasion of his retirement, appeared in the *B.C. [British Columbia] Asian Review*, no. 3/4 (1990), pp. 35-38.
- 937 CS 1994.

- 938 EGS 1993.
- 939 AC 1995.
- 940 This seat was pictured in a *Seattle Times* article by Julie Emery, February 7, 1965, with a photograph by Ron De Rosa. The caption read: "Prof. Bishnu P. Puodel, left, with Lama Kunga Labrang. Lama sat cross-legged in his cut-down chair as he and visitor discussed Tibet and Nepal." The article further stated: "The project secretary, Mrs. Barbara Mahr, contributed to the coziness of the office by arranging for a specially cut-down, upholstered chair for Lama Kunga Labrang so that he can do his collaborating work and writing in his customary lotus (cross-legged) position." Professor Bishnu Puodel of Nepal was in Seattle in 1965 on a Fulbright grant to do research with Wylie on Tibetan-Nepalese relations.
- 941 Julie Emery in her *Seattle Times* article of October 29, 1961, p. 20, recorded E. Gene Smith's observation about this: "Smith is particularly fond of Lama Kunga Labrang, 56, a 'walking encyclopedia' of Tibetan knowledge. 'Living in the middle of this family places me in an awkward position at times,' Smith said. 'In Tibetan society you do not offer advice unless asked. The old lama says "hello" to everyone on the bus,' the student said, smiling. 'I wouldn't tell him not to for the world.'"
- 942 EGS February 1993.
- 943 EGS August 1993.
- 944 For more details on Wylie's life and works, see the biographical sketch in the introduction to L. Epstein and R. Sherburne, eds., *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V. Wylie* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), pp. ix–xiii. See also the similar obituary by R. A. Miller in the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 9-1 (1986), pp. 150–155.
- 945 Durango (alt. ca. 6,500 feet, pop. 9,500 in 1957) was then a mining and processing center for uranium ore.
- 946 With Downs, Ekvall wrote the articles: "Note on Water Utilization and Rule in the Sakya Domain," *Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 22-3 (1963), pp. 293–303; and "Animal and Social Types in the Exploitation of the Tibetan Plateau," in A. Leeds and A. P. Vadya, eds. (1965), *Man, Culture and Animals*; and also the book Ekvall and Downs (1987).
- 947 Henderson later published the article "Settlement of Homicide Disputes in Sakya," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 66-5 (1964), pp. 1096–1148.
- 948 In addition to the book *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sakya* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1969) written together with Ekvall, Casinelli also published the brief article: "An Introduction to the Principality of Sakya," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 66-5 (1964), pp. 1105–1109.
- 949 David L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study*, 2 vols. (London: 1959). Wylie's teacher Tucci is said to have received at least formally some tantric

initiations or instructions in Sakya from Dagchen Rinpoche's father, Ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug. Evidently Wylie expected to do something similar in Seattle.

- 950 As mentioned before, Bharati left the Inner Asia Project not long thereafter, in the fall of 1961, to take a position in Syracuse, New York.
- 951 DK 1993.
- 952 Dbu mdzad 'Jam dbyangs chos 'phel was from the Ra 'og Gzhung rung tshang.
- 953 What Dezhung Rinpoche was saying here was that the Sanskrit word *Buddha* was used in the English word for *Buddhism*.
- 954 This refers, of course, to Leon Hurvitz and his students.
- 955 Here Dezhung Rinpoche wrote but later crossed out: "Those who give such initiations [i.e., to unsuitable people] will have obstacles to their longevity. And certainly I, as the haphazard exponent of the Tantra, would fall into hell."
- 956 This refers to Ekvall and his collaborators.
- 957 One of the Sakyapa's in-laws in Sikkim heard about this flap between Wylie and the Sakyapa lamas and wrote a letter scolding them, saying, "You should have made them your disciples! Good luck came in your mouth but you expelled it!" When Dagmola showed this letter to Dezhung Rinpoche, he replied: "How terrible! Even if it costs me my life, I cannot sell my religion!" (DK 1993).
- 958 For Tucci's obituary by L. Petech, see the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 7–2 (1984), pp. 137–142.
- 959 In his report on the second Bellagio meeting (July 1962), p. 22, Wylie reported optimistically that the "apparent conflict of interest (re: Sa skya research) was resolved at the Bellagio conference and it seems that the Sa skya works needed at Seattle for research will now be available from Rome or from other centers." This, however, did not prove to be the case. When they finally could obtain the most important sources, it was from elsewhere, such as from the collection of Barmiook Athing in Sikkim, but by then it was too late.
- 960 In effect, the project became fragmented into "Ekvall's party" and "Wylie's party"—with the Tibetans falling into one or the other camp. Those in Wylie's camp believed that Ekvall was jealous of Wylie and had influenced George Taylor against him. Those in Ekvall's camp believed that Wylie was extremely jealous of Ekvall.
- 961 Julie Emery 1993.
- 962 M. Goldstein, letter of February 21, 1995.
- 963 A thoroughly positive account of the marriage was given by Julie Emery in a *Seattle Times* article of April 30, 1961, p. 16. I could find no other published reports of it.

- 964 As a follow-up article, the *Seattle Times* reported on April 2, 1962, the birth of a first child to the couple.
- 965 See the bibliography of Wylie's works in the introduction to L. Epstein and R. Sherburne, eds., *Reflections on Tibetan Culture: Essays in Memory of Turrell V. Wylie* (Lewiston: 1990), pp. ix–xiii. He did at least publish the one article, "Mortuary Customs at Sa-skya, Tibet," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 25 (1965), pp. 229–242.
- 966 Julie Emery 1993.
- 967 For some details of this distinguished diplomat and scholar's life and works, see David Snellgrove, "An Appreciation of Hugh Richardson," in M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi, eds., *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson* (Warminster: 1980), pp. vii–xv. His arrival in Seattle was reported in the *Seattle Times*, February 21, 1961, p. 9.
- 968 Some of Richardson's activities were reported in a *Seattle Times* article of October 29, 1961, p. 20.
- 969 EGS 1994.
- 970 H. Richardson, personal letter, January 13, 1995.
- 971 Probably this "history of Amdo" was Rinpoche's history of Sga pa, *Bod ljongs mdo khams sga ldan skyur gsum* Politically, Sga pa was, like Amdo, ultimately under Sining control.
- 972 EGS 1993.
- 973 This list has yet to be located.
- 974 EGS 1993.
- 975 KN and JR 1987.
- 976 EGS 1993.
- 977 L. Epstein October 1993.
- 978 See also Downs and Iijima, "Appreciation," in Ekvall and Downs (1987), p. ix: "[Ekvall's] relations with the academic world were not always as smooth as he hoped they might be. In a field such as Asian Studies based in no small part on the detached and meticulous reading of classical texts in little-known languages, his complete and flamboyantly demonstrated fluency in Chinese and Tibetan was not always appreciated. There is no doubt that his development of a romanization system for Tibetan based on the spoken language did not meet with the approval [of] many scholars who spoke the language poorly, if at all. His interpretations of events in both China and Tibet based as they were on a life of observation and interaction did not always correspond to those of some of his more academically oriented colleagues."
- 979 As mentioned above, Robert B. Ekvall and James F. Downs (1987), p. 4, state that

- Ekvall had acted as chairman of the Inner Asia Research Project from 1958 until he devoted himself more fully to research with the Tibetans.
- 980 Downs and Iijima in their "Appreciation," in Ekvall and Downs (1987), p. vi, refer to this without mentioning names: "[Ekvall's] efforts to produce [the book] *Cultural Relations [on the Kansu-Tibetan Border]* (Chicago: 1939)] diverted him from his formal studies, and his goal of an advanced degree was not realized. In future years this would prove a handicap in dealing with some of the more hidebound academics who put greater faith in certification than they did in proven merit."
 - 981 See also Wylie's review of Ekvall (1964), "A Propos of Tibetan Religious Observances," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 86-1 (1966), pp. 39-45.
 - 982 Later, on May 23, 1969, Wylie was appointed chairman of the Department of Asian Languages and Literature, to succeed George Taylor. This was reported in the *Seattle Times*, p. 6.
 - 983 Melvyn Goldstein married Chunden Surkhang in Seattle on December 7, 1962, as reported in a *Seattle Times* front-page article by Julie Emery (December 10, 1962). The arrival of Chunden Surkhang (niece of the Surkhang cabinet minister) in Seattle in June 1961 from Cottey College, Nevada, Missouri, where she had been studying was reported in a *Seattle Times* article dated June 7, 1961, p. 3. She was to assist in the research project in summer 1961.
 - 984 According to Geshe Norngang 1993, after receiving an advance copy of the study, Goldstein had rechecked several key points, such as whether there had been a flag and army of Sakya, and come to the opposite conclusion.
 - 985 Some of Ekvall's opponents went further, maintaining that his "seminar" did not really exist in the way he had described it to other anthropologists. Most of his dealings and information-gathering were done, they said, on an informal person-to-person basis. L. Epstein 1993 commented in retrospect: "There was too much money around in those days. A lot was wasted. The only ones who were really learning anything were Gene Smith and Mel Goldstein." (A *Seattle Times* article of October 29, 1961, p. 20, reported that grants then totaled "some \$150,000.")
 - 986 An earlier mimeographed letter dated February 26, 1962, from Kenneth Read, one of the senior anthropologists at the university, to George Taylor (in U.W. Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85-42, general correspondence, miscellaneous) addressed the subject: "Anthropological research with members of the Tibetan group resident in Seattle, a collective opinion." Here Read stated that "culture at a distance" studies had largely fallen out of use after the war. He stressed the need for specialists who were conversant with the literary tradition and history. (Ekvall could not, of course, claim to be such a specialist.)
 - 987 M. Goldstein, letter of February 21, 1995. Ultimately Ekvall and Cassinelli decided not to go for further research to India (Ekvall perhaps would not have been granted an Indian visa, while Cassinelli said he was not responsible for the veracity of the data—that was Ekvall's job—but only for analyzing it). So in

- Goldstein's opinion (*ibid.*), their book was virtually useless: "There was no way to tease out what is really Lhasa, what is hyperbole and what is correct."
- 988 M. Goldstein, letter of February 21, 1995.
- 989 L. Epstein October 1993.
- 990 M. Goldstein, letter of February 21, 1995. This professor was evidently Dan F. Henderson.
- 991 Also, 1962 was the year of death of Joseph Rock (b. 1884), the Austrian-American botanical explorer from whom the U.W. bought many of its first Tibetan books. After the conference in Italy, Smith went to Marburg to visit him, and stayed there as long as he could. While he was gone from Seattle, Mel Goldstein stayed with the Sakya family.
- 992 See E. G. Smith (1969).
- 993 See, for instance, E. G. Smith (1969), vol. 2, p. 200, about the printing of Rong zom's available collected works at Derge.
- 994 See, for example, E. G. Smith (1969), vol. 2, p. 202, on the names and teachers of Mkhan chen Gzhan dga'.
- 995 See also E. G. Smith (1969), vol. 1, p. 49f. See also the revised reprint of many of Smith's contributions: E. G. Smith (2002).
- 996 EGS, Jakarta 1993. Dezhung Rinpoche also used to say sometimes, with a self-depreciating laugh: "I'm a 'book-person'" (*nga dpe cha ba yin*; *dpe cha ba* = "person who studies books"; CS 1994).
- 997 Sadhu's subsequent naming ceremony is referred to in a *Seattle Times* article of November 12, 1962, p. 7.
- 998 EGS 1993.
- 999 For many years, Dr. Webber has had a practice in the Medical Dental Building, Seattle.
- 1000 C. Webber, letter of September 1998.
- 1001 EGS 1993. For a French translation of Kong sprul's marriage ceremony, see Katia Buffetrille (1987), "Le rituel de mariage tibétain," *L'Ethnographie*, vol. 83 (no. 100–101), pp. 35–62. This article refers also to an English translation of the same piece by T. Skorupski, and a German translation by D. Schuh.
- 1002 C. Webber, letter of September 1998.
- 1003 During this period the Buddhist-studies specialist Richard Robinson and his wife, Hannah, were also in Seattle, and they became close to the Sakya family.
- 1004 This was reported in a *Seattle Times* article of January 23, 1963, p. 3.
- 1005 Julie Emery in a *Seattle Times* article of June 21, 1963, p. 1.

- 1006 *Seattle Times* article of December 30, 1963, p. 2. For Jetsun Pema's life story, see Jetsun Pema, *Tibet, mon histoire* (Paris: Éditions Ramsay, 1996) and *Tibet, My Story: An Autobiography* (Shaftesbury: Element Books, 1997).
- 1007 As reported in *Seattle Times* articles of March 15 (p. 16) and April 5 (p. 37), 1964.
- 1008 *Seattle Times*, February 21, 1963, p. 18.
- 1009 *Seattle Times* Sunday supplement, April 21, 1963, pp. 4–9.
- 1010 A few years later, Geshe Nornang reminisced in the *Seattle Times* article, "Seattle Tibetans to Celebrate," February 9, 1967.
- 1011 The application mentions Dezhung Rinpoche's job title as "research associate," his salary as \$4,000 annually, and the source of his salary as "11–2205 Central Asia Study."
- 1012 George E. Taylor, director, letter of September 24, 1963. U.W. Archives, W.U. Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85–42.
- 1013 Jigdal Dagchen Rinpoche, with a family to support, had officially asked for an extension. Geshe Nornang (who received the appointment) had never actually applied.
- 1014 Already one year after her arrival in Seattle, Dagmola was quoted in a *Seattle Times* article (October 29, 1961, p. 20): "We would like to stay in America," said Mrs. Jamyang Sakyapa, 27, mother of four boys. "I am learning how to type and I enjoy my English lessons at the university."
- 1015 *Seattle Times* article "5 Hope to Stay: Tibetans Work While U.S. Decides Fate," January 15, 1964, p. 1. The exhibit opened at the Burke Memorial Museum three years later in April 1967, as reported in the *Seattle Times*, Rotogravure Pictorial, April 16, 1967. The subsequent opening of the exhibition at the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, was reported in an article in the *Seattle Times*, November 23, 1967.
- 1016 As reported in the *Seattle Times* January 15, 1964 article, p. 1.
- 1017 EGS 1993.
- 1018 After six months, the extended family moved back to the old house on 24th Avenue N.E., where they stayed for another eighteen months. Dezhung Rinpoche then moved with his siblings to the University District.
- 1019 EGS 1993.
- 1020 See J. Szerb, ed. (1990), p. 90.
- 1021 E. Conze (ca. 1979), *The Memoirs of a Modern Gnostic* (Sherborne [England]: Samizdat Publication Company), p. 119f.
- 1022 EGS 1993.
- 1023 U.W. Archives, W.U. Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85–42, box 1, general correspondence, miscellaneous.

- 1024 EGS 1993. I could not trace this in Merton's writings or elsewhere.
- 1025 In *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, vol. 42 (1988), pp. 119–152.
- 1026 See D. Jackson (1989b).
- 1027 For a brief biographical sketch of Zur khang, see L. Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet 1728–1959* (Rome: 1973), p. 152.
- 1028 This was reported in an article by Julie Emery in the *Seattle Times*, July 1, 1964, p. 67.
- 1029 AC 1993.
- 1030 Zur khang Zhabs pad is said to have worked as “Tibetan translator” for the Inner Asia Project from 1966 to 1970. Before that, the same work was done by Chunden L. Surkhang Goldstein, and in 1970–1971, Jigme Dorje Yuthog held the position.
- 1031 EGS 1993.
- 1032 The revival of Ekvall's “seminar” is mentioned in the introduction to Robert Ekvall and James F. Downs (1987).
- 1033 Ekvall and Downs (1987), p. 11.
- 1034 R. Ekvall (1968), pp. ix–x. See also R. Ekvall (1967), “Tibetans in Switzerland,” *The Tibet Society Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 113–117.
- 1035 Darrell Houston, “Seattle's China Watcher,” *The Seattle Times*, Magazine, May 7, 1972, p. 8f.
- 1036 Two years before his death Ekvall's last known article appeared, “The High-Pasture Ones of Tibet Also Grow Old,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 124–6 (1980), pp. 429–437.
- 1037 J. Reynolds September 1992.
- 1038 DR 1979.
- 1039 The arrival of Dezhung Rinpoche's two siblings was reported in two articles by Julie Emery in the *Seattle Times*, August 15, 1965, p. 74: “City's Tibetan Population Increases with New Arrivals” and “Nun Finds New Life Here.”
- 1040 DK 1993.
- 1041 By 1963–1964, Dezhung Rinpoche had adjusted somewhat to life in America, and he had begun trying to bring his siblings over, too. As he wrote in a letter from this period, part of what had convinced him that this would be best were remarks by Gene Smith that his brother and sister would definitely live longer if they could leave India and come to a healthier environment. But then his application for his own permanent residence was turned down on July 30, 1964. According to documents preserved in the general correspondence file, U.W. Archives, Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85–42, “re: Chime Drolma and Kun-sang Nyima,” he was found “ineligible under the Asia Pacific triangle quota.”

Moreover, “no numbers were available under the China quota.” But then he was recommended to try applying for the admission of his brother and sister as dependents. Smith cabled Wylie on August 5, 1964, informing him of this.

- 1042 *Seattle Times*, September 29, 1966, p. 18, “Tibetans Given Permanent Residence.”
- 1043 AC, Bodhnath, 1995.
- 1044 J. Reynolds September 1992.
- 1045 Michal Abrams read the paper “Buddhist Life at Bshad grub gling” on March 28, 1968. It is found in the U.W. Archives, W.U. Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85-42, box 1.
- 1046 Alan Watts, *In My Own Way* (New York: Vintage Books 1973), p. 316.
- 1047 “The Americanization of the Sakyapas, or Tibet Was Never like This,” *Seattle Magazine*, February 1967, p. 14.
- 1048 “The Americanization of the Sakyapas,” *Seattle Magazine*, February 1967, p. 14.
- 1049 J. Reynolds September 1992.
- 1050 JN 1993, referring to his impressions of Wylie in the early 1970s.
- 1051 John Reynolds 1992.
- 1052 But see R. Fields (1981) and (1992), p. 254, on the establishment of an Office for Buddhist Affairs in the U.S. State Department already in 1963.
- 1053 See Conze’s memoirs, *The Memoirs of a Modern Gnostic*, part 1. For a review of this book, see Roger Jackson, *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 4-2 (1981), pp. 102-106. For Conze’s obituary by E. Bastian, see *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 2-2 (1979), p. 116.
- 1054 J. Reynolds September 1992.
- 1055 E. Conze (1979), *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 41.
- 1056 U.W. Archives, Inner Asia Colloquium, acc. no. 85-42, general correspondence, miscellaneous.
- 1057 *The Daily*, May 15, 1968, pp. 1 and 15.
- 1058 One such letter, by the undergraduate student Jane Spence, a junior majoring in Social Welfare, is an accurate reflection of the times. It concludes:

If Dr. Conze is forced to leave the University, the acclaimed Indic Studies program will collapse, the many students who have tuned into his classes will be stunned, and one more sensitive, cosmically aware mind will have been sacrificed to The Establishment. His lectures flow freely with insight into human relationships, sexual attitudes and pacifism; with creative criticism of the “Great Society” but sincere concern

for its direction in the world today; and with an unabashed intensity that has stimulated me to heavier mind-expansion than any other University educator. If the University passively accepts his deportation, it won't be the first time it has turned its collective back on a man devoted to principles of enlightenment and peace.

- 1060 In the early 1970s, Conze did return to the U.S. to teach Buddhist Studies in California at U.C. Berkeley.
- 1061 See Conze's *Memoirs*, part 1, p. 99, n. 1, where he alludes to further discussions. But these apparently were included in the still-unpublished part 3 of his work, which will probably never be published because of its scandalous contents.
- 1062 AC, Bodhnath, 1995.
- 1063 According to KN and JR 1987, Dezhung Rinpoche composed for Conze a brief summary of the Prajñāpāramitā, a *Sher phyin don bsdu*. Conze is said to have taken it, translated it, and distributed it among some interested colleagues. If this work ever existed, it has been impossible to trace.
- 1064 JG 1994.
- 1065 According to CS 1993, Dezhung Rinpoche did not like the work he had composed. When Stearns later wanted to translate it, Rinpoche said, "No, don't bother translating it. It is incomplete and far too brief. No sources were then available. I wouldn't want people to see it published." He was not writing for a learned Tibetan audience, and the learned would not be pleased with it, he felt. (The *Sa skya pa* section seemed to be based primarily on Mang thos Klu sgrub's Three Visions manual, *Snang gsum khrid yig*.)
- 1066 When Cyrus Stearns mentioned to Rinpoche in the late 1970s that he had located a shoebox full of such cards, Rinpoche just laughed and dismissed them as "something they wanted me to do back then."
- 1067 *Seattle Times*, January 16, 1968, p. 14, "Tibetan Faithful about Prayers (All 10,000 a Day)."
- 1068 KN and JR 1987. According to AC 1993, G.yu thog knew a lot about Buddhism and was a good practitioner. Dezhung Rinpoche gave him other minor teachings in this period.
- 1069 For more details on the life of Shakabpa, who died February 23, 1989, in Corpus Christi, Texas, see the obituary by the U.S. Tibet Committee published in the *Tibetan Review*, vol. 14-4 (April 1989), p. 9, and Karma Gyatso (1991), "Shakabpa (1908–1989): A Brief Biography," *Tibetan Journal*, vol. 16-2, pp. 91–94.
- 1070 T. V. Wylie is asserted to have been an "anonymous co-author" of Shakabpa's book in L. Epstein and R. Sherburne, eds. (1990), Introduction, p. xii. The Tibetan text appeared in two volumes under the title *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs* (An advanced political history of Tibet; Delhi: Tsepal Taikhang, 1976) and in two reprint editions.

- 1071 Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, p. xii. It was not a compulsory practice among Tibetan historians to cite every informant and source. One obvious instance of Dezhung Rinpoche's help is found on p. 105 in note 8, where Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen's writings (i.e., his "recorded teachings," or *thob yig?*) are cited on the location of Be ri as in "Denkhog Chokhorpon in Nangchen" (i.e., in Ldan ma, under Nang chen?). Though the influence of the Be ri king Don yod rdo rje extended to Ldan khog in the early 1600s, Be ri has been shown by P. Schwieger (1999), p. 249, to be located southeast of Lha thog on the Chamdo/Derge road near the border of Chab mdo and 'Jo mda' districts.
- 1072 Chime Rinpoche, Graz, June 1995.
- 1073 DK 1992.
- 1074 Maruta Kalnins 1993.
- 1075 Tashi Densapa, Oxford, 2003.
- 1076 G. Tucci, transl., *Deb t'er dmar po gsar ma, Tibetan Chronicles*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 24 (Rome: 1971).
- 1077 Tashi Densapa went on to become an official in the Department of Culture and other ministries in what became the Indian state of Sikkim. By 1993 he was in charge of Sikkim House in New Delhi, and he retired from government service in 2002.
- 1078 J. Ardussi, letter of October 3, 1997.
- 1079 J. Ardussi, letter of October 3, 1997.
- 1080 J. Ardussi, letter of October 3, 1997.
- 1081 RS 1993. Other students in this batch who persevered to complete their doctorates were Karen Lang, Mark Tatz, and John Ardussi.
- 1082 Sherburne's obtaining the Ph.D. was reported by J. Emery in a *Seattle Times* article, "U.W. Graduation Takes on a Himalayan Flavor," June 13, 1976, p. A16. This same year, Minzu Sakya, the eldest of Dezhung Rinpoche's five great-nephews, completed his B.A. at the same university.
- 1083 RS 1993. In the late 1970s, Dezhung Rinpoche sent Sherburne a Mother's Day card from the East Coast. Sherburne was puzzled by this, but then remembered the seven-step meditation on "recognition as mother" (*mar shes pa*) in the *Lam rim chung ngu*.
- 1084 RS 1993.
- 1085 "Priest Does Studies at the Feet of Lama," *Seattle Times*, February 26, 1971, p. B4. Also a front-page photo of the two by Josef Scaylea.
- 1086 In Julie Emery's obituary of Dezhung Rinpoche, "Lama Kunga Labrang Dies at 82; Holy Man, Noted Tibetan Scholar," *Seattle Times*, May 19, 1987, p. G3,

Richard Sherburne is quoted as saying: “[Dezhung Rinpoche was] a holy and learned man—the real thing.”

- 1087 Actually Rinpoche was at “retirement age” by then, so it is curious that this reason is given for his being “dropped from the payroll.” In a later *Seattle Times* article, October 26, 1975, p. D12, J. Emery similarly wrote: “Since he [Dezhung Rinpoche] was laid off because of budget cuts, students of Nornang and others in the community go to the lama’s house for tutoring.” It seems his work at the U.W. from 1964 to 1970 was funded through grants from the Ford Foundation.
- 1088 DK 1993.
- 1089 RS 1993.
- 1090 See also the obituary of Rim bzhi Zur khang, “Ex-Tibetan Official, Rimshi Surkhang, Dies,” *Seattle Times*, August 18, 1970, p. A9.
- 1091 RS 1993.
- 1092 MT 1993. Tatz also recorded most of these sessions on tape and had most of them transcribed by Ngawang Jordan in the 1980s.
- 1093 MT 1993.
- 1094 A certain Jim Dresher, a student of Kalu Rinpoche then living in the Okanagan Valley in Eastern Washington, had contacted Rinpoche about 1971 (RB 1993).
- 1095 Lama Kunga had come to the United States in May 1962 with a small group of Gelukpa monks to New Jersey, to assist the Mongol Geshe Wangyal. His arrival with three other Tibetan monks (“Tsangpa Lhundrup Sopa, Khamloong Tulku and Sermay Tenzin Tinlay”) to study English for two years in New Jersey was reported in the *New York Times*, May 3, 1962. Shortly before visiting Seattle, Lama Kunga had moved to the San Francisco Bay area in California.
- 1096 AC 1993.
- 1097 LK 1987.
- 1098 For an annotated English translation of Kalu Rinpoche’s autobiography, see Kenneth I. McLeod, transl., *The Chariot for Travelling the Path to Freedom: The Life Story of Kalu Rinpoche* (San Francisco: Kagyu Dharma, 1985), which mentions Dezhung Rinpoche as one of his teachers on p. 35 and as one of his major students on p. 43. On this autobiography, See also J. Gyatso (1992), p. 471f. and n. 30. For a brief biographical account, See also Kalu Rinpoche, *The Dharma That Illuminates All Beings Impartially like the Light of the Sun and the Moon* (Albany: SUNY, 1986), pp. 1–4, and further the brief sketch in G. Samuel (1993), pp. 349–351. A sketch of his life in Tibetan is found in the modern history of Palpung monastery by Karma rgyal mtshan, *Kam tshang yab sras dang dpal spungs dgon pa’i lo rgyus ngo mtshar dad pa’i padma rgyas byed* (Chengdu: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997).

- 1099 According to RB 1993, before this Kalu Rinpoche had visited Lama Kunga's center in Kensington and had liked what he saw there. So he partly modeled his Vancouver center after that. In those days there were few models, except perhaps Trungpa's Dharmadhātu centers. There was much discussion among students in the early 1970s about whether centers were really a desirable thing, with group practice, group politics, and so forth.
- 1100 MT 1993. Dezhung Rinpoche did not mention them by name to Tatz, but his main earlier students from the 1960s included Gene Smith, John Reynolds, and Michal Abrams. Or possibly he had spoken of three prior *occasions* when Americans had received such teachings: (1) Smith, (2) Reynolds and Abrams, and (3) Lama Kunga's disciples Gyatso and Trabin.
- 1101 MT 1993. Later Tatz translated and published this prayer. See M. Tatz transl. (1977), "Translation of the *Bhadracariprañidhāna* (*Bzang spyod smon lam*)", *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, vol. 5, pp. 153–176. For other translations into European languages, see Peter Pfandt, *Mahāyāna Texts Translated into Western Languages* (Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1956), p. 14.
- 1102 Janet Gyatso, letter of September 23, 1993.
- 1103 See also J. Gyatso (1997), p. 163ff.
- 1104 Sometimes Dezhung Rinpoche would eat this thinly sliced frozen steak straight, without any spices, while other times he would dip it in a mixture of hot red chilies and soy sauce—a taste he had acquired in Mi nyag.
- 1105 M. Kapstein 1993.
- 1106 JG 1994.
- 1107 RB 1993. Baldwin added: "In those days the sect of the teacher also played a lesser role in the thinking of students."
- 1108 RB 1993.
- 1109 The full name that Lama Kunga bore in childhood was Blo bzang kun dga' 'gyur med, and the name he received at full monastic ordination was 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi rgya mtsho.
- 1110 After the prostrations and recitations of the fast, Moke Mokotoff's lung collapsed. He was told by the doctor that if it had happened a few weeks later, when he planned to be in the Himalayas, it would have been fatal.
- 1111 JG 1994.
- 1112 Tharthang Trulku (1977), *Crystal Mirror*, vol. 5, pp. 300–301, records the studies of Tharthang Trulku at Rdzong gsar.
- 1113 KN and JR 1987.
- 1114 MK 1993; JG 1994.

- 1115 AC 1995.
- 1116 KN and JR 1987.
- 1117 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1118 KN and JR 1987.
- 1119 KN and JR 1987.
- 1120 RB 1993: Baldwin was introduced to Dezhung Rinpoche by his friend William Stablein in March 1972, and the two of them by accident walked right into the meeting of the Tibetans when Tashi Densapa's nearly completed M.A. thesis on the *New Red Annals* had been disallowed by Wylie. In the next two years, Rita Johnston (Sonam Chodzom) often came from Canada and visited Rinpoche. Once when she and Baldwin were visiting, Dezhung Rinpoche asked them: "Would you like to receive an empowerment for Avalokiteśvara practice?" They quickly replied, "Yes." They were under the impression that this was one of the first times Dezhung Rinpoche had openly given an empowerment to Westerners. Rinpoche used to complain that there were no Dharma people in Seattle.
- 1121 For a short time in 1974 Rinpoche tried to rotate translators, with Jackson, Stearns, and Baldwin taking turns. But this was dropped.
- 1122 RB 1993. *See also* Tcheukyi Sènguè, Rintchèn Tsono, and Josette Jouas, *Vie de Kalou Rinpotché, album* (A photographic record of Kalu Rinpoche, his teachers and students La Rochette: Editions Prajna, 1984), p. 15, for a photograph of Dezhung Rinpoche with a caption mentioning Dezhung Rinpoche's flattering references to Kalu Rinpoche's achievements and the profound mutual respect that existed between the two masters.
- 1123 Kalu Rinpoche's Vancouver center, Kagyu Kunchab Chuling, then at 2865 West 4th Avenue, published in 1975 Ken McLeod's translation of certain Shangpa instructions, including a brief Avalokiteśvara practice under the title *The Total Flowering of Activity to Help Others*. It included both a dedication to Dezhung Rinpoche and his photograph.
- 1124 CS 1994.
- 1125 RB 1993.
- 1126 DK 1993.
- 1127 Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche had started to become more active in 1973, having visited Taiwan in October of the previous year with his wife and son Mati to inaugurate the Tibetan Buddhist monastery of Mingyur and Gelek Rinpoche. This was reported in the article "Seattleite Goes to Taiwan: Tibetans to Open Monastery," *Seattle Times*, October 6, 1973, p. A10.
- 1128 Moke Mokotoff preserved the letter sent to him in reply by Dezhung Rinpoche on this occasion. In it, Dezhung Rinpoche wrote: *yang mtshams 'dri'i rten/ ston pa*

thugs rje can gyi zhabs rjes ka shi'i ras la par ba cha gcig bskur 'byor shin tu dga' spro byung/ thugs rje chel rten byin chen 'di 'byor nyin de la nga tsho mi kha shas gros mthun gyis grong khyer 'dir sangs rgyas kyi chos tshogs zhig 'dzugs thub pa'i re ba byed rgyus/ tshogs 'du thog mar 'dzom pa'i skabs su khel bas/ nga tsho tshang mas don yag po 'grub nges/ rten 'brel legs so zhes bkra shis bde legs zhu 'dugl.

- 1129 Chris Wilkinson, taped account, Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1130 CS 1994.
- 1131 DK 1992.
- 1132 See H.H. Sakya Trizin's autobiography (1977) in Khetsun Sangpo, vol. 10, p. 542: *de skabs sde gzhung mchog sprul rin po che yang lhod mjal byung/ khong spyir mkhas grub gnyis ldan gyi bla ma zhig yin pa ma zad/ ngos rang chung ngu'i dus dbang gi chos 'brel yod pa zhig yin stabs dam tshig gso phyir rdo rje rnal 'byor ma'i byin brlabs zhus shing/ phar yang phyi rgyal gyi slob ma rnams dang lhan rgyas la sgrol dkar rjes gnang zhig phull.*
- 1133 See also D. Jackson (1984), p. 58.
- 1134 For a brief biography of the Sixteenth Karmapa, see Karma Thinley, *The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet*, (Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1980), p. 129ff.
- 1135 CS 1994.
- 1136 RB 1993.
- 1137 KN and JR 1987.
- 1138 CS 1992.
- 1139 RB 1993. Kalu Rinpoche had recited the *Prayer of Benevolent Conduct* over one hundred thousand times before the Jo khang in Lhasa.
- 1140 A tape of this teaching survives.
- 1141 This manual of meditation practice was translated into English in the mid-1980s by Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima). A French translation is said to have been published.
- 1142 RB 1993. Much later Dezhung Rinpoche taught the work again.
- 1143 DK 1993.
- 1144 John Snelling (1987), p. 326, mentioned Dezhung Rinpoche as a Buddhist teacher not in his own right but as a major student of Rdzong gsar Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros and Kalu Rinpoche, indeed as having taken charge of Kalu Rinpoche's Vancouver center in Lama Kalu's absence (in the mid-1970s).
- 1145 Jetsun Chime Luding married Klu sdings Sras Rin chen in August 1964.
- 1146 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1147 RB 1993.

- 1148 AC 1994.
- 1149 J. Emery, *Seattle Times* article, October 26, 1975, p. D12.
- 1150 JN 1993. The thieves walked on the altar and pulled down the thangkas from the walls, but did not steal such things. Upstairs, everything that one of the house residents, Nyquist, owned was stolen or destroyed.
- 1151 DR 1975.
- 1152 CS 1994. Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho, *Lam 'bras slob bshad*, vol. 14, p. 243: *rtsa brgyud bla ma'i rnam thar thos pa'i mod// sprin gyi rnga gsang thos pa'i rma bya ltar// dad dang spro ba'i spu long cher g.yos te// byin rlabs snying la 'jug par byin gyis rlobsl//*.
- 1153 CS 1994.
- 1154 A tape of this survives.
- 1155 RB 1993.
- 1156 DK 1992.
- 1157 A tape of this survives, but I suspect it may also be the *Zhen pa bzhi bral* teachings.
- 1158 CS 1993. Stearns later completed a draft translation of the Sakya preparatory practices by ca. 1978, but then the work was translated by others and published from Singapore.
- 1159 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1160 Mr. Shen was a shipping magnate of Chinese descent who was a dedicated Buddhist and a devoted disciple of the Karma pa. He is said to have had a vision indicating that he should sell the American Steamship Company, which he did before the business sharply declined. Much of his wealth he devoted to Buddhist masters and causes.
- 1161 AC 1995. Radha Chime, Graz, June 1995, related that Dezhung Rinpoche during this period remarked to him, "You know, many Sa skya pa scholars have criticized the Bka' brgyud pa. If I took the side of Sa paṇ, I could probably carry the criticisms even further than Sa paṇ himself. But this time I am taking the side of the Bka' brgyud pa."
- 1162 L. P. Lhalungpa (1986), p. xviii.
- 1163 Dhongthog Rinpoche, September 1987.
- 1164 KN and JR 1987.
- 1165 MK 1993.
- 1166 KN and JR 1987.
- 1167 T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, letter of January 16, 1997. Unfortunately the calligrapher of the *dbu-can* text introduced a number of misspellings through his

- poor knowledge of *dbu-med* script, and these mar the 1979 New Delhi edition somewhat.
- 1168 Dezhung Rinpoche had met Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong in 1959. For a brief biographical sketch of this master, see *Snga 'gyur 'od gsal* (Bylakuppe: Ngagyur Nyingma Institute, 1992), pp. 120–128. In a letter dated October 15, 1976, Dezhung Rinpoche stated that Dudjom Rinpoche was in New York.
- 1169 According to James Sarzotti, letter of November 1995, the Asif's Gallery was founded by "Jim and John," the word *asif* being a term coined by Gurdjieff meaning something like "Assume you are it, then eventually you will become it." This gallery may have had some connection with the Rudi Commune of Indian Point, New York.
- 1170 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1171 Michal Bigger, letter of November 1995.
- 1172 Jared Rhoton was born in Shiro, Texas, on June 21, 1941. He died May 18, 1993.
- 1173 Go rams pa's *Dbu ma'i spyi don* was Jared Rhoton's original choice for his dissertation topic, but later he was obliged by his academic advisor to change topics.
- 1174 According to MK 1993, directly below the apartment occupied by Lama Norlha's group lived counterculture young people who would play their music loudly sometimes. The lama had worked out a system to tell them to turn down the music during meditations and teachings by thumping three times on the floor.
- 1175 The little center begun by Jane Werner had by this time dissolved.
- 1176 Helen Stendahl, taped account, 1987, reported that several in this group of students had leg problems at the time, and that when they would go out for dinner or to some function, they made a funny sight: a group of people—young and old, Western and Asian—mostly tottering along with canes or crutches!
- 1177 Already in spring of 1972, Dezhung Rinpoche had received a letter from the Tharlam monks in India asking that something be done for the surviving monks. Sometime in 1974 or in early 1975, he asked for the Tharlam monk 'Jam dbyangs shes rab to be appointed abbot (*mkhan po*) of the monastery, and this was done by H.H. Sakya Trizin and Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche.
- 1178 H. Stendahl, taped account, September 1987.
- 1179 The prayer was written at Tibetan New Year: *'jam pa'i dbyangs dngos kun dga' rgyal mtshan gyi// bstan pa'i rjes zhugs spang rtogs yon tan gyis// ris med grub mtha'i snang ba gsal mdzad pal// chos kyi nyi ma gang khyod zhabs brtan shog// ces gnam lo gsar tshes pa'i rten 'byung dge ba'i skabs bstan smon tshig tu rmong rdul phrin las nor bus snying nas gsol ba btab pa'o//* // There also survives a long-life prayer for Dudjom Rinpoche, with a note stating it was given three weeks before, on the tenth day of the twelfth lunar month: *ye shes lam byed shin tu rnal 'byor gyi// thos bsam*

sgom pa'i snang ba brgya phrag gis// 'brel tshad rdo rje snying po'i lam dkri ba'i// sku tshad phrin las rtag khyab lhun grub shog//. It is not certain that Dezhung Rinpoche composed this.

- 1180 M. Kapstein 1993.
- 1181 ST 1993.
- 1182 MK 1993.
- 1183 MK 1993.
- 1184 KN and JR 1987.
- 1185 See J. Gyatso (1997), p. 164f., for two pages of Dezhung Rinpoche's diary from this period, namely, for Wednesday and Thursday, January 18 and 19, 1978.
- 1186 Most of the account of Dezhung Rinpoche's activities in New York from February 10 (Tibetan New Year's) until May 4 derives from notes of Jetsun Sakya activities taken by April Dattulo in 1978, which were kindly made available to me by James Sarzotti. Other sources used include Jetsun Sakya records of Jared Rhodon preserved by The Sapan Fund.
- 1187 Since Mkhan po A pad held the lineage for the sūtra-related works of Go rams pa, these were considered at that time less vital to receive.
- 1188 ST 1993. His Holiness interpreted this as an indirect admission by Dezhung Rinpoche that he had in fact achieved high realization in this practice.
- 1189 H.H. Sakya Trizin's wife was of the Derge Ho cho tshang family.
- 1190 H.H. Sakya Trizin's first son, Rin chen rdo rje was born ca. 1974. The second son, Ye shes rdo rje, was born ca. 1980.
- 1191 ST 1993.
- 1192 This thangka is pictured as the frontispiece in JS and JE (1990).
- 1193 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1194 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1195 These references were apparently sent to the translator when the book was already in the press. This may account for Dezhung Rinpoche's contribution not being mentioned.
- 1196 Chris Wilkinson (tape), Denver, October 20, 1994.
- 1197 Tapes of this teaching have been preserved. They may contain details about the teachers from whom he received these teachings.
- 1198 RB 1993.
- 1199 CS 1994.
- 1200 CS 1994.

- 1201 KN and JR 1987.
- 1202 CS 1994. The teachings were attended by Cyrus Stearns, Maruta Kalnins Stearns, David Jackson, Janice Seino, Lew Hemenway, Dagmo Kusho, Ane Chime, and Kunzang Nyima.
- 1203 Maruta Kalnins 1993.
- 1204 KN and JR 1987.
- 1205 KN and JR 1987.
- 1206 I am indebted to Victoria Scott for furnishing information about his activities in Minnesota.
- 1207 CS 1992.
- 1208 James Sarzotti, letter of January 1996.
- 1209 James Sarzotti, letter of March 1998.
- 1210 Michal Bigger, letter of November 1995.
- 1211 See the resulting dissertation: Janet Gyatso, "A Literary Transmission of the Traditions of Thang stong Rgyal po: A Study of Visionary Buddhism in Tibet." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1981.
- 1212 M. Kapstein, "Remarks on the Maṇi Bka'-'bum and the Cult of Avalokiteśvara in Tibet," *Tibetan Buddhism: Reason and Revelation*, S. D. Goodman and R. M. Davidson, eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 163.
- 1213 CS 1994.
- 1214 "They did not know whether to feel shortchanged or just bored" (MK 1993).
- 1215 Nina Shoumatoff, 1997.
- 1216 For a perhaps similar maṇḍala offering and exposition (*maṇḍal bshad pa*) given by Dge bshes Shes rab rgya mtsho before the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, see Shes rab rgya mtsho, *Collected Works* (Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982), vol. 2, pp. 160–164.
- 1217 DR 1980.
- 1218 Helen Stendahl, taped account, 1987.
- 1219 Michal Bigger, letter, November 1995.
- 1220 The Dalai Lama would later receive the *Path with Its Fruit* (*Lam 'bras*) instructions from Bco brgyad Khri chen Rin po che.
- 1221 Maruta Kalnins 1994; CS 1994. Dezhung Rinpoche was amused by this remark, and he related the story to a number of his students.
- 1222 CS 1994.

- 1223 The Dalai Lama here used the slightly pejorative slang word *mgo ser* ("yellow head") for Americans of European descent.
- 1224 KN and JR 1987.
- 1225 Dezhung Rinpoche did not normally speak English, though his passive understanding was sometimes uncannily good. Some people in New York were convinced he could read their minds.
- 1226 Michal Bigger, letter, November 1995.
- 1227 KN and JR 1987.
- 1228 This talk was recorded on tapes, available from the Karma Triyana Dharmacakra publications and archives department.
- 1229 Kunga Wangmo, Bodhnath, 1994.
- 1230 KN and JR 1987. On other occasions when Dezhung Rinpoche visited the Dharma-dhātu centers, he recounted the life histories of the previous Trungpa trulkus, with whom he had a good religious connection.
- 1231 Jetsun Sakya center newsletter *The Lotus*, vol. 1-2 (October 1980).
- 1232 CS 1993.
- 1233 James Sarzotti, letter of March 1998.
- 1234 Jetsun Sakya center newsletter *The Lotus*, vol. 1-2 (October 1980).
- 1235 Jetsun Sakya center newsletter *The Lotus*, vol. 1-2 (October 1980).
- 1236 Flyer for lecture courtesy of Victoria Scott.
- 1237 Jetsun Sakya center newsletter *The Lotus*, vol. 1-2 (October 1980).
- 1238 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Massachusetts, April 1997. The last time Paul Johnston met Dezhung Rinpoche, the same collision occurred, leading Johnston to speculate that either he was hard-headed or Rinpoche had to beat the wisdom into him any way he could.
- 1239 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Massachusetts, April 1997.
- 1240 James Sarzotti, letter of March 1998.
- 1241 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Massachusetts, April 1997.
- 1242 Susanne Fairclough, letter of May 1996.
- 1243 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Mass., April 1997. Photographs of Rinpoche from this period show him sitting outside at the Cambridge Commons and the Boston Public Gardens. The picture sitting indoors on a chair was taken in the residence of Paul Johnston and David Rich in Somerville.
- 1244 Jetsun Sakya center newsletter *The Lotus*, vol. 1-2 (October 1980).

- 1245 Dhongthog Rinpoche had arrived in Seattle on July 12, 1979.
- 1246 CS 1994.
- 1247 CS 1994.
- 1248 LKG 1994.
- 1249 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Mass., April 1997.
- 1250 While at Puruwala, Dezhung Rinpoche also received several other invitations to teach: Mkhan po Ku se A pad invited him to come to the Sakya College and give the *Lam 'bras* in Legs pa Rin po che's tradition, and H.H. Sakya Trizin also requested him to give the *Lam 'bras*.
- 1251 LKG 1994.
- 1252 ST 1993.
- 1253 CS 1994.
- 1254 CS 1994. Here Dezhung Rinpoche was continuing to revive this tradition, which he had written down from memory after all the texts for it had been lost.
- 1255 LKG 1994.
- 1256 Trogawa Rinpoche 1993.
- 1257 KN and JR 1987.
- 1258 LKG 1994.
- 1259 KN and JR 1987.
- 1260 In the mid-1970s, when Dezhung Rinpoche had started planning to build a small structure for his monks in India, he had been led to believe that he could accomplish the plan with about \$12,000! One faithful American patron, John Bishop, on different occasions, before and after, donated \$5,000 and \$20,000. According to AC, by the time construction actually began, Rinpoche had about \$70,000 in all, including the money given by his siblings and the money he had received as offerings at the *Lam 'bras* in Puruwala.
- 1261 LKG 1994.
- 1262 H.H. the Sixteenth Karma pa is said to have died on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month.
- 1263 MK 1993; 1994. Dezhung Rinpoche was perhaps also regretting that he had not come to Rumtek sooner, in time to meet the Karma pa again.
- 1264 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Massachusetts, April 1997. These statements are reminiscent of Sga ston's remarks before his death, on which see chapter 12.
- 1265 AC 1994.

- 1266 Damchoe Phuntshok, March 28, 1999, Bodhnath.
- 1267 CS 1992. These verses are preserved in Dezhung Rinpoche's collected works.
- 1268 CS 1993.
- 1269 LKG 1994.
- 1270 CS 1993.
- 1271 CS 1993.
- 1272 Dezhung Rinpoche was still short of funds for building the temple. From this point of view, his decision was justified. All his fundraising efforts in North America had resulted in relatively little money, especially in comparison with what the wealthy Chinese Buddhist patrons in Southeast Asia would offer him.
- 1273 CS 1994.
- 1274 CS 1992. Gayadhara was the eleventh-century Indian lay paṇḍita who taught the *Lam 'bras* to 'Brog mi the Translator in return for large offerings of gold.
- 1275 DR, Maruta Kalnins notes, 1982.
- 1276 CS 1994.
- 1277 CS 1994.
- 1278 LKG 1994.
- 1279 AC 1995.
- 1280 LKG 1994.
- 1281 CS 1994.
- 1282 CS 1993.
- 1283 Ng Goo Teck, Singapore, April 1, 1995.
- 1284 Ng Goo Teck, Singapore, April 1, 1995.
- 1285 Ng Goo Teck, Singapore, April 1, 1995.
- 1286 Jay Goldberg, letter of December 1995.
- 1287 Ng Goo Teck, Singapore, April 1, 1995.
- 1288 Jay Goldberg, letter of December 1995.
- 1289 According to Ng Goo Teck, Singapore 1995, Rinpoche never seemed to come to the main subject matter. Actually he did teach the main points briefly, but the students were distracted.
- 1290 CS 1992.
- 1291 The account of Sga ston's life appeared in the article, "Short Biography of His Eminence Ngawang Lekpa Rinpoche," in the newsletter of the Singapore Buddha

Sasana Society: *The White Conch*, vol. 4–3 (August 1984), pp. 6–16. There Dezhung Rinpoche mentioned the four prerequisites for being born in Bde ba can.

1292 KN and JR 1987.

1293 LKG 1994.

1294 The donations were said to total about U.S. \$100,000, mostly in currency but also in the form of precious objects.

1295 LKG 1994.

1296 LKG 1994.

1297 LKG 1994.

1298 LKG 1994.

1299 I am indebted to Victoria Scott for providing records of Dezhung Rinpoche's visits to Los Angeles.

1300 Susanne Fairclough, letter of April 1998.

1301 Paul Johnston, taped account, Barre, Massachusetts, April 1997.

1302 Susanne Fairclough, letter of May 18, 1996.

1303 Mingyur Rinpoche (Mi 'gyur Rin po che), Lynnwood, Washington, September 1995.

1304 DK 1993.

1305 Mingyur Rinpoche, Lynnwood, Washington, September 1995.

1306 A Yi of Taipei, Bodhnath, April 1995.

1307 Mingyur Rinpoche, Lynnwood, Washington, September 1995.

1308 A Yi of Taipei, Bodhnath, April 1995.

1309 Mingyur Rinpoche, Lynnwood, Washington, September 1995.

1310 KN and JR 1987. It is said that he received about \$40,000 U.S. in offerings during this visit.

1311 For the text of this talk, see appendix A.

1312 KN and JR 1987.

1313 CS 1993. According to Dezhung Rinpoche, there had been a certain amount of rivalry between the two great scholars, Si tu Paṇ chen and Zhu chen. When Si tu Paṇ chen had written this *Kanjur* catalogue he showed it to the Derge king, who then passed it on to Zhu chen for his evaluation. The latter said it was too long, so Si tu Paṇ chen had to reduce its length somewhat. Nevertheless, the full-length version was published later in Si tu Paṇ chen's works, separately from the Derge *Kanjur*.

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- 1314 CS 1994.
- 1315 CS 1994.
- 1316 CS 1994.
- 1317 KN and JR 1987.
- 1318 RB 1993.
- 1319 According to Tara Goforth, letter of July 1993, who was then in retreat on Mount Tuam, Dezhung Rinpoche's main purpose for this practice was to ensure that he lived long enough to establish the monastery in Nepal.
- 1320 Tara Goforth, letter of July 1993.
- 1321 KN and JR 1987.
- 1322 T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche 1987.
- 1323 CS 1994.
- 1324 Susanne Fairclough, letter of April 1998.
- 1325 KN and JR 1987. Rinpoche at one point reported that he had had a peculiar dream: A great, strange, many-storied building floated on a great ocean, circling the central continent of Jambudvipa. All his students and acquaintances were inside.
- 1326 KN and JR 1987.
- 1327 Nina Shoumatoff 1997.
- 1328 LKG 1994.
- 1329 Michal Bigger, letter of November 1995.
- 1330 Paul Johnston, taped account, 1997.
- 1331 For the schedule of teachings, I have followed a flyer of the Cambridge center from Fall 1984, kindly provided by Ane Kunga Chodron.
- 1332 LKG 1994.
- 1333 Paul Johnston, taped account, 1997.
- 1334 DR, letter to CS dated January 28, 1985.
- 1335 LKG 1994.
- 1336 Paul Johnston, taped account, 1997.
- 1337 Susanne Fairclough, letter of May 18, 1996.
- 1338 KN and JR 1987.
- 1339 LKG 1994.

- 1340 Paul Johnston, taped account, 1997.
- 1341 Abby Petty, letter of 1998.
- 1342 Paul Johnston, taped account, 1997.
- 1343 DR, letter to CS, January 28, 1985.
- 1344 Sarah Harding, letter of 1993.
- 1345 Susanne Fairclough, letter of April 1998.
- 1346 As Rinpoche was departing from Kensington, he told Lama Kunga (taped interview, Kensington, 1987): "Well, you know, I am an old monk, and death is near me. Impermanence is everywhere. I'd like to die in Kathmandu, in a place where Buddhist monks and lamas are nearby."
- 1347 Maruta Kalnins 1993.
- 1348 During one evening near the end of these teachings, Dezhung Rinpoche blessed Stephanie Prince by placing a relic of the Ngor abbot Dpal-Idan-chos-skyong on her head. She was wondering at that time silently to herself about how to perform the six perfections of the Mahāyāna while simultaneously engaging in Vajrayāna practices. Without her having broached the subject, Rinpoche began to speak for some time. Then Cyrus Stearns translated into English what turned out to be a perfect answer to her silent question. As Stephanie Prince later wrote (letter of February 2, 1994): "Though Rinpoche said he never had any powers of clairvoyance, I believe that was a situation in which he did. He had read my mind."
- 1349 LKG 1994.
- 1350 Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche, September 1992. Dezhung Rinpoche was never known to involve himself in politics.
- 1351 A Buddhist fully ordained monk (*bhikṣu*) is not allowed to touch gold. But even as a tantric practitioner such "tossing away" of the gold has a special significance. Throwing away gold was done, for instance, by the female Indian guru Niguma when her Tibetan disciple Khyung po rnal 'byor offered her five hundred ounces of gold. See M. Kapstein (1992a), p. 196: "I offered up my five hundred ounces of gold, but she just tossed it all into the forest." See also *ibid.*, p. 219f., note 13: "The 'scattering of the gold' is a not uncommon motif: for example, in Dudjom Rinpoche, *The History of the Nyingma School*, we find Padma-sambhava scattering the gold dust he has been offered to encourage him to visit Tibet (vol. 1, book 2, part 3), and Guru Chos kyi dbang phyug scattering the gold he is given as a parting gift by his Newar disciple Bhara Gtsug-'dzin (*ibid.*, part 6)."
- 1352 CW, taped account, October 1994.
- 1353 Vana Jakic, 1992.

- 1354 Abby Petty, letter of 1998.
- 1355 LKG 1994.
- 1356 KN 1987; LKG 1994.
- 1357 KN and JR 1987.
- 1358 T. G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, 1993.
- 1359 Vana Jakic, 1992.
- 1360 KN and JR 1987.
- 1361 Susanne Fairclough, letter of April 1998.
- 1362 A tape recording exists of these last two teachings.
- 1363 James Sarzotti, letter of December 1995.
- 1364 KN and JR 1987.
- 1365 C. von Furer-Haimendorf (1990), p. 107, briefly alluded to the founding of this monastery: "A third Sakya Monastery is being built behind [the stūpa] at Bodhnath.... The founder, Deshung Rinpoche, owned a monastery in Tibet..."
- 1366 James Sarzotti, letter of December 1995.
- 1367 In the previous year from the fifteenth through twenty-second of the ninth lunar month, H.H. Sakya Trizin had already come and performed the main consecration (*rab gnas*) ceremony.
- 1368 This trulku was probably the second of the two junior trulkus of the monastery: (1) Rje dkar Mchog sprul Ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen (b. 1919), a major disciple of Bco brgyad Khri chen Rin po che of Na lendra, and (2) Chab mdo Rin po che Smra ba'i seng ge (b. 1930s), who was a disciple of Mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros at Rdzong gсар in the 1950s. He was not the late Dhiḥ phu Chos rje Bla ma Chos rje Lha sa tshang Sprul sku Mkhyen rab gyi dbang phyug 'Jigs bral phyogs las rnam rgyal (1908–ca. 1960), whom Dezhung Rinpoche had known in Sakya during the 1940s.
- 1369 AC 1995. Rinpoche's sister Ane Chime has donated much money herself and has also collected donations from former disciples for this purpose, and the painting of murals began in 1999. The murals on the internal walls are now complete, the work of an excellent master painter from Ladakh.
- 1370 Che mo Shi log of Rtse gdong, Bodhnath, March 1995.
- 1371 JN 1993.
- 1372 Kunga Wangmo, Bodhnath, March 1994. She came to Nepal on April 12 and left on May 23.
- 1373 JN 1993.

- 1374 JN 1993: Rinpoche was very lethargic. They had an EKG done which the lab assistant in the hospital said was perfectly normal. Nyquist, however, thought he saw signs of heart trouble and insisted that they admit him.
- 1375 CS, Seattle, 1992. In the tantric tradition one should not cut or puncture the body, that is, the *lus rtsa'i dkyil 'khor*.
- 1376 According to KN and JR 1987, this lama-official had requested the Seven-Day Amitāyus (*Tshe sgrub zhag bdun ma*) from Dezhung Rinpoche and later also requested Rinpoche to compose the addendum to the lineage prayer for that practice.
- 1377 JN 1993.
- 1378 JN 1993.
- 1379 CS 1993.
- 1380 JN 1993.
- 1381 The text of both letters was kindly provided by Ane Kunga Chodron.
- 1382 AC 1992.
- 1383 This calls to mind Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra* chapter I, verse 14, on the joy the bodhisattva feels when he hears the words, "Please give!"
- 1384 CS 1994.
- 1385 These instructions for the practice of the Great Perfection were written by 'Jig med gling pa (1729–1798) on the basis of the *Bi ma snying thig*. They form the essential instructions of the *Klong chen snying thig* cycle. Evidently the part Dezhung Rinpoche received was the section for resting the mind in *dharmadhātu*, recognition of the appearances that arise in the *bar do* state, and so forth.
- 1386 Bco bryad Rinpoche believed that some of these obstacles had arisen as a result of the Mahākāla Gur gyi mgon po teachings that Dezhung Rinpoche had given several years before. At that time Dezhung Rinpoche had also given the *gsang khrid* to a smaller group without having done the full retreat. Several similar near disasters are described in the biography of Bdag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan.
- 1387 The doctors later guessed that instead of hepatitis, it had been a stroke, but they were not sure.
- 1388 CS 1992.
- 1389 Rinchen Tsering, Dharamsala, 1993.
- 1390 Notes of Jared Rhoton, January 27, 1988.
- 1391 Rinchen Tsering, Dharamsala, 1993. When Dil mgo Mkhayen brtse Rinpoche later heard of this dream, he said, "This is a very rare vision, a sign of a *ḍākiṇī*." Dezhung Rinpoche himself seems to have identified the lady as the protective goddess Dmag zor ma [Pārvatī], the personal deity of his family.

- 1392 According to the notes of Jared Rhoton, January 27, 1988, Dezhung Rinpoche then added: "In my life I have only dreamt of her three times. The first time was just before fleeing from Tibet; after dreaming of her, I met with difficulty in traveling. The second time was in America quite a few years later, and I had much success in teaching after that. But the first two times she was not as beautiful or dignified, and not as well ornamented as last night, so I think it is a good sign for me."
- 1393 Notes of Jared Rhoton, January 27, 1988.
- 1394 Rinchen Tsering, Dharamsala, 1993.
- 1395 KN and JR 1987.
- 1396 Notes of Jared Rhoton, January 27, 1988.
- 1397 Ane Kunga Zangmo was a nun in her sixties from the Boston area.
- 1398 Isabelle Robert, Bodhnath, 1993.
- 1399 KN and JR 1987.
- 1400 CS, letter of July 29, 1987, recorded Dezhung Rinpoche's last words simply as: "The teachings of Sakya Paṇḍita possess a very great blessing. They are no different than the word of the Buddha" (*sa paṇ gyi gsung byin brlabs chen po zhe drag red/ rgyal ba'i bka' dang khyad par yod pa ma red/*). Some later accounts state that Dezhung Rinpoche then added the final words: "We will see tomorrow."
- 1401 This was evidently the seventeenth or eighteenth day of the third lunar month—the eighteenth being reckoned as the day of Dezhung Rinpoche's passing. The master Sa bzang 'Phags pa also died on the eighteenth day of the third lunar month.
- 1402 This Rdzogs chen introduction to the nature of mind composed by 'Jigs med gling pa had already been given by Mkhyen brtse Rin po che when Dezhung Rinpoche was in the coma. It is often given to those about to die.
- 1403 Isabelle Robert, 1993.
- 1404 At this time, H.H. Sakya Trizin was giving the *Path with Its Fruit* teachings in Rajpur. As usual, Dezhung Rinpoche had made an offering of tea and money to the whole *Lam 'bras* assembly. On the day of Virūpa's nirvāṇa, His Holiness announced the offering of Rinpoche and also his passing.
- 1405 These vultures were interpreted as a sign of the dākiṇī's escorting and welcoming Dezhung Rinpoche to his new abode. The Tharlam *mkhan po* also reported seeing a rainbow, but this was not seen by everyone.
- 1406 From where Cyrus Stearns was observing from his house west of the Bodnath complex, the rainbow seemed to end at the Tharlam House itself (CS 1994).
- 1407 It was said that a piece of robe, miraculously unburnt, was found among the ashes. This was interpreted by some as a sign that Dezhung Rinpoche would soon take a new birth.

- 1408 There are about fifty regular members of the center in Seattle.
- 1409 Ra brda 'Chi med, Graz, June 1995.
- 1410 DK 1992.
- 1411 KN and JR 1987.
- 1412 I am grateful to Grace McLeod of Seattle for locating these notes and sending me a photocopy in 1994.
- 1413 AC 1994.
- 1414 LKG 1994. To this, Rinpoche added, "If there is too much praise, then the lama's story will become a fake!"
- 1415 PhLh 1994.
- 1416 Some preliminary information was also gathered at about this time at Jared Rhoton's request by Helen Stendahl, who visited the West Coast and interviewed Sonam Gyatsho (Hiroshi Sonami, September 17, 1987), Lama Kunga (September 18), Chime Luding (September 27), Ane Chime and Dagmola Sakya (September 28), and Dhongthog Rinpoche (October 1, 1987). I am grateful to her for sharing these taped interviews with me.
- 1417 Some brief information is also given in Rick Fields (1981), *How the Swans Came to the Lake: A Narrative History of Buddhism in America* (Boulder: Shambhala), pp. 289, 333, and 376, but much of this account is unreliable and seems to have been gathered from second- and third-hand sources. Essentially the same information is repeated in the third, revised edition (1992).
- 1418 Could this title have been in part a play on his childhood name, Dkon mchog lhun grub?
- 1419 I am grateful to Lama Kalsang Gyaltsen for kindly sending me a photocopy of these writings.
- 1420 AC 1994 stated that her father was perhaps thirty-three or thirty-four when he died.
- 1421 According to PhLh 1994, it was divided into two branches, the Ra 'og Jo 'khor Ltag ma and 'Og ma.
- 1422 This was the tradition told by Dezhung Rinpoche's younger brother, Kunzang Nyima, himself a doctor.
- 1423 PhLh 1994. At Chos zhing there was also the family called Stong dpon tshang, likewise evidently descended from a military officer.
- 1424 In the 1930s this Ra 'og Jo 'khor tshang uncle helped Dezhung Rinpoche build his *bla brang*.
- 1425 Jo sras Dge slong 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan was the first teacher of medicine to Kunzang Nyima. He also taught Ane Chime reading and writing between her

- ninth and eleventh years (ca. 1931–1933). By then he was already living in his meditation retreat (AC 1994).
- 1426 According to PhLh 1994, Jo sras Dge slong was one of two siblings, a brother and sister. The Jo sras lineage descended originally from a side branch of the 'Dzi mda' Gcen ngar family which had branched off from the main line some two or three generations before Jo sras Dge slong. The later "Jo sras Nyi ma" on the farm in the 1930s was an adoptive groom (*mag pa*) from the Ya kha tshang (this family was originally from northern Gtsang, the lineage being Nag tshang star go). He married the sister of Jo sras Dge slong.
- 1427 According to the Tharlam monk Dam chos 1993, Jo sras Lung pa was the name of a small settlement north of Tharlam which previously had sent their sons to become monks in Ri mthun Thub bstan Dgon pa, the monastery on the other side of the 'Bri chu to which the nineteenth-century Ngor Dpon slob Ngag dbang legs grub is said to have belonged. Meanwhile three families providing monks to Tharlam lived on the far side of the 'Bri chu approximately opposite 'Dzi mda'. Tharlam took the families at Jo sras to become their monks, and in return gave to Thub bstan Dgon pa the three families on the other side, including the Dung 'khor (or Dung khur) Lab kha tshang, family of the "Brug pa Mkhan po" Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho.
- 1428 AC 1994.
- 1429 Cf. JS and JE (1990), p. 21. The etymology from *khang ser* ("yellow house") is probably incorrect, and *khang rise* ("house peak, topmost house") is doubtful. Phan bde Lhag pa used the spelling *khang srib* in his unpublished biography of Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho, and this seems correct. According to PhLh 1994, *Khang srib rwa ba* was also the name of one of two main areas of land in the Thag lung valley: there was both a Khang srib rwa ba and a Kha dbyis rwa ba (named after the working area on the flat roof of a Tibetan house). Presumably one area was high and exposed, while the other was more sheltered and shaded. The family, or house, name Khang srib may well have derived from that. When applying for his social security number in 1963, Dezhung Rinpoche (or the American helping him) gave his family name as "Khangt-sigshang" and his father's name as "Namgyal Gombo." (Letter from T. V. Wylie to the Social Security Administration dated January 6, 1964, regarding a discrepancy in his "family name.") Since his father's name is incorrectly given here, probably one should not place too much weight on the spelling of his family name.
- 1430 See JS and JE (1990), p. 21, for more details.
- 1431 AC 1993.
- 1432 AC 1994.
- 1433 PhLh 1994 states that the Khang srib family had another monk (a brother of the *dbu mdzad*!) named Dpal 'byor. After 'Jam rgyal's troubles at Tharlam, Dpal

- 'byor went to the nomadic areas and rumors spread at Tharlam that he had lost his monk's vows, though that was untrue. He lived to a very old age.
- 1434 At least this is what KN reported. According to PhLh 1994, who was also descended from this lineage through his maternal grandfather, the line went back to one "Dkar po Lha brgyad" (?) (*lha* = *lha rje*?), one of nine early expert doctors (*lha sman mkhas pa mi dgu*).
- 1435 PhLh 1994. This was the Dra'u Dpon or Dra'u chieftain lineage of Jyekundo. It was said that whichever families the various daughters of another Dra'u Dpon lineage, that of Dra'u Dpon Bsod nams rab brtan, married into, all those family lines would come to an end.
- 1436 PhLh 1994. According to him, Dezhung Rinpoche's mother was the youngest daughter in the family.
- 1437 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 2a.
- 1438 Lab mda' was said to be one of the four "Gru sga lung rung bzhi." See T. G. Dhongthog, *Important Events in Tibetan History* (Delhi: 1968), p. 46. Several works from Ngag dbang legs grub's five volumes of writings are listed in Khenpo Appey et al., *Sa skya pa'i dkar chags*, p. 161f.
- 1439 PhLh 1994.
- 1440 A history of the White Stūpa of Sga is found in the biography of Dpal ldan chos skyong. Further west from the famous old stūpa, in the side valley of the Lab River, lay the Dge lugs pa establishment Lab Dgon pa.
- 1441 According to DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 19, the old trade mart was known as *sga thag lab mdo dang sga mchod rten dkar po'i gru so*.
- 1442 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, pp. 19–21, relates the story of how a shepherd discovered and unearthed an ancient buried image, and how soon after it was brought to the Don grub gling pho brang Stag rtse dmar po by the Dra'u chieftains, the main market moved to Jyekundo, attracted there, as it were, by the holy image.
- 1443 Rinchen Tsering 1993.
- 1444 Tharlam Damchöe Phuntshok, 1993. According to PhLh 1994, Mgar ra Dgon pa was located in the 'Dan pa ra ba district.
- 1445 Dezhung Rinpoche composed a brief history of this region, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, and one can also find a brief summary in DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 6a–b.
- 1446 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 11: *'ba' res shug pa g.yag rnga tsam skye ba yan chad*. According to Dezhung Rinpoche (EGS notes), to the west of the settled parts of Sga pa lay many nomadic districts, including Rag shul, Dge rgyas, G.yu shul, Yag ra, and others. The old people of Sga pa used to say that the local divinity Jo bo Sgyogs chen lived like a nomad in one of these nomad districts, namely, in Nya mtsho. He was considered to be a bodhisattva of the eighth bhūmi, of the same level as rMa rgyal Spom ra and gNyan chen Thang lha. He was counted among

- the thirteen *mgul lha* of the early Tibetan emperor Khri strong lde'u btsan. For further references to this deity, see R. A. Stein (1961), pp. 47–48.
- 1447 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 12. The spelling *Ldan* has been used in the present work, though *'Dan* occurs often in the sources. Dezhung Rinpoche states that both forms are found in the works of the Ldan ma native and great scholar Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen (1700–1769). By implication, both spellings are acceptable.
- 1448 A brief history of Nang chen district has been published (from Delhi in the 1960s?): Karma Thinley Wangchin [Karma phrin las Dbang chen?], *Important Events and Places in the History of Nangchin Kham and Eastern Tibet: Gangs ljongs mdo smad nang chen rgyal rabs dang 'brel ba'i lo rgyus phyogs bsdu ya rabs rna rgyan* (no place, no date).
- 1449 Many people of Sga tribe extraction were found elsewhere, too, such as in A mdo and Tre bo. See DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 13.
- 1450 Some interesting information on the organization of Nang chen and the situation in the area of Jyekundo is given in P. Carrasco (1959), p. 151f., who mentions (p. 152): “One of the most important of the twenty-five tribes is that of *Chawu* [Tib. *dra'u*], which includes the town of ... Jyekundo. The Dpon po of [Jyekundo, according to Tafel and Younghusband] is an incarnate lama of the Sa skya order. According to Tafel, [Jyekundo] counted 330 families. According to Ma Ho-t'ien [who was there in the 1930s] there are in the tribe 800 families (4,500 persons). [Jyekundo] is especially important as a trade junction on the route from Central Tibet to Koko-nor.” Carrasco refers (p. 265, n. 51) to several complete lists of the twenty-five tribes under the Nang chen king.
- 1451 Rinchen Tsering 1993.
- 1452 But on the abuses of some Sining officials when traveling through the villages, see Jamyang Sakya and Julie Emery (1990), p. 19.
- 1453 On the history of Derge and its earlier predecessor, Gling, see J. Kolmaš (1968), *A Genealogy of the Kings of Derge* (Prague: Oriental Institute in Academia); Kessler (1983); and Bkra shis tshe ring (1992), “Gling tshang rgyal rabs” [History of the Gling tshang Principality of Khams: A Preliminary Report].
- 1454 There are various spellings attested for the name *Dra'u*, and a number of fanciful etymologies have been suggested (such as from the word *gra rol*, “cymbal’s noise”).
- 1455 According to PhLh 1994, these included the following ten: (1) and (2) two *be cang* for Dpal thang; (3) and (4) two for Lab mda' (Lab mda' and 'Dzi mda'); (5) one for Ha shul; (6) one for Rje bzang (7) one for Bskal bzang Thar che (?); (8) and (9) two for Zhe'u, the “New” and “Old” (*zhe'u gsar rmying gnyis*); and (10) one for Skye rgu mda', which had one *be cang* (from the Kha rtsi tshang) for both Seng ge ra ba and Seng ge mda'.
- 1456 Thrangu Rinpoche 1994. According to PhLh 1994, there was the saying, “The

Dra'u trio: lama, layman, and lord" (*dra'u bla skya dpon gsum*). This referred to the fact that after several splits in the family line the separate lines each had a special character. There was a predominantly "lama" branch: the Dbang po tshang, which during a split-up took its patrimony in the form of religious objects and made no claim to temporal rule. There were two layman branches—Bu chen and Ra brda—each of which received about 30 percent of the patrimony. The "lord" line was the main line of the Dra'u 'Broq pa tshang rulers. They were called "'Broq pa tshang" because they were originally nomads living in tents.

- 1457 Tashi Tsering (1985), p. 201, n. 25.
- 1458 PhLh 1994 asserts that the "palace" was originally the *bla brang* of Sga Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes. It contains the latter's teaching throne (*chos khri*) made of earth. PhLh stated that it had been taken over later by the Dra'u chieftain when one of the latter's monks was in residence there. That monk had lost his vows, taken a wife, and stayed in this building, affecting the manner of a great adept.
- 1459 Rinchen Tsering 1993.
- 1460 PhLh 1994.
- 1461 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 44. Kun dga' rin chen was the disciple of the Sakya 'Khon master Theg chen Chos rje Kun dga' bkra shis (1349–1425), as well as of Ngor chen (1382–1456) and Rong ston (1367–1449).
- 1462 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 45.
- 1463 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, pp. 49–50.
- 1464 'Jigs med's father is said to have been from the 'Jang ru tshang.
- 1465 Rinchen Tsering 1993.
- 1466 PhLh 1994.
- 1467 This formed one of a trio of great monasteries in old Skyu ra: *khra skye ban gsum*, i.e., Khra 'gu, Skye rgu, and 'Ban chen.
- 1468 PhLh 1994.
- 1469 It was one of three *sa 'go* in the greater Nang chen domain, the other two being at Jyekundo and Nang chen proper.
- 1470 Thrangu Rinpoche 1994.
- 1471 Thrangu Rinpoche 1994. PhLh 1994 noted that there were many "*shul*" among the nomads; traditionally there were said to be eighteen. These included Yul shul, Se shul, Ra shul, and Wa shul.
- 1472 The other five forms of wealth were sheep, yaks, horses, wood, and barley.
- 1473 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 6b. Evidently this was the '*bis rnam par snang mdzad* mentioned by Dezhung Rinpoche in his *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 22, which he

- also mentions is described in the autobiography of Si tu Paṅ chen. The Chinese princess mentioned here was evidently Kim Shang, who married the Tibetan emperor Khri lde gtsug btsan in 710.
- 1474 On the master Ldan ma Dbang phyug rgyal mtshan, abbot of Rwa sgreng in 1078, see R. A. Stein (1961), p. 54.
- 1475 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 33.
- 1476 These included the great adepts Snang ba mtha' yas in Kam yul, Legs ldan nag po in Gle yul, Rdo rje snying po in Khams 'jo, Rgya ra Nyi 'dzin in La kho, and Stong ri 'Jam dpal in Ges ngo. Sum pa Mkhan po in his history (ed. Das [1908], p. 355) also mentions a Dgon lung Bla zur Ldan ma grub chen Tshul khirms rgya mtsho as the founder of Kan chen dgon in A mdo in a wood-horse year.
- 1477 As mentioned above, Drung Kun dga' rin chen's younger sister was an ancestor of the Dra'u chieftain lineage. Kun dga' rin chen himself was also associated with the creation of three miraculous statues of Mahākāla. He is further credited with discovering the sacred site of the Sga Jo bo and was considered to have been an emanation of Sgam po pa. (See DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, pp. 23 and 34.) His writings comprised two physical volumes. His immediate rebirth was said to have been Gzhung brgya pa Byams pa dngos grub dpal 'bar (fl. early sixteenth century), founder of Chos 'khor lhun po monastery near Sakya.
- 1478 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 33f. Sga Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes died on the thirteenth day of the second month in the lunar calendar.
- 1479 A number of studies and references exist on Sga A gnyan Dam pa Kun dga' grags. He is mentioned in R. A. Stein, *Les tribus anciennes des marches sino-tibétaines* (1961), p. 46f., notes 125–127. More recent studies include: (1) Herbert Franke, "Tan-pa, A Tibetan Lama at the Court of the Great Khans," *Orientalie Venetiana*, vol. 1 (1984), pp. 157–180, and (2) Elliot Sperling, "Some Remarks on Sga A-gnyan Dam-pa and the Origins of the Hor-pa Lineage of the Dkar-mdzes Region," *Tibetan History and Language: Studies Dedicated to Uray Geza on His Seventieth Birthday*, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, vol. 26 (Wien: 1991), pp. 455–465. For further incidental references to A gnyan Dam pa, see also L. Petech (1990), *Central Tibet and the Mongols*, pp. 33 and 73, where he is wrongly referred to as "Rgya a-snyan Dam-pa." See further David Jackson (1987), *The Entrance Gate for the Wise (Section III)*, especially pp. 79–80, n. 18.
- 1480 On the importance of Mahākāla during other periods, cf. Samuel M. Grupper, "The Manchu Imperial Cult of the Early Ch'ing Dynasty: Texts and Studies on the Tantric Sanctuary of Mahākāla at Mukden" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1980).
- 1481 A gnyan Dam pa is said to have received a tribute of gold from Sga pa, a tribute of barley from Ldan ma, a tribute of mules from Gling, a tribute of wool from the nomadic north, and so on. See DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 40. According to the biography of Si tu Rab brtan kun bzang 'phags composed in 1481 (Dharamsala:

- LTWA, 1979, p. 432), Ldan ma was one of four Khams pa administrative divisions (*las tshan?*) under the Sakya administration, the other three being Gong jo, Gling tshang, and Shar kha. See Bkra shis tshe ring, "Gling tshang rgyal rabs," p. 803.
- 1482 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 40. Chinese sources mention A gnyan Dam pa being forced temporarily into retirement by the backbiting of his former pupil Samgha, another powerful Tibetan monk-official of this period.
- 1483 Bkra shis dpal 'byor was born in Ldan Lung pa into the lineage of the Ldan Khri dpon, evidently an old ruling family of Ldan ma. His brief biography is found at the end of volume one of the Kam tshang history by Si tu and 'Be lo. The birth-date given there of 1445 and death age of sixty-four (1509) would not have allowed him to have taught the Eighth Karmapa for very long!
- 1484 For Dul mo Bkra shis 'od zer's life, see Si tu Paṇ chen and 'Be lo, vol. 1, p. 656f. (*da* 329a–b). He was a major teacher of the Eighth Karma pa Mi bskyod rdo rje. His father was the Bdud mo (= Dul mo?) chieftain, whose territory was in 'Bri stod, being one of the trio: Skyabs, Bdud, and Gser.
- 1485 Evidently Ldan ma Sangs rgyas dpal was the teacher by this name who taught Sangs rgyas gnyan pa Grub chen Bkra shis dpal 'byor at 'Dan Chos sde when the latter was between eight and fifteen years old.
- 1486 A brief biography of Sangs rgyas dpal bzang is also found in Chos nyid ye shes, *Dpal ldan gle lung chos sde chen po'i gnyags ston pa'i gdung rabs dang bcas pa'i rnam thar skal bzang mdzes pa'i rgyan* (composed 1775), *Gangs can rig mdzod* 31 (1997), pp. 416–448. He was also counted as forty-second abbot of Mus Gle lung chos sde. An autobiography of the slightly later Ngor pa lama Rin chen chod ldan of Sga pa, who served as forty-seventh abbot of Mus Gle lung, is also included (pp. 478–516). Much information relevant to Ngor and Mus in the eighteenth century is given in lives of the last few Mus Gle lung abbots.
- 1487 All but the last are listed in DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 35.
- 1488 Zhu chen Tshul khri ms rin chen, *Chos smra ba'i bande ...*, *Autobiography of Tshul-khri ms-rin-chen of Sde-dge* [sic] and *Other of His Selected Writings*, pp. 304, 315, and elsewhere. On p. 304f. he discusses the Lha khang bdag chen Rin chen rgyal mtshan (fl. late fifteenth century?), who founded Sa dkar Bsam grub gling, and the reliquary of the latter's nephew, Bdag chen 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' blo gros (who died in a dragon year, age 71/72).
- 1489 See also DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 37f. The monks from these twenty-four monasteries all belonged to the same Ldan ma regional dormitory (*khang tshan*) when they went to Ngor.
- 1490 Ngor Dpon slob Ngag dbang legs grub died on the twenty-ninth day of the sixth month in the lunar calendar.
- 1491 Skye rgu Ngag dbang bsam gtan died on the tenth day of the tenth month in the lunar calendar.

- 1492 Kun dga' dpal 'byor died on the fourteenth day of the first month in the lunar calendar.
- 1493 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 7a–8a. *See also* the brief mention in his history of Sga, Skyur, and Ldan ma: *Sga ldan skyur gsum*. Dezhung Rinpoche himself composed biographies of a number of recent masters, most of which remain unpublished.
- 1494 A recent Dbon po Sprul sku was born in Thag lung in about 1916. His father was rta mgrin rdo rje (“rta rdo”), who had come as a *mag pa* to the Thag lung A gnyan tshang from the 'Dzi mda' Bar grong tshang, and his mother, Bsod nams lha mo, was from the Thag lung A gnyan tshang and was sister of Phan bde Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs kun bzang thub bstan chos kyi rgyal mtshan (d. ca. 1930). This trulku's younger brother was the Phende Zhabdrung in France, Bstan pa rab rgyas, b. late 1934/early 1935.
- 1495 The lama ca. 1900 was named Ngag dbang 'jam dpal.
- 1496 Trarik Trulku in Bodhnath (1933–1998) was the seventh of this lineage to have been active at Khra rug monastery. The others so far ascertained are said to have been: (1) 'Jam mgon Bstan 'dzin, (2) Zhe chen 'Gyur med mthu stobs, (3) Dpal Klu'i dbang po, (4) Chida? Dpal Klu'i [dbang po?], (5) Chinkar? Dpal Klu'i [dbang po?], and (6) Dpal Klu'i dbang po, otherwise known as Padma dbang chen bzhad pa'i rdo rje.
- 1497 The lama ca. 1900 was named 'Jam dpal ye shes bzang po.
- 1498 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 39.
- 1499 The first two masters of the Khra 'gu Sprul sku lineage were (1) Dge 'dun seng ge, who was left as religious representative by the Seventh Karma pa Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506) after newly building the temple, and his rebirth (2) Shes rab rgyal mtshan.
- 1500 Evidently this is the “Lab chos sde” mentioned in Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *Baidūrya ser po*, p. 331, no. 70, said to be a branch of Ldan ma Chos 'khor.
- 1501 On Rwa nyag monastery, *See also* the terse description in Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *Baidūrya ser po*, p. 329, no. 57.
- 1502 For a listing of the nine branches of dDan Chos 'khor, see Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *Baidūrya ser po*, p. 330f., no. 68.
- 1503 The rebirths of both Rong tha Sprul sku lineages of Rwa nyag monastery were living in Kalimpong in the early 1960s. According to Dezhung Rinpoche (EGS notes), the monastery of Rwa nyag had about five hundred monks and five or six *bla brang*. It was once the seat of a married lineage, the Kong 'jo Rwa nyag *gdung brgyud*, evidently connected with Ldan ma Sha khrid Grub thob Ri rgyal rdo rje. The lineage has now died out, but the *sprul sku* of the Kong 'jo tshang was an example of a married Dge lugs pa *sngags pa*. This master was highly revered, and his rebirth was also living in Kalimpong in the early 1960s. Also at Rwa nyag was the Rong tha tshang, with its two *sprul sku* lineages as listed here.

- 1504 The last of the Lab Skyabs mgon lineage is living in Switzerland.
- 1505 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, pp. 36–37.
- 1506 PhLh 1994.
- 1507 According to Thrangu Rinpoche, Bodhnath, 1994, the biography of the seventeenth-century master 'Bri gung Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa contains references to his seeing many Mongols when visiting Sga pa. C. Trungpa (1966), p. 35, similarly records that the fanatical Mongol armies of Gushri Khan attacked the Karma Bka' brgyud monastery of Zur mang in southern Nang chen at this time (1643) and imprisoned its masters.
- 1508 The anniversary of Sga Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes's death was observed on the thirteenth day of the second lunar month.
- 1509 For this date, supplied by a Don grub gling monk, I am grateful to Mr. Tashi Tsering.
- 1510 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 47. Here Dezhung Rinpoche referred to the (now inaccessible and probably lost) biography of Sga Rab 'byams pa as the source of this account.
- 1511 According to PhLh 1994, this affiliation with Ngor had become institutionalized in the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama (mid-seventeenth century). Before then the monks were freer to choose which monastery they went to in central Tibet and which masters they studied under.
- 1512 All Sakyapa monks from Sga, Skyur, and Ldan belonged to the big Ldan ma kham tshan. Gling kham tshan (another Khams pa kham tshan that included all the monks from Derge district) was, however, almost as large, and there was a certain amount of rivalry between the two.
- 1513 PhLh 1994. Another resident was apparently A myes Thub bstan blo gsal, who seems to have left in the 1920s or 1930s.
- 1514 This was not a hard-and-fast rule, however, and there was at least one noteworthy recent exception, namely, the so-called 'Brug pa Mkhan po, who was an abbatial candidate of the Khang gsar bla brang. In addition, at Ngor a special brotherhood existed between the monks of the Ldan ma and Mi nyag kham tshan, and they both were allowed to attend each other's tea-offering assemblies (*mang cha*). According to PhLh 1994, this was thanks to the fact that the Mi nyag (Lcags la) king was from the Sga tribe, so as a courtesy Sga pa monks (many of whom presumably shared this ancestry) could also go there. People tracing their descent from the Sga tribe were, in fact, relatively few in Sga khog, according to PhLh. (Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse from Ldan ma was one.) By contrast, 'Bru ancestry was much more common.
- 1515 According to PhLh 1994, until the time of Phan khang Mkhan po Dpal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan, each of the twenty-one or twenty-three "Ldan dgon" had a lama and caretaker (*gnyer pa*) appointed by the Phan khang at Ngor. But Dpal

- ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan's steward, Zla ba nor bu, the father of the Mus mkhan po, sold off all the estates he could, and where he could not do that, he stripped the small *bla brangs* of their other assets or possessions for his own use—which did, however, include some schemes for the aggrandizement of the Phan bde bla brang at Ngor. From the *bla brang* in Jyekundo, for instance, he took all its possessions and holy objects. In the process he became personally very rich, and he married the daughter of the Lcags la rgyal po. Their son became Ngor mkhan po (the so-called Mus pa Mkhan Rin po che).
- 1516 It was said that the first Ngor abbot actually to visit Derge was the twenty-first, Dpal mchog rgyal mtshan.
- 1517 Bstan 'dzin lhun grub was a great Ngor pa lama and lineage transmitter, though he never actually served as Ngor abbot.
- 1518 Blo gter dbang po, *Ngor gdan rabs kha skong*, p. 638 (fol. 72b), briefly records Dpal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan's activities in Khams (chiefly in Derge) after his tenure as abbot.
- 1519 PhLh, unpublished, unfinished biography of the late Phan bde Mkhan po Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1917–1969), p. 20.
- 1520 PhLh, unpublished, unfinished biography of the late Phan bde Mkhan po Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho (1917–1969), p. 20.
- 1521 See, for instance, the references in Zhu chen Tshul khrims rin chen, *Chos smra ba'i bande tshul khrims rin chen du bod pa'i skye ba phal pa'i rkang 'thung dge sdig 'dres ma'i las kyi yal ga phan tshun du 'dzings par bde sdug gi lo 'dab dus kyi rgyal mos re mos su bsgyur pa*. On p. 416.1 there is mentioned a stay at Tharlam by Dpal ldan chos skyong.
- 1522 DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fols. 7a–8a. See also his history of Sga, Skyur, and Ldan ma.
- 1523 Thar lam Grub chen Kun dga' rnam rgyal's death anniversary was observed on the twenty-ninth day of the third lunar month (the same as Sga ston's).
- 1524 Thar lam Rab dkar lhun grub's death anniversary was observed on the fifteenth day of the tenth lunar month.
- 1525 Thar lam Nyi dga' Rin po che passed away on the twenty-second day of the ninth month (*Lha 'babs dus chen*).
- 1526 'Jam dbangs blo gsal, called "A khu Blo gsal," was a meditator at the 'Dzi mda' retreat, with Sga ston, 'Jam rgyal, and the others. He was himself from the 'Dzi mda' A myes tshang. Thar lam 'Jam dbyangs blo gsal died in winter on the seventeenth day of the twelfth month in the lunar calendar.
- 1527 Jo sras 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan is said to have passed away on the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month, like Nyi dga' Rin po che. This would have been in about December 1949 or January 1950.

- 1528 Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho was a disciple of Sga ston and was from the 'Dzi mda' A myes tshang. He received as a young man (among many teachings) the initiations for the seven Ngor maṇḍalas from Sga ston in 1930 at Tharlam. See DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*, fol. 44a. He later became a major disciple of Dam pa Rin po che, receiving the *Collection of Tantras (Rgyud sde kun btus)* from him at Rta nag in the late 1930s and later imparting this collection of initiations and teachings at Jyekundo in the 1940s.
- 1529 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 23.
- 1530 On the use of this manuscript, see D. Jackson (1987), p. 233.
- 1531 These treasures are listed in DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 27. The history of the great gilt images at Tharlam is told in DR, *Sga ston rnam thar*.
- 1532 According to PhLh 1994, Sga A gnyan Dam pa made offerings to this monastery after his return from China.
- 1533 PhLh 1994.
- 1534 Orally, PhLh 1994 attributed the destruction to the "Paṇ chen Rin po che'i Sog dmag," though in his unfinished biography of Phan bde Mkhan po Ngag dbang bshad sgrub rgya mtsho, p. 19, he attributed it to the "sog dmag" of the "Dzung gar rgyal po" (which would have been about eighty years later). But as mentioned above, C. Trungpa (1966), p. 35, records the tradition that the fanatical Mongol armies of Gushri Khan attacked the Karma Bka' brgyud pa monastery of Zur mang at this time (1643) and held its captured masters in prison (see note 1507). Thrangu Rinpoche, Bodhnath, 1994, also reports reading in the biography of the seventeenth-century master 'Bri gung Rig 'dzin Chos grags references to his seeing many Mongols when traveling to Sga pa.
- 1535 DR, *'Jam rgyal rnam thar*, fol. 4b.3.
- 1536 According to PhLh 1994, Bstan 'dzin was from 'Dzi mda' and acted as the Tharlam *dgon bla*, i.e., the political leader of the monastery. He had a very close link with the Dra'u Dpon.
- 1537 DR, *Sga ldan skyur gsum*, p. 17.
- 1538 These two were Dezhung Rinpoche's "classmates" at Rdzong gsar, Ngag dbang rin chen and Ye shes nyi ma. The first of this pair took leave to become the tutor of the Phan bde Zhabs drung (now in France). A later seminary master was Kun dga' tshe ring (1922–ca. 1960s?). According to PhLh 1994, the first seminary master at Tharlam was actually the Sde gzhung Mkhan po Tshul khirms, who (in the late 1920s?) taught a few young monks at Tharlam including Kun dga' bstan 'dzin and Tshe mgon from 'Dzi mda'. For several years there were problems organizing such classes because many of the older monks in powerful positions (who had never studied the scholastic texts) opposed this innovation out of sheer conservative inflexibility.
- 1539 The following is mainly based on KN and JR 1987.

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- 1540 I am indebted to Dr. Franz-Karl Ehrhard for bringing this source to my notice. In addition, G. Samuel (1993), p. 349, cites a short account of Kalu Rinpoche's life in a source he cites as "Ven. Dezhung Rinpoche. 1977. The Biography of Kalu Rinpoche. In *Mahākāla: The Awakened Energy of Compassion: A Tantric Invocation by Kalu Rinpoche*. San Francisco, Kagyu Drodan Kunchab."

Table of Tibetan Words and Names

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Amdo | A mdo |
| Ameshap | A mes zhabs |
| Ameshap Ngawang Kunga Sönam | A mes zhabs Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod nams |
| Ane Chime | A ne 'Chi med |
| Ane Chime Drölma | A ne 'Chi med sgrol ma |
| Anjam | A 'jam |
| Anjam Rinpoche | A 'jam Rinpoche |
| Anye Chodrak | A myes Chos grags |
| Anye Kalsang Gönpö | A myes Bskal bzang mgon po |
| Anye Tamdrin Tsheskyab | A myes rta mgrin tshe skyabs |
| Anyen Dampa | A gnyan Dam pa |
| Anyen Dampa Kunga Drak | A gnyan Dam pa Kun dga' grags |
| Ara. <i>See also</i> Wara. | Wa ra |
| Ara Lama | 'A ra Bla ma |
| Ara Ritro | 'A ra ri khrod |
| Atro | A khro |
| Atro Behu | A khro Be hu |
| Bamchu | 'Bam chu |
| Bamji | 'Bam spyi |
| Bamle | 'Bam le |
| Bari Lotsāwa | Ba ri Lo tsā ba |
| Behu | Be hu |
| Behu Rinchen Tsering | Be hu Rin chen tshe ring |
| Behu Tendzin Drakpa | Be hu Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |

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| Benchen | 'Ban chen |
| Beri | Be ri |
| Bernakchen | Ber nag can |
| Bo Gangkar | 'Bo Gangs dkar |
| Bo Gangkar Rinpoche | 'Bo Gangs dkar Rin po che |
| Bo Gangkar Trulku Karma Drupgyü Chökyi Sengge | 'Bo Gangs dkar Sprul sku Karma sgrub brgyud chos kyi seng ge |
| Bonpo | Bon po |
| Buchen | Bu chen |
| Bumthang | 'Bum thang |
| Butön | Bu ston |
| Chagö | Bya rgod |
| Chagö Topden | Bya rgod Stobs ldan |
| Chakdzö Gönpö | Phyag mdzod Mgon po |
| Chakdzö Pönlop Thrinlay Tenzin | Phyag mdzod Dpon slob Phrin las bstan 'dzin |
| Chakla | Lcags la |
| Chamdo | Chab mdo |
| Champa Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Champa Kunga Tenpay Nyima | Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i nyi ma |
| Champa Namkha Kunzang Tenpay Gyaltsen | Byams pa nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Champa Ngawang Tenzin Nyendrak | Byams pa ngag dbang bstan 'dzin snyan grags |
| Champa Rinchen Khyentse Wangpo | Byams pa Rin chen mkhyen brtse'i dbang po |
| Champa Tenzin | Byams pa bstan 'dzin |
| Chang Ngamring | Byang Ngam ring |
| Changchup Nyima | Byang chub nyi ma |
| Chatral Rinpoche | Bya bral Rin po che |
| Chatral Sangyay Dorje | Bya bral Sangs rgyas rdo rje |
| Chekawa | 'Chad kha ba |
| Chenrezik | Spyan ras gzigs |
| Chikhyap Khenpo Palden Dondrup | Spyi khyab Mkhan po Dpal ldan don grub |

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| Chikhyap Palden Dondrup | Spyi mkhan Dpal ldan don grub |
| Chime Drolma | 'Chi med sgrol ma |
| Chime Luding | 'Chi med Klu sdings |
| Chö Phüntso | Chos phun tshogs |
| Chobgye Labrang | Bco brgyad Bla brang |
| Chobgye Tri Rinpoche Ngawang Khyenrab Lekshay Gyatso | Bco brgyad Khri chen Rin po che Ngag dbang mkhyen rab legs bshad rgya mtsho |
| Chobgye Trichen | Bco brgyad Khri chen |
| Chobgye Trichen Rinchen Khyentse Wangpo | Bco brgyad Khri chen Rin chen mkhyen brtse'i dbang po |
| Chobgye Trichen Rinpoche | Bco brgyad Khri chen Rin po che |
| Chobgye Tripa | Bco brgyad Khri pa |
| Chögyal Phakpa | Chos rgyal 'Phag pa |
| Chögyam Trungpa | Chos rgyam Drung pa |
| Chögyam Trungpa Trulku | Chos rgyam Drung pa Sprul sku |
| Chökyi Jungnay | Chos kyi 'byung gnas |
| Chökyi Lotrö | Chos kyi blo gros |
| Chökyi Nyima | Chos kyi nyi ma |
| Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche | Chos kyi nyi ma Rin po che |
| Chukmo | Phyug mo |
| Dagchen | Bdag chen |
| Dagchen Gyagarwa | Bdag chen Rgya gar ba |
| Dagchen Gyagarwa Sherab Gyaltsen | Bdag chen Rgya gar ba Shes rab rgyal mtshan |
| Dagchen Ngawang Kunga Lotrö | Bdag chen Ngag dbang kun dga' blo gros |
| Dagmo | bdag mo |
| Dagmo Kusho | bdag mo sku zhabs |
| Dakho | Zla kho |
| Dalai Lama | Dalai bla ma |
| Damchö | Dam chos |
| Damchö Tenpa | Dam chos brtan pa |
| Dampa Rinpoche | Dam pa Rin po che |
| Dampa Rinpoche Ngawang Lotrö Shenphen Nyingpo | Dam pa Rin po che Ngag dbang blo gros gzhan phan snying po |
| Damthok | 'Dam thog |

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| Dar | 'Dar |
| Dar Drangmoche | 'Dar Grang mo che |
| Dartsedo | Dar rtse mdo |
| Dawa Norbu | Zla ba nor bu |
| Dawa Zangpo | Zla ba bzang po |
| Dawö | Zla 'od |
| Denkhok | Ldan khog |
| Denma | Ldan ma |
| Denma Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup | Ldan ma Dpon slob Ngag dbang legs grub |
| Dephuk Rinpoche | Bde phug Rin po che |
| Derge | Sde dge |
| Derge Göichen | Sde dge Dgon chen |
| Derge Göichen Yarnay Khenpo Ngawang Samten Lotrö | Sde dge Dgon chen Dbyar gnas Mkhan po Ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros |
| Derge Yilhung | Sde dge Yid lhung |
| Desi Sangyay Gyatso | Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho |
| Dezhung | Sde gzhung |
| Dezhung Anjam | Sde gzhung A 'jam |
| Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche | Sde gzhung A 'jam Rin po che |
| Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | Sde gzhung A 'jam Rinpoche 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Dezhung Anjam Trulku | Sde gzhung A 'jam Sprul sku |
| Dezhung Chöphel | Dezhung Chos 'phel |
| Dezhung Khenpo Tendzin Dawö | Sde gzhung Mkhan poBstan 'dzin zla 'od |
| Dezhung Kunzang | Sde gzhung Kun bzang |
| Dezhung Kyashül Trulku Kunzang | Sde gzhung Skya shul Sprul sku Kun bzang |
| Dezhung Kyashul Trulku Kunzang Chökyi Nyima | Sde gzhung Skya shul Sprul sku Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma |
| Dezhung Labrang | Sde gzhung bla brang |
| Dezhung Lungrik Nyima | Sde gzhung Lungs rigs nyi ma |
| Dezhung Lungrik Trulku | Sde gzhung Lungs rigs Sprul sku |
| Dezhung Choktrül Rinpoche Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | Sde gzhung Mchog sprul Rin po che 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |

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| Dezhung Nyendrak Lungrik Nyima | Sde gzhung Snyan grags lung rigs nyi ma |
| Dezhung Paṇḍita | Sde gzhung Paṇḍita |
| Dezhung Pön Tshang | Sde gzhung Dpon tshang |
| Dezhung Pön Tshang Orgyen Kyap | Sde gzhung Dpon tshang O rgyan skyabs |
| Dezhung Rinpoche | Sde gzhung Rin po che |
| Dezhung Trulku | Sde gzhung Sprul sku |
| Dezhung Trulku Anjam | Sde gzhung Sprul sku A 'jam |
| Dezhung Trulku Lungrik Nyima | Sde gzhung Sprul sku Lung rigs nyi ma |
| Dhi phu | Dhi phu |
| Dhi phu Chöje | Dhi phu Chos rje |
| Dhi phu Chöje Rinpoche | Dhi phu Chos rje Rin po che |
| Dhongthog | Gdong thog |
| Dhongthog Rinpoche | Gdong thog Rin po che |
| Dhongthog Trulku | Gdong thog Sprul sku |
| Dhongthog Trulku Tenpay Gyaltzen | Gdong thog Sprul sku Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Dilgo | Dil mgo |
| Dilgo Khyentse | Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse |
| Dilgo Khyentse Rabsal Dawa | Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rab gsal zla ba |
| Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche | Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Rin po che |
| Dilgo Khyentse Trashi Paljor | Dil mgo Mkhyen brtse Bkra shis dpal 'byor |
| Dingri | Ding ri |
| Dingri Langkhor | Ding ri Glang 'khor |
| Dolpo | Dol po |
| Döndrup Ling | Don grub gling |
| Dongtray | Gdong sprad |
| Dorjedrak | Rdo rje brag |
| Doti Gangkar | Doti Gangs dkar |
| Dra'u 'Brog pa Pön Tshang | Dra'u 'Brog pa Dpon tshang |
| Dra'u Behu Tendzin Gyaltzen | Dra'u Be hu Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |
| Dra'u Lama Kundun Rinchen Chokdrup | Dra'u Bla ma Sku mdun Rin chen mchog grub |
| Dra'u Pön | Dra'u dPon |

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| Dra'u Pön Lama Tendzin Gyaltzen | Dra'u Dpon Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |
| Drak | Sgrags |
| Drak Dzongma | Brag rdzong ma |
| Drakkar Taso | Brag dkar rta so |
| Drakkar Taso Trulku Kagyü Tendzin Norbu | Brag dkar rta so Sprul sku Bka' brgyud bstan 'dzin nor bu |
| Drakpa Gyaltzen | Grags pa rgyal mtshan |
| Drakri Chöje Jamyang Chökyi Nyima | Brag ri Chos rje 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi nyi ma |
| Drakri Dorjechang | Brag ra Rdo rje 'chang |
| Dramagang | Drwa ma sgang |
| Drangmoche | Grang mo che |
| Drepung | 'Bras spungs |
| Drichu | 'Bri chu |
| Drikung | 'Bri gung |
| Drikung Kagyüpa | 'Bri gung Bka' brgyud pa |
| Drokmi | 'Brog mi |
| Drokmi Lotsāwa | 'Brog mi Lo tsā ba |
| Drölma <i>dagchen</i> | Sgrol ma bdag chen |
| Drölma Phodrang | Sgrol ma Pho brang |
| Drölma Kyabgön | Sgrol ma skyabs mgon |
| Dromtön | 'Brom ston |
| Drönda | Mgron zla |
| Drönda Gelong | Mgron zla Dge slong |
| Drönda Gelong Jamyang Gyaltzen | Mgron zla Dge slong 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan |
| Drönda trong | Mgron zla grong |
| Drongnyin Tshewang Lama | Grong nyin Tshe dbang bla ma |
| Dru Jamyang Rinpoche | 'Bru 'Jam dbyangs Rinpoche |
| Druk Khenpo | 'Brug Mkhan po |
| Druk Tshampa | 'Brug Mtshams pa |
| Drukpa Kagyü | 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud |
| Drukpa Kagyüpa | 'Brug pa Bka' brgyud pa |
| Drukpa Khen Rinpoche | 'Brug pa mkhan Rinpoche |

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| Drukpa Khenpo | 'Brug pa Mkhan po |
| Drukpa Khenpo Ngawang Yönten Gyatso | 'Brug pa Mkhan po Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho |
| Drukpa Kunlek | 'Brug pa Kun legs |
| Drukpa Tsheju | 'Brug pa Tshe bcu |
| Drung Kunga Rinchen | Drung Kun dga' rin chen |
| Drung Tsultrim Gyaltzen | Drung Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan |
| Druptop Ngawang Topju | Grub thob Ngag dbang stobs bcu |
| Druptop Sangyay Rabten | Grub thob Sangs rgyas rab brtan |
| Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje | Bdud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje |
| Dudjom Rinpoche | Bdud 'jom Rin po che |
| Dudjom Rinpoche | Bdud 'joms Rin po che |
| Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdral Yeshe Dorje | Bdud 'jom Rin po che 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje |
| Durthrö Dakpo | Dur khrod Bdag po |
| Düsum Khyenpa | Dus gsum mkhyen pa |
| Dza Paltrül | Rdza Dpal sprul |
| Dzachu | Rdza chu |
| Dzachu Gemang Khenpo Shenphen Thayey | Rdza chu Dge mang Mkhan po Gzhan phan mtha' yas |
| Dzachukha | Rdza chu kha |
| Dzakhok | Rdza khog |
| Dzin | 'Dzin |
| Dzin Namgyal | 'Dzin Rnam rgyal |
| Dzinda | 'Dzi mda' |
| Dzinda Naysep | 'Dzi mda' Gnas gseb |
| Dzinda Naysep Ritrö | 'Dzi mda'i Gnas gseb ri khrod |
| Dzinkhok | 'Dzin khog |
| Dziphu | 'Dzi phu |
| Dzokchen | Rdzogs chen |
| Dzongkar | Rdzong dkar |
| Dzongsar | Rdzong gsar |
| Dzongsar Gönpa Lotrö Wangchuk | Rdzong gsar Dgon pa Blo gros dbang phyug |
| Dzongsar Khamche | Rdzong gsar Khams bye |

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| Dzongsar Khamche seminary | Rdzong gsar Khams bye seminary |
| Dzongsar Khyentse | Rdzong gsar Mkhjen brtse |
| Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö | Rdzong gsar Mkhjen brtse Chos kyi blo gros |
| Dzongsar Khyentse Tulku | Rdzong gsar Mkhjen brtse Tulku |
| Dzongsar Ngari Trulku Jamyang Sherab Gyatso | Rdzong gsar Mnga' ris Sprul sku 'Jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho |
| Dzongsar Shedra Khenpo Khyenrab | Rdzong gsar Bshad grwa Mkhan po Mkhjen rab |
| Dzonyak | 'Dzo nyag |
| Dzonyak Samdrup | 'Dzo nyag Bsam grub |
| Dzonyak Samdrup Gönpa | 'Dzo nyag Bsam grub dgon pa |
| Dzungar Mongol king | Dzung gar rgyal po |
| Ga | Sga |
| Ga Anyen | sGa A gnyan |
| Ga Anyen Dampa | sGa A gnyan Dam pa |
| Ga Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen | Sga Bla ma 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan |
| Ga Rabjampa | Sga Rab 'byams pa |
| Ga Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe | Ga Rab 'byams pa Kun dga' ye shes |
| Gagu | Gwa gu |
| Gakhok | Sga khog |
| Gampo Jennga Tashi Namgyal | Sgam po Spyen nga Bkra shis rnam rgyal |
| Gampopa | Sgam po pa |
| Ganden | Dga' ldan |
| Ganden Nari | Dga' ldan Rna ri |
| Ganden Nari Khenchung | Dga' ldan Rna ri Mkhan chung |
| Ganden Naring | Dga' ldan Rna ring |
| Ganden Tripa | Dga' ldan Khri pa |
| Gangchen Rinpoche | Gangs chen Rin po che |
| Gangkar | Gangs dkar |
| Gangkar Dorjechang | Gangs dkar Rdo rje 'chang |
| Gangkar Rinpoche | Gangs dkar Rin po che |
| Gangkar Trulku | Gangs dkar Sprul sku |
| Gapa | Sga pa |

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| Gapa Tshega | Sga pa Tshe dga' |
| Gatön | Sga ston |
| Gatön Lekpa Rinpoche | Sga ston Legs pa Rinpoche |
| Gatön Ngawang Lekpa | Sga ston Ngag dbang legs pa |
| Gelek Rinpoche | Dge legs Rin po che |
| Gelong | Dge slong |
| Geluk | Dge lugs |
| Gelukpa | Dge lugs pa |
| Gemang Khenpo Yönga | Dge mang Mkhan po Yon dga' |
| Gen Phende Lhakpa | Rgan Phan bde Lhag pa |
| Gendun | Dge 'dun |
| Gendun Chöphel | Dge 'dun chos 'phel |
| Gendun Targye | Dge 'dun dar rgyas |
| Gendun Zangpo | Dge 'dun bzang po |
| Gephel Pönlop | Dge 'phel dpon slob |
| Geshe | dge bshes |
| Geshe Losang Chökyi Gawa | Dge bshes Blo bzang chos kyi dga' ba |
| Geshe Ngawang Nornang | Dge bshes Ngag dbang nor nang |
| Gökar | Gos dkar |
| Gönchen | Dgon chen |
| Gönchen Yarnay Khenpo Samten Lotrö | Dgon chen Dbyar gnas Mkhan po Bsam gtan blo gros |
| Gongkar | Gong dkar |
| Gongma Kunga Lotrö | Gong ma Kun dga' blo gros |
| Gönpo Bernakchen | Mgon po Ber nag can |
| Gönpo Chakdrukpa | Mgon po Phyang drug pa |
| Gönpo Gur | Mgon po Gur |
| Gönpo Throwochu | Mgon po Khro bo bcu |
| Gönpo Tsheten | Mgon po tshe brtan |
| Gönpo Zhal Zhipa | Mgon po Zhal bzhi pa |
| Gorampa | Go rams pa |
| Gorampa Sönam Sengge | Go rams pa Bsod nams seng ge |
| Gorum | Go rum |
| Gowo Rabjampa Sönam Sengge | Go bo Rab 'byams pa Bsod nams seng ge |

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| Gurgyi Gönpö | Gur gyi mgon po |
| Guru Drakpo | Gu ru Drag po |
| Guzi | 'Gu ze |
| Guzi | 'Go zi |
| Guzi | 'Gu zi |
| Gyalkhang | Rgyal khang |
| Gyalkhang Shenphen Chökyi Nangwa | Rgyal khang Gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba |
| Gyalkhang tshang | Rgyal khang tshang |
| Gyalsay Shenphen Thayey | Rgyal sras Gzhan phan mtha' yas |
| Gyalsay Thokmay Sangpo | Rgyal sras Thogs med bzang po |
| Gyalsay Tulku | Rgyal sras sprul sku |
| Gyaltzen | Rgyal mtshan |
| Gyaltshab | Rgyal tshab |
| Gyantse | Rgyal rtse |
| Hocho Lama | Ho cho Bla ma |
| Hocho Lama Könchok Gyaltzen | Ho cho Bla ma Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan |
| Hocho Tshang | Ho cho tshang |
| Horkhok | Hor khog |
| Jamgön Kongtrül | 'Jam mgon Kong sprul |
| Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche | 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Rin po che |
| Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche Lotrö Thaye | 'Jam mgon Kong sprul Rin po che Blo gros mtha' yas |
| Jamgyal | 'Jam rgyal |
| Jampal Tendzin | 'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin |
| Jampal Zangpo | 'Jam dpal bzang po |
| Jamyang Chökyi Nyima | 'Jam dbyangs chos kyi nyi ma |
| Jamyang Chöphel | 'Jam dbyangs chos 'phel |
| Jamyang Gyaltzen | 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan |
| Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lotrö | 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros |
| Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo | 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po |
| Jamyang Kunga Namgyal | 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' rnam rgyal |

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| Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Jamyang Kunga Wangyal | 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' dbang rgyal |
| Jamyang Losal | 'Jam dbyangs blo gsal |
| Jamyang Namgyal | 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal |
| Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso | 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho |
| Jamyang Sakya | 'Jam dbyangs Sa skya |
| Jamyang Shedrup | 'Jam dbyangs bshad sgrub |
| Jamyang Sherab | 'Jam dbyangs shes rab |
| Jamyang Tenpay Nyima | 'Jam dbyangs bstan pa'i nyi ma |
| Jatshön Nyingpo | 'Ja' tshon snying po |
| Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen | Rje btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan |
| Jetsun Tāranātha | Rje btsun Tāranātha |
| Jetsunma Pema Trinlay | rJe btsun ma Padma 'phrin las |
| Jigdral | 'Jig bral |
| Jigdral Dagchen | 'Jigs bral Bdag chen |
| Jigdral Dagchen Rinpoche | 'Jigs bral Bdag chen Rin po che |
| Jigdral Rinpoche | 'Jigs bral Rin po che |
| Jigme Dorje | 'Jigs med rdo rje |
| Jigme Lingpa | 'Jigs med gling pa |
| Jokhang | Jo khang |
| Jokhor | Jo 'khor |
| Jonang | Jo nang |
| Jonang Tāranātha | Jo nang Tāranātha |
| Jonangpa | Jo nang pa |
| Josay | Jo sras |
| Josay Gelong | Jo sras Dge slong |
| Josay Gelong Jamyang Gyaltsen | Jo sras dge slong 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan |
| Josay Jamyang Gyaltsen | Jo sras 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan |
| Jowo | Jo bo |
| Jowo 'Jam pa'i rdo rje | Jo bo 'Jam pa'i rdo rje |
| Jowo 'Phags pa Wa ti | Jo bo 'Phags pa Wa ti |
| Jowo Śākyamuni | Jo bo Śākyamuni |

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| Jowoje Atiśa | Jo bo rje Atiśa |
| Ju Mipham | 'Ju Mi pham |
| Jyeku | Skye rgu |
| Jyeku Döndrup Ling | Skye rgu Don grub gling |
| Jyeku Döndrup Ling Khenpo Ngakga | Skye rgu Don grub gling Mkhan po Ngag dga' |
| Jyeku Göñ | Skye rgu Dgon |
| Jyeku Göñ Khenpo Khenrab Loden (= Ngakga) | Jyeku dgon Mkhan po Mkhyen rab blo ldan (= Ngag dga') |
| Jyeku La rgan La | Skye rgu La rgan La |
| Jyekundo | Skye rgu mdo |
| Jyekundo Önpö Trulku | Skye rgu mdo Dbon po Sprul sku |
| Kadam | Bka' gdams |
| Kadampa | Bka' gdams pa |
| Kagyü | Bka' brgyud |
| Kagyü Tendzin Norbu | Bka' brgyud bstan 'dzin nor bu |
| Kagyüpa | Bka' brgyud pa |
| Kalsang Gyaltsen | Bskal bzang rgyal mtshan |
| Kalu | Ka lu |
| Kalzung | Bskal bzang |
| Kalzung Gyatso | Bskal bzang rgya mtsho |
| Kangshar | Gang shar |
| Kangshar Wangpo | Gang shar dbang po |
| Kapshi | Bka' bzhi |
| Kapshi | Ka bzhi |
| Kapshi Göñ | Ka bzhi dgon |
| Kapshi Göñ | Bka' bzhi dgon |
| Kapshi Gönpa | Bka' bzhi Dgon pa |
| Kapshi Trulku | Bka' bzhi Sprul sku |
| Kapshi Trulku Losal Thubten | Bka' bzhi Sprul sku Blo gsal thub bstan |
| Kapshipa Rikpay Sengge | Bka' bzhi pa Rigs pa'i seng ge |
| Karma | Karma |
| Karma Chakme | Karma Chags med |
| Karma Drupgyü Chökyi Sengge | Karma sgrub brgyud chos kyi seng ge |

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| Karma Kagyü | Karma Bka' brgyud |
| Karma Kagyüpa | Karma Bka' brgyud pa |
| Karma Thinley Rinpoche | Karma phrin las Rin po che |
| Karmapa | Karma pa |
| Karmapa Rangjung Rikpay Dorje | Karma pa Rang byung rig pa'i rdo rje |
| Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje | Karma pa Dbang phyug rdo rje |
| Kathok | Ka thog |
| Kathok Rmang gsar | Ka thog Rmang gsar |
| Kham | Khams |
| Kham Sumdrak | Khams gsum grags |
| Kham Sumdrak Gönpa | Khams gsum grags dgon pa |
| Khamche | Khams bye |
| Khamche Shedrup Dargay Ling | Khams bye Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling |
| Khampa | Khams pa |
| Khana | Kha na |
| Khangna | Khang na |
| Khangsar | Khang gsar |
| Khangsar Dampa Rinpoche | Khang gsar Dam pa Rin po che |
| Khangsar Khenchen Ngawang Khyentse Thubten Nyingpo | Khang gsar Mkhan chen Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po |
| Khangsar Khenchen Ngawang Lotrö snying po | Khang gsar Mkhan chen Ngag dbang blo gros snying po |
| Khangsar Khenpo Ngawang Khyentse Thubten Nyingpo | Khang gsar Mkhan po Ngag dbang mkhyen brtse thub bstan snying po |
| Khangsar Khenpo Ngawang Yönten Gyatso | Khang gsar Mkhan po Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho |
| Khangsar Labrang | Khang gsar bla brang |
| Khangsar <i>shabdrung</i> | Khang gsar zhabs drung |
| Khangsar Shabdrung Dampa Rinpoche | Khang gsar zhabs drung Dam pa Rinpoche |
| Khangsar Shabdrung Dampa Rinpoche Ngawang Lotrö Shenphen Nyingpo | Khang gsar zhabs drung Dam pa Rinpoche Ngag dbang blo gros gzhan phan snying po |
| Khangsar Shabdrung Ngawang Lotrö Tendzin Nyingpo | Khang gsar zhabs drung Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin snying po |
| Khangsip | Khang srib |

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| Khardo Trulku | |
| Kha'u Drakdzong | Kha'u Brag rdzong |
| Khenchen Jampal Zangpo | Mkhan chen 'Jam dpal bzang po |
| Khenchen Kapshipa Rikpay Sengge | Mkhan chen Bka' bzhi pa Rigs pa'i seng ge |
| Khenchen Ngawang Chödrak | Mkhan chen Ngag dbang chos grags |
| Khenchen Ngawang Samten Lotrö | Khenchen Ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros |
| Khenchen Samten Lotrö | Mkhan chen Bsam gtan blo gros |
| Khenchen Sangyay Tendzin | Mkhan chen Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin |
| Khenchen Shenga | Mkhan chen Gzhan dga' |
| Khenpo Appey | Mkhan po A pad |
| Khenpo Chöga | Mkhan po Chos dga' |
| Khenpo Dakho | Mkhan po Zla kho |
| Khenpo Jamyang Sherab | Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs shes rab |
| Khenpo Kangshar | Mkhan po Gang shar |
| Khenpo Kangshar Wangpo | Mkhan po Gang shar dbang po |
| Khenpo Khyenrab | Mkhan po mKhyen rab |
| Khenpo Khyenrab Chökyi Öser | Mkhan po Mkhyen rab chos kyi 'od zer |
| Khenpo Kunga Wangchuk | Mkhan po Kun dga' dbang phyug |
| Khenpo Kuse Appey Yönten Zangpo | Mkhan po Ku se A pad Yon tan bzang po |
| Khenpo Ngakga | Mkhan po Ngag dga' |
| Khenpo Ngawang Rinchen | Mkhan po Ngag dbang rin chen |
| Khenpo Palden Lotrö Gyaltsen | Mkhan po Dpal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan |
| Khenpo Rukho | Mkhan po Ru kho |
| Khenpo Sangye Rinchen | Mkhan po Sangs rgyas rin chen |
| Khenpo Shenga | Mkhan po Gzhan dga' |
| Khenpo Trinlay Chöphel | Mkhan po 'Phrin las chos 'phel |
| Khetsun Sangpo | Mkhas btsun bzang po |
| Khön | 'Khon |
| Khuna Mchog sprul Jamyang Sherab Gyatso | Khu na Mchog sprul 'Jam dbyangs shes rab rgya mtsho |
| Khunu Lama | Khu nu Bla ma |
| Khunu Lama Tendzin Gyaltsen | Khu nu Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |

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| Khunu Rinpoche Tendzin Gyaltzen | Khu nu Rinpoche Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |
| Khusi Drakgön | Khu si brag dgon |
| Khyabdak Ngawang Samten | Khyab bdag Ngag dbang bsam gtan |
| Khyenrab Chökyi Öser | Mkhyen rab chos kyi 'od zer |
| Khyentse | Mkhyen brtse |
| Khyentse Wangchuk | Mkhyen brtse dbang phyug |
| Khyentse Wangpo | Mkhyen brtse dbang po |
| Khyungpo Naljor | Khyung po rnal 'byor |
| Könchok Chödar | Dkon mchog chos dar |
| Könchok Lhündrup | Dkon mchog lhun grub |
| Kongtrül | Kong sprul |
| Kongtrül Yönten Gyatso | Kong sprul Yon tan rgya mtsho |
| Könyak | Dkon yag |
| Kundun Rinchen Chokdrup | Sku mdun Rin chen mchog grub |
| Kunga Lotrö | Kun dga' blo gros |
| Kunga Rinchen | Kun dga' rin chen |
| Kunga Tenpay Lotrö | Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros |
| Kunrik | Kun rig |
| Kunrik Lopdra | Kun gzigs slob grwa |
| Kunzang Nyima | Kun bzang nyi ma |
| Kunzang Shedrup | Kun bzang bshad sgrub |
| Kunzang Tsultrim | Kun bzang tshul khriims |
| Kuse | Ku se |
| Kuse Appey Yönten Zangpo | Ku se A pad Yon tan bzang po |
| Kuse Drak | Ku se brag |
| Kuyang la | Dkon dbyangs lags |
| Kyashül Trulku Kunzang Chökyi Nyima | Skya shul Sprul sku Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma |
| Kyichu | Skyid chu |
| Kyirong | Skyid rong |
| Kyirong Jowo | Skyid rong Jo bo |
| Kyirong Jowo 'Phags pa Wa ti | Skyid rong jo bo 'Phags pa Wa ti |
| Kyura | Skyu ra |

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| lama | bla ma |
| Lama Dawö | Bla ma Zla 'od |
| Lama Dorje | Bla ma Rdo rje |
| Lama Gendun | Bla ma Dge 'dun |
| Lama Gendun Zangpo | Bla ma Dge 'dun bzang po |
| Lama Jamyang Gyaltzen | Bla ma 'Jam dbyangs rgyal mtshan |
| Lama Kalsang Gyaltzen | Bla ma Bskal bzang rgyal mtshan |
| Lama Kalu Rinpoche | Bla ma Ka lu Rin po che |
| Lama Kunga | Bla ma Kun dga' |
| Lama Tendzin Gyaltzen | Bla ma Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |
| Langkhor | Glang 'khor |
| Lekpa | Legs pa |
| Lekpa Rinpoche | Legs pa Rin po che |
| Lhagang | Lha sgang |
| Lhagyal | Lha rgyal |
| Lhapchi | Lha phyi |
| Lhasa | Lha sa |
| Lhasa Jowo | Lha sa Jo bo |
| Lhatse | Lha rtse |
| Lhatse Dzong | Lha rtse Rdzong |
| Lhokha | Lho kha |
| Ling Rinpoche | Gling Rin po che |
| Lingtshang Guzi | Gling tshang 'Go zi |
| Lithang | Li thang |
| Lithang Athar | Li thang A thar |
| Lithang Dezhung | Li thang Sde gzhung |
| Lithang Göichen | Li thang Dgon chen |
| Lithang Othok | Li thang 'O thog |
| Longchen Rabjampa | Klong chen Rab 'byams pa |
| Longchenpa | Klong chen pa |
| Loter Wangpo | Blo gter dbang po |
| Lotrö Wangchuk | Blo gros dbang phyug |
| Luding | Klu sdings |

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| Luding Gyalsay | Klu sdings Rgyal sras |
| Luding Khenpo | Klu sdings mkhan po |
| Luding Khenpo Jamyang Tenpay Nyima | Klu sdings Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs bstan pa'i nyi ma |
| Luding Labrang | Klu sdings bla brang |
| Luding Shabdrung | Klu sdings Zhabs drung |
| Lungrik Nyima | Lung rigs nyi ma |
| Lungrik Wangchuk | Lung rigs dbang phyug |
| Magzorma | Dmag zor ma |
| Mal | Mal |
| Mal Lotsāwa | Mal Lo tsā ba |
| Mangkhar | Mang mkhar |
| Mangkhar Nyugulung | Mang mkhar Myu gu lung |
| Mangthö Ludrup | Mang thos Klu sgrub |
| Mangyul Kyirong | Mang yul Skyid grong |
| Marpa | Mar pa |
| Mayshö | Smad shod |
| Mila | Mi la |
| Milarepa | Mi la Ras pa |
| Mingyur | Mi 'gyur |
| Mingyur dgon | Mi 'gyur dgon |
| Mingyur Gyaltsen | Mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan |
| Mingyur Rinpoche | Mi 'gyur Rinpoche |
| Minyak | Mi nyag |
| Minyak Bka' bzhi pa Rikpay Sengge | Mi nyag bKa' bzhi pa Rigs pa'i seng ge |
| Minyak Gangkar | Mi nyag Gangs dkar |
| Minyak Gangkar Sprul sku | Mi nyag Gangs dkar Sprul sku |
| Minyak Jakla | Mi nyag Lcags la |
| Minyak Kunga Sönam | Mi nyag Kun bzang bsod nams |
| Minyak Lungrik Wangchuk | Mi nyag Lung rigs dbang phyug |
| Minyak Rikhü | Mi nyag Ri khud |
| Minyak Rikhü Önpö Trulku | Mi nyag Ri khud Dbon po Sprul sku |
| Minyak Rikhü Trulku | Mi nyag Ri khud Sprul sku |

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| Minyakpa Palden Chökyi | Mi nyag pa Dpal ldan chos gyi |
| Gyaltsen | rgyal mtshan |
| Mipham | Mi pham |
| Mipham Jamyang Namgyal | Mi pham 'Jam dbyangs rnam rgyal |
| Mönlam | Smon lam |
| Mü | Mus |
| Mü Rabjampa | Mus Rab 'byams pa |
| Müpa Khenpo | Mus pa Mkhan po |
| Nakchukha | Nag chu kha |
| Nalendra | Na lendra |
| Nalendra Chobgye Trichen | Na lendra Bco brgyad Khri chen |
| Namdak Trulku | Rnam dag Sprul sku |
| Namgyal Dorje | Rnam rgyal rdo rje |
| Nangchen | Nang chen |
| Nangchen Khampa | Nang chen Khams pa |
| Nangchen Sdom pa behu | Nang chen Sdom pa be hu |
| Nangdzin Wangmo | Nang 'dzin dbang mo |
| Nāro Khachöma | Nā ro Mkha' spyod ma |
| Nāropa | Nā ro pa |
| Narthang | Snar thang |
| Naysep | Gnas gseb |
| Ngakchang Chenpo | Sngags 'chang chen po |
| Ngakchang Kunga Rinchen | Sngags 'chang Kun dga' rin chen |
| Ngakchang Sönam Chöphel | Sngags 'chang Bsod nams chos 'phel |
| Ngamring | Ngam ring |
| Ngamring Chos sde | Ngam ring Chos sde |
| Ngamring Dzong | Ngam ring Rdzong |
| Ngamring Dzongpön | Ngam ring rdzong dpon |
| Ngari | Mnga' ris |
| Ngari Trulku | Mnga' ris Sprul sku |
| Ngawang Chödrak | Ngag dbang chos grags |
| Ngawang Gyaltsen | Ngag dbang rgyal mtshan |
| Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso | Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho |

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| Ngawang Khyenrab Lekshay Gyatso | Ngag dbang mkhyen rab legs bshad rgya mtsho |
| Ngawang Kunga Rinchen | Ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen |
| Ngawang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Ngawang Kunga Trinlay Trashī | Ngag dbang kun dga' phrin las bkra shis |
| Ngawang Legdrup | Ngag dbang legs grub |
| Ngawang Lekpa | Ngag dbang legs pa |
| Ngawang Lotrö | Ngag dbang blo gros |
| Ngawang Lotrö Nyingpo | Ngag dbang blo gros snying po |
| Ngawang Lotrö Shenphen Nyingpo | Ngag dbang blo gros gzhan phan snying po |
| Ngawang Nyima | Ngag dbang nyi ma |
| Ngawang Rinchen | Ngag dbang rin chen |
| Ngawang Samten | Ngag dbang bsam gtan |
| Ngawang Samten Lotrö | Ngag dbang bsam gtan blo gros |
| Ngawang Shedrup Gyatsho | Ngag dbang bshad sgrub rgya mtsho |
| Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk | Ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug |
| Ngawang Yönten Gyatso | Ngag dbang yon tan rgya mtsho |
| Ngawang Zangpo | Ngag dbang bzang po |
| Ngor | Ngor |
| Ngor Pönlop Loter Wangpo | Ngor Dpon slob Blo gter dbang po |
| Ngor Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup | Ngor Dpon slob Ngag dbang legs grub |
| Ngorchen | Ngor chen |
| Ngorchen Könchok Lhündrup | Ngor chen Dkon mchog lhun grub |
| Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo | Ngor chen Kun dga' bzang po |
| Ngorpa | Ngor pa |
| Niguma | Ni gu ma |
| Nub Lama | Nub Bla ma |
| Nub Lama Jamyang Khyenrab | Nub bla ma 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab |
| Nyalam | Nya lam |
| Nyanang | Nya nang |
| Nyanang Grod pa phug | Nya nang Grod pa phug |
| Nyarak | Nya brag |

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| Nyarak Kunga Zangpo | Nya brag Kun dga' bzang po |
| Nyarak Labrang | Nya brag Bla brang |
| Nyarak Trulku | Nya brag Sprul sku |
| Nyendrak Lungrik Nyima | Snyan grags lung rigs nyi ma |
| Nyiga | Nyi dga' |
| Nyiga Dorjechang | Nyi dga' Rdo rje 'chang |
| Nyiga Dorjechang Kunga Nyima | Nyi dga' Rdo rje 'chang Kun dga' nyi ma |
| Nyiga Kunga Nyima | Nyi dga' Kun dga' nyi ma |
| Nyiga Rinpoche | Nyi dga' Rin po che |
| Nyingma | Rnying ma |
| Nyingma lama | Rnying ma bla ma |
| Nyingmapa | Rnying ma pa |
| Nyugulung | Myu gu lung |
| Önpo | Dbonpo |
| Önpo Tenli | Dbon po Bstan li |
| Önpo Trulku | Dbon po Sprul sku |
| Öntö | Dbon stod |
| Öntöpa | Dbon stod pa |
| Öntöpa Jamyang Khyenrab | Dbon stod pa 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen rab |
| Öntrül | Dbon sprul |
| Öntrül Jamyang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltzen | Dbon sprul 'Jam dbyangs kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Öntrül Rinpoche | Dbon sprul Rin po che |
| Ordzong Geshe | 'O rdzong Dge bshes |
| Orgyen Jigme Chökyi Wango | O rgyan 'Jigs med chos kyi dbang po |
| Orgyen Kyap | O rgyan skyabs |
| Orgyen Tendzin Norbu | O rgyan Bstan 'dzin nor bu |
| Ösal Larigang | 'Od gsal La ri sgang |
| Othok | 'O thog |
| Pal Lhagang | Dpal Lha sgang |
| Palden Chökyi Gyaltzen | Dpal ldan chos kyi rgyal mtshan |
| Palden Chökyong | Dpal ldan chos skyong |
| Palden Lhamo | Dpal ldan lha mo |
| Palden Lotrö Gyaltzen | Dpal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan |

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| Palgön Zhal | Dpal mgon Zhal |
| Palpung | Dpal spungs |
| Palpung | Dpal spungs |
| Palpung Situ Rinpoche Pema Wanchok Gyalpo | Dpal spungs Si tu Rinpoche Padma dbang mchog rgyal po |
| Paltrül | Dpal sprul |
| Palyul Lama | Dpal yul Bla ma |
| Palyul Lama Sherab Öser | Dpal yul Bla ma Shes rab 'od zer |
| Panchen Rinpoche | Paṅ chen Rin po che |
| Pema Chödrom | Padmachos 'dzom |
| Pema Trinlay | Padma phrin las |
| Pema Wangdrak | Padma dbang grags |
| Phadampa | Pha dam pa |
| Phadampa Sangyay | Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas |
| Phagmotrupa | Phag mo gru pa |
| Phakchok | 'Phags mchog |
| Phakpa | 'Phags pa |
| Phakpa Rinpoche | 'Phags pa Rin po che |
| Phankhang Khenpo Ngawang Khedrup Gyatso | Phan khang Mkhan po Ngag dbang mkhas grub rgya mtsho |
| Phende | Phan bde |
| Phende abbot Kunga Tenpay Lotrö | Phan bde Kun dga' bstan pa'i blo gros |
| Phende Khenpo Ngawang Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | Phan bde Mkhan po Ngag dbang kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Phende Khenpo Palden Lotrö Gyaltsen | Phan bde Mkhan po Dpal ldan blo gros rgyal mtshan |
| Phende Labrang | Phan bde Bla brang |
| Phende Lhakpa | Phan bde Lhag pa |
| Phende Lhakpa Tshering | Phan bde Lhag pa tshe ring |
| Phende Shabdrung | Phan bde Zhabs drung |
| Phendekhang | Phan bde khang |
| Phenkhang | Phan khang |
| Phenpo | 'Phan po |
| Phenpo Nalendra | 'Phan po Na lendra |
| Phenyül | 'Phan yul |

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| Phüntshok | Phun tshogs |
| Phüntshok Gyaltsen | Phun tshogs rgyal mtshan |
| Phüntshokling | Phun tshogs gling |
| Phüntsok Drölma | Phun tshogs sgrol ma |
| Pön Tshang | Dpon tshang |
| Pöngen Orgyen Kyap | Dpon rgan O rgyan skyabs |
| Pönlop Loter Wangpo | Dpon slob Blo gter dbang po |
| Pönlop Mönlam | Dpon slob Smon lam |
| Pönlop Ngawang Legdrup | Dpon slob Ngag dbang legs grub |
| Pönlop Shedrup | Dpon slob Bshad sgrub |
| Pönpo Lama Lotrö Wangchuk | Dpon po Bla ma Blo gros dbang phyug |
| Pönshö | Bon shod |
| Porong | Po rong |
| Potala | Po to la |
| Ra'ok | Ra 'og |
| Ra'ok Trakseng | Ra 'og Grags seng |
| Rabjam Chöje Kunga Yeshe | Rab 'byams Chos rje Kun dga' ye shes |
| Rabjampa Kunga Yeshe | Rab 'byams Kun dga' ye shes |
| Rabten Wangyal | Rab brtan dbang rgyal |
| Radreng | Rwa sgreng |
| Radreng Trichen | Rwa sgreng Khri chen |
| Radreng Trulku | Rwa sgreng Sprul sku |
| Rakshül | Rag shul |
| Rakshül Drukpa | Rag shul 'Brug pa |
| Rakshül Drukpa Tobju | Rag shul 'Brug pa Stobs bcu Rinpoche |
| Rakshül Traruk | Rag shul Khra rug |
| Ralung | Rwa lung |
| Randa | Ra brda |
| Randa Chime | Ra brda 'Chi med |
| Rangjung Rikpay Dorje | Rang byung rig pa'i rdo rje |
| Ranyak | Ra nyag |
| Ratna Lingpa | Ratna gling pa |
| Rikhü | Ri khud |

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| Rikhü Kusho | Ri khud Sku zhabs |
| Rikhü Kusho Jigme Chökyi Öser | Ri khud sku zhabs 'Jigs med chos kyi 'od zer |
| Rikhü Önpo Trulku | Ri khud Dbon po Sprul sku |
| Rikhü Önrül Kunga Tenpay Gyaltsen | Ri khud Dbon sprul Kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Rikpay Sengge | Rigs pa'i seng ge |
| Rimshi Surkhang | Rim bzhi Zur khang |
| Rinchen Chokdrup | Rin chen mchog grub |
| Rinchen Tsering | Rin chen tshe ring |
| Rinpoche | Rin po che |
| Rolpay Dorje | Rol pa'i rdo rje |
| Rolpay Dorje Trulku | Rol pa'i rdo rje Sprul sku |
| Rongtön | Rong ston |
| Rongtön Sheja Kunrik | Rong ston Shes bya kun rig |
| Sachen | Sa chen |
| Sachen Kunga Nyingpo | Sa chen Kun dga' snying po |
| Sakya | Sa skya |
| Sakya Dagchen Kunga Lotrö | Sa skya Bdag chen Kun dga' blo gros |
| Sakya Geshe Tashi Namgyal | Sa skya Dge bshes Bkra shis rnam rgyal |
| Sakya Khenpo Sangyay Tendzin | Sa skya Mkhan po Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin |
| Sakya Khön | Sa skya 'Khon |
| Sakya Paṇḍita | Sa skya Paṇḍita |
| Sakya Phüntsoḱ Phodrang | Sa skya Phun tshogs Pho brang |
| Sakya Phüntsoḱ Phodrang Dagchen Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk | Sa skya Phun tshogs Pho brang Bdag chen Ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug |
| Sakya Phüntsoḱ Phodrang Jigdral Dagchen | Sa skya Phun tshogs Pho brang 'Jig bral bdag chen |
| Sakya Pönlop Mönlam | Sa skya Dpon slob Smon lam |
| Sakya Thegchen Choling | Sa skya Theg chen Chos gling |
| Sakya Trichen | Sa skya Khri chen |
| Sakya Tripa | Sa skya khri pa |
| Sakya Tripa Ngawang Kunga Sönam | Sa skya Khri pa Ngag dbang kun dga' bsod noms |

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| Sakya Trizin | Sa skya khri 'dzin |
| Sakyapa | Sa skya pa |
| Samten Lotrö | Bsam gtan blo gros |
| Samye | Bsam yas |
| Sangyay Gyatso | Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho |
| Sangyay Nyenpa | Sangs rgyas mnyan pa |
| Sangyay Nyenpa Drupchen | Sangs rgyas gnyan pa Grub chen |
| Sangyay Nyenpa Drupchen Trashī Paljor | Sangs rgyas gnyan pa Grub chen Bkra shis dpal 'byor |
| Sangyay Nyenpa Rinpoche | Sangs rgyas gnyan pa Rin po che |
| Sangyay Nyenpa Shedrup Tenpay Nyima | Sangs rgyas gnyan pa Bshad sgrub bstan pa'i nyi ma |
| Sangyay Nyenpa Trulku, Shedrup Tenpay Nyima | Sangs rgyas mnyan pa Sprul sku, Bshad sgrub bstan pa'i nyi ma |
| Sangyay Rabten | Sangs rgyas rab brtan |
| Sangyay Tendzin | Sangs rgyas bstan 'dzin |
| Sangye Rinchen | Sangs rgyas rin chen |
| Sapaṇ | Sa paṇ |
| Sengdongma | Seng gdong ma |
| Sera | Se ra |
| Sera Je | Se ra Byes |
| Serdokchen | Gser mdog can |
| Serdokchen Paṇchen Shākya Chokden | Gser mdog Paṇ chen Shākya mchog ldan |
| Sertok | Gser tog |
| Shabdrung | Zhabs drung |
| Shabdrung Champa Namkha Kunzang Tenpay Gyaltsen | Zhabs drung Byams pa nam mkha' kun bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Shabdrung Kunga Gyurme | Zhabs drung Kun dga' 'gyur med |
| Shabdrung Ngawang Lotrö Tendzin Nyingpo | Zhabs drung Ngag dbang blo gros bstan 'dzin snying po |
| Shakabpa | Zhwa sgab pa Dbang phyug bde ldan |
| Shākya Chokden | Shākya mchog ldan |
| Shalshipa | Zhal bzhi pa |
| Shamar | Zhwa dmar |
| Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk | Zhwa dmar Chos kyi dbang phyug |

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| Shamar Karmapa | Zhwa dmar Karma pa |
| Shamar Rinpoche | Zhwa dmar Rin po che |
| Shangpa | Shangs pa |
| Shangpa Kagyü | Shangs pa Bka' brgyud |
| Shapdrung Sönam Gyatso | Zhabs drung Bsod nams rgya mtsho |
| Shar Lama | Shar Bla ma |
| Sharchen Mingyur Gyaltsen | Shar chen Mi 'gyur rgyal mtshan |
| She'udo | Zhe'u mdo |
| Shechen | Zhe chen |
| Shechen Gyaltsab Gyume Pema Wanggyal | Zhe chen Rgyal tshab 'Gyur med padma dbang rgyal |
| Shechen Khenpo Kangshar Wangpo | Zhe chen Mkhan po Gang shar dbang po |
| Shechen Kongtrül | Zhe chen Kong sprul |
| Shechen Önrül | Zhe chen Dbon sprul |
| Shechen Önrül Gyurme Tutob Wanggyal | Zhe chen Dbon sprul 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal |
| Shechen Paṇḍita Gyurme Tutob Wanggyal | Zhe chen Paṇḍita 'Gyur med mthu stobs rnam rgyal |
| Shechen Rabjam | Zhe chen Rab 'byams |
| Shechen Gyaltsab | Zhe chen Rgyal tshab |
| Shedrup Yarphe | Bshad sgrub yar 'phel |
| Shedzang | Zhe 'dzang |
| Shelkar | Shel dkar |
| Shelkar Dzong | Shel dkar rdzong |
| Shenga | Gzhan dga' |
| Shenga Rinpoche | Gzhan dga' Rin po che |
| Shenphen Chökyi Nangwa | Gzhan phan chos kyi snang ba |
| Shenphen Thayey | Gzhan phan mtha' yas |
| Shenphen Thayey Trulku | Gzhan phan mtha' yas Sprul sku |
| Sherab Gyaltsen | Shes rab rgyal mtshan |
| Shongtön | Shongs ston |
| Shongtön Dorje Gyaltsen | Shongs ston Rdo rje rgyal mtshan |
| Shuchen | Zhu chen |
| Shuchen Paṇḍita Tsultrim Rinchen | Zhu chen Paṇḍita Tshul khrims rin chen |

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| Shuchen Tsultrim Rinchen | Zhu chen Tshul khrim rin chen |
| Sining | Zi ling |
| Situ | Si tu |
| Situ Paṇchen | Si tu Paṇ chen |
| Situ Paṇchen Chökyi Jungnay | Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas |
| Situ Pema Wanchok Gyalpo | Si tu Padma dbang mchog rgyal po |
| Situ Rinpoche | Si tu Rin po che |
| Situ Rinpoche Pema Wanchok Gyalpo | Si tu Rin po che Padma dbang mchog rgyal po |
| Sönam Chöphel | Bsod nams chos 'phel |
| Sönam Drölkar | Bsod nams sgrol dkar |
| Sönam Gyatso | Bsod nams rgya mtsho |
| Sönam Tsedzom | Bsod nams tshe 'dzom |
| Sönam Tsemo | Bsod nams rtse mo |
| Soong Lama | Gsang Bla ma? |
| Surkhang | Zur khang |
| Surkhang Wangchen Delek | Zur khang Dbang chen dge legs |
| Surkhang Zhabpay | Zur khang Zhabs pad |
| Surmang | Zur mang |
| Surmang Chögyam Trungpa Trulku | Zur mang Chos rgyam Drung pa Sprul sku |
| Surmang Düdsithil | Zur mang Bdud rtsi mthil |
| Surmang Rolpay Dorje | Zur mang Rol pa'i rdo rje |
| Takmo Lüjin | Stag mo lus sbyin |
| Taktser Rinpoche Thubten Jigme Norbu | Stag 'tsher Rin po che Thub bstan 'jigs med nor bu |
| Tanak | Rta nag |
| Tanak Thubten | Rta nag Thub bstan |
| Targyay | Dar rgyas |
| Tashi Namgyal | Bkra shis rnam rgyal |
| Tashilhunpo | Bkra shis lhun po |
| Tendzin Dawö | Bstan 'dzin zla 'od |
| Tendzin Gyatso | Bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho |
| Tendzin Nyendrak | Bstan 'dzin snyan grags |

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| Tendzin Gyaltzen | Bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan |
| Tenpay Gyaltzen | Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| tertön | gter ston |
| Tertön Rolpay Dorje | Gter ston Rol pa'i rdo rje |
| Thaklung | Thag lung |
| Thaklung Anyen tshang | Thag lung A gnyan tshang |
| Thangtong Gyalpo | Thang stong rgyal po |
| Tharlam | Thar lam |
| Tharlam Jamyang Losal | Thar lam 'Jam dbyangs blo gsal |
| Tharlam Khenpo Jamyang Sherab | Thar lam Mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs shes rab |
| Tharthang Trulku | Dar thang Sprul sku |
| Thartse | Thar rtse |
| Thartse Khenpo Champa Kunga Tendzin | Thar rtse Mkhan po Byams pa kun dga' bstan 'dzin |
| Thartse Khenpo Champa Kunga Tenpay Gyaltzen | Thar rtse Mkhan po Byams pa kun dga' bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Thartse Khenpo Champa Namkha Chime | Thar rtse Mkhan po Byams pa nam mkha' 'chi med |
| Thartse Khenpo Sönam Gyatso | Thar rtse Mkhan po Bsod nams rgya mtsho |
| Thartse Labrang | Thar rtse Bla brang |
| Thartse Shabdrung | Thar rtse zhabs drung |
| Thartse Shabdrung Kundga | Thar rtse zhabs drung Kun dga' |
| Thartse Shabdrung Kunga Gyurme | Thar rtse Zhabs drung Kun dga' 'gyur med |
| Thartse Shabdrung Lama Kunga | Thar rtse Zhabs drung Bla ma Kun dga' |
| Thokmay Sangpo | Thogs med bzang po |
| Thrangu | Khra 'gu |
| Thrangu Rinpoche | Khra 'gu Rin po che |
| Thubten | Thub bstan |
| Thubten Chökyi Dorje | Thub bstan chos kyi rdo rje |
| Thuchen Jampal Tendzin | Mthu chen 'Jam dpal bstan 'dzin |
| Topden | Stobs ldan |
| Trakshül Trinlay | Drag shul phrin las |

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| Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen | Drag shul phrin las rin chen |
| Traruk | Khra rug |
| Traruk Trulku | Khra rug Sprul sku |
| Trashī Chöde Önrül | Bkra shis chos sde Dbon sprul |
| Trashī Paljor | Bkra shis dpal 'byor |
| Trashī Tshering | Bkra shis tshe ring |
| Trehor | Tre hor |
| Trehor Dhongthog Trulku Tenpay Gyaltzen | Tre hor Gdong thog Sprul sku Bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan |
| Trichen Trakshül Trinlay Rinchen | Khri chen Drag shul phrin las rin chen |
| Trindu | Khri 'du |
| Trindu Pön Tshang | Khri 'du Dpon tshang |
| Trindu Dzong | Khri 'du rdzong |
| Trinlay | Phrin las |
| Trinlay Chöphel | 'Phrin las chos 'phel |
| Trinlay Norbu | Phrin las nor bu |
| Trinlay Paljor Zangmo | Phrin las dpal 'byor bzang mo |
| Tripa | Khri pa |
| Tripa Ngawang Thutop Wanchuk | Khri pa Ngag dbang mthu stobs dbang phyug |
| Trogawa Rinpoche | |
| Tromthar | Khrom thar |
| Trulku | sprul sku |
| Trulku Anjam | Sprul sku A 'jam |
| Trulku Kunzang | Sprul sku Kun bzang |
| Trulku Kunzang Chökyi Nyima | Sprul sku Kun bzang chos kyi nyi ma |
| Trulku Kunzang Tsultrim | Sprul sku Kun bzang tshul khriims |
| Trulku Losal Thubten | Sprul sku Blo gsal thub bstan |
| Trungyig | Drung yig |
| Trungyig Tsechö | Drung yig Tshe chos |
| Tsang | Gtsang |
| Tsang Lhatse | Gtsang Lha rtse |
| Tsangnyön | Gtsang smyon |
| Tsangnyön Heruka | Gtsang smyon He ru ka |

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| Tsangpo | Gtsang po |
| Tsharchen | Tshar chen |
| Tsharchen Losal Gyatso | Tshar chen Blo gsal rgya mtsho |
| Tsharpa | Tshar pa |
| Tshembupa | Tshem bu pa |
| Tshewang Düdül | Tshe dbang bdud 'dul |
| Tshewang Gyurme | Tshe dbang 'gyur med |
| Tsongkhapa | Tsong kha pa |
| Tsultrim Gyaltsen | Tshul khrims rgyal mtshan |
| Tsultrim Gyatso | Tshul khrims rgya mtsho |
| Tsultrim Rinchen | Tshul khrims rin chen |
| Ü | Dbus |
| Umdzay | dbu mdzad |
| Umdzay Chö Phüntso | Dbu mdzad Chos phun tshogs |
| Umdzay Trashi | Dbu mdzad Bkra shis |
| Wangchuk | Dbang phyug |
| Wangpo Labrang | Dbang po Bla brang |
| Wara. <i>See also</i> Ara. | Wa ra |
| Wara Lama | Wa ra Bla ma |
| Wara Shabdrung | Wa ra Zhabs drung |
| Wasi | Wa si |
| Yangpachen | Yangs pa can |
| Yarnay Khenpo | Dbyar gnas Mkhan po |
| Yarnay Khenpo Samten Lotrö | Dbyar gnas Mkhan po Bsam gran blo gros |
| Yeshe Nyima | Ye shes nyi ma |
| Yilhung | Yid lhung |
| Yilhung Lhagyal | Yid lhung Lha rgyal |
| Yönga | Yon dga' |
| Yongdzin | Yongs 'dzin |
| Yongdzin Ling | Yongs 'dzin Gling |
| Yongdzin Ling Rinpoche | Yongs 'dzin Gling Rin po che |
| Yongdzin Paṇḍita Minyakpa Palden Chökyi Gyaltsen | Yongs 'dzin Paṇḍita Mi nyag pa Dpal ldan chos gyi rgyal mtshan |

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| Yongdzin Paṇḍita Palden Chökyi Gyaltsen | Yongs 'dzin Paṇḍita Dpal ldan chos gyi rgyal mtshan |
| Yongdzin Pönlop Shedrup | Yongs 'dzin Dpon slob Bshad sgrub |
| Yongdzin Pönlop Shedrup Yarphel | Yongs 'dzin Dpon slob Bshad sgrub yar 'phel |
| Yönru | G.yon ru |
| Yönru Tertön Chime | G.yon ru Gter ston 'Chi med |
| Yönru Tertön Chime Dorje | G.yon ru Gter ston 'Chi med rdo rje |
| Yönru Rabsal | G.yon ru Rab gsal |
| Yönten Gyatso | Yon tan rgya mtsho |
| Yönten Zangpo | Yon tan bzang po |
| Yuthok | G.yu thog |
| Zimok Rinpoche Champa Ngawang Tendzin Nyendrak | Gzims 'og Rinpoche Byams pa ngag dbang bstan 'dzin snyan grags |
| Zimwok | Gzim 'og |
| Zimwok Rinpoche | Gzims 'og Rin po che |
| Zimwok Trulku | Gzims 'og Sprul sku |

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