

The Biography of the Departed Lhodrak Tertön,
His Holiness Kunzang Dechen Lingpa Rinpoche
Entitled
'The Jewel of Faith for the Fortunate'



Namo Guru Ye

*From the luminous clear sky of primordially pure Dharmadhatu,
clouds of swirling Bodhicitta and loving compassion
send down a constant rain of nectar appropriately edifying to all.
We pay homage to the one who cultivates this harvest;
which is the propensity of the minds of sentient beings.
With far greater kindness even than all of the Buddhas of the three times,
Protect us throughout our succession of lives, as a mother protects her child.*

*We pay homage to the un-repayable kindness of
Padmasambhava and Yeshe Tsogyal,
who come in dreams and visions
not as single definable entities, but in a variety of forms.
Clear away our obstructions and bless us
In so doing we prostrate ourselves to the Guru and Consort.*

*You impart the direct transmission of the Buddha's teachings to us
Your knowledge is like a vast treasure house.
Out of your compassion, you confer teachings in many different ways,
appropriate to all beings in their respective realms.*

*We pay homage to you
Please bestow the teachings to those endowed with the fortune to receive them*

As far as I am concerned, this is merely the story of a Dharma-less wandering beggar. If asked, I would not tell it to gatherings of fancy company. However, in order to study this in the future my students have asked for an account of this wicked, unlettered rambling beggar. The first part is about my childhood, then as the wandering beggar and lastly, regarding the Dharma. First is the account of the little child; born in that great sacred land of Dharma, Tibet.

I myself couldn't remember all the stories about my birth and so forth, but my Uncle Rigdzin told me of my father's home near Kula Kangri in Lhodrak; which is known as a supreme holy site sacred to Guru Rinpoche. In each of the cardinal directions of this mountain are four miraculously manifested mansions. The great eastern mansion was the paternal home of my eminent father, Kunzang Rangdrol. That land was known as Drakar and the house itself was known by the name Drakar Khangmoche. On the roof, the deities of Kula Kangri had planted a divine arrow which was not made by human hands and shone of its own accord. The house was square and had four stories. There was one room full of magically manifested iron arrow tips and a small protector chapel.

The lineage of that house was known to be that of the Siddha Melong Dorje. I am not certain exactly how many brothers were among that lineage, it has been said that because those brothers took brides from here and there, I have a mixture of lineages from Ratna Lingpa, Dorje Lingpa and Pema Lingpa. My father Kunzang Rangdrol and Uncle Rigdzin both were lamas and my Uncle Lhundrup was a layman.



Mount Kula Kangri in Lhodrak, South Tibet. Hugh Richardson 1950.

Courtesy of The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

As for my eminent father, he kept to himself in a remote mountain retreat, living in the manner of tantric yogi, free from worldly distraction. I remember my father's tantric attire; he wore his hair tied in a top knot and wore conch earrings and so forth. He generally practiced the Nyingma Longchen Nyingthik and Machig Labdron's Chod.

When he reached his 61st year, while he was engaged in solitary retreat in a mountain cave (known as a place sacred to the Delog Karma Wangdzin ma), a wisdom dakini appeared in the form of a young girl. This beautiful, poor girl, Kunzang Chodron, from a nearby village

called Tralung, suffered from an eye sickness. People had told her that if she went to the eaves of the retreat cave to ask the lama for purification and blessings, it would surely help. So she went to the retreat cave and after she asked for purification and blessings she stayed there for a few days. During that time they engaged in unsurpassable secret blissful union and liberation. At the centre of the great Southwest mountain abode of Guru Rinpoche, from the place of the Guru and the Consort's union, there came a ball of red light about four inches in size which passed through Kurtod in Bhutan and dissolved at the place of my father and mother's union. I then manifested in my mother's womb.

Recovered from her eye disease, Kunzang Chodron returned to her village. Since mother was poor, she had to work hard just to earn a daily wage and was compelled to work very hard in other people's fields. After 9 months and 10 days passed, in the Earth Snake year (1928) on the 10th day of the 5th month, at the snake hour, while she was working in the fields, she began having labour pains. From the Southwest border, two vultures, black and white, male and female, came flying and circled the sky above her three times, after which they flew back to their Southwest abode. A pavilion of rainbow light appeared in the sky and a soft rain of flowers descended around her. I was born into one of the water channels in the fields. Due to a piece of grass piercing my left eye, now that left eye is a little weak, that is what happened.

Father's family and all his biggest and most loyal patrons thought he was too elderly to have a son. So all those people, whether consciously or unconsciously, were thinking "who is the father?" and that this was a spiteful rumour, nothing more than the shameless speech of a beggar girl, giving my father a bad name. They said my mother had pretended to be ill as a

pretext for going to see my father and pass off another man's bastard as his. All of them unanimously agreed that mother and child should not be allowed near my father.

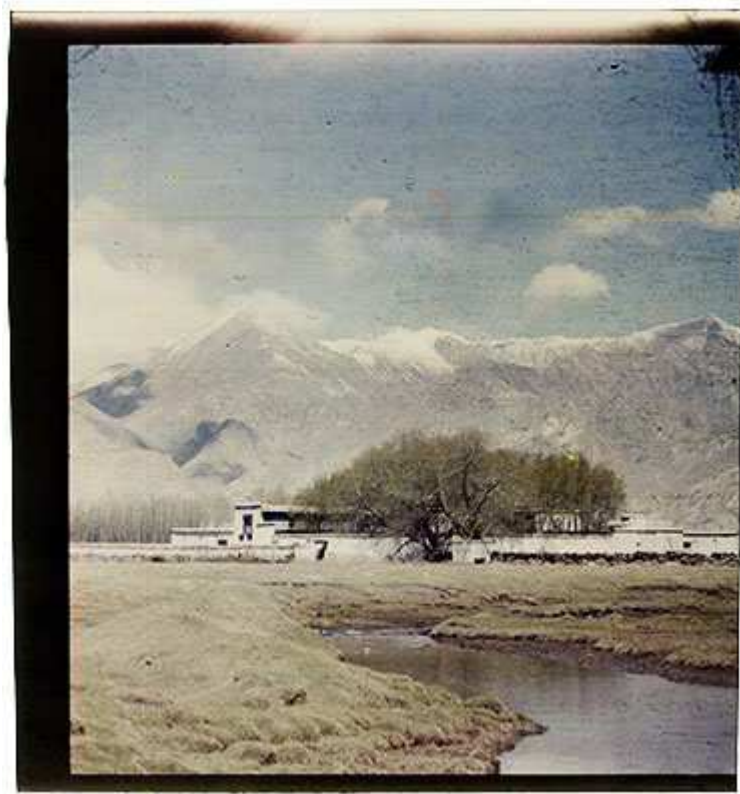
In a nearby village at a Gelugpa monastery, there was a man known as Kusho Lupon. He was a person who was filled with faith in all denominations, including the Nyingma. When the people of the region invited him to perform a healing ritual he invited Mother and me. He said clearly to my mother that I needed red Dharma robes (then he spoke to the crowd)

“The Yogi Kunzang Rangdrol has reached an exalted age, in order to benefit beings he took a secret consort, if you ask the reason why, it is because this son he conceived is auspicious. He must be kept clean and pure and cared for nicely. Let other people say what they will. I give this advice, of what is to be done, to the best of my ability” He then recognized me as the Terton Longsel Nyingpo and bestowed on me the name Rigdzin Longsel.

When I was very young, about two years old, due to some samaya-breaking pollution, I became very ill. I recall that Father led Mother and me to a forest where there was a wrathful spring. As dusk fell that evening, Father performed a great fire puja and danced a Chod dance, while Mother circumambulated the fire, carrying me on her shoulders. After that, Kusho Lupon met with Father and said “If you do not take your son to Pemako quickly, surely obstacles will come”.

Since I was little I don't remember clear details, but later when I met my Uncle Rigdzin, he told me the story of Father, Mother, me and of the attendants and the preparations to leave for the Guru's Hidden Land, Pemako. Father and Mother both had a horse each, but how

many others there were, pack horses and so on, I am not sure. A good horse was prepared for me the tack, saddle and so on was all wrapped in silk. With one man holding the reins I rode between hoisted khatas and prayer flags. We stopped on the way for a few months at Lhodrak Lhakang. My friend, the treasurer's son Yarphel and I both slept under a great peach tree, in the middle of the temple courtyard.



The peach tree at Lhodrak Lhakang, taken by Hugh Richardson in 1950.

Courtesy of the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford.

One night, just before dawn, I dreamt of a lama with a body slightly bigger than a human and with an overwhelming and extremely peaceful shining presence. I was wondering whether or not this was actually Pema Jungney, then he spoke to me, saying “Son, eat this peach” and

immediately gave me three peaches. I suddenly rose up, and, holding on to his index finger, just like that, we arrived instantly to Zangdokpalri, in the Southwest land of Orgyen. At the door of a great gonpa, he said to me "Wait here, son, I will go request for you an audience with Guru Rinpoche" After saying this he went up a staircase. Although I waited for a long time no one came. Now I was wondering where that Lama was, so I went to see. He was seated on top of a throne, in front of him were placed empowerment implements such as bumpas and so on. I thought to myself "He is actually Guru Rinpoche" Then, while I was requesting vase empowerment, I suddenly arrived back in my bed.