

# A Biography of Chöje Lingpa

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A Biography of Chöje Lingpa  
*From A Garland of Precious Vaiḍūrya: A Short History of the  
Profound Treasures and Accomplished Treasure Revealers*  
By Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye  
Translated by Tib Shelf



# A BIOGRAPHY OF CHÖJE LINGPA

By Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye

Thorns between compatriots summoning borderland people.  
 Demonic emanations trampling over the earth.  
 These signs appeared that it must not stay put; it must be extracted—  
 The hidden hoard in Yumbu Lagang.  
 Thus comes the one called “Orgyen Rogje Lingpa.”

Tertön Rogje Lingpa, also called Chöje Lingpa and Önje Lingpa in some accounts, additionally referred to himself as Dagpo Chöje Lingpa.<sup>1</sup> He was the twelfth treasure-revealing incarnation of Gyalse Lhaje, [469] born in Lukhar Dong, Dagpo, as the son of Dorje Dragpa, the fifteenth descendant of the unbroken familial lineage starting from Lhaje Nyichung, the younger brother of Je Da Ö Zhönu.<sup>2</sup> He was commonly known as Chöje Dzamling Dorje and Dewe Dorje.

While Je Zangpo Dorje asserted that he was the reincarnation of Zhabdrung Rinchen Dorje,<sup>3</sup> Zhamar Yeshe Nyingpo recognized him as the reincarnation of Chimé Wangpo, the emanation from Rechungpuk, and gave him the name of Dawe Wangpo Tenpe Salje.<sup>4</sup> At the age of six, Rogje Lingpa went to the monastic residence [of his former incarnation].

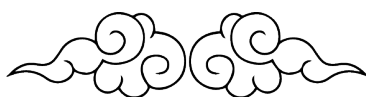
He then received novitiate ordination from the elder Jamyang Dragpa and full ordination from Gaden Trichen Lobzang Dargye.<sup>5</sup> He was thus given the name of Ngagi Wangpo Lobzang Chöying Palzangpo.<sup>6</sup> He became a great kalyāṇamitra who trained and mastered many texts of the sūtras and tantras from India and Tibet, amongst other things.

As his predecessors had worn their hair in locks, he too had locks along with his monastic garb, and so he became known as Gelong Ralpachen (“Monk with Locks”). As such, in his early life, he carefully conducted himself as well through pure conduct and the monastic code. Later, following the extraction of his profound treasures and toward the end of his life, he took Dechen Trinle Tsomo, the direct reincarnation of the female practitioner Orgyen Butri, as his mudrā (spiritual consort). Although a wonderful thing occurred when Drukpa Rinpoche’s reincarnation was born to them, his life was not long. [470]

In any case, until he was twenty-five, he lived at Rechungpuk in Yarlung, which was the residence of the siddha Tsangyön the Great.<sup>7</sup> From Jangchub Lingpa Gongma Yönten Gyatso, Geshe Dönden Zhab, and others, he received all the empowerments, transmissions, pith instructions, and practices of their tradition.<sup>8</sup> Through extensive study and contemplation of the teachings of the sūtras and tantras, as well as the fields of knowledge, he reached the far shore of learning. As a result of his sustained mind training and practice at that abode, he exhibited the way of complete realization.

Even though he never met Gyalwang Yeshe Dorje in person, by the power of this master’s transmitted blessings, he directly perceived the fundamental nature of Mahāmudrā.<sup>9</sup> From Rigdzin Tagsham Dorje, he received empowerment and complete entrustment of his various profound treasures, through which he came to master the realization of Dzogchen. Thus, he considered these two his root gurus.

Specifically concerning how Rogje Lingpa received the transmission of the profound treasures, not only did the famous Tagmo Tertön Öñse Khyuntok provide him with prophecies and treasure inventories, but when he traveled to the Mön region, the signs were evident.<sup>10</sup> As a result, he retrieved the



*Sādhana of the Guru's Four Kāyas* and inventories of such locations as Yumbu Lagang and Songtsen's Bangso Marpo, as well as a treasure inventory of Ushangdo.<sup>11</sup> Following these, he extracted various profound treasures from Yumbu Lagang Bangpo Marpo. However, he did not endeavor greatly to organize them but rather sealed most of them as treasure. [471]

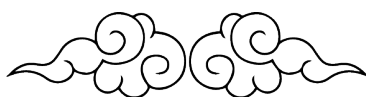
Further, while considering that the time had come to benefit beings through the profound treasures, at age twenty-five, he handed over his monastic seat to the tulku (“emanation”) while he took up the conduct of a complete renunciant and set off for such places as the glorious Tsāriṭa, where he endeavored in the practice of his spiritual commitments. All the while, the inventories and prophecies became even clearer to him, and he retrieved the *Combined Sādhana of the Immortal Three Roots*, some marvelous water of longevity, and other items from the Zagme Jatsön Pugpa (“Cave of Immaculate Rainbows”).<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, he retrieved various treasures including *Yangdak Heruka* and *Vajrakīla* from the poisonous lake of Kharak Gogu (“Nine-Headed Karak”); the *Heart Jewel of the Profound Path that Accomplishes the Guru* from Chagö Shong (“Vulture Basin”) in Puwo; the *Guru Vidyādhara* from a lake in Makung Valley; the cycles of the *Great Compassionate One*, *Essence of the Earth* and *Red Jambhala* from Dongchu Temple; as well as *Drolö*, the *Fierce Lion's Roar*, *Black Kāli*, and so forth.<sup>13</sup> He established most of these teachings, and the majority of their transmission lineages continue until today, like his cycles of pure visions and his *Ruby Garland of Sādhanas*, along with his collected works—even I (Jamgön Kongtrul) received them.<sup>14</sup>

At Metok Letang in the land of Kongpo, he engaged in the approach and accomplishment of his spiritual practice for three years and also brought extensive benefit to beings and a flourishing of enlightened activity.

His main Dharma heirs and disciples were Gyalwang Jangchub Dorje, Zhamar Palchen Chökyi Döndrub, Tre'o Chökyi Wangpo, Drigung Könchok Trinle Zangpo, Dagpo Zhabdrung Tulku Lhundrub Ngedön Wangpo, [472] Druk Tamche Kheympa Pagsam Wangpo, and others.<sup>15</sup> There were also many others, like the great lamas Tsubri Drubchen, Lhowa Drubchen, and his single closest heart-son Ratön Tobden Dorje.<sup>16</sup> He also appeared to have a few other Dharma connections with Rigdzin Pema Trinle, Minling Gyalse Pema Gyurme Gyatso, and others.<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, during the Jungar invasion, he traveled to and reached the heart of the hidden land of Pemakö, as he intended to open that place of power. Not long after, in the second month of his forty-fourth year, he departed for the pure realm of Lotus Light. It is common knowledge that his emanations include Jigten Wangchuk, who was born in the Gachak ruling family in Kongpo, and various others in secret forms who continue to appear up to the present.

Extensive life stories of this lord can be seen in detail in the lord's prevalent writing, in sections of his guidebooks, in the historical life story of Gampopa Zangpo Dorje, and in other places.<sup>18</sup> What are here are only kernels [of his life].



## NOTES:

1 gter ston rog rje gling pa, chos rje gling pa, dbon rje gling pa, dwags po chos rje gling pa, chos rje 'dzam gling rdo rje, bde ba'i rdo rje (1682–1720/1725). BDRC P671. Chöje Lingpa was an important Kagyu teacher who was also connected to the Nyingma tradition by being a main disciple of Tagsham Nuden Dorje (stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, 1655–1708) and a treasure revealer.

2 Gyalse Lhaje (rgyal sras lha rje), also known as Gyalse Lharje Chogdrub Gyalpo (rgyal sras lha rje mchog grub rgyal po) was the second son of Mutik Tsenpo (mu tig btsan po, 798–815, BDRC P8LS13667), the son of Tri Songdetsen (khri srong lde brtsan, 742–800, BDRC P7787).

dwags po klu mkhar gdong (*rdzong?*). This was constructed Lukhar Dzong was constructed in the sixteenth century below Dagla Gampo Monastery (dwags lha sgam po, BDRC G197). See Ehrhard, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 60, n. 6.

Dorje Dragpa (rdo rje gras pa, 1652–1698) was the son of Orgyen Rigdzin Dorje (o rgyan rig 'dzin rdo rje) and a disciple of the Third Gampopa, Zangpo Dorje (sgam po pa 03 bzang po rdo rje, 1636–1700). See Ehrhard, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 60.

lha rje snyi chung. Chöje Lingpa was of the Nyiwa (snyi ba, rnyi ba) familial line of Dagla Gampo (dwags la sgam po). See Jamgön Kongtrul, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, 268, n. 48 and Ehrhard, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 60, n. 6.

Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen, 1079–1153).

3 The Third Gampopa, Zangpo Dorje.

It would appear that Zhabdrung Rinchen Dorje is Chöje Lingpa's grandfather, Orgyen Rigdzin Dorje.

4 The Seventh Zhamarpa, Yeshe Nyingpo (zhwa dmar pa 07 ye shes snying po, 1631–1694, BDRC P1386).

Chimé Wangpo ('chi med dbang po) was the resident teacher at Rechengpuk (ras chung phug, BDRC G2832). Rechengpuk was the hermitage of Rechungpa (ras chung rdo rje grags pa, 1085–1161, BDRC P4278) and the location where Tsangnyön Heruka (gtsang smyon he ru ka rus pa'i rgyan can, 1452–1507, BDRC P442) composed the biography and songs of Milarepa (rje btsun mi la ras pa, 1040–1123, BDRC P1853).

zla ba'i dbang po bstan pa'i gsal byed.

5 Jamyang Dragpa (dge slong 'jam dbyangs grags pa) was a personal attendant of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso (ta la'i bla ma 05 ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–1682, BDRC P37). Ehrhard documents that this occurred in Lhasa. See Ehrhard, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 62.

dga' ldan khri pa 49 blo bzang dar rgyas, 1662–1723, BDRC P2758. Ehrhard writes his name as Tri Rinpoche Tsultrim Dargye (khri rin po che tsul khriims dar rgyas) and states that this occurred at Maldro Dagpo (mal gro dag po). See Ehrhard, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 67.

6 ngag gi bang po blo bzang chos dbyings dpal bzang po. Ehrhard documents his name as Ngagi Wangchuk Lobzang Chöying Palzang (ngag gi dbang phyug blo bzang chos dbyings dpal bzang). See Ehrhard, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 67.

7 gtsang smyon he ru ka, 1452–1507, BDRC P442.

8 byang chub gling pa gong ma yon tan rgya mtsho, d. 1693.

9 karma pa 11 ye shes rdo rje, 1675/1676–1702, BDRC P943.

10 stag mo gter ston dbon/dpon gsas khyung thog. He was an emanation of Vairocana and claimed to be an incarnation of the earlier treasure revealer Pönse Khyungtok. See Jamgön Kongtrul, *The Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, 326, n. 441.

11 yum bu bla mkhar, BDRC G4459.



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Bangso Marpo (bang so dmar po) is the tomb of Songtsen Gampo (chos rgyal srong btsan sgam po), BDRC P8067.

12 See: [https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Bde\\_gshegs\\_rtsa\\_gsum\\_%27chi\\_med\\_dril\\_sgrub](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Bde_gshegs_rtsa_gsum_%27chi_med_dril_sgrub).

13 Kharak Gogu (kha rag dgo dgu) appears to be a land of demons (bdud yul), while Kharak may be the name of a nine-headed yakṣa (*srin po*). Please do contact us if you have any further information.

*thugs rje chen po sa yi snying po yid bzhin nor bu*, see:

[https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Thugs\\_rje\\_chen\\_po\\_sa\\_yi\\_snying\\_po\\_yid\\_bzhin\\_nor\\_bu](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Thugs_rje_chen_po_sa_yi_snying_po_yid_bzhin_nor_bu).

*gnod sbyin dzam+b+ha la dmar po'i chos skor*, see:

[https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Gnod\\_sbyin\\_dzam%2Bb%2Bha\\_la\\_dmar\\_po%27i\\_chos\\_skor](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Gnod_sbyin_dzam%2Bb%2Bha_la_dmar_po%27i_chos_skor).

Dongchu Temple is in Powo/Puwo; see Ehrhard, “The Role of ‘Treasure Discoverers,’ ” 5.

Guru Dragpo Dorje Drolö, *bdud 'dul ma hA gu ru drag po rdo rje gro lod*, See:

[https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Bdud\\_%27dul\\_ma\\_hA\\_gu\\_ru\\_drag\\_po\\_rdo\\_rje\\_gro\\_lod](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Bdud_%27dul_ma_hA_gu_ru_drag_po_rdo_rje_gro_lod).

*gtum po seng sgrog*, see: [https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Gtum\\_po\\_seng\\_sgrog](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Gtum_po_seng_sgrog).

*bla ma drag po yum bka' khros ma nag mo*, see:

[https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Bla\\_ma\\_drag\\_po\\_yum\\_bka%27\\_khros\\_ma\\_nag\\_mo](https://rtz.tsadra.org/index.php/Bla_ma_drag_po_yum_bka%27_khros_ma_nag_mo).

14 *sgrub thabs pad+ma rA ga'i phreng ba*.

15 zhwa dmar dpal chen chos kyi don grub (zhwa dmar 08 dpal chen chos kyi don grub, 1695–1732, BDRC P955).

'bri gung che tshang 02 dkon mchog 'phrin las bzang po, 1656–1718, BDRC P416.

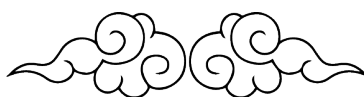
dwags po zhabs drung sprul pa'i sku lhun grub nges don dbang po. He was the resident teacher of Rechungpuk. See, Ehrhard, Franz-Karl, *The Treasure Discoverer from Dwags-po*, 60.

'brug chen 05 dpag bsam dbang po, 1593–1641, BDRC P877. Given the available dates on BDRC, this must be a mistake for the Sixth Drugchen Mipam Wangpo ('brug chen 06 mi pham dbang po, 1641–1717, BDRC P940).

16 kong po rtsub ri grub chen, BDRC P4486; rwa ston gter ston stobs ldan rdo rje, BDRC P666.

17 rdo rje brag rig 'dzin 02 pad+ma 'phrin las, 1641–1717, BDRC P657; smin gling khri chen pad+ma 'gyur med rgya mtsho, 1686–1718, BDRC P6.

18 sgam po pa bzang po rdo rje, 1636–1700, BDRC P898.



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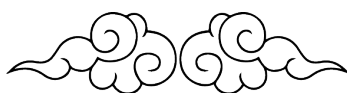
Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye ('jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas). *gter ston rog rje gling pa*. In *zab mo'i gter dang gter ston grub thob ji ltar byon pa'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus bkod pa rin chen bai DUr+ya'i phreng ba*, vol. 1, 468–472. Shechen Publications, 2007–2016.

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