

Biography of Getse Lama Jigme Ngotsar Gyatso

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GETSE LAMA

JIGME NGOTSAR GYATSO

A LIFESTORY

Getse Lama Jigme Ngotsar Gyatso, the disciple of Rigzin Jigme Lingpa and the Third Dzogchen [Drubwang, Ngedön Tenzin Zangpo], was born in the Iron Dog year of the twelfth sexagenary cycle, 1730, into a pure noble family of the renowned nomadic clan of Getse.¹ This was in a sacred place protected by the prominent local guardian Dorje Penchuktsal of the god class, near the slow-flowing Dachu River, which belongs to a region of Derge in Dokham [eastern Tibet].² His household was headed by his father Nyingbum Gyal, a chieftain of Getse, and his mother Drölma.³

Since his early years, he clearly displayed signs of being an excellent person, such as having faith [in Buddhism] and renunciation. When he was young, he left a clear footprint in the stone as if trampling the mud, as he subdued a samaya-breaking evil spirit by manifesting in

the form of Guru Drakpo and bounded it by oath.

Once, looking to the southwest, he exclaimed: “I’m so delighted that the Yarlung valley will have a good harvest this year!” The elders sitting there inquired, “Why are you happy about the harvest in the Yarlung valley?” He replied: “Because my teacher from previous lives, the omniscient Second Buddha, lives there.”

On another occasion, when all the local people were upset about having to pay the yearly tax to the kingdom of Derge, he made the following statement to his father: “You may be afraid of these chieftains now, but when I’m older, I’ll be the Derge king’s preceptor, and there’ll even be a time when I’ll be the object of their worship.” Through such assertions, he displayed mastery over the superknowledges and signs of a siddha.



Since the age of eight or nine, he trained in writing and reading, which he had no difficulty comprehending. He also became proficient in the daily liturgical texts of the Dzogchen tradition [held at his monastery]. At the age of thirteen, he went to the mother monastery, Rudam Orgyen Samten Chöling, and was ordained by his spiritual mentor Sengdruk Pema Tashi.⁴ Then, he took the bodhisattva vows of the two oral teachings from Gyalse Zhenpen Taye.⁵ Additionally, learned and accomplished ones of this monastic center, such as the Jewön Pema Kundröl Namgyal, Ngedön Tenzin Zangpo, and so on, bestowed upon him maturing empowerments and liberating instructions of the Oral Transmission and the Revealed Treasures, as well as endless instructions on the traditions of sūtra and mantra.⁶ Because of these trainings, he became known as Getse Lama Sönam Tenzin (“Meritorious Doctrine-Holding Lama of Getse”).⁷

Then, when he was about thirty, as all the interdependent phenomena coincided—the deities’ [520] divine, symbolic prophecies, and Ngedön Tendzin Zangpo’s requests—it became evident that the time was ripe. Therefore, he went to meet his lineage lord of many lives, the Omniscient Lama Jigme Khyentse Özer.⁸

After he was lovingly accepted as a disciple, he was given the name Jigme Ngotsar Gyatso, and became one of the heart disciples known as the Four Jigmes.⁹ For a long time, he adhered to the three pleasing ways,¹⁰ and as a result he received the general oral and treasure teachings of the Early Translations school, as well as tantras, transmissions, and pith instructions of

the highest vehicle—the Secret Heart Essence, as if filling a vase to the brim.¹¹

He attained the highest view of realization after penetrating the vital points of the practice. At one point the Omniscient Lama [Jigme Lingpa] predicted: “Now, you will go to Dokham. There, you’ll establish a monastic community of the Heart Essence teachings and build a two-story temple on the scale of sixteen pillars, with newly constructed statues and sacred objects. This will benefit the Dharma as well as sentient beings extensively.”

He then named the monastery Gönsar Ogmin Rigzin Pelgye Ling.¹² As for the inner sacred object of worship, he gifted him a *chölichima* bronze statue of Vajrakumāra in union,¹³ handwritten notes of the Vajrakīlaya tantra tradition, a Kadam “lotus-bouquet” stūpa, a primary blessed kīla wrapped in the high-quality golden silk threads, an elephant tusk, Götsangpa Natsok Rangdröl’s hat,¹⁴ the Omniscient Lama’s own empowerment hat, and offerings. He also bestowed a ceremonial bell of Chinese *darlima* bronze,¹⁵ a silver-brimmed cup made from a yeti’s skull, a handmade life-force chakra of the three protectors Ekajaṭī, Rāhula and Vajrasādhu, a longevity arrow made of white sandalwood, nine wall-sized tangkas based on *Ocean of the Eight Heruka’s Pronouncement* painted in gold on a black field, and a portrait of the Omniscient Lama.¹⁶ Blended into the paint were countless sacred substances—namely, the nose blood of the Omniscient Lama himself, relics of the paṇḍitas, siddhas, and bodhisattvas from India and Tibet, some of the relics had the power to multiply. Powerful guardians of the Heart Essence such as Ekajaṭī, Rāhula, Vajrasādhu,



and others offered their service by personally unrolling the canvas and preparing the painting materials, such as pigment. The way in which the Omniscient Lama himself created the tangka with his own hands is clearly delineated in the autobiography, *An Ear of Grain Comprised of Excellent Deeds*.¹⁷

When this excellent master, Lama Jigme Ngotsar Gyasto, insistently requested the supreme Omniscient Lama [Jigme Lingpa] to ride out to Domé one time to carry out the earth-taming liturgy and site consecration for the temple,¹⁸ the Omniscient Lama responded: “I’m now burdened with old age. Even if I were to go, the environment of a distant land wouldn’t suit me. There’s little need to do so and more reasons to say no.”

Then the Omniscient Lama assured him: “Indeed in the past, when the Derge king’s escorts came to invite me, I only gave them [in return] a letter and three representations of body, speech, and mind, without having to go there myself. But student, for you and faithful disciples, signs of blessing and virtue will surely manifest, just as if I were going there myself.”

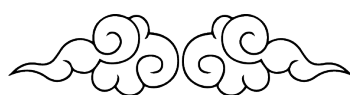
Then the lord [521] ventured to his homeland of Dokham on foot. He surveyed the land for an appropriate site for the monastery but could not find anything for certain. Thus, feeling discouraged, he prayed to his teacher concentratedly. At that time, one night in his dream, three lamas in white robes appeared in a luminous manifestation from the western sky. They used their shawls as wings and, flying like birds, they descended upon the eastern-facing side of the vale. There, by hovering in the sky and performing a vajra dance, they left footprints on a boulder that looked like a white

tent and chanted the mantra of Vajrakīlaya. The sounds of the environment and beings of that valley, including the creatures, plants, earth, stones, river, and so on, naturally resonated with the chant of Vajrakīlaya.

The next day, in a group of five, the master and his disciples departed. In accordance with his dream, they found that the valley and the boulder with footprints were exactly there. The location of the monastery was thus identified. Because the vale possessed the natural sounds of Vajrakīlaya and was an empowered abode of the great, glorious Kīla, it was named Kilung (“Valley of Vajrakīlaya”).¹⁹ At this sacred site, there was a housewife named Tashi Chözom.²⁰ As they went to a yak-hair tent, she held a ladle full of milk to welcome the master and his disciples. Auspicious connections, such as this, naturally coincided.

Around the same time, the king of Derge requested a divination from the Omniscient Jigme Lingpa and Do Drubwang Rinpoche to see what kind of rituals should be performed for the prince. They said [to the king]: “Jigme Ngotsar, the disciple of the Omniscient Jigme Lingpa and a wonderful and fearless yogin practicing the Vajrakīlaya teachings, lives in Getse, which is in your jurisdiction. Invite him and command that he must not only perform a Vajrakīlaya drubchen ceremony but also give a longevity empowerment.”

Accordingly, an important minister was specifically dispatched to invite him to the capital, where he fulfilled the wishes of the king, the queen, and the prince. The lord received innumerable worship for his service and all the required resources for establishing the new monastery.



As soon as everything related to the monastery and the sacred objects it houses was completed, the great siddha Jigme Trinle Özer and the lord Jigme Ngotsar, with a hundred monks, performed a consecration ceremony.²¹ Tens of regional people became permanent monks in the monastery, and the theories and practices of the Victor's teachings were conducted as time went by. Especially, throughout the summer and winter, the lord continuously turned the wheel of the Dharma of the Great Perfection's Secret Heart Essence. As a result, countless great disciples, who were sure to be inheritors of the lineage, arose: Jigme Gyalwe Nyugu, Mahāsattva Paltrul Rinpoche, Do Khyentse, and so on.²²

At that time, Ritrö Rigzin Gyatso, the great treasure revealer Nyima Drakpa's heart disciple, and the first tulku of Mura in Dza, a great spiritual mentor and emanation of the noble and supreme Avalokiteśvara, resided in the Gödum valley in upper Dza, engaging in the essential practice and establishing a domain where people adopted virtue and abandoned evil deeds.²³ There he lived as a great being, benefiting whomever he encountered through such deeds as constructing, for the glorious merit of gods and humans, the Mura Dokhar Chenmo ("Mura Maṇi Wall").²⁴ [522] The wall was replete with a great many collections of Dharmas carved onto stone plates—the Kangyur, Tengyur, and an incredible amount of dhāraṇīs and mantras. After being invited to the monastic seat, he was entrusted with the teachings of Gönsar Ogmin Rigzin Pelgye Ling. Having exhibited the completion of his disciples' training for the time

being, the lord [Lama Jigme Ngotsar Gyatso] passed into nirvāṇa around sixty years old.

Subsequently, the second [Kilung] reincarnation, Jigdral Chokle Namgyal, born in Troshul of lower Dza, was identified by [the Fourth Dzogchen Drubwang] Mingyur Namkhe Dorje. His incarnation, Jigme Trinle Dorje, was born in the lower part of Getse. Along with Jigme Trinle Dorje's reincarnation, Shedrub Nyide Özer, this lineage of tulkus sat on the monastic seat in succession. Because of them, the teaching there kept flourishing.²⁵

COLOPHON

none

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1 'jigs med ngo mtshar rgya mtsho, b. 1730–1750, BDRC P2881; 'jigs med gling pa, 1730–1798, BDRC P314; rdzogs

chen grub dbang 03 nges don bstan 'dzin bzang po, 1759–1792, BDRC P7404; dge rtse, BDRC C2CN10983



2 rdo rje 'phan phyug rtsal; sde dge, BDRC G1539

3 dge rtshe'i dpon po snying 'bum rgyal; sgrol ma

4 rdzogs chen ru dam o rgyan bsam gran chos gling, BDRC G16; seng phrug pad+ma bkra shis, b. 1798, BDRC P2914

5 rgyal sras gzhan phan mtha yas 'od zer, 1800–1855, BDRC P697

6 rje dbon pad+ma kun grol rnam rgyal, 1706–1773, BDRC P6006; *The Oral Transmission and Revealed Treasures are two primary transmissions of the Nyingma tradition.*

7 dge rtse'i bla ma bsod rnams bstan 'dzin

8 'jigs med mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer

9 The Four Jigmes were the heart disciples of Jigme Lingpa: (1) Dodrubchen Jigme Trinle Özer, (2) Jigme Gyalwe Nyugu ('jigs med rgyal ba'i myu gu 01, 1765–1842, BDRC P695), (3) Jigme Ngotsar Gyatso, and (4) Jigme Kundröl Namgyal ('jigs med kun grol rnam rgyal, b. 1719, BDRC P2AG29). Alternatively, there is a list concerning the Four Jigmes from Kham in which Jigme Kundröl Namgyal is replaced by Jigme Gocha (rig 'dzin 'jigs med go cha, b. 1763, BDRC P9099). See “Four Jikmes.”

10 The disciple pleases his teacher through material offerings, service, and practice.

11 rgyud lung man ngag [tantra, transmission, and pith instruction] can refer to the teachings of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga of the Nyingma tradition; gsang pa nying thig

12 dgon gsar 'og min rig 'dzin 'phel rgyas gling

13 Another name for Vajrakīlaya

14 Götsang pa Natsok Rangdröl (rgod tshang pa sna tshogs rang grol, 1605/1608–1677, BDRC P1687).

15 A kind of Chinese bronze.

16 dpal chen bka' 'dus rgya mtsho, BDRC T01JR183

17 Emending legs bshad yongs 'dus snye ma to legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma; kun mkhyen 'jigs med gling pa'i rnam thar legs byas yongs 'du'i snye ma, BDRC WA4CZ1260

18 mdo smad

19 kiHlung dgon, BDRC G3955

20 bkra shis chos 'dzoms

21 rdo grub chen 01 'jigs med 'phrin las 'od zer, 1745–1821, BDRC P293

22 rdza dpal sprul o rgyan 'jigs med chos kyi dbang po, 1808–1887, BDRC P270; mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, 1800–1866, BDRC P698

23 mu ra 01 ri khrod rig 'dzin rgya mtsho, BDRC P2JM457; rig 'dzin nyi ma grags pa, 1647–1710, BDRC P425; mu ra sprul sku'i skye brgyud, BDRC R8LS13176; mgos zlum; rdza stod, BDRC G2328

24 mu ra'i rdo mkhar chen mo

25 This section contains the continuation of the Kilung incarnational line that began with the First Kilung Getse Lama Jigme Ngotsar Gyatso. Those listed in the text are as follows: the Second Kilung Jigdral Chogle Namgyal (kiHlung 02 'jigs bral phyogs las rnam rgyal, 1836–1886) born in Troshul (khro shul) and recognized by the Fourth Dzogchen Drubwang Mingyur Namkhe Dorje (rdzogs chen grub dbang 04 mi 'gyur nam mkha'i rdo rje, 1793–1870, BDRC P1710); the Third Kilung Jigme Trinle Dorje, also known as Jigme Pema Dorje (kiHlung 03 'jigs med phrin las rdo rje, 1887–1929); and the Fourth Kilung Shedrub Nyide Özer (kiHlung 04 bshad sgrub nyi zla'i 'od zer, 1931–1965). See “Kilung Incarnation Line.”



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