

Biography of TULKU LOBSANG



A Boy Accepts His Destiny

In the vast grassland plains of Amdo—the northeast corner of the Tibetan plateau—where herds of wild horses ran, fields of wild flowers blossomed, and high snow-peaked mountains glistened in the distance, the Tibetan people lived in harmony with the land. Nomads tended to the yaks and dru (female yak) that provided butter and cheese for the family, and the sheep that gave fine wool. They moved their tents, following the verdant grazing pastures and favorable weather. Many Tibetans in the area were farmers instead, benefiting from the fertile soil. Living in villages of earthen cottages, the farmers passed on their skill for harvesting barley to make tsampa, generation to generation.

One day, a Lama came to visit a family in one of these earthen cottages. The mother of the family greeted the Lama at the door, inviting him inside for tea. Once seated, formalities having been met, the Lama revealed the reason for his visit. "It has been seen by the oracle of the Sowa Monastery that your son is the reincarnation of the Nyentse Lama that the monks have been seeking." "Young Jigmed, you mean?" The mother needed to be sure; after all, she had more than one son in the local monastery. Many boys went to the monastery to receive their education and training in the Buddhist ways. The people of Tibet regarded development of the spirit a high priority in the journey of life. "Yes, it is he that I speak of."

The mother regarded the Lama quizzically, absorbing this information. She reflected on her youngest son, Jigmed. Indeed, he was special and talented, wise and strong. She also thought of his wild antics—the time he tried to fly by jumping off the third story of the house with a makeshift glider, no more than an umbrella, really. And all the times

he had run away from the Bön monastery, wanting to be completely free, frolicking in the hills, only to be found naked and running with seemingly inexhaustible energy. Or that time that he took the keys of the houses of the village, locking everyone inside until he surrendered the keys. Yes, he was a wild one. He lived up to his name—Jigmed means fearless. But perhaps that inner freedom from concepts was the very spark that would ignite a fire in the people he met.

"There is something more," the Lama said. "If he becomes enthroned as Tulku, it is his destiny that he will leave Tibet, returning only for a brief moment, or possibly never. You will not be with him any longer." The Lama explained that the oracle had separately identified the body, speech and mind of the Nyentse Lama. As her son is the reincarnation of his speech, it is his destiny not to stay as the head of the monastery, but to travel the world, giving oral teachings and sharing his gift of speech. The mother's heart ached considering that she may never see her precious boy again. "However," the Lama continued, "if he does not take his position as the Nyentse Tulku and does not accept this path, he will die young, maybe before reaching age 26. You must decide." Oh what a decision!

But, really, there was no decision. Clearly, the young boy was meant to share his deep wisdom with the greater world. She was not to keep the boy sheltered and secluded. He was meant for great things and his spirit would touch many. Yes, he is a tulku—a great teacher, a Buddhist master. The mother herself was a devout Buddhist, and regarded spreading the teachings so that many could benefit a high calling.



If you have love, you have the key to heaven.

If you have love, you find the happiness of heaven in your life.

At that time, Jigmed Tenzing was at the Nangzhig Bön monastery where he was learning the ways of Bön, the indigenous religion of Tibet, from his uncle, who was the abbot. The monastery was the biggest Bön Monastery in Tibet, and remains so until this day. When word was received about the oracle naming the boy as the 8th incarnation of the Nyentse Lama, he then traveled to Sowa Monastery to become enthroned as a Tulku. It is not really known how the boy felt about this news. But what is clear is that he accepted his destiny with courage and with his head held high. At only 13 years old, it is surely a big responsibility to assume this role.

Upon his enthronement, as was the custom, the boy received a new name to reflect his passage into a new life. Forever after, he would be Lobsang, Tulku Lobsang.

Tulku Lobsang then went to Amchok Monastery where he could better receive the intensive, personalized teachings of the Tibetan Dharma. Tulku Lobsang was encouraged to deepen his studies of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology and a line of scholars privately taught him in these special healing arts and sciences. He studied under great teachers at other monasteries, including Labrang Monastery, one of the six great monasteries of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism. Altogether, Tulku Lobsang had 35 main teachers from whom he received instructions, empowerments and initiations, including: Kalachakra empowerments, Jonang Kalachakra secret teachings, Merta Jertsa (which means 100 Mandala Empowerments), medical empowerments, as well as flower and water essence initiations and teachings. A thorough education indeed!

Over the next several years, Tulku Lobsang received training in all eight major lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. This enabled him to truly perceive the deep essence of Buddhism without the sectarianism that sometimes arises among the various schools. Each lineage has its own special strengths and focus, so he felt it was most beneficial to receive what they each have to offer and to practice all.

Tulku Lobsang excelled in all his studies, but in his heart he felt especially drawn to the movement traditions of Tantrayana Buddhism. These practices working with the subtle body were not readily available to everyone. They were more esoteric, kept secret, passing just orally from master to student. So, he sought out the great masters far away in different monasteries in order to receive the initiations. In this way, he amassed unique experience with the Tantrayana healing movement practices, perhaps more so than anyone else.

In 1993, it became clear that in order to expand and deepen his studies with the great masters, Tulku Lobsang would have to go to India. And so, at age 17, Tulku Lobsang traveled to the Gaden Shartse Monastery in southern India. There, the next chapter of his destiny awaited him. Soon, he would enter a very different world.

To be continued....