



Biography of TULKU LOBSANG



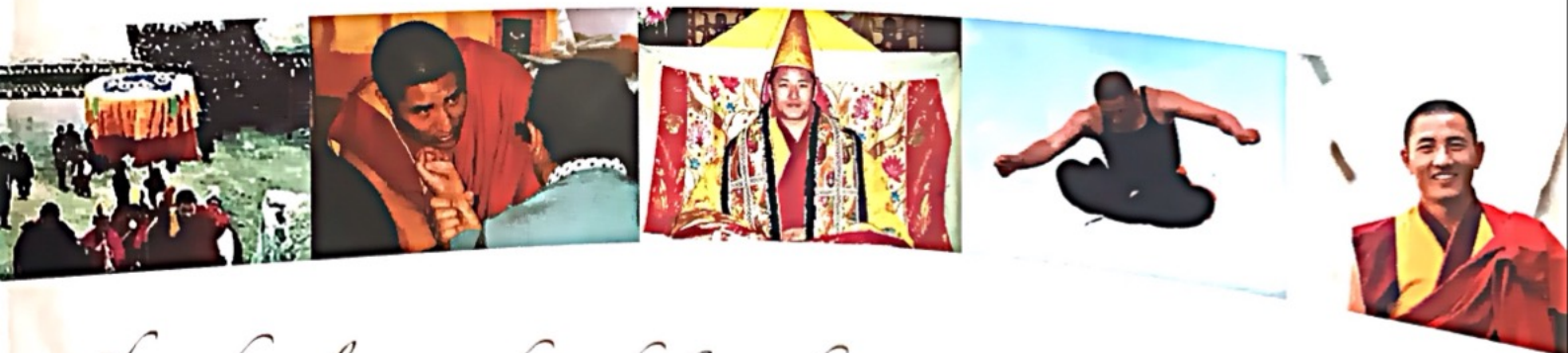
A Young Tulku in a Hot Climate

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The original Gaden monastery was built in Tibet by Je Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelug school of Buddhism. It was one of the three great Gelug monasteries. Later, after the original was destroyed, it was recreated in Karnataka. This monastery will be young Tulku Lobsang's home for the next five years.

Despite the heat and foreign land, Tulku Lobsang becomes quite comfortable there. He is surrounded by fellow Tibetan monks, all studying, debating, joking and reminiscing together. But the young Tulku already knows that he will not remain at the monastery. He is planning to travel to northern India and offer his services there in Tibetan Medicine. Knowing this makes the time at Gaden Shartse even more precious. This is his opportunity to learn from great masters! So, while attending the regular schedule of classes—which, being at one of the highest universities, are definitely rigorous and demanding—Tulku Lobsang seeks out the accomplished masters of the monastery to receive important teachings from different lineages. His teachers have a profound impact on him; three will become the main teachers in his life.



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

Simple Living

All this time, young Lobsang is known only as a normal monk. He has decided not to assume his special status as a tulku—a reincarnation lama. Instead, he enjoys the chance to experience the basic duties that are required. Some days he farms rice and vegetables, harvests the crops, or cooks in the kitchen. All the monks take turns with these chores. Six or seven monks prepare the meal for the other one to two thousand monks.

There are a lot of monks in the monastery but, unfortunately, not as much food. There is some food, of course, but it is not good quality food and there is never enough to be really satisfied. In Tibet, the people eat well; there is strong, heavy food and enough of it to really fill you up. It is different here in the monastery. It makes a young Tibetan really want to eat some good Tibetan food! But for that you need money. Sure, there are some offerings from the lay people, but only small ones—5 or 10 rupees (1 Euro is about 72 Rupees). The monks each receive a small monthly stipend too, maybe 55 to 100 rupees, but from that they still have to pay for electricity, around 30 – 35 rupees. No problem, this Tibetan boy will find a way!

Barefoot and Happy

“Hey! Barefoot Man!” the monks call out to Tulku Lobsang. He grins and continues running up the hill. He has earned his nickname; for six months Tulku Lobsang has worn no shoes. There are a couple reasons for this craziness. First of all, it’s hot! Secondly, the shoes have been deemed to be of lesser importance. You see, he has enough to buy the shoes—they would only cost 25 or 30 rupees—but whenever he has saved enough to buy shoes, he reaches the same conclusion. Tulku Lobsang would ask himself, “Well, I could buy shoes with this money or I could go to a restaurant and eat some real food.” Inevitably, the food would win!

So, he relishes the two or three kilometer hike up to the Tibetan restaurant. They make the best tingmo (Tibetan bread)! He orders that and sharpta, mixed vegetables with meat. He quickly finishes his meal—too quickly—and notices that he is not really full yet. He decides to order another. Yes, two meals at the Tibetan restaurant are much better than shoes! With a delightfully full stomach, Tulku-la pays his bill. The owner looks at him, raises an eyebrow and asks, “Where are your shoes?” He just grins as he runs out of the restaurant, heading back down to the monastery, ready to continue his studies.

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in 1987 and everyone is excited because His Holiness the Dalai Lama is coming to give a Kalachakra empowerment. Tulku Lobsang is particularly excited because his mother is coming as well. It is a fine reunion! She is so happy to see her son after all this time. But, wait a minute. "Why is my son running around barefoot?!" she asks. "And why is he not in his recognized position as tulku?" His mother urges him to tell the monastery of his enthronement and assume his proper role. He agrees that it is time. A ceremony is held in his honor and Tulku Lobsang is officially recognized as a reincarnated Lama by the monastery.

One Eat, All Eat

All too quickly, it is time for his mother to leave. She arranges for her son to regularly receive some money. Their family has some wealth and there is no reason for him to be hungry or shoeless. She also buys him a little refrigerator to keep in his room so that he can prepare food for himself. This seemed like a great idea, but not for long. One night, Tulku Lobsang is preparing a meal, boiling water and chopping some vegetables. He becomes very aware of how much noise he is making. For sure the monks in the room below can feel a squeeze in their stomachs knowing that he is cooking! This is not going to work. It just doesn't make sense for one to have food if all couldn't. Better that they all don't have. So instead Tulku-la decides to spend the money all at once on food for all of them.

A few years pass, and Tulku Lobsang becomes eager to move forward with his plans for practicing Tibetan Medicine, which means leaving the monastery. So he becomes even more focused, learning as much important knowledge as possible and receiving teachings from all five main lineages. He cannot officially study all, but he receives them personally, one-on-one with his teachers.

And now, the time has come to enter the next phase of his life...

We always say,
'I will have time later.'
But 'later'
is what makes us have less time.

Developments in Dharamsala

Tulku Lobsang arrives in McLeod Ganj, upper Dharamsala and home to the Dalai Lama, with the aim of opening a Buddhist Medical Center to serve Tibetan people. He has no dream to do anything in the west, but still, it would soon happen nevertheless...

Tulku Lobsang's parents come to visit again. Not all parents have this chance, but since his father is doing business between Tibet and Nepal, they can travel from there to India to see their son. As they leave, they give him some money so that he may realize his dream of a medical center. With money in hand, Tulku-la goes down to Dharamsala to buy medical supplies and various necessary items for the center. There is still some money left over, so he invites some Tibetan people that are having a hard time affording food and housing to stay with him.

One day a Western woman offers to sponsor Tulku Lobsang. He had received these offers before, but always declined them since he was supporting himself just fine. But this time, he decides to try something. He tells the woman that he does not need help himself, but he has an idea to open a restaurant that would give food away to people in need. She agrees. So Tulku Lobsang opens this restaurant. He gives out a special card that allows those with it to eat at the restaurant for free. They feed many people. But after two or three years, Tulku-la no longer wants to focus on these business things, so he sells the restaurant. He is then able to give back all the money that the woman originally lent to him.

What shall the next project be? Many young Tibetans are flocking to India, leaving their homeland for political reasons. It can be quite expensive to obtain the official documents to stay in India, so Tulku Lobsang decides to give many of them the money for this.

What is it that makes us normal?
What is it that makes us special?
We all want to be special,
but we don't need to be any more
special than we are now.



Natural Wisdom Spreading

By this time, the medical center is up and running and Tibetan people are coming daily for consultations, diagnosis and treatment. One day, his friend brings a Western woman and asks if Tulku Lobsang will do her astrological chart, so he does. She is very happy with it and starts to bring other people to him. Before long, the Western people are asking if he will teach them. The group of students gets larger and larger, amazed at his vast knowledge and ability to communicate difficult concepts. Westerners have a very open mind. They are very intelligent and really have a possibility to study medicine and especially to

study Buddhism. So as Tulku Lobsang teaches, more and more students come. He begins to offer regular classes. He sees these students every day and they become friends. They really want him to teach in the West. He is interested; he knows there are opportunities there for him. Soon it comes to manifest and Tulku Lobsang travels from India to teach in Europe.

And this is how it came to happen that we are so fortunate to have Tulku Lobsang here, so close, always traveling to us to offer his precious wisdom. ■