

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PALDEN PAWO RINPOCHES' LINEAGE

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(Translated with the kind help of Thubten Pende)
2nd rev. ed.



Palden Tsuglag Editions

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Written for the 900-year anniversary of the precious Karma Kagyü Lineage
as a homage to the 10th Palden Pawo Rinpoche, Tsuglag Mawey Wangchug
(1912-1991)

Dedicated to His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Ogyen Tinley
Dorje, and to the 11th Palden Pawo Rinpoche, Tsuglag Mawey Drayang,
who are like father and son

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General overview

The incarnation lineage of the Palden Pawo Rinpoches is one of the most famous spiritual lineages of the Tibetan plateau. They are seen as manifestations of the activity of Buddha Amitabha, Padmasambhava and Vajrapani. Long before they were called “Pawo”, the Hero, they enjoyed great fame in India where they had been utmost holders of the Buddhist teachings, when it knew its last lights there.

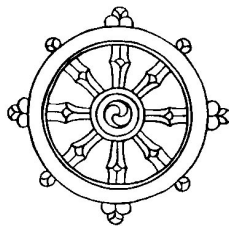
By the 11th century, the lineage appears in Tibet and is integrated in the broad Buddhism rebirth movement that spread all over the country. The most important character is Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa who, inspired by visions and guided by texts giving him their keys, discovered collections of *termas*, “treasures”, the teachings hidden by Padmasambhava, the “Second Buddha”, who had been one of the most important masters of the first spread of Buddhism in Tibet (8th c.). Recognized as a manifestation of Bairotsana, one of Padmasambhava’s closest disciples, Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa was and is still considered as one of the main *tertöns*, or “treasure discoverers” of the plateau.

A major change occurred in the 15th century. The eighth incarnation, Chöwang Lhündrup, was born when Tibet went through a new period of political fragmentation, but also of spiritual expansion. Because of his uncommon behaviour, people gave him the nickname Pawo, the “Hero”, and because of his universally recognized spiritual qualities, he became a very famous master. His meeting with the 7th Karmapa, the head of the Karma Kagyü Lineage, was a turning point. Seeing him as an equal, the hierarch asked him to take care of Drowo Lung Sekhar, the former residence of Marpa the Translator, the originator of all the Kagyü Lineages

in Tibet. Since then, without losing their links with others spiritual lineages, the newly named Palden Pawo Rinpoches, the “glorious and precious heroes”, have been regents, masters and disciples of the Karmapas and the others main lineage holders.

Another great step took place during the 17th century. In the 1630’s, the political ascent of the Gelug Lineage forced the most important Karma Kagyü masters to flee to eastern and southern Tibet. As a consequence of the raise of the 5th Dalai Lama in 1642 and the demise of the Karma Kagyü landlords, the main monasteries of the lineage were confiscated; Drowo Lung Sekhar and its branches were put under the authority of the Gelug Monastery of Sera. Sent by the 10th Karmapa to the new Tibetan ruler, the 5th Palden Pawo established close links with him. The seat of Palden Pawo’s lineage was relocated to Nenang, not far from Tsurpu, the seat of the Karma Kagyüs where the Karmapa returned shortly thereafter. Until then, the Palden Pawos were called Lhodrag Pawos, Lhodrag being the name of the area where Drowo Lung was located; since then, they were called Nenang Pawos and they are still today venerated in Tibet under this name.

Today, the eleventh holder of the name Palden Pawo, eighteenth incarnation of the lineage and fifteenth to be born in Tibet, brandishes the torch of the Karma Kagyü teachings in the Tibet Autonomous Region.



Sources

This short history of the Palden Pawos' lineage has been retraced with the constant support and encouragement of the 10th Palden Pawo (1912-1991).

Added to the notes and information given by the late Lama Karma Tsültrim (1911-2005), who spent his life serving him, it is based upon many works such as:

Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa, *dGe slong gtsug lag phreng ba rang nyid kyi rtoqs pa brjod pa 'khrul pa'i bzhin ras 'char ba'i me long*, xyl. ed., long autobiography written at Rongchung Samten Hermitage, in Tsari, in 1543

—, *dPal gtsug lag phreng ba'i rang tshul mdor bsdud pa don tshan dgu pa'o*, xyl. ed., short autobiography written in Lhodrag, at Drowo Lung Sekhar in 1550

—, *mKhas pa'i dga' gton*, chapter *pa*, Rumtek Ed., (information is also found in other chapters)

Karma Tsültrim, *dPal ldan dpa'bo gtsug lag smra ba'i dbang phyug mchog gi mdzad rnam snying bsdus skal ldan dad pa'i gdung dbyangs*, written by the 10th Palden Pawo's secretary (mainly about the 10th Palden Pawo's life; some mistakes in the chapters concerning the previous incarnations)

Situ Chökyi Jungne, *Karma kam tshang brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam thar rab 'byams nor bu'i chu shel gyi phreng ba*, (vol. 11 & 12 of the 8th Tai Situ's *gsung 'bum*), Palpung Sungrab Nyamso Khang, Sansal (HP), 1990, (biographies up to the 7th Palden Pawo, information about the lineage)

Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 9, LTWA, Dharamsala, 1981 (some mistakes here and there, other information is to be found mainly in the volumes dedicated to the Nyingma lineage)

Anon., *sTod lung mtshur phu'i gnas nang dgon ma lag dang bcas pa'i rten brten par bcas pa dang de 'dzin dge 'dun pho mo'i sde grangs bcas kyi dgon tho mthor bduds*, Nenang Göñ, Tölung Tsurpu

Thubten Osel Tenpay Nyima, *rNying ma'i chos 'byung*, vol. 1 et 2, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, sl, 1992 (There is some information about the incarnations, mainly those linked to the *maha-ati* teachings and Rinchen Lingpa's biography)

Information has also been gathered from historical works, biographies, colophons of prayers or rituals, collected works (*gsung 'bum*) of the Gyalwang Karmapas, Tai Situs, Gyalwang Drukpas, etc.

Thanks to comparing those different sources, it has been possible to retrace at least the main events of the lives of the lineage masters, and to identify precisely their dates of birth and death. This also allowed for the correction of some inconsistencies and the elimination of confusion and errors in dates and names. Most often, the choice was made to preserve the style of “external” biographies, to simplify the long lists of transmissions (initiations, ritual readings, etc.) and, wherever possible, to briefly contextualize the biographies.

(The choice was made to take the most common spelling of names; the spelling of Sanskrit words and names has been simplified; dates of birth and death of the various people are given on the first occurrence. If mistakes remain, they are mine.)



Incarnations in India

The first known figures of the Palden Pawos incarnation lineage were three extraordinary masters living in India. The first one, Prajñakara[mati], was a wise and learned monk; he was one of the last to contribute to the grandeur of the monastic universities of northern India.

The second incarnation, Kapalabhadri, was surprising as she was a woman; in most cases of the more or less important incarnation lineages they are men. Her spiritual journey reveals the religious atmosphere of northern India in the 11th century. First, as a woman, she should have followed the common rule: to be a promised girl, a married woman or a widow. But Kapalabhadri became a nun at a time when nunneries were relatively well accepted wherever the Buddha's teachings had spread. Her inner and intellectual qualities were recognized, since she was allowed to teach. Her story recounts that in parallel to her disciplined life as a nun, she was a Vajrayana practitioner, and had a secret life at night. Armed with this dual background, she had spiritual masters who belonged to these two main inner traditions.

The last Indian incarnation, Lalitajñana, followed in the footsteps of the Buddha and entered in the homeless life of a wandering ascetic. Very little is known about him except that he lived in cemeteries and, perhaps, died in China.

Prajñakaramati (950-1030)

A learned scholar, Prajñakara[mati] (Tib. Sherab Jungne [Lodrö]) was one of the leading spiritual teachers of the last great period of influence of Buddhism in India. According to some sources, he was the gatekeeper of the eastern gate of the great monastic University of Nalanda (Bihar) when Naropa (1016-1100), one of the Indian fathers of the Kagyü spiritual lineage, was one of its most influential members. According to other sources, he was the gatekeeper of the eastern or the southern gates of the monastic University of Vikramashila (Bihar), when Naropa was guarding its northern gate.

In any case, he belonged to the elite of those high places of Buddhism. As a *madhyamaka* master belonging to the lineage of Chandrakirti (7th c.), he was famed for his intimate and spontaneous understanding of the nature of mind, and for the high quality of his commentaries of the works of Chandragomin (600-c.650) and Haribhadra (8th c.). He was said to have visions of the bodhisattva of knowledge, Mañjushri, and it was said that his skill when he was debating came from the close relationship he had with him.

Two major texts of Prajñakaramati are known. The *Bodhicharyavatara-pañjika* (Derge, T., *mdo*, vol. *la*, 105), is considered as the most complete commentary in the Indian Buddhist literature of the *Bodhicharyavatara* written by Shantideva (8th c.). It was translated and introduced into Tibet by Marpa the Translator (1012-1097), the Tibetan father of the Kagyü Lineage. Prajñakaramati also wrote a commentary to the *Abhisamayalamkara* (Derge, T., *mdo*, vol. *ja*, 86), the first of the *Five Treatises* of Maitreya, an important text belonging to the literature of the Perfection of Wisdom, the *Prajñaparamita*. Both were integrated into the Tengyur, the collection

of commentaries on the Buddha's teachings. He was a master of Drogmi Lotsawa (10th-11th c.), one of the fathers of the Sakya Lineage who introduced to Tibet the teachings of the *Path and its Fruits* (Tib. Lamdre).

Kapalabhadri (11th c.)

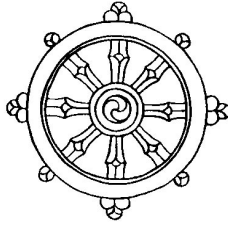
Kapalabhadri (Tib. Dekyong Zangmo) was recognized as a manifestation of Vajrayogini. She had a double life: by day, she led the exemplary life of a *bhikshuni*, a fully ordained nun, while at night, dressed as a yogini, she went to cemeteries to perform tantric practices. The story tells us that doing so she managed to convince many people of the merits of the Buddha's teachings.

Among her masters, Ratnakarashanti (10th-11th c.), also known as Shantipa, was an accomplished practitioner of tantra and we find him in numerous transmission lineages. As an abbot of the great monastic University of Vikramashila (Bihar), he also is recognized by tradition as one of the 84 *mahasiddhas*. He was one of the spiritual masters of Atisha (982-1054), who later spread Buddhism in Tibet. According to her biographers, Atisha was also one of Kapalabhadri's masters when she was a child.

Lalitajñana (12th c.)

Almost nothing is known about Lalitajñana (Tib. Rölpey Yeshe) except that he was considered a manifestation of Chakrasamvara. It is said that he was the elder of seven sons of a powerful maharaja. When he became

the regent of the family estate he decided to give all his possessions to a Brahman known for his spiritual power. The penalty was immediate: his family and subjects expelled him and he then went to live in a cemetery. A version of his biography states that he left India to settle in China, in the Wutai Mountains (Wutai Shan, Shanxi), one of the earthly residences of Mañjushri, where he died.



First Tibetan incarnations

After having left their imprint on the history of Buddhism in India, the four next incarnations appeared in Tibet where Buddhism began to settle. Some of them were particularly important, mainly Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa. Tradition says that during the first attempt to establish Buddhism (7th-9th c.), which was almost unsuccessful, one of its key players, Padmasambhava, hid various teachings and sacred objects, the *termas*, and prophesied when and by whom (the *tertöns*) they would be discovered. Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa was among those who discovered those “treasures” when Buddhism took root, this time permanently. His two successors played the same role, but information is very rare about them.



Sangye Rongtön (1170-1233)

Often confused with the Sakya master Rongtön Sheja Künrig (1367-1449), Sangye Rongtön, also called Rongtönpa, or Rongtön Chöje, quickly mastered the sutras and the tantras. Born in the Iron Tiger Year (1170) in Loro, in the mountains of the Yuru region in southern Tibet, he was a great traveller and built several temples and hermitages, chiefly that of Jölnang.

He was especially considered to be one of the spiritual sons of Tengpa Lotsawa Tsültrim Jungne (1106/07-1190), one of the most important Kalachakra masters and translators of the second spread of Buddhism on the Tibetan plateau.

He also heard teachings from Nyang Ral Nyima Öser (1136-1204), one of the major *tertöns* and the first to spread the Avalokiteshvara practices, mainly through teachings given to the most humble people about the great merits of the *mani*, the mantra of the bodhisattva of Compassion. Among his other famous masters, is Talung Thangpa Tashi Pal (1142-1210), father of the Talung Kagyü Lineage – one of the eight Kagyü “daughters.”

He died in the Water Snake Year (1233); his body vanished and nothing but his clothes remained.

Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa (1241-1320)

Among the numerous prophecies made by Padmasambhava announcing the coming of Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa, one stated:

The scholar of India Prajñākara[mati], after five births, will take a human body at the border of rocky Tibet to guide the ordinary people...

According to those prophecies, he was proclaimed as a manifestation of the mind of Padmasambhava himself and of Bairotsana, one of his closest disciples. In the *Padma Thangyig*, his *tertön*'s activity is clearly described:

The affairs of the inhabitants of Ü will degenerate, Zahor will frighten;
a demon with impure acts will incarnate and stay long everywhere.
The *terma* of Drinthag, at the rock of Koro, won't remain, as the signs
will show; then will appear the one called Rinchen Lingpa, the *tertön*.

He was born during the summer of the Iron Ox Year (1241) in Tsedro, in the region of Loro, in southern Tibet. His mother's name was Balmo Yangbum and his father, Dorje Gödor Bum, was a tantric practitioner, and apparently a physician. He gave him his first teachings but, according to a biography, his grandfather gave him his first spiritual instruction. Since his childhood, he displayed unusual abilities, such as leaving several body prints in rocks. In dreams, he met Padmasambhava, Atisha, Nagarjuna and Padampa Sangye. His parents hardly understood him when, from time to time, he said "I am Rongtönpa, I am Rongtönpa!"

On some occasions, he gathered the children and acted as if he was giving them teachings; also he built a small altar to celebrate offering rituals. His behaviour was so unusual that many people thought he was a demon with a human form. One winter's day, at the age of 5, he fled from the family house to go and meditate in a cave. Overwhelmed with anxiety, his mother looked for him everywhere, but in vain. When finally he came back home, she talked to him roundly. Not troubled at all, he said:

I am the son of the realized master
Not born to a mother, I spontaneously arose;

In essence, I am the lotus flower born in the lake [Padmasambhava],
Today, neither life nor death are necessary for me.

His mother, infuriated by his seeming insolence replied: “If you are not born from a mother, whom then are you born from?” He fled from home but returned soon with a beautiful bouquet of colourful flowers which he gave her. His father, who had attended the scene could only exclaim: “To find such flowers here right in the middle of winter shows that in fact this child is a *trülku!*”

At 12, he had already mastered all his father knew and he took his first religious vows from the master Rinchen Chatral (?-?) who gave him the name of Rinchen Gyelpo Palzang. Then, he went to Lower Nyal, in southern Tibet, and stayed there in Geri Monastery that had been built by Tengpa Lotsawa (1106/07-1190). He heard numerous teachings of both sutra and tantra, mastering them without any difficulty. For instance, he was said to have realized the Hevajra tantra in only two months. Later, he went to Drukdril Gönpa Monastery where he heard the Rechung Nyen-gyü, the oral teachings of Rechung (1083-1161), one of the main disciples of Milarepa (1040-1123). As soon as he practised them, he realized the purity of appearances. One of his biographies and a prayer to the Palden Pawos lineage report that he met in this monastery the *tertöns* Sergo, Lupug and Ledrel Tsel from whom he also received many instructions.

One day when he was in Lhasa on a pilgrimage, making offerings in front of the statue of an eleven-headed, thousand-armed Avalokisteshvara, a bodhisattva named Künga came to him and gave him a list of *termas*. Since then, through visions and dreams, he was able to discover them. Among them, there were the “Five Cycles of Five” (Tib. *ngaden kornga*) and relics of Padmasambhava and spiritual consort, Yeshe Tsogyel.

He mainly made discoveries in Loro Dragmar, “dashing tricks and obstacles created by the protecting gods of the *termas*, thanks to the intimate vision of the absence of a self.”

He spent years in solitary meditation, but he also travelled extensively, wandering in Tibet, and also in India following a prophecy where he revealed hidden teachings.

As an accomplished master, the books concerning the history and the spread of Dharma in Tibet refer to him as Rinchen Lingpa the Dharma king (Tib. *chögyel*) or the great *tertön* (Tib. *terchen*). He is often confused with another *tertön*, Ratna Lingpa (1403-1479), or with another Rinchen Lingpa who lived in the 18th century. He died in Loro when he was in his 80th year, in the Iron Monkey Year (1320).

Zhönu Lhündrup and Gyaltsen Palzang (14th-15th c.)

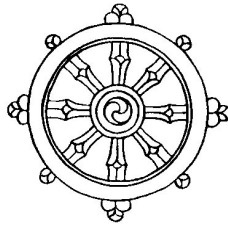
After Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa, the lineage has two other *tertöns*, but information about them is very sketchy. Their names are only given in lists, without any details. The first one is the best known, but with several different names : Zhönu Lhündrup, Drodül Samdrup Göñ, or even Longyang Dewa.

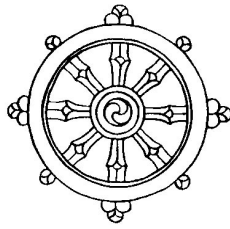
In his youth, Orgyen Rinchen Lingpa wanted to visit the Jölnang temple. Unfortunately, the keeper of the place denied him any access to the temple, and he found the door closed. Saddened, he took a small sheet of paper and wrote: “Since I am unable to perform a spiritual practice here, I shall be reborn here in my next life!” Before leaving the place, he hid the paper under the lintel of the door.

Consequently, he took birth there (mid-14th c.), in the family of one of his uncles. From his early childhood, he showed unusual marks of spiritual

ability, including chanting mystic songs with very deep meaning. He discovered the paper hidden by Rinchen Lingpa, and left footprints and handprints in rocks in the area. He died still very young, in his 17th year.

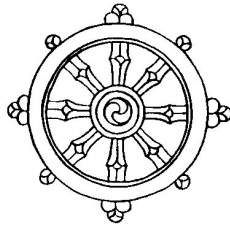
His following incarnation was Gyaltsen Palzang (15th c.), who is very often confused with Bara Gyaltsen Palzang (1310-1391), a leading master of the Drukpa Kagyü Lineage. We know that he had very clear recollections of many past lives and that, in turn, he revealed spiritual *termas*. He died at the age of 21.





The Palden Pawo Rinpoches

Chöwang Lhündrup, the eighth incarnation of the lineage had a key role since he was the first to be called (Palden) Pawo and was also the first officially belonging to the institutional framework of a lineage, the Karma Kagyü, headed by the Gyalwang Karmapa. Raised to the rank of *gyalwa yabse*, “Victorious, father and son”, the Palden Pawos were then responsible for maintaining and transmitting all the material and spiritual heritage of their new lineage. Though they have been only temporarily and occasionally regents, most of them played a spiritual role of the first order. They were monks in most cases, but some were lay. Added to the function they had within the Karma Kagyüs, some of them also played a significant role for preserving and transmitting the teachings of the Nyingma Lineage to which they remained linked. Their spiritual activity was so great that they wove strong links with the major religious figures of the other lineages, including the Dalai Lamas.





Palden Pawo I, Chöwang Lhündrup (1455-1503)

He took birth in the Wood Pig Year (1455) in Upper Yarlung, not far from the banks of the Tsangpo River, in the residence of Künga Legpa (1433-1483), the last ruler of the Pagmodru Dynasty to have real authority over Central Tibet after nearly one century of hegemony. His father, whose name was Drag Gyalwa, was Künga Legpa's butler and belonged to the Minyag clan; his mother, Gyalmo Dzom, belonged to the Dorthok clan.

In his early childhood, he showed a strong spiritual inclination, but his parents neglected it or were opposed to his will. One day, as his mother was feeding him, he clearly saw the beings of the six realms and shouted: "I previously lived in Loro Dragmar! I want to go to Loro Dragmar!" But she urged him to keep silent. Later on, while he was playing in the dirt he unearthed a small statue of Dorje Zhönu, an aspect of the great protector and *yidam* Vajrakilaya; doing so, a *mandala* arose, representing the peaceful and wrathful aspects of the mind. His mother, who was watching him, witnessed the scene and, seized with terror, ran for shelter.

During his youth, he restlessly affirmed his longing for a spiritual life, but in vain. Finally, when he was 16, after a new incident with his parents, he decided to leave the family home, bringing with him a golden reliquary. He joined Lhüde Rabjampa (?-?), whom we know almost nothing but he was a renowned master of *maha-ati*.

He then had a dream in which he met the *tertön* Guru Chöwang (1212-1270) who said "You will act for the welfare of beings, as I did", and gave him the novice vows and his own name, Chöwang. However, a later tradition reports that he received his name Chöwang Lhündrup from Lhüde Rabjampa who gave him the vows.

Thereafter, as soon as he received instructions on *mahamudra*, he realized them and then samsara and nirvana were undifferentiated for him. Initially,

he was supported by three famous masters: Lhünde Rabjampa, the first of these he met; Ngawang Dragpa (1418-1496), the 12th throne holder of Talung Gön, the seat of the Talung Kagyü Lineage; and the 2nd Gyalwang Drukpa, Künga Paljor (1428-1476), head of the Drukpa Kagyü. Among his initial masters, was Chang Ri Zhönu Lodrö, renowned for his erudition in the field of philosophy, who is probably none other than Chödingpa Zhönu Lodrö (1372-1475), whose biography quotes a Chöwang Lhündrup among his disciples.

At Tsurpu, the seat of the Karmapa, the head of the Karma Kagyü Lineage who was then travelling, he received from Chöze Chökyi Dorje (?-?) instructions about inner heat (Tib. *tumo*). He then wore a damp cloth and dried it in the time it takes to prepare some tea, which astonished everybody. Three breaths were enough to generate such heat.

Biographers mention his great spiritual abilities and his ordinary accomplishments: visions and miracles characterized his wanderings, such as some people thought he was crazy while others saw him as a remarkable man whose behaviour was quite uncommon. On one occasion, as he stayed on the banks of Zangtso Lake, he began to walk on the water as if it was dry land; he took from the lake numerous statues, including one of the protector Remati Devi. He was therefore nicknamed Pawo, the Hero, and since then he was only known under the name of Pawo Chöwang Lhündrup.

He relied on visions to decide if he should go to this place or that to teach or to stay in retreat. He went once to Jölnang, in Loro, where his past incarnations stayed. He found there a stupa forgotten by everyone, and several *tsatsas*, small plaques of clay depicting aspects of the Buddha. He even recognized old people, giving their names and telling old stories about them. For all, he was the “undisputed reincarnation.”

He was also famed as a qualified *maha-ati* master. As he was always on the move, never residing in a particular place, he had disciples all over Central Tibet, some being also homeless hermits, as he was. He had such fame that his benefactors were numerous, especially since his family had been close to the former rulers of the country. That is why a man called Künzang who ruled over the Gyalkhar area decided to give him Drowo Lung Sekhar, in Lhodrag, in southern Tibet, the former residence of Marpa the Translator (1012-1097), the father of the Kagyü Lineage, where his disciple Milarepa (1052-1135) had built a tower during his years of trials. But Chöwang Lhündrup declined the offer.

One day, when he was leading a meditation retreat in darkness, local people told him about the 7th Karmapa Chödrag Gyatso (1454-1506) who was staying nearby in the Nyal area, between Yarlung and today Bhutan. People flocked to hear the Karmapa, and Chöwang Lhündrup's disciples urged him to allow them to receive the Karmapa's blessing. Chöwang Lhündrup refused, saying that since the Karmapa was undifferentiated from the clear light, they just needed to meditate properly to meet him. After a little while, he understood that such a meeting was the fruit of past lives, and that he should not neglect this opportunity. Therefore, they left their retreat places all together to join the Karmapa.

The meeting between the two men was preponderant for the Karma Kagyü Lineage and for Chöwang Lhündrup's own incarnation lineage. The Karmapa recognized him as his equal and asked him to take charge of Drowo Lung Sekhar, which, this time, Chöwang Lhündrup agreed. He recognized the Karmapa as his master and biographers report that each time he was in the Karmapa's presence or invoked him, he joined his hands and streams of tears flowed down his face, so great was his joy. He became

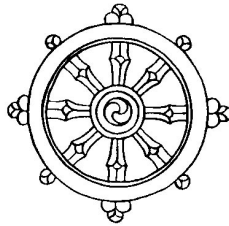
a *gyalwa yabse*, a holder of the spiritual and material heritage of the Karma Kagyüs; he spent the rest of his life mostly in Drowo Lung Sekhar, restoring the buildings and still gathering disciples, lays and ordained, rich and poor. He also built the Orgyen Dechen Tse Hermitage. Indifferent to the world, he had an equal regard for everyone, night and day. The inhabitants considered him a manifestation of Marpa Lotsawa's compassion and he was said to probably be the incarnation of Marpa's son, Darma Dode. Added to the Nyingma teachings he held, he also transmitted the Karma Kagyüs' teachings, in particular those that were specific to Drowo Lung Sekhar, namely those of the Six Yogas of Naropa (Tib. *chö druk sekharma*).

His death, in the Water Pig Year (1503), was followed by unusual events: rainbows, flower-shaped snowflakes, and so forth. A stupa was built on the cremation site where relics were still found long after his death. One of the masters attending the ceremonies, Dhagpo Rabjampa (?-?), bitterly regretted not to have had true spiritual relations with him, but suddenly, as if it was flowing from deep inside himself, he heard Pawo Chöwang Lhündrup's voice consoling him and saying they would meet again very soon. In fact, he became one of the new incarnation's masters.

His disciples were very different from each other. The most powerful lord of the time, Prince Dönyö Dorje (1452/53-1512), who had put his troops at the service of the 4th Shamarpa, Chökyi Dragpa (1453-1524) to conquer Central Tibet, was one of those he had instructed. Opposite to the prince and some others great political figures, were the majority of his disciples, the hermits, such as his brother the wandering yogi Ritrö Rechen (?-?) and the Madman of Ü, Künga Zangpo (1458-1532), both belonging to the spiritual movement of the "Madmen", from which Chöwang Lhündrup himself was not so different.

Künga Zangpo's life is quite well-known but not Ritrö Rechen's. He received the lay ordination from Pawo Chöwang Lhündrup who gave him the name of Jamyang Lhündrup. He heard instructions from the Madman of Tsang (1452-1507) and was a disciple of Sharkha Rechen (1453-?), who named him Ritrö Rechen; since then, he wore the bones ornaments of the tantric practitioners. He considered his brother as his root lama. In the rare texts where his name is given, he is called Chöje (Skt. dharmaraja) Ritrö Rechen or Repa, and is said to have had numerous disciples. His reincarnation, Karma Zangpo (?-?), was in charge of Drowo Lung Sékhar at the times of the 2nd Palden Pawo.

Chöwang Lhündrup's collected writings include his teachings and mystic songs.





Palden Pawo II, Tsuglag Trengwa (1504-1566)

He was also known as Tsuglag Gyatsö Trengwa and (Pal) Mipam Chökyi Gyelpo Dön (Tamche) Yongsu Drubpa.

He is the most famous Palden Pawo Rinpoche and his influence is still important today. His life is known thanks to the biographies of the masters he met, but also thanks to the two autobiographies he wrote at the request of his disciples.

Numerous rituals were performed after Chöwang Lhündrup's death so that his new incarnation would swiftly come. After five days, one of his disciples, a woman called Lamnye Drölma, organized an offering ceremony while he was still in the *thugdam* post-mortem meditation. During the ritual, the veil covering him touched her and he immediately showed the signs of leaving his body. In the following weeks, it was apparent that Lamnye Drölma was pregnant and everyone was convinced that she bore Chöwang Lhündrup's reincarnation. The future new-born was therefore recognized as such before his birth.

Information concerning his parents is sparse. His father's name was Lama Dargye and one of his parents belonged to the clan of Nyag Jñana Kumara (8th c.), one of the main disciples of Padmasambhava.

He was born above Nyethang, not far south of Lhasa, the 13rd day of the 4th month of the Wood Mouse Year (May-June 1504) and was immediately recognized as the 2nd Palden Pawo by the former's disciples.

The news of his birth reached Prince Dönyö Dorje (1452/53-1512), who ruled over Central Tibet and who considered the 1st Palden Pawo as one of his masters. The Prince cared for him and his parents until the age of 5, at which time he was enthroned at Drowo Lung Sekhar as the new Palden Pawo.

Then, he was taught reading by Togden Drag Gendün Gyatso (?-?), who headed Nenang Monastery. When he was 6, he was secluded in retreat for two years. During this retreat, he had to study texts belonging to the sutras and tantras under the guidance of several masters, including disciples of his former incarnation. After this, he continued his basic spiritual training.

In the Water Monkey Year (1512), he went into the presence of the 4th Shamarpa, Chökyi Dragpa (1453-1524), who gave him the novice vows and named him Pal Mipam Chökyi Gyelpo Dön Tamche Yongsu Drubpa. Later, when he talked about those early years, he expressed regret and drew an unhappy picture of them:

I ate the leftovers of the food offered by devotion and for the deceased. I didn't practice the holy Dharma according to my will and, even though I did not have the required qualifications, solely because of my name, it was time to assume the duty of a lama.

From the age of 9 until the age of 25, under the tutorship of the 1st Karma Tinley (1456-1539), he received the most extensive philosophical training at Drowo Lung and several places of Central Tibet, including Lekshe Ling, the monastic college founded by the 8th Karmapa Mikyö Dorje (1507-1554), in Tsurpu, the seat of the lineage.

In his autobiographies, he confesses to have not enjoyed those years of study, mostly referring to his deep boredom, and to “the mud of the restless mind” in which he sank.

However, he admitted that he spontaneously understood the basic texts by simply reading them. He placed a critical eye on the world around him, where religious were vying for titles, while the monasteries and the noble clans were competing to enlarge their estates. He then made up his mind

to integrate even more the teachings until the day the nature of mind became obvious to him. Relating this time, he wrote:

Now, my intellect had left the superficial thoughts behind and I destroyed the arrogance of the eight worldly concerns. I let adversaries plant the banner of victory, those who were bound to clans protested vehemently. As I had understood that the enemy was in my mind, I had subdued it.

During this period, in 1526, he received the full monastic ordination from Shalu Lochen Chökyong Zangpo (1441-1527), after which he entered seclusion for three years at Orgyen Dechen Tse Hermitage that had been built by the 1st Palden Pawo.

Saddened by the behaviour of the Tibetans, he wished to leave his country and follow a childhood wish to go to India as an ordinary pilgrim. If, unfortunately, this plan would have failed, he imagined he would go to China to visit the great holy places of Buddhism. He opened his heart to the Karmapa who strictly refused to let him go. He therefore practised with more intensity and completed his inner realization. Then he said:

I have perfectly understood in my body the samsara and the nirvana; today, I have given up the idea of going anywhere else.

The 2nd Palden Pawo quickly realized all that was transmitted by his masters and was very soon famed for his scholarship and his abilities as a yogi. When he was still a child he was already said to be like the sun and the moon illuminating the world.

His teachers were very different from each other. Some had been linked to the 1st Palden Pawo, such as the Madman of Ü, Künga Zangpo (1458-1532),

who invited him to receive everything he held. Closely linked to Chöwang Lhündrup, he welcomed Tsuglag Trengwa saying: “I was once your disciple, now I will be your master. I’ll perfectly give you all the instructions.” He bestowed on him numerous teachings, including the *mahamudra*. He was also under the spiritual guidance of Shakya Gyaltzen (?-?) and Sangye Lodrö/Loba (?-?), two others disciples of the 1st Palden Pawo, who gave him various teachings, among which the Six Yogas of Naropa in the tradition of Drowo Lung Sekhar (Tib. *chö druk sekharma*). He also received teachings belonging to sutra and tantra from Dhagpo Rabjampa (?-?) and from the 1st Karmai Tinley, among other masters renowned for their deep knowledge and wisdom.

When he was 29, his meeting with the 8th Karmapa at Zimpo Bumpa Gang, in Kongpo, was a defining event. He wrote:

Thanks to Lord Karmapa’s blessing, samsara and nirvana are thrown out like one hundred birds by a sling. I instantaneously understood the secret essence of all phenomena.

A deep friendship and a very great respect immediately tied the two men. The Karmapa transmitted to him numerous teachings and the bodhisattva vows, giving him the name of Tsuglag Trengwa, “the rosary of sciences”, by which he is best known. Since this time, all the subsequent Palden Pawo Rinpoches have been called Tsuglag.

In his 37th year, considered as a difficult year according to Tibetan astrology, he began retreats in the Tsari area, in southeastern Tibet: he stayed five months at Nangnang Rongchung; two and half months at Shudru Shi, a secret cave blessed by *dakinis*; two months in the secret cave of Khari ; and finally, three years in the hermitage called Khyung Dzong at Tsokar.

Already immense, his inner realization became greater. During his stay there, he wrote his first autobiography in which he showed no concession to the world.

When the Karmapa passed away in 1554, Tsuglag Trengwa made great offerings and invited the 5th Sharmapa, Könchog Yenlag (1525-1583), to the throne of regency. When the Shamarpa and the 4th Gyaltsab Rinpoche Dragpa Döndrup (1550-1617), travelled to Kham in order to find the Karmapa's reincarnation, Pawo Rinpoche became the *de facto* regent of the lineage. As such, he travelled widely in Tibet to spread the Buddha's teachings, especially those of the Karma Kagyü Lineage. Meanwhile, during this period, he carried on the restoration work of Drowo Lung Sekhar where he already had covered the tower built by Milarepa (1052-1135) with a golden copper roof. In the temple, he installed statues of the Seven Buddhas, Ananda, Vajrapani, and so on. He also ordered works on the outer and inner parts of the temple of Sangye Mingyur Lhündrup and, close to Drowo Lung Sekhar, of the temple of Lhodrag Lhalung which had been entrusted to him.

His health declined when he was 60. The Shamarpa, Gyaltsab Rinpoche and other masters often prayed for his long life. It is said that one day, as they were in Kham reciting a prayer dedicated to Tsuglag Trengwa, he – in Central Tibet – asked that an incense stick be prepared, but at that very moment the incense began to burn.

He settled in a bedroom in Tsurpu Monastery where he gave numerous teachings and empowerments to the young 9th Karmapa, Wangchug Dorje (1555-1603). All the masters who paid a visit to the lineage holder came also to Tsuglag Trengwa's room to receive instructions and spiritual transmissions. At that time, he gave the novice vows to the Karmapa, naming him Palden Mipam Chökyi Wangchug.

He passed away at dawn, on the 16th day of the 10th month of the Fire Tiger Year (December 1566) after saying he would come back soon, giving instructions about his future birth and the place and the names of his future parents. At the moment of death, the lamps on his altar shone intensely and a strong smell of incense filled the room. Some heard chants and musics, as if he were invited to Sukhavati, Amitabha's pure realm. The 4th Gyaltsab led the first funeral ceremonies. After his cremation, his bones and ashes were put into a silver stupa.

His disciples were numerous, the most important being the 9th Karmapa, the 5th Shamarpa and the 4th Gyaltsab. Among those disciples, there were holders of Kagyü lineages other than the Karma Kagyü, such as the Drigung Kagyü and the Talung Kagyü, hermits or scholars, landlords of Central Tibet or nomads of eastern Tibet.

He wrote throughout his life, leaving a collection of 16 volumes concerning rituals (Six-Armed Mahakala, Palden Lhamo Düsölma in the Karma and Drukpa Kagyü traditions, Vajrabhairava thirteen deities, etc.), the complete practice of Vajravarahi, Kalachakra, Hevajra, the oral teachings of Rechung (1083-1161), the great philosophical systems of Buddhism, and also his mystic songs and astrology in the system of Kalachakra. Today, each of those books is seen as essential for knowledge and spiritual practice. His commentary upon Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* is renowned as one of the most accomplished, as was the one written by Prajñakaramati, his previous incarnation. His historical studies, such as *A Feast for the Wise*, are still praised by contemporary historians in Asia and in the west and his commentaries upon the meditations of tantra are still taught and practised. He was credited *a posteriori* with numerous miracles, but himself said:

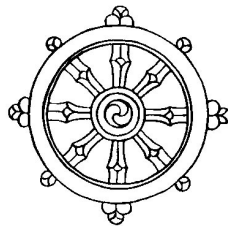
Because I have no miraculous powers, no foreknowledge, I have no signs of accomplishment such as that of leaving footprints or handprints, and so forth.

He was said to have had, in his early childhood, many memories of his past lives, but he wrote that he never had this kind of experience.

Concerning visions, they were for him just visions of “Mara’s knotty snout.” However, among many examples, it was said that the day he received the empowerment of White Mañjushri, a white letter Ah descended from the sky, and everyone was able to see Atisha, the Karmapa and many spiritual masters or aspects of Buddha. In fact, in his long autobiography, he hardly conceded that he had symbolic dreams.

Reading his autobiographies shows that, thanks to the very close link he had with the Karmapa, once he let the natural freedom of mind arise – the inner master – he restlessly acted to demonstrate the unity of Buddha’s teachings, whatever the lineage to which one belongs. So he declared:

When the sun rose from the centre of my heart, where the darkness of ignorance was, I gathered all the blessings of the Kagyüs; nowadays, they reside deep within me. As I have not spent my time to receive teachings again and again, I don’t follow any herd, whatever it is, and I am not dependent of anything.





Palden Pawo III, Tsuglag Gyatso (1568-1631)

The previous Palden Pawo had left a letter containing the information that, in time, would enable his disciples to find his new incarnation. It was opened two years after his death; it stated that he would return “in the vicinity of Tsurpu.”

The young 9th Karmapa Wangchug Dorje (1555-1603) and his main tutor, the 5th Sharmapa Könchog Yenlag (1526-1583), recognized him as a boy born on the 6th or the 21st day (Tib. *dga' ba gnyis pa*) of the 8th month of the Earth Dragon Year (September-October 1568) in a family that lived in Bende Lung, at the entrance of the Tölung-Tsurpu Valley. His mother's name was Norzin Wangmo and his father's was Sönam Gyatso. The two masters gave him the first religious vows and, by mutual agreement, named him Tsuglag Gyatso.

He was enthroned at Drowo Lung the following year, on the 1st day (*yartshes*) of the 7th month of the Earth Snake Year (1569). On this occasion, the Shamarpa bestowed on him a long-life empowerment originated from the Indian yogini Siddharajni's tradition, and the empowerment of Palden Lhamo Düsölma. The 4th Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Dragpa Döndrup (1550-1617), gave him the empowerment of Amitayus, and the Karmapa gave him the ritual reading of the *Sutra of Amitayus* and of a volume belonging to the collected works of the 2nd Palden Pawo. Finally, the Shamarpa endowed him with the great empowerment of Kalachakra.

Since the previous Pawo Rinpoche had displayed excellent qualities as a scholar and a yogi, his tutors decided to give the new incarnation the most complete spiritual training. From the age of 3 to 8, he heard teachings on Asanga's *Five Treatises of Maitreya* (*Pañcamaitreyograntha*), on the *Abhidharma*, on Chandrakirti's *Introduction to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamikavatara*), Shantideva's *Way of the Bodhisattva*, the *Astrology Compendium* and so forth.

After the completion of this study cycle when he was only 8, he received the lay vows from the Shamarpa who gave him the name of Tsuglag Gyatso Gaway Yang. Then he heard the reading transmission of Tsuglag Trengwa's collected works, and of the Sharmapa's own writings.

He began afterwards an extensive training on the teachings and practices of tantra. Together with one hundred lamas, among them the 4th Tai Situ, Chökyi Gocha (1542-1585), he received the empowerments and *mandalas* of Abhaya's *Adamantine Rosary (Vajravali)*. The following year, the Shamarpa gave him the reading transmission of *Chanting the Names of Mañjushri (Arya-Mañjushri-Namasangiti)*, *The Stainless Light (Vimalaprabha)* – a commentary upon the root-tantra of Kalachakra –, *Approaching the Ultimate (Paramarthaseva)*, *The One Hundred Thousands Tantras* – of the Nyingma Lineage –, the *Concise Initiation (Sekoddsha)*, part of the root-tantra of Kalachakra) and so forth.

At the age of 11, he carried on his training, receiving the reading transmission of the Buddha's birth stories (Skt: Jatakas), and of Milarepa's life and mystic songs; Gyaltsab Rinpoche also transmitted to him a great deal of theoretical and practical texts about tantra. Once more, the Shamarpa taught him and gave reading transmissions, mainly the extensive and abridged texts belonging to the *Prajñaparamita* class. He then went to Yangpachen, the second monastery of the Shamarpas where he received instructions on *mahamudra* in the tradition of Ngog Chöku Dorje (1036-1102), one of the main disciples of Marpa (1012-1097).

At the age of 12, in the Iron Dragon Year (1580), he began to serve the Karmapa and the Shamarpa and, on this occasion, he had the vision of Dorje Bernagchen, the Karmapa's protector. Gyaltsab Rinpoche kept on training him and gave him the empowerments and teachings

of Ngog's Seven Mandalas. On the same year, but the reason remains unknown, he had to travel up to Za Thil, on the banks of Upper Mekong River in eastern Tibet, close to Chamdo, to take charge of the monastery which had been the main seat of Marpa Goleg (11th c., also Marpa Uleg), one of Marpa's disciples.

After the passing away of the Shamarpa (1583), Pawo Rinpoche received from the Karmapa the reading transmission of the four volumes of the commentary on *mahamudra* in the Drigung Kagyü tradition, written by the 8th Karmapa (1507-1554), and, from Gyaltsab Rinpoche, a part of the collected works of the 2nd Karmapa (1204-1283), empowerments from the 1st Karmapa (1110-1193), and the empowerment of Kalachakra in the tradition of the 3rd Karmapa (1284-1339).

In the Wood Bird Year (1585), he went to Lhodrag. En route, a huge crowd rushed to get his blessing and it is said that his goodness spread in all directions. On the 15th day of the 2nd month of the following year, at Yanpachen, he received the novice vows from the Karmapa, as the abbot, together with Gyaltsab Rinpoche and *khenchen* Legpa Döndrup (?-?). Then, he heard from the Karmapa the detailed teachings on the nature of mind written by the 8th Karmapa, and Gyaltsab Rinpoche transmitted to him many spiritual practices, among them the empowerments, reading transmissions and explanations of Vajrabhairava, Vajrasamputa, Red Yamantaka and Black Yamantaka. He then left for Drowo Lung Sekhar where he stayed in seclusion for more than a year; he is said to have had numerous dreams in which the Dharma protectors appeared to him.

Even though he didn't care for worldly concerns, his fame hadn't stop growing since his childhood and, though he was still young, he was sponsored by the most influential political figures of the time, such as

the Rinpung leaders. He transmitted to all of them numerous and various teachings. Among his disciples, there was also the reincarnation of Karma Tinley, Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso (?-?).

He then travelled throughout Central and southern Tibet, mainly in the holy area of Tsari, seen as one of Chakrasamvara's residences; visions enabled him to discover and make accessible several places especially blessed and propitious for meditation.

When the news arrived that the 6th Shamarpa was born at Drigung (1584), the Karmapa sent Pawo Rinpoche there to invite him to take his responsibilities in the Karma Kagyü Lineage. On this occasion, he made sumptuous offerings to the new Shamarpa after which he returned to his simple way of life, meditating tirelessly and transmitting what he had received from his masters.

To deepen much more his spiritual practice, he stayed in retreat between the ages of 23 and 26 during which he had several visions. When he reached his 35th year, he received the full monastic vows from the Karmapa, as the abbot, and Gyaltsab Rinpoche. The next year, the Water Hare Year (1603), the Karmapa passed away and Pawo Rinpoche took charge of all the funeral ceremonies, making huge offerings to the body of his deceased master. Soon after, on the 20th day of the 7th month, he celebrated the enthronement of the Shamarpa as the regent of the lineage.

A short while later, in his 39th year, he visited the 6th Shamarpa in order to transmit to him teachings and empowerments, such as the 108 Great Mandalas of Mitrayogin's tradition, the great empowerment of the secret practice of Avalokiteshvara, the short initiations of Mañjushri, Vajrapani, Amitayus, Tara, Dzambhala and so on.

He then built the palace of Drakhar or Drakmar, its location remains uncertain today, where he decorated the walls and galleries with paintings and statues. He consecrated the place and stayed there in retreat.

In the Earth Monkey Year (1608), he updated the 9th Karmapa's collected works and then went to Tsari Tsokar where he composed a homage to the eight aspects of Padmasambhava after he had a vision of him. On the 11th month of this year, the Shamarpa invited the 10th Karmapa, Chöying Dorje (1604-1674), who was born in Kham, to ascend to his throne at Tsurpu.

In 1610, Gyaltsab Rinpoche was so ill that everyone thought his death was near; Pawo Rinpoche offered him a long-life prayer and his master recovered his health. On this occasion, Pawo Tsuglag Gyatso collected Gyaltsab Rinpoche's writings in five volumes. Then, he travelled to Narthang, the ancient Kadampa monastery, where he taught extensively for one month. During his stay, the news that the Karmapa was coming back to Tsurpu spread everywhere. The event was welcomed by rejoicing ceremonies.

In the Water Mouse Year (1612), when he was 44, he gave the first religious vows and the full vows of a monk to 400 people at Tse Lhagang, a monastery built by the 8th Karmapa the exact location of which is unknown today (Kongpo or Kham). Soon after, at the beginning of spring of the Wood Hare Year (1615) he went to Tsurpu where he gave the first religious vows and the lay vows to the young Karmapa who was in his 12th year. After these ceremonies, he transmitted to him the White Tara empowerment and others long-life initiations; then he gave him many other empowerments, scriptural transmissions and teachings held by the Palden Pawo Rinpoches belonging to the sutra and tantra paths.

Two years later, in 1617, when Gyaltsab Rinpoche passed away, he made numerous prayers of dedication for the swift rebirth of one

of his main masters. The next year, on the 13th day of the 5th month of the Earth Horse Year (June-July 1618), he returned to Tsurpu to make great offerings of gold and silver to Gyaltsab's reliquary stupa. Concentrated upon the illusory nature of phenomena and the ultimate nature of mind, he led great rituals of dedication and wishes amidst the monastic community.

Information concerning political activity is very rare in the Palden Pawos' biographies. However, when he was in Tsurpu to pay homage to his deceased master, Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Tsuglag Gyatso held a great ritual of burnt offerings (Tib. *jinsek*) of the Six-Armed Mahakala in order to remove the threats of invasion of Central Tibet by Mongolian armies. Indeed, during the Shamarpa's regency, many conflicts broke out between his supporters, including the princes of Tsang, and the Gelug lineage supported by Mongolians. In 1618, on the 7th month of the Tibetan year (August-September), troops fighting in the name of the Karma Kagyüs invaded the Lhasa area, the Gelugpas' stronghold, and took possession of their rivals' monasteries. Everybody feared a Mongolian response, which happened only two years later, resulting in the defeat of the patrons of the Shamarpa who, despite his attempts to mediate between the Tibetan lords, had failed to completely resolve tensions.

While Central Tibet was shaken by these conflicts, the Karmapa went to Tsurpu where he wrote to Pawo Rinpoche to join him to transmit empowerments, teachings and reading transmissions. While he was on his way, Tsuglag Gyatso arrived on the banks of the Tsangpo River after crossing the Yarlung area and met Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651). He was the former abbot of the Drukpa Kagyü monastery of Ralung, and was regarded as one of the two incarnations of the deceased lineage holder, the 4th Gyalwang Drukpa, Pema Karpo (1527-1592).

Because his rival had the support of the prince of Tsang. Ngawang Namgyal had no choice but to leave Tibet to seek refuge in Bhutan. Once at Tsurpu, Tsuglag Gyatso narrated his meeting with the Drukpa hierarch, and the Karmapa was delighted to hear that Bhutan would benefit from the presence and teachings of this prestigious lineage.

The Karmapa made extensive offerings to Pawo Rinpoche, who bestowed on him the numerous transmissions he had requested: the reading transmission of the teachings of the 1st and 2nd Karmapa, the transmission of the Buddha's teachings – the Kangyur – and empowerments belonging to all the classes of tantra. These ceremonies lasted for months during which the Karmapa received and integrated all that was given without any obstacle.

These years were very troubled for the lineage and some were doubtful about the authenticity of the Shamarpa's reincarnation who was at the heart of many conflicts. Whatever hardships were encountered, Pawo Rinpoche carried on his activity for the teachings, using the offerings he received to restore the temple of Drowo Lung Sekhar that the Karmapa visited later.

In the Wood Mouse Year (1624), the Karmapa was 21 when he received the full ordination from the Shamarpa, Pawo Tsuglag Gyatso, and the 5th Tai Situ, Chökyi Gyaltzen (1586-1657). Thereafter, whenever the Shamarpa went up to Tsang province where he had his main patrons, he visited Pawo Rinpoche, sharing with him the offerings made to him, and, as the biographers say, "covering him from time to time with his own cape." He also performed rituals to remove obstacles to Tsuglag Gyatso's health.

The 3rd Palden Pawo passed away on the 28th day of the 12th month of the Iron Horse Year (January-February 1631) as he was beginning

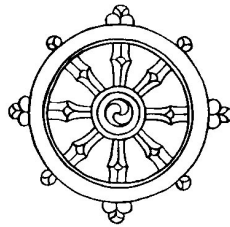
his 63rd year. The Karmapa personally took charge of the funeral rituals of one of his main teachers.

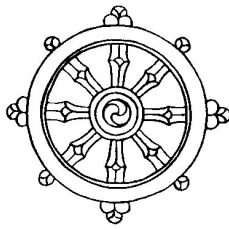
Formerly, when the Karmapa was 11, he had questioned Pawo Rinpoche about his lifespan. Tsuglag Gyatso answered: “I don’t know. I don’t have the gift of foreknowledge and the *yidams* haven’t given me any prophecy.” The Karmapa then said: “You will live between 62 and 63 years old.”

His main disciples were the 10th Karmapa, the 6th Shamarpa and the 5th Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Dragpa Chöyang (1618-1658). Among his other disciples, one of the most remarkable was Götsangpa Natsog Rangdröl (1608-?), whom he gave the first religious vows when he was in Kongpo. Later on, Natsog Rangdröl arrived in his presence at Drowo Lung Sekhar to receive the full monastic vows and many teachings. A prominent master of *mahamudra* and *maha-ati*, Natsog Rangdröl was said to be “equal to Milarepa and to the foremost scholars of India.”

Pawo Tsuglag Gyatso was also one of the teachers of the Nyingma master Sangdag Tinley Lhündrup (1611-1662), the father of Lochen Dharma Shri (1654-1718) and Terdag Lingpa (1646-1714), founder the great Nyingma monastery of Mindröling.

His collected writings include rituals and teachings.





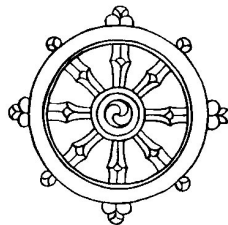


Palden Pawo IV, Tsuglag Küntu Zangpo (1632-1649)

His life story is only known through information given by or related to the 10th Karmapa, Chöying Dorje (1604-1674). He was born in the Water Monkey Year (1632) in Chushül area, south of Lhasa. He was recognized as the reincarnation of Pawo Tsuglag Gyatso by the Karmapa, who travelled to Drowo Lung Sekhar, probably with the 5th Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Dragpa Choyang (1618-1658), to celebrate his enthronement.

Political rivalries between the Karma Kagyü and Gelug Lineages were at their peak. The Karmapa left Central Tibet, entrusting the affairs of the lineage to the 5th Gyaltsab who gave Pawo Rinpoche the novice vows and the name of Tsuglag Küntu Zangpo. The estates of the Palden Pawo Rinpoches were put under the control of the Gelug Lineage; Drowo Lung Sekhar and Lhalung were then run by Geshe Lobsang Palden, of Sera Monastery. Because of this change, most of the goods and books of the lineage were dispersed.

He died in his youth, in 1649, during the Earth Ox Year, when he had not yet received all the teachings.





Palden Pawo V, Tsuglag Tinley Gyatso (1650-1700)

In his early years, he was also called Pawo Künzang Nyingpo.

In the 1650's, despite the advent of the 5th Dalai Lama (1617-1682) in 1642, the political context remained relatively tense. At the height of the conflicts, the opposition had been very rough between the Gelug Lineage supported by its Mongolians patrons on the one hand, and some great patrons of the Karma Kagyü Lineage, mostly the Shamarpa's, on the other hand. Numerous spiritual masters had been obliged to flee to eastern and southern Tibet.

It is precisely in eastern Kham that the 5th Palden Pawo was born sometime in the Iron Tiger Year (1650) at Shelkhog, close to the town of Dawu (in current Sichuan Province). He was born at the foot of Dorje Yudrönma's mountain-residence, one of the main guardian deities of Tibet. His father's name was Nuzog, and his mother's was Rayön Za.

As the 10th Gyalwang Karmapa, Chöying Dorje (1604-1674), was crossing the region en route to Central Tibet, he travelled in the neighbourhood of a cave where the great Ga Lotsawa (12th c.) had meditated. The Karmapa was there to give teachings to hermits and ordained communities who meditated in the area; on this occasion, he met the young Pawo Rinpoche's parents. He blessed him with his hands and his forehead, a very rare deed; he recognized him as the reincarnation of the Palden Pawos and gave him the name of Künzang Nyingpo. He explained some purification techniques to his parents, after which they had dreams with marvellous signs, such as a multicoloured hat descending from the sky on their tent.

Since then, the 5th Pawo lived with the Karmapa and the 7th Shamarpa, Yeshe Nyingpo (1631-1694). Depending on the political turmoil that shook the region, they tirelessly travelled from the north to the south of Kham. One day, as the young *trülku* was crossing a river, he discovered

in the water many sacred objects made of stone, such as statues, that he hastily offered to the Karmapa. Later on, as they were in Gyalthang (current Zhongdian / Shangrila, Yunnan), the former capital of the Jang Satham Tibetan Kingdom, the Shamarpa gave him the *getsül* vows and the name of Tsuglag Tinley Gyatso; the Karmapa, in turn, transmitted to him the reading transmission of the Buddha's teachings, the Kangyur, and many others instructions and empowerments.

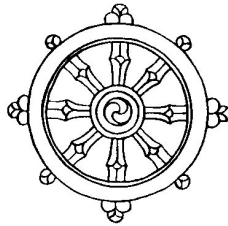
The young Pawo Rinpoche was unable to go to Drowo Lung or to Lhalung, which were under the authority of the Gelug Lineage. So, responding at the wish of the Karmapa, he travelled to Lhasa where he was warmly welcomed by the 5th Dalai Lama, with whom he spent all his time from that day forward. With great kindness, the Dalai Lama gave him many empowerments, spiritual advices and reading transmissions. To sustain his daily expenses, the Tibetan government awarded him an allowance.

When he was in his 17th year, in the Fire Horse Year (1666), in compensation for the confiscation of his feudal estates, the Dalai Lama gave him the responsibility of several monasteries, mainly Nenang – confiscated from the Sharmapa whose seat had been moved further to the north, at Yangpachen – and Ngagdra Gön in Drak country, southern Tibet. Since then, the Palden Pawos were no longer called Lhodrag Pawos but Nenang Pawos. The Dalai Lama likely gave him other places, monasteries and hermitages, but chronicles remain vague about their names and locations.

In 1673, the Karmapa returned to Lhasa where, together with the *trülkus* of the Shamarpa, Tai Situ and Gyaltsab, he was welcomed by the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government with great honour. At that time, in 1675, the 5th Dalai Lama gave the monk vows to Tsuglag Tinley Gyatso and the name of Ngawang Tsuglag Döndrup.

He kept on receiving and transmitting the Buddha's teachings and passed away when he was in his 49th year, on the 15th day (Tib. *nya*) of the 12th month (Tib. *rgyalzla*) of the Earth Hare Year (January-February 1700).

The Dalai Lama said he was a very skillful teacher, able "to rise the mind" of everyone. Among his numerous disciples, the chief ones were the 11th Gyalwang Karmapa, Yeshe Dorje (1676-1702), the 3rd Treho Rinpoche, Tenzin Dargye (1653-1730), whose incarnations lineage dated back to the times of the 8th Karmapa (1507-1554), Trungpa Sönam Gyaltzen (?-?). The Karmapa transferred Palden Pawo's body to Tsurpu where his ashes were put into a reliquary stupa made of gilded copper.





Palden Pawo VI, Tsuglag Döndrup (1701-1718)

The 6th Palden Pawo was born in the Iron Snake Year (1701), in the vicinity of Lhasa, at Chushül Tse-nga, in the family of a member of the government administration. His father's name was Tseten and his mother's Künga Wangmo. He was quickly recognized as the reincarnation of the previous Palden Pawo by the 11th Karmapa, Yeshe Dorje (1676-1702), who offered him ritual objects. Soon after the Karmapa's death, the young 8th Shamarpa, Chökyi Döndrup (1695-1732), sent him letters, presents and offerings as welcoming signs and then led the enthronement ceremonies at Nenang. Afterwards, the *trülku* went to Tsurpu Monastery to receive from the Shamarpa the first religious vows and the name of Tsuglag Döndrup Lungtog Tenpey Danyi Yeshe Gyatso Palgyi De.

Even if his biographers are not really explicit, Pawo Rinpoche's health seems to have been delicate from the very beginning of his life. Thus, the Shamarpa performed purification rituals in order to dispel stains whose energy is considered negative, creating obstacles and possibly disrupting the activity of a bodhisattva. He also performed rituals for longevity and composed a long-life prayer for the young Pawo Rinpoche. The 3rd Treho Rinpoche, Karma Tenzin Dargye (1653-1730), bestowed on him the empowerments of Six-Armed Black Mahakala, of Six-Armed White Mahakala, and of Palden Lhamo Düsölma. He also composed prayers for his longevity.

In the Fire Pig Year (1707), the Shamarpa and Pawo Tsuglag Döndrup went together to Lhasa on a pilgrimage, visiting holy places such as the temples of Tsuglagkhang and Ramoche, and the Potala. On their way back, Pawo Rinpoche invited the Shamarpa to stay at Nenang where he welcomed him with great offerings, wearing the pandit hat.

Sometime later, as a small pox epidemic had broken out in Nenang, Pawo Rinpoche went back to Tsurpu; for three years he rarely paid a visit to his monastery.

When the 8th Tai Situ, Chökyi Jungne (1700-1774), returned from Kham with the new Karmapa, Jangchub Dorje (1703-1732), to install him on the throne of Tsurpu, Pawo Rinpoche joined the *gyalwa yabses* (the Karmapa, the Shamarpa, the Tai Situ and Gyaltsab) who were tied, as the chroniclers said, “like the five fingers of the hand.” The Shamarpa instructed the two young *trülkus*, giving them the reading transmission of the *Chanting the Names Of Mañjushri (Arya-Mañjushri-Namasangiti)* and texts related to the 1st Karmapa, Düsum Khyenpa (1110-1193).

Afterwards, whenever the *gyalwa yabses* were en route to Lhasa and had the occasion to go to Nenang, Pawo Rinpoche took the opportunity to invite them. As they often met, the *trülkus* became intimate, especially Pawo Rinpoche and Tai Situ Rinpoche who wrote long-life prayers for his young friend.

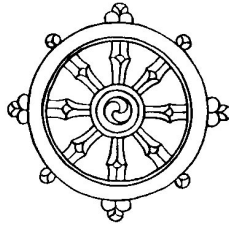
From the time of his birth, the 6th Palden Pawo had poor health. It still declined and, by 1715, in the Wood Sheep New Year, the 3rd Treho Rinpoche went to his bedside at Nenang where the *tertön* Chöje Lingpa (1682-1720) already was. The two masters bestowed on him long-life empowerments to dispel the obstacles to his health. In 1716, the *gyalwa yabses* stayed one month at Nenang to help the 6th Palden Pawo and, one year later, Chöje Lingpa gave him long-life pills made by Padmasambhava himself, together with the entire transmission of the *termas* he had revealed. Regularly, the monastery was visited by the *gyalwa yabses* who gave him their blessings, but his health worsened.

Depending on the sources, he passed away on the 2nd, the 7th, or the 17th day of the 2nd month (Tib. *dbo zla*) of the Earth Dog Year; two days after a lunar eclipse, i.e. March, 18th, 1718. Some years before, as he was staying at the seat of the Shamarpas at Yangpachen, a rainbow

appeared in the sky in front of him and the space filled with *dakinis* who said: “We are going to meet you soon.” He then wrote a letter to his mother Künga Zangmo in which he said:

In the Year of the Sheep (1715), the twigs of the tree will wither,
In the Year of the Bird (1717), the main branches of the tree will wither,
In the Year of the Dog (1718), the trunk of the tree will wither.

His mother was so saddened by this letter that she threw it into fire after reading it. The funeral ceremonies were held by the Karmapa.





***Palden Pawo VII, Tsuglag Gawey Wangpo
(1718/19-1781/82)***

He was sometimes called Pawo Dorje Tsuglag Gawa or, most often, Pawo Tsuglag Gawa.

Numerous were the contemporaries of the 6th Palden Pawo who had perceived a deep connection between him and the 8th Tai Situ, Chökyi Jungne (1700-1774). In addition, he himself had expressed his wish to be reborn near his young friend. Therefore, the research focused naturally in Kham where Tai Situ had settled. At the far end of the Earth Dog Year (December 1718- February 1719), a child was born in a family whose ancestor was an uncle of the 2nd Karmapa, Karma Pakshi (1204-1283). The conditions of his birth were so unusual that the baby was quickly recognized as the reincarnation of the Palden Pawo by the 12th Gyalwang Karmapa, Jangchub Dorje (1703-1732), and by other masters who were in Central Tibet. Soon after, they sent him the previous Palden Pawo's ritual objects.

He then stayed at Palpung Monastery, recently built (1727) by Tai Situ who gave him his first spiritual training. Later, in the Iron Pig Year (1731), in his 13th year, emissaries of the Karmapa arrived at Palpung to invite him to return to his monastery of Nenang. He therefore left for Central Tibet, staying for a little while at Surmang Monastery. All along his journey through Kham, nobles, high-ranking religious and ordinary people eagerly sought his blessings and, doing so, established a spiritual link with him.

He arrived at Tsurpu at the beginning of the 5th month of that year, as the *gyalwa yabses* were back from a pilgrimage in Bhutan (Lho Mön). During their first meeting, Pawo Rinpoche received offerings and blessings from the 12th Karmapa and the 8th Shamarpa, Chökyi Döndrup (1695-1732), who gave him the lay vows on the 10th day. The Shamarpa gave him the name of Palden Pawo Wangchug Tinley Chögyel Tsuglag Gawey De.

On this occasion, the Shamarpa led the enthronement ceremony of the new Palden Pawo and made many auspicious wishes for him.

The Karmapa and the Shamarpa bestowed on him all the empowerments of Vajrayogini and gave him the ritual practices of Sitatapatra. Afterwards, the Shamarpa taught him the Abhidharma and explained to him the essential points of some others basic texts of Buddhist philosophy. From time to time, the Shamarpa also transmitted to him initiations and reading transmissions of the Sharmapas' tradition.

The *gyalwa yabses* travelled all together to Lhasa where they met Miwang Polhane (1689-1747) who had assumed the head of the Tibetan government three years earlier with the support of China, while the 7th Dalai Lama, Kelsang Gyatso (1708-1757) was exiled in Kham. They took the opportunity of their stay in the capital to make extensive offerings in the holy places, such as the Potala Palace, and the temples of Ramoche and Tsuglagkhang.

On their way back, they stopped at Nenang where the Karmapa and the Shamarpa transmitted to the 7th Palden Pawo empowerments and teachings, after which the three carried on their way to Tsurpu. They performed there the rituals and wishes of *Gutor* Day, the 29th day of the last month of the year, by which they purified the negativities of the old year, making also great offerings to the Dharma protectors for the coming year. They participated in the making of *mani* pills with precious ingredients such as mother of pearl and quartz; they transmitted some teachings revealed by Samten Lingpa (17th c.) and Chöje Lingpa (1682-1720), and then returned to Lhasa to attend the celebrations of the New Year of the Water Mouse (1732). They made great offerings to the holy places and again met Miwang Polhane who, this time, was with his sons.

Back in Tsurpu, Pawo Rinpoche received profound explanations on the spiritual practices of Vajravarahi. It is at this time that the Gyalwang Karmapa and the Shamarpa decided to honour the request initiated by the Chinese emperor Yongzheng (1722-1735) to visit him in Beijing. Pawo Rinpoche accompanied them to the Chinese border, taking any occasion to make offerings to them. Upon leaving, he put their feet on his head, made prayers and then turned back towards Nenang. En route, he had the vision of the wisdom body (Skt. *jñanakaya*) of the great *tertön* Terdag Lingpa (1646-1714) who gave him an index of various *termas* he was then able to reveal, and also able to understand the writings of the *terma* texts he discovered.

The Karmapa and the Shamarpa passed away while they travelled in China and the 8th Tai Situ became the regent of the Karma Kagyü Lineage. Once in Central Tibet, Pawo Rinpoche went into Tai Situ's presence and received a great amount of teachings related to his own tradition and to the Shamarpas, together with empowerments of wrathful aspects of the Buddha. On this occasion, he received the monastic vows from Tai Situ whom he considered his root master throughout his life. Soon after, he met a master very close to Tai Situ, the great *vidyadhara* Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755), from the Nyingma monastery of Kathok in eastern Kham, who became one of his main instructors. From him, Tsuglag Gawa received a considerable amount of spiritual advice, teachings and initiations belonging to both old and new traditions, particularly together with the Tai Situ the empowerment of the *Mahavajracarya* of Kalachakra. Thus, he became Tsewang Norbu's spiritual heir.

His realization of the nature of mind became even more profound and subtle. He therefore lived as a mendicant, wandering here and there, without any attachment. He spent three years in retreat in a cave, during which he discovered many mind *termas* of Padmasambhava.

Kathok Tsewang Norbu was one of the most important religious figures of Tibet. Thanks to his spiritual fame and to the links he had with the Tibetan government, Tsewang Norbu has been invited to visit the royal family of Nepal. There, with the support of the kings Jaya Prakash (1735-1768) of the Malla Dynasty of Kathmandu, and Prithvi Narayan Shah (1723-1775) of the future ruling Gurkha Dynasty, he initiated the restoration of the stupas of Boudhanath, Swayambunath and Namu Buddha, which were in need of repair.

Chronicles report that, despite several trips in Nepal, various hindrances caused the works to be halted. After Tsewang Norbu's death (1755), the 7th Gyalwang Drukpa, Kagyü Tinley Shingta (1718-1767), first (1757) and then Pawo Rinpoche (1758) performed rituals to dispel obstacles and complete the work to fulfil their master's commitment. A couple days after the last consecration of the place by Tsuglag Gawa, many auspicious signs appeared, showing that the efforts of the three masters had been successful. An engraved plaque at Swayambhunath commemorates their stay and the benefits they brought to the country.

As Tsewang Norbu and Pawo Rinpoche were very close, in 1755, when Tsewang Norbu passed away, Pawo Rinpoche built a stupa at Riwo Pelbar, in southern Tibet, to pay homage to his deceased master who had made him the regent of his lineage. Built to receive the physical relics of Tsewang Norbu, this stupa was consecrated and blessed by Pawo Rinpoche and the Gyalwang Drukpa at the end of the 1750's.

On this occasion, Pawo Tsuglag Gawa left his footprints and handprints in the surrounding rocks. Their relationship was made of deep mutual respect, so that, for instance, Tsewang Norbu composed a prayer for the Palden Pawos lineage, with the aim to pay homage to them, but also to keep their memory alive.

The Palden Pawo continued to wander in Tibet, receiving and transmitting a great amount of teachings. He sometimes made long retreats, like the one he made in Kongpo, in the Namgyal Chöling Cave of the Nyingma master Jatsön Nyingpo (1585-1686), where he remained, say his biographers, “in the natural state of mind.”

In this way, he tied very close links with masters belonging to the Kagyü and Nyingma main spiritual streams. Principally in the Drukpa Kagyü Lineage, in addition to the 7th Gyalwang Drukpa, with whom the relationship was very close, he was one of the foremost masters of his successor the 8th Gyalwang Drukpa, Künzig Chökyi Nangwa (1768-1822), whom he prophesied the birth and to whom he gave the first religious vows. He was also one of the masters of the 4th Khamtrül Rinpoche, Tenzin Chökyi Nyima (1730-1779), and of the 4th Drukpa Yongzin, Jampel Pawo (1720-1780).

In the Karma Kagyü Lineage, he was one of the 13th Karmapa’s masters and he discovered the 9th Tai Situ, Pema Nyingje Wangpo (1774-1853) thanks to a vision of Padmasambhava who allowed him to know precisely where and when the *trülku* was born. Also the 10th Shamarpa, Mipam Chödrup Gyatso (1742-1792) was his disciple. Together with the Tai Situ, he went to Tashi Tse, in Tsang, to search for him, and brought him back to Tsurpu where they proceeded with his enthronement. Tsuglag Gawa transmitted to him many spiritual advices, teachings and empowerments each time he was in Yangpachen area.

His numerous travels brought him the opportunity to teach, but also to create communities for yogis where he principally taught the *maha-ati* of which he was an undisputed master. He seems to have had a special consideration for nuns, whose life was difficult in most cases. Thus, in 1743, in Dranang Tashi Ling, in southern Tibet, the birthplace of Longchenpa

(1308-1363), he built the temple of Karma Künzang Khachö and Deden Damchö Ling Monastery that hosted about fifty nuns.

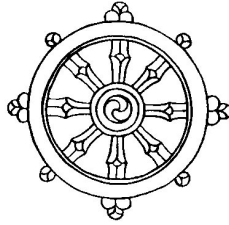
He also had under his responsibility Drag-ngag Monastery in southern Tibet, and the caves surrounding it, where hermit nuns stayed. In Powo, a kingdom in the loop of the Tsangpo River, Tsuglag Gawa established another nunnery that was linked to Nenang Monastery.

At Tane, Upper Kongpo, a place blessed by Hayagriva, he restored the “One Hundred Thousands Images” great stupa of Tapag Thongdröl Ling. He also made statues and arranged hermitages where about fifteen nuns lived. This stupa was destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), but in the 1980’s, some people discovered in its ruins a skullcap, a *kapala*, formerly put there as a relic, which produced an abundance of *ringsel* pearls. The *kapala* was removed and put in a safer place, so that no one would damage it, and pearls were offered to the 10th Palden Pawo (1912-1991) who lived in Nepal at that time.

He had the fame of a holy man, not only because of his great qualities as a teacher, but also because, day and night, he remained in a state of perfect clarity and spiritual liberation. He passed away on the 5th day of the 11th month of the Iron Ox Year (end of 1781 / beginning of 1782). A biography states he realized the Rainbow Body at the time of his death.

He wrote many texts and prayers, among them a prayer for the *mahamudra* lineage masters, and a prayer for the Palden Pawo Rinpoches lineage. From this incarnation, as a manifestation of Padmasambhava’s mind, the Palden Pawos hold the hat called “Padma thong dröl”, i.e. the Lotus that liberates through seeing, which belonged to Padmasambhava. This particularly blessed hat is invoked, for instance, in the *Lama gongdü*, discovered by Sangye Lingpa (1340-1396), and the *Lama norbu gyatso*,

discovered by Padma Lingpa (1450-1521). Because of this hat, the Pawo Rinpoches were therefore sometimes called Shatrapa, which means “the one who holds the multicoloured hat”, this hat being multicoloured (Tib. *shatra*) as each part of it has a different colour related to its symbolism: golden yellow / the union of wisdom and skilful means, dark blue / Samantabhadra, and so forth. Since then, the Pawo Rinpoches celebrated a special ceremony during which they showed this precious hat.





*Palden Pawo VIII, Tsuglag Chökyi Gyelpo
(1785-1841)*

He was also called Pawo Tsuglag Chögyel, Pawo Tsuglag Dorje Chökyi Gyelpo, [Pawo Tsuglag Chökyi Gyelpo] Padma Tenzin Chogdrup Tsel, Palden Pawo Chog Tsuglag Chökyi Gyelpo Padma Tenzin Tsel, Rigzin Padma Chogdrup Tsel, and Padma Garwang Drodül Gyelpo Tsel.

He was born at Yilung, Derge Kingdom, Kham, on the 15th day of the 1st month of the Wood Snake Year (1785) in the family of the 9th Tai Situ, Pema Nyinje Wangpo (1774-1853), of whom he was the younger brother; his father was a tantric practitioner called Ngagchang Ngawang Dorje Gön, and his mother's name was Andro Za Tsering Wangmo (or Palmo). It was said that his very first words were Om Ah Hung and that he shook his hands as if he handled a *vajra* sceptre and a bell.

He was first recognized as the reincarnation of the Palden Pawo by the 8th Gyalwang Drukpa, Künzig Chökyi Nangwa (1768-1822), and by the great Drukpa Kagyü master Zigar Rigzin Dorje Dragpo (1740-1798) who performed the ablution ritual for the young *trülku*, after which he had to begin the journey to Nenang for his enthronement. The 13th Karmapa, Dödül Dorje (1733-1797) also recognized him, and gave him his first religious names and offered prayers for his longevity. The Palpung Önrül (?-?), one of the main masters of Palpung Monastery, arrived at Nenang where the enthronement took place. For a time, he took charge of the *trülku*'s spiritual training. Then the 8th Palden Pawo went to the 8th Dalai Lama, Jampel Gyatso (1758-1804), who gave him the name of Jampel Sangdag Pema Tenzin.

His childhood was deeply troubled by the political turmoil that Central Tibet knew. In 1791, as the country was invaded by Nepalese armies, Pawo Rinpoche went to the southern region of Jar, at the seat of the Drukpa

Kagyü Lineage where the 8th Gyalwang Drukpa gave him many teachings, including those related to the *mahamudra*. In turn, the Karmapa taught him the collected writings of the former Karmapas and special advices on *mahamudra*, such as those concerning the co-emergent union.

In 1792, with the intervention of the Chinese army to expel the Nepalese troops, the political atmosphere was very tense. Pawo Rinpoche's close masters took the opportunity of an invitation sent by the Kanam Depa, king of the small Powo Kingdom, to leave the most troubled areas and visit him. Installed in the royal palace, though he was very young, Pawo Tsuglag Chögyal performed numerous rituals, including a 21-day *drupchen* during which he made medicinal pills made of nectar. Soon after, he took the road back to Nenang, staying a long time at the Drukpa Kagyü's seat where a house called Sang-ngag Gatsel was built for him under the Gyalwang Drukpa's guidance. Even if the links between the two spiritual masters were already very strong, they became even closer. However, it is difficult to know how long he stayed away from Central Tibet. In the Fire Dragon Year (1796), he was back in Tsurpu where he met the young Drukpa Kagyü master Yeshe Drubpa (1781-1845) who became one of his disciples and a close friend. They met again in Tsurpu in the Earth Horse Year (1798).

Years later, in 1815, Pawo Rinpoche returned to Tsurpu where he gave many teachings to the 14th Karmapa Thekchog Dorje (1798-1868), including the *mahamudra*, the Six Yogas of Naropa, the oral instructions of Rechung and so forth. As the 9th Dalai Lama, Lungthog Gyatso (1806-1815) had died very young, Tibet was under the rule of a regent, Demo Jigme Gyatso (1778-1819, reg. 1811-1819), who requested Pawo Rinpoche to go to Tsari, in southeastern Tibet, to supervise the restoration of the holy place of Palpug, whose exact location remains uncertain today.

In 1822, when the 8th Gyalwang Drukpa passed away, Pawo Rinpoche was given the responsibility to organise the funeral rituals. He made a representation of his main master and built the stupa intended to receive his precious relics. Two years later, in 1824, visions enabled Pawo Rinpoche and Drukpa Yeshe Drubpa to find his reincarnation who was born the previous year at Gyantse in Tsang Province. Since then, the 14th Karmapa and Pawo Tsuglag Chögyal became the spiritual masters of the new 9th Gyalwang Drukpa, Jigme Mingyur Wangyel (1823-1883), with whom they established very deep relations.

In 1832, the 14th Gyalwang Karmapa, the 9th Tai Situ and the 8th Pawo Rinpoche gathered to celebrate great rituals in honour of Padmasambhava, which were attended by the Derge king, his relatives and ministers; thus, the existing patron-religious relations were strengthened.

While at Lhasa, Pawo Tsuglag Chögyel visited the 10th Dalai Lama, Tsültrim Gyatso (1816-1837), and then, in 1837 he began the long journey to Kham. He took residence at Palpung, Tai Situ's monastery and, during his stay or while travelling, he met the main masters of all the spiritual lineages of the region. He stayed particularly at Nangchen whose king invited him to remain in his palace where he gave many teachings to the royal family and to the numerous masters living in the kingdom.

It was at that time that he received an invitation from Ganden Jampa Ling, the great Gelug monastery of Chamdo, the capital of Kham. Its head, the 8th Pagpa Lha, Jigme Tenpey Nyima (1795-1847), and his entourage welcomed Pawo Rinpoche with great pomp. He performed several auspicious rituals for the monastery and long-life rituals for the masters of the place. In addition, he taught them and gave them empowerments and spiritual advice, including his own *termas* and those revealed by Chöje

Lingpa (1682-1720). He had a specially close relation with the 7th Chagra Trülku (1796-1860), one of the main masters of Ganden Jampa Ling, who became one of his close disciples. He then travelled to Surmang and the surrounding area where he gave numerous spiritual transmissions to the *trülkus* and the various masters of the place, including the Seven Mandalas of Ngog, the Three Cycles of Dohas, Jatsön Nyingpo's Six Books, and other teachings and practices belonging to the old and new traditions.

He also went to Derge, at the invitation of the king, where he gave to the landlords, the religious and lay, a great amount of teachings and empowerments with detailed explanations. Back in Palpung, he received from the 9th Tai Situ very important empowerments of Dharma protectors, *yidams* and *dakinis*. The Tai Situ revered Pawo Tsuglag Chögyal and composed several texts praising his spiritual qualities.

While in Kham, he met the masters whom the Rime non-sectarian movement was founded by, and he himself became one of its key figures, though less well known. Thus he had links, as a master and a disciple, with the 1st Jamgön Kongtrül, Lodrö Thaye (1813-1899), Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892) and the great *tertön* Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870).

His relations with this last one were very important, though very brief. Shortly after having received his first monastic vows, Chogyur Lingpa received from Pawo Tsuglag Chögyal teachings and empowerments from the *Lama gongdü*, a *terma* revealed by Sangye Lingpa (1340-1396). Once the transmission was complete, Pawo Rinpoche urged his new disciple to practice diligently what he had given to him. When Chögyur Lingpa was only 13, he began to discover hidden teachings and tradition says that he became able to reveal the huge quantity of *termas* he discovered because he followed Pawo Rinpoche's advice.

Around 1839, Pawo Tsuglag Chögyal gave the 1st Jamgön Kongtrül teachings, reading transmissions and empowerments belonging to *mahamudra* and mind *terma* traditions. In his autobiography, Jamgön Kongtrül wrote that, for each teaching or any kind of transmission, he had very auspicious dreams. Once back in Nenang, Tsuglag Chögyal stayed only for a short time. He left for Lhasa, where he made sumptuous offerings to the holy places of the city. A biography states that on this occasion he met the 11th Dalai Lama, Khedrup Gyatso (1838-1856) but it seems impossible as this Dalai Lama was identified in September 1841 and enthroned in May 1842, after Pawo Rinpoche's death.

The date and place of his death remain unclear. Some state that he passed away in Lhasa, or Nenang, the 21st day of the 8th or 10th month of the Earth Pig Year (Oct.-Nov. 1839; Dec. 1839-Jan. 1840) as he was in his 55th year. A biography states that he arrived at Nenang on the 25th day of the 8th month of the Iron Ox Year (Oct. 1841). This last date seems probable as he celebrated at Surmang, in Kham, the hair-cutting ceremony for a *trülku* of Ragtrül Gön monastery this Iron Ox Year. Anyway, all agree that he remained three days in meditation after his death during which the sky looked like a rainbow, everyone being full of respect and admiration. Numerous were the masters who wrote prayers for the future activity of the Palden Pawo's lineage.

He wrote several texts, including a praise to Palden Lhamo Düsölma. As a *tertön*, he was considered a manifestation of Bairotsana, one of Padmasambhava's closest disciples. One of his Mind *termas*, a long-life practice entitled *The Pure Vase of Nectar of Immortality, Vanquisher of the Evil Lord of Death*, has been included in Jamgön Kongtrül's *Rinchen Terdzö* (vol. 20, p. 721-764). He had at least one son, Karma Drubgyü Tenpa Yarpel (?-?), who was maybe an incarnation of Kathog Rigdzin Tsewang Norbu (1698-1755). He was one of Jamgön Kongtrül's masters and transmitted him a cycle of *termas* discovered by Sangye Lingpa.



Palden Pawo IX, Tsuglag Nyinje Wangpo (1842-1909)

He was also called Pawo Tsuglag Nyinjey De, Pawo Tsuglag Nyinmor Jepey De, Pawo Tsuglag Nyimay De, or Pawo Tsuglag Nyima.

Information about the 9th Palden Pawo's life is very scattered and mainly found in books related to the 14th Karmapa, Thekchog Dorje (1798-1868), the 9th Tai Situ (1774-1853) and the 1st Jamgön Kongtrül (1813-1899). As the previous incarnation, he was equally a master of the Nyingma and Kagyü Lineages and had strong links with the masters of the non-sectarian Rime movement.

When the 8th Palden Pawo passed away, many masters composed prayers for his swift rebirth. The 9th Tai Situ wrote a supplication in which he said:

Supreme master of the *mantrayana*, may you quickly manifest as the protector of the teachings and of all sentient beings; a guardian who makes the awakened activity of Padmasambhava shine in one hundred directions, like the sun in a clear sky!

He was born at Drowo Lung Sekhar, the former seat of the Palden Pawo Lineage, probably in the Water Tiger Year (1842). Almost nothing is known about his parents except that his father Dorje Dzinpa and his mother Rinchen Drölma were of good family.

He was perhaps recognized by the 9th Gyalwang Drukpa Mingyur Wangyel (1823-1883), but nothing is absolutely certain. Nevertheless, he became one of the Gyalwang Drukpa's disciples and a close disciple of the 14th Karmapa. As stated in the *Golden Rosary*, he also received empowerments of *termas* discovered by Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870) given at Tsurpu by the 1st Jamgön Kongtrül, in May-June 1858 to the 14th Karmapa, the young 10th Tai Situ, Pema Künzang (1854-1885), the 9th Gyalwang Drukpa, among 20 other lamas. Then, despite his young age, Pawo Rinpoche

gave them, in the Dechen Podrang at Tsurpu, the transmission of the *termas* discovered by Dechen Lingpa (?-?). In his autobiography, Jamgön Kongtrül adds that, after his stay at Tsurpu, he joined the 10th Tai Situ who was invited by Pawo Tsuglag Nyinje at Nenang; Jamgön Kongtrül gave him the empowerment and the reading transmission of Vajarakilaya, also belonging to Chogyur Lingpa's *termas*. In turn, Pawo Rinpoche gave him very rare empowerments and reading transmissions mostly from the Nyingma lineages that were held by the Palden Pawos.

Pawo Rinpoche became a direct disciple of Chogyur Lingpa, also a former disciple of the 8th Palden Pawo. According to Chogyur Lingpa's biographies, Pawo Rinpoche was at Tsurpu Monastery when he stayed there to give empowerments and to instruct the 14th Karmapa and his close disciples. In addition, reference is made to the 9th Pawo Rinpoche in the list of Chogyur Lingpa's closest disciples, Tsuglag Nyinje being one of the few holders of the new *termas* revealed by him.

After the Karmapa's passing away in 1868, Chogyur Lingpa, Jamgön Kongtrül and Pawo Tsuglag Nyinje began a confidential research to find the birthplace of his reincarnation, basing their investigation upon a prediction letter written by the Karmapa. They therefore recognized him in a baby born in 1871 in Tsang Province.

Later, in 1877, once the *trülku* was back in Tsurpu, Tsuglag Nyinje probably attended the ceremony led by the 9th Gyalwang Drukpa for his enthronement as the 15th Karmapa, Khakhyab Dorje (1871-1922). Pawo Rinpoche became one of his masters, transmitting to him in November 1882 the entire cycle of the Six Books of the *tertön* Jatsön Nyingpo (1585-1686), and the cycle of Vajrakilaya according to the tradition of Chöje Lingpa (1682-1720). Soon after, the young Karmapa came to Nenang to bless the buildings

that were newly restored, the work having begun one year before at the request of Pawo Rinpoche.

He travelled at least two times to Kham. Around the 8th month (c. December) of the Fire Mouse Year (1876), he arrived in Palpung Monastery where Jamgön Kongtrül came to welcome him. They went together to Kongtrül's hermitage where, at his request, Pawo Rinpoche performed rituals of consecration and bestowed on him a long-life empowerment. Tsuglag Nyinje stayed then at Dzongsar Monastery where Jamgön Kongtrül gave him teachings on Hevajra in the tradition of Marpa the Translator (1012-1097), and the commentaries he himself had composed. Jamgön Kongtrül also gave him teachings on *mahamudra* and numerous empowerments and reading transmissions of Dharma protectors.

While Pawo Rinpoche was in Kham, Jamgön Kongtrül wrote at his request a short explanation about the symbolism of the Padmasambhava's hat held by the Pawo Rinpoches, based upon the account given to him by the 8th Palden Pawo. At his behest, Kongtrül also wrote a short explanatory text about the practice of the 8th Pawo's Mind *terma*, *The Pure Vase of Nectar of Immortality, Vanquisher of the Evil Lord of Death*. If Pawo Rinpoche did attend the enthronement of the Karmapa, his first stay in Kham would have been short.

Pawo Tsuglag Nyinje returned to Kham in 1885. In the 6th month of the Wood Bird Year (July-August), he joined Jamgön Kongtrül at Dzong Shö Monastery where many masters gathered to receive the teachings and empowerments they had requested.

Biographies are very discrete about the personal life of the Pawo Rinpoches who were lay. Tsuglag Nyinje had a consort, but the texts give no information about her, neither her name, nor her origin. Maybe she was from Kham,

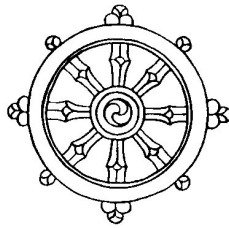
more precisely from Nangchen, as Palpung Monastery had to pay to the kingdom the traditional compensation for Pawo Rinpoche's son who had been recognized as the reincarnation of the late Palpung Önrül (?-1873), one of Jamgön Kongtrül's main masters. The 5th month of the Wood Monkey Year (July 1886), Pawo Rinpoche returned from Nangchen to Palpung with his son after an arrangement was reached. They didn't stay a long time in the monastery and went back to Nenang after the enthronement of the *trülku* whose religious name was Chökyi Lodrö; Pawo Rinpoche promised that his son would return to Palpung later. In fact, he came back there at the far end of the Iron Hare Year (c. December 1891). He then received numerous teachings from Jamgön Kongtrül and from the great abbot of Palpung, Tashi Öser (1836-1910).

Though very active on the spiritual level, Tsuglag Nyinje spent years in retreat, mainly in Samten Ling Hermitage, at Tsurpu. However, he is mentioned in the long biography of Serkong Ngawang Tsültrim Dönden (1856-1918), an important master and yogi of the Gelug Lineage who met Pawo Rinpoche once at Thangpoche Monastery, in southern Tibet, where Pawo Rinpoche had stayed on his way back to Nenang after a journey. Serkong Rinpoche emphasized his deep friendly and peaceful temper.

According to Khakhyab Dorje's biography, Pawo Rinpoche passed away on the 21st day of the 10th month of the Earth Bird Year, i.e. December, 7th, 1909. This news was immediately announced to the Karmapa who stopped the retreat he had begun a couple of days before and went as quick as possible to Nenang to make wishes in the presence of his master's body. The biography states that according to tradition, the Karmapa sealed all the Pawo Rinpoche properties : texts, ritual objects, room, statues and so forth. He stayed then in the monastery for some days, without eating,

leading rituals and making great offerings. Afterwards he returned to Tsurpu where he resumed his retreat.

The existence of a collection of his works is known, but its exact content remains uncertain. Among other texts, he wrote a practice of a *guru yoga* of the 8th Palden Pawo. His son, Palpung Önrül Chökyi Lodrö, became the regent of the properties of the lineage. He died at the end of the 1910's on his way back to Palpung. His wife died before 1913, the 3rd Kathog Situ, Chökyi Gyatso (1880-1925), having seen her reliquary stupa alongside that of the 9th Palden Pawo in Nenang that year. He had another son who was the treasurer of the monastery, but his name remains unknown.





***Palden Pawo X, Tsuglag Mawey Wangchug
(1912-1991)***

He was also called Pawo Tsuglag Mawa and Pawo Tsuglag Mawey Wangpo.

After the passing away of the 9th Pawo, Tsuglag Nyinje, in December 1909, his close assistants and disciples continuously asked the 15th Gyalwang Karmapa, Khakhyab Dorje (1871-1922) to search for his reincarnation. The Karmapa related the circumstances that allowed him to meet these requirements. He wrote:

In the early days of the Water Mouse Year (1912), like in a dream, I saw a monk I thought was Gongtsen [the guardian deity of Nenang Monastery]. He had a rosary adorned with precious stones and gave me a silk scarf, urging me to find the excellent *trülku* of the mighty Pawo. This vision vanished immediately after speaking.

Then at that very moment, everywhere in the room appeared images that allowed the Karmapa to know precisely the place and conditions of birth. Meanwhile, at Nenang, the offering scarf that adorned the altar of the protectors of the Palden Pawos' lineage fell on the ground with no apparent reason. Soon after, lay and religious disciples of the late Palden Pawo, among them his son Önrül Chökyi Lodrö (?-?), came to Tsurpu to kindly request once more the Karmapa to find their master. They were very surprised to see the scarf offered by Gongtsen and to hear that the protector had already made the same request.

In the early days of 1913, the Karmapa was delighted to hear that the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933) was coming back from his exile in India where he had sought refuge after the Chinese invasion (1910). Soon after, in the first days of April, as the Karmapa went to Lhasa to have an audience with him, he stopped at the residence of the Lhalu family, one of the great noble families of the country where Gyurme Wangchug, the prefect

of Mönkhar Dzong, his wife Pema Drölma and their infant were also staying. The child had a large abscess on his eye and his parents kindly asked the Karmapa to bless him. Upon seeing the baby he felt deeply happy, recounted the Karmapa, and the child took his finger and didn't want to let it go. The Karmapa was then firmly convinced that he was the new Palden Pawo. The next morning, the abscess was gone.

The Karmapa inquired about the conditions and place of birth, the details of which corresponded to his vision inspired by Gongtsen. The boy was born on the 10th day of the 5th month of the Water Mouse Year, i.e. June 24th, 1912, at approximately one day's journey from Lhasa in the Nyemo County, at Mönkhar Dzong, on the border of Tsang Province. His parents belonged to the nobility. His birth had been accompanied by wonderful events: a splendid rainbow had appeared in the sky as if it had sprung from the house, delicate scents had filled the air while flower-shaped snowflakes fell.

The Karmapa understood that the ties he had with Pawo Rinpoche were of great purity, but the abscess on the eye revealed that his master's reincarnation might meet obstacles with his health. He commanded then that this birth be kept secret to avoid any hindrance. He also enjoined rituals to be made to ensure health and longevity for the reincarnation. The *trülku*, instead of going to his monastery, stayed at home with his parents.

Added to these continuous prayers, special ceremonies for his sake and his long life were performed from the 1st to the 5th month of the Wood Hare Year (1915). Shortly after, on the 4th day of the 6th month, i.e. July 16th, 1915, a delegation led by Önrül Chökyi Lodrö came to his parents to invite and bring him to Tsurpu where he was welcomed with great pomp. The Gyalwang Karmapa gave him his first religious vows and the name of Gyurme Rangjung Dagpey Dorje Thekchog Tsuglag Mawey Wangchug

Nampar Gyalwey De. Two days later, he solemnly celebrated the *trülku*'s enthronement at Nenang and he gave back to Gongtsen the scarf that the protector had offered to him in his vision, after having dyed it red and adorned it with his seal. Afterwards, the Karmapa endowed the White Tara empowerment on the young *trülku* and composed a long-life prayer for him on this occasion.

The 10th Palden Pawo was then raised by the Karmapa who had a spouse and children, among them one of the incarnations of Jamgön Kongtrül (1813-1899), the 2nd Kongtrül, Khyentse Öser (1904-1953) who was only a few years older than Pawo Rinpoche. First, Önrül Chökyi Lodrö taught him the basic alphabet and then, one year later, the Karmapa himself and his consort Urgyen Tsomo (?-?), the great *dakini* of Tsurpu, took personally charge of the new Palden Pawo's education.

The Karmapa was not only his spiritual tutor, but also taught him writing, grammar, the making of protection knots and so forth. From time to time, when the Karmapa was invited to ceremonies or shows, he took Pawo Rinpoche with him. On the spiritual level, the *trülku* received all the teachings specific to the Karmapas, and all those transmitted to Khakhyab Dorje by the important spiritual masters of various lineages who visited him, especially the Nyingmas Kathok Situ (1880-1925), and Minling Dozin (?-?). In 1922, despite his young age, Tsuglag Mawey Wangchug supervised the ceremonies for the Karmapa's funerals.

Some years later, in 1925, he went to Lhasa where he met the 13th Dalai Lama who celebrated the hair cutting ceremony and gave him the name of Tsuglag Thubten Künsel. The Dalai Lama asked him if, in the future, he would rather be a monk or a layman, like several of his previous incarnations. Pawo Rinpoche replied eagerly that he wanted to enter the monastic way of life and asked the Dalai Lama to give him the first vows.

Considering the year as not favourable for it, Thubten Gyatso proposed to him to perform the ceremony the following year.

On that year, on the day of the full moon of the 1st month of the Fire Tiger Year (February 27th, 1926), in the heart of the great festival of Mönlam, the Dalai Lama gave him the *getsül* vows in the new Chensel Podrang of Norbulingka. Then, as he was back in Nenang, Pawo Rinpoche entered a long retreat in Samten Tse Hermitage, built in the Fire Tiger Year (1386) above the monastery by the 2nd Shamarpa, Kachö Wangpo (1350-1405), where he made *mahamudra* practices and meditations several times.

The new Karmapa took birth in Kham in 1924 where the 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchug Gyelpo (1886-1952), took him under his tutorship. In 1931, he arrived at Tsurpu and was welcomed on his way by the 2nd Kongtrül Rinpoche, the 11th Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Dragpa Gyatso (1902-1959), and the 10th Palden Pawo who organized for him sumptuous ceremonies. Soon after, during the enthronement ceremonies of the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpey Dorje (1924-1981), Pawo Rinpoche made great offerings and composed long-life prayers for the new head of the Karma Kagyüs. Since then, the Karmapa stayed regularly at Nenang where he received many teachings and empowerments. However, the 10th Palden Pawo continued his spiritual training, mainly under the guidance of Bogangkar Drupgyü Chökyi Senge (1893-1957), a master of incomparable erudition who was also one of the 16th Karmapa's main tutors. Bogangkar Rinpoche spent two and a half years with him, during which he transmitted countless teachings concerning the Tibetan language, philosophy, meditations and rituals of old and new traditions. On one occasion, he wrote a long-life prayer saying:

Like the magic thought of the Victorious Born in the Lake, you manifest
as the one wearing the saffron robe.

Excellent sun who makes the perfect Lord's teachings shine, I pray you to live long Tsuglag Mawey Wangpo!

In the Water Bird Year (1933), nomad sponsors invited him to their lands in northern Tibet. He therefore took the road to Jangthang, the great northern plain where he was everywhere welcomed by festivities. He continuously made prayers for the humans and animals, who endured a very difficult life, wishing them to enjoy good conditions and, true to his bodhisattva commitments, he distributed all the offerings he received. At each place he stayed, he gave teachings and empowerments, and also performed rituals for protection; on one occasion, he celebrated the Padmasambhava's hat wearing ceremony.

During the same year, back in Nenang, he restored the old Samten Tse Hermitage where he intended to stay in retreat for three years. But there were so many insects that any sojourn there was impossible during the hot season. He decided therefore to stay there three or four months each winter.

The Fire Ox Year (1937) had just begun when he started a pilgrimage to the holy places of Central Tibet. He visited the former monasteries of the Kadampa lineage such as Shara Bumpa, Reting and Nyethang. He also went to Talung where he met the young Talung Tsetrül (1926-2015); and Drigung Thil, where he met the great yogi and hermit Drigung Amgön Rinpoche (1853-1945) and Kangyur Rinpoche (1898-1975). He stayed for a while at Terdrom, where Yeshe Tsogyal (8th c.) the main mystical consort of Padmasambhava had spent years in retreat; at Ganden, the Gelug lineage seat; and at Samye, the first Tibetan monastery founded in the 8th century by Padmasambhava and Shantarakshita.

He travelled to Densa Thil, founded by Pagmodrupa (1110-1170); to Zangri Kharmar, the residence of Machig Labdrön (1055-1149); and then to

Lhasa, where he arrived at the start of the festivities of the Earth Tiger New Year (1938). All along his journey, he made great offerings and, from time to time, gave or received teachings.

As soon as he returned to Nenang, he left for Tsurpu where the 2nd Jamgön Kongtrül transmitted many teachings, such as the 15th Karmapa's collected works, *termas* revealed by Yongey Mingyur Dorje (?-1708), and among others, the empowerment of Palden Lhamo with its detailed explanations.

In the summer 1939, Pawo Rinpoche went to Lhasa to attend the festivities organized in honour of the arrival in the capital of the new Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (1935-). The next year, on the 22th February 1940, he came back to Lhasa to attend the enthronement of the young leader of Tibet. At the very beginning of summer, he started a long journey towards Kham, mainly to visit Palpung, Tai Situ Rinpoches' monastery, where masters lived holding precious teachings, including all those gathered by the founders of the Rime movement.

En route, his road was cut off by the failure of the metallic fasteners of a bridge made of iron chains that had been built by the 3rd Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339) in the Wood Dog Year (1334). The population was severely impacted by this because, despite all the efforts already made, the bridge could not be repaired. They could only advise Pawo Rinpoche's caravan to make an extended detour to find another way to cross the river. Pawo Rinpoche decided to stop and prayed intensely to the *naga* kings, spending all night performing rituals and making offerings to remove obstacles. The next morning, he grabbed the iron cables of the bridge that miraculously came out of the water; he fixed the fasteners so well that men and beasts were again able to cross the river.

On the side of the bridge, Pawo Rinpoche let them pass, making the gesture of giving refuge in the Three Jewels to everybody. For everyone, the *naga* kings had obviously helped Pawo Rinpoche to lift the bridge out of the river. This event had such an impact that soon everyone in the area knew Pawo Rinpoche under the nickname of “lama who repaired the ties of the iron bridge.” His fame, already huge, became even greater and, until the end of his journey, he was constantly escorted by government officials, religious and lay people who came in large numbers to meet him and get his blessing.



At Palpung, from left to right: 2nd Jamgön Kongtrül; Palpung Ögen; 1st Beru Khyentse;
16th Karmapa ; 11th Tai Situ ; Treho Rinpoche ; 10th Palden Pawo ®

He stayed four years at Palpung, giving the teachings and empowerments he held and receiving those held by the masters of the area, including

the 11th Tai Situ, the 1st Beru Khyentse, Mize Jampey Gocha (1890-1946), and Shechen Kongtrül Pema Drime (1901-1960). He was said to receive the teachings in the manner of a vase is filled to the brim, losing absolutely nothing.

In 1944, the Palpung masters were on their way to Central Tibet when the great crow of Nenang, a bird linked to the protector Gongtsen, appeared above the monastery, confirming to Pawo Rinpoche that it was a good time for him to return. The crow escorted the *gyalwa yabses* all along their journey. Each time they stopped, crowds of devotees came to give offerings; Pawo Rinpoche tirelessly performed rituals for the welfare of people and gave empowerments and celebrated everywhere the ceremony of wearing Padmasambhava's hat.

Upon his arrival at Nenang, he was invited to visit the great Lhalu family who received him with all the honours due to his rank. Through their patronage, the next year, he was able to built a hermitage for the monks of Nenang where they could benefit from the best conditions to practice the entire *mahamudra* teachings and *yidam* meditations. Pawo Rinpoche wanted his monks to have this spiritual training before they might be allowed to practice any funeral rituals and the yoga of transference (Tib. *powa*).

He then stayed at Nenang, travelling only from time to time. Thus, in 1947, he went to Deden Damchö Ling, the nunnery founded by the 7th Palden Pawo in 1743. When he was in Kham, several extraordinary events occurred in his presence, so that he got the reputation of being able to help the dead in the intermediate state, whatever their situation was. The villagers living in the vicinity of the nunnery were faced with a case of possession by the spirit of a dead person, and they decided to explain to Pawo Rinpoche

the enormous difficulties they met, and to request his help. He then talked directly to the spirit and obliged him to take an oath not to hurt anybody. The spirit, through the voice of the possessed person agreed to submit to him; afterwards, no one feared the spirit anymore, and peace returned to the region.

The same year, he received at Nenang the 2nd Jamgön Kongtrül who gave him at his request empowerments of peaceful and wrathful aspect of the Buddha and special explanations on the Six Yogas of Naropa; Pawo Rinpoche himself gave him the transmission of the longevity practices of the *termas* of Yongey Mingyur Dorje (?-1708).

His health remained fragile and when he entered his 37th year, during the ceremonies of the Earth Mouse New Year (1948), the 2nd Jamgön Kongtrül led all the monks of Nenang and Drag-ngag to perform a five-day ritual dedicated to his long life. On the 15th day, Jamgön Kongtrül composed a long-life prayer for him; in turn, Pawo Rinpoche gave him several teachings, including the reading transmission of the *Prajñāparamita*.

Two years later, in spring 1949, in accordance with the wishes he had expressed in front of the 13th Dalai Lama, he took the full monastic vows from the 2nd Jamgön Kongtrül, who gave him the name of Karma Ngawang Thubten Tsuglag Künsel Lekshe Mawey Wangchug Pal Zangpo. Since then, he became an example of the Vinaya ethical conduct. Further in that year, wishing to maintain the spiritual heritage of his incarnation lineage, he started the restoration of the temples of Nenang and of Ngagdra Gön, already embellished by Pawo Tsuglag Gawa in the 18th century.

It took four years of work at Nenang. At the same time, in order to facilitate the purification practice of *nyungne* of the villagers of Kado, at the foot of Nenang, he built for them a large temple dedicated to it, whose main statue was a thousand-armed, eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara made of

an alloy of copper and gold. He also granted an annuity to the temple so that its care would not depend on the villagers.

The defeat of the Tibetan army against the communist Chinese troops in 1950-1951 upset the administration of the country. Pawo Rinpoche managed to keep stability in his monastery and, in 1954, he started a great pilgrimage to Mount Kailas, in western Tibet. While he was travelling, several difficult situations occurred, but they miraculously turned to his advantage. Thus, without any obstacle, he was able to circumambulate the sacred mountain and to visit its numerous holy places. He returned after the Wood Sheep New Year (1955), when peasants invited him to their area where the local deity created severe obstacles. A lama of the place who had already been solicited for the same affair had failed and, since then, endured many problems. Against the opinion of his entourage, who didn't want to let him go, he went to the farmers' region and managed to subdue the deity, which was a great relief for everyone.

In 1956, taking advantage of the numerous gifts he received and of the patronage of high noble families, he organized the restoration of the monks' cells and of the temple of Ngang Pug, the former residence of Melong Dorje (1243-1303), a great *maha-ati* master. He also started great works at Khachö Ling, in Drag-ngag area, that was under his responsibility. He donated to the temple statues and all the needed ritual objects.

That same year, shortly before leaving for India to attend the great celebrations of the 2.500-year anniversary of the Buddha, the 14th Dalai Lama responded positively to the 16th Karmapa's invitation and, in July, went to Tsurpu Monastery. On his return, the Dalai Lama stopped at Nenang where Pawo Rinpoche invited him to give a short teaching on the *Gradual Path*, the *Lamrim*, composed by Tsongkhapa (1357-1419),

the founder of the Gelug Lineage. Accompanied by his two tutors, surrounded by a hundred monks, the young Dalai Lama taught a large crowd gathered in the valley. The next day he gave the transmission of Avalokiteshvara's mantra, and then went to the monastery to bless the temple. His political duties obliged him to return to the capital the next day.

In the mid-1950's, political tensions intensified as the uprising against the Chinese in Kham began to spread all over. The Dalai Lama then made the request to the great spiritual masters of the country to look for signs that would enable him to know what would happen to the Buddha's teachings in Tibet. One night, while meditating, Pawo Rinpoche saw the sun disappear, leaving a deep darkness, but thousands of stars began to sparkle, spreading their light all over the world. This vision was told to the Dalai Lama and interpreted as a sign that the Buddha's teachings would fade at least for a time in Tibet but it would spread everywhere else. This is one of the very few inner experiences Pawo Tsuglag Mawey Wangchug shared with his entourage during his life. He was generally silent about them, considering them as illusory as the phenomenal world.

His health was still a matter of concern for his retinue. In 1957, at the request of Kharag Yongzin Rinpoche (?-?), the monks of Nenang performed different ceremonies, sometimes repeated one hundred thousands times, such as reading the Kangyur, the recitation of prayers to remove obstacles (*barche lamsel, sampa lhündrup...*), rituals of Tara, prayers to the *dakinis*, offerings to Padmasambhava, and so on. The physical hindrances of Pawo Rinpoche were then dispelled.

Political tensions still worsened and the uprising against the Chinese arrived in Lhasa. Even though, at Nenang, most of the monks and lamas didn't want to believe that the danger was near, the 10th Palden Pawo was sure that Padmasambhava's prophecies announcing a dark age for

the Dharma in Tibet were bound to be realised. On the 13th day of the 1st month of the Earth Pig Year, February 19th, 1959, he suddenly said that he had to go to Lhasa to make offerings. In fact, in utmost secrecy, he declared that he was going to leave Tibet for a country where the Dharma was unknown and gave orders to distribute the various objects of value that were in his apartment. Some were hidden there, some others were given to Öngen Rinpoche (?-?) from Palpung, who happened to be in Lhasa at that time.

From February 21 to March 9, together with his sister, Tsering Drölkar, and some relatives, he made great and precious offerings in the Tsuglagkhang temple dedicated to the welfare of everybody, while the uprising would burst in Lhasa. During his stay in Lhasa, he met the 2nd Bokar Trülku, Ngedön Chökyi Lodrö (1940-2004), who prepared his departure. They talked about the different roads to leave Tibet, and Pawo Rinpoche decided then to take the southern one to Bhutan. Still anxious about Pawo Rinpoche's future, Kharag Yongzin Rinpoche performed extensive rituals for his wishes to be accomplished without any obstacle and for his long life.

Many people had already taken the road to exile. The Lhasa uprising of the 9th and 10th of March accelerated the events. On the 9th, Pawo Rinpoche went back to Nenang and started a one week retreat. The Karmapa was also preparing his leave with the help of the fighters of the Chushi Gangdruk, who proposed to secure his way across the strategic bridge of Chaksam on the Tsangpo River. Finally, during the night of the 23rd of March, a few days after the Dalai Lama, Pawo Rinpoche took the southern road with a small group of monks, yogis and some of their intimates. He crossed Chaksam Bridge and continued his way, visiting places held by the former Palden Pawos, such as Drowo Lung Sekhar and Lhalung. With the protection of Palden Lhamo, he crossed the country without any obstacles.

As his small caravan went over the pass on the Bhutanese border, he looked back towards Tibet for the last time and made numerous wishes and prayers for the welfare of everyone.

With the help of the Bhutanese government, he stayed in various places and then was sent with other Tibetans in India to the refugee camp of Buxa Duar in West Bengal, where thousands of monks and lamas tried to preserve and organize the transmission of the Buddha's teachings. From there, he went to Kalimpong (West Bengal) with Serkong Rinpoche (1914-1983), one of the foremost masters of the Gelug Lineage who, afterwards, became one of the assistant tutors of the 14th Dalai Lama. Pawo Rinpoche travelled again several times during 1959, and in 1960 he settled in Kalimpong, in a monastery that had been built at the request of the 9th Karmapa Wangchug Dorje (1555-1603).

While the Karmapa installed in Sikkim, the Dalai Lama formed his government in exile, first in Mussoorie, Uttarakhand, and, then at Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh. Deeply aware of the great importance of keeping alive the secular and religious culture of Tibet, he appointed to key positions people renowned for the vastness of their knowledge. Thus, in 1960, he requested Pawo Rinpoche to be the head of the Kagyü Chair of the Sanskrit University of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He accepted this position, and assumed his duties in 1962 when he began to teach various topics, such as the history of the spread of Buddhism in Tibet, the history of the Kagyü Lineages, the teachings about the “base, path and fruit”, and so on. He met the German Tibetologist and Sanskritist Herbert V. Guenther (1917-2006) who was then the head of the Department of Comparative Philosophy and Buddhist Studies at the University.

Pawo Rinpoche was amazed by the extent of his erudition and by his precise knowledge of Tibetan language. He gave Guenther detailed explanations

and reading transmissions of the main texts about *mahamudra*. He also gave numerous teachings to new Indian disciples, including the Six Yogas of Naropa, and wrote several books concerning *mahamudra*, the Karma Kamtsang Lineage, the aspects of Padmasambhava, and so on.

Then, in 1965, the Karmapa informed him that, as the elder of the *gyalwa yabses*, his presence would be very useful in Bhutan where hermits and yogis needed his advice. Thus, as the hot and wet climate of Varanasi did not suit him, Pawo Rinpoche shared his time between the University, and long periods at Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Bhutan where, greatly honoured by the royal family, he taught extensively. Consequently, he asked the Dalai Lama to be relieved of his academic functions; it was officially granted in 1967.



Varanasi, July 1962: left, the 10th Palden Pawo; middle, H. V. Guenther ®

Since his departure from Tibet, he often had expressed to the Karmapa and to the Dalai Lama his wish to abandon everything and to live as a wandering practitioner in India and in the Himalayan foothills. They both were strongly opposed; the situation of Tibetan religious

in exile was very difficult and there were few competent teachers who had been able to escape; as a consequence, his life as a mendicant could create major difficulties for the Dharma transmission. Considering that such a decision could also create difficulties for his immediate entourage, Pawo Rinpoche agreed to adopt the life of a high-ranking lama. However, instead of building a monastery, he preferred to remain in retreat, settling in Bhutan with short sojourns in northern India and Sikkim. Living with his two assistants and secretaries, the Lama Karma Tsültrim (1911-2004) who had been close to him since his childhood, and Ngedön Chöpel (1950-2008) who was a cousin of the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa (1963-) and whose family included several important Sakya and Nyingma masters, he then gave teachings, advice and empowerments mainly to the masters of the Kagyü and Nyingma lineages.

In 1967, in Darjeeling, he met Gerard Godet (1924-2010), a Frenchman who had been attracted to India through yoga and philosophy and who had strong links with Kangyur Rinpoche, who had sought refuge in northern India. Godet invited Pawo Rinpoche to France. He agreed, but he did not say when he would visit, and requested his secretary to keep safely Godet's address and phone number. The Gyalwang Karmapa came to France for the first time in 1974. Afterwards, with the help of Bernard Benson (1922-1995), centres for the study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism were created in the Vezere Valley, Dordogne. In 1975, Pawo Rinpoche had to go to Switzerland for health reasons; Benson, informed of his presence in Europe, invited him to France. On arrival in the city of Lyon, in southeastern France, he met his first French disciples and requested them to contact Gerard Godet. Godet proposed to offer him a house close to the land given by Benson to the Karmapa and to Düjom Rinpoche (1904-1987), the head of the Nyingma Lineage. Instead of a great

property, Pawo Rinpoche accepted a small isolated farm where he stayed intermittently until 1978 when he founded the Hermitage of Nenang Samten Chöling dedicated to *mahamudra* practice, which he made his residence in the west. Opened to the lay and ordained practitioners, he established as a rule for the laity to respect the five vows (Skt. *upasaka/~sika*) including the sexual abstinence (Skt. *brahmacharya*).

Within a few years, thanks to Bernard Benson and Gerard Godet, the 16th Karmapa, Düjom Rinpoche, Pawo Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1910-1991), and Kangyur Rinpoche's family established their Dharma centres or residences a few kilometres from each other.



France, 1977: the 3rd Jamgön Kongtrül; the 16th Karmapa; the 10th Palden Pawo ®

At first, once installed in France, Pawo Rinpoche spent winters in Switzerland where he generally remained in the Tibetan Institute in Rikon and in Rabten Chöling, the residence of Geshe Rabten (1920-1986) for

whom he had a very high regard since their meeting in Buxa Duar refugee camp. At the very beginning of the 1980's, he stayed permanently in his hermitage.

Meditating day and night without any break, he gathered western disciples and welcomed all the masters who visited the neighbouring Dharma centres, to whom he sometimes gave spiritual advice, teachings and empowerments. Those who came to his hermitage included the Gyalwang Karmapa, Düjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa, Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989), and the young *gyalwa yabses* of the Karma Kagyü: the 14th Shamarpa (1952-2014), the 12th Tai Situ (1954-), the 12th Gyaltsab (1959-) and the 3rd Jamgön Kongtrül (1954-1992). He also visited the French Dharma centres and retreat centres where he occasionally gave empowerments. He encouraged the efforts of the first translators and always responded to their requests to clarify difficult points.

At the end of the 1970's, the Karmapa knew that he would pass away soon and asked Palden Pawo Rinpoche, as the elder of the *gyalwa yabses*, to transmit all the teachings and practices he held to the others great figures and *trülkus* of the lineage. The Karmapa also requested him to oversee the regency that would occur after his death. Pawo Rinpoche accepted to give all he held, but refused to take the head of the regency, explaining that he was unable to return and live in Asia because of his poor health. He then suggested to the Karmapa to grant this important responsibility to Kalu Rinpoche who lived in Kalimpong, and this quickly took place. When the Karmapa passed away in November 1981, Pawo Rinpoche was unable to attend the ceremonies because of his health, but he spontaneously composed a long and beautiful prayer for the Karmapa's swift return.

In 1982, the Dalai Lama came to France at the kind request of the Gelug Dharma centre, Vajrayogini Institute, not far from the city of Toulouse

where Pawo Rinpoche had some of his first disciples. As an amazing wink of history, this centre had been founded by Lama Thubten Yeshe (1935-1984) who had been recognized shortly after his birth by Pawo Rinpoche as the reincarnation of a nun who had led a small nunnery close to Nenang Monastery. At the request of Pawo Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama bestowed the initiation of Avalokiteshvara on the numerous westerners assembled there.

In a private meeting, the Dalai Lama expressed deep concern for the future of the Palden Pawo Lineage; he requested Pawo Rinpoche to live long and to think about how to ensure the future. Pawo Rinpoche reassured the Dalai Lama answering that, in his case, a prediction letter would be useless as the signs of his return would be obvious. Prostrating at Pawo Rinpoche's feet, the Dalai Lama offered him his body, speech and mind by giving him a bell, a rosary and a text. Whenever the opportunity arose, the Dalai Lama emphasized how few were bodhisattvas like him, whose exemplary life was solely dedicated to the welfare of all the beings.

Though his health was fragile, to be certain that he would fulfil the Karmapa's will, he spent some weeks in the spring of 1984 in Sikkim where he gave instructions and empowerments to the *gyalwa yabses*. Finally, to ensure the continuity of his lineage, Pawo Rinpoche agreed to build a monastery. Despite the huge efforts made by former disciples in Tibet, who had begun the restoration of his monastery destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), it was not conceivable that he would return. While a new house was built for him in France, mainly thanks to the financial support of disciples from Toulouse, the work on his new Nenang Puntsog Chödar Ling Monastery, built close to the sacred place of Boudhanath in Nepal, started in the mid-1980's with the generosity

of Gerard Godet and of Vicky Remy (1919-2010). In November 1986, he settled there and gathered a small monastic community.

In August 1991, at the request of the Tibetan masters of the Vezere Valley, the Dalai Lama came to teach Shantideva's *Bodhicaryavatara*. From Nepal, Pawo Rinpoche wrote to some of his French disciples to go and listen the teachings as this was a very rare and precious occasion. On the 20th of August, his breathing began to weaken and his health deteriorated until the evening of the 22th when he stopped breathing. At the same time, in France, the Dalai Lama visited his chamber and sent prayers and homage to him. In Nepal, the death was followed by amazing events. While Pawo Rinpoche remained in meditation, his heart still warm, the monsoon rains suddenly stopped and the clouds were pushed away by a strong wind, unveiling a clear sky; everyone saw that the moon shone with an unusual brilliance. On the 24th, in the evening, Pawo Rinpoche's head tilted, indicating that he had concluded his post-mortem meditation; then, a great storm arose, bringing back the clouds and the monsoon rain. People in the Kathmandu valley wondered who was the holy man "who had been able to stop the monsoon rains for two days!"

As several French disciples attended the Dalai Lama's teachings, ceremonies in homage of Pawo Rinpoche were organized immediately in his western seat, while, in Nepal, numerous rituals were performed under the guidance of the 12th Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Tenga Rinpoche (1932-2012), Thrangu Rinpoche (1933-) and Chatral Rinpoche (1913-2015), the oldest of his Tibetan disciples. On the 20th of September, the cremation of his body happened in the presence of Shamar Rinpoche, Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Dabzang Rinpoche (1929-1992), Tsikey Chogling Rinpoche (1953-) and his brother Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche (1951-). Unable to attend, the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa sent one of his lamas as an assistant for the

preparation of all the ceremonies, rituals, and so on. Many relics were found in the ashes, some being like white pearls.

An amazing event occurred during the rituals. About 200 meals had been made for the pilgrims and devotees who had come to pay homage to Pawo Rinpoche, but more than 700 meals were given and the leftovers were so large that it was possible to share them among the poor and beggars living near the stupa of Boudhanath. For everybody, this miracle was the sign of the great altruism that the 10th Palden Pawo manifested throughout his life.



Nenang Samten Chöling, France: blessing a snail ®

His way of life had been very simple and humble, reading everyday Thome Zangpo's *Thirty Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*. He generally taught only through key-instructions adapted to each of his disciples and it was

said that hearing one word from him was like receiving all the Buddha's teachings. Praised by all the masters of Tibet as a pure bodhisattva, he himself said he was just an ordinary human being.

His disciples were numerous, from the humblest nomads to the most powerful nobles. Among them, the best known in the west are the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa, the four *gyalwa yabses* of the Karma Kagyü Lineage (Shamar, Gyaltsab, Tai Situ and Jamgön Kongtrül), Chatral Rinpoche, Tenga Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, the 9th Zigar Chogtrül Rinpoche (1961-) and so forth. Numerous were also the spiritual masters with whom he had particularly close relations, such as Düjom Rinpoche, Drukpa Thukse Rinpoche (1917-1983), the 12th Gyalwang Drukpa, and the two grand-sons of the *tertön* Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870), Samten Gyatso (1881-1945/46) and Terse Trülku (?-?).

Pawo Rinpoche appointed the 12th Gyaltsab Rinpoche as his disciples' tutor. His Nepalese monastery and his seat in the west remained under the wise direction of the two lamas who had attended him throughout their lives, the Lamas Karma Tsültrim and Ngedön Chöpel who were his representatives at Tsurpu during the enthronement ceremonies of the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa, Ogyen Tinley Dorje (1985-), on the 27th of September 1992.



Palden Pawo XI, Tsuglag Mawey Drayang (1994-)

He is also called Pawo Tsuglag Tenzin Künzang Chökyi Nyima.

Despite the supplications of many high ranking lamas, the 10th Palden Pawo did not leave any information about his future incarnation. In 1995, thanks to a prediction letter written by the 10-year old 17th Karmapa, Orgyen Tinley Dorje (1985-), a fact-finding mission was sent to Nagchuka, a large city to the north-east of Central Tibet.

Following the letter's indications step by step, the mission discovered a baby born on the 11th day of the 4th month of the Wood Dog Year, i.e. the 21st of May 1994, who, presumably, was the new Palden Pawo. His father, Lhagpa Zungla, came from Yangchen, in Kham, and belonged to the Nyuwa clan; his mother, Yangchen Drölma, also from Kham, was from a place close to Sinmo Dzong, called Menjong the "Medicine Valley", an area covered by forests and regarded as one of Padmasambhava's secret places. She belonged to the Ga Arig Family which originated from the Mu Clan, one of the first Tibetan clans born from the union of a demoness and the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara incarnated as a monkey, both being considered the ancestors of the Tibetan people.

The members of the mission then returned to Tsurpu where they made a report to the Karmapa who said:

According to the report of the fact-finding mission, there is no doubt that it is the reincarnation of the Palden Pawo, without any error. However, it must be absolutely certain; therefore, you have to conduct a new investigation with great care. See if it matches exactly or not to your first findings. If you have full confidence, give a clear explanation to the parents and others, and then make preparations for the purifying ablutions, and give the clothes and the other offerings.

A second fact-finding mission was therefore sent to Nagchuka. As everything corresponded precisely to the information provided by the Karmapa, its members concluded that the child was the 11th Palden Pawo. At an early hour, on the 22th day of the 5th month of the Wood Pig Year, i.e. the 19th of July 1995, they proceeded with the washing ritual and made the offering of clothes. Shortly after, 18 delegates, monks and lamas mainly from Nenang and Tsurpu, arrived to officially invite him to return to his monastery.

The 4th day of the 6th month, i.e. the 1st of August, the new Palden Pawo began the journey back to his seat; in the evening, they stopped in front of the Nyenchen Thangla sacred mountain and the day after they arrived at Nenang.



The 17th Gyalwang Karmapa and the 11th Palden Pawo ®

Later, on the 1st day of the 7th month, i.e. the 27th of August, he went to Lhasa where great offerings, including food and tea in golden vessels, were made in front of the statue of the Jowo. On the 17th day of the 8th month, i.e. the 11th of October, he met the 17th Karmapa for the first time and instantaneously they had very close and friendly relations.

Very early in his life, he displayed abilities that confirmed he was really the incarnation of the Palden Pawos. In July 1996 at Lhasa, at the age of 2, he met a western disciple of the 10th Palden Pawo; as soon as he saw him, he screamed, wrestled and, finally jumped from the arms of his caretaker. He ran to his throne to draw from behind it with great difficulty a big suitcase that he pushed with effort to the door, clearly showing that he wanted to go away with his visitor. For the few people attending this amazing scene,

it was obvious that Pawo Rinpoche wanted to return with his disciple. On another occasion, the 14th of June 1997, he found deeply buried in the ground, not far from the monastery, objects that had been secretly placed there by the 8th Palden Pawo, including *zi* stones and a self-arisen Buddha in black stone.

After the exile of the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa in the last days of 1999, Pawo Rinpoche was installed in Lhasa and enrolled in a Chinese school. He remained there until 2003, and then was authorized to return to Nenang where he was enthroned on the 29th day of the 9th month of the Sheep Year, i.e. 22th of December 2003, in full agreement with the authorities of the Lhasa Prefecture.

The following years, in spite of many difficulties, he was able to receive teachings that, in turn, he transmitted to lay and religious devotees of the Tölung-Tsurpu Valley. Among his teachers, one of the most important is Drupön Lama Chöying Künkyab (?-), from Kyodrag Barom Kagyü Monastery. He also made a pilgrimage to the main places that were under the authority of the former Pawo Rinpoches, or linked with them, such as Drowo Lung Sekhar Guthok, Ngagdra Göñ, Lhalung and so on. In addition to his responsibilities at Nenang, he regularly visits Tsurpu to guide the community of disciples there. Alongside his religious activity, he received a classical education delivered by tutors in his monastery. Moreover, with 36 other religious figures of the Tibet Autonomous Region, he received on the 18th of February 2009, an official award given by the Committee for Religious and Ethnic Affairs for his action in support of the Tibetan culture.

