



PALPUNG SHERABLING MONASTIC SEAT

(Seat of the Twelfth Tai Situpa)

Venerable Lama Tenam's Speech During the Directorship Transition Meeting of Kagyu Drodren Kunchab, San Francisco, USA

On June 6, 2019, the directorship transition of Kagyu Drodren Kunchab (KDK San Francisco) took place in its city location. For over 40 years, Venerable Lama Lodu has been the KDK San Francisco Resident Lama for both its city location and the retreat center. Likewise, with the transition of Kagyu Dzamling Kunchab in New York City (KDK NYC), formerly supervised by the late Venerable Lama Norlha since its establishment took place last year, Guru Vajradhara the 12th Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa completed transferring the directorship of these centers previously founded by H.E. the 1st Kalu Rinpoche to H.E. Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche, marking the end of Guru Vajradhara's three-year interim care taking.

Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche, Venerable Lama Lodu, Venerable Wangchen Rinpoche, Venerable Lama Rinchen, a couple of resident lamas from Yangsi Rinpoche's other North America centers and board of directors of KDK San Francisco were among the participants of the transition meeting. Representing Guru Vajradhara was his Chief of Protocol and Executive Secretary of Palpung Institution, Venerable Lama Tenam.

In addressing the audience, Lama Tenam started by stating why this meeting took place. He emphasized that the core essence of everything boils down to the importance of lineage. He pointed out that centers, resident lamas and even rinpoches are part of the positive side of samsara. But, without lineage, all are still samsara. He delivered a detailed and thorough speech on the historic lineage background and connections so the audience have clear understanding on the importance of lineage and why their responsibilities and doing is meaningful.

May all bear in mind the significance of lineage and those lineage masters who serve their lives fearlessly and selflessly to this very day in the efforts of preserving and propagating the precious lineage beyond criticism and praise.



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Modern History of Palpung Institution - Mount of Excellence Where All Aspects of the Lineages of Buddhism and Disciplines of the Land of Snow Including its Ancient Bon Lineage Revived by the 8th Tai Situ, Chökyi Jungne

In the context of this meeting, Marpa Kagyu and Shangpa Kagyu, or Mar-Shang Kagyu, is the source of our lineage. Of course, we can elaborate on the glorious history starting from Buddha and the long list of lineage masters down the line but it is not needed for today's agenda. Today we will focus on the modern history of these two lineages. In the past 300 years, the history of Marpa Kagyu and Shangpa Kagyu go back to the glorious lineage of Palpung. The 8th Tai Situ, Chökyi Jungne contributed tremendously to the revival of the entire Tibetan Buddhism. Not only Marpa Kagyu and Shangpa Kagyu, he led the preservation efforts and revived all ten academic lineages and eight practice lineages of the Land of Snow. Besides that, the nine Yanas, ten aspect of knowledge and the ancient Bon lineage, everything was established in the Palpung Main Seat, Thubten Choekorling in East Tibet by the 8th Tai Situ. That is our source of lineage. Including Yangsi Rinpoche, the presented resident lamas and people who claim to authentically follow Marpa Kagyu or Shangpa Kagyu, you all are directly connected to Palpung. That's the fact. Palpung is the source of our lineage.

The 9th Tai Situ, Pema Nyingje Wangpo and the 1st Jamgon Kongtrul

Nowadays people talk so much about Shangpa Kagyu, Marpa or just Karma Kagyu. We should know that the entire lineage was further established strongly by the 9th Tai Situ, Pema Nyingje Wangpo who continued the 8th Tai Situ's aspiration and work.

The 1st Jamgon Kongtrul, Lodoe Thaye was born and demonstrated an extraordinary individual without doubt. But he was not Jamgon Kongtrul at the beginning until the 9th Tai Situ recognized him and gave him the name of Jamgon Kongtrul. From then on, the entire activities of Jamgon Kongtrul originated from Palpung.

People here want to talk about Shangpa. Today's Shangpa lineage is from Tsandra. Tsandra Rinchendra is not something separate from Palpung. It is the Retreat Center of Palpung. It is part and parcel of Palpung. Tsandra Rinchendra was not started or established by the 1st Jamgon Kongtrul. Before him, there was the 9th Tai Situ, Pema Nyingje Wangpo as well as the 8th Tai Situ - especially the 8th Tai Situ, he was the first one who spent his life at Tsandra Rinchendra. Beyond that, Tsandra Rinchendra was a holy place of Guru Rinpoche. We don't need to trace back that far, but we should know how the profound activities of the 1st Jamgon Kongtrul started. His activities took on because of the 9th Tai Situ, Pema Nyingje Wangpo. With his blessing and his protection to the 1st Jamgon Kongtrul, we now have the lineage of the 1st Jamgon Kongtrul. Today we are here as family and all of you are lamas or rinpoches who are supposed to guide people. You should know this part of the history clearly.



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The 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo and the 1st Kalu Rinpoche

You all are very fortunate, especially the rinpoches and lamas nourished by the 1st Kalu Rinpoche. Large number of centers, retreat centers, stupas were established and thousands of people turned into Buddhism by his blessings. People always connect the 1st Kalu Rinpoche to Jamgon Kongtrul. But you should know that the 1st Jamgon Kongtrul's entire core activities were blessed to the 1st Kalu Rinpoche by the 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo. Glory of any great master doesn't just pop up from the sky or grow like mushrooms from the earth. It goes back to the lineage. If you believe in karma from the aspect of relative reality, you have to know how each individual and great masters are connected, as well as the causes and conditions how they become great masters. The 1st Kalu Rinpoche's entire lineage is from Palpung. He didn't become Kalu Rinpoche because of his birth family. It is by the lineage he preserved and practiced. When we look at the essence of his greatness and how his activities became glorious, it connected back to the 11th Tai Situ. People nowadays emphasize that Kalu Rinpoche is the source of Shangpa. People have choices and perceptions when it comes to information. Truth is that the 1st Kalu Rinpoche is Palpung Retreat Master for both Karma Kagyu and Shangpa Kagyu retreat centers, appointed by the 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo.

How the 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo Saved the Life of the 1st Kalu Rinpoche

There was a history I heard a few times from authentic sources including Guru Vajradhara's teacher Gegenla and a few Guru Vajradhara's previous attendants and assistants who knew all the life of the previous Kalu Rinpoche. One time the previous Kalu Rinpoche was in Lhasa giving Shangpa teachings and empowerments by request of Gelugpa sangha. During that time Reting Rinpoche, Dalai Lama's Regent and a very high Gelugpa lama well respected spiritually as well as politically, was also in Lhasa receiving Nyingmapa teachings from Chatral Rinpoche. When asking who he could receive Kagyupa teachings, Chatral Rinpoche recommended the 1st Kalu Rinpoche who happened to be in Lhasa. Reting Rinpoche sent a group of his monks to request meeting with the 1st Kalu Rinpoche and expressed his wish to receive Kagyupa teachings. However, the 1st Kalu Rinpoche's Root Guru, the 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo had previously commanded him to start the retreat in Palpung Retreat Center. Feeling obligated, the 1st Kalu Rinpoche went seeking permission from his Guru, the 11th Tai Situ to possibly postpone the retreat. When Kalu Rinpoche went to his Root Guru who was also visiting Lhasa and conveyed Reting Rinpoche's request, the 11th Tai Situ, appeared in very wrathful manifestation and told Kalu Rinpoche, "No! You should go back to Palpung immediately and lead the retreat."

This part of the story was recorded when the previous Kalu Rinpoche visited Palpung Sherabling to share advice with sangha. The previous Kalu Rinpoche said he felt very



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uncomfortable with his Root Guru's wrathful manifestation but he chose to obey his words. He went back to Reting Rinpoche and promised that he would return to Lhasa after giving all necessary transmissions to the retreatants. Then the previous Kalu Rinpoche left Lhasa immediately. On the 2nd or 3rd day from his journey back to Palpung, the previous Kalu Rinpoche received from his radio the shocking news that Reting Rinpoche was arrested by Tibet Government and in the next day of two, news had that Reting Rinpoche and people having ties with him were executed. The previous Kalu Rinpoche shared to Palpung sangha that through incident like that, he realized how enlightened his Root Guru was. Had his Lama not urged him back to Palpung, he would have been killed together.

When we understand the importance of Golden Rosary, when we contemplate how fortunate we are under Great Master as such, we should strike to live our lives as meaningful as possible in this mandala. Otherwise, wearing red robes and making conduct no different from the mundane bear no true meaning to our lives.

Guru Vajradhara, the 12th Chamgon Kenting Tai Situpa on Preserving Genuine Lineage and Recognizing Young Generation of Masters

The 11th Tai Situ passed away and the current Guru Vajradhara was enthroned at very young age. After 1959, Tibetans became refugees. When Guru Vajradhara arrived in India through the Kingdom of Bhutan at the age of five, he was sick with TB. Besides a few lamas, the Red Crown and a few objects, he literally has nothing. His mandala became the poorest among all high lamas in exile. There were years he had to live in a ghetto and street boys were his playmates. However, as time went by, he has grown to become the pillar of our lineage. Guru Vajradhara stands here now as the great Marpa Lotsawa in this current time. He is like a father to everyone. Talking about Karma Kagyu, if Guru Vajradhara was not there, where did we have the authentic and glorious 17th Karmapa Ogyen Drodul Trinley Dorje? And for this sacred endeavor, how much has Guru Vajradhara sacrificed? However, without a single complaint, Guru Vajradhara rejoiced the fact that he has fulfilled the trust of his Root Guru, H.H. the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa.

Due to the physical limitations, the previous Kalu Rinpoche passed into parinirvana. The 2nd Kalu Rinpoche was recognized by Guru Vajradhara. Later Yab Gyaltsen, Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche's late biological father obtained a confirmation from His Holiness the Dalia Lama. Today Yangsi Rinpoche is here with us because this is the one recognized by Guru Vajradhara practically and physically. Through these concrete examples, we witness the importance of the existence of the Glorious Master and the legacy of Palpung. That's why we are so lucky to have Guru Vajradhara here like a father, like a mother protecting Mar-Shang Kagyu in the current time.



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Following the footsteps of his predecessors, Guru Vajradhara established Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat in India as the Palpung Monastic Seat in Exile. He reestablished the entire curriculum initiated by the 8th Tai Situ and strengthened by the 9th Tai Situ for the sake of preserving the genuine lineage. One of Guru Vajradhara's duties is to educate the young generation of masters. Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche is a great example of the young generation masters grown up and educated in Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat. Morally trained, inwardly matured as a Bodhisattva and further enlightened by the techniques of Vajrayana under the blessings of the enlightened Guru Vajradhara. This way, lineage is saved.

Guru Vajradhara Protecting the Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche Through Troubled Time

Unfortunately, one of the 1st Kalu Rinpoche's main disciples, Very Venerable Bokar Rinpoche passed away suddenly. It was a big loss to the lineage. Particularly his responsibility in bringing up the 2nd Kalu Rinpoche came to a sudden disruption. Because of that, Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche went through some hardship growing up due to the lack of proper guidance and righteous surrounding to provide moral conduct and training that he could model from. At crucial time when things became difficult for Yangsi Rinpoche and Sonada, for the sake of the previous Kalu Rinpoche's legacy, Guru Vajradhara stood there unshakably as the only one to protect Yangsi Rinpoche and supported him whatever way Guru Vajradhara could.

During the early time in exile, since the previous Kalu Rinpoche was one of the eldest Palpung lamas, he took on the responsibilities to preserve and propagate the lineage where he established many dharma centers around the world. Legally speaking, back then some centers in Europe were more attached to Guru Vajradhara and some more towards the previous Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche who was still alive back then. But Guru Vajradhara has no interest in taking over anyone else's possessions. Before Yab Gyaltzen passed away, he insisted that Guru Vajradhara took over the legal rights of all the centers if he could physically present there and if he could not, named a spiritual director for the center. Depending on who was the eldest or who had been running that particular center, without disturbing the existing configuration at that time, Guru Vajradhara appointed accordingly with the intentions to wait for Yangsi Rinpoche to grow up physically and spiritually to be ready to take on his responsibilities. There had been situations like in France where the spiritual directors put their names in the legal papers and didn't give back to Yangsi Rinpoche. They claimed concerns on Yangsi Rinpoche's certain activities.

Guru Vajradhara is never against any individual. The Grand Master is beyond hope and fear. He is beyond concerns of his personal interests. Lineage, legacy, responsibilities and samaya are the core things Guru Vajradhara holds seriously and carefully. When difficult situations arise like these, since Guru Vajradhara has legal right of words and his decision is important, he always makes decisions based on what is the righteous act lineage-wise, legacy-wise,



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responsibilities-wise as well as from historical aspect. From these stand points and considering the samaya among the previous Kalu Rinpoche's lamas, he deemed that everything should go back to Yangsi Rinpoche. Therefore, Guru Vajradhara wrote, endorsed and stood by Yangsi Rinpoche, despite the occasions where people had the opportunities to make excuses on some accounts of Yangsi Rinpoche's activities. People's criticism and complaints towards Guru Vajradhara is not his concerns. He is beyond expectations and disappointments. He stood unshakably like a mountain guarding the lineage. By the support of Guru Vajradhara, Yangsi Rinpoche started to take ground and establish in Europe. His activities in his main seat in France started to flourish. These days opportunists take advantage to secure possessions under circumstances when given a chance. Yab Gyaltsen passed to Guru Vajradhara the legal rights and what Guru Vajradhara did was to uphold Yangsi Rinpoche's rights against all odds. Thus, we are truly fortunate to be under Guru Vajradhara's care.

History Background on Kalu Rinpoche's Key America Centers and Connections of The Resident Lamas

After covering the history and the reasons behind Guru Vajradhara's actions and decisions, Lama Tenam next highlighted the historic background of the previous Kalu Rinpoche's centers in America and the connections of the corresponding resident lamas.

Venerable Lama Rinchen of Hawaii

Venerable Lama Rinchen was ordained by the 11th Tai Situ, Pema Wangchok Gyalpo. The monastery in his hometown was established by the 8th Tai Situ. Before serving for the 1st Kalu Rinpoche, Lama Rinchen started from Palpung. The name of the Hawaii center has gone through changes but when the center was first established, the 1st Kalu Rinpoche named it Situ Rime Choeling. There have been times Lama Rinchen expressed his wish to offer the Hawaii center to Guru Vajradhara. Guru Vajradhara always encouraged Lama Rinchen that gradually Yangsi Rinpoche would be able to handle the legacy of his predecessor and urged Lama Rinchen to continue operation until the time came. That beautiful timing took place in 2018 when Yangsi Rinpoche visited and the transition of the center was complete.

Remark: In addition to the Hawaii center where he supervised under the guidance of the previous Kalu Rinpoche, Lama Richen has a new center independently and solely established by himself in New Mexico, Karma Gyurmed Ling Buddhist Center, where he wishes to offer to Guru Vajradhara. Guru Vajradhara has recently instructed him to also offer it to Yangsi Rinpoche.



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Venerable Late Lama Norlha of New York

Next Lama Tenam talked about the late Lama Norlha who established the original New York City center, Kagyu Dzamling Kunchab (KDK, NYC) under the guidance of the previous Kalu Rinpoche. During the NYC center establishment, Lama Norlha gained a nickname as the garbage lama by collecting garbage in exchange of money to fund the center. Lama Tenam shared the hardships Lama Norlha went through to establish the center as well as his critical illness and sex misconduct he suffered in later years. Nonetheless Lama Tenam went over his enormous contributions to Rumtek, Sonada, Tso Pema and Tibet so that Yangsi Rinpoche and his lamas can have a full picture of the late Lama Norlha's life and contributions.

On the account of New York City Center KDK, NYC, when Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche visited in 2018, he expressed in person his wish to revive the center. KDK, NYC being part of Kagyu Thubten Chöling, the board of directors conveyed Yangsi Rinpoche's words and sought guidance with Guru Vajradhara. Guru Vajradhara was delighted by Yangsi Rinpoche's aspiration. Guru Vajradhara immediately instructed the board of directors and the sangha to start ownership transfer. The transition of Kagyu Dzamling Kunchab was completed in 2018.

After the operation of KDK, NYC was maintained in a relatively good shape, Lama Norlha made a new aspiration to Guru Vajradhara. He said that very auspiciously Guru Vajradhara is the Palpung Kyabgon so he would offer a grand seat to the Palpung Kyabgon. While building the Maitreya Center, Kagyu Thubten Chöling in Wappingers Falls, NY, Lama Norlha became very sick and he felt he couldn't last till its completion. Guru Vajradhara advised him to come to Delhi immediately. By fully trusting and following Guru Vajradhara's advice, Lama Norlha's life was miraculously extended. He was able to see his wish for a grand Palpung Monastery in New York fulfilled.

Venerable Wangchen Rinpoche

Next Lama Tenam introduced Wangchen Rinpoche and how he got the cute name as the Junior Kalu from the previous Kalu Rinpoche. Lama Tenam noted Wangchen Rinpoche's dedication to the lineage of Palpung Institution and his widely known advocacy of Nyungne practice. Being one of the previous Kalu Rinpoche's main disciples, Wangchen Rinpoche's contributions include building monasteries and retreat centers in Tibet. He also sponsored the new Shangpa Retreat Center in Palpung Sherabling Monastic Seat. Guru Vajradhara is looking forward to the start of the first Shangpa retreat, blessed by his teacher Gegenla.



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Venerable Lama Lodu of San Francisco

Finally, Lama Tenam explained in details how Kagyu Drogen Kunnchab (KDK San Francisco) came under Guru Vajradhara's supervision in the past three years. Through growing concerns of his health, Lama Lodu had repeatedly requested Guru Vajradhara to kindly take over Kagyu Drogen Kunnchab. He also requested for an assistant lama. Lama Palden Dorjee was appointed by Guru Vajradhara in 2016 to assist Lama Lodu in running KDK San Francisco. In April 2019, Guru Vajradhara commanded Lama Tenam that he has decided to pass the spiritual directorship to Yangsi Rinpoche and that he wanted to inform Lama Lodu regarding his decision. During the audience in Delhi, Guru Vajradhara advised Lama Lodu that time is right for Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche to take over the responsibilities and encouraged Lama Lodu with full confidence. On June 6, 2019, Lama Tenam representing Guru Vajradhara, Yangsi Rinpoche and all parties gathered for the formal transition. Lama Tenam officially declared the ending of Guru Vajradhara's spiritual directorship for three years as well as the ending of Lama Palden Dorjee's assignment as the Assistant Lama for KDK San Francisco. Lama Tenam urged Yangsi Kalu Rinpoche to appoint a new lama for a fresh start.

Epilogue

As conclusion, Lama Tenam reminded the audience that KDK San Francisco is able to establish for over 40 years because of the blessings of the lineage. With the transition auspiciously taking place, the old chapter has beautifully come to full circle ready for a brand-new page by Yangsi Rinpoche. Lama Tenam earnestly encouraged Yangsi Rinpoche to work together with Lama Lodu, Wangchen Rinpoche, the authentic lamas from the previous Kalu Rinpoche's time and the presented lamas. Likewise, Lama Tenam requested the support from the lamas, rinpoches, sangha and the board of directors to assist Yangsi Rinpoche. Since Guru Vajradhara and his representatives never owned any processions or held legal titles in the board or the trust of KDK San Francisco, Lama Tenam concluded the transition meeting and departed shortly after lunch, leaving the new leadership and KDK board of directors to further discuss legal and practical matters.