

# The Ngakpa Tradition

## An Introduction

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# Contents

- What is the Ngakpa Tradition (NT) ?
- History of the Ngakpa Tradition
- The Life Philosophy of NT
- Education System of the NT
- Ngakpas in Different Schools of Tibetan Buddhism.
- Women's equality
- The Spiritual Practice of NT
- NT's past and future
- Rebkong Ngak-Mang
- Ngak-Mang Institute
- Conclusion

# What is the Ngakpa Tradition?

- The NT is the cultural and non-monastic spiritual tradition of the Tibetan people.
- Tibetan lay people's Tantric lineage is called the lineage of the Ngakpa Tradition.
- Lay practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism and especially practice Tantric Buddhism.
- In Sanskrit known as Yogin and yogini, or Mantri and mantrini.
- Lay women practitioners are called Ngakmo or Ngakma.
- In the west it's known as white Sangha tradition, or Tibetan yogic tradition, also weathermen.

# History of the Ngakpa Tradition

- **Padmasambava**

founded NT in the 8th century so that lay people could receive spiritual and cultural education.

- The king Trisong Detsan (742-797) not only made large contributions to the development of the Ngakpa tradition but, as an example to the people, he became a Ngakpa himself.

# History of the Ngakpa Tradition

- The Ngakpa Community is originally called

*'Go kar Chang lo' De*

which literally means

'The community with white dress and long hair'

or more simply 'The group of white Sangha'.

- The first Ngakpa centre was a branch of Samye college and was called the

*Ngakpa 'Dud dul Ling'.*

There, people were trained in the subjects of Literature, Translation, Astrology, Meteorology and especially Vajrayana studies and practice.

# Historical Ngakpa Practitioners

- Many Ngakpas have shown their great abilities by becoming highly educated people and practitioners.
- An example is the founder of Traditional Tibetan Medicine (TTM) Yuthok Yonten Gonpo(708-833 A.D). He was a Ngakpa, as were many of his lineage physicians.
- In the 9th Century, Tri Ralpa Chan(866-?), the 3rd Tibetan Dharma King, became involved in the Ngakpa Tradition. Through his dedication and support the Ngakpa Tradition grew all over Tibet.

# Ngakpas in Different Schools

**Tibetan Buddhism is divided into 5 schools and each of them has their own way of Ngakpas.**

- **Tibetan Indigenous Ngakpa**

Bonpo school Ngakpa, *Dransong*.

- **Most prevalent Ngakpa**

Nyingma school Ngakpa, *Ngakmo, Kyimngak, Drongngak. Tertons and Rigzin.*

- **Renouncing Ngakpa**

Kagyü school *Naljorpa, Naljorma, Togtenpa.*

- **Special Ngakpas**

Chod school Ngakpa, *Chodpa.*

- **Family lineage Ngakpas**

Sakya school Ngakpa, *Gongma.*

- **Monastic Ngakpas**

Gelug school Ngakpa, *naljorpa, Ge-nyen. Sumdan Dorje zinpa.*

# Women's Equality

- Tibetan women are recognized as one of the largest contributors to the Ngakpa tradition.
- Ngakmo (yogini) such as Yeshe Tsogyal(777-837 A.D), Machin Labdron(1103-1201), Sera Khadroma(1899-1952) Chusep Jetsun(?-1951) Tare Lhamo(1938-2002) were highly respected practitioners and were an inspiration to many Tibetan women.
- Khadro Tsering Chodon, Drikong Khadroma and Ngakmo Tsekyid are highly qualified living Ngakmos.

# Equal Realization

Highest spiritual realization can be achieved by both men and women

Free from any sectarian beliefs, the Ngakpa Tradition continues today in Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, India, Mongolia and more recently in the West, both men and women studying and practicing throughout their daily lives.

# The Difference Between Ngakmo and Nun

## The nuns

- Ordination  
Through an ordination ritual
- Life style  
Renouncing of normal life,  
Living in monastic tradition
- Study and practice  
Combination of Sutra and tantra

## The ngakmos

- Ordination  
Through Tantric empowerment
- Life style  
Living with family in dynamic  
society
- Study and practice  
Mainly tantra.

# The Life Philosophy of NT

## The transformation.

- The logic mental poisons or negative emotions can be transformed into wisdoms.

## Keeping the state of nature

- Subject - the Mind
- Object - the matter

## Daily life philosophy

The three non changeable points;

1. Uncolored White dress
2. Uncut Long hair
3. Unchanged Natural mind

# The Spiritual Practice of NT

- **Preliminary practice**

Ngondro (*sNgon 'Gro*)  
Common and uncommon

According to Nyingma school

- **Creation practice**

Kyedrim (*bsKyedrim*)



Deity practice, peaceful and wrathful expression of compassion and wisdom.

- **Total perfection**

Dzogchen. (*rDzogchen*)

1. Emptiness (*khegs chod*)
2. Appearance (*thodrgal*)

- **Completion practice**

Dzorim (*rDzogrim*)

Energy and mind work, such as six yoga of Naropa.



# The Samayas in NT

- In Tibetan is called *Damtshig* which refers to Buddhist Vows or rules
- 14 root Samayas
- 25 branch Samayas
- Hundreds of thousands of Samayas
- Routine rules
- Being present in three aspects: Body, speech and mind
- Appearance – illusory vision
- Sound – illusory mantra
- Thought – illusory pleasure

# Education System of the NT

## Education sources

- Training from family members
- Local Ngakpa houses
- Village group study
- At monasteries and temples.
- Individual masters.



## Subjects

- Basic Tibetan studies
- Fundamentals of Buddhism
- Tantric studies; philosophy, anatomy and physiology.etc.
- Additional studies such as; Astrology and Traditional Tibetan Medicine, including healing rituals and mantras, charts.

# Ngakpa's Activities and Social Roles

The existence of the NT is extremely important for everybody in Tibetan society; Ngakpas and Ngakmos are always willing to kindly help others through their daily activities.

## Social activities

- Medical advice.
- Astrological suggestions.
- Guidance to individual people, groups and communities.

## Spiritual activities

- Make divinations.
- Performance of tantric rituals.
- Controlling the weather.

## Cultural activities

- Preservation and development of holistic Tibetan general studies, such as: literature, art, Medicine and so on.

# Survival of NT

One thousand years ago.

The last King, Lhang Tharma(802-842) did his best to eradicate the Buddhist tradition in Tibet but he was not able to destroy the Ngakpa Tradition. It is fundamental to native Tibetans.

One thousand years later.

During the Chinese Cultural Revolution all aspects of Tibetan culture were heavily damaged, especially the tragic toll on Buddhism, but the NT survived and continued once more.

# The future of NT

As an impermanent philosophy the Ngakpa Tradition is facing the danger of being lost. Even though it's extremely close to the native Tibetans daily life, due to people's misunderstanding, the value of this culture is not highly respected or preserved in correct way.

Preservation and development of Ngakpa Tradition in modern society is very important and Ngakpa Tradition must be integrated in to the new life style.

The life philosophy of Ngakpa can benefit all humans at large.

# Rebkong Ngak-Mang

- Rebkong (Tib. *Rebgong*) is a well known region of north eastern Tibet (Amdo)
- Ngak-Mang (Tib. *sNgags Mang*) means many ngakpas or a great group of Ngakpa.
- Rebkong Ngak-Mang is the largest Ngakpa group in the history of Tibet.

# The origin of Rebkong Ngak-Mang

- In the 9th century, Lhalung Paldor, a famous Ngakpa, traveled to Amdo and planted the Vajra seed of the NT in Rebkong. He was particularly skilled in the practices of Vajrayana.
- The descendants of Lhalung Paldor, known as the Eight Great Ngakpa of Rebkong, practiced in eight different places. All of them successfully completed their practices and achieved realization.

The disciples of the Eight Great Ngakpas continued their ancient and secret spiritual knowledge, integrating it into their daily lives.

# The History of Rebkong Ngak-Mang

- Rigzin Palden Tashi (1688-1743) was the greatest contributor to the Rebkong Ngak-Mang, known as the king of Rebkong Ngakpas.

The most important historical Ngakpa house in Rebkong is called

**Rigzin Rabpel Ling**

Kyanglung Palchen Namkha Jigmed (1757-1821) was one of the Rebkong Ngak Mang's head master.

- The founder of the 1,900 Ngakpa Group in Kyung gon Rebkong, Amdo.
- (*Tib. Rebgong sNgagsmang Phurthog Cigstong dGubgya.*)

# Ngak-Mang Institute (NMI)

- NMI was founded in 1999, in Xining, Qinghai, (Amdo) China.
  - Its aim is promoting the cultural continuity and preserving of Ngakpa Tradition in modern and dynamic society.
  - NMI is maintaining the status of Rebkong Ngak-Mang.
  - The only official institute for Ngakpa Tradition in Tibet.
- NMI collects existing Ngakpa texts, preserves them through a process of rewriting and republishing, and publishes new works.
  - The institute also records teachings from elder practitioners to protect the future of Ngakpa culture.

# Ngak-Mang Students

NMI has projects in fields of culture, education and health since 2000.

## Ngak-Mang Schools

There are two main Ngak Mang schools; Ngakpa boy's school and Ngakmo girl's school.

Students spend the first two years studying Tibetan and math, and then spend three years specializing in an elective subject such as handicrafts, traditional art, or medicine. They spend their final five years learning traditional Ngakpa studies, including tantric philosophy and practice.

# Ngak-Mang International

- Ngak-Mang Institutes (NMI) exist throughout the world in order to preserve and maintain the Ngakpa culture in modern society.
- NMI was developed as a worldwide non-profit organization in 2000. There are several associated branches throughout the world, all collaborating to bring the knowledge and support of the Ngakpa Tradition of Tibet to the forefront.

# Conclusion

The Ngakpa Tradition is an ultimate knowledge, of having a perfectly balanced life.