

Tulku Thadral Rinpoche

Tulku Thadral Rinpoche, Jigme Namgyal Dorje, is a highly realized and respected contemporary Buddhist master able to teach and confer all aspects of the Nyingma tradition. Vastly learned but extraordinarily humble, he embodies the qualities of erudition, nobility, and excellence and is particularly knowledgeable about Vajrayana ritual practices. Synthesizing the meaning of the Dharma into the key points for practice, his teachings are direct, simple, and to the point.

Tulku Thadral Rinpoche was born in Northern India to devout Buddhist parents, Drolma and Dondrub, the latter a yogi at the Sang-ngak Choling Monastery. At the age of four, he was recognized by Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche as the reincarnation of Lama Thadral Dorje, a close disciple of Ladakh Chöje Rinpoche, who had achieved a high level of realization. Soon afterwards, he received refuge vows from Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche, thereby entering the Dharma. He received his novice monk vows from Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche followed by the vows of full ordination from Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, who also gave him the Bodhisattva vows. Additionally, he received Bodhisattva vows from H.H. Dalai Lama and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

From a very young age, Tulku Thadral Rinpoche lived and studied at the Ngaygyur Shedrup Dojoling, the shedra or philosophical college, established by Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche at the request of H.H. Dalai Lama and H.H. the Sixteenth Karmapa and under the direction of both Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche and Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche. Here he first met and became close to Lama Sonam Rinpoche, who was also studying there and acting as the shedra's manager at the time. Tulku Thadral Rinpoche progressed through his studies with astonishing speed, mastering whatever he was taught. With incredible diligence, he would frequently stay up late into the night reading and reflecting. He received many teachings and instructions on all aspects of Buddhist philosophy, practice, and ritual from such lamas as Mewa Khenpo Thupten, Khenpo Pema Tsewang Lhundrup, Khenpo Tsewang Rigzin, and Khenpo Gelek Tenzin, as well as his own root lama, Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche.

Tulku Thadral Rinpoche received a vast array of empowerments, transmissions, and teachings from the Nyingma tradition's kama and terma lineages from such sublime lamas as Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Chatral Rinpoche, Dondrubchen Rinpoche, Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and many others. In particular, Tulku Thadral Rinpoche first received the Rinchen Terdzö from Dondrubchen Rinpoche in the 1980s. Later, in 2008, Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche bestowed the Rinchen Terdzö at Mindroling Monastery in India, for which Tulku Thadral Rinpoche acted as the ritual master.

Putting all of this into practice, Tulku Thadral Rinpoche completed the Dudjom Tersar Ngondro in a retreat soon after receiving instructions from Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche and also completed the Longchen Nyingthik Ngondro under the guidance of Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche. He has since accomplished many practices of the Three Roots as well as the Dudjom Troma Ngondro.

In early 1998, after graduating from his studies of sutra and tantra, Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche and Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche enthroned Rinpoche as Khentrul Thadral Rinpoche, "Khentrul" being the

title bestowed on one with a Khenpo degree who is also recognized as a tulku and possesses a high level of realization. Since graduating, Tulku Thadral Rinpoche has taught extensively at the Dudjom Shedra and in 2003 was appointed by Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche as its Principal and Director of Education.

Once, when he visited Dungse Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, Dungse Rinpoche introduced Tulku Thadral Rinpoche to Lama Tharchin Rinpoche saying: “In the future it would be good to have Rinpoche teach at Pema Osel Ling as he has the perfect lineage, knowledge, and realization and is extremely humble and very noble.” Without being requested to do so by anyone, Dungse Rinpoche also wrote a long life prayer for Tulku Thadral Rinpoche in which he says:

Expert in teaching, debate, and composition, you make the Buddhist teachings shine.
Noble, with unconceited and pure self-discipline,
You work to help others with your excellent qualities.
Jigme Namgyal Dorje, may your lotus feet remain firm.

As this demonstrates, Thinley Norbu Rinpoche clearly held Tulku Thadral Rinpoche in high regard. In 2014, Dudjom Yangsi Rinpoche requested Tulku Thadral Rinpoche to preside as the vajra master over Pema Osel Ling’s first Mendrub and from that point on he has acted as the primary vajra master for nearly all of Pema Osel Ling’s major ritual activities. At Lama Sonam Rinpoche’s invitation, Tulku Thadral Rinpoche moved to Pema Osel Ling permanently in 2022, where he now teaches and leads retreats and practices.