

Retreat Master Jetsün Jamyang Yeshe Palmo

Jetsün Jamyang Yeshe Palmo is master of the retreat center of Ewam Kusum Khandro Ling. She was born in 1979, on the twenty-fifth day of the eighth lunar month in the earth sheep year of the sixteenth sexagenary cycle, at the Tibetan refugee settlement of Phendeling in Mainpat, India. Drupwang Penor Rinpoche conferred on her the name Jamyang Drolma.

Initially she attended primary school at the settlement in Mainpat, and then four grades at Thrangu Rinpoche's school in Nepal. She completed her education to the twelfth grade at the Tibetan Homes School in Mussoorie. His Holiness Sakya Trizin Rinpoche recognized her as the rebirth of Karma Tsultrim Kechog Palmo (1911–1977).¹ In 1996 she offered her hair² to Beru Khyentse and took the vow of refuge. Auspicious circumstances were set in place when she was formally enthroned at Bodh Gaya by the Gyalwa Karmapa and Shamar Rinpoche. It was also at Bodh Gaya that she received the Kalachakra empowerment, teachings on *Engaging in the Conduct of a Bodhisattva*, and the bodhisattva vow from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She received the ordination of a novice nun in the presence of the lord Drupwang [Penor] Rinpoche, and in 1999 she enrolled in the college at the Ngagyur Nyingma Nunnery Tsogyal Shedrup Dargye Ling Institute at Namdroling. There she completed a nine-year program studying sutra and tantra, as well as secular subjects. Over time she attained Tadrel Mrawey Wangchuk degree (equivalent to higher secondary degree)³ and a Masters⁴ graduating first-class and receiving official commendations. At the same time she was appointed as a revision class teacher when she was in the seventh-year, teaching *The Treasury of Higher Teachings*,⁵ valid cognition, and other subjects. In addition, she served as instructor to the younger students, teaching them English and Tibetan spelling and grammar and other secular subjects.

While Drupwang Penor Rinpoche was still alive, Jamyang Yeshe Palmo received teachings on the Namchö tradition of tsalung, Dzogchen tögel, and so forth, and pursued her practice of these. Then, in 2008 she came to the retreat center of Kusum Khandro Ling in Pharping, Nepal, where she began by receiving from Gochen Tulku Sang-ngag Tenzin Rinpoche the maturing empowerments of the Three Roots from the Nyingthig cycle and the profound Namchak teachings. Following this, she undertook a strict three-year retreat. During this retreat, she commenced by carrying out the one-hundred-day program of mental training devised by Khenpo Ngagchung, followed by development and purification of the five hundred thousand repetitions of the Nyingthig preliminaries (as well as 1,200,000 repetitions of the guruyoga mantra). As for

1. The English Buddhist nun Freda Bedi.

2. As part of the ceremony for accepting the refuge vow.

3. Tib. Tadrel Mawey Wangchuk (“Powerful Master of Limitless Speech”).

4. Tib. Ngeysang Lekshey Dzödchang (“Holder of the Treasury of Excellent Explanation of Definitive Secrets”).

5. Tib. *Ngönpa Dzöd*; Skt. *Abhidharmakosha*.

the stage of development, she completed the phases of approach, accomplishment, and application for the Three Roots of the Nyingthig and Namchak traditions and other practices, including the concluding fire rituals. As for the stage of completion, she received teachings through an experiential process⁶ on the tsalung practices of the Nyingthig tradition as well as the six advanced yogas of the Namchak tradition, the Dzogchen teaching manual *Timeless Awareness as the Guiding Principle (Yeshe Lama)*, the oral lineage of Ngagchung, and other teachings. Putting these all into practice, she gained signs of attainment that were not at all lacking.

She then entered a second three-year retreat, in which she emphasized practicing the extraordinary stage of completion—such as the Dzogchen approaches of *trekchö* and *tögel*—while at the same time accepting the responsibility of serving as master for the retreat center of Kusum Khandro Ling and instructing the retreatants.

To summarize, Jetsün Jamyang Yeshe Palmo has spent nine years in a shedra program and seven years in a retreat center, listening to teachings, contemplating them, and meditating on a continuous basis. In such ways she provides an exceptionally praiseworthy and inspirational model for women nowadays. It was for this reason that Tulku Sang-ngag Rinpoche offered her the honored title of Jetsünma, as director of the study and practice centers of Turquoise Leaf Nunnery and Kusum Khandro Ling. To those in the study center she taught the tantra *Magical Web: Heart Essence of Secrets*,⁷ *The Detailed Explanation of the Eight Commands (Kagyed Namshey)*, *The Trilogy of Genuine Mind (Nyuksem Korsum)*, *The Treasury of Enlightened Qualities (Yönten Dzöd)*, and other texts. In the three-year retreat program she has given personal teachings on everything from the preliminaries through the stage of development, the stage of completion including tsalung and the six advanced yogas, and the Dzogchen approaches of *trekchö* and *tögel* including the teaching manual *Yeshe Lama* and other texts. She has given explanatory teachings to the general community of nuns on mental training (*lojong*), as well as monthly seminars to benefit others. For her own benefit, she upholds an ongoing practice. From any point of view she is seen to be excellent, and it is Rinpoche's hope that she will prove to be uniquely qualified to be entrusted with upholding this dharma lineage in the future.

6. Tib. *nyong-trid*. This approach combines theory and practice, with the student developing both understanding and personal experience of each step before moving on to the next.

7. Tib. *Gyutrul Sang-nying Skt. Guhyagarbha*.