



JAMGON KONGTRUL LABRANG

Correspondence Address:

Pullahari Monastery, Jagdol, Budhanilkantha-II, P.O. Box 11015, Kathmandu, Nepal

Email: pullahari@jamgonkongtrul.org | Website: www.jamgonkongtrul.org

April 15, 2022

MAJOR PROJECTS OF JAMGON KONGTRUL LABRANG

INDIA – PARAMITA CHARITABLE TRUST

(A) Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery & The Rigpe Dorje Monastic Institute of Higher Buddhist Philosophy

Kagyü Thekchen Ling comprises a monastery, a 3-year Shangpa Kagyu Retreat Centre, and a Shedra or Higher Institute of Buddhist Philosophy. It is located on the periphery of West Bengal's pristine Neora Valley National Park that extends to the borders of Sikkhim and Bhutan. Remote, serene and quiet, the environment is ideal for pursuing study and meditation.

Kagyü Thekchen Ling started with 7 monks on *Chokhor Duchen*, June 6, 1990. The first batch of 10 monks entered its **3-year Shangpa Kagyu retreat centre, Ngedon Chagchen Ling**, on March 10, 1991. Currently, the 9th batch of 9 monks is pursuing the retreat under Retreat Master, Drupon Lama Wangdue. They entered the retreat on *Lha Bab Duchen* on October 27, 2021 and will complete in March 2025.

Until 2001, new monks were educated and trained in Kagyü Thekchen Ling Monastery. In 2001, when Rigpe Dorje Monastic Institute opened, monks who had successfully completed the 8-year curriculum of monastic studies and who wished to pursue higher studies in Buddhist Philosophy joined the Shedra. The education and training of new monks were relocated to Pullahari Monastery, Nepal. Since then, the monks at Kagyü Thekchen Ling were mainly those pursuing the Acharya Degree Program. However, last year, 2021, it was decided to admit young monks to Kagyü Thekchen Ling. The first group of 13 young monks were between the ages of 10 and 16 years. Most of them are from Kalimpong District and a few from Sikkhim. Today, there are 35 monks in the Monastery including the administrators, Sonam Chopel and Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen.

The Rigpe Dorje Monastic Institute is recognised as a leading Karma Kagyü Institute of Higher Buddhist Philosophy established in year 2001. It offers a 13-year Acharya Degree Program to monks of Pullahari Monastery who have successfully completed the basic 8-years monastic curriculum and who wish to pursue the Acharya program. It is also opened to monks of other Kagyü monasteries. The Principal of the Institute is Very Ven. Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal. The 9 teachers are 7 Acharyas who had graduated from the Institute itself, and 2 Geshes from Drepung and Sera Monasteries respectively.

Since the Shedra opened in 2001, 47 monks successfully completed the 13-year program and graduated as Acharyas. They now serve as teachers in the Institute, in Pullahari's Monastic School, in some nunneries, as well as in administrative capacities in Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang. One Acharyas is now serving in H.H. Karmapa's Dharma publication group.

Today, there are 92 monks in the Shedra from Classes 1 to 13. The senior class of 9 students will be graduating in February 2023.

(B) Jamgon Kongtrul IIRD Memorial SCHOOL

The grounds and building for the School was donated to Paramita Charitable Trust by the family of The Third Jamgon Kongtrul after His Parinirvana to fulfil His vision of education of poor and needy children and to bridge the divide of castes and creeds through right values.

The School opened in 1997. The aim was to provide a high standard of free education to poor and needy children while upholding traditional Himalayan culture and values. Viewed as a school for lower caste children, many families of higher castes refrained from sending their children there. But this changed gradually over the years due to the School's inspiring environment and high academic standard. Over time, more and more families of all castes and creeds began enrolling their children in the School. Today, pupils in the School are from all castes and creeds. Among them are also children of past pupils, many of whom were the first in their families to receive education.

Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang and the family of the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche are happy that the School now meets the vision and heart-wish of the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche.

After an extended period of lockdown due to the pandemic where classes were taught on-line, the School re-opened on March 7, 2022 with 276 pupils in classes ranging from Lower Kindergarten to Class 8. Among the pupils, 118 are girls and 158 are boys. The School has 12 teachers and 4 non-teaching staff including a warden.

(C) Jamgon Kongtrul IIRD Memorial HOME

The Home opened in 1995 with 8 destitute elderly whom Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche encountered on His way to Lava in 1990. They were eking a living by breaking stones for a road that was under construction and living in make-shift shelters along its verge. The encounter gave rise Rinpoche's aspiration to build a Home for the destitute.

In 1997, the first 5 children joined the Home. They were 2 brothers and a sister abandoned by their blind widowed father, and 2 blind children whose alcoholic father brought to the Home and pleaded for acceptance. This way, the Home became INTER-GENERATIONAL.

The Home admits new residents annually. However, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, there were no admissions to the Home between March 2020 and December 2021. Beginning January this year, 2022, one local elderly man of 67 years, Man Bahadur Baraily, and 4 children between the ages 8 and 13 years joined the Home. Today the Home has 55 residents. They are 23 Elderly (12 men and 11 women) and 32 children (13 girls and 19 boys). All children attend the Jamgon Kongtrul IIRD

Memorial School until Class 8 and continue their higher secondary education until Class 12 at the Central Tibetan School.

Traditional Himalayan culture and values are observed at the Home. Residents are encouraged to follow their faith. The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche aspired that the minds, particularly of the elderly, must change. His wish and blessings are evident in the reflection of security and peace among the elderly, and the caring qualities of the children at the Home.

To support the needs of children from poor and destitute families, the Home arranged the admittance of 21 local children to the Central Tibetan School, and provide for their uniforms, school and hostel fees which are largely subsidised by the Tibetan government in Exile. As their families are unable to care of them, the children stay in the Home during their school holidays.

(D) Jamgon Kongtrul IIRD Memorial HEALTH-CARE CENTRE

Opened in 1995 to benefit Lava and its surrounding communities, the Healthcare centre (a day clinic) was the first health facility for a population there of more than 8,000 people. It is located at the entrance of Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery in remote Lava at an altitude of 7,700 feet. The Clinic is under the Monastery's administration. Until today, there are still patients who walk more than 3 hours to reach the Clinic. In addition to primary care, the Clinic serves as a link to diagnostic and treatment centres in Kalimpong (1 hour away by car) and in Siliguri (2 to 3 hours away by car).

The Clinic has a resident registered nurse, Sister Lhaden. Dr. Sonam Drakpa, senior physician and ENT specialist at the Kalimpong General Hospital, visits weekly with a pharmacist. Treatments are free. Medications are subsidised and those unable to pay are not charged.

From April this year, 2022, Dr. Reetesh Tamang, a Dental Surgeon at Kalimpong's District Hospital, visits at least once per month. He is a Buddhist and was inspired by the services that Dr. Sonam Drakpa had been providing to the Clinic for many, many years.

Following protocols, the Clinic opened on by appointment only during the CoVid pandemic and Dr. Sonam visited for emergency cases only. However, the Clinic is now fully re-opened.

Last year, 2021, the clinic attended to 2,173 cases. Among them, 668 were those of monks from Kagyu Thekchen Ling monastery and 1,107 from nearby Lava town and Kopche village. The remaining of 398 were patients from 42 surrounding villages.

Majority of cases in 2021 were related to coronavirus symptoms and infection, hypertension, lung problems, skin diseases and diabetes. There were also a high number of cases of gastro-intestinal, skeletomuscular, ear and nose problems.

(E) Jamgon Kongtrul EYE CENTRE

Opened in 2005, the Eye Centre (JKEC) is a world-class community eye hospital offering a high standard of ophthalmic treatments. It is only eye hospital serving the District of Kalimpong and patients are also from Darjeeling and Sikkhim. Treatments provided range from cataract and other eye surgeries, retinal and glaucoma examinations and treatments, corneal transplants etc.

JKEC is committed to its founding aim of raising awareness of Cataract as a form of Treatable Blindness and contributing to the alleviation of cataract among the poor and needy. Remote Outreach Programs are conducted bi-weekly at poor villages where vision care is unavailable. Cataract patients identified are mobilised to JKEC for free surgeries and intra-ocular lens implants.

Observing Covid health protocols, the Eye Centre cancelled all outreach programs from March 2020 and out-patient visitations were restricted to emergency cases only. Despite that, in 2021, the Eye Centre screened more than 8,000 walk-in patients and conducted 417 surgeries.

JKEC is resuming its bi-weekly outreach cataract programs from April 17, 2022 as restrictions are now lifted.

JKEC is financially self-sufficient and the percentage of free cataract treatments have been above JKEC's aim of 30%.

**PROJECTS FOR
PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL HIMALAYAN CULTURE & CUSTOMS**

PARAMITA CHARITABLE TRUST

**- Jangchub Choling Nunnery Building Project –
Labrang, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh**

Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang is appealing for donations towards the construction of a nunnery in Labrang, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh. The place is remote and mountainous, 3 hours by road to Tibet's western border near Mount Kailash.

Labrang is an old Vajrayana Buddhist village. It is also the home of Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal and Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen. The culture and customs of the people in Labrang support the faith and practice of Vajrayana Buddhism.

Families continue to encourage their daughters to become nuns. They participate in the Community Temple regular activities of prayers and pujas and take care of the Temple too. However, as tradition has not changed, nuns continue to depend on their families for livelihood and support. They help with their family's household chores in return for staples, food and fuel for their winter retreat. Winter is the only time they have for study and cultivation. As such, more and more girls and young women aspiring to become nuns are leaving Labrang village to join nunneries elsewhere. If this is allowed to continue, it will affect the future of the Buddhist community in Labrang. Therefore, at the request of Labrang's elders, Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang has agreed to help preserve the tradition and culture in Labrang by building a nunnery for the nuns where they can devote their life to study and cultivation of their vocation.

Work on the Nunnery building will commence in May 2022. We appeal for donations towards its construction. So far, an amount of US\$108,000 has been donated and another US\$100,000 is needed to complete the project.

NEPAL – ANANDA SANGH

(A) Pullahari Monastery and Retreat Centre

In 1986, Khyabje Dapsang Rinpoche (1929 -1992) gifted the land to the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche. Construction began soon after. Pullahari Monastery was completed by March 1992 and the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche consecrated the statues and blessed the Monastery. Rinpoche also gave the first transmissions to the monks who had arrived to do the 3-year retreat.

At Pullahari, the age-old tradition of the sangha community is preserved. The way of life, education and training prepare monks for their future roles in preserving and propagating of the Dharma, and benefitting others spiritually in accordance with Buddhist view and values. Novice monks undergo an 8-year monastic curriculum of education in Tibetan, Nepali and English languages, Buddhist studies and history, and Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and rituals. Today, monks are also taught arithmetic and social sciences in accordance with Nepal’s national primary curriculum. This also helpful for monks who leave and return to worldly life.

Upon successful completion of their studies, the monks may choose to pursue the 13-year Acharya Program at the Rigpe Dorje Monastic Institute for Higher Buddhist Philosophy in Lapa, India, or undergo more extensive and profound training in scriptures and rituals, a further 5 to 7 years of study and training under senior Lamas and Ritual Masters.

Like at Kagyu Thekchen Ling, on *Lha Bab Duchon*, October 27, 2021, 10 monks entered the 7th Mahamudra retreat at Pullahari Monastery’s **3-year Retreat Centre, *Kunsang Osel Dechen Ling***, under Retreat Master, Drupon Lama Chokyi Nyima. Their retreat will conclude in March 2025.

Today, Pullahari Monastery has 220 monks. Among them, 35 joined in 2021. The ages of the monks range from 5 to 68 years old.

(B) FREE REMOTE OUTREACH CATARACT PROGRAM

Since 1995, Ananda Sangh has conducted at least one Remote Outreach Cataract Program annually. The Program is aimed at raising awareness of cataract as a treatable form of blindness, and providing access for free treatments to poor and needy patients, especially those in remote areas where vision care is not available. Conducted in technical collaboration with Tilganga Eye Centre under the direction of the esteemed Dr Sanduk Ruit, the Program is FREE. As at December 31, 2021, 66,966 poor and needy patients were screened for cataract at numerous remote locations in Nepal, and 6,240 were treated with cataract surgeries and intra-ocular lens implants.

The last outreach program conducted was on November 28 to December 1, 2021. It was held at Nawalpari in the Nawalpur District of Gandaki Province, Nepal. A total of 1,976 patients were screened at 7 remote sites and 193 cataract surgeries were conducted. An outreach Cataract program is also being planned for the current year of 2022.

NEPAL – JAMGON KONGTRUL THIRD MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Leaving Pullahari Monastery for the last time on April 7, 1992, the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche walked through its village and stopped by a land nearby the Monastery. There, Rinpoche said that we should acquire it, set up a Tibetan Medical Centre and grow medicinal herbs and plants. Never forgetting Rinpoche’s wish, Tenzin Dorjee bought the piece of land in 1995.

In 2019, twenty-four years on, Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang was finally ready to fulfil the Third Jamgon Rinpoche’s aspirations. However, conditions have changed and the Labrang is planning that the project to preserve Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye’s medical lineage be self-supporting eventually.

The Jamgon Kongtrul Third Memorial Foundation, a Non-distribution of Profit Company was set up on June 18, 2021. Site preparations started on December 11, 2021, after the monsoon and re-opening of the country following the CoVid pandemic lockdown. By end March 2022, major earthworks, slope protection and pathways were completed. The Foundation is now ready to begin the first phase of the project.

Phase 1, 2022 - 2023:

A. Construction of a Multi-Functional Building

Estimated Cost: US\$350,000/-

A Tibetan Medical clinic and pharmacy will be set up when the building is ready. There will also be spaces for alternative physical therapies, rooms for visitors, and a café.

B. Construction of a Sukhavati Shrine

Estimated Cost: US\$50,000

The Sukhavati Shrine will incorporate a columbarium for names & funeral tsa-tsas of dearly departed.

Phase 2, 2024 – 2026:

Construction of the Tibetan Medical Centre

The Tibetan Medical Centre will have a Tibetan Medical Clinic, a Pharmacy, a Clinic/Training facility for Alternative Physical Therapies, a Resource Library and facilities for Tibetan Medical training.

The Tibetan Medical Clinic and pharmacy, and the Alternative Therapy clinic in the Multi-Functional Building will be relocated to the Tibetan Medical Centre. Their spaces will be leased out.



Tenzin Dorje
April 15, 2022