



# JAMGON KONGTRUL LABRANG

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## MAJOR PROJECTS OF JAMGON KONGTRUL LABRANG

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### INDIA – PARAMITA CHARITABLE TRUST

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

Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery in Lava, District Kalimpong, India, is located on the periphery of West Bengal's pristine Neora Valley National Park that extends to the borders of Sikkim and Bhutan. Remote, serene and quiet, the environment is ideal for study and meditation.

Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery was opened by The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche on June 6, 1990, the holy day of Chökhör Duchen, The first sangha comprised 7 monks. Its Shangpa Kagyu Retreat Centre, **Ngedön Chagchen Ling**, opened the following year on March 10, 1991. The first batch of 3-year retreatants were 10 monks. Among them was Lama Oser Kongtrul, personal attendant of the Second and Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoches. The **Rigpe Dorje Monastic Institute of Higher Buddhist Philosophy (Shedra)** was established in 2001. It offers a 13-year Acharya Program of higher studies in Buddhist philosophy open to monks who had successfully completed the compulsory 8-year elementary monastic education of studies and training.

Today, there are 28 young monks between the ages of 6 and 17 years old in Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery. They attend the 8-year elementary monastic education and training. The monastic school has 3 teachers. In addition, the Monastery has 17 other monastics and 6 lay staff in-charge of various responsibilities and duties.

In the Shedra, 75 monks are pursuing the 13-year Acharya Program. The Shedra is among the leading Institutes of Higher Buddhist Philosophy of the Karma Kagyu Lineage. To date, more than 70 monks have graduated as Acharyas. Among them are 9 senior Acharyas who were selected for award of the position in 2023. The awards were made on the basis on their scholastic achievement and their commitment and dedication to Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang. Today, they serve as senior teachers in the Shedra and in the monastic schools and as administrators in Pullahari and Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monasteries.

At Ngedön Chagchen Ling, the 9<sup>th</sup> Shangpa Kagyu retreat is in progress with 9 monks under the guidance of the Drupon Lama Wangdue. The retreat that began on Lhabab Duchen, October 27, 2021, concluded on Losar Day this year, February 28, 2025.

**(B) Jamgon Kongtrul IIIRD Memorial HOME**

In 1987/1988, moved by his encounters with stricken destitute elderly people, the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche began plans to found a Home. Through his meetings with them, he realised the impact of prolonged poverty and destitution on the human spirit. Rinpoche put it quite simply that the Home he envisioned would be “a place where minds must change”. He approached Rigpe Dorje Foundation (Canada) to support his wish and in response, the Foundation contributed to the establishment of the Home in partnership with Help the Aged Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The Home eventually opened on December 7, 1995. Three of the first seven residents were among those whom the Third Jamgon Kongtrul met in remote Lava in 1987 whose plight moved him deeply.

By 1997, the Home had 27 elderly residents. That year, the first 5 children joined. All the children were destitute and two among them were blind. As the Home was for elderly people, they were brought in on a temporary basis until a children’s home and blind school would admit them. Very quickly, however, it was clearly evident that the elderly were responding to the children with keen interest and care. Their presence livened the atmosphere at the Home and lifted the spirits of the elderly. A great warmth settled in. A decision was thus made to keep the children. This way, the Home for Elderly transformed into an Intergenerational Home.

Today, the Home has 22 elderly (12 men and 10 women) and 55 children (28 boys and 27 girls). All the residents, old and young, are destitute. They come from remote areas in District Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Sikkim. The Home is a big family managed by 9 staff. All staff are regarded as residents of the Home too.

To date, since its opening in 1995, the Home has sheltered a total of 194 elderly. Among them 123 passed away, 49 reunited with families and 22 are currently residing in the Home. The Home has also sheltered 153 children including the 55 still in the Home today.

The children study at the Jamgon Kongtrul IIIRD Memorial School (JKMS) from Lower Kindergarten class to Lower Secondary Level (Class 8). They continue upper secondary levels (Classes 9 to 12) at Sambhota Tibetan School. At present, the Home has 14 children in JKMS and 28 in Sambhota Tibetan School. Among those studying in Upper Secondary classes, 8 are graduating Class 12 this year.

**(C) Jamgon Kongtrul IIIRD Memorial SCHOOL**

Though impressed with the high standard of schools in Kalimpong and Darjeeling, the Third Jamgon Kongtrul was however dismayed by the lack of attention to local values, traditions and culture of the Himalayan people in the education of students. There was also a lack of good educational opportunities for children of lower castes and poor below-poverty-level (BPL) families. This moved him to establish a School for needy Himalayan children from poor families of all castes and creeds. To fulfil the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche’s vision, his family, the Sadutshang family, donated land and property to establish the School.

Jamgon Kongtrul IIIRD Memorial School opened on May 10, 1997. Its first class a Lower Kindergarten Class of 30 needy children under the tutelage of 2 teachers. Education was completely free for the first few years. However, through experience, it became clearer and clearer that parents took their children’s education more seriously if they were required to contribute nominally. Today, parents pay for their children’s uniforms. Tuition, text books and school materials are still provided free of charge. The

initial nutritional program of daily milk and cookies for all the children is now only provided to those in Kindergarten Levels and Class 1 as the older children are not keen to have them.

Initially viewed by the community as a school for lower castes, Jamgon Kongtrul Third Memorial School has children from poor families of all castes and creeds today due its high academic standards, clean and well-cultivated environment. The vision of the Third Jamgon Kongtrul of bridging the divide of castes and creeds is naturally realised.

The 2025 academic year began in March. The School selected 60 new pupils: 30 for the Lower Kindergarten Class and 30 others for entrance to various classes from Upper Kindergarten Level to Class 4. Today, the School has 255 pupils (151 boys and 104 girls), 12 teaching staff and 4 non-teaching staff in total.

### **(D) Jamgon Kongtrul IIIIRD Memorial HEALTH-CARE CENTRE**

The Health Centre serving Lava, its surrounding remote communities, and the Monastery opened as a day clinic in 1995. It was the only health care facility for a population there of more than 7,000 people then. Located at the entrance of Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery, it operates under the Monastery's administration. Today, the population has grown to more than 15,000. However, there are still patients who walk for 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). Treatments for the poor are free and medications are subsidised.

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. Both have served with commitment and dedication since 1996. Since April 2022, Dr. Reetesh Tamang, a Dental Surgeon from the Kalimpong District Hospital, visits once per month at the encouragement of Dr. Sonam Drakpa.

In 2024, the clinic treated 1,555 patients. Among them, 424 were monks of Kagyu Thekchen Ling monastery and 712 from Lava town and nearby Kopche village. The rest of 419 patients were from 42 remote villages around Lava.

There were 170 cases of hypertension and 130 cases of diabetes and skin diseases. Other major cases were ailments related to lungs, kidney, throat, ear and nose. Since the establishment of the clinic, the quality of health in Lava and its surrounding communities have improved.

### **(E) Jamgon Kongtrul EYE CENTRE (JKEC)**

The Eye Centre, a world-class community eye hospital offering a high standard of ophthalmic care and treatments opened in 2005. It serves patients in District Kalimpong and from Darjeeling and Sikkim. Treatments range from cataract and other eye surgeries to retinal and glaucoma examinations and laser treatments.

JKEC is committed to its founding aim of raising awareness of Cataract as a form of Treatable Blindness and contributing to its alleviation among the poor and needy. Except in the monsoon period where access is difficult, Remote Outreach Programs are conducted at poor, remote villages where vision care

is unavailable. Cataract patients that are identified are mobilised to JKEC for free surgeries and intra-ocular lens implants.

Today, JKEC is financially sufficient and self-supporting. Poor patients receive free treatments and cataract surgeries and lens implants, and treatment of low-income patients are subsidised. JKEC's aim of 30% free and subsidised treatment for the poor and needy is met.

**(F) PRESERVATION OF TRADITIONAL HIMALAYAN CULTURE & CUSTOMS**  
**Jangchub Choling Nunnery Building Project at Labrang, Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh**

Labrang, an old Vajrayana Buddhist village in remote and mountainous Kinnaur, is the home of Ven. Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal and Khenpo Sherab Gyaltzen. The culture and customs of the people there support the faith and practice of Vajrayana Buddhism. Single daughters are encouraged to become nuns. They take care of the Temple and join the regular activities of prayers and pujas. However, due to lack of facilities and opportunity for proper cultivation, young women are leaving the village to join nunneries elsewhere. To protect and preserve the way of life in Labrang, Paramita Charitable Trust is helping Jangchub Choling Temple build a nunnery with facilities for living, studying and practicing.

The building under construction has 3 floors. The two lower floors are accommodation for 14 nuns including showers, toilets, a dining area and a kitchen. The third floor is the main temple. Construction of the super-structure, plumbing, electrical wiring and flooring are complete. However, funding is still insufficient to complete the installation of windows, doors, sanitary and kitchen equipment and fixtures, and painting and artwork. The opening of the Temple and Nunnery is thus delayed. Conditions allowing, Jangchub Choling Nunnery hopes to complete the entire project for opening on Lha Bab Duchen, 2026 November 11.

**NEPAL – ANANDA SANGH**

**(A) Pullahari Monastery and Kunsang Osel Dechen Ling Retreat Centre**

The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche named Pullahari Monastery after Naropa's Monastery in Bihar, India, where Marpa trained in practice. From there, at Naropa's command, Marpa returned to Tibet and established the Marpa Kagyu Lineage.

In 1986, Khyabje Dapsang Rinpoche (1929 -1992) gifted the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche seven rupaneees of land at Jagdol, Ward Kapan in the foothills north-east of the Great Stupa of Boudhanath. The monastery building was completed at the end 1991. In March 1992, the Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche set-up and consecrated the upper Lineage Shrine Room and in April, granted the first transmissions to 17 monks who had arrived to begin the traditional 3-year Mahamudra retreat.

At Pullahari, as at Kagyu Thekchen Ling Monastery in Lava, India, the age-old tradition of the monastic community is preserved. The way of life, education and training prepare monks for their future roles of upholding and propagating the Dharma to benefit sentient beings and the world in accordance with Buddhist view and values. Novice monks undergo an 8-year elementary curriculum of education in Tibetan, Nepali and English languages, Buddhist studies and history, and training in Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and rituals. Today, young monks are also taught arithmetic and social sciences in accordance with Nepal's national primary curriculum. Upon successful completion of their elementary education, the monks may choose to pursue the 13-year Acharya Program at the Rigpe Dorje Monastic Institute for Higher Buddhist Philosophy in Lava, India, or undergo more extensive and profound training in scriptures and rituals at Pullahari Monastery. The Rituals Program is a further 5 to 7 years of study and training under senior Lamas and Ritual Masters. Thereafter, the monks may choose to enter the traditional 3-year Mahamudra retreat in Pullahari or the Shangpa Kagyu retreat in Lava.

Today, Pullahari Monastery has 240 monks. Their ages range from 4 years to 72 years old. Among the monks, 156 attend the monastic school offering the elementary curriculum of education and training. The classes range from 1 to 8. There is a special Kindergarten class for young monks below the age of 7 years.

Pullahari Monastery is managed by the monks themselves and administered by 2 Khenpos and 1 Acharya. The School's Principal is a senior Khenpo and among its teachers are 4 Acharyas and 3 lamas who teach the Ritual classes. In addition, there are 12 lay staff. Among the staff are a book-keeper, 3 lay teachers of Nepali and English languages and of mathematics, a building maintenance supervisor, a cook and a kitchen assistant, a gardener, a driver and a tea-house cook.

At **Kunsang Osel Dechen Ling 3-year Retreat Centre**, 10 monks are in the 7<sup>th</sup> Mahamudra Retreat under Drupon Lama Chokyi Nyima. The retreat that started on Lha Bab Duchen, October 27, 2021. The retreat will conclude on June 11, 2025, full-moon day of the coming Saga Dawa.

**(B) REMOTE OUTREACH CATARACT PROGRAM FOR THE DESERVING**

The Remote Outreach Cataract Program by Ananda Sangh grew out from the ideal that The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche shared with the eminent ophthalmologist Dr. Sanduk Ruit. Their vision was to raise national awareness of cataract as a treatable form of blindness, reach out to patients in remote areas where vision care is unavailable, and provide free treatment for the poor and needy.

Ananda Sangh's Remote Outreach Cataract Program started in 1995. At least one program is organised annually. Between 1995 and 2024 September, Ananda Sangh has conducted 35 cataract programs. The last from August 1 to September 6, 2024 was a Remote Outreach Screening Program of the entire remote Upper Dolpo Area. A total of 2,507 were screened and 114 identified with cataract. Cataract patients were all above 65 years old. Due to the distance from their home location to the surgical site, only 62 made it for surgeries and intra-ocular lens implants. (The surgeries and lens implants were sponsored by another organisation.)

To date, Ananda Sangh has screened 86,100 patients from various remote sites in Nepal. Among them, 7,256 cataract patients have been surgically treated and given intra-ocular lenses.

The next Remote Outreach Cataract Program will be held in June. Remote Outreach Screenings are currently being planned. The surgeries will be conducted at Pullahari Monastery on June 13 and 14, 2025.

**NEPAL – JAMGON KONGTRUL THIRD MEMORIAL FOUNDATION**

On April 7, 1992 as The Third Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche was leaving Pullahari for the last time, He walked past a nearby piece of land and said that the Labrang should acquire it, set up a Tibetan Medical Centre and grow medicinal herbs and plants. Though the Labrang acquired the said piece of land in 1995, Rinpoche's instruction is finally realised after 24 years.

Finally in 2019, plans to preserve Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye's medical lineage is being implemented. As conditions are now different, the project is designed to be self-supporting.

The Jamgon Kongtrul Third Memorial Foundation, a Non-distribution of Profit Company was officially formed on June 18, 2021. Site preparations started on December 11, 2021. By end of March 2022, major earthworks, slope protection and pathways were completed. In March 2023, the Foundation started on the first phase of the project of building the Multi-Function Complex. Today, construction of the super-structure is built and work is continuing to complete the building and supporting facilities and the access roadways.

**Phase 1, 2023 March – 2024 December:**

**A. Construction of a Multi-Function Complex**

**Estimated Cost: US\$400,000/-**

The complex will have spaces for a café and rooms for shops, alternative therapies and healing practices, and visitor rooms. Due to work on the public roads in Jagdol village, transportation of building materials to the site was affected causing delay in work. The complex is therefore open in the first quarter of 2026 instead of 2025. A Tibetan Medical clinic and pharmacy will be set up at the Multi-Function Building. It will be relocated to the Tibetan Medical Centre eventually when the building is ready.

Future phases will include the construction and establishment of a centre with facilities for practice and preservation of the medical lineage of Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, and a Sukhavati Temple.