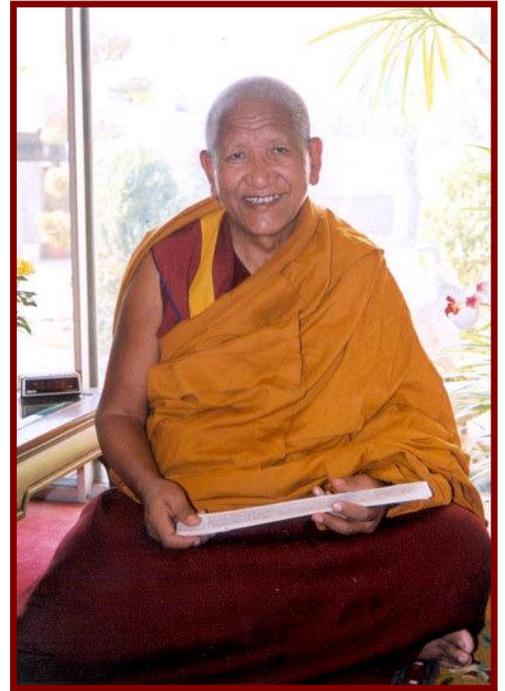


His Eminence Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Dawa

His Eminence Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Dawa, former abbot of Namgyal Monastery, Dharamsala, India, was born in 1931, into the family of Shabnang Nyangru in the Gyadha District of the Kongpo region of Tibet. His father was Alog and his mother was Lhamo. He enjoyed a regular childhood in his village until age 11. From age 11 to 15 he went to school and in 1946 he joined Kongpo House of Gaden Jangtse College of Gaden Monastic University, Lhasa. He received his ordination from His Eminence Sonam Namkha Rinpoche, then abbot of Gaden Jangtse College, and received the name Sonam Sangye.

For the next four years Khensur Rinpoche focused on memorizing the ritual prayers and texts of the College, studying rigorously throughout this time, and when he was 19 began his study of Buddhist metaphysics, including the Basic Debate Form (Collected Topics), with many qualified teachers. At age 24 he stood for his board debate examination (Tsoglang) on the Second Level of the Perfection of Wisdom Studies and the following year (age 25) he received full ordination from His Most Eminence Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, the Senior Tutor to His Holiness the Dalai Lama.



In 1959, when Tibet was occupied, Khensur Rinpoche was in the new course/class on the Middle Way Philosophy (Madhyamika) but had to cut short his education to escape to India. Following his escape he continued his monastic education at Gaden Monastic University which had been re-established in South India. He stood for his board debate examination on Monastic Discipline (Vinaya) in the new Assembly Hall of Gaden University. In 1976 he successfully completed his board examination for Master's Title organized by the High Level Gaden Education Board.

Having diligently studied and trained as a monastic for 30 years, Khensur Rinpoche received distinguished marks and earned his Geshe Lharampa Degree (the Highest Degree equivalent to Ph.D in Buddhist Philosophy) in 1979. After his formal studies were completed he served his monastic college as a secretary in the administration office for 6 years. In 1980 His Holiness the Dalai Lama appointed him to the Teaching Faculty of Namgyal Monastery in Dharamsala to teach dialectical debate, philosophy and Buddhist practice. He taught the Namgyal monks for seven years until 1987.

In 1987 His Holiness the Dalai Lama appointed him to the Teaching Faculty at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives where he taught Western students. During his 18 years of service at the library, Rinpoche taught thousands of foreign and Tibetan students, wrote books and articles on various topics of Buddhist Philosophy, and represented the LTWA in many religious and academic gatherings, both officially and unofficially. During this time he also taught Buddhism to the monks of Nechung Monastery (Monastery of the State Oracle of Tibet).

In 2004 His Holiness the Dalai Lama appointed him to be the sixth abbot of Namgyal Monastery, the private monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This post is a rare honour as the abbot of His Holiness' monastery is considered in rank the most senior among all other abbots of other monasteries. With sincerity, dedication and humility, he took over this responsibility and did much to improve the standard of education here.

In 2009 Khensur Rinpoche requested His Holiness' permission to resign from the abbot's post in order to visit his family and relatives in Tibet. His Holiness praised him for his marked contribution in teaching Buddhism and overseeing discipline at Namgyal Monastery and happily granted him permission to resign. Presently, Rinpoche resides in Kongpo House at Gaden Jangtse College within Gaden Monastic University, South India. H.E. Khensur Rinpoche has also taught and led retreats at Namgyal Institute in Ithaca, NY, Gaden Samten Ling in Edmonton, various Tibetan Buddhist Centres in the United States, and also centres in South Korea. He has many Western and Eastern students.