

Abbots and Leadership

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Summary: The spiritual leadership of Dzongkar Choede rests with the Abbot (Khenpo), who guides the study program, the ritual calendar, the ordination and training of monks, and the preservation of the monastery's lineage. The present abbot is Khenpo Thubten Tsering. He follows Khenpo Jampa Sopa Rinpoche, enthroned in October 2013, who was born in Dharamsala in 1962, served seven years as chant master, was appointed ritual master in 2003, and led Kyidong Thukchoe Nunnery in Nepal from 2004 to 2013; Ex-Abbot Jampa Kalsang Rinpoche, appointed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2005; and the late Ex-Khenrinpoche Ven. Thupten Tsondue, who helped re-establish the monastery in exile at Hunsur in 1972 and led the fundraising for the new temple completed in 2004.

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Abbots and Leadership

The spiritual leadership of Dzongkar Choede rests with the Abbot, known in Tibetan as the Khenpo. The abbot guides the religious life of the monastery: its study program, its ritual calendar, the ordination and training of monks, and the preservation of the monastery's lineage and traditions.

The present abbot of Dzongkar Choede is Khenpo Thubten Tsering. The monastery also honors the abbots who preceded him: Khenpo Jampa Sopa Rinpoche, Ex-Abbot Jampa Kalsang Rinpoche, and the late Ex-Khenrinpoche Ven. Thupten Tsondue, who led the monastery through its re-establishment in exile.

Khenpo Thubten Tsering — Present Abbot

Khenpo Thubten Tsering is the present abbot of Dzongkar Choede. A fuller account of his life and work is being prepared and will follow.

Khenpo Jampa Sopa Rinpoche

Khenpo Jampa Sopa Rinpoche was enthroned as abbot of Dzongkar Choede on the 2nd day of the 8th month of the royal year 2140 in the Tibetan lunar calendar, corresponding to 6 October 2013.

He was born in 1962 in Dharamsala and was admitted to the monastery at the age of fifteen. He received Sramanera (novice) ordination from His Holiness Ling Rinpoche in 1982, and Bikshu (full)

ordination from His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1985.

Within the monastery he served as chant master for seven years, and in 2003 he was appointed ritual master (Lopon). From 2004 until 2013 he served as abbot of Kyidong Thukchoe Nunnery in Nepal, where he carried through a program of administrative reform.

His teaching covers Buddhist philosophy, the tantric arts, and the creation of sand mandalas, and he has taught internationally in Europe, America, Canada, and Japan.

Ex-Abbot Jampa Kalsang Rinpoche

Ex-Abbot Jampa Kalsang Rinpoche entered the monastery at the age of seven and studied for twenty-two years.

He served the monastery in a succession of senior roles: thirteen years as chant master, three years as disciplinarian master, and four years as Acarya (Lopon). He completed the Yamantaka retreat of three years, three months, and three days.

He was appointed abbot by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 2005 and took his oath of office on 3 December 2005.

Ex-Khenrinpoche Ven. Thupten Tsondue

Ex-Khenrinpoche Ven. Thupten Tsondue became a monk at the age of fifteen and escaped from Tibet following the Chinese invasion of 1959.

In 1972, with the kind guidance of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, he helped re-establish Dzongkar Choede in exile at Hunsur in southern India. He afterwards led fundraising efforts abroad for the construction of a new temple, which was completed and opened by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in late 2004.

Leadership and Governance Today

Spiritual leadership is guided by the Abbot, while day-to-day discipline, coordination, and communal organization are managed by the disciplinarian (Gegu or Gegeu) and an administrative committee appointed by the monastery's general board. The community operates under a transparent hierarchy designed to support practice rather than exert power.