JAMGÖN KONGTRUL'S FIVE TREASURIES TIMELINE - 19th through 21st centuries

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1800 | 1825 | 1850 | 1875 | 1900 | 1950 | 2000 | Present

1813 - 1900

THE LIFE OF JAMGÖN KONGTRUL

Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé (1813-1900) was one of the most prominent Buddhist masters of the 19th century, who placed special focus upon a non-sectarian approach to the study and practice of Tibetan Buddhism. Renowned as an accomplished master, scholar and writer, he authored and compiled more than 100 volumes of Buddhist literature. Together with Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Chögyur Dechen Lingpa, he stimulated the *ris med* movement, which brought forth a revival of Buddhist culture in eastern Tibet. Jamgön Kongtrul's life is an amazing example for all of us and here we present a timeline with special emphasis on his contribution to world literature in the form of the five great collections of Buddhist texts known as the *Dzö Chen Nga*.

Life Events (Milestones)

1813
The sublime Kongtrul Yönten Gyatso was born in the hidden valley of Rongyap, which lies in front of Pema Lhatsé in Drida Zalmogang in East Tibet, into the clan of the Khyungpo to the lay Bön priest Sönam Phel and Tashi Tso, in a household of moderate means.

1828-1829
Kongtrul leaves his home with the support of his mother as the political situation deteriorates in the wake of violence.

1830 ?
Kongtrul begins studies at the great Zhechen Monastery under Jamgön Lama Gyurmé Thutop Namgyal, Orgyen Paljor, and Gyurmé Tendzin.

1830-1831
He receives his first initiation for White Manjushri practice and the oral transmission for *Reciting the Names of Manjushri*.

1831-1832
Receives first introduction to the nature of mind teachings and practices the Northern Treasures cycle.

1832-1833
Takes ordination with Jamgön Lama Gyurmé Thutop Namgyal in the lineage of precepts of the Early Translation School.

1833-1834
At the age of 20, Kongtrul travels to Palpung and stays there. He takes ordination again in the Kagyü tradition from Situ Rinpoche at Palpung.

1836-1837
Teaches, studies, and travels with the 14th Gyalwang Karmapa, Thekchok Dorjé for the next few years.

1840
Kongtrul meets Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo and they exchange empowerments and teachings for the rest of their lives.

1843
Kongtrul obtain's Situ Rinpoche's permission to establish Kunzang Dechen Ösel Ling, the hermitage near Palpung that would serve as Kongtrul's personal residence and the center of his activities for the rest of his life.

1851-1852
Performs many ceremonies for the prince of Dergé and travels there to ensure the good fortune of the newly born brother of the prince.

1861-1862
Khyentsé Rinpoche tells Kongtrul of his pure vision of a stupa and says that "this proves that your destiny concerns these Five Treasuries."

1900
At the age of 87 years at about midnight on the 27th day of the 11th lunar month of the earth-pig year, Jamgön Kongtrul passed on to the next realm.

The Treasury of Knowledge (TOK) ཤེས་བྱ་མཛོད།

1862
In between meditation sessions, Kongtrul composes the root verses of the first great treasury, *The Treasury of Knowledge*, at his hermitage Tsadra Rinchen Drak.

1862-1863
Khyentsé Rinpoche receives Kongtrul's draft of the *TOK* and says: "We will call this *The Treasury of the Knowable*, the first of the five great Treasuries you will produce. Now you must write your own commentary to it."

1863-1864
Kongtrul composed a three-volume commentary on the root verses, in less than four months, and titles it *The Infinite Ocean of Knowledge* (*Shécha Kunkhyap Dzö*).

1866
Kongtrul's first account of having used the complete text to teach.

1875
The woodblocks were carved and the first publication of the three-volume commentary to *The Treasury of Knowledge* printed at Palpung.

1970
First modern printed version produced by Lokesh Chandra, including Gene Smith's famous introduction.

1975
The last four volumes of the twenty-volume *rGya chen bka' mdzod* published in Paro, Bhutan by Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey include the *Shes bya kun khyab mdzod.*

1982
Three-volume edition published in Beijing - *Theg pa'i sgo kun las btus pa gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod bslab pa gsum legs par ston pa'i bstan bcos - Shes bya kun khyab mdzod.* People's Press (Mi rigs dpe skrun khang).

1997
Shechen edition in four volumes, New Delhi, India.

1993
Peter Alan Roberts
The Practice of Tranquillity & Insight: A Guide to Tibetan Buddhist Meditation: a commentary on the eighth chapter of The Treasury of Knowledge by Jamgön Kongtrul. Shambhala Publications.

2002
One-volume edition published in Beijing by the People's Press (Mi rigs dpel skrun khang)

2004
Karl Brunnhölzl
Commentary on The Presentation of Grounds, Paths, and Results in the Casual Vehicle of Characteristics from the Treasury of Knowledge, by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé. Root text, translations, and oral translation. Nitārtha Institute.

Publication of the English Translation 1995 - 2013

1995
Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book I; Myriad Worlds. Treasury of Knowledge Series. Snow Lion Publications.

1998
Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book V; Buddhist Ethics. Treasury of Knowledge Series. Snow Lion Publication.

2005
Ingrid McLeod and Elio Guarisco
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book VI, Part 4; Systems of Buddhist Tantra. Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. Snow Lion Publication.

2007
Elizabeth Callahan
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book VI, Part 3; Frameworks of Buddhist Philosophy. Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. Snow Lion Publications.

2007
Sarah Harding
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book VIII, Part 4; Esoteric Instructions. Snow Lion Publications.

2008
Ingrid McLeod and Elio Guarisco
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book VIII, Part 3; The Elements of Tantric Practice. Kalu Rinpoché Translation Group. Snow Lion Publications.

2010
Ngawang Zangpo
The Treasury of Knowledge: Books II, III, and IV; Buddhism's Journey to Tibet. Tsadra Foundation Series. Snow Lion Publications.

2011
Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima)
The Treasury of Knowledge: Books IX and X; Journey and Goal. Tsadra Foundation Series. Snow Lion Publications.

2012
Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima)
The Treasury of Knowledge: Books VII and VIII, Parts 1 and 2; Foundations of Buddhist Study and Practice. Tsadra Foundation Series. Snow Lion/Shambhala Publications.

2012
Gyurme Dorje
The Treasury of Knowledge: Book VI, Parts 1 and 2; Indo-Tibetan Classical Learning and Buddhist Phenomenology. Tsadra Foundation Series. Snow Lion/Shambhala Publications.

2013
Two-volume edition of the *TOK* by the Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang, at the Rigpe Dorje Institute, Kalimpong, India.

2013
Tsadra Foundation publishes a digital bilingual edition and a Tibetan edition of the *TOK* for tablets. These editions include the English translations published by Snow Lion Publications, and the two-volume Tibetan edition published by the Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang.

2013
Tsadra Foundation finishes the ten-volume translation project and the publication of Kongtrul's *The Treasury of Knowledge*.

The Treasury of Kagyü Mantras (KNZ) བཀའ་བརྒྱུད་སྔགས་མཛོད།

1853 - 1855
Kagyü Ngakdzö compiled by Kongtrul. The timing of the production of woodblocks at Palpung is unknown.

1982
Eight-volume edition published in Paro, Bhutan by Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey

The Treasury of Precious Termas (RTZ) རིན་ཆེན་གཏེར་མཛོད།

1855-56
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo entrusted a number of minor terma texts that he had collected in four volumes to Kongtrul who expanded the collection to ten volumes. These were known as the *gTer phren* collection and became the precursor for *Rinchen Terdzö*.

1855 - 1893
The *RTZ* was collected and arranged at various times over the course of almost forty years.

1875 - 1895
Woodblocks carved and texts printed at Palpung.

1909-1912
Carving of blocks and printing of the *RTZ* at mTshur pu with some additions from the Karmapa.

1976 - 1980
111-volume edition created under the direction of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and published in Paro, Bhutan by Ngodrup and Sherab Drimay. This larger edition is based on both of the earlier editions and adds three volumes of useful practice texts.

2007 - 2008 - 2016 ?
A new Tsadra edition is being created in 70 volumes, 60 volumes of which were already published by Shechen Publications, 2007-2008. This will be a new edition based on all previous editions, with multiple levels of editing, based on all existing editions of individual texts and research of rare manuscripts done by Dakpo Tulku. The final volumes should be available by 2016. In the following years two supplemental volumes of practice materials will also be produced.

The Treasury of Precious Instructions (DNZ) གདམས་ངག་མཛོད།

Late 1881
Revisions and publication of the *DNZ* at Palpung.

1871-1881
Jamgön Kongtrul compiles the twelve-volume *DNZ.*

1882
Jamgön Kongtrul gives first transmission of the unfinished *DNZ*.

1886 - 1893
Kongtrul continues adding texts to his *DNZ*.

1971-1972
Kundeling Printing in 12 volumes in Delhi by Ngawang Gyaltsen and Ngawang Lungtok.

1979-1981
Dilgo Khyentse Printing in 18 volumes, published in Paro, Bhutan by Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimey. This contains several of the rare texts missing from the Kundeling printing.

1999
Shechen Printing in 18 volumes, published by Shechen in New Delhi. This is the most complete collection and contains the few missing pages and texts that had been found since the 1979-1981 version (according to Gene Smith).

2013
Richard Barron
The Catalog of The Treasury of Precious Instructions, Volume 18, Text 13 of the *DNZ*. Tsadra Foundation.

2013
Tsadra Foundation begins the translation project of the entire *DNZ* in 18 volumes.

The Treasury of Extensive Teachings (GKZ) རྒྱ་ཆེན་བཀའ་མཛོད།

1859 - 1893
The *Gyachen Kadzö* is an anthology of over 300 titles compiled by Kongtrul, including unique treasuries of his own terma.

1900-1910 ??
The woodblocks were likely carved and printed within a few years of Kongtrul's death, in the first decade of 20th century, at Palpung.

1976
A twenty-volume edition is published in Paro, Bhutan by Ngodrup.

2002
A thirteen-volume edition is published by Shechen in New Delhi. This version is an expanded edition of the twenty-volume set published in Paro, 1975-76, and includes several more terma cycles.

Translations of Jamgön Kongtrul's Other Works · A Selection *

1975
Ken McLeod
A Direct Path to Enlightenment, Kagyu Kunkhyab Choling, republished in 1987 as *The Great Path of Awakening*. Snow Lion Publications.

1975
Judith Hanson
The Torch of Certainty.
Snow Lion Publications.

1994
Ngawang Zangpo
Jamgön Kongtrul's Retreat Manual.
Snow Lion Publications.

1997
Pamela White
Manuel de Retraite de Djamgœun Kongtrul. Translation from English into French. Editions Yogi Ling.

2003
Ngawang Zangpo
Timeless Rapture: Inspired Verse of the Shangpa Masters. Tsadra Foundation Series, Snow Lion Publications.

2003
Christiane Buchet and Tcheuky Séngué
Les Chants de l'immortalité, Chants de réalisation des maîtres de la lignée Shangpa. Translation from English into French. Editions Claire Lumière.

2003
Richard Barron (Chökyi Nyima)
The Autobiography of Jamgön Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors. Tsadra Foundation Series, Snow Lion Publications.

2005
Christian Charrier
Vie de Jamgœun Kongtrul, écrite par lui-même, Jamgœun Kongtrul. Translation from English into French. Editions Claire Lumière.

Disclaimer

Because of the lack of internal evidence in Tibetan sources regarding the actual dates of production of most of the texts and collections in this timeline, we have estimated the dates as best as we can, in consultation with specialists in the field. The information presented here is based on the following sources, including interviews with Richard Barron and professor Anne Burchardi:

1. Alak Zenkar Rinpoche, *Biography of Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye* at Lotsawa House, as translated by Adam Pearcey of Rigpa Translations, 2005.
2. Barron, Richard, trans. *The Autobiography of Jamgon Kongtrul: A Gem of Many Colors*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2003.
3. Barron, Richard, trans. *Journey and Goal*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2011.
4. Barron, Richard, trans. *The Catalog of The Treasury of Precious Instructions*. Tsadra Foundation, 2013.
5. Burchardi, Anne. *Kongtruls Fem Samlinger*. Fund Og Forskning, 2001.
6. Schwieger, Peter. *Collecting and Arranging the gTer ma Tradition: Kong sprul's Great Treasury of the Hidden Teachings*. In Chayet, et al. Edition, éditions: l'écrit au Tibet, évolution et devenir. Indus Verlag, 2010.
7. Smith, E. Gene. *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*. Edited by Kurtis R. Schaeffer. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001.

* **Translations of Other Works**
These texts are a small selection of significant translations of Kongtrul's works and do not reflect the many other translations that exist in Spanish, German, French, and English.

LEGEND OF SYMBOLS

LIFE EVENTS
EDITIONS
TRANSLATIONS

1800 | 1825 | 1850 | 1875 | 1900 | 1950 | 2000 | Present

19th Century | 20th Century | 21st Century