



# A Short Life Story of Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan (1914 - 1997)



By the Late Guru's Humble Disciples Yeshe Thaye & Pema Lhadren



*His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche's Bestowal of the Lotus Hat to Vajra Guru Lau Yui-che*

Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan (alias Ven. Guru Lau Yui-che) was one of the chief disciples and also the Chinese Spiritual Representative of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche II in the Far East. Born in the Village of Dongguan, near Guangzhou city, of Guangdong province, China in 1914, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan was interested in Chinese Buddhism when he was 12 years old, and was later initiated as a disciple of the Japanese Shingon School. Thus, he was well versed in the Kriya-, Carya-, and Yoga- Tantras.

However, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan soon realized that these stages are not the ultimate of the Buddhist teachings, and so he decided to continue on with the study of Annuttara-Yoga Tantra of Tibetan Buddhism. Hence, he received further maturing empowerments and liberating instructions from such Tibetan lamas as Ven. Norla Rinpoche, Lama Dorje Gyurbei, Khenpo Rinchen, Thubtan Nyima and Panchen Lama, among many others. When he was 18 years old, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan received the "Bodhisattva Vow" from the Ven. Master Shu Yuen, the great contemporary Ch'an master, in Guangzhou.

When he was 37 years old, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan further received initiations and teachings from Ven. Kunga Rinpoche, the root teacher of both Professor Garma C.C. Chang and



*His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche with Vajra Guru Lau Yui-che After the Bestowal of the Lotus Hat*

Yogi C.M. Chen. Hence, being encouraged by Professor Chang, urged by Yogi Chen, together with the sponsorship from Mr. Lee Sai-wah, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan went to India and met his predestined Tsawai Lama (Root Guru) His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong in 1958, **due to their previous karmic connections and their prayers in the same mandala to benefit all motherly sentient beings.** And so accordingly, he received all the empowerments and heart instructions concerning the precious "Na Rak Dong Truk Tantra" from His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche.

Furthermore, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan was also empowered by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche with the blessings of the Lama, Yidam and Khandro, to transmit these precious teachings to all suitable vessels. Since his return to Hong Kong, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltsan established various Dharma centers in both Hong Kong and Taiwan to spread the teachings of Guru Rinpoche and of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche to the Chinese people.





*His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche and Vajra Guru Lau Yui-che were Making Jokes with Each Other*

At the same time, he visited the United States, Canada, France, Australia and Southeast Asia in spreading those precious teachings around the world. Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan's great wish was to fulfill the name of "**Chokyi Gyaltzan**" given to him by His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, that is, to **uphold the Victory Banner in all directions** across the world for the benefits of all our motherly sentient beings!

Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan also learnt the Tibetan language at the age of sixty, and translated quite a few important Tibetan Buddhist works into Chinese, including Guru Rinpoche's *Parasol of the Dharma*, and His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche's *The History of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*. At the same time, Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan himself wrote many books and articles in Chinese concerning the teachings of Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, and also compiled and edited a voluminous series of books called the "Collected Works of Vajaryana" in Chinese.

Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan further published a "Quarterly Journal" to be distributed free of charge to peoples all over the world, and established the Secret Vehicle Publications so as to benefit the Chinese people. Then, it was one year before Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan passed away in 1997 that he had already arranged for his lineages to be upheld.

In fact, it was back in the years of 1986 and 1996 that Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan had twice asked Yeshe Thaye to uphold his lineages and to raise the Victory Banner of the Holy Dharma for the sake of all our motherly sentient beings (please refer to the article on "[Unfathomable Ocean](#)

of Kindness – In Commemoration of Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan", in Issue One of the "Light of Lotus, published by Dudjom Buddhist Association in February, 1999). Then, at the age of eighty-four (of the same age that His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche had passed away), Ven. Lama Sonam Chokyi Gyaltzan entered into parinirvana on Guru Rinpoche's Day, the tenth day of the fourth month ( Saga Dawa ) of the Tibetan Fire Ox year of the 17<sup>th</sup> Rabjung Cycle (that is, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1997 ).



*Ven. Kunga Rinpoche, One of Vajra Guru Lau Yui-che's Gurus*



*Ven. Norla Hutoheto, One of Vajra Guru Lau Yui-che's Gurus*