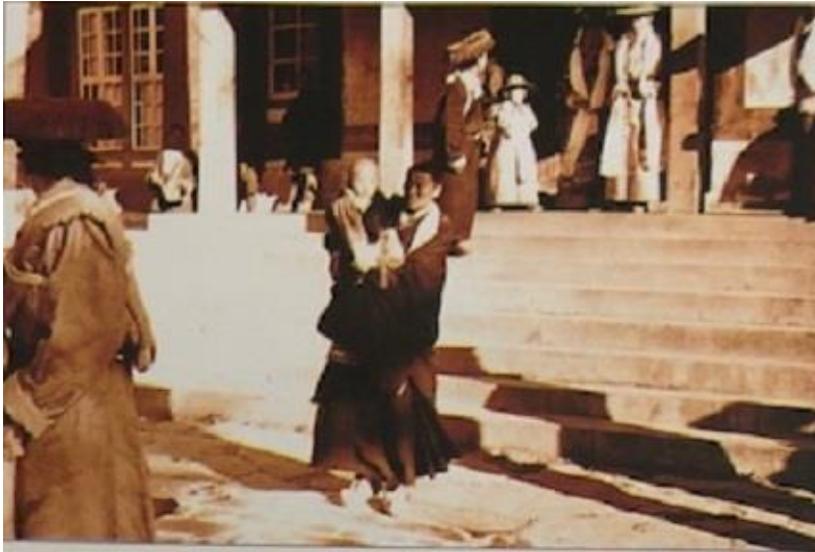


## Part 3 – Equanimity

After the ceremony for the recognition of little Tseten Gyurme as the Seventh Chetsang Rinpoche, the next step was a big ceremony to give him the throne, where he will teach as the future leader of the Drikung Kagyu Buddhist tradition. It began with a ceremony at his family home, in the shrine room. Everyone in his family, their friends, and their servants, got dressed in their best clothes and jewelry. He and his older brother Jigme wore yellow silk robes.



Next, they prepared for the journey on horseback to Drikung, that usually took about two days from Lhasa. Little Chetsang Rinpoche had two monks taking care of him. One was named Solpön Chösjor, who had taken care of him in his past life as the Sixth Chetsang Rinpoche when he was an old man. Solpön Chösjor carried little Rinpoche out of the house to a beautifully decorated horse waiting for him.



He was too small to sit alone on the saddle, so his two attendant monks, who were the only monks allowed to touch him, had to help him, putting him on the horse and then holding onto him.

He wore a very special hat that could only be worn by the highest (most important) tulkus. It looked like a big plate with a jewel shape ornament at the top.

Also, because he was one of the most important tulkus, he had ten government officials, five of whom were monks, accompany him in the little parade, or procession, to Drikung.



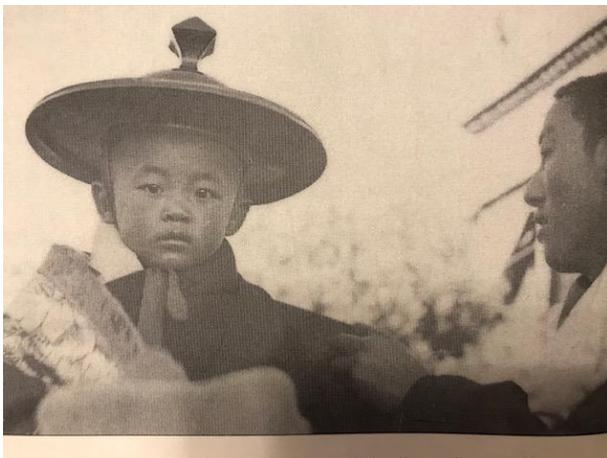
The leader of the procession was a monk holding a Wheel of Existence to show that Chetsang Rinpoche was a bodhisattva, an enlightened being who could have stayed in the most blissful Pure Land heaven, but who had so much compassion that he decided instead to be born again on Earth to help all beings escape from the suffering of the world.

Next came a monk with a trumpet, and monks with magnificent red hats holding banners of the Drikung Kagyu protector deities.



Another monk held a golden umbrella over the little Chetsang Rinpoche. Members of his family followed, and many monks and other important people. His older brother Jigme also was riding a horse.

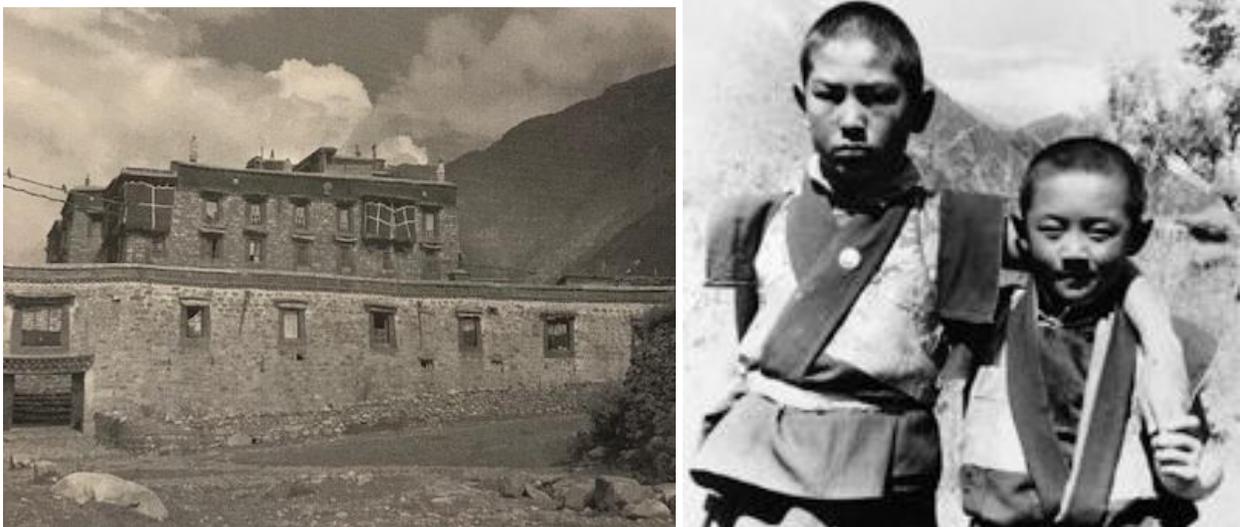
All those around little Rinpoche had joyful faces, showing spiritual pride, excitement and enthusiasm seeing little Rinpoche become the next leader of the Drikung Kagyu lineage. But little Rinpoche's face was both serious and calm. No one knew what the little boy was thinking. He was the still and serene one in the middle of all the excitement, as the crowds of people lined the streets to see him and offer their respect.



In the Drikung area is the famous Drikung Thil monastery, built by Jigten Sumgön over 800 years ago. There were three other monasteries there, and all of them were to be the residences of little Chetsang Rinpoche, just as they had been his homes in his past lives. The monastery called Drikung Tse was to be his home in the spring, the one called Yangrigar was to be his home in the summer, Drikung Thil was to be his home in the fall, and Drikung Dzong was to be his home in the winter. There were also Drikung monasteries in other areas of Tibet and in other countries.



Each big village and each monastery they came to on their journey had a special ceremony to welcome Chetsang Rinpoche. After traveling some distance, they had to cross a river in boats. From that point, Chetsang Rinpoche was carried on a special chair on poles carried by eight men.



The ceremony to give the throne to little Chetsang Rinpoche, called the “enthronement ceremony,” was at Drikung Tse monastery, where there was a very old statue of the Buddha, said to have been made during the Buddha’s lifetime 2,600 years ago.

And at that monastery there was another young tulku waiting to meet him. It was his little brother from his past life when he was the First Chetsang Rinpoche more than 300 years ago, who also was his tulku friend in several other lives when they both were born on Earth again around the same time. The one who had been his little brother, called Chungtsang Rinpoche, was born four years before Chetsang Rinpoche in the present lifetime, so he was older - about seven years old - when they met. Chungtsang Rinpoche scowled when they met, making an unhappy face, because he always seemed to look gloomy, as if he was in a bad mood. He also was from a well-respected upper-class family. He has already been trained in how to conduct ceremonies, and knew the discipline of living in a monastery, so he was confident and calm.

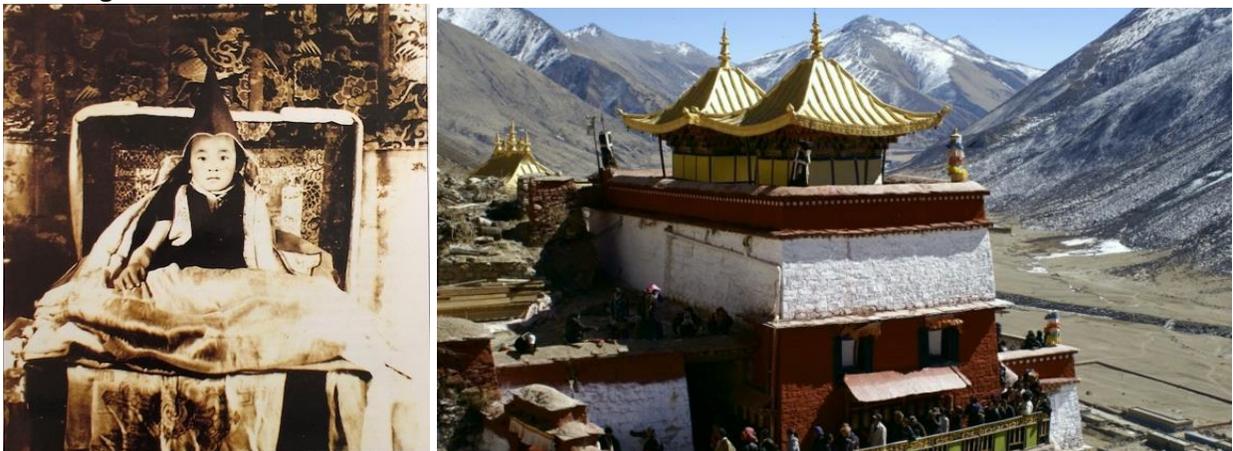
But he couldn't resist little Chetsang Rinpoche's warm-hearted friendliness, and they got along very well.

Chetsang Rinpoche's mother noticed that the monastery and stupa were the same ones she saw in her dreams when she was pregnant. She felt this was more proof that her son really was a tulku and that she had made the right decision to give him up to the monks.



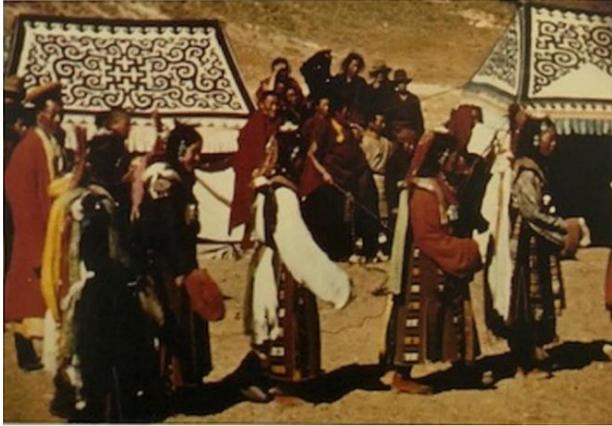
After the enthronement ceremony, the procession traveled to the main monastery, Drikung Thil. More than 2,000 people were waiting there to welcome Chetsang Rinpoche, including people from far away and very important people from the Tibetan government.

Inside Drikung Thil was a life-sized statue of Jigten Sumgön covered in gold, that had a tooth of Shakyamuni Buddha and two fingers of Milarepa inside the statue. There were many statues of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and masters of the Drikung Kagyu lineage, and stupas of all sizes. There were tall bookshelves with more than 200 precious books, including books of Jigten Sumgön's teachings, printed with gold and silver ink, and teachings of the other lineage masters. The wooden book covers were covered in gold, silver, pearls, turquoise and coral, because the teachings are so valuable.



The next day, Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche sat on their thrones at Drikung Thil. No one else dared to touch the thrones, because they were afraid that the serpent spirits which lived in the thrones would make them ill if anyone except the two tulkus touched the throne.

Little Chetsang Rinpoche sat attentively during the long ceremonies and didn't seem tired by them, watching everything with alertness and calmness. He quickly understood what actions and motions to perform during the rituals, amazing the lamas with how quickly he learned what happened next in the ceremonies.



There were special dances performed only at the enthronement of a new Drikung tulku. The men and women dressed in very ancient costumes and danced slowly, as they chanted a story of the religious history of the Drikung Kagyu tradition and the holy mountains, and animals, rivers and lakes around the Drikung area.

The next day, he went on a tour of the whole Drikung Thil monastery and buildings, including the many meditation huts, where monks spent years alone meditating like Milarepa, sometimes with the doors sealed shut with mud so they never left the hut. There was a very special treasure room that only is opened to show it to a new tulku when he becomes the next leader of the Drikung Thil monastery. Chetsang Rinpoche and his parents stood at the door of the treasure room, and the monks tried to open the ancient lock, but it wouldn't open. Then Chetsang Rinpoche's father tried the lock, and finally it unlocked, so they could open the old creaking door. It was totally dark inside, so they held up fire torches to see inside. They saw hundreds of weapons – spears, knives and old guns. There were even guns holding up the ceiling. There was a jewel said to be from a dragon, the claw of a powerful spirit eagle, and the skin of a snow lion, supernatural creatures which are known only from ancient stories, and never seen by normal people. There was an old chest containing clothes that were from Tilopa, the first guru of the Drikung Kagyu lineage who lived in India more than 1,000 years ago. There were many more treasures, hidden in the darkness.

When Chetsang Rinpoche, his parents and the monks left the treasure room and the creaking doors were closed and locked behind them, they didn't know that in years later the room would be violently invaded and destroyed.

Indeed, changes were coming from far away. Rinpoche's father listened to reports on his radio about the Chinese army that was arriving in Tibet. The new Chinese Communist government wanted to make changes in Tibet to unite it with China, and tried to get the Tibetan government to agree with their plans. But the Tibetan government ignored them, so China sent thousands of army troops into eastern Tibet to show that they meant business. When the Tibetan government leader in Kham, eastern Tibet, heard about the troops coming, he knew the country was in great danger and requested instructions from the central government of Tibet in Lhasa, the capital. But he got no answer, and finally he was told that the government ministers were at their annual picnic. Also, Tibet didn't have a strong enough military to resist the huge, powerful Chinese army. So, the leader in Kham surrendered to the Chinese army.

When Rinpoche's father heard about it, he wanted to return to Lhasa immediately with his family. The Drikung monks couldn't understand why he wanted to leave so fast; they had no idea that there was any danger. The Tsarong family left and went to Lhasa without little Chetsang Rinpoche, who stayed at the monastery.

His grandfather decided that the family should go to India where it was safer. Many other families in Lhasa were moving away from the cities, or to India. The Tsarong family left in the middle of a bitterly cold winter on horses and mules toward Kalimpong, India, which was near the border of the land of Sikkim. It took three weeks to get to Sikkim, and when they arrived, they stayed with the royal family of Sikkim.

Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama, 15 years old at that time, was in Lhasa. Although he was so young, because of the danger from the Chinese government, he was given the immense responsibilities of being the leader of the Gelug branch of Tibetan Buddhism and the leader of the Tibetan government. The young Dalai Lama wasn't sure he was prepared for such great responsibilities, three years before he was supposed to be given the throne. But he agreed to it anyway. Then, when he was informed that 800 Chinese army troops were headed to Lhasa, he decided that he and other Tibetan leaders should leave Lhasa and go to the border of Sikkim where they would be safe. He dressed in regular Tibetan clothing so he wouldn't be noticed, and left Lhasa with his teachers and government officials. Chetsang Rinpoche's father and grandfather planned the Dalai Lama's escape route.

When the Drikung senior monks found out that the Dalai Lama had left Lhasa, they realized the danger and decided to send Chetsang Rinpoche to join his parents in Kalimpong, India. The monks loaded up 12 mules and horses with tents, clothing, bedding and food. His attendant monk, his bodyguard, and other monks and helpers accompanied Rinpoche on the journey.



For little Rinpoche, the journey through the icy winter landscapes was a fabulous adventure that he would remember for his whole life. He rode on a mule that had been a gift from his grandmother. He was delighted to see many wild animals he had never seen before – strange birds, Tibetan antelopes, beautiful wild donkeys called “kiang,” and huge mountain sheep with big twisted horns.

They went over very high mountains and other dangerous places. They went through an area that had to be crossed in the daytime because it was so cold that they might freeze if they

camped there in the night. Another area had to be crossed at dawn, before the powerful winds would start that could blow people and even animals over the cliff. The final dangerous place had leeches in the water. They had to tie their shoes securely and tie their pants at the ankles to avoid being bitten by the leeches. But they could do nothing to protect the poor animals. By evening the mules and horses were bleeding everywhere – on their legs, bellies, and even on their mouths and eyes. Little Rinpoche cried when he saw the horrible sight, but all the animals survived. Only one mule didn't survive because he was old and couldn't travel that far.

When Rinpoche was reunited with his family, they stayed with another family in a beautiful house with many rooms and a big yard and garden. So, the five Tsarong children were together again, and, along with their cousins, they had a great place to play.



Rinpoche couldn't play right away because he caught a disease called whooping cough after the cold, difficult journey. After a few weeks in the warmer climate of Kalimpong, he felt better and was ready to play. And then he had lots of energy! As the children played happily together, Rinpoche was a whirlwind of activity, wearing out the monks who took care of him. One time when they were visiting another family, little Rinpoche even pushed his older brother Jigme into a goldfish pond!



Rinpoche was an enthusiastic soccer player, along with Jigme and his cousins.

Meanwhile, his grandfather remained in Tibet near the border of Sikkim with the Dalai Lama. They heard about what was happening with the Chinese Communist government - that it had made what it called the "17 Point Plan for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet." It didn't explain what it thought Tibet had to be liberated from, because there wasn't anything Tibet needed to be liberated from. It was just the way the Chinese tried to make their plan seem like it will help everyone. The Chinese set up discussions with Tibetan officials so it would seem to the Tibetan people that there had been some kind of agreement, and then they might more easily accept the Chinese

government's programs. One thing the Chinese government did not want was for the Dalai Lama to remain in power as the leader of Tibet. When the Tibetan officials asked about that, they were told that Tibet had a choice of being "liberated" peacefully, or by force. In other words, they had no choice. The Chinese government officials put extreme pressure on the Tibetan leader of eastern Tibet to sign the 17 Point Plan, so he did, and then they put a fake official seal of the Dalai Lama on it. When the Dalai Lama heard about it on the radio, he was shocked, because that leader had no power to sign for the whole Tibetan government. When the plan was signed, it was the end of Tibetan independence and freedom. The Tibetan people were now under the power of the Chinese government.

The Dalai Lama had to decide whether to escape Tibet or to return to Lhasa and try to cooperate with the Chinese government according to the 17 Point Plan. A decision was made for him to return to Lhasa, so he went back.

Meanwhile at the Drikung monastery, the monks were concerned that the Tsarong family might keep Chetsang Rinpoche with their other children outside of Tibet even though the 17 Point Plan now was in place to keep peace between China and Tibet. So, they decided to send someone to Kalimpong to bring little Rinpoche back to the monastery. His brothers and sisters were going to stay in India and go to boarding school where they would live away from their parents. They would miss him, but little Rinpoche wasn't unhappy about returning to the monastery. Even as a child, he accepted life's changes with joyful equanimity.

In Lhasa, he was taken in a parade, or procession, for a haircutting and name-giving ceremony given by the Dalai Lama. Cutting his hair means following the path of the Buddha, who had cut his own hair when he decided to give up the life of a prince and look for a way to end suffering.



(photos of Chetsang Rinpoche going to the hair cutting ceremony)

The serious young Dalai Lama performed the ceremony with love and deep devotion to the Buddha. While he was focused on the ceremony, he didn't seem to be upset about the country's future under power of the Chinese.

## QUESTIONS:

1. What was the expression on Chetsang Rinpoche's face when he was on the way to his enthronement ceremony in Drikung? (serious and calm)
2. How many monasteries were his homes? (four)
3. Who was the young monk he met at Drikung Tse? (Chungtsang Rinpoche, another tulku who was his brother from a past life)
4. Did he get tired or bored by the long ceremonies? (no)
5. What animals did he see on the long, cold, dangerous journey to Kalimpong, India? (wild antelope, donkeys, and sheep)
6. How did he feel about leaving his family in India and going back to the monastery? (he wasn't unhappy)
7. What was the meaning of cutting off Rinpoche's hair? (following the path of the Buddha)

## DHARMA DISCUSSION – Equanimity:

We learned in the story that even as a child, Chetsang Rinpoche was able to accept life's changes with joyful equanimity.

That means that he didn't get upset or excited about things happening around him.

He didn't mind the changes.

He was calm when he was going to different places, or when he was with different people.

He calmly accepted the way things were, whether he was being treated like a king or having to leave his family.

Equanimity, like "equal," means looking at everything as equal – not having likes and dislikes.

Most of us don't have such equanimity.

Most people spend a lot of time trying to get what they like, and avoiding what they don't like.

We want to go to this place, and not that place; we want to do this and not that; we want to eat this and not that; we want to listen to this and not that; we want to have this one and not that.

We think we'll be more happy when we get what we want, and when we can do what we want.

But actually, when there are many things that we really want very much, and there are many things that we really hate, then we are more miserable.

This is because when we have so many things that we want, we are disappointed each time we don't get what we want.

And when there are so many things we hate, then we are upset each time we have to face them.

So then we find ourselves very often whining, complaining, grumbling, or quarreling.

Of course, we like our house, our things, our friends, and our favorite activities.

And we don't like things that are harmful or bad.

So, some "likes" and "dislikes" (attachments and aversions), are actually good for us: when we like something that is good for us, or is Dharmic, and when we dislike something that is harmful, or is not Dharmic.

For example, when Chetsang Rinpoche first saw monks that came to his house, he cried because he liked them so much and didn't want them to leave.

And he was upset because he didn't like the horses and mules getting harmed by leeches.

And of course, the Dalai Lama and Tibetan people were upset by the Chinese Communist government taking over Tibet.

But when we have *too many* likes and dislikes, then we're miserable, because we get upset when we can't get all those things we like, and when we experience all the things we dislike.

How can we have more equanimity - not too many likes and dislikes?

Pay attention to how you feel when you are complaining, how uncomfortable you feel.

Then, remember that you will feel happier if you accept different things with an open mind.

Maybe you would like something other than exactly what you want,

Maybe what you dislike isn't so bad after all.

Try to remember how calm Chetsang Rinpoche was even with in all the changes in his life.