

# The Spirit of Tibet

Journey to Enlightenment

The Life and World of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche



The Spirit of Tibet is an intimate glimpse into the life and world of one of Tibet's most revered 20th-century teachers: Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1910-1991).

A writer, poet and meditation master, Khyentse Rinpoche was an inspiration to all who encountered him. His many students

throughout the world included the Dalai Lama.

This unique portrait tells Khyentse Rinpoche's story from birth to death ... to rebirth — from his escape following China's invasion of Tibet to his determination to preserve and transmit Buddhist teachings far and wide. His life leads us on a journey revealing the wonders of Tibet's art, ritual, philosophy and sacred dance.

Along with rarely photographed areas of Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal, this film features interviews with the Dalai Lama, who speaks candidly about his own spiritual life.

Director Matthieu Ricard — noted French photographer, Buddhist monk and best-selling author — travelled with Khyentse Rinpoche for over 14 years.

Director: Matthieu Ricard

Producer: Gabriella Martinelli

Produced by Martinelli Productions Inc, and Shechen Inc.

46 minutes, 5 seconds  
Order number: C9198 091

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*Narrated by Richard Gere and featuring an exclusive interview with His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama*  
*Musical arrangement by Philip Glass*

The Spirit of Tibet



VHS

C9198 091



A National Film Board of Canada Release



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT TIBETAN BUDDHISM

### Who brought Buddhism to Tibet?

According to tradition, Buddhism was brought to Tibet from India in the eighth century, when King Trisong Detsen invited Indian Buddhist scholar Shantaraksita to come and teach. Shantaraksita and Padmasambhava, a fellow teacher and meditator, founded Tibet's first monastery, which Khyentse Rinpoche helped to rebuild after it was ravaged by the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s.

### What are some of the essential teachings of Buddhism?

The Four Noble Truths, taught by the Buddha 2,500 years ago, are that 1) all life entails suffering; 2) hatred, craving and ignorance are the sources of suffering; 3) when hatred, craving and ignorance have been dispelled, suffering ceases; and 4) the spiritual path leads to the cessation of suffering. Wisdom and compassion are the essence of Tibetan Buddhism. Central themes include a sense of weariness with endless worldly preoccupation, the wish to free all sentient beings from suffering, and the importance of the student-teacher relationship as the key to enlightenment.

### There are many monks in the video. Are there nuns in Tibet too?

Yes, and many important Tibetan Buddhist deities are female. Before the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1957, up to one-quarter of the population consisted of monks and nuns. Many important spiritual masters were women. The first nunnery was founded in the 11th century, and in 1959 there were still over 12,000 nuns in Tibet. Today, as the Tibetan tradition tries to survive, a number of nunneries and philosophical colleges for women are being established.

**Director:**  
Matthieu Ricard

**Producer:**  
Gabriella Martinelli

**Executive  
Producer:**  
Shechen Rabjam  
Rinpoche

**Co-Producers:**  
Vivian Kurz  
Jane Morrison

**Music Director:**  
Philip Glass

**Editor:**  
Jane Morrison

46 minutes  
5 seconds

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## RELATED READING

*Journey to Enlightenment: The Life and World of Khyentse Rinpoche, Spiritual Teacher from Tibet.* A companion volume to this video, with text and photos by director Matthieu Ricard. Published by Aperture, New York, 1996.

*The Monk and the Philosopher.* A dialogue between Matthieu Ricard and his father, French philosopher Jean-François Revel, which explores Buddhist and Western perspectives. Published by Schocken Books, New York.

*The Heart Treasure of the Enlightened Ones.* A commentary on a Buddhist text by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Published by Shambhala Publications, Boston.

*Enlightened Courage* by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Published by Snow Lion Publications, New York.

## RELATED WEB SITES

Please note that addresses on the Web can change unexpectedly.

**[www.fusebox.com/shechen](http://www.fusebox.com/shechen)** — Official site of the monasteries founded by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche.

**[www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net)** — Links to Web sites related to Tibetan Buddhism.

For further information on Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Shechen projects, write Shechen, 511 Avenue of the Americas, suite 339, New York, NY 10011 USA. Or e-mail **[shechen@sprynet.com](mailto:shechen@sprynet.com)**



## What is the role of the Dalai Lama in Tibetan Buddhism?

The Dalai Lama is the head of the Gelukpa school (one of the four main schools of Tibetan Buddhism), founded in the 15th century. Each Dalai Lama is said to be an incarnation of the previous one, and in the 17th-century they became the political as well as spiritual leaders of Tibet. The current Dalai Lama, Tenzing Gyatso, is the 14th, and serves as head of the Tibetan government in exile. He had 15 spiritual teachers, and Khyentse Rinpoche was one of the most important of these.

### GLOSSARY OF BUDDHIST TERMS

**Bodhisattva:** The bodhisattva is an enlightened being who takes a vow to continually be reborn to help all other living beings on their journey to enlightenment. Many great Tibetan teachers (such as the Dalai Lama and Khyentse Rinpoche) are considered bodhisattvas.

**Buddha Nature:** A major principle in Buddhism is that the innermost nature of every sentient being is essentially good, even though it is often obscured on the surface by negative emotions and tendencies.

**Dharma:** This word has several meanings in Buddhism, but in this video it refers to the teachings of the Buddha and the Buddhist path.

**Dorje and Bell:** Throughout this video we see Khyentse Rinpoche holding two ritual objects: a bell, which represents wisdom, and a small sceptre (known as a *dorje* in Tibetan), which represents compassion and skilful means.

**Empowerment:** A transmission of the inner wisdom from teacher to student; a permission to engage in a particular spiritual practice; and a blessing to progress along the path to enlightenment.

**Lama:** A Tibetan term for a learned spiritual teacher. Lamas can be, but are not always, monks. Some lamas (like Khyentse Rinpoche) are married.

**Mandala:** Mandalas are objects of meditation intended to transform our ordinary perception of the world into pure perception of the Buddha-nature. In the video we see monks create a complex sand mandala.

**Rinpoche:** Pronounced "Rin-po-shay." Literally means "precious one" — a title given to eminent spiritual teachers.

**Stupa:** A stupa is a usually dome-shaped memorial structure housing sacred relics or texts and symbolizing the mind of the Buddha.

**Tulku:** Buddhists believe that our stream of consciousness continues from life to life in various states of existence. When this stream is highly purified, as is the case with a bodhisattva, it will assume states that are very beneficial to other beings. Sages with profound foresight can identify "rebirths" of great lamas. Such rebirths are called "tulku" or "manifested body" or "Yangsi" (one who came back into existence).

### Related NFB Videos

**The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Parts 1 and 2** — Narrated by Leonard Cohen, these two videos are a combination of drama, documentary and animation that take us into the heart of the Tibetan teachings on death and dying. Order number 193C 9194 092.

**A Song for Tibet** The dramatic story of the efforts by Tibetans-in-exile, including the Dalai Lama, to save their homeland and preserve their heritage against overwhelming odds. Order number C9191 084.