The great spiritual friend widely known as The Third Mura Pema Dechen Zangpo (b. 19th cent)\(^1\) an actual emanation of Avalokiteshvara, was a direct disciple of both Khenchen Pema Vajra (1807–1884)\(^3\) and Patrul Jigmey Chokyi Wangpo (1808–1887).\(^4\) The basis for his emanation is as follows:

In the presence of our Teacher [Buddha Shakyamuni] there were the bodhisattva mahasattva, the supremely noble, Avalokiteshvara, and Mahakalika\(^5\) of the [sixteen] elder arhats. Here in the Land of Snow, from the twenty-five disciples,\(^6\) the king and subjects, the great adepts and heart heirs of the Second Buddha Orgyen were Kyeuchung Lotsawa (b. 8th cent.)\(^7\) and Nyak Jnanakumara.\(^8\) Having appeared as sequential [incarnations] such as the magical display of the great treasure revealer Taksham Nuden Dorje (b.1665)\(^9\) as well as [at times] unexpectedly,\(^10\) [the stream of \[incarnations\] greatly increased the benefit and welfare of beings as well as the teachings.

**THE FIRST INCARNATION RITRO RIGDZIN GYATSO**

The first incarnation Ritro Rigidzin Gyatso (b. 18th cent)\(^11\) was born in the land of Nag Sho.\(^12\) He completed his studies [relying upon] many spiritual friends such as the great treasure revealer Nyidrak Tulku. Thereafter, due to the ripening of his aspirations to acquire students at the appropriate time in Upper Dza in Do Kham, he was greatly inspired to firmly plant the victory banner of practice at Kilung Godam Hermitage,\(^13\) where he stayed for a long while.

During this period Getse Lama Jigme Ngotsar (18th cent.)\(^14\) and [Ritro Rigidzin Gyatso] mutually taught one another as guru and student. With a single intention they built a
monastery together and established the single monastic seat [of Kilung Hermitage, which later became known as Kilung Monastery]. Furthermore, he newly built the famous great stone edifice known as the Mura Mani Wall for the common splendour and merit of the beings in the Snowy Land of Tibet—which can [still] be seen to this day.

After Getse Lama Jigme Ngotsar passed into the pure lands, the First Lord Mura maintained the seat [of Kilung Monastery] by himself. Innumerable students congregated there as he turned the wheel of the doctrine. [During his life] he extensively spread the teachings of the theory and practice, [eventually] passing away in peace.

THE SECOND INCARNATION PONPO GYURME CHODAR

The second lineage incarnation Ponpo Gyurme Chodar (18th cent.) was born in the Gotsa Dragen home, which was part of the Getse settlement. The Fourth Dzogchen Drubwang [Mingyur Namkhai Dorje] (1793–1870) recognised and installed him on the dharma throne of the monastic seat. As he reached a respectable age, he had an extreme dislike of watching over the monastic preparations, which were fraught with distractions. [Rather], he would single-pointedly practice [meditation]. Since he had completely enveloped his mind with bodhicitta, even habitually sinful and pernicious people would instinctually adopt beneficial and altruistic conduct simply by meeting this lord or hearing his voice. [Furthermore] wherever he resided, the vicious animals living around that region would not engage in anything harmful to [any] sentient being. In these ways, he attained mastery, living the liberative life of a conqueror’s heir.

At the end of his life and the completion of his practice, he actually passed into the primordially pure inner space, the royal capital of the dharma.

THE THIRD INCARNATION PEMA DECHEN ZANGPO

In concordance with what was mentioned earlier [regarding] emanations appearing as one or many, simultaneously or instantaneously in accordance with the specific dispositions and inclinations of sentient beings, the third incarnation the kind and glorious Mura Pema Dechen was the last to arrive. Once again, he intentionally took birth as a spiritual friend of all vajra holders possessing the three [vows], as in the latter half of the fourteenth sexagenary cycle (18th cent.) in a Getse settlement situated in Dzachuka, Do Kham, he took birth into a divine house where many sublime beings had been born.

As soon as he spoke, he recited the six syllable [Mani] mantra. He possessed the nature [of someone] totally beyond that of an ordinary person as his heart was filled with immeasurable love, compassion, and various other [qualities]. Drubwang Dzogchenpa Mingyur Namkhai Dorje [recognised] and decided that he was the unmistaken incarnation of the previous [Mura] and installed him on the monastic seat.

Having arrived at Rudam Orgyen Samten Choling (Dzogchen monastery), the source of scholars and accomplished ones, he received teachings from many virtuous friends such as
Dzogchen Yishin Norbu, Gyalse Shenpen Taye (1800–1855). He received pratimoksha, bodhisattva, and tantric vows, instructions and guidance on the great scriptures of sutra and tantra, the maturation and liberation instructions of the oral traditions and treasure traditions of the old and new schools, and the instructions and advice on the Dzogchen Heart Essence (Nyingtik) cycles. He became a lord of scholars and adepts through completing his studies.

He particularly served Khenchen Pema Vajra as his special lord of the [tantric] family. Even after the Lord [Pema Vajra] passed into the pure land, [Pema Vajra’s] wisdom body protected and blessed Pema Dechen. He made a profound, powerful, and truthful aspiration to never be separated from [Pema Vajra] for many lives to come. This apparent aspiration can be inferred as it is contained in his supreme secret biography.

The signs of Mura’s attainment include squeezing stones with his bare hand, possessing unobstructed clairvoyance, and other such marvels for which all sentient beings bowed down at his feet. At his monastic seats of Kilung Monastery and Rudam [Dzogchen monastery’s] Shri Simha College, he turned the wheel of the doctrine of the limitless ripening instructions of both the oral and treasure teachings. In particular and from time to time [he taught]: Yeshe Lama, or The Unexcelled Wisdom, the instructional guide of the secret Dzogchen Heart Essence teachings, and Purifying the Six Intermediate States of the completion stages.


In the present age, as for all the lineage of the six bardo transmissions, it appears that there is nothing that is not connected with this lord. He is featured in various supplications for the lineage gurus of our own Heart Essence tradition. He came to be an unrivalled tradition holder of the greatly secret Heart Essence.

He encouraged all the men and women from higher and lower Dzachuka up to north Golok to give up sin and engage in virtuosity, and he turned the wheel of the doctrine for Mani [recitation] and practice. Thus, he transformed the entire area into a land of complete virtue.

Furthermore he extensively renovated the Mani Stone Wall that his previous incarnation had built becoming one hundred-fold more extensive. [Lastly] he built many [virtuous structures] including stupas in the surrounding area.

The continuation of his activity for the spontaneous accomplishment of the two-fold benefit will never diminish [and instead] will
continue throughout his future lives. [Finally] he temporarily displayed the manner of peacefully passing away into the primordial inner space, the expansive wisdom mind of Samantabhadra.

BIBLIOGRAPHY – EDITION USED


1 dge ba’i bshes gnyen, kalyāṇamitra
2 pad•ma bde chen bzang po, BDRC P8693
3 mkhan chen pad•ma badz•ra, BDRC P6744
4 dpal sprul ’jigs med chos kyi dbang po, BDRC P270
5 dus ldan chen po
6 This is referring to the 25 disciples (rje ’bangs nying lnga) of Padmasambhava.
7 khye’u chung lo tsA ba, BDRC P3AG56
8 gnyags dznyA ku mA ra, BDRC P6525
9 stag sham nus ldan rdo rje, BDRC P693
10 The meaning here is that the emanations of the mind-stream of Mura Pema Dechen arose sequentially, but in some cases emanations would appear at any point in time devoid of and sequence.
11 ri khrod rig ’dzin rgya mtsho, BDRC P1J4M457
12 yul nag shod
13 kilI lung mgs zlam, BDRC G3955
14 dge rtse bla ma ’jigs med ngo mtshar, BDRC P2881
15 mu ra sprul sku 02 dpam po ’gyur med chos dar, BDRC Ps8LS1375
16 mgo tshwa sba rgan
17 rdzogs chen gru dbang 04 mi ’gyur nam mkha’i rdo rje, BDRC P710
18 See point 10
19 rdzogs chen ru dam o tgyan bsam gran chos gling, BDRC G16
20 gzhan phan mtha’ yas od zer, BDRC P697
21 These corresponds to the vows of the three vehicles.
22 rdzogs chen grub dbang 05 thub bstan chos kyi rdo rje, BDRC P701
23 bde dga’, BDRC P6960
24 mkhan chen kun dga’ dpal, BDRC P4996
25 mi pham ’jam dbyangs rnam rgyal rgya mtsho, BDRC P252
26 a bu lha sgang pad•ma theg mchog blo ldan, BDRC P6955
27 ’jigs med yon tan mgon po, BDRC P6600
28 mkhan chen chu’i med ye shes, BDRC P6959
29 zhe chen rgyal tshab 04 ’gyur med pad•ma rnam rgyal, BDRC P235
30 dge mang mkhan chen yon tan rgya mtsho, BDRC P6961
31 ’jigs med yon tan mgon po, BDRC P6600
32 mkhan chen chu’i med ye shes, BDRC P6959
33 zhe chen rgyal tshab 04 ’gyur med pad•ma rnam rgyal, BDRC P235
34 dge mang mkhan chen yon tan rgya mtsho, BDRC P6961
35 stag bla dkon mchog rgyal mshan, BDRC PooKG03790
36 mkhan chen kun bzang ldan, BDRC P6962
37 ngag dbang dpal bzang, BDRC P724
38 mkhan chen tshe dbang rig ’dzin 01, BDRC P6306
39 dil mgo mkhyen btrse bkra shis dpal ’byor, BDRC P625