

## A BIOGRAPHY OF MR. ORGYAN DORJE GURUNG.

In the land of the Himalayan kingdom lays a wonderful place Dolpa hidden within the mountains and the hills. The thought of it makes me nostalgic. This is where I belong; born on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1971 to this day I have lived for 36 years.

In the early stages of my life I got the privilege to stay with my parents but it didn't last long. Only after two years when my brother Rinpoche was born I had to move to my mother's father (Tashi) place. My grandparents and I stayed there for five years whereas Rinpoche was still with my parents. My grandparents provided me with all the needs that were required, they were priceless to me. At the age of seven I returned home. My parents were very glad to see me as a strong and healthy boy. They had a belief that I could be of great help to them. I helped my father who imported salt from China, but this business discontinued during monsoons. We bought salts and went to the villager and sold them with considerable profits.

Again a twist in fate I started working with my uncle instead of my father because his drinking habit got severe. Those days were very difficult for me; I had no father taking care of me. Making everything worse even my uncle started consuming alcohol. There were times when I had to work very hard wake up at 3 a.m. and walk for hours in cold and rain, return the runaway yaks.

When I was 18 years old Rinpoche went to Mt. Kailash and stayed there during summer. This was the year of the horse which was a very important year for Buddhist. On the spring Rinpoche came back with three peoples from Mount Kailash and they stayed with us for three months. We were very concerned about our future. Then we decided to go to Kathmandu. This would be the best place for us, this city had a great history and was tolerable to every kind of people. So in 1990 we ultimately move to Kathmandu. On arrival we could not find a place for us to stay. We didn't know the Nepali language well in comparison to Tibetan and we went to Tibetan office aspiring that we may get help from them but we didn't as we were Nepali. So Rinpoche, my cousin and I went to Boudha where we stayed in a monastery for two months. Then my father came to Kathmandu and told me I could not stay here any longer because he needed my help to carry out his domestic activities. I denied his proposal because by now studies had become a part of my life. Finally he consent but was very disappointed. After couple of days he returned home. Until then we could not find a school we were searching at every nooks and corners in the valley. We were struggling. After sometime we managed to find ourselves a place in monastery, the Dudjom Rinpoche Monastery. Together we stayed and studied for another four years. Here I pay my gratitude to the head teacher Khezin Tsangpo Rinpoche, teacher Khenpo Tsewang Rinzin and His holiness Khenza Rinpoche who helped me. I spend a year studying Buddhism philosophy but in order to do that I had to slog cook food and the spare a time for studies. Then I joined Buddhist College for three years. My father often visited. One day father came with the news that my mother passed away I broke down and cursed myself for losing her. My father tried to convince me to move back to Dolpa for he was alone. But this time too I rejected his offer by now studies had become a part of my life earn money and support my

father. My father had two wives, the elder one had one son and the younger had seven children. I am the third child on the row. My two elder brothers had jobs and were so engaged with their own family life that they had no time for father.

During the winter of 1992 my father came to visit me this time he brought blankets with him to sell. I gave him my hands in this business and worked out well. We made quiet a penny. My father was very pleased because had plenty of money to buy him alcohol. After we made business we caught a crowded bus to Boudha. We stood all the way and got out when we reached our destination. Heaven fell upon us a pick-pocket had managed to sneak into my fathers pocket and stole all the money. So again to send my father back home I borrowed money from a friend of mine. He took a bus to Pokhara and hiked for fifteen days to reach home. In the mean time my brother (Nyima) and sister (Pema) was suffering from awful situations back home, thing turned bad to worse as my father became a drunkard in the phase of time. Rinpoche and I were anxious regarding the conditions back home we sent a message revealing that we can take good care of Pema and Nyima. We wanted them to give good education which we lacked. I had knowledge of Buddhism but did not have the fundamental education that is very important in our general life.

One fine day father and Pema came to visit us in Boudha. After that we arranged everything for Pema, a friend of Rinpoche wanted to sponsor Pema for her schooling and we arranged everything and all the necessities required. We convinced father the importance of education, he reacted negatively because he was scared and afraid of living alone so he took her with him. With the passage of time Pema and Nima grew up father could handle them no longer. Those days I was studying in India. Teachers like Penor Rinpoche, Dalai Lama Rinpoche, Khempo Tsewang, Khempo Thukden and Taklung Tsatul Rinpoche had always helped me during my stay in India. In due course of time we got a vacation for two months so I went to Kathmandu to meet my brother Rinpoche. We send a message to my father a second time that he was ruining his daughter's and son's life by keeping them at home. Eventually he brought both the children to Kathmandu and to our surprise he left them back. Father was reluctant to leave them but for their bright future he left and returned home with heavy heart. We immediately sought a place and school for Nyima but then things went the other way for Pema and ultimately found a place in an orphanage without any cost.

From the benediction of God Rinpoche got a good support from Taiwan, so he studied and later taught there for two years. By now Rinpoche could bear the expenses for Nyima's schooling. I studied in India for nine years. Then I and my cousin went to Kathmandu and Rinpoche also came to Kathmandu from Taiwan. After our arrival to Kathmandu we rented a room in Boudha. After a couple of months Rinpoche returned Taiwan. I visited Pema once a week. One day when I went to visit her I found that she was sick. The orphanage center could not take care of her so she had spent her time in the room thus missing all the daily assignments. Then on next day the orphanage center told that she must leave the orphanage so I took her along with me. She did not want to remain idle at home but she never showed her despair. She just wanted to continue her studies but she

was against joining the orphanage. She stayed with me for six months. Yung Dung a friend of mine found a school for her supported by the Americans. The school where Nyima was studying, and where Rinpoche paid for, was complaining about the money that arrived later than they wanted.

My cousin went to India, now Rinpoche was able to bear my expenses. In this phase of time I met a boy named Kalsang who started to live with me. On January 2000 Rinpoche came back to Kathmandu then on the following month we decided to establish an orphanage. I send my friend to Dolpa for the needy children because I know very well the economic status of the people there. He returned with my father bringing 14 children. Since the room became very congested so we rented an apartment. The house owner was nagy old women always complaining about the kids and even ended up beating them.

I got a new apartment in the place called old Baneshwor. We started teaching the children Basic English, Nepali and Tibetan. Rinpoche, four big children and I started making incense to sell and earn money to bear the expenses. This time the house owner was nice though he was a police officer. But later he was changed, used to come drunk thus harassing our female staff so we stayed there for just eight months by this time we have 39 people including staff.

A friend of mine, Mr. Prem Namdu Lama, showed me the current location of the Snowland Ranag School in Bishal Nagar, Kathmandu. On August we move there. The condition of the building and the premises were pathetic with no supply of electricity and water but with the help of friends we made every thing possible. We made big news in Dolpa. Children started joining and by 2001 we had 46 children. Rinpoche always contact me from Taiwan about the children's Whereabouts and there performances. Rinpoche frequently visited the school and spent ample of time with them. He bought clothes, books and other things the children needed. On 2002 we had 65 children only to become 83 on 2003 and from then we progressed remarkably.

We always celebrate Losar(Buddist's New Year, 17<sup>th</sup> February) together with other guests. At times we celebrate with guests such as the ambassador of a foreign country or Minister of Education and Welfare of Nepal. We sing folk songs originated in Dolpa. On 2003 we received donations from Australian embassy, the German embassy and other sponsors. With the amount collected we could met the deficiencies we had for the school. On 2003 the French doctor team from A.M.T.M (Medical Association of Roof of the world) visited Snowland and did a physical check to all the children for two days. Then they started helping us thus bringing the materials required for proper hygiene.

On 2004 Rinpoche visited us again. The space seems to be very small so he rented an apartment nearby the school. On January 2004 father along with another brother of mine arrived here and stayed with us for a month and half. By now the total numbers of students were 135. The weak ones stayed with me because they needed more attention. The doctors from A.M.T.M visited the children at regular intervals and advised me not to take anymore children due to limited space. But then I could not see a wailing heart of a child just lying in the street. We were running short of fund. On 2005 Rinpoche came to Kathmandu to celebrate Losar with us. This time

more guests joined us. Rinpoche gave a speech mentioned that how much I was attached with the children and revealed the bad and awful situation in the Dolpa region.

On 2006 Rinpoche and his followers visited us again. This time he had come to participate in a very important event every body was invited, the press and the government too. The Minister of Education was pleased with the effort of Rinpoche and me despite of such political instability and chaos in the country we were keen to uplift the society. He himself presented the letter of appreciation to us. Rinpoche told every body that though he lives in Taiwan his heart is always here in Nepal. He feels that he has acted as a father to Snowland and me as a mother taking care of her children. Followers of Rinpoche like Mr. Chou Yung Chi, Mr. Jaing-Ren Chang and others were able to arrange a very generous donation from International Rotary Club of Taiwan, receiving a fully equipped room with computers. So when the followers of guru come to our Snowland they do a lot of contributions. I am very thankful to them for the sake of humanity. Dolpa is a very poor place with no good school. Government is least bothered in promoting the area. The school remains open just for two to three months with no qualified teachers besides they drink alcohol. Businessmen are hoarding thus selling goods at high price.

On 2006 August Rinpoche receives an official recognition and vote of thanks from Human Rights For All (HURFA). During the month of November Rinpoche visited us again because Snowland had organized a program thanking him for the efforts and endeavors to make institution running smoothly. Although the ministers were unable to take part there were more than 1300 people present.

## Thanks

On my part I am impressed and thankful by the efforts compassion and energy that Rinpoche has given to me and the children of Snowland.

We are very thankful to generous people from different countries like Taiwan, Singapore, Germany, U.K., Netherlands, and France for supporting us. Also to AMTM people who really care the children and to those foreigners who stays with us to help.

Rinpoche and Mr. Eric are indeed unforgettable to us whenever they depart every individual in the Snowland sheds tears.

## AMTM

Two women from AMTM connect the private sponsors to our children. Danial Pachulski, Benedicte de Valicourt. Mrs. Evelyn is very kind to us. They also act as the incharge here.

## Snowland

As I act as a mother to the Snowland at times I do not get time to eat besides tensions keeps on mounding so those time poor children comes to console me. Under such circumstances I get relieved and thank god. Snowland is a non-profit seeking organization having eleven board members.

1. Chairman: Guru Ranag Tulku Rinchen Rinpoche
2. Member Secretary and founder Principle: Orgyan Dorjee Gurung
3. Vice Principal: Durga Budhathoki
4. Trusties: Radha Sharma
5. Trusties: Lank Man Rokaya
6. Trusties: Prem Namdu Lama
7. Trusties: Suraj Kaji Dotel
8. Trusties: Dhurba Kumar Kasaju
9. Trusties: Uddhav Khanal
10. Trusties: Kiran Khanal
11. Day to day manager: Dawa Gyaljan Gurung

Every month there is board meeting to discuss the progress of school.

### About Buddhism and everything related

I follow Buddhism and my brother is the reincarnation of Lord Buddha. There is every sort of children studying here and we never force any kid to follow Buddhism but we explain what this religion all about is. I have studied Buddhism for nine years and taught for three years. I share wide knowledge regarding religion which ultimately leads to the showing of love and compassion. This is why I stay here to teach better aspects of life. As a founder Principal I keep everyone intact and manage the school and in free hours I teach and give lectures because it is good for my Dharma. My job is difficult but I enjoy.

### Remarks

I have always a very deep attachment with Snowland. I always teach my children manners and discipline so that they become good citizens of the country and help in building the nation. I have visited the sick children in the hospital and understood the internal sorrow and grief because they do not have their parent in the times of their pain. So I do my possible best to console them. Though I miss my mother I seldom meet my father because I am too busy in life. Every child is not lucky the street children must not be hated, it's not their fault but their fate that had brought them there. My aim is to pick up all these children from the street and various part of the country and give them good education so that they built a very good nation in the years ahead. Infact the government should be taking necessary responsibility regarding these destitute and poor children.

I respect Rinpoche for his sincere love for his children. Besides school Snowland is also an orphanage. I know life without parents is how difficult. I tell you this because I have studied Buddhism for many years, I do

not want myself and others wander around and get lost in big dreams but stay realistic, seeing and understanding that these children need help.

In my place (Himalayan region) marriages are fixed when the children are eight or nine which is really pathetic. Before exploring the world they enter the world of quarrel and ends up spinning a web like spider. Our country has entered a civil war and the peace is gradually restoring, everyone should concentrate more on building the nation. Government should take all the necessary steps in helping us in every aspect because we are doing this not for our personal benefit but for building a strong nation. Our intention is to educate each and every child and teach them the real values of life.

Indeed it is our privilege to honour Rinpoche for his deeds to Snowland. We have 160 children at present and it is quiet a fair achievement on our part but that is not enough we have miles to go.

### Goal of the book

The main goal of this book is to make the readers conscious about the poor situation and lack of education in the Himalayan regions of Nepal. This is also to make you acquainted with the struggle made by us in the establishment of the school for the poor, destitute and orphan children from those discarded region and would be grateful if our dear readers comes out with suggestion and support for our Snowland. These days Snowland seems to be thriving with the support from and other sponsors but then our dream is to educate each and every child belonging to poor family and eradicate street children by building orphanage and school like Snowland almost everywhere wherever required.

My sincere request to all the readers let us join hands and take part in social works, people from other places come here to help us so are there from our country to. Let us do whatever we can for the upliftment of our people though your contribution may be small but your participation is enough to give us a good support. You can make a difference.