

## **Guru Rinpoche in Sikkim: The Bayue Dremo Jong**

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In several prophecies and apocalyptic books of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokiteshvara and the Lotus Born Buddha, Mahaguru Padmasambhava, popularly known as ‘Guru Rinpoche’, several hidden countries have been mentioned. Of these, Bayue-Dre-Mo-Jong, that is, Sikkim is considered to be the epicenter and mother of all. The other sacred hidden lands are located in parts of Tibet, Nepal and in the sacred country of Bhutan.

During the course of his exorcism in Tibet, he decided to make a sojourn to Sikkim, the Bayue Dremo Jong. He first came to Guru Dongmar lake at its northern border where he examined an oracle in the lake and found it auspicious to enter into the heartland of Dremo Jong. He recognized the lake as a part of the places of worship of the famous *Dorje Nyima* or *Choedten Nyima*, situated at the northern border of Dremo Jong. This was his first step to the Dremo Jong.

After receiving favourable omen at the Guru Dongmar lake, he along with his retinue of 25 disciples, immediately reached and sanctified the entire landscape, including its caves, rocks, lakes, streams. He proclaimed Tashiding as *Denjong Ney-gi Teu*, that is, naval to all the sacred sites and abodes of Dremo Jong and left his hand-foot-body prints at various locations.

Apart from being the *Denjong Ney-gi Teu*, that is, naval to all the sacred sites, Drakar Tashiding is also known for its universally acclaimed Bumchu ‘Vase of consecrated Water’, which attracts numerous pilgrims and devotees from across the globe, particularly Bhutan.

Interestingly, at this point of time when the Mahaguru visited Sikkim, it was dominated by the negative forces under all

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the destructive influence of the Khangchen Jonga (gangs chen mdzod lnga). After concealing major and minor dharma treasures *ter* across the appointed lakes, caves, cliffs, streams, rocks, etc, the Mahaguru, out of his miraculous powers converted and convinced all these negative forces as deities, led by Khangchen Dzonga as the Chief deity of Bayue Dremo Jong and bound them through solemn oath into being protectors of the faith and to refrain from causing harm to sentient beings. He also instructed the Mahakala to ensure that Dzonga keeps up with the solemn bound. In fact, by having hidden spiritual treasures (*ter*) to be discovered in later times by his own appointed incarnates, Mahaguru Padmasambhava brought Buddhism in Bayue Dremo Jong.

The deity, usually simply referred as Dzonga along-with other major and minor deities, are accordingly invoked and propitiated in various capacities and in various forms, the highest being the annual *Pang Lhabsol* (dpang lha gsol) ceremony observed in Sikkim to this day.

Scriptures says that anyone who practices in this blessed land would achieve instant accomplishment. Every cliff, peak, cave, hill and lake of this land is sacred and consecrated. He equated this land as sacred as his own Copper-plated-abode (Zangdopalri). Before departing, he prophesied that he would once again visit Bayue Dremo Jong in form of the *Naljoir Choe Ji* brothers, the Four Superior Yogic Brothers.

In another guidebook, *Thangyig Shel-Dra-Ma*, Sikkim, the Bayue-Dre-Mo-Jong has been mentioned as the most appropriate place of devotion wherein the *dakinis* would appear without being invoked. According to the *Denjong Neyig*, guidebook to all the sacred locations of Sikkim, Bayue-Dre-Mo-Jong has five great provinces and six hidden spots that protect all living beings.

**Terchen Sangay Lingpa** revealed Bayue Dremo Jong as a Mandala of Lama Gongdue (bLama dgongs'dus), one of the three main *rNyingma* texts. He generously

concealed dharma treasures *ter* in these appointed caves and lakes.

**Terton Pema Lingpa** prophesied that the Bayue Dremo Jong situated at the southwest is the hidden blissful abode of the Mahaguru and blessed by the physical presence of his 25 disciples. It declares that the Bayue Dremo Jong with Drakar Tashiding is consecrated and blessed with all the essential outer, inner and secret blessings of the Mahaguru during his stay here along with *Jewang Nyisu-tsa-chig*. The prophesied abodes of Nub Dechen Phu at the west, Lharig Rinchen Phug at the North, Dzonga Tagtse, Hungrih and Tsomein which is more popularly known today as Khechuperi Lake stands testimonials to his visit to Bayue Dremo Jong. The sacredness of Bayue Dremo Jong has been proclaimed by Pema Lingpa as equal to that of *Gyagar Dorje Den* (Bodh Gaya). Terton Pema Lingpa further mention that all the males born in this Bayue Dremo Jong are incarnate Pao, superior in all qualities, and female, a Pamo.

**Terton Rigjin Lingpa** has mentioned Dremo Jong, engulfed in between China, Nepal and India as the mother to all the hidden land.

According to **Terton Ratna Lingpa's** guide book, Sikkim as Bayue Dremo Jong is recognized as the highest of all the sacred places of pilgrimage and practice, which is visited and blessed since time immemorial by great Buddhas and Bodhisattavas like Avalokiteshawara (Chenrezi) himself, Jetsun Dolma (Tara) Dro-Nger-Chen, the celestial king Indra, Chogyal Song-Chen Gompo, the incarnated daka and dakinis, and finally the Khen-Lob-Cho-sum, that is, the Mahaguru Padmasambhava, Khenchen Bodhisattava Santarakshita and Chogyal Tri-song-Dechen followed by their retinue of several dakas and dakinis, devas, dharmapalas, tutelary deities, etc. They filled, blessed and sowed all kinds of virtuous seeds and deeds in Bayue Dremo Jong and hid sacred dharma treasures, known as *ter* including several sacred scriptures-texts, sacred objects and wealth.

He further explain that every cliff, cave, ridge, hilltop and river of Sikkim as been blessed and consecrated by the Mahaguru and thus, one with pure devotion and correct practice would surely attain spiritual perfection within no time. The book further says that the Bayul-Dre-Mo-Dzong houses a number of objects, both material and sacred like the wish-granting gem of king Indra Bodhi, precious and 500 rare wish-fulfilling gems, enormous sacred texts, miraculous vajra (dragger) having the power of subduing all the negativities, etc.

Later in the late 13th century CE, Sikkim was visited by tertons (revealers of sacred treasures) like Rigdzin Goedemchen and Kathog Ued Yeshe Bumpa, who established meditation centers and lhakhangs (monasteries) at sacred centers of Drakar Tashiding and Pawo Hungri. At the summit of Khangchen Dzonga, Rigjin Goedhethru Chen received image of Guru Gragpo. At the sacred cave of Lhari-Nyingphu, Terton Ngari Rigdzin Chenpo Lagden Dorjee discovered *Khado-Khalangma Tantra*. It was here that at the sacred cave of Lhari-Nyingphu, Terton Ngari Rigdzin Chenpo Lagden Dorjee discovered *Khado-Khalangma Tantra*. Rigdzin-Goedemchen simultaneously mentions that the Bayue-Dre-Mo-Jong will be filled with monasteries, retreat centers, hermitages and numerous places of pilgrimage and sanctity, and that there would be 1,00,000 dwellings, 1,000 monasteries, etc.

In fact, the rich heritage of, apart from Tashiding, such as Thragthung Rong, Phamo Rong, Sanga Dorden Dubdre, Drakar Tashiding, Sangchen Pemayangtse, Sanga Choeling, etc, stands testimonial to the historic sojourn of the Mahaguru to Bayue Dremo Jong with authentic and authorized legends and narrations.

While at Dremo Jong, the Mahaguru subjugated all the demons and negative forces of all the classes and directions. He in fact miraculously converted them as the local dharmapalas, the protector of faith.

His way back to Tibet, Guru halted at '*Tsemo Rinchhen Thang*',

the present day Tsunghang in North Sikkim and subjugated one mischief demon called 'Duetsen' who had been reluctant to come under his spiritual domain. He blessed the site with his footprint and a sacred *Ney-do* (the blessed rock). It is said that after having normal meal, he sprinkled a handful of grain on the spot which now miraculously produces paddy in this climatically Tundra Type valley over centuries.

The Medieval Phase: The Medieval Phase, that is, Tenpo Phadar of around 13th-15th century saw works of different sacred Treasure Revealers (*Terton*) as well as the inauguration of the blood-brotherhood between the Bhutias (Lhopo) and the Lepchas (Rongs) into a single entity.

The Modern phase: The Modern phase (Tenpo Chidar) saw the culmination and acknowledgement of different tribal groups under the central leadership of the Denjong Chogyals, the dharma rulers of Sikkim since 1642 CE and consolidation of Sikkim as a Nation-State.

**Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo Namkha Jigme:** Terten Rigjin Terda Lingpa proclaimed that Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo Namkha Jigme shall open the spirituals gate of Bayue Dremo Jong in accordance to the prophecy and instructions of the Mahaguru and no one is as eloquent and well-versed as him in Drejong Dzogchen lineage.

Even before physically coming to Dremo Jong, he revealed the *Denjong Neyig* in his *Gongter* - a *dharma* treasure received spontaneously in his nature of mind. He accordingly introduced important sacred sites such as the four sacred caves, 109 holy lakes, Dzoenga-Tagtse, Thragthung Rong, Phamo Rong, Sanga Dorden Dubdre, Drakar Tashiding, Sangchen Pemayangtse, Sanga Choeling, etc. He physically visited all the sacred sites in Dremo Jong. Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo Namkha Jigme was also the exponent of *Drejong Dzogchen* tradition.

Gyalwa Lhatsun Chenpo Namkha Jigme also revealed the secret *ter* of Rigdzin Sogdrub (rig 'dzin srog sgrub) -

*Accomplishing the Life-Force of the Vidyadharas* - which is a cycle of more than 800 pages in five volumes. These teachings were received by him in a vision while in retreat at Lhari Rinchen Nyingphug, one of the four sacred caves to the north of Drakar Tashiding. In fact, *Rigdzin Sogdrub* is today, central to Sikkimese Buddhism and its practice, which is also universally also known as Denjong Dzogchen.

Today's practitioners and devotees performs *sang* offering in form of *Riwo Sangchoe* (Mountain Smoke Offering), which itself was a concealed *ter* of Mahaguru and later revealed by Lhatsun Namkha Jigme in his vision. The offering of *Riwo Sang Choe* has become a universal phenomenon in the Buddhist world.

Thus the era up-till the 16th century sees Sikkim groomed and initiated to receive the full teaching and its fruition as well as flourishing of the Vajrayana tradition so intricately and elaborately inaugurated by Mahaguru Padmasambhava and his immediate emanations. The following centuries were quick to grasp the heritage and teachings of the Mahaguru, which is so intricately engraved in the life of the Sikkimese people, in their all aspects to this day.

Hundredfold are the spiritual and inspiring traces the Lotus-Born left on the path, from the caves of Khandro Sangphug, in the south, to the miraculous paddy field of Tsungthang to its north. The most important long-term effect is, however, the groundwork done towards a future safe harbour for the gentle doctrine and Buddhist devotees in general, and for Guru Rinpoche's monastic followers in particular. Several centuries later, a number of masters of the Nyingmapa tradition got shelter in Sikkim. They found everything ready for the establishment of the Buddhist doctrine, which was to become a foundation of Sikkimese culture and self-conception. And to the present day, Sikkim is regarded as the pathway to a prized hidden land, Bayue Dremo Jong, prophesied by the Mahaguru himself.