

Sakya

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Sakya Lineage Tree

This articles concerns the Sakya school of Tibetan Buddhism. For information on the ancient Śākya tribe, see [Shakya](#).

The **Sakya** ([Tibetan](#): ས་སྐུ་, [Wylie](#): *sa skya*, "pale earth") school is one of four major schools of [Tibetan Buddhism](#), the others being the [Nyingma](#), [Kagyu](#), and [Gelug](#). It is one of the [Red Hat Orders](#) along with the Nyingma and Kagyu.

□

Contents

[1Origins](#)

[2Teachings](#)

[3Subschools](#)

[4Feudal lordship over Tibet](#)

[5Sakya today](#)

[6The Rimé movement](#)

[7See also](#)

[8Notes](#)

[9References](#)

[10External links](#)

Origins[[edit](#)]



Virūpa, 16th century. It depicts a famous episode in his hagiography when he stopped the sun in the sky. ^[u]



Sakya Monastery



Sakya Pandita

The name *Sakya* ("pale earth") derives from the unique grey landscape of [Ponpori Hills](#) in southern [Tibet](#) near [Shigatse](#), where [Sakya Monastery](#), the first monastery of this tradition, and the seat of the Sakya School was built by [Khon Konchog Gyalpo](#) (1034 - 1102) in 1073.

The Sakya tradition developed during the second period of translation of Buddhist scripture from [Sanskrit](#) into Tibetan in the late 11th century. It was founded by [Drogmi](#), a famous scholar and translator who had studied at the [Vikramashila](#) directly under [Naropa](#), [Ratnākaraśānti](#), Vagishvakirti and other great panditas from [India](#) for twelve years.^[2]

Khon Konchog Gyalpo became Drogmi's disciple on the advice of his elder brother.^{[3][4]}

The tradition was established by the "Five Venerable Supreme Masters" starting with the grandson of Khonchog Gyalpo, [Sachen Kunga Nyingpo](#), who became known as Sachen, or "Great Sakyapa":^{[5][6]}

[Sachen Kunga Nyingpo](#) (1092 - 1158)

[Sonam Tsemo](#) (1142 - 1182)

[Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen](#) (1147 - 1216)

[Sakya Pandita](#) (1182 - 1251)

[Drogön Chögyal Phagpa](#) (1235 - 1280)

[Buton Rinchen Drub](#) (1290 - 1364) was an important scholar and writer and one of Tibet's most celebrated historians. Other notable scholars of the Sakya tradition are the so-called "Six Ornaments of Tibet:"

[Yaktuk Sangyey Pal](#)

[Rongton](#) (1367 – 1449) ^[7]

[Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo](#) ^[8]

[Zongpa Kunga Namgyel](#)

[Gorampa](#) (1429 – 1489)

[Sakya Chokden](#) (1428 – 1507)

The leadership of the Sakya School is passed down through a hereditary system between the male members of the Sakya branch of the Khon family.

Teachings[[edit](#)]

Part of a series on
<u>Tibetan Buddhism</u>

Sects [show]
Key personalities [show]
Teachings [show]
Practices and attainment [show]
Major monasteries [show]

The other major system of the Sakya school is the "[Naropa](#) Explanation For Disciples" ([Wylie](#): *nā ro mkha spyod slob bshad*).

Another important series of teachings is based on verses of Gūnga Nyingpo (1092 – 1158) called "separating from the four attachments" which is the subject of commentaries by numerous Sakya masters like Drakpa Gyeltsen, Sakya Pandita, Ngorchhen Gūnga Sangpo, and [Gorampa](#) Sönam Senggé. The verses are:^[10]

If you cling to this life, then you are not a dharma practitioner.

If you cling to existence, then you do not have renunciation.

If you are attached to your own interests, then you do not have the mind of awakening.

If you hold to a position, then you do not have the correct view.

Subschools[[edit](#)]

In due course, two subsects emerged from the main Sakya lineage,

[Ngor](#), founded in Tsang by Ngorchhen Kunga Zangpo (1382 – 1457).^[8] The Ngor school is centered on Ngor Evam Choden monastery. It represents 85% of the Sakyapa school^[citation needed] and most if not all the monasteries in India are Ngorpa, apart from Sakya Trizin's monastery.

[Tshar](#), founded by Tsarchen Losal Gyamtso (1496 – 1560 or 1502 – 1556).^[11]

There were three "mother" monasteries of the Sakya school: [Sakya Monastery](#), founded in 1073, [Ngor Evam Choden](#), founded in 1429, and Phanyul Nalendra in Phanyul, north of Lhasa, founded in 1435 by Kuntchen Rongten. Nalendra became the home of the 'whispered-lineage' of the Tsar school.^[12]

The [Bodongpa tradition](#), founded by [Bodong Panchen Chögle Namgyel](#) [1376 1451], is considered by some scholars to be a sub-sect of the Sakya tradition.^[citation needed]

Feudal lordship over Tibet[[edit](#)]

See also: [Tibet under Yuan rule](#), [Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs](#), and [List of rulers of Tibet](#)



Tibet within the Yuan dynasty under the top-level department known as the [Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs](#) (Xuanzheng Yuan).

The [Mongol conquest of Tibet](#) began after the foundation of the [Mongol Empire](#) in the early 13th century. In 1264, the feudal reign over Tibet was given to [Drogön Chögyal Phagpa](#) by [Kublai Khan](#), founder of the [Yuan dynasty](#). Sakya lamas, along with Sakya [Imperial Preceptors](#) and [dpon-chens](#) continued to serve as viceroys or administrators of Tibet on behalf of [Yuan emperors](#) for nearly 75 years after Phagpa's death in 1280 until the Yuan dynasty was greatly weakened by the [Red Turban Rebellion](#) in the 1350s, a decade before the [Ming dynasty](#) founded by the [Han Chinese](#) overthrew Mongol rule in China.

The leaders of the Sakya regime were as follows.

[Drogön Chögyal Phagpa](#) 1253–1280

[Dharmapala Raksita](#) 1280–1282, d. 1287

[Jamyang Rinchen Gyaltsen](#) 1286–1303

[Zangpo Pal](#) 1306–1323

[Khatsun Namkha Lekpa Gyaltsen](#) 1325–1341

[Jamyang Donyo Gyaltsen](#) 1341–1344

[Lama Dampa Sonam Gyaltsen](#) 1344–1347

[Lotro Gyaltsen](#) 1347–1365

Sakya today[[edit](#)]

Part of [a series](#) on

Vajrayana Buddhism



Traditions[\[show\]](#)

History[\[show\]](#)

Pursuit[\[show\]](#)

Practices[\[show\]](#)

Festivals[\[show\]](#)

Tantric texts[\[show\]](#)

Symbols and tools[\[show\]](#)

Ordination and transmission[\[show\]](#)

[v](#)
[t](#)
[e](#)

Part of [a series](#) on

Mahāyāna Buddhism



Transmission[\[show\]](#)



Teachings[\[show\]](#)



Mahāyāna sūtras[\[show\]](#)



Mahāyāna schools[\[show\]](#)



[Other traditions](#)[\[show\]](#)



[v](#)
[t](#)
[e](#)

Part of [a series](#) on

[Buddhism](#)



[History](#)[\[show\]](#)



	Dharma
	Concepts
	[show]
	Buddhist texts [show]
	Practices [show]
	Nirvāṇa [show]
	Traditions [show]
	Buddhism by country [show]
	Outline
	 Religion portal
	v
	t
	e

The head of the Sakya school, known as [Sakya Trizin](#) ("holder of the Sakya throne"), is always drawn from the male line of the Khön family. The present Sakya Trizin, [Ngawang Kunga Tegchen Palbar Trinley Samphel Wanggi Gyalpo](#), born in Tsedong in 1945, is the forty-first to hold that office. 41st Sakya Trizin is the reincarnation of two great Tibetan masters: a Nyingmapa lama known as Apong Tertön (Orgyen Thrinley Lingpa), who is famous for his Red Tara cycle, and his grandfather, the 39th Kyabgon Sakya Trizin Dhagtshul Thrinley Rinchen (1871 – 1936). ^[13] Today, he resides in Rajpur, India along with his wife, Gyalyum Kushok Tashi Lhakyi, and two sons [Ratna Vajra Rinpoche](#) and [Gyana Vajra Rinpoche](#). Ratna Vajra Rinpoche being the older son, is the lineage holder and is married to

[Dagmo Kalden Dunkyi Sakya](#) and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche is married to Dagmo Sonam Palkyi Sakya.

Traditionally hereditary succession alternates between the two Sakya palaces since Khon Könchok Gyelpo's (1034–1102) reign. The Ducho sub-dynasty of Sakya survives split into two palaces, the Dolma Phodrang and Phuntsok Phodrang. Sakya Trizin is head of the Dolma Phodrang. [Jigdal Dagchen Sakya](#) (1929–2016) was the head of the Phuntsok Phodrang, and lived in Seattle, Washington, where he co-founded Sakya Monastery of Tibetan Buddhism with [Dezhung Rinpoche III](#), and constructed the first Tibetan Buddhist Monastery in the United States. Dagchen Sakya's father was the previous Sakya Trizin, Trichen Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk, throne holder of Sakya, and his mother Dechen Drolma. Dagchen Sakya was married to Her Eminence Dagmo Jamyang Kusho Sakya; they have five sons, and several grandchildren.

The Rimé movement[\[edit\]](#)

Having seen how the [Gelug](#) institutions pushed the other traditions into the corners of Tibet's cultural life, [Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo](#) and [Jamgön Kongtrül](#) compiled together the teachings of the Sakya, [Kagyu](#) and [Nyingma](#), including many near-extinct teachings. ^[14] Without Khyentse and Kongtrul's collecting and printing of rare works, the suppression of Buddhism by the Communists would have been much more final. ^[15]

See also[\[edit\]](#)

[Tibet under Yuan rule](#)

[Sakya Monastery](#)

[Lamdré](#)

[Tibetan Buddhism](#)

[Jonang](#)

[Patron and priest relationship](#)

Notes[\[edit\]](#)

[↑] Davidson, Ronald M. *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: Social History of the Tantric Movement*, p. 259

[↑] Luminous Lives, Stearns, Wisdom 2001

^ Ch. 25, Treasures of the Sakya Lineage, Tseten, Shambhala, 2008

^ [Jump up to:](#) ^a ^b Warner, Cameron David Warner (December 2009). ["Drokmi Śākya Yeshe". *The Treasury of Lives: Biographies of Himalayan Religious Masters*](#). Retrieved 2013-08-09.

^ Powers, John. *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*. Snow Lion Publications. 1995. p. 382.

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^ *The Circle of Bliss: Buddhist Meditational Art* by John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel. Serindia Publications. pg 42

^ [Hungarian website of Sakya Trizin](#)

^ Schaik, Sam van. *Tibet: A History*. Yale University Press 2011, page 165-9.

^ Schaik, Sam van. *Tibet: A History*. Yale University Press 2011, page 169.

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External links[[edit](#)]



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[His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, Official Website.](#)

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[Sakya Foundation – Canada](#)

[Sakya Dechenling – Canada](#)

[Sakya Kachöd Chöling – Canada](#)

[Sakya Lamas](#)

[International Buddhist Academy \(IBA\) in Kathmandu, Nepal](#)

[Sakya Foundation – USA](#)

[Sakya Monastery in Seattle, Washington](#)

[Chödung Karmo, Sakya Translation Group](#)

SAKYA TRADITION: DROGON CHOGYAL PHAGPA– *Holy Biography of the Fifth Founder of the Sakya Order Synthesized from a biography written by Sakyapa Ngawang Kunga Sodnam*

[show](#)

[v](#)

[t](#)

[e](#)

[**Tibetan Buddhism**](#)

	Nyingma (Dzogchen)	Padmasambhava
	Sakya	Sakya Pandita
		Drogön Chögyal Phagpa
	Kagyu	Milarepa
		Thang Tong Gyalpo
	Gelug	Je Tsongkhapa
		Trisong Detsen
	Other	Vairotsana
		Dampa Sangye
		Drukpa Kunley
		Namkhai Norbu
		Godrakpa
		Gorampa Sonam Sengye
		Jigdral Yeshe Dorje (2nd Dudjom Rinpoche)
		Shamarpa
		Dilgo Khyentse
		Jamgon Kongtrul
		Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo
		Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö
		Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen
		Longchenpa
		Jigme Lingpa
		Patrul Rinpoche

[Gampopa](#)

[Marpa Lotsawa](#)

[Chögyam Trungpa](#)

[Penor Rinpoche](#)

[Ratna Lingpa](#)

[Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche](#)

[Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche](#)

[Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche](#)

[Shakya Shri](#)

[Thinley Norbu](#)

[Chogye Trichen](#)

[Tenzin Ösel Hita](#)

[Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche](#)

[Taranatha](#)

[Mikyö Dorje, 8th Karmapa Lama](#)

[Minling Tertön](#)

[Rendawa](#)

[Rongtong Shenrab Kunrig](#)

[Orgyen Chokgyur Lingpa](#)

[Pema Lingpa](#)

[Tai Situpa](#)

[Thubten Yeshe](#)

[Jamgon Ju Mipham Gyatso](#)

[Tenzin Palmo](#)

[Sakya Chokden](#)

[Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#)

[Tsele Natsok Rangdröl](#)

[Ganden Tripa](#)

[Lama Jampa Thaye](#)

[Rangjung Dorje, 3rd Karmapa Lama](#)

[Thubten Zopa Rinpoche](#)

[Nyoshul Khenpo Rinpoche](#)

[Tarthang Tulku](#)

[Dodrupchen Rinpoche](#)

[Anagarika Govinda](#)

[Alexandra David-Néel](#)

[Vimalamitra](#)

[Atiśa](#)

[Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo](#)

[Tsangnyön Heruka](#)

[Go Lotsawa Shonnu Pal](#)

[Sogyal Rinpoche](#)

[Second Beru Khyentse](#)

[Alexander Berzin \(scholar\)](#)

[Chatral Rinpoche](#)

[Dezhung Rinpoche](#)

[Tulku Thondup](#)

[Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche](#)

[Akong Rinpoche](#)

[Khenpo Abbey Rinpoche](#)

[Kangyur Rinpoche](#)

[Dudjom Yangsi](#)

[Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche](#)

[Orgyen Tobgyal](#)

[Kathok Ontrul Rinpoche](#)

[Zurmang Tenpa Rinpoche](#)

[Adzom Drukpa](#)

[Yudra Nyingpo](#)

[Ratna Vajra Sakya](#)

[Gyana Vajra Sakya](#)

[Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche](#)

[Dawa Chodrak Rinpoche](#)

[Kalu Rinpoche](#)

[Tenga Rinpoche](#)

[Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche](#)

[Thrangu Rinpoche](#)

[Chetsang Rinpoche](#)

[Trijang Rinpoche](#)

[Phabongkha](#)

[Reting Rinpoche](#)

[Zong Rinpoche](#)

[Ling Rinpoche](#)

[Khandro Rinpoche](#)

[Trulshik Rinpoche](#)

[Karma Thinley Rinpoche](#)

[Khamtrul Rinpoche](#)

[Gyalwang Drukpa](#)

[Luding Khenchen Rinpoche](#)

[Rechung Dorje Drakpa](#)

[Phagmo Drupa Dorje Gyalpo](#)

[Arija Rinpoche](#)

[Hugh Edward Richardson](#)

[Charles Alfred Bell](#)

show

[v](#)

[t](#)

[e](#)

Topics in [Buddhism](#)

show

[v](#)

[t](#)

[e](#)

[Tibet](#) [articles](#)

Overviews

[Timeline](#)

[List of rulers](#)

[European exploration](#)

[Historical money](#)

[Prehistory \(Neolithic\)](#)

[Zhangzhung](#)

[Yarlung dynasty](#)

[Empire \(7th - 9th century\)](#)

[List of emperors](#)

[Lönchen](#)

[Relations with Tang \(618 - 907\)](#)

[Era of Fragmentation \(9th - 11th century\)](#)

[Guge kingdom](#)

[Tsongkha](#)

[Yuan dynasty rule \(1270 - 1350\)](#)

[Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan
Affairs](#)

Chronology

	<u>Phagmodrupa dynasty</u>
	<u>Relations with Ming (1368 - 1644)</u>
	<u>Rinpungpa dynasty</u>
	<u>Tsangpa dynasty</u>
	<u>Ganden Phodrang</u>
	<u>Kashag</u>
	<u>Qing dynasty rule (1720 - 1912)</u>
	<u>Lifan Yuan</u>
	<u>List of imperial residents</u>
	<u>Post-Qing to 1950</u>
	<u>Tibetan Army</u>
	<u>People's Republic of China (PRC) rule</u>
	<u>PRC incorporation</u>
	<u>political leaders</u>
	Wars and conflicts
<u>Battle of Dafei River</u>	
<u>Mongol invasions of Tibet</u>	
<u>Tibet - Ladakh - Mughal War</u>	
<u>Battle of Dartsedo</u>	
<u>Battle of the Salween River</u>	
<u>Chinese expedition to Tibet (1720)</u>	
<u>Jinchuan campaigns</u>	

[Lhasa riot of 1750](#)

[Sino-Nepalese War](#)

[Sino-Sikh War](#)

[Nepalese - Tibetan War](#)

[Sikkim expedition](#)

[British expedition to Tibet](#)

[1905 Tibetan Rebellion](#)

[Chinese expedition to Tibet \(1910\)](#)

[Xinhai Lhasa turmoil](#)

[Sino-Tibetan War](#)

[Qinghai - Tibet War](#)

[1938 - 39 German expedition to Tibet](#)

[1939 Japanese expedition to Tibet](#)

[Battle of Chamdo](#)

[Protests and uprisings since 1950](#)

[1959 Tibetan uprising](#)

[1987 - 1989 Tibetan unrest](#)

[2008 Tibetan unrest](#)

[Self-immolation protests by
Tibetans in China](#)

[Treaty of Tingmosgang \(1684\)](#)

[Treaty of Chushul \(1842\)](#)

Documents

[Treaty of Thapathali \(1856\)](#)

[Treaty of Lhasa \(1904\)](#)

[Convention Between Great Britain and
China Respecting Tibet \(1906\)](#)

[Treaty of friendship and alliance with
Mongolia \(1913\)](#)

[Simla Accord \(1914\)](#)

[Seventeen Point Agreement \(1951\)](#)

[70,000 Character Petition \(1962\)](#)

[Flora](#)

[Fauna](#)

[Environment](#)

[Mountains](#)

[Lhotse](#) / [Changtse](#)

[Namcha Barwa](#)

[Tanggula](#)

Rivers

[Yarlung Tsangpo](#)

[Grand Canyon](#)

[Rongbuk Glacier](#)

[Tibetan Plateau](#)

[Changtang](#)



[Nature Reserve](#)

[Valleys](#)



Traditional regions

[Amdo](#)

[Kham](#)

[Ü-Tsang](#)

[Ngari](#)



[Tibet Autonomous Region \(TAR\)](#)

[Central Tibetan Administration](#)

[Parliament](#)

[Definitions of Tibet](#)

[Foreign relations](#)

[Human rights](#)

[LGBT](#)

[Patron and priest relationship](#)

[Golden Urn](#)

[Tibet Area](#)

[Independence movement](#)

[Serfdom controversy](#)

[Sovereignty debate](#)

[CIA Tibetan program](#)

[Government](#)

[Regional Government](#)



[Postage and postal history](#)

[Qinghai-Tibet Highway](#)

[Qinghai - Tibet railway](#)

[Education](#)

[Languages](#)

[Religion](#)

[Bon](#)

[Tibetan Buddhism](#)

[Sakya](#)

[Imperial Preceptor](#)

[Dpon-chen](#)

[Nyingma](#)

[Kagyu](#)

[Jonang](#)

[Gelug](#)

[Ganden Tripa](#)

[Dalai Lama](#)

[list](#)

[Lhamo La-tso](#)

[Panchen Lama](#)

[list](#)

[Islam](#)

[Sinicization](#)

[Social classes](#)

[Tibetan people](#)

[Changpa](#)

[Yolmo](#)

[Diaspora](#)

[Names](#)

[Art](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Cuisine](#)

[Dzong architecture](#)

[Emblem](#)

[Festivals](#)

[Flag](#)

[Historical and cultural sites](#)

[Culture](#)

[*Khata*\(ceremonial scarf\)](#)

[Literature](#)

[*Annals*](#)

[*Chronicle*](#)

[writers](#)

[Music](#)

[Tibetology](#)

[Traditional medicine](#)

[Authority control](#) 

GND: [4395770-5](#)

LCCN: [sh85116153](#)

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Categories:

[Sakya](#)

[Schools of Tibetan Buddhism](#)