

About Kagyu

Kagyu (translated as tradition of oral transmission) is one of the Four main institutional transmission lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. Each tradition line is headed by a Supreme lineage holder, the Supreme Head of all Tibetan Buddhists is H. H. The 14th Dalai Lama.

There are two main spiritual transmission lineages within the Kagyu lineage known as Marpa Kagyu and Shangpa Kagyu.

The particular Marpa Kagyu tradition has its origin with the Indian master Tilopa who received all the teachings directly from Vajradhara, the tantric aspect of Buddha Shakyamuni. He transmitted them to the Indian Naropa and from him the lineage was passed onto the first Tibetan, Marpa. Marpa bestowed all instructions to his main disciple Milarepa who transmitted them to his main disciple Gampopa.

From Gampopa's main disciples the Marpa Kagyu lineage developed into four primary (Karma Kagyu, Tshal Kagyu, Barom Kagyu, Phadru Kagyu) and 8 secondary (Drikung Kagyu, Taglung Kagyu, Trophu Kagyu, Mar Magyu, Yamzang Kagyu, Drug Kagyu, Shugseb Kagyu, Yel Kagyu) lineages. Their classification into primary and secondary is based on their historical and timely development, not on a hierarchical status.

Nevertheless the entire Kagyu lineage is headed by H. H. the Gyalwang Karmapas, currently in his 17th incarnation, Ogyen Thrinle Dorje, throughout history and His Holiness is the Supreme the head of all Kagyupas.