

The 800-Year Commemoration of Lord Jigten Sumgön

This year marks the 800th anniversary of the passing of the Great Drikungpa Lord Jigten Sumgön, founder of the Drikung Kagyu lineage. This great Bodhisattva was an enlightened master of vast accomplishment, who not only had the highest spiritual attainments but also built numerous monasteries and gathered over a hundred thousand disciples. His collected teachings comprise five volumes, including the profound text “Gong Chik”, which continue to be studied by the highest practitioners. Lord Jigten Sumgön’s amazing life story is written in the book “Prayer Flags”.

To commemorate the 800th anniversary of Lord Jigten Sumgön, the International Drikung Kagyu Council is organizing a celebration that will begin on October 19 at Jangchubling monastery, the main seat of the Drikung Kagyu in Dehra Dun, India. All the dharma brothers and sisters are invited to attend this celebration; there are some in Pittsburgh who are planning to do this, as well as groups from other American centers and from India, Nepal and all over the world.

Additionally, all the centers are invited to participate by supporting this event however they can. At the TRTCC/Three Rivers Dharma Center, we will make some special collections over the next couple weeks which we will send to Jangchubling with a member who is travelling to the celebration. If you would like to contribute, you may do so by writing a check with the memo line “LJS800”, or by putting cash in an envelope with the same designation, or by contributing through PayPal with the note “LJS800”.

The various lineages, or schools of Tibetan Buddhism, are part of Tibetan culture. But now we in the West are benefitting from their careful preservation of the teachings and practices as well as the unbroken lineage of enlightened masters in whom we can have full confidence. It was a happy accident when the Three Rivers Dharma Center was originally formed in 1993, that we were able to make a connection with the great teacher Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche, and therefore became a Drikung Kagyu center. For 24 years we have benefitted here in Pittsburgh from this lineage, first in the great lamas who would come and give us teachings, then from the translations of teachings and practices, and finally our greatest benefit, our dear and beloved resident Lama Khenpo Choephel.

It is only right for us to now take our place among the Drikung Kagyu centers, and support this celebration of our founder, the great enlightened master whose teachings remain valid and meaningful. We are very fortunate that this lineage of teachings has continued for 800 years and we are able to benefit from it. And we are fortunate to have this opportunity to exercise our generosity and show our gratitude, and therefore share in the merit of this auspicious and wholesome activity. May all beings benefit from it!