



INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR TIBET

ICT remembers Tendzin Choegyal a.k.a Ngari Rinpoche, youngest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

<https://savetibet.org/ict-remembers-tendzin-choegyal-ngari-rinpoche>

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The International Campaign for Tibet mourns the loss of Tendzin Choegyal, the youngest brother of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who passed away today at his home in Dharamsala, India. He was 80 years old. Known popularly as Ngari Rinpoche, he was very close to the Dalai Lama and served him in various capacities. He travelled with the Dalai Lama on many of his tours, including the 1954-1955 visit to China, the 1956 visit to India and post-1959 travels in many countries.

Rinpoche was a knowledgeable and candid individual who spoke at educational institutions in India and abroad on different aspects of the Tibetan issue. Although he was recognized as a Buddhist master, he detested ritualistic practice and monastic protocols that created a distance between the lama and the monastic community. In addition to the monastic institutes in Tibet, the Ngari Rinpoches also traditionally oversaw several monasteries in Ladakh.

Born in Lhasa, Tibet, in 1946, he was named Tendzin Choegyal by the 14th Dalai Lama. He was recognized as the 16th reincarnation of a Tibetan lama known as Ngari Rinpoche when he was barely four years old. Although he was taken briefly to the monastery near Lhasa founded by the first Ngari Rinpoche for his enthronement, he continued to stay at his home until he was six years old. Thereafter, he began his religious studies in the same monastery and continued the study in the famed Drepung Monastery.

However, in March 1959, when he was 12, Rinpoche escaped to India as part of the larger entourage of the Dalai Lama, in the wake of the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. A few weeks after arrival in India he was sent to a boarding school in Darjeeling in eastern India where he got his first formal modern education. He subsequently did further studies in the United States and lived in India for the remainder of his life.

Upon return to Dharamsala, Rinpoche began working in the Tibetan Children's Village. He took up a lay status and eventually married Rinchen Khando Choegyal, who headed the Tibetan Women's Association, founded the Tibetan Nuns Project and served as a Minister in the Tibetan Cabinet.

Ngari Rinpoche spent his whole life in the service of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people. He served for many years in the Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama as well as in the Tibetan Department of Security. He also briefly joined the Tibetan paramilitary force, Special Frontier Force and was elected to the Tibetan Parliament. He was also involved with the Tibetan Youth Congress during its initial years.

Ngari Rinpoche also contributed to making the monasteries in Ladakh have more practical relevance to the community, reducing protocol and expanding educational opportunities. In addition to the Dalai Lama, he is survived by his elder sister Jetsun Pema and her family and by his wife Rinchen Khando Choegyal, their daughter Tenzin Choezom and son Tenzin Lodoe and their family.



International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) | 1825 Jefferson Place NW | Washington, DC 20036 | United States of America
Phone: (202) 785-1515 | Fax: (202) 785-4343 | info@savetibet.org

ICT Europe
Funenpark 1D | 1018 AK
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Phone: +31 (0)20 3308265
Fax: +31 (0)20 3308266
icteurope@savetibet.nl

ICT Deutschland e.V.
Schönhauser Allee 163 | 10435
Berlin, Germany
Phone: +49 (0)30 27879086
Fax: +49 (0)30 27879087
info@savetibet.de

ICT Brussels
11, rue de la linière | 1060
Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 (0)2 609 44 10
Fax: +32 (0)2 609 44 32
info@save-tibet.eu