

Arjia Rinpoche, Author of *Surviving the Dragon*



Arjia Rinpoche is one of the most prominent Buddhist teachers and lamas to have left Tibet. At age two, he was recognized by the Panchen Lama as the 20th Arjia Danpei Gyaltzen, the reincarnation of Lama Tsong Khapa's father, Lumbum Ghe, and the throne holder and abbot of Kumbum Monastery. He has trained with lineage teachers, such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness the Panchen Lama, and Gyayak Rinpoche--from whom he received many sacred teachings and ritual instructions.

During the Cultural Revolution in Chinese controlled Tibet, Arjia Rinpoche was forced to attend Chinese schools, yet secretly continued to practice and study with his tutors. In addition, he was required to work in a forced Labor Camp for 16 years. Following the Cultural Revolution, Rinpoche continued serving as Abbot of Kumbum--overseeing the renovations in the monastery and reestablishing monastic studies. In 1991 he launched several projects including the following:

- Red Cross Organization in Kumbum
- Disaster Relief Project for local villages
- Clinic for villagers run by monks of the Tibetan Medical Institute and
- School for local village children

In 1998, due to the strained political climate in Tibet, Arjia Rinpoche went into exile because he would not compromise his spiritual beliefs and practices. He escaped to the United States and started the Tibetan Center for Compassion and Wisdom (TCCW) in Mill Valley, California. In 2005, he was appointed Director of the Tibetan Mongolian Buddhist Cultural Center (TMBCC) in Bloomington, Indiana by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama of Tibet. Presently, he directs both TCCW and TMBCC. Both centers are dedicated to the preservation of Buddhist teachings, art and culture within and outside of Tibet and Mongolia.

Arjia Rinpoche is the only Tibetan high lama of Mongolian descent. Throughout his life, Arjia Rinpoche was tutored by specialized teachers in the area of Buddhist philosophy, sutra and tantra teachings, as well as in Buddhist art and architectural design.