**Rumtek Monastery, Gangtok – Overview**

Rumtek Monastery is one of the largest and most revered monasteries in Sikkim, located atop a hill about 23 km from Gangtok. Rumtek Monastery was first built in the **16th century by the 9th Karmapa**, the spiritual head of the Karma Kagyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism. it belongs to the Kargyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism, which dates back to the 12th century. After the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, the **16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje**, fled to India and rebuilt the monastery in the 1960s. Since then, Rumtek has become the **main seat of the Karmapa outside Tibet** and a center of Tibetan Buddhist culture in India. Surrounded by lush green mountains, it offers not only spiritual peace but also breathtaking views.

**Rumtek Monastery** is also known as the **Dharma Chakra Centre**, a major institute of Buddhist learning. The monastery preserves **rare manuscripts, thangkas (scroll paintings), and ancient relics**, making it one of the richest repositories of Tibetan Buddhist heritage outside Tibet. Rumtek is the official seat of the **Karmapa Lama**, who is considered the **third-highest spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism** after the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. The monastery's architecture is considered among the finest globally. It is designed to spread Buddhist teachings worldwide.

### Rumtek also preserves a golden stupa and several sculptures belonging to the 16th Karmapa. The Golden Stupa was built to aid the reincarnation of the 16th Karmapa. The monastery comes alive during festivals, especially Losar (Tibetan New Year) and the Cham Dance Festival. Monks perform colorful masked dances accompanied by traditional music, symbolizing the victory of good over evil. These events attract devotees, tourists, and photographers, showcasing the rich culture of Tibetan Buddhism.

### Travel Tips

* **Distance**: About 23 km (1 hour drive) from Gangtok.
* **Best Time to Visit**: October – March, when the weather is pleasant and skies are clear.
* **Timings**: Open daily from 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
* **Photography**: Permitted in the outer complex but restricted inside prayer halls.
* **Experience Tip**: Walk the *Kora path* for a peaceful spiritual experience and enjoy panoramic Himalayan views from the hilltop.

A top destination for spiritual seekers in Sikkim, Rumtek is also home to rare religious artifacts and ancient scriptures. Its grand prayer hall, adorned with vibrant murals, statues, and thangkas, makes it a must-visit site for anyone interested in Buddhist heritage and art.

Green- added things ( extra)   
yellow – just modified