CHOS-DBYINGS RDO-RJE, THE
TENTH BLACK HAT KARMAPA

—H. E. Richardson

Two books on Lamas of the Karmapa tradition have been published recently: "Karmapa, the Black Hat Lama of Tibet" by Nikolas and Meryl White (Luzac, 1976) and "The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet" by Kaime Thinley (Prakrta Prakal, 1980). The former contains short accounts of the lives not only of the Black Hat (Zhwa Nag) but also of the Red Hat (Zhwa Dmer) incarnations and of several other great lamas of the KarmapaKGpags-dpa' sect. The second concerns only the sixteen Black Hat Lamas.

The accounts in both books are collated from a number of sources but neither author refers to the Rnam-thar Chen-mo of each great lama, mentioned in such works as villages of the Chos-byung of Dpal-'bo Gsang-lag 'phreng-Rdo, which are presumably the "official" version. If any of these have survived in India, it would be valuable to have them published in accessible form.

The existence of the two books mentioned above may seem to make it unnecessary to attempt any more biographies of the Karmapa Lamas; but neither of them is actually a translation from any of the sources. There are, in fact, few full translations of Tibetan rnam-thar in Western languages. The Padma Bka'-rser is a collection of its own but we have the magnificent hagiography of the lives of Marpa by Jacques Barrot and of Milarepa by Evans Wentz, the more straightforward biography of the great scholar Bu-ston by David Ruegg, and the lives of four simple lamas of Dolpo by David Snellgrove. The Karmapals were for some five centuries not only religious leaders but were actively involved in the politics of Tibet and I would like to convey the original flavour of Karmapa biography by translating the rnam-thar of at least one of their famous statesmen-rinpoche.
The lives I find of particular interest are those of the Fifth Black Hat, De-bzhin gshegs-za who established a close connection with the Ming Emperor Yung Lo; the Fourth Red Hat, Cho-grags ye-shes who, in alliance with the Rin-spongs princes, was the most influential figure in Tibet after the eclipse of Phag-mo-rgyu about 1492 and the Tenth Black Hat, Cho-dbyings rdo-rje, in whose time the power of the Karmapa was supplanted by that of the Gelugpa through the might of the Oiret Mongol armies of Gushri Khan. As an experiment I have started with the last which is the shortest of all, to which I have access because I can use only one source—the series of brief lives in "Cho-'je Karmapa skul-yehreg rin-byon gyi rnam-thar mo" by gsal dpag-bsam khris-shing date 1851 and attributed by Thinley to Mendon Tshampa Rinpoche Ngaydon Tenjay.

The text is rather staccato and elliptical here and there. Some obscure points have kindly been clarified by the Tibetan scholar Samten Karmay but there are probably passages, especially relating to religious practices, which I have misinterpreted. Nevertheless, I hope that the course of events and the style of the biography have in general been fairly represented.

Several of the incidents appear in a different light from that in the two works mentioned above. The "invitation" to the court of the Golik ruler Chang Moa (Lcags-mo-ba) is seen to have been virtually the kidnapping of the child by two Lcags-mo lamas for the sake of gain. There is no hint in the other biographies of the difficulty the Zhwa Dmar had in obtaining care of the child, or of various other unpleasant intrigues. The part said to have been played by Cho-dbyings rdo-rje in averting a Mongol invasion in 1635 is here, more probably, attributed to the Rgyal-tshab Rinpoche. The Lama's suffering and hardship during his flight from the Mongol army are related in more vivid and moving language than in the other works, as is the devotion of his personal attendant, the Rin-gin-pa, who served him faithfully in adversity for over thirty years. And the relationship of the Karmapa with the Fifth Dalai Lama, though touched on only briefly, seems more realistic than the account in Thinley's work.

There is a strange discrepancy from the chronology in Gelugpa histories in the attribution of the attack on the Karmapa's Camp to the year 1644 rather than 1642.

The stories are, of course, written from one point of view and to get a balanced picture of the period other sources such as the history by W.D. Shakabpa could be consulted. But the rnam-thar is not to be read as history but as the progress through earthly vicissitudes of a Lama whose character is well depicted, in the closing pages, as gentle, compassionate, retiring, unworlthy, indifferent to misfortune, contemplative, artistic, a lover of animals, and essentially good.
In the translation which follows, suggested readings for the few passages where the text is illegible, are shown in brackets.

The sayings in verse of the Lhama when a child are shown by asterisks.

A short version of the tenth Incarnation, Tshul-mey-chen-dbyings-rdo-rje.

As was foretold in a detailed communication by the late lama, at the time of his death, to Lar-dbang Tsuns-cae nyi-rten-pal(1) about the place where the next holy incarnation would appear, in the lowest group of the eighteen great garbes of Mdo-kham, a country nowadays known as Gu-log(2), a father named Dhi-thukhyi-khu-tho and a mother named A-mboo had three sons, the eldest, Nam-mbah, the middle one A-tham and the youngest, this present Lord born on the 28th day of the first month of the wood-dragon year (1606) at sunset, without any difficulty to his mother. While he was still in the womb her mother had seen in a dream the form of Guru Padma, all radiant with light, enter her body and she had other such wonderful dreams. She therefore called him Ggyi-pa-kyab. As soon as he was born he set up on his head the six-latter formula, namely by the kindness of the four-noble code, good pa, when he was one year old his mother asked for an initiation from a certain lama but the child would not hear it. When they said "He is the Khri-thul incarnation of the Citu" the child said "He is not, Kyi-thul, he is Rgyan-bye-dag-rab-rdo-rje", and he did reverence to him and received the initiation and blessing.

The late Lhama in his lifetime was not greatly skilled as an artist but when his attendants the Lha-bris Spod-ma Phun-bde laughed about that the child said "Later I shall make you understand" and accordingly, while he was still quite small, he painted pictures of deities and made many coloured wools. He made (a little seat) of straw from a bunch he was carrying on his back saying "Good Fortune", and he said "I am the Karmapö, sound the rgya-glal well."

Having taken rebirth as one full of compassion, he said at the time of sheep-shearing "Do not harm the creatures in this way", and he kept. Loving all sentient creatures as dear friends and sacred beings, he said "Whenever I see flocks of sheep and cattle I regard them as myself and I please my mind". One day when his father was carrying him on his lap on horseback he said "Give me the whip and the reins" and when they were given to him he said "This creature by its nature goes where it pleases but if you instruct it regularly it becomes easy to govern; one should so instruct living creatures everywhere and direct them straight to deliverance and peace". Again, when he washed in a flowing stream in rainwater he said "Water cleanses the body, the whole flowing river of the scriptures cleans away the impurities of the mind". When it was time to eat and drink he told his rosary and repeated the six-latter formula.
At that time when it was widely reported that the Karmapa incarnation had been born in ’Gu-log country, the Lcegs-mo Lamas, uncle and nephew, devised a wicked trick and giving many presents to the ’Gu-log Governor, Padma and to the father and mother, they conspired to make them come together with his father and mother to be presented to Zla-ma(3) of Lcegs-mo and installed him there. When he was five years old, being covetous of wealth, they took him towards the Rma-chu Rma Shom-rab(4) escorted him and there was a shower of rainbow light and flowers. Many wild animals accompanied him. The Lcegs-mo uncle and nephew grabbed the many presents that were offered to him.

At one time when a rumour arose that the reincarnation of the Karmapa had been born at ’Bri-khung, the Lcegs-mo-po saying "Whatever this boy under our roof, the father and son, may go, let us go too", and they also went to Dbus. The All-knowing Zhwa Dmar who was staying at that time at Risa-ril Mi-tha-dkar, sent his Gzim-dpon Mongon-dga’ secretly together with servants, and gave the child the name Chos-dbyings rdo-rje as Ordained by the Adamantine Word of G-yi-yang Chen-po, and he offered services of confirmation and a letter expressing his respect. Offerings of tea, and homage in large measure came from the king of Jang Sa-tham and from Dbus and Gtsang. When he was seven years old the Yang-ril(5) Drung-po, who was known as Shreg-rag-po, in the guise of a monk offering flowers, invited him to the assembly tent and made a presence of offering a service of good fortune. Then on the 14th day of the twelfth month more than three thousand monks of the Great Camp(6) of the All-knowing Zhwa Dmar and of Zur-’Icog and Nyin-byes came there. On the fifteenth day, at Rgyal Phur ‘Proec, the Father and Son met together. On the 23rd day of the first month of the Lo-gsat the All-knowing Gsas-dbang, with incense in his hand, invited him to the Great Camp and performed the enthronement on the lion throne and the ceremony of good fortune. He gave into his care the black hat(7) with the gold forehead, the scarf, the umbrella and so on, and he made the great offering of lamps and incense. All the religious communities separately paid homage to him and he put on the hat and performed the prayer of dedication. The All-knowing Zhwa Dmar said that the incarnation with his father and mother should be entrusted to him but the Yang-ril Drung-po and the Lcegs-mo-po did not agree and feasting that if they made over the child to the Zhwa Dmar they would not be able to get possession of his wealth, they were not willing to give him up. Then the Si-tu Rinpoche also came but the Yang-ril and Lcegs-po would not allow him to make a peaceful settlement.

The Sog-po king ’Kho-lo-pa(8) invited the Father and Son but, fearing that the Sog-po and the Sgar-po might carry off the child, Yang and Lcegs took him to another place as a means of evasion. At that time by severing the
connection with the hundreds of blessings of long life resulting from the meeting of father and son, all the ways to good fortune were thwarted and it was widely said to have caused great damage to the Karmapa faith.

One day when a stone, the size of a man's head, by the side of a river was broken open and many green worms came out, in pity for creatures in hell he uttered "Om Mani padme hum" and as soon as he cast his eyes on them they effected transmigration. At the age of eight he showed skill in the mystic dances expounded in the tantras. The many images, both painted and carved, which he made were really a delight to the eye. He received great gifts from the Emperor Wen Li — fifty "kye-ma" of white sandal wood, two hundred lengths of silk for outer and inner garments, and so on. Also many gatherings of the faithful from other places offered great gifts when he gave them audience. An invitation was received from the King of 'Jang Su-tham.' (10)

In those days, treasuring dearly the rosary given him by the All-knowing Zhwa Dmas, the wishes of his heart were set only on prayers for a speedy meeting. Taking as his model the best petitions from Dbus and Giseng and by exercising his articulate skill, he became without an equal in writing and reading. At 'Bum-nyag he left the imprint of his foot on a stone. Accompanied by the deity Kem-po Rdo-rje dpal-brtsegs he came to Ngor-nang, Kong-po and Ri-chab and other places made offerings. He settled quarrels and disputes.

At this time, thinking mostly how the needs of the future might be met, when the king of 'Jang and the Sog-po king once again invited him, he went to Sog-yul. He imposed vows against taking life upon king Da-li-ching (11) and all others, monk and lay. When a fire broke out on a mountain he quenched it by laying on his hands. At the age of eleven he went to Dbus. At Pha-bong, Zhabs-chen two of his foot-prints appeared. At the invitation of Tsher-lung Drung-chen and the Gar-Dbang he went to Zur-mang, he proceeded to Tshog-du of Bde-mchog. On the occasions when he performed the ceremony of wearing the hat at those places, because the Karmapa and Zur-mang-pas took the side of the Zhwa-Dmas, the Yang-rin-ba and Longs-mo-ba were afraid that he might be abducted and they increased their precautions.

At Spam-ghung a deer pursued by a hunter's hound came to the door of his tent to seek refuge. He blessed it by the thrice of G-yung-drung Nor-bu and, tying a knotted scarf round its neck, he gave it absolute. The deer and the hound became like mother and son. He paid the price to the hunter who made a vow not to take life. And on all beings on the way by which he went by bestowing religious teachings and presents he imposed the rule of the ten virtues and so on, and gave them the purpose of severing the chain of desire and effect. When the god Gryn-en-chen Thang-ka himself came to welcome
him everyone saw a fair-complexioned youth with his hair in five braids, carrying a crystal censer in his hand. The Lama's living tent was filled with rainbow-coloured rays and a shower of flowers fell. With an ever-increasing array of escorts he came to Yang-pa-cas (12) and Mipham-pa. (13) He was installed on the great lion throne. The whole region of Mipham-pa and Gnas-nang was bathed in rainbow light and so on, just like the sort of wonderful magical manifestation there were on the occasion when Jé-chen geleg-pa went to the Chinese Imperial palace.

When he was twelve the Lama Dpa-bu Glugs-pa-rgya-rtshe performed the rite of offering his hair-lock and ordained him dge-bshes in front of the Dzongsar shrine. He gave him the name Opal-mdon 'Jig-rten chos-kyi 'dren-pa-skru-bzhi. Thun-gnyug Chos-kyi-dbyings kun-tshiyi-pa'i 'phrin-las trg-pa'i rdzod-rje. Dge-dan-mi Yithar-mi byung-pa tshul-khor-pa zla-bi med增多 byung-pa mito-ba'i dzin. The glorious leader of the three worlds, the 101-originated four-fold body, the glory of the changeless essence of all wishes, the peerless manifestly valed thunderbolt who perpetrates the good deeds and doctrine of all-covering heaven; Guided by his fitness and the encouragement of Sgrub-dkar, with regard to the precious Bka'-khrul of the Buddha, the tantric essential instructions, commentaries and explanations of commentaries, the granting of initiation, the collected works of the late Karmapa and so on he received, beyond measure, initiations, empowerments and instruction of great profundity. That is all set out in the greater rnam-thar.

The Chos-rje addressed his teacher the Dpa-bo Rin-po-che and asked 'How long will you live?' He replied 'since I have not the gift of foreknowledge and the Nor, I do not know.' The Chos-rje answered 'I believe you will live to be sixty three.' He meditated successively on a selection of the sutras. Having been invited by the Gsang Sgrub Srid-je on the way, at Nga-rgya Ling Lake when he had been in the proper offerings, the second the mindless would come forth from within the lake and the sky was filled with rainbow light. At Zab-phyug he had a vision of Sgrub-gran Rin-po-che with his retinue. Received on a grand scale by the Gsang Sde Phun-tshogs rnam-gyas he pitched camp at Rnam-gling Khu-siring. Great offerings were made. At Gsang-tshing when he saw a tree painted by the Ninthlama he said 'This is strangely unlike the work of a mere maker of images'.

When Yang and Nying were constantly making demands on the Khro-brag Sgar-pa the Lama himself issued an order not to do so in future. At Par-nam a boy of turquoise-blue colour came and bowed before him. The Lord Dpa-bo said that because of three Ku Demonbrothers whom the Lord Rgyal-byung-pa had formerly bound by an oath of subjection, there was turquoise colour everywhere.
With the Gtsang-tse meeting him on grand scale he came to Blum-tse Klu-khang. He performed the ceremony of holding the hat, Gime offerings were made: hats for a regular woman, redes, a gold seal and so on were presented. The public Kamla Ral-kyung Shang-po made the grand offering (incense, lamps, flowers and so on) when he received in audience.

At that time he heard an interpretation of poems of Klu-thang (Sham-bhala). As for poetry no sooner did he hear the meowing verses of Lord Dran Nam-mkhor than he knew them. He was uncounted with knowledge of the substance and measurements of the three symbolic offerings (sou, gling-thup) and he was especially fond of Lekshin bronzes.

Yang and Lelop together slaughtered the father and mother and two nephews to the Gtsang-tse and caused them to be evicted from the camp. The Byang-Blo-gong and others came for audience, with presents. A gold box arrived from the Chinese Empress Da Ming. They presented golden presents of eighty lengths of silk for outer and inner garments, and so on. In the presence of the Lord Dpa’i-bo gave great presents. When going to the Rong-po Rdzes la he left imprints of his feet. The Sa-skong (15) ruler together with his court officials and ministers having provided a great feast, he came to Sonru Gdong-rils. At the time there arrived an eighth letter and many especially valuable gifts from China and 'Jang presented by Sa Tham Kiep.

He went towards Tsa-ti. At Dpa’i-Mo he set up sixteen thousand four hundred images of the Sixteen Arhat discloses. In general, wherever he went, he satisfied the disciples with the three blessups. Whosoever offered to take the vows of a hermit he gave him an image of the Lord-Mi-los and to those who took the vow to repeat constantly the Six Letters Prayer he gave a picture of Shagts-grik Spyam-kha-gya drawing his self. To those who hold in general he administered the vow not to take life and not to accept banquets of meat and change to provide for others. If they wanted long life, let them not take life. If they wanted good fortune, not only should they utter their worship to the Precious Ones but also they should refrain from offering worship to demons by the repetition of Bao Spells.

In Rong-po, Rlips-Lu’i-bzin ‘Djam-bedroom myung-po came to meet him. In accordance with secret instructions in the Chen-lug-glag (? he presented a group of images of the Precious Ones, a horse and a yagl. Hidden treasures he had discovered. Smyung-ignas Ran-chen, seated on a litter because he was of Rlz’s age, surrounded by a retinue of several hundred myung-po came to meet him and gave many presents of robes and so on. When the Lord Dpa’bo fell ill, the Chos-ril himself performed religious ceremonies and even acted as attendant on the sick man who was thus relieved of his illness. Although he had continuously listened to sermons for many years he did not himself pronounce any.
When the Lord Dpa'-bo caused the evil deeds of Yang and Lcags to be revealed, the Sku-rab-pa (16) and the Gisang Sde took counsel together and made each of them go into retirement separately. The other Lcags-mo-bo were banished to their own country and the obstacles troubling the Great Camp were removed after. After that, at the instigation of Sde-pa Spel-dmar, the Gisang Sde put Yang and Lcags in prison. Although the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che made an appeal to him, accompanied by presents, the Gisang Sde disregarded this and made war on the Sru-rab-pa. The Chos-rje sent to enquire from the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che about an auspicious day for an urgent meeting and asked that protection should be given to the Sru-rab Govenor and his people who had committed no offence. The All-knowing Zhwa Dmar came; and there were excellent results from the meeting of Father and Son. The Zhwa Dmar and Zhwa Nag together with Dpa'-bo and Tse-xa. The father and mother and two nephews of Chos-rje also entered the Camp. Although the Father and Son together gave instructions restraining the Gisang Sde and Sru-rab, the Gisang Sde would not listen. Because the Gisang Sde seemed to be victorious at that time, disobeying the orders of the Lama it happened to him according to the saying that the fate of one who regards only his present actions as different as it is from thinking of a field and possessing one on his way up the Gisang Sde died of small pox. Although the Father and Son were invited to Gisang they did not go there; and the representatives abused them greatly. It was well known that Shag-ram-pa, the Yang-rje Drung-pa had given the impression that in future he would control both religious and temporal affairs and because of great hatred for the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che who was responsible for that former wish not being fulfilled, he became a great obstacle to the good of the Father and Son.

At that time gifts were sent by the Chag-gar king and the Khar-ka king, from among the Yu-gur people, were received. The Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che gave to the Rgyal-ba's dbang-po all his possessions, his camp, his estates and his monks attendants. The reincarnation of the Rgyal-lab Rin-po-che was recognized. After that, the Gisang Sde having invited them they went together. Great gifts were offered.

In his twenty-first year, with the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che acting as mihan-po, Dpal Gsug-lag rgya-mtho as abu-dgon and Si-tu Chos-rje Chos-kyi rgyal-mthun as gyang-tson he was fully ordained in the presence of the assembled monks. By way of Lhasa and the Dnam Mtho he came to Mshur-phu. The Zhwa Dmar and Zhwa Nag together made the vases to be buried for the subjection of the earth when the precinct wall was being built. From the Ldor Dpa'-bo he heard much religious doctrine and from the Lor' Dpa'-bo he heard an abundance of sermons. The Chos-rje offered many images of the deities painted by himself.
On the further invitation from the Gisang Dge they went there. With a mounted escort and a procession of monks they came to Gyantse. Great offerings were made and all prisoners were released. From there they went gradually to Sa-skya and there was a meeting between the Bdag-chen and the Chos-rje. On the Rtsis-ri he had a vision of the Siddhas. At Ding-ti Gling-’khor he meditated extensively and he had a vision of Dam-pa Kun-dga’. With the dgyal Tse-rin-mu escorting him he came to Chu-dbar. He had a vision of Rin-mi-la wearing monk’s robe and smiling at him. Father and Son both carried stones on their backs for building a chorten. When fire broke out on a hill he quenched it by reciting the Bden-lugs-pa. Then the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che went on pilgrimage to Nepal and Chos-rje went on pilgrimage to Gangs Tsi-se. There many remarkable signs such as visions. He invited the lives of all the animals offered to him by the Droq-pa Nal-tser-gon. When he went to Skyi-grong the news came that the Ali-knowing Zhwa Dmar was going to India; he weep very sad and shed tears. Having asked advice from the Lord Dpon Nam-mkha’ how to prevent this he sent a letter to the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che with a present of gold.

At Ding-ti Gling-’khor Dpal-no-brang an assembly of monastic patrons petitioned him saying: “why should you travel without a fixed abode rather than stay here as Priest for the King?” He answered each of them with a verse. Going to Chu-dbar he painted many thangkas. When he went to welcome the All-knowing Zhwa Dmar, the Father and Son met at Spro-ode Bka-’chus-sgang. He offered a jar of precious water from Mchog Mar-pham and they washed in it. “The Lord Zhwa Dmar gave him many special gifts from India and Nepal. Carrying on his back the Lord Zhwa Dmar’s religious books and ritual ornaments the Chos-rje went to Chu-dbar. When a letter arrived from Chos-rgya that the Dpal-bo Rin-po-che had died the Chos-rje was greatly grieved; and soon after, the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che, having given a promise about the place where his reincarnation would appear, manifested the signs of passing into the Void, Tre-to Rin-po-che then became the personal attendant of the Chos-rje. The precious body was brought to Mshur-phu with religious ceremonies every day. The Gang king presented two hundred string of silver and many pearl rosaries. Many of the faithful gave their personal possessions and the memorial ceremony was performed on a grand scale. The Chos-rje himself led the foundation of the precious mchen-then for the Rin-po-che’s remains and carried stones on his back for building its chapel. He painted many images for the memorial ceremony and fetched water on his back for the assembly of monks.

He sent one hundred and eight mystic adepts to Chu-dbar after enquiring about their religious devotion. Percieving that there was a change of faith in Dbus and Gisang he formed the wish to go to Mdo-kham and he taught many
songs of sorrow and remembrance. The Umbrella-holding Mongol kings Ar-pa-lang and Chog-thu (17) and others asked for a meeting but it was not granted. Saying that the Be-ri king who refused to let the Mongol pass, although a Bon-po seemed true to his faith, he (Karmapa) had good reason for having previously blocked the road. Then the Chos-ri went on foot on pilgrimage to Tsar-ri. Then he returned to Lho-bros and performed a hundred thousand circumambulations, outside and inside, round the images of each Jo-be Shaska. He offered to the Jo-be Rin-po-che three silk khatas tied with ribbons and the next day he received count his neck from the Jo-be Rin-po-che as a staff with three knots. He caused the faithful to have greatly increased faith in the two images of Jo-be Shaska and to perform virtuous acts such as persecuting themselves on the circuit around the images.

An invitation from the Sa-thang king arrived and the Lord and his attendant went there gradually. They invited the Royal-tshab Chen-po Grags-pa Mchog dbangs and took part in meditation (tjie shub mtsad) seeking his help. The O-rdo (stan-’dzin Chos-rgyal) (18) launched an attack on Gyang. Before this a Mongol army had come, the Royal-tshab Chen-po Grags-pa Mchog dbangs, at the request of the Gyang Sde, was able to turn it back, but this time, although the father and son gave orders to stop, they were not able to turn them back. Through the Panchen Rin-po-che they appealed to the Great Fifth. The Panchen gave a reply to the Royal-ba’s dbang-po to this effect, "I guarantee that in relations between the Ogyen-pa and Karmapa there is no disagreement and I know nothing of such deeds concerning the Karmapa faith. But although the Karmapa received a written order granting their independance, malicious persons caused disturbances and because a great war broke out the Chos-ri went to Lho-bros. He recognized Kun-tu bzang-po as the Dkar-po incarnation.

To his attendant Kun-tu bzang-po he gave a bowlful of curds, a bell in a case, five pens, and a thousand rolls of paper, telling him he was needed as his personal disciple. The evil deeds of the Gyang Sde once again caused the Chos-ri great concern. Although some of the ministers, because of the disgrace brought on the court, explained that they did not agree with the Gyang Sde his purpose did not change and when the Kong-po army arrived the Chos-ri said "This has happened because you would not keep quiet. If you do not obey, you yourself must bear responsibility to the Karmapa doctrine of which Mipham-pa is head. I am going to submit to the Great Fifth. It was generally said that because a demon was sitting in the hearts of these leaders of the Karmapa way so that they relied on the Gyang-pa and abandoned their responsibility to the Karmapa faith, the Great Fifth therefore disregarded his order that the Karmapa faith should be independent. The Chos-ri saw that the condition of ruler is the honey mixed with poison since the Karmapa and
the Gtsang-pa sought to combine religious rule with affairs of state and so brought about the end of war, and that a wound that strikes this way into the centre of the faith of one's heart is in accordance with the repeated pronouncements of O-trgyan Chen-po that by the fortunes of many nothing can be achieved. After that, Father and Son went into religious retreat at Lho-brag for a short time. He made many pictures of images and he began to distribute all his wealth to the poor. He went to Miphol-pgon, gnas-van and Gtsang Nying-bred. An Inauspicious conjunction of stars prevented the Chos-rtse and Rin-gro-pa from going to Khams. On the New Year day of the water-sheep year (1643) he conferred full ordination, upon the Rigpwo-shab Chen-po, and the Rigwo-rtse incarnation and first vajra upon the dpal-rgyu Sprul-sku. In the monkey year (1646) Stag-lung Bhra-rtsho dpal-grub came in to meet him. (9).

An order came from the Priest and Patron of the Government (the Dalai Lama and Gushri Khan) that the Karmapa should take an oath not to subvert the interests of the Dge-leg-pa. To which the Chos-rtse replied? "It is not necessary to do so. I formerly took an oath that I would never subvert or cause dissension between the Karmapa and the Dge-leg-pa." And because at the time of the Gtsang Sde Phun-tshogs Rnam-rgyal he disobeyed orders in the matter of the Skiu-rab-pa the Chos-rtse had been greatly troubled and it was undoubted that the purposes of the Gtsang-pa and the Great Camp were quite different, he therefore thought he should be allowed to take an oath that, let alone any question that he might cause subversion, he had never done so in the past. But the priest and Patron misinterpreted his meaning and became angry. The Skiu-rab-pa and the Mongol army surrounded the Great Camp. The Chos-rtse and the Rin-gro-pa escaped from the camp and went to Miphol-pa Long. Some of the soldiers saw him as a deity some saw him as a vulgum, and although they pursued him they could not catch him. The armies destroyed the Great Camp. Some monks were wounded some were killed. During the time of his flight there were many different reports that the Chos-rtse with four disciples had been seen to come to Blam-yul that he had been seen to come to Lhag-dag that he had been seen to come to Kong-po Rigdol-tshang. The soldiers sought but could not find him. For twelve days between the monkey year and the bird year (1644-1645) the Chos-rtse and his disciple, those two lacked food and clothing but O-trgyan Rin-po-che gave them nectar and they suffered neither hunger nor cold.

For three years from this time the Rin-gro-pa Kun-lu byang-po never loosened his waist band, and for thirty years he continued unfailingly in the service of the Lama. After that time the Chos-rtse shared his seat with him and by giving him many of the three symbols (sten) and consecrating them and in other ways he showed his great regard for him.
...and so on. Wherever he was offered the choice between a roll of red brocade and one of soft woolen cloth, he chose the thickness and chose the woolly cloth saying "This is real Klo-pa stuff!". A Musk deer which they gave him followed close behind. About a hundred monkeys came to meet him and gave a display of their gambolling. He went to Miluo-dkar and saw many vases. In the fire-dog year (1646) he came to Ka-ram Se-ba-vgung at the time of Lo-gnas. The gifts that were showered on him like rain he immediately gave for religious offerings. Knowing that the Zhwa Omar reincarnation had been born he sent Karma Snying-rgye and Karma Don-grub to perform religious ceremonies and to present nectar, a white carpet and a rosary, together with a lettuce and a gold saag for the father and mother,

In the pig year (1647) an invitation came from the Sa-tham king. He went to Kha-ba-dkar-po. Escorted on a grand scale by the Sa-tham king's Chief Minister Karma Stubs-idan and others, he came to Rgyal-thang. The king 'Chu-me Lha-dbang, the father with his son and queen together offered a great ceremonial at the Lo-gnas of the wood-mouse year. There were boundless gifts. He performed the ceremony of wearing the black hat, and preached virtue. There was display of fireworks after which the Chos-rje, seated in a tent of white cotton at the summit of a hill, passed offered prayers for all blessings. As special presents at their first meeting, the king gave a golden Wheel of the Dharma, a white conch shell with a golden fin and so on.

Putting his head on the Lama's feet he asked for prayers of compassion for his late father Mi-pham Tse-dbang. On the next day, for about three sangs (about five miles) along the road on the right and left many thousands of people, kneeling, set out holy water, incense and flowers on tables in front of each of them. Accompanied by religious ceremonies, with the sound of many kinds of musical instruments, the camp was pitched by them in the Dha-she pleasure park. Then when the palace had been splendidly decorated both outside and within, he was invited by a great welcoming party of some five ministers and took his seat on a golden throne. Great gifts were presented: The Eight Lucky Signs in pure gold, the Seven Jewels of Monarchy, a box (about 1 lb.) of gold and one of silver, silk stuffs, and so on. He performed the ceremony of wearing the hat and gave initiations in the recitation of the Yig-ge drug-pa. He expounded the merits of "Phag-pa Sphan-bdag by according to the words of Dam-chos Pad-kar and he gave extensive religious instruction about causes and effects with regard to the prince more than all other, and about the necessity following them from of praying to that tutelary deity and repeating the Yig-ge drug-pa. Then the nine great ministers each invited him separately and did him
reverence. He caused them to understand the meaning of cause and effect in everything and to the accumulation like a great cloud by way of presents and wealth offered as a religious duty from below, he gave blessing from above.

Up to the time of the Seventh Kamapa, the Lungking had been one who worshipped heaven and offered living sacrifices, but when the All-knowing Mi-bskyod Zhabdrung visited that country the elephants saluted him and when he wished to ride they knelt down to the ground so the king, thinking he must be a god, obeyed whatever he said and followed his command to accept the ten virtues. And until the present time the kings have been converts to the Kamapa doctrine. It is said that in that country there are more than one hundred and twenty households.

Then the king distributed to the Rin-gpo-chen and all the other teachers great quantities of possessions and made a complimentary speech in excellent style on his success in inviting to holy a saint. One hundred and one gifts were given for the funeral rites of his father and the Chos-je made a prediction that he would attain the body of a god. Although the king asked him to stay there forever, he did not like the bustling and noise and went towards Rgyal-thang, At Brus-god Dzon many people of Spo, Brun, Sgo and Don came to meet him and he satisfied all with religious teaching and material goods. Then, intending to meet the Zhwa-Dmar reincarnation he gave all his possessions to the Rin-gpo-chen and the Chos-je himself, dressed as a beggar, having loaded all his necessities on one horse, went alone into 'Gu-log country. His horse and clothes and whatever he had were lost by robbers and as he went begging barefooted, both his feet suffered sores from the mud and cold. When he had neither food nor clothing someone gave him a bowl that had been broken into five pieces and joined together with thread someone else gave him a felt cloth, and he enjoyed comfort in these. When the wounds on his feet would not heal a household brought him medicines. One day when he was pouring the inside of his broken bowl with ashes he drew a picture of the Budhdhakirta Steng-chen Lhundrub and did reverence to it. Then as he went on his way many people recognized him and many came to meet him. About one hundred horses from the 'Brug-chen tribes and many other offerings were made to him.

When the Zhwa-Dmar came to know of it, one of his relatives arrived to greet him. Then the Spul-pa-rkyi-skur gave him a pearl basin, The Chos-je gave the Spul-pa-rkyi-skur gold, silver and so on, all objects to give him every pleasure and he also satisfied his kinmen with riches. When he went to his birth place he saw his house destroyed and the country devastated, all signs of the transitory nature of the world. In a pleasure garden he composed a eulogy of the Twelve Deeds of the Buddha and went it together with news of his condition.
to the Rim-gro-pa. From all directions many people came to meet him. The horse that had been stolen by robbers was returned to him. And the Rim-gro-pa not wanting to stay in Li-yul came from there. The Father and Son together preached sermons of all sorts. He recognized the reincarnation of the Lodr 'Dpal-bo. He took the hair-lock of the Zhwa Dmar incarnation and he gave final ordination to several monks. The Sixth Gar-dbang and the Lord himself repeatedly performed vows of piety. When he was fifty years of age an invitation was received from China but he did not go. Again great presents were sent. In the same year, the Great Fifth who had gone to China in the water-dragon year (1652) returned from there.

In the wood-sheep year (1655), the Chos-je acting as Minango and the Rim-gro-pa as Slab-dpon, together with others, gave final ordination to the Si-tu incarnation, Chos-rgyal mi-pham 'jhein-las rab-brtan and in the same year he gave monastic vows and final ordination to about a thousand monks of 'Jang-yul. Then having been invited by the Sa-tham king, Priest and Patren took part in many initiations and religious instructions. At this time, from Mchur-phu, the Rgyal-lobab Chen-po, thinking he was about to die, sent word that his reincarnation would appear in that region. At the time of meritorious at the iron-mouse New Year (1660), the Rim-gro-pa gave a New Year feast to the Chos-je Karmapa, the Zhwa Dmar, Si-tu, Dpal-bo, Phag-mo, Zhab-drung, Zhwa-sgod and other incarnations. The Sa-tham king also offered a new year entertainment. A messenger arrived with a letter from the Emperor Shun-tusu. The Chos-je gave detailed instruction to the Zhwa Dmar and many others in the mudras of the Rdo-rje and drol-bu and in the realization of the Six Principles of the Doctrine and so on. Again presents were received from the Emperor Shun-tusu, his queen, sons, and ministers. The Emperor requested that the seal should be changed and recognition accorded in the manner in which it had been done during the reign of the Ta-Ming. He replied "I have no desire to receive a new seal which is a worldly matter". Although his attendants urged him, he said "Nothing of the sort is necessary. You simply seem to want the presents of silk. By my foreknowledge I see many parts of China engulfed in a sea of blood. The Si-tu incarnation especially, finding it difficult to bear the great deterioration of the Karma doctrine, requested that he might be reborn as a prince of China and so restore the religion. But the Chos-je prevented him, saying "Nowadays even if you were to do that, the doctrine would not become perfect. There is no need for mere simulacra of the faith. If you hold that idea, it will be an obstacle to you meeting me regularly".

He recognized the reincarnation of the Rgyal-lobab Rim-po-che. Formerly when the Mongol troops captured the Great Camp and all the Karma monasteries were seized, the Rgyal-lobab Chen-po Grap-pa Methog-dbyangs and the Lord Ngag-dbang grik-a-shis dpal-grub composed a very able
petition and to some twenty-one houses of religion, above all Mithur-phu, Yangs-pa-can, Nyin-byed-gling Legs-bsdud-gling, and 'Ol-zer-gling were granted to them. In gratitude for that all the Karmapa monasteries caused him to take charge of Mithar-phu and appointed him head of each of all the religious communities and the amba of the faith were kept alive. He went to Lhasa with a suitable welcoming party from the capital. The Priest and Patron of the Government did him great honour. When the Chos-rje himself was staying for the time at Mithur-phu in Lho-brag a letter from the Fifth Dalai Lama was sent through the stag-tsung Zhab-drung Rinpoche. If he (the Karmapa?) would not in the same way as the Rgyal-tshab Rinpoche had been doing he would become a welcome chaplain. But by reason of the destiny of sentient beings that would not be beneficial. When there were recriminations between the stag-tsung Zhab-drung and the monastic communities because of that, the Lord (Rgyal-tshab) himself went to Lhasa and explained the situation. An oath had to be obtained from the Zhab-drung. After that he went to Lhasa to explain how those persons had sought to cause disunion with the Priest and Patron of the Government. He had audience with the Great Fifth, the Priest, and the Patron and as well as convincing him he gave great presents. Presents of recognition were received from the Gtsang Sde and the First queen. When the Great Fifth arrived back from Chos the Rgyal-tshab went to Lhasa and accompanied by a simple escort from Rye and Shod (monk and lay officials) he was received by the ruler and they had much cordial conversation. The Miphan Nor-thug-phyu of the Oirtat royal lineage sought audience and initiation from him and prayed that later he might take reliquia in his retinue. This Lama's successful achievements for the Karmapa doctrine were very great and the stag-tsung Zhab-drung was his equal. In the earth 20th year (1658) at the age of forty-two he passed away in the Zhal-rtsa chapel at Mithur-phu. Having acquired freedom to choose his own reincarnation in the power of his perfect vow, he was born as the son of a household in 'jang-yul where the Great Karmapa was living. And because he would have to control the monastic seal of Mithar-phu until the next most excellent incarnation of the Chos-rje should appear, he had promised to become a son of the Lama's Lineage. From his birth, therefore, he was grown up, he remembered his past renaissance, and told many tales of Mithur-phu. He was installed at the age of three and at the age of eight he took the dge-biwa vows. He was given the name Dpal Nor-bu btsan-po 'gro-'ud Kun-lugs-dba'-bshad-rgyal-mdzes-nam-pa rol-po btsan-'ul chos-du 'babs-pa btsan-po dpal.

The Chos-rje gave to the Zhwa Dmar, the Si-tu and the Rgyal-tshab headaddresses of red and gold which he himself had made. To the Zhwa Dmar, the Si-tu, Rgyal-tshab, Dpal-po, Phag-mo Kama Rin-chen, Skrul-skhu Chos-skyong btsan-pa, Skrul-skhu chok-skyong-btsan-pa and many others, he gave verbal instruction in the Precious Bka'-rgyud. Whig-'dzin
Mi-gyat rdol-tre met him for the first time, he presented a self-formed golden crescent moon, a hidden treasure which he himself had discovered. The Chos-ri recognized him as a genuine stupa-hot. He made very extensively all those offerings of valuables prescribed in the Vinaya. Then, since it was necessary to install the Zhwa-lma, the Royal-ebah and the Dpal-bo incarnations, he gradually processed towards Dru, with preaching and with material gifts all the communities of monk and laymen on the way. At Spro-lung he met the Zhaps-dron and they had extensive and pleasant conversation. He went to the Potala and met the Great Rite who enquired at length about his travels and his religious practices. Since the Chos-ri were advanced in years and hard of hearing the conversation was conducted through the Rim-gro-pa. A banquet and excellent presents were provided. When he visited the Jo-bo at Lhasa vision, without number were seen. The Chos-ri himself seemed to become strong-bitten sgam-po of old and to merge into the heart of the Jo-bo. When the Dalai Lama gave permission, he left and not long after, his illusory outward appearance contracted and in the age of seventy-one, on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month of the wood tiger year (1674), at dawn, he passed peacefully into the infinite. About that time his whole room was filled with a white radiance and there were other such wonderful phenomena which it is not necessary to detail. His precious body was brought to Mskhar-pa and the incarnation lamas who were his spiritual sons, with the Rim-gro-pa and others, took part in the perfect performance of the funeral rite, offering lamps, building the silver tomb, carrying out religious ceremonies and offerings, and consecrating the tomb.

Briefly, the progress to perfection of this late most excellent Lama was that by his compassion, so far from harming any creature, even an ant, he loved them all as one loves an only son. He specially loved dogs and beggars, all the poor and needy and afflicted and satisfied them all lavishly with gifts from his own hand. So far from ever doing harm, in return for harm he would lovingly confer benefit. Being perfectly accomplished in his understanding of the Phya-rgya Chen-po, he perceived the visible world as illusion and through the vicissitudes of prosperity and adversity he was never affected by feelings of happiness or sorrow. By his nature devoted to intensely calm concentration in progressive meditation on his personal deity the compassionate One, he constantly repeated the Six Letter Prayer, fierce spells and magical practices had no place in his mind. Meat and things never touched his tongue. He never failed to make confession twice a month. He passed his time in the creation of the three precious symbols and in making offerings and the religious paintings he completed were without number. He himself said "In poetry and painting there is no one in Tibet better than I am" — saying also "I am one who delights in Sphar-ras-gtig, the works of his hand were like magic for the eyes."
The band of disciples of that Lama were the Zhwa Dmar Ye-shes sning-po who became the guide of the next Most Excellent Incarnation the continuum of the lineage of possessors of wisdom the Rgyal-tshab Chen-po Grags Mchog unparalleled in good deeds for the Karmapa doctrine and his equal, the Zhabs-drung Bhra-srabs dpal-grub the Rim-po-chen Kun-tu bzung-po, without peer in his service to the person of the Lama Si-tu Chos-rgyal mi-phams Dpal-bo Kun-tu bzung-po and his reincarnation 'Phrin-las rgya-mtsho Rgyal-tshab sprul-skBU Nor-bu bzung-po Mchog-grub Ral-'ga-assyas Mchog-reg Karmapa Tsultrim-khyab-brag Gsang-pa Rgyag-mo Zhabs-drung Zhwa-sprul Bskal-bzang sning-pi sprul-skBU Karmapa Chos-skyyong Sa-tham Lha-btsan Karmapa Rin-chen Rgyal-ras Karphyung Karmapa Bluetooth Karmapa Rgya-brag Karmapa Chos-phags Karmpa Don-grub 'Byam-chen Dzong jo-stor mkhan-po Ri-bo-chos Chos-rtse Ra-tha sprul-skBU Nying Chos-rtse Yel-mo sprul-skBU Zur-mtsho Gser spyan Rnying-rtogs Iden Blu-grub those who have shown renunciation of worldly affairs (bya-btang bstan rnam) Che-tshag sprul-skBU Rtsa-le sphan-skBU Tah-rgyur dbang-pa Rgyal-tshab sprul-skBU Nor-bu rgyan-pa Rgya-tsan 'Je' mkhyen sning-po Zhabs-drung Dkon-mdzogs Gong-ru lo-chos with other peripheral disciples in general from among those holy beings and severall whose minds were united by the band of the holy religion.

"Lord of all beings, at a time when the age was full of disillusion. By the power of his compassion like a banquet of pure food. When the heart of the doctrine was assaulted by foreign troops when the great expanse of the earth was crowded with corpses when the destruction of the three precious symbols all beings were in misery the then by the power of his compassion was Lord of beings who had no lord. Who but he was the second Ruler of the Sakya?" Thus it was said.

NOTES
2. 'gu-log, 'Ga-log, Mgo-log, Npo-log a fierce nomadic tribe living near the Rmas-chu, the upper waters of the Yellow River and the Am-nya Rma-chen range, much given to brigandage.
3. Zle-ma is a monastery in the 'Ga-log country.
4. Rma-Sdob-rwa the mountain deity of the Am-nya Rma-chen range.
5. Yangtil a great monastery of the 'Be-kyung Bhra/mdug-pa about 65 miles N.E. of Lhasa. 

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6. The Great Camp: The Zhwa Nag and Zhwa Dmar Lamas spent much of the year travelling between their many monasteries and the headquarters of their lay patrons, and maintained what was virtually a tented monastery with a regular regime of officials and servants known as Sgar-pa.

7. The Black Hat is a mystic treasure of the Karmapa, said to be made from the hair of a hundred thousand Minkas—gro-ma and given by the Chinese Emperor Yung Lo to the Fifth Karmapa, De-bzhin grib-rgyas-pa. It is worn ritually at a special ceremony by the Zhwa Nag Lama.


9. Three Beautiful images carved from thincoros horn by Chos-dbyings rdo-rje, now in Rumtek monastery, are illustrated in Nilm Douglas book.

10. 'Yang-Sa-tham: a Nakh kingdom centered on Likiang on the upper Yangze.

11. Dal's-ching: a title of Kho-la-jii (r. 8)


14. The Gisang, Sde: Phun-gshogs gsam-stong, ruler of the greater part of Central Tibet at that time.

15. The Sa-skhyon: the representative of the enfeebled former ruling family of Phag-mo-gru.

16. Sko-tab-par: Governor of a region in Drags-po.

17. At-pa-lung (At-se-lung) and Choq-thur for the curious history of their intervention in Tibet see W.D. Shakabpa "Tibet" pp 103-104.


19. The account of chronology and events following Gashi's attack on Gisang is sketchy and difficult to reconcile with other sources. The final defeat of Karmapa resistance was in 1642 or early 1643 at latest, not 1644. Its centre was Rding-pyi north of 'Ol-khu. It is not clear whether Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje was there or in one of the other centres perhaps Lho-brag. The Mskhen-po Lings where he took refuge is probably the semi-legendary secret valley in north Bhutan which would agree with the story of Douglas' version that he was miraculously transported to Kurto (Skur-stok) in northern Bhutan. At all events he made his escape and is next recorded in Tse-o.

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