

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 Nik Douglas and Meryl White (Luzac, 1976) and "The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet" by Karma Thinley (Prajna Press, 1980). The former contains short accounts of the lives not only of the Black Hat (Zhwa Nag) but also of the Red Hat (Zhwa Dmar) incarnations and of several other great lamas of the Karma Bka'-brgyud 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 vol. pa of the Chos-'byung of Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag 'phreng-bo, 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'-thang is in a category of its own; but we have the magnificent hagiography of the lives of Marpa by Jacques Bacot 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 Karmapas 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 statesman-lamas.

The lives I find of particular interest are those of the Fifth Black Hat, De-bzhin gshegs-pa who established a close connection with the Ming Emperor Yung Lo; the Fourth Red Hat, Chos-grags ye-she who, in alliance with the Rin-spungs princes, was the most influential figure in Tibet after the eclipse of Phag-mo-gru about 1492; and the Tenth Black Hat, Chos-dbyings rdorje, in whose time the power of the Karmapa was supplanted by that of the Gelugpa through the might of the Oirat Mongol armies of Gushri Khan. As an experiment I have started with the last which is the shortest of those to which I have access because I can use only one source – the series of brief lives in "Chos-rje Karmapa sku-'phreng rin-byon gyi rnam-thar mdor bsdud dpag-bsam khri-shing date 1851 and attributed by Thinley to Mendong 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 Golok ruler Chang Mowa (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 Chos-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 Rim-gro-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, unworldly, 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 Lama when a child are shown by asterisks.

A short nam-thar of the tenth incarnation, Rgyal-mchog-chos-dbyings-rdo-rje.

As was foretold in a detailed communication by the late lama, at the time of his death, to Gar-dbang Thams-cad mkhyen-pa(1) about the place where the next holy incarnation would appear, in the lowest gorge of the eighteen great gorges of Mdo-khams, a country nowadays known as 'Gu-log(2), a father named Dhi-tsha khyi-ku-thar and a mother named A-mtsho had three sons, the eldest, Nam-mkha', the middle one A-'bum and the youngest, this present Lord born on the 28th day of the first month of the wood-dragon year (1604) at sunrise, without any difficulty to his mother. While he was still in the womb his 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 O-rgyan skyabs. As soon as he was born he sat up on his haunches. He took a pace in each direction and uttered the essence of the six-letter formula and the Rdo-rje gcod-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 Khyi-thul incarnation of the Guru" the child said "He is not Kyi-thul, he is Rang-byung Dga'-rab rdo-rje"; and he did reverence to him and received the initiation and blessing.

The late Lama in his lifetime was not greatly skilled as an artist but when his attendant the Lha-bris Sprul-sku Phan-bde laughed about that the child said "Later, I shall make you ashamed"; and accordingly, while he was still quite small, he painted pictures of deities and made rosary beads of many coloured wools. He made (a little seat) of straw from a bundle he was carrying on his back saying "Good Fortune!" and he said "I am the Karmapa, sound the rgya-gling 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 wept. 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 it pleases 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 one instructs 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 or in rainwater he said "Water cleans 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-letter formula.

At that time when it was widely reported that the Karmapa incarnation had been born in 'Gu-log country, the Lcags-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 constrained the incarnation together with his father and mother to be presented to Zla-ma(3) of Lcags-mo and installed him there. When he was five years old, being covetous of wealth, they took him towards the Rma-chu. Rma Sgom-ra(4) escorted him and there was a shower of rainbow light and flowers. Many wild animals accompanied him. The Lcags-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 Lcags-mo-pa saying "Wherever 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 Rtsa-ri Mtsho-dkar, sent his Gzim-dpon Mngon-dga' secretly together with servants, and gave the child the name Chos-dbyings rdo-rje as Ordained by the Adamantine Word of O-rgyan 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-ri(5) Drung-pa, who was known as Shag-rog-pa, in the guise of a monk offering flowers, invited him to the assembly tent and made a pretence 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-lcog and Nyin-byed came there. On the fifteenth day, at Rgyal Phur 'Prod, the Father and Son met together. On the 23rd day of the first month of the Lo-gsar the All-knowing Gar-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 frontlet, the seal, 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-ri drung-pa and the Lcags-mo-ba did not agree and fearing 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-ri-ba and Lcags-mo-ba would not allow him to make a peaceful settlement.

The Sog-po king Kho-lo-ji(8) invited the Father and Son but, fearing that the Sog-po and the Sgar-pa might carry off the child, Yang and Lcags 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(9). He received great gifts from the Emperor Wen Li -- fifty rgya-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 Sa-tham." (10)

In those days, treasuring dearly the rosary given him by the All-knowing Zhwa Dmar, the wishes of his heart were set only on prayers for a speedy meeting. Taking as his model the best petitions from Dbus and Gtsang and by exercising his artistic 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 Kam-po Rdo-rje dpal-brtsegs he came to Gnas-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'i-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-dbu 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-Dmar, the Yang-ri-ba and Lcags-mo-ba were afraid that he might be abducted and they increased their precautions.

At Spam-gzhung a deer pursued by a hunter's hound came to the door of his tent to seek refuge. He blessed it by the rite of G-yung-drung Nor-bu and, tying a knotted scarf round its neck, he gave it absolution. 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 cause and effect. When the god Gnyen-chen Thang-lha 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 Yangs-pa-can (12) and Mtshur-phu. (13) He was installed on the great lion throne. The whole region of Mtshur-phu and Gnas-nang was bathed in rainbow light and so on, just like the sort of wonderful magical manifestations there were on the occasion when Dezhin gshegs-pa went to the Chinese imperial palace.

When he was twelve the Lama Dpa-bo Gtsug-lag rgya-mtsho performed the rite of offering his hair-lock and ordained him dge-bsnyen in front of the Gandola shrine. He gave him the name Dpal-ldan 'Jig-rten gsum-gyi 'dren-pa sku-bzhi lhun-grub Chos-dbyings kun-tu khyab pa'i 'phrin-las rtag-pa'i rdo-rje 'Gyur-med Yi-bzhin snying-po rgyas-pa zla-med mngon-par mtho-ba'i dpal (The glorious leader of the three worlds, the self-originated four-fold body, the glory of the changeless essence of all wishes, the peerless manifestly exalted thunderbolt who perpetuates the good deeds and doctrine of all-covering heaven). Guided by his firmness and the encouragement of Sgrol-dkar, with regard to the precious Bka'-gyur of the Buddha, the tantras, oral indoctrinations, commentaries and explanations of commentaries, the granting of initiation, the collected works of the late Karmapa's and so on he received, beyond measure, initiations, empowerments and instruction of great profundity. That is all set out in the greater nam-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 like, I do not know." The Chos-rje answered "I assure you you will live to be sixty three". He meditated unceasingly on a selection of the sutras. Having been invited by the Gtsang Sde, (14) on the way, at Na-ga ring Lake when he had thrown in the proper offerings, the second the music was heard from within the lake and the sky was filled with rainbow light. At Zab-phu-lung he had a vision of O-rgyan Rin-po-che with his retinue. Received on a grand scale by the Gtsang Sde Phun-tshogs nam-gryal; he pitched camp at Rnam-gling Klu-sding. Great offerings were made. At Gsung-rab-gling when he saw a fresco painted by the Ninth Lama he said "This is strangely unlike the work of a mere maker of images".

When Yang and Icags were constantly making demands on the Lho-brag Sgar-pa the Lama himself issued an order not to do so in future. At Pa-nam a boy of turquoise-blue colour came and bowed before him. The Lord Dpa-bo said that because of three Klu Demon brothers whom the Lord Rang-byung-pa had formerly bound by an oath of subjection, there was turquoise colour everywhere.

With the Gtsang-Sde escorting him on grand scale he came to Bsam-rtse Klu-sding. He performed the ceremony of wearing the hat. Great offerings were made: hats for a regular wear, robes, a gold seal and so on were presented. The prince Karma Bstan-skyong dbang-po made the great offering (incense, lamps, flowers and so on) when he was received in audience.

At that time he heard an interpretation of picture of Ka-la-pa (Shambhala). As for poetry no sooner did he hear the mnemonic verses of Lord Dbon Nam-mkha' than he knew them. He was unrivalled in his knowledge of the substances and measurements of the three symbolic offerings (sku, gsung, thugs); and he was especially fond of Ladakhi bronze.

Yang and Lcags together slandered the father and mother and two nephews to the Gtsang Sde and caused them to be evicted from the Camp. The Byang Bdag-po and others came for audience, with presents. A golden letter arrived from the Chinese Emperor Da Ming Wan Li with great presents of eighty lengths of silk for outer and inner garments, and so on. In Lho-brag the Lord Dpa'-bo gave great presents. When going to the Rong-po Rdza-la he left imprints of his feet. The Sa-skyong (15) ruler together with his court officials and ministers having provided a great escort, he came to Sne'u Gdong-rtse. At the time there arrived a golden letter and many especially valuable gifts from China and 'Jang presented by the Sa Tham King.

He went towards Tsa-ri. At Dga' Ma-mo he set up sixteen thousand four hundred images of the Sixteen Arhat disciples. In general, wherever he went, he satisfied the converts with the three blessings. When anyone offered to take the vows of a hermit he gave him an image of the Lord Mi-la; and to those who took the vow to repeat continually the Six Letter Prayer he gave a picture of 'Phags-pa Spyang-ras-gzigs drawn by himself. To the householders in general he administered the vow not to take life and not to accept banquets of meat and chang nor to provide these 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 Bon Spells.

In Kong-po, Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-mtshon snying-po came to meet him. In accordance with secret instructions in the Chos-bdag (?) he presented a group of images of the Precious Ones, a horse and a pig, hidden treasures he had discovered. Smyung-gnas Ras-chen, seated on a litter because he was of ripe old age, surrounded by a retinue of several hundred smyung-gnas-pa came to meet him and gave many presents of robes and so on. When the Lord Dpa-bo fell ill, the Chos-rje 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 Gtsang Sde took counsel together and made each of them go into retirement separately. The other Lcags-mo-ba were banished to their own country and the obstacles troubling the Great Camp were removed afar. After that, at the instigation of Sde-pa Spel-dmar, the Gtsang Sde put Yang and Lcags in prison. Although the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che made an appeal to him, accompanied by presents, the Gtsang Sde disregarded this and made war on the Sku-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 Sku-rab Governor 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 Tre-ho. The father and mother and two nephews of Chos-rje also entered the Camp. Although the Father and Son together gave instructions restraining the Gtsang Sde and Sku-rab, the Gtsang Sde would not listen. Because the Gtsang Sde seeming to be victorious at that time, disobeyed the orders of the Lama it happened to him according to the saying that the fate of one who regards only his present actions is as different as it is from thinking of a field and possessing one; and on his way up the Gtsang Sde died of small pox. Although the Father and Son were invited to Gtsang they did not go there; and the representatives abused them greatly. It was well known that Shag-ram-pa, the Yang-ri 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 sent by the Cha-gar king and the Khar-kha king, from among the Yu-gur people, were received. The Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che gave to the Rgyal-ba'i dbang-po all his possessions, his camp, his estates and his monk attendants. The reincarnation of the Rgyal-tshab Rin-po-che was recognized. After that, the Gtsang 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 mkhan-po, Dpal Gtsug-lag rgya-mtsho as slob-dpon and Si-tu Chos-rje Chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan as gsang-ston he was fully ordained in the presence of the assembled monks. By way of Lhasa and the Gnam Mtsho he came to Mtshur-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 Lord Gar-gyi dbang-po he heard much religious doctrine and from the Lord 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 Gtsang Sde 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 Rtsib-ri he had a vision of the Siddhas. At Ding-ri Gling-'khor he meditated extensively and he had a vision of Dam-pa kundga'. With the deity Tshe-ring-ma escorting him he came to Chu-dbar. He had a vision of Rje-Mi-la wearing monk's robe and smiling at him. Father and Son both carried stones on their backs for building a chapel. When fire broke out on a hill he quenched it by reciting the Bden-tshig. Then the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che went on pilgrimage to Nepal and Chos-rje went on pilgrimage to Gangs Ti-se. There many remarkable signs such as visions. He saved the lives of all the animals offered to him by the 'Brog-pa herdsmen. When he went to Skyi-grong the news came that the All-knowing Zhwa Dmar was going to India; he was very sad and shed tears. Having asked advice from the Lord Dbon Nam-mkha' how to prevent this he sent a letter to the Zhwa Dmar Rin-po-che with a present of gold.

At Ding-ri Glang-'khor Dpal-mo-thang 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-bde Bkra-shis-sgang. He offered a jar of precious water from Mtsho Ma-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 Lho-brag that the Dpa'-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-ho Rin-po-che then became the personal attendant of the Chos-rje. The precious body was brought to Mtshur-phu with religious ceremonies every day. The 'Jang king presented two hundred srang 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 laid the foundation of the precious mchod-rten 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 tea and thug-pa for the assembly of monks.

He sent one hundred and eight mystic adepts to Chu-dbar after enquiring about their religious devotion. Perceiving that there was a change of faith in Dbus and Gtsang he formed the wish to go to Mdo-khams; and he sang many

songs of sorrow and repentance. 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 Mongols pass, although a Bon-po seemed to be a true Karmapa he pardoned him for having previously blocked the road. Then the Chos-rje went on foot on pilgrimage to Tsa-ri. Then he returned to Lho-brag and performed a hundred thousand circumambulations, outside and inside, round the images of each Jo-bo Sha-ka. He offered to the Jo-bo Rin-po-che three silk scarves tied with ribbon; and the next day he received round his neck from the Jo-bo Rin-po-che a scarf with three knots. He caused the faithful to have greatly increased faith in the two forms of Jo-bo Sha-ka and so to perform virtuous acts such as prostrating themselves on the circuit around the images.

An invitation from the Sa-tham king arrived and the Lord and his attendant went there gradually. He invited the Rgyal-tshab Chen-po Grags-pa mchog dbyangs and took part in meditation (? rjes sgrub mdzad;) secured his help?)

The O-rod Bstan-' dzin Chos-rgyal (18) launched an attack on Gtsang. Before this when a Mongol army had come, the Rgyal-tshab Chen-po Grags-pa Mchog dbyangs, at the request of the Gtsang 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 Rgyal-ba'i dbang-po to this effect. "I guarantee that in relations between the Dge-lugs-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 independence, malicious persons caused disturbances and because a great war broke out the Chos-rje went to Lho-brag. He recognized Kun-tu bzang-po as the Dpa'-bo 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 Gtsang Sde once again caused the Chos-rje great concern. Although some of the ministers, because of the disgrace brought on the court, explained that they did not agree with the Gtsang Sde his purpose did not change; and when a Kong-po army arrived the Chos-rje said "This has happened because you would not keep still before. Now go back and contrive to keep quiet. But if you do not obey, you yourself must bear responsibility to the Karmapa doctrine of which Mtshur-phu 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 those leaders of the Karmapa way so that they relied on the Gtsang-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-rje saw that the condition of ruler is like 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 evil deed 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-rgyan Chen-po that by the fortunes of men 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 deities and he began to distribute all his wealth to the poor. He went to Mtshur-phu, gnas-nan and Gtsang Nyin-byed. An inauspicious conjunction of stars prevented the Chos-rje and Rim-gro-pa from going to Khams. On the New Year day of the water-sheep year (1643) he conferred full ordination, upon the Rgyal-tshab Chen-po and the Rding-tsha incarnations and first vows upon the dpa'-bo Sprul-sku. In the monkey year (1644) Stag-lung Bkra-shis dpal-grub came to meet him. (19).

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-lugs-pa. To which the Chos-rje 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-lugs-pa." And because at the time of the Gtsang Sde Phun-tshogs Rnam-rgyal he disobeyed orders in the matter of the Sku-rab-pa the Chos-rje 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 Skyi-shod-pa and the Mongol army surrounded the Great Camp. The Chos-rje and the Rim-gro-pa escaped from the camp and went to Mkhan-pa Ljongs. Some of the soldiers saw him as a deer; some saw him as a vulture, 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-rje with four disciples had been seen to come to Bsam-yes; that he had been seen to come to Lhasa; that he had been seen to come to Kong-po Rgod-tshang. The soldiers sought but could not find him. For twelve days between the monkey year and the bird year (1644-1645) the Chos-rje and his disciple, those two lacked food and clothing but O-rgyan Rin-po-che gave them nectar and they suffered neither hunger nor cold.

For three years from this time the Rim-gro-pa Kun-tu bzang-po never loosened his waist band, and for thirty years he continued untiringly in the service of the Lama. After that time the Chos-rje shared his seat with him and by giving him many of the three symbols (rtan) and consecrating them and in other ways, he showed his great regard for him.

Then they went to Tsa-ri. Offerings were made to them of the necessities for making the upper circuit. When they went to the seven Klo-pa houses they were offered many gifts of honey and so on. When he was offered the choice between a roll of red brocade and one of soft woollen cloth, he compared the thickness and choose the woolly cloth saying "This is real Klo-pa stuff". A musk deer which they gave him followed close behind him. About a hundred monkeys came to meet him and gave a display of their gambolling. He went to Mtsho-dkar and saw many visions. In the fire-dog year (1646) he came to Ka-nam Se-ba-sgang at the time of Lo-gsar. The gifts that were showered on him like rain he immediately gave for religious offerings. Knowing that the Zhwa Dmar reincarnation had been born he sent Karma Snying-rje and Karma Don-'grub to perform religious ceremonies and to present nectar, a white carpet and a rosary, together with a letter and a gold srang 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 Stobs-ldan and others, he came to Rgyal-thang. The king 'Chi-med Lha-dbang, the father with his son and queen together offered a great ceremony at the Lo-gsar 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-pass, 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 Tshe-dbang. On the next day, for about three rgyang-grags (about five miles) along the road on the right and left many thousands of people, kneeling, set out holy water, incense and flowers on table 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 Bha-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 bre (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 Spyan-rasgzigs 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 therefrom 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 Karmapa, the 'Jang king had been one who worshipped heaven and offered living sacrifices, but when the All-knowing Mi-bskyod Zhabs 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 Karmapa doctrine. It is said that in that country there are more than one hundred and twenty households.

Then the king distributed to the Rim-gro-pa and all the other teachers great quantities of possessions and made a complimentary speech in excellent style on his success in inviting so holy a saint. One hundred zho of gold were given for the funeral rites of his father and the Chos-rje 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 bustle and noise and went towards Rgyal-thang. At Bya-rgod Dgon many people of Spo, 'Bor, Sga and 'Dan came to meet him and he satisfied all with religious teaching and material goods. Then, intending to meet the Zhwa Damar reincarnation, he gave all his possessions to the Rim-gro-pa; and the Chos-rje 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 looted by robbers and as he went begging, barefooted, both his feet suffered sores from the frost 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 cloak, and he enjoyed comfort in these. When the wounds on his feet would not heal, a householder brought him medicines. One day when he was scouring the inside of his broken bowl with ashes he drew a picture of the Bodhisattva Stag-mo lus-sbyin and did reverence to it. Then as he went on his way some people recognized him and many came to meet him. About one hundred horses from the 'Brog-pa tribes and many other offerings were made to him.

When the Zhwa-Dmar came to know of it, one of his relatives arrived to escort him. Then the Sprul-sku himself came to welcome him and doing great reverence, presented a pearl rosary. The Chos-rje gave the Sprul-pa'i-sku gold, silver and so on, all objects to give him every pleasure; and he also satisfied his kinsmen with riches. When he went to his birth place he saw his house destroyed and the country **devasted**, 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 sent 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 Lord Dpa'-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 acts of penitence. 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-rje acting as Mkhanpo and the Rim-gro-pa as Slob-dpon, together with others, gave final ordination to the Si-tu incarnation, Chos-rgyal mi-pham 'phrin-las rab-brtan; and in the same year he gave monastic vows and final ordination to about a thousand monks of 'Nang-yul. Then having been invited by the Sa-tham king, Priest and Patron took part in many initiations and religious instructions. At this time, from Mtshur-phu, the Rgyal-tshab Chen-po, thinking he was about to die, sent word that his reincarnation would appear in that region. At the time of merriment at the iron-mouse New Year (1660), the Rim-gro-pa gave a New Year feast to the Chos-rje Karmapa, the Zhwa Dmar, Si-tu, Dpa'-bo, Phag-mo, Zhabs-drung, Zhwa-sgom and other incarnations. The Sa-tham king also offered a new year entertainment. A messenger arrived with a letter from the Emperor Shun-rtsi. The Chos-rje gave detailed instruction to the Zhwa Dmar and many others in the mudras of the Rdo-rje and dril-bu and in the realization of the Six Principles of the Doctrine and so on. Again presents were received from the Emperor Shun-rtsi, 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 Karmapa doctrine, requested that he might be reborn as a prince of China and so restore the religion. But the Chos-rje 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-tshab Rin-po-che. Formerly when the Mongol troops captured the Great Camp and all the Karma monasteries were seized, the Rgyal-tshab Chen-po Grags-pa Mchog-dbyangs and the Lord Ngag-dbang bkra-shis dpal-grub composed a very able

petition and so some twenty-one houses of religion, above all Mtshur-phu, Yangs-pa-can, Nyin-byed-gling; Legs-bshad-gling, and 'Od-zer-gling were granted to them. In gratitude for that all the Karmapa monasteries caused him to take charge of Mtshur-phu and appointed him as head of each of the religious communities; and the embers 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 Mtshur-phu or in Lho-brag a letter from the Fifth Dalai Lama was sent through the Stag-lung Zhab-drung Bkra-shis dpal-grub that if he (the Karmapa?) would act 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-lung Zhabs-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 Zhabs-drung. After that he went to Lhasa to explain how some persons had sought to cause dissension 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 them he gave great presents. Presents of recognition were received from the Gtsang Sde and the Oirat queen. When the Great Fifth arrived back from China the Rgyal-tshab went to Lhasa and accompanied by a simple escort from Rtse and Shod (monk and lay officials) he was received by the ruler and they had much cordial conversation. The Mkhan Hu-thug-thu of the Oirat royal lineage sought audience and initiation from him and prayed that later he might take rebirth in his retinue. This Lama's successful achievements for the Karmapa doctrine were very great and the Stag-lung Zhabs-drung was his equal. In the earth dog year (1658) at the age of fortytwo he passed away in the Zhal-ras chapel at Mtshur-phu. Having acquired freedom to choose his own reincarnation, by the power of his perfect vow, he was born as the son of a householder in 'Jang-yul where the Great Karmapa was living. And because he would have to control the monastic seat of Mtshur-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, before he was grown up, he remembered his past residence and told many tales of Mtshur-phu. He was installed at the age of three and at the age of eight he took the dge-bsnyen vows. He was given the name Dpal Nor-bu bzang-po 'gro-'dul Kun-tu dga'-ba'i rgya-mtsho rnam-par rol-po dgos-'dod char-du 'bebs-pa bzang-po dpal.

The Chos-rje gave to the Zhwa Dmar, the Si-tu and the Rgyal-tshab headdresses of red and gold which he himself had made. To the Zhwa Dmar, the Si-tu, Rgyal-tshab, Dpa'-bo, Phag-mo Karma Rin-chen, Sprul-sku Chos-skyong bzang-po, Sprul-sku Bskal-bzang snying-po and many others, he gave verbal instruction in the Precious Bka'-'gyur. When Rig-'dzin

Mi-gyur rdo-rje met him for the first time, he presented a self-formed golden crescent moon, a hidden treasure which he himself had discovered. The Chos-rje recognized him as a genuine qter-ston. He made very extensively all those offerings of valuables prescribed in the Vinaya. Then, since it was necessary to instal the Zhwa Dmar, the Rgyal-tshab and the Dpa'-bo incarnations, he gradually processed towards Dbus, he satisfied with preaching and with material gifts all the communities of monks and laymen on the way. At Spro-lung he met the Zhabs-drung and they had extensive and pleasant conversation. He went to the Potala and met the Great Fifth who enquired at length about his travels and his religious practices. Since the Chos-rje was 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 visions without number were seen. The Chos-rje himself seemed to become Srong-brtsen 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 at 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 portents which it is not necessary to detail. His precious body was brought to Mtshur-phu 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 rites, 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 benefits. Being perfectly accomplished in his understanding of the Phyag-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 chang 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 Spyans-ras-gzigs", the works of his hand were like nectar for the eyes.

The band of disciples of that Lama were: the Zhwa Dmar Ye-she snying-po who became the guide of the next Most Excellent Incarnation the continuer 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 Bkra-shis dpal-grub; the Rim-gro-pa Kun-tu bzang-po, without peer in his service to the person of the Lama; Si-tu Chos-rgyal mi-pham; Dpa'-bo Kun-tu bzang-po; and his reincarnation 'Phrin-las rgya-mtsho; Rgyal-tshab sprul-sku Nor-bu bzang-po; Mkhas-grub Ra'-ga-asya; Mkha-reg Karma Bstan-srung; Khyab-bdag Grub-dbang; Phag-mo Zhabs-drung; Zhwa-sprul Bskal-bzang snying-po; Sprul-sku Karma Chos-skyong; Sa-tham Lha-btsun Karma Rin-chen; Rgyal-sras Kar-phun; Karma Bstan-skyong; Karina Bsam-grub; Karma Chos-'Phags; Karma Don-grub; 'Bam-chen Dbon; Jo-stan mkhan-po; Ri-bo-che'i Chos-rje; Rdi-tsha sprul-sku; Ne-ring Chos-rje; Yol-mo sprul-sku; Zur-mang Gar sprul Rin-snying; Rtogs-Iden Blo-gros; those who have shown renunciation of worldly affairs (bya-btang bstan rnams); Che-tsang sprul-sku; Rtse-le sprul-sku; Tsher-lung drung-pa; Rgod-tshang sprul-sku; Nor-bu rgyan-pa; Rig-'dzin 'Ja'-mtshon snying-po; Zhabs-drung Dkon-mchog; Gong-ra lo-chen; with other personal disciples in general from among those holy beings and several whose minds were united by the bond of the holy religion.

"Lord of all beings at a time when the age was full of dissension. 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 through the destruction of the three precious symbols all beings were in misery; he 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

1. Gar-dbang Thams-cad mkhyen-pa: the Sixth Zhwa Dmar, Chos-kyi dbang-phyug.
2. 'gu-log, 'Go-log, Mgo-log, Ngo-log; a fierce nomadic tribe living near the Rma-chu, the upper waters of the Yellow River and the Am-nye Rma-chen range, much given to brigandage.
3. Zla-ma: a monastery in the 'Go-log country.
4. Rma-Sbom-ra: the mountain deity of the Am-nye Rma-chen range -
5. Yangri: a great monastery of the 'Bri-khung Bka'-brgyud-pa about 65 miles N.E. of Lhasa.

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 retinue 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 Mkha'-'gro-ma and given by the Chinese Emperor Yung Lo to the Fifth Karmapa, De-bzhin gshegs-pa. It is worn ritually at a special ceremony by the Zhwa Nag Lama.
8. Kho-lo-ji : a prince of the Tumed Mongols and a great nephew of Altan Khan.
9. Three Beautiful images carved from rhinoceros horn by Chos-dbyings rdo-rje, now in Rumtek monastery, are illustrated in Nik Douglas book.
10. 'Jang-Sa-tham : a Nakhi kingdom centered on Likiang on the upper Yangtze.
11. Da'i-ching : a title of Kho-lo-ji (n. 8)
12. Yangs-pa-can : the principal monastery of the Zhwa Dmar Lama, on the upper waters of the Lho-rong Chu in Snye-mo.
13. Mtshur-phu : the principal monastery of the Zhwa Nag Lama, in the Stod-lung valley, founded in 1187.
14. The Gtsang Sde : Phun-tshogs rnam-rgyal, ruler of the greater part of Central Tibet at that time.
15. The Sa-skyong : the representative of the enfeebled former ruling family of Phag-mo-gru.
16. Sku-rab-pa : Governor of a region in Dvags-po.
17. Ar-pa-lang (Ar-sa-lang) and Chog-thu : for the curious history of their intervention in Tibet see W.D. Shakabpa "Tibet" pp 103-104.
18. Bstan-'dzin Chos-rgyal : Gushri Khan.
19. The account of chronology and events following Gushri's attack on Gtsang 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 Rdzing-phyi north of 'Ol-kha. It is not clear whether Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje was there or in one of the other centres perhaps Lho-brag. The Mkhan-po Ljongs 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 Kurtod (Skur-stod) in northern Bhutan. At all events he made his escape and is next recorded in Tsa-ri.