



TWO KARMAPAS

Lama Tendar Olaf Hoeyer

Since 1992 there has been two branches of the old Karma Kagyü tradition, each with its own Karmapa and international

network of Lamas, monasteries, institutions and centres. This separation in two branches is problematic of several reasons, but it is not unusual in the history of Buddhism. The most problematic point is, that the whole Tibetan Tulku tradition of so called *consciously reborn* Lamas has been discredited and has maybe lost its usefulness as a credible propagator of the Dharma transmissions. The Karmapa was the first Lama in history that formed an institution around his repeated incarnations in the World 900 years ago. Today, there are more than 5000 Tulkus from Tibet and nearby territories. It is unlikely that they all are saints. On the other hand, saints *do* appear in most religious traditions, whether they are Tulkus or not. True Bodhisattvas will reincarnate anyway, within or without formal institutions.

Generally, it is overlooked that the separation is the result of an attempt to overthrow Shamarpa from his position as the second highest Tulku within the Karma Kagyü tradition. Shamarpa is the *second* Lama in history to build an institution around his repeated incarnations. Most people think, that the matter at hand is an election between two Karmapas, and very few ask into, why the Shamarpa had to be removed from influence. And indeed, there are only political reasons for that.

In 1992 everybody in the Karma Kagyü tradition became completely astonished, because *Situpa*, the third highest ranking Lama after the Karmapa, appointed a boy, *Ogyen Thrinley Dorje* as the 17th incarnation of Karmapa. It was not shocking, that a Karmapa was appointed. It had been expected ever since the death of the 16th Karmapa in 1981. The astonishing aspect was, that the next-highest Lama within Karma Kagyü, the *Shamarpa* was away travelling in America, and he had not been informed about the event beforehand, nor had he consented to it. Shamarpa knew, that *Situpa* thought he had found the right candidate, but Shamarpa had resisted an appointment at their last meeting, until a proper investigation could be conducted about the authenticity of the candidate. *Situpa rushed the appointment anyway,*

probably because he already had an approval and a negotiated time-schedule with the Chinese government in place. Ogyen Thrinley Dorje was on his way to the monastery of Tsurphu in Tibet in order to ascend the throne of the Karmapas there, while all this happened in Rumtek Monastery of Sikkim. (Tsurphu was the seat of the 16th Karmapa in Tibet until the flight in 1959 to Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, where he lived thereafter.) When Shamarpa came back to Rumtek, he expressed great reservations about this appointment and proceeded to proclaim the new 17th Karmapa *Thrinley Thaye Dorje* in 1994. The separation in two branches of the Karma Kagyü was a reality without mutual recognition and respect. Shamarpa thinks that an appointment demands his acknowledgement and the recognition by the 16th Karmapa's *lhabrang* (more about this later) according to tradition. Situpa thinks that Shamarpa has *not* found a genuine Karmapa Tulku (rebirth of a high Lama). Why he thinks so, he has not explained, except that since he has appointed Karmapa, there is no need for Shamarpa to proclaim another Karmapa. Situpa quite simply is in denial, and he does not want to handle the matter of Shamarpa's appointment of Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje. The issue is definitely not easy to evaluate. The book: *Karmapa Papers*, presents the related documents. I show here, what I have found out myself and relate my personal views.

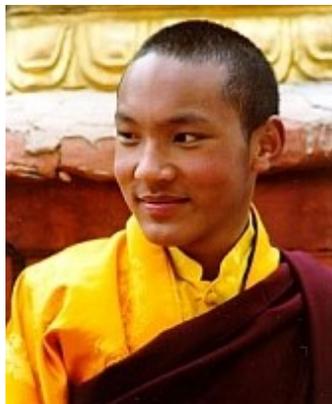


Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje

The 17th Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje was found by a great Lama in a clear and strong vision. The day after his clairvoyance, the Lama met with Karmapa on the street, exactly as he had seen in his vision, and Karmapa did thereupon exactly the same as the Lama had seen previously. It was a *déjà-vu*. The Karmapa was then just a little boy, but he went straight up to the Lama and said: *I am the Karmapa and you were previously my student*. All

circumstances have been told to me by this great Lama that I have known for many years and who is well respected all over the Tibetan cultural area. It was not before the year 2000 at an official occasion that this Lama took me into confidence and told me, how all this had happened.

Unfortunately, I cannot tell any more because of the present political circumstances. According to my retreat-master Gendun Rinpoche, the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpae Dorje told him that certain prophecies about events in connection with his rebirth had to be fulfilled, before everything about it could be told publicly. Hopefully, this time is approaching because the public has a right to know. For my own part, I am satisfied with the information I have obtained so far and I can conclude, that the 17th Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje was found in a way and under circumstances that are normally considered authentic in Tibet, when it happens in this way, and they are indeed traditional for a Karmapa's rebirth. There are several other accounts about the finding of Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje, that describe the indications of the authenticity of his appointment, but nobody else tell this story, that I have recounted above. It was this great Lama's personal information that really convinced me.



Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje

I would have loved to be able to say the same about the 17th Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje, but I have not been able to gather reliable information and I meet distrust among his followers, that also have not been helpful to obtain such information. They know that I am a student of Shamarpa, so their reservations are understandable, but I am also a student of several high ranking Lamas, that publicly adhere to Situpa's

appointment of Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje. There are, of course reports about how he was appointed and why he is an authentic incarnation, but serious doubts has been raised about them that have not been satisfactory explained by Situpa and Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje's organisation nor by his supporters. So, I await patiently and hope that everything also will be discovered concerning Ogyen Thrinley Dorje.

There is, though, a somewhat strange story, that Ogyen Thrinley Dorje tells to an audience of a TED conference in November 2009

(http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/his_holiness_the_karmapa_the_technology_of_the_heart.html). In this film, he says that a team of people once came to his family, while he was only a 7 year old child, and told him that he was in fact a reincarnation of Karmapa. It is custom that a Karmapa proclaims himself to be an incarnation of the previous Karmapa for everybody to know. The earlier incarnations have all appointed themselves and thereby attracted the attention of the World – and not the other way around. Also Thrinley Thaye Dordje did this. It was in fact his very first spoken words at all.

Ogyen Thrinley Dorje must know this, so it is a very peculiar statement. To Zeenews, he explains in December 2011: "*I was only seven years old when I was recognised as the Karmapa. I did not have the ability to choose. I was caught between a rock and a hard place. And when I had the ability to choose, it was too late.*"

(Zeenews.com is an Indian online news service:

http://zeenews.india.com/news/nation/chinese-guards-are-also-human-beings_748632.html).

These words from his own mouth does undeniably indicate, that he was not found in the same way as all the previous Karmapas. Of course, I cannot judge whether he is a genuine Tulku of the 16th Karmapa or not, but there are really many unanswered questions, that have risen in the wake of his appointment.

There is no doubt however, that both Karmapas have been educated traditionally and have received the full Dharma transmission, and they are both thereby holders of it. So, today there are two branches of the Karma Kagyü tradition with a separate Karmapa for each as their spiritual heads. The problem is, of course that there used only to be *one* Karmapa, and now both Karmapas' authenticity are thrown into doubt, and the two Karmapas' organisations have not yet discovered how to relate to each other in a constructive way. The Dalai Lama and the Chinese government have recognised Ogyen Thrinley Dorje as Karmapa without doing so also concerning Karmapa Thrinley

Thaye Dorje, but *recognition of Karmapas have never before been their concern*. It is in fact quite remarkable that they feel called upon to do so, and we should question what interests that they seek to serve by this intervention. Shamarpa has of course not asked for their recognition of Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje in a similar way, because that would go against the tradition of Karma Kagyü. Appointment of a Karmapa is an internal matter of Karma Kagyü alone.

Dilemma

It is not for me to approve or recognise a Karmapa. The controversy about the two Karmapas is not a *presidential election*, as Shamarpa has said earlier. The point of this paper is to show my own dilemma, that is shared by many others, and to present the main character of the issue. I am a student of both Shamarpa and Tenga Rinpoche that each support a different Karmapa. The reason for my reservations towards Tenga Rinpoche's position is, that he has to follow Situpa, no matter what he may think for himself. Why this is so, will become obvious later. The really frustrating thing about the whole matter is, that Ogyen Thrinley Dorje may very well be a genuine Tulku, but it is not being documented. Instead it is being emphasized that he looks a lot like the 16th Karmapa in his physical features, but none of the previous Karmapas resembled their predecessors, so what is the point? Also, Situpa's letter is emphasized, that allegedly is written by the 16th Karmapa and that allegedly predicts Ogyen Thrinley Dorje as a genuine reincarnation. This does not appear credible though, partly because both Shamarpa and Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche were sceptical of the origin of the handwriting. Shamarpa has said that the handwriting most of all resembled that of Situpa. Partly because Situpa will not allow a forensic test of the document.

This is suspicious, because just before Situpa declared that he had found the prophetic letter, so long sought after, he had announced that he lied about *the previous letter*, that were earlier presented about the reincarnation of the 16th Karmapa. Why then, should he not feel forced to lie again? He said, that he had to lie because of pressure from impatient supporters. Ever since the appointment of Ogyen Thrinley Dorje, the pressure on Situpa has increased manifold, but now he is not lying? Once caught in a lie, you are actually not trustworthy. Since a forensic test of the letter is not allowed, *we must assume* it is a forgery.

The 16th Karmapa's own organisation (*Tibetan: lhabrang*) was as official as can be in Tibet, but when the Karmapa moved to India in 1959, he had to form a corporation according to Indian law. So, he instituted the *Karmapa Charitable Trust* for this purpose. This foundation also demanded a forensic examination of the letter in 1992. This is its privilege as the administrator of the late 16th Karmapa's estate. Situpa would not allow that, disregarding the tradition. Why doesn't Situpa just tell us, how he really found Ogyen Thrinley Dorje, the whole story? He has some authority to find Karmapas, so he does not have to forge documents and so on. I think, it is a bit too mysterious.

Here is what Shamarpa said

The earlier announced letter about Karmapa's rebirth was put in a relic-box in the Karmapa's apartment in Rumtek Monastery by Shamarpa, Situpa, Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche and Gyaltsab Rinpoche together in 1987.

In the paper of the "International Karma Kagyü Conference" (that took place in New Delhi from the 28th to the 30th of March 1996) on page 65, Shamar Rinpoche goes into detail about this letter. He is cited for saying: "In 1986 - - - we [the 4 regents] issued a statement that we had found a short letter left behind by the late Karmapa, but as it was short, the instructions were difficult to interpret. - - - The fact [is], that the short letter we had said was the late Karmapa's instructions was in fact not the instructions. - - - At one of our meetings, I do not remember if it was in 1985 or '86, but around that time, Jamgon Rinpoche said that in his opinion, it was certain that a letter with instructions would appear. The way he said this, convinced me that Jamgon Rinpoche was in possession of the instructions, that the late Karmapa had given to him. It was at Jamgon Rinpoche's suggestion that the announcement that the instructions of His Holiness had been found was made. As I myself was convinced that Jamgon Rinpoche had the instructions, I agreed to this. - - - At another meeting in 1987 Gyaltsab Rinpoche suggested that we use a verse which the late Karmapa had composed and had himself written down as the "provisional" letter of instruction."

It is this poem that was placed in the blessing-box. The box was placed in Karmapa's apartment in Rumtek, where pilgrims often came to pray and receive blessings from the many holy objects in these rooms. Shamarpa at that time thought, that Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche was in possession of a real letter of instruction, but that he did not trust the others to see it, nor to let it be placed at such a public place. If nothing else, this tells us that there were mistrust between the 4 Regents and they were not in a position to speak freely with one another. How much this entails lies, can thus be discussed, but Situpa declared that it was all lies, just before he announced his prophetic letter, that he promised was neither a lie nor falsified. The question is, if we will ever know, but Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche apparently did not possess any letter from Karmapa.

(The paper from "International Karma Kagyü Conference" does not declare any publisher. It is a book with 125 pages. The conference took place in connection with the KIBI institute, so you may very well get it from there.)

Of whatever reason, Situpa announced that he had never met with Ogyen Thrinley Dorje before he put him on the Karmapa's throne inside Tsurphu Monastery in Tibet in September 1992. However, Lopön Dechen Rinpoche - who at that time was the leader of the monastery - said, that Situpa had met with Ogyen Thrinley Dorje the year before. He was himself a witness of the event (according to Brooke Webb at: www.karmapa.org.nz/news/58/64/Today-there-are-two-officially-proclaimed-17th-Karmapas). Why did Situpa not support this account? Since they already met each other in 1991, why did he not tell the other 3 Regents about it in 1992? Who put pressure on Situpa to lie about this as well? Now, these lies may be lies of convenience - white lies, but what purpose do they serve? Surely, they seem intended to save face for Situpa, but they also misguided the public. The whole story about Situpa and Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje have never been told in public. Hopefully, we shall come know it all in due time.

*Traditionally, it has been the Shamarpa that found the new Karmapa, but it has not always been the case. Situpa has also found several incarnations, but it is the first time in history that Situpa has forced an appointment of a Karmapa without any concern about the opinions of the Shamarpa and without the consent of Karmapa's organisation (Karmapa Charitable Trust). It is not clear, why Situpa regarded this action as necessary and right. Something could indicate that Situpa's' lhabrang want to put aside Shamarpas' authority in order to promote Situpa's' influence on the Karma Kagyü organisations. This, they probably want, because for almost 200 years there have been no official Shamarpa, so in this period, Situpa have been number two in the hierarchy after the Karmapa. Therefore Situpa's' lhabrang is a bit sad to become number three again. This is somewhat strange, since the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpae Dorje quite clearly have stated the hierarchical authority within Karma Kagyü (read the page: *Hierarchy*).*

NEW: (The plausible reason for Situ Rinpoche's line of actions may be explained by his dealings with Chen Luan and the government of China. I did not know the details of this connection, when I wrote my original paper. You can read about it in Arnaud Dotézac's paper from the magazine 'Market' in Switzerland: www.tilogaard.dk/Market_ch_Buddhist_soft_power_30_May_2014_EN_Final_V4_.pdf)

Shamarpa has found what he calls the *classical* Karmapa, thereby meaning Thrinley Thaye Dorje. By this appointment he has not excluded Ogyen Thrinley Dorje from being a genuine Tulku. On the other hand, Shamarpa does not feel, that the

documentation for Ogyen Thrinley Dorje is satisfying. It is quite obvious that Shamarpa has no influence on the other branch of Karma Kagyü, that is now being lead by Situpa and Ogyen Thrinley Dorje. *So, you must be a fool, if you cannot see, that a coup has taken place in order to remove the Shamarpa from his top post.*

That has only partly succeeded. Shamarpa is still leading a large part of the Karma Kagyü organisations together with Karmapa Thrinley Thaye Dorje. Both Shamarpa and Situpa have been appointed to their high posts by the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpae Dorje and no one have raised doubts about their authenticity, so if the 16th Karmapa was a genuine Tulku, both of them should also be so. Logically you could assume, that both of the Karmapas having been appointed by them are also authentic, but doubts are raised exactly about that. Most people can only imagine one Karmapa at a time, at any rate only one *official* incarnation, even though the Karmapa is known to emanate several Tulkus simultaneously. It is not so uncommon. Khyentse Wangpo, a famous Lama from the 19th century, is known to emanate 7 incarnations simultaneously in our time.

Politics

Read the article *Karmapa Controversy* by Karma Wangchuk (from the KIBI institute) about the disagreements between the two branches of Karma Kagyü. Hopefully, the article can clarify some of the political manipulations, that have evolved around the Karmapas. There is also a reliable book: *Buddha is not smiling*, by Erik D. Curren, that exposes a number of lies and manipulations which Situpa and his organisations are responsible of. Unfortunately, the book does not clarify completely all the points of controversy, because much of it is yet not known or made public.

On the internet, you may find a lot of misleading lies and nonsense, when you conduct a search. Some people think that there can only be one genuine Karmapa, so the other have to be a fake, but *the controversy does not at all lead to such a choice*. Instead the whole Tulku tradition of Tibet is thrown into doubt, that is whether any such appointed Lama is really a reincarnation of his predecessor. You can only trust that, when everybody goes about the matter with the highest degree of seriousness, sincerity and transparency in all their dispositions. There were always doubt about certain Tulkus when their appointments looked like political choices and therefore often also were so, but very seldom about the really great Lamas. Some people feel, that they

have to choose because their own Lamas have chosen side. Such a choice have to be considered with some reservation, because you cannot always know why Lamas decide political matters in a Tibetan context. Normally they are wrapped into age-old alliances with both other Tulkus, monasteries, powerful families and various clans. This is so even today when Tibet is a "communist" republic and the exiled Tibetans live in freedom abroad.

To state it briefly, the great Tibetan Lamas are under obligation towards many thousands of people from all over the Tibetan cultural area, where both politics, survival and suppression take place by personal connections and various more or less known networks, both inside and outside Tibet, that have existed for centuries and still evolve. People cultivate their loyalties as they have always done. What is new, is the communist party of China. And the new Chinese Empire. Likewise the great Karma Kagyü Lamas cultivate their age-old alliance patterns between their original Tibetan monasteries that are spread out all over the whole of the Tibetan cultural area, each monastery with it's own support groups in the populace. There are not political parties, but several unions or more correctly tribal alliances that follow the clan-leaders. It of course matters to the Tulkus, the support-groups and the clan-leaders, who the "real" Karmapa is, but they follow the policies of their unions when first it has been laid down for them, in order to stay united. *Those that since old times were allies of Situpa follow his lead.* Those from the central Tibet dare not go against the wishes of the Dalai lama, at the least not publicly.

NEW: (You can read in the paper in 'Market' about, how Situ Rinpoche and all his supporters was bribed with large sums of money, that indirectly originated from the Chinese government. The local government of Sikkim was also bribed, so it both allowed and supported Situ Rinpoche's violent take over of Rumtek Monastery, whereby the administration of the Karmapa and his monks were thrown out and exiled from the monastery. They still are, of course.)

Shamarpa differs from this pattern by his lack of such old unions and alliances in Tibet, because the Tibetan government some 200 years ago prohibited his official incarnations. Since the death of the 10th Shamarpa in 1792, his incarnations have been unofficial, though known by an inner circle ([read about the 10th Shamarpa below](#)). The monasteries that regarded him as their head, were confiscated by the Tibetan government and all his possessions including the fabulous ruby-red crown were brought to the Potala palace in Lhasa and confiscated by the government.

(The crown was later buried in the ground before the shrine of Ramoche Temple in Lhasa city. This was done in order to have people walk over the fine crown and thereby desecrate the good name of the Shamarpas in Tibet.)

Dalai Lama revoked the ban in 1964. The present 14th Shamarpa has therefore only a proper network outside Tibet, though the *Yangpachen* monastery near Lhasa once again have appointed him as their head. In this context the consequence is, that the Shamarpa does not have the same obligations towards the situation and populace of Tibet as the other great Karma Kagyü Lamas.

NEW: (The Chinese also tried to bribe the Shamarpa already in 1981. They wanted to participate and ‘help’ to find the Tulku of the newly deceased Karmapa. Shamar Rinpoche told me about it. He politely said ‘no thanks’ and explained to the Chinese, that the Karma Kagyü tradition was fully able to find the Tulku all by itself and did not need help. The Chinese were also polite, but afterwards they then just addressed the next highest Tulku of Karma Kagyü, that is Situ Rinpoche. He listened much better and was interested. It was at this occasion that all our troubles with the two Karmapas started.)

First of all, we still need information about what really happened between Situpa, the Chinese government, the exile-government of Dalai Lama and Situpa’s large number of followers and allies in eastern Tibet (*Kham*) and north-eastern Tibet (*Amdo*) all the way back from the time of the 16th Karmapa Rangjung Rigpae Dorje’s death in 1981. Those areas lie partly in the Sichuan- and Qinghai provinces of China proper. The controversy is definitely not marked by mutual understanding, empathy, transparency, openness, access to archive papers, sobriety and verification of both events and accounts of witnesses from the part of Situ Rinpoche. On the contrary, there has been a great pressure on everybody to choose the side of Ogyen Thrinley Dorje in the conflict. Hopefully, in due time we will come to know the information, so far lacking. Here in the West, such things cannot drift in the clouds, left to speculation and superstition. The whole *transmission* of Dharma may become threatened, if the general public is lead to believe that this story is just yet another Guru scandal, where people are mislead to fanaticism and superstition and loose money, that they might have spent better themselves.

The controversy is a Tibetan mess that shows, that the Tibetans are not at all ready for the modern age with it’s challenges, as we perceive them to be here in the West. I am tempted to claim that the Dharma is a reactionary force in Asia, just like most other

religions with roots in antiquity, are more comfortable with the past than the future. We from the West do not need to get trapped and become reactionaries ourselves. To us, the Dharma is avant-garde, great news and the new religion of modern times. It is a challenge to ourselves how we organise and institutionalise the transmission and training of the Dharma in such a way, that transparency, power-sharing and accountability in all matters of power, money and decisions become routine. We cannot organise ourselves as if we were in Tibet, nor give power over our organisations to any one single person. That would be an invitation for disaster. Buddhist societies should be democratically organised, while the institutions should have meritocratic governance (**peer control**), when nothing else is prescribed as in the case of monasteries with their ancient democratic tradition. I can only hope that the Tibetans will arrive at the same conclusion in due time.

About the 10th Shamarpa

The history of the Shamarpas becomes especially dramatic during and after the lifetime of the 10th Shamar, Chödrub Gyatso (1742-1792). For that reason it is useful to explain his life in more detail here. The brother of the 3rd Panchen Lama Palden Yeshe (1738-1780) - a highly ranked Gelukpa Lama - the 10th Shamarpa had a very poor relationship with the Gelukpa government of Tibet based in Lhasa and directly ruled by the Chinese Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799). Tsomonling Ngawang Tsultrim, the imperial Chinese representative in Lhasa at that time, was especially opposed to him for a number of reasons. First of all, he belonged to the Karma Kagyu school and claimed that that the Kagyus were the former rulers of Tibet. Second, he was on friendly terms with the British government in India, a state of affairs that had come about because his mother was a princess of Ladakh. Both of these facts made the Emperor's government very suspicious. Fearing censure or punishment from the governments of both Tibet and China, the 10th Shamarpa fled to Nepal. He lived there comfortably until, in 1788, a war broke out between Tibet and Nepal over the minting and circulation of counterfeit coins. The 10th Shamarpa was used by the government of Nepal as a mediator in the peace talks with Tibet, and as a result the government of Tibet informed the Emperor Qianlong that the Shamarpa had taken the part of the Nepalese in the conflict. The Gelukpa Tibetan government then requested that the Shamarpa institution be banned. The ban was effected upon the death of the 10th Shamarpa in 1792 and remained in effect until the 20th century.

Written by Lara Braitstein on Shamarpa's website

To verify the Tulkus' authenticity is certainly a problem, but first of all to the Tibetans, and the problem here lies more with the Tulku's own organisation, the so-called *lhabrang*, that resembles a company or corporation. The lhabrang is formed in order to support the activity of the Tulku on a practical level, and to administer the property and wealth of the Tulku. When a Tulku dies, the most important job for the lhabrang is to find the reincarnation of the Tulku. The most important issue for us in the West, is to verify the authenticity of the Dharma-transmission and to observe, whether the Tulku behaves as a real Bodhisattwa or not. The most important function of a Tulku anywhere is, that he or she in the right and best way carries the perfect transmission of Dharma from Buddha Sakyamuni himself, master the Dharma and transmit it to willing trainees, that also are able to master the transmission.

Tulkus are not just anybody. They all have a good upbringing and education and are normally found with several of the so-called *Buddha-marks* on their bodies even as very small children. Those Buddha-marks are physical signs that in both *Ayurveda* and the *Tantras* are characterised as physical expressions of spiritual qualities. Actually, these Buddha-marks are indeed interesting for the future. If the Tulku system is to become reformed in order to prevent lies and manipulations, it is imaginable that we no longer should be looking for a definite reincarnation but rather the most suited, that manifests inborn marks of a true Bodhisattwa. If these Buddha-marks have general validity and are free from simple convention and old custom, then it is possible to find and describe the talents and abilities of even very small children, before they themselves are able to show and demonstrate them. A reformation of the Tulku system though, may take very long time, because the Tibetans are very conservative about their great Lamas. We Westerners cannot institute any new procedure, because for many years yet to come, we will be completely dependent on the Tibetans to hold and master the transmission of Dharma. Without the Tibetans, the Karma Kagyü tradition will simply vanish from the West. We can only keep our own kitchen clean.

Rumtek Monastery and a conclusion

A very prolonged lawsuit about the control of Rumtek monastery in Sikkim have to some degree clarified the legal status in India. The suit has been in progress since 1997. Never the less, it is still Situpa's organisation that illegally occupies

Rumtek monastery, though the Shamarpa and the administration of the 16th Karmapa (*Karmapa Charitable Trust, the officially recorded Karmapa lhabrang in India*) won in the courts. *The monks of the 16th Karmapa have in fact been homeless ever since 1993, when supporters of Situpa illegally, violently and forcefully evicted them from the Rumtek monastery.* The lawsuit have dragged on for many years in Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. An appeal to the High Court in New Delhi was won by the Shamarpa and Karmapa Charitable Trust, where after the suit has to reopen in the Sikkim court. Here it is being delayed by the other part in the suit and the political establishment in Sikkim, including the court itself. Therefore, the Sikkim court as well as Shamarpa and the Karmapa Charitable Trust wish to have the suit transported to a court of law in West Bengal, a neighbouring union-state of India, that seems less biased for all. Anyway, no matter how the suit develops, it is very interesting. The two Karmapas have not yet met, even though they both live in India and may be the best persons to mediate the controversy.

NEW: (The two Karmapas met for the first time in October 2018 somewhere in France. They met to get to know each other and explore ways to bring the Karma Kagyü tradition together again. So far, this is just a beginning, and we do not know where this will lead. Read the paper on:

www.tilogaard.dk/english/Two_Karmapas_met_in_France_October_2018.pdf.

In October 2019, they met again. This time they composed a long life prayer for the new 15th Shamarpa, Thaye Dorje's son. Read about it here:

www.tilogaard.dk/english/Shamar_Mipham_Gargyi_Wangchuk_Rinpotje_approved_by_both_Karmapas_oct_2019.pdf)

Do not let confusion take hold of you. The Karma Kagyü tradition have simply branched out in two organisations of different reasons, but they are both the carriers of the same tradition, learning and training systems. That is all very genuine, original and effective. These organisations do only exist in order to propagate the transmission - not to compete, nor to fight. There are good Lamas and Lopöns (*Sanskrit: Acharya, an academic master degree*) within both branches of Karma Kagyü. There are also villains everywhere in the world and not only within just one of the branches of Karma Kagyü. Still, we wait on satisfactory information about the history of the ramification itself, and about Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje in particular.

We should not be surprised to find dirty politics within religious traditions. They are like all other societies prone to quests for power, so we should prevent the power-hungry from being able to control everything in the very way, that we organise ourselves. The answer to the Karmapa controversy is to decentralise everything and spread all kinds of power structures, so decisions can only be made by consensus of many. The guiding principle should be that of transparency, power-sharing and easy ways of removing various kinds of leadership. We need check and balances and much more accountability on all levels. The spiritual directorship must stay with the Tulkus and the Khenpos (Sanskrit: Pandit, an academic doctor degree). In the future the Tulku tradition have to be reformed, when the Tibetans eventually come to understand the need for it.

The legend about the two Karmapas is now awaiting that the court suit concerning Rumtek Monastery will reach a verdict, before a dialogue can start, I presume. The story about the finding of Ogyen Thrinley Dorje still awaits, that the necessary informations are made available. There are simply too many holes in it. It is not possible for me to obtain information from Chinese sources, though it would be really interesting to know, what knowledge the Chinese have of his appointment. The Tibetans may use this issue as an inspiration to build a critical investigative journalism. There is a astonishing lack of this in the Tibetan exile community. One may wonder, how the Tibetans will handle democracy in the future, when dissent from the mainstream fare so badly, as this controversy shows. The princely Tulku tradition seems doomed to vanish, unless some checks and balances are introduced to verify their authenticity. In the kingdom of Bhutan, the government have established a committee to oversee the appointment of Tulkus within Bhutan in order to counteract manipulations of both the establishment and the public.. Whether this is a good idea, is very doubtful. It does not seem to be the right thing to do for a worldly government.

The controversy is described in depth in the book: *Buddha's not smiling*, by Erik D. Curren.

There is a new book: *The Karmapa Prophecies* by Sussie Wong that describes how earlier Dharma-master's prophecies have been used in the art of distortion and manipulation of public opinion in order to promote the appointment of Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje. It describes in more detail those strange events.

Karmapa Ogyen Thrinley Dorje's organisation and supporters have also published some books about the separation, but I cannot recommend these, because they fail to be of quality and lack in accuracy. You may read them anyway to learn their points of view, or if you want to study manipulation of public opinion. All these books are tedious reading.

The latest developments in the lawsuit about Rumtek monastery can be obtained at:

www.tilogaard.dk/Investigations_into_the_Rumtek_case.pdf

The K. S. Rao's report, stating the interests of the Indian Government in the matter, can be found at:

www.tilogaard.dk/K_Shreedhar_Rao_s_report_on_Rumtek_-_1998.pdf.

The report from the Swiss magazine 'Market:'

www.tilogaard.dk/Market_ch_Buddhist_soft_power_30_May_2014_EN_Final_V4_.pdf

Other documents in this matter may be found at:

www.tilogaard.dk/english/html/sitemap.html

and at: www.tilogaard.dk/english/html/download.html

This paper was originally written in 2009, but has been updated along the way. The latest additions are put into brackets including the new information about the Chinese influences. This has been done in order to keep the original flow of the story running.

Read also about Ogyen Dorje being accused of rape and faced with a legal claim for paternity and alimony in Canada: www.tilogaard.dk/english/The-alternative-or-Chinese-Karmapa-Ogyen-Dorje-accused-of-rape.pdf (2021 - 2022).