

**RESTORING A LOST LINEAGE: REINVENTING THE KARMA KAGYU  
SCHOLASTIC TRADITION OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM IN-EXILE POST-1959**

by

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## Abstract

In both popular and academic discourse, Karma Kagyu Tibetan Buddhism is known for its meditation practices and sometime is considered anti-scholastic. However, I claim that the Karma Kagyu does have a historical scholastic lineage and that the Sixteenth Karmapa attempted to revive it during the twentieth century. This thesis is a critical analysis of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition from the medieval period to the present day. Throughout I adhere to the cross-cultural and comparative concept of “scholasticism” as defined by José Cabezón, and *khepa* as discussed by Sakya Pandita (1182-1251). *Khepa (mkhas pa)* is a crucial but ambiguous Tibetan term that includes meanings of “scholarship” and “scholasticism.”

The history of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition can be broken into three periods: an early period of invention, a middle period of decline and loss, and a recent period of revitalization. The Third Karmapa (1303-1339) established a formal academic tradition during the fourteenth century and this tradition declined by the seventeenth century under the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). This decline was a result of the Tibetan Civil War between the Ü and Tsang regions of central Tibet and was perpetuated by a hegemonic Buddhist sectarian ideology that suppressed non-Geluk scholastics.

This history explains why there are so few Karma Kagyu scholars and monastic institutes, or *shédra*, in-exile post-1959. It also highlights the work of the Sixteenth Karmapa (1924-1981) to restore the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition and hybridize it with modern curricula and educational institutions during this same period but itself began to decline in 1993, negatively influenced by both the Seventeenth Karmapa succession controversy and a strong antagonism between Karma Kagyu monasticism and scholasticism. This latter tension is embodied by the difficult relations between Rumtek Monastery and Rumtek Shédra. My analysis of the Sixteenth Karmapa’s efforts to revive the scholastic tradition in-exile rely to some extent on a positive understanding of the theoretical framework of *The Invention of Tradition* (1983) by

Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in which “invention” is not a deceptive act but a creative hybrid of old and new.

## **Lay Summary**

This thesis casts new light on the scholastic lineage of the Karma Kagyu School, a sub-sect of Tibetan Buddhism, well-known for its meditation practices but not for its scholastic training. This Karma Kagyu scholastic lineage began in medieval Tibet, was lost for centuries, and finally revitalized by the Sixteenth Karmapa in-exile post-1959. A historical account elucidates the turbulent journey of Karma Kagyu scholasticism in the past, present, and its future direction as well. It is hoped that major research findings in this thesis can be used for the sustainability and development of the tradition by improving the existing Karma Kagyu scholastic system, and might assist Karma Kagyu leaders in organizing monastic institutes or shédra. Such development should make monastic education compatible with a mainstream educational paradigm, so that monastics from younger generations, mainly in the Himalaya region, receive an timely and appropriate education.

## **Preface**

This thesis is the original, unpublished, and independent work of the author, Chulthim Gurung.

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## List of Abbreviations

ARF	Audio Recording File
BDRC	Buddhist Digital Resource Center
CGT	Chulthim Gurung's Translation (refers to translations prepared by the author)
CIHTS	Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies
HTL	The Tibetan & Himalayan Library
JKLT	Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye
KKST	Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition
KKSTB	Karma Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism
KSNI	Legal name (India): Karma Shri Nalanda Institute Tibetan name: Pal Karmae Nalanada Chethoe Shedra Chenmo (Wylie: <i>dpal kar ma'i n'landra ches mtho'i bshad dra chen mo</i> ) Popular name: Rumtek Shédra
NJ	The Nalandakirti Journal
RDCC	Legal name (India): Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center Tibetan name: Pal Karmae Densa Shedrup Chokhor Ling (Wylie: <i>dpal karma'i gdan sa bshad sgrub chos 'khor gling</i> ) Popular name: Rumtek Monastery
SSU	Sampurnanand Sanskrit University
TBRC	Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center
TOK	<i>The Treasury of Knowledge, 8 Volumes</i> . 2003-2010. First Jamgon Kongtrul (Lodro Thaye). Translated from Tibetan to English by Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group. Snow Lion Publications. (It is expected that the translation will comprise 10 volumes when complete.)

## Glossary

### Tibetan phonetics and Wylie

### English translations and definitions

Chögyüshi (*chos brgyud bzhi*):

The four schools of Tibetan Buddhism: Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu, and Geluk. This is one way to classify Tibetan Buddhist sects.

*drasa* (*grwa sa*):

Buddhist monastic universities or institutes in the Geluk School. Generally, the institute provides primary to master level of traditional Buddhist education. Some equate the highest degree to Ph.D.

*drikdra* (*sgrigs grwa*):

“Disciplined Community”; The term is used specifically in the Karma Kagyu School to refer a Tantric institute such as at Rumtek Monastery. Geluk School uses the term *Gyudra* to refer the same Tantric institute in Tibetan Buddhism

*dupgyü* (*sdrub brgyud*)

“Meditation Tradition”; meditation or practice lineage. Transmission of Buddhist Tantras, associated with empowerment and oral transmission of the texts received from a master. A part of the institutional Tibetan Buddhism, textual authorization, and authentication.

*Dulwa* (*'dul ba*)

*Vinaya* in Sanskrit. The literal translation into English is “to lead out” or “to tame.” It is also a key topic of the Buddha’s teaching being one of the three primary textual collections of Buddha’s words (*Tripitaka* or “Three Baskets”) and constitutes Buddhist moral and ethics.

Gaden Phodrang (*dga' ldan pho drang*)

It is a name of the traditional Tibetan Government given by the Great Fifth Dalai Lama after he assumed the political and religious power of Tibet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The name was primarily given for the Second Dalai Lama’s house in the Drepung monastery in Tibet but later used for the government.

*gönpa* (*dgon pa*)

A place of solitude, usually a mile away from a village. In religion, the term is commonly translated as a monastery.

*gyüpa* (*brgyud pa*)

“Tradition”; There are various English translations for this term: lineage, tradition, transmission, heredity, and offspring are common ones. In religious studies, many reliable dictionaries translate it as “lineage of

transmission.” In order to best capture the history of scholasticism in the Kagyu School, I translate the term as “tradition.”

*shédra (bshad grwa):*

Buddhist monastic institutes, monastic colleges or commentarial schools; The name is used in the Nyingma, Sakya and Kagyu School. Generally, such an institute provides from primary to master level of the traditional Tibetan Buddhist education. There is no centralized education system within the institutes.

*shégyü (bshad brgyud)*

“Scholastic Tradition”; scholastic transmission or doctrinal lineage. The uninterrupted transmission of Buddhist philosophical explanations of the Sutras received from a master. A part of the institutional Tibetan Buddhism, textual authorization, and authentication.

Tsuklagkhang (*gtsug lag khang*)

A traditional place where the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha dwell or where the Buddha’s words and commentaries are being contemplated, such as Nalanda Vihara in India or Samye (*bsam yas*) Monastery in Tibet.

## Notes on Translation, Transliteration, and Conventions

Most of the key Buddhist terms in English are drawn from the treatise, *The Treasury of Knowledge (shes bya mdzod)* (TOK), translated into ten volumes by the Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group between 1993 to 2007. I translate selected parts of Tibetan texts where no English translation is available or where I prefer a different translation. My translations are marked with CGT (Chulthim Gurung's Translation). This includes the memorandum booklet of the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute, which is an important primary source for Chapter Three. Quotes from the memorandum are followed by numbers and their Wylie transliterations can be found in Appendix Five. I have italicized Tibetan book and long document titles.

*Transliteration:* Tibetan terms are first given phonetically using The Tibetan & Himalayan Library (THL) conventions,<sup>1</sup> such as *shédra*. At first occurrence of the term, the Wylie transliteration is also given in parentheses, such as (*bshad grwa*). Some technical Tibetan terms might be new to many readers. To make them familiar, a separate glossary was created with the original word using Wylie, and along with the translation and definition. The names of certain people and organizations are long, and to shorten them, I have created a separate chart of name abbreviations. Both glossary and the abbreviation chart are at the beginning of the thesis.

*Proper nouns:* Place and organization names in Tibetan and Sanskrit are given phonetically, again using THL conventions, except where an organization already has a standard English spelling, e.g., Nalanda Vihara. I have referred to monastic institutes' certificates in this thesis, some of which are available online in the public domain, and others which I have individual permission to use here. They are marked as such and shown in the appendix with numbers, for example, Appendix One. Sources of these certificates are given in the appendices.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.thlib.org/reference/>

*Historical figures and dates:* I have provided a separate List of Historical Figures mentioned in this thesis, along with their birth and death years, in the front matter. Their names are given as: (1) honorific, ordinal public title, followed by (2) full name and (3) dates in parentheses: for example, “the Sixteenth Karmapa (Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, 1924-1981).” Wylie transliteration of their names only appears in the List of Historical Figures. The dates of the people discussed in thesis derive from a comparison of multiple sources. The dates of Karma Kagyu masters are based on book *Karmapa: Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (1976), checked against the official websites of the two Seventeenth Karmapas, since most of the people named herein are Karma Kagyu masters.<sup>2</sup> Other figures are sourced from *The Treasury of Lives*,<sup>3</sup> and I used the *Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary* as a primary source to reconfirm dates.

*Bibliographic entries:* Entries are arranged into two groups by language, Tibetan and English, in that order. Although Tibetan texts are major sources for this thesis, I consulted *The Treasury of Knowledge* in English translation. There are three types of books and articles that were used in the thesis. First, compositions written in Tibetan by traditional Tibetan scholars, primarily monastics, e.g., the First Jamgon Kongtrul. Second, traditional Tibetan texts available in English translation by contemporary scholars, e.g., *Gateway to Knowledge (mkhas 'jug)* by Erik Schmidt. Third, secondary sources written by contemporary scholars in English, e.g., *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping* by Georges Dreyfus. I use the *Chicago Manual of Style, 17<sup>th</sup> Edition* Author-Date format and added page numbers so readers can easily find the original source.

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<sup>2</sup> The website of Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje is <https://kagyuoffice.org/kagyu-lineage/> and for Karmapa Thaye Dorje is <https://www.karmapa.org/karma-kagyu/lives/> (originally accessed May 18, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> (<https://treasuryoflives.org/people>)

## List of Historical Figures

Incarnation Ordinal	Full Name (Wylie)	Dates	Years Lived
Marpa	Chökyi Lodro ( <i>mar pa chos kyi blo gros</i> )	1000 – 1081	(81)
Milarepa	Zhepa Dorje ( <i>bzhad pa rdo rje</i> )	1040 – 1123	(83)
Gampopa	Sonam Rinchen ( <i>bsod nam rin chen</i> )	1079 – 1153	(74)

## Karmapas

1 <sup>st</sup>	Dusum Khyenpa ( <i>dus gsum mkyen pa</i> )	1110 – 1193	(83)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Karma Pakshi ( <i>karma pak+shi</i> )	1204 – 1283	(79)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Rangjung Dorje ( <i>rang byung rdo rje</i> )	1284 – 1339	(55)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Rolpe Dorje ( <i>rol pa'i rdo rje</i> )	1340 – 1383	(43)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Deshin Shekpa ( <i>de bzhin gshegs pa</i> )	1384 – 1415	(31)
6 <sup>th</sup>	Thongwa Donden ( <i>mthong ba don ldan</i> )	1416 – 1453	(37)
7 <sup>th</sup>	Chodrak Gyatso ( <i>chos grags rgya mtsho</i> )	1454 – 1506	(52)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Mikyo Dorje ( <i>mi bskyod rdo rje</i> )	1507 – 1554	(47)
9 <sup>th</sup>	Wangchuk Dorje ( <i>dbang phyug rdo rje</i> )	1556 – 1603	(47)
10 <sup>th</sup>	Choying Dorje ( <i>chos dbying rdo rje</i> )	1604 – 1674	(70)
11 <sup>th</sup>	Yeshe Dorje ( <i>ye shes rdo rje</i> )	1676 – 1702	(26)
12 <sup>th</sup>	Jangchup Dorje ( <i>byang chub rdo rje</i> )	1703 – 1732	(29)
13 <sup>th</sup>	Dudhul Dorje ( <i>bdud 'dul rdo rje</i> )	1733 – 1797	(64)
14 <sup>th</sup>	Thekchok Dorje ( <i>theg mchog rdo rje</i> )	1798 – 1868	(70)
15 <sup>th</sup>	Khakyab Dorje ( <i>mkha' khyab rdo rje</i> )	1871 – 1922	(51)

16 <sup>th</sup>	Rigpe Dorje	<i>(rig pa'i rdo rje)</i>	1924 – 1981	(57)
17 <sup>th</sup>	Ogyen Trinley Dorje	<i>(ao rgyan phrin las rdo rje)</i>	1985 – present	
17 <sup>th</sup>	Thaye Dorje	<i>(mtha' yas rdo rje)</i>	1983 – present	

### Other related Figures

	Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsesn	<i>(kun dga' rgyal mtshan)</i>	1182 – 1251	(69)
	Drogon Chogyal Phakpa	<i>('gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags pa)</i>	1235 – 1280	(45)
	Tasi jangchub Gyaltsen	<i>(ta si byang phyub rgyal tshan)</i>	1302 – 1363	(61)
	Rongton Sheja Kunrig	<i>(Rong ston shes bya kun rig)</i>	1367 – 1449	(82)
	Gorampa Sonam Sengye	<i>(go rams pa bsod nams seng ge)</i>	1429 – 1489	(60)
	Je Tsongkhapa Losang Dakpa	<i>(blo bzang drags pa)</i>	1357 – 1419	(62)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Dalai Lama Sonam Gyatso	<i>(bsod nam rgya mtsho)</i>	1543 – 1588	(45)
4 <sup>th</sup>	Dalai Lama Yonten Gyatso	<i>(yon tan rgya mtsho)</i>	1589 – 1617	(28)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Dalai Lama Lozang Gyatso	<i>(blo bzang rgya mtsho)</i>	1617 – 1682	(65)
13 <sup>th</sup>	Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso	<i>(thub bstan rgya mtsho)</i>	1876 – 1933	(57)
14 <sup>th</sup>	Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso	<i>(bstan 'zin rgya mtsho)</i>	1935 – present	
Mongol	Gushri Khan	<i>(gu shr'i khan)</i>	1582 – 1655	(73)
Ü	Desi Sonam Chopal	<i>(bsod nam chos dpal)</i>	---? – d.1658	
	Tsang Desi Phuntsok Namgyal	<i>(phun tshogs rnam rgyal)</i>	1587 – 1620	(33)
	Tsang Desi Tenkyong Wangpo	<i>(bstan skyong dbang po)</i>	1606 – 1642	(36)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Pawo Tsuklag Trengwa	<i>(gtsug lag phreng ba)</i>	1504 – 1566	(62)
6 <sup>th</sup>	Shamar Chokyi Wangchuk	<i>(chos kyi dbang phyug)</i>	1584 – 1630	(46)

7 <sup>th</sup>	Shamar Yeshe Nyingpo	( <i>ye shes snying po</i> )	1631 – 1694	(63)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Shamar Palchen C. Dondup	( <i>dpal chen chos kyi don drub</i> )	1695 – 1732	(39)
14 <sup>th</sup>	Shamar Chokyi Lodro	( <i>chos kyi blo gros</i> )	1952 – 2014	(62)
8 <sup>th</sup>	Situ Chokyi Junge	( <i>chos kyi 'byung gnas</i> )	1700 – 1774	(74)
11 <sup>th</sup>	Situ Pema Wangchok	( <i>pad ma dbang mchog</i> )	1886 – 1952	(66)
12 <sup>th</sup>	Situ Pema Nyinje Wangpo	( <i>pad ma nyin byed dbang po</i> )	1954 – present	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye	( <i>blo dro mtha' yas</i> )	1813 – 1899	(86)
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Jamgon Kontrul Khyentse Woser	( <i>mkhyen btse 'od zer</i> )	1902 – 1952	(50)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Senge	( <i>blo dros seng ge</i> )	1954 – 1992	(38)
5 <sup>th</sup>	Gyalstap Drakpa Choyang	( <i>grags pa chos dbyang</i> )	1618 – 1658	(40)
12 <sup>th</sup>	Gyaltsap Drakpa Migyur Gocha	( <i>grags pa mi 'gyur do cha</i> )	1954 – present	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso	( <i>rnam rgyal rgya mstho</i> )	1846 – 1912	(66)
	Khenpo Zhenphen Nangwa	( <i>gzhan phan snang ba</i> )	1871 – 1927	(56)
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Drukgyal Jigme D. Wangchuck	( <i>'jigs med rdo rje dbang phyug</i> )	1929 – 1972	(43)
12 <sup>th</sup>	Chogyal Palden D. Namgyal	( <i>dpal ldan don drub rnam rgyal</i> )	1923 – 1982	(59)

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Library for providing me the Rumtek Shédra's *Memorandum Booklet*, access to the *Nalandakirti Journal*, and for allowing me to use its library during my time in India.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to the swift resolution of the Karma Kagyu controversy and further development of the monastic education system in the Karma Kagyu School.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis seeks an answer to the question I have asked for many years: Why there are so few Karma Kagyu scholars and monastic institutes or *shédra* (*bshad drwa*) in-exile post-1959? The Karma Kagyu sect is currently the largest among the different Kagyu schools of Tibetan Buddhism, but it has very few central monastic institutes.<sup>4</sup> This state implicit in the popular and academic discourse that assumes Karma Kagyu is generally more focused on meditation, and in part overly relies on Karma Kagyu hagiographic emphasis on practice—such as Milarepa’s (Zhepa Dorje, 1040-1123) solitary and ascetic path. However, we know that the First Karmapa (Dusum Khyenpa, 1110-1193) was both a meditation practitioner as well as a scholar. What happened to scholasticism in the Karma Kagyu and what is its status today?

The First Jamgon Kongtrul (Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, 1813-1899), for example, understood the whole of Tibetan monasticism, including the Karma Kagyu, as having two major transmissions: the “scholastic tradition” *shégyü* (*bshad brgyud*), and the “meditation tradition” *dupgyü* (*sdrub brgyud*) (2010, 315). Throughout this thesis I adhere to the cross-cultural and comparative concept of “scholasticism” as defined by José Cabezón (1998), and *khepa* (*mkhas pa*) as discussed by Sakya Pandita (Kunga Gyaltsen 1182-1251). *Khepa* is a crucial but ambiguous Tibetan term that includes meanings of “scholarship” and “scholasticism.” Despite discourses that label Karma Kagyu Buddhism as anti-scholastic, like the First Jamgon Kontrul, I claim that the Karma Kagyu does have a historical scholastic lineage and that the Sixteenth Karmapa (Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, 1924-1981) attempted to revive it during the twentieth century. This thesis is a critical analysis of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition from the medieval period to the present day. I examine its religious, social, and political involvement in Tibetan history and then connect it to the twentieth century when the Sixteenth Karmapa’s

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<sup>4</sup> The monastic institute here means a government recognized institute which is dedicated for the systematic Tibetan Buddhist philosophy studies.

reconstructed and reinvented the tradition in-exile post-1959 by hybridizing it with a modern education system, adopting practices ranging from administration to curriculum (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche 1989).

For a short period in-exile, the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition was reconstructed, producing many young scholars. Yet it has stagnated in the decades following 1993. I postulate that the decline of the present Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition is rooted in two major causes. The first is the internal Tibetan civil war caused by sectarian conflicts that occurred in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, mainly between Kagyu and Geluk School. The second cause is related to Karma Kagyu monasticism that prioritizes Tantric rituals over the Buddhist philosophy studies. The revitalization of the scholastic tradition in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a result of the Sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa (Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, 1924-1981) efforts to maintain good relations with the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's (Tenzin Gyatso, 1935-present) Government, both in Tibet and later in-exile. However, despite those efforts, the scholastic tradition was once again fading away after a decade of its reconstruction due to the close alliance between Rumtek Monastery and Rumtek Shédra.

Traditionally, a Buddhist monk must accept the education that the monastery has to offer. From personal experience growing up in Nepal, the Karma Kagyu School did not have many traditional monastic institutes for higher education. There was only one institute at that time for the entire school: the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute also known as Rumtek Shédra. This institute was later affected by the Sixteenth Karmapa's reincarnation controversy (Ecclesiastical Department 2016, 71). Despite having many research papers on the scholasticism of Geluk, Sakya, and Nyingma schools, Karma Kagyu scholasticism has remained unstudied. The aim of this thesis is to elucidate the missing Karma Kagyu piece of Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism.

Buddhism in Tibet before 1959 was flourishing, but it was forever changed by the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) invasion of the land. Following the Tibetan uprising in Lhasa

in 1959, the CCP applied more aggressive force to suppress monastics and laypeople alike, which resulted in the mass destruction of Tibetan religion, culture, society, politics, and economics (Goldstein and Kapstein 1998). Nevertheless, the old monastic system was successfully re-established in-exile and, for a period, flourished. Led by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and other spiritual leaders who managed to escape from Chinese rule, Tibetans in-exile began the process of re-establishing old institutions in order to preserve their religion, politics, and culture. In 1960, the Indian government provided an establishment (a former British cantonment and prison) in Buxa Duar, West Bengal for the Tibetan monastic community to establish a Buddhist institute (Dreyfus 2003, 52; Lempert 2012, 22). This is the place where the first major monastic leaders and scholars from Tibet were recruited—the Sixteenth Karmapa was among them.

In the early 1980s, other Tibetan Buddhist schools successfully established several monastic institutes in-exile. For the Geluk School, Sera, Drepung, and Gaden were reconstructed to be as close as possible to the originals in Tibet (Lempert 2012, 155). The Nyingma School also began a project to restore its monastic education by establishing Ngagyur Nyingma Institute in South India (Pearcey, 2015, 455). Likewise, the Sakya School built institutes such as Sakya College in Dehradun and Dzongsar Institute in Himachal Pradesh, both in Northern India. However, after the outbreak of Karmapa controversy at Rumtek Shédra at the beginning of the 1990s, the future Karma Kagyu monastic students, such as myself, and of Karma Kagyu education became uncertain.

## **1.1 The Arrival of Buddhism in Tibet**

Buddhism that was brought in-exile by Tibetans has a long and complex history. Different sutras and commentaries provide different overviews of the Buddhist teachings. According to the Indian master Vasubandhu, the essence of the teachings can be encapsulated in two categories:

(1) “scripture” (*lung*) and (2) “realization” (*rtogs pa*) (de la Vallée Poussin and Sangpo 2012, 2436). The teachings were further classified into “three baskets” (*sde snod gsum*) and three *yānas* or vehicles to address the diverse abilities and interests of practitioners: Śrāvakayāna, Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Bodhisattvayāna (Shamar Rinpoche and Draszczyk 2018, 9). Vasubandhu’s two categories of “adhering to the Buddha’s teachings” (*sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa*), together with the schema of the three vehicles, came to Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and had fully matured by the 13<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, Buddhist scholasticism emerged as well as an institutional form of Buddhism later called the “Four Schools of Tibetan Buddhism”: Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Geluk (Dreyfus 2003, 25; Thinley 1980, viii). This four schools schema is the most widely used in contemporary Tibetan Buddhism.

The First Jamgon Kongtrul, the famous Tibetan Buddhist polymath, believed the way in which the Tibetan Buddhism was understood—in terms of “four schools”—was not satisfactory. Therefore, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, he synthesized and recategorized Tibetan Buddhism in a treatise entitled, *The Treasury of Knowledge (shes bya mdzod)* (TOK). In this treatise, he rearranged the order of Tibetan Buddhism within two types of tradition: “Ten Foremost Pillars of Scholastic Transmission” (*bshad brgyud ’degs pai ka chen bcu*) and “The Eight Major Chariots of Meditation Lineage” (*sgrub brgyud kyi shing rta chen po bgrad*) (TOK 2010, 4:315-18). This ideology understands Tibetan Buddhism in a way similar to Vasubandhu. He understood the the Kagyu<sup>5</sup> scholastic tradition as being its “scholastic transmission.”

The two traditions are each practiced in different types of monasteries: tantric institutes (*drikdra*) on the one hand, and scholastic institutes (*shédra*) on the other. These two different institutions of learning have existed since the pre-modern period. However, the Karma Kagyu had been without a *shédra* for many centuries. In the early 1960s, the Sixteenth Karmapa

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<sup>5</sup> Although JKLT writes Kagyu in his commentary the actual explanation includes only Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition but not others.

established *drikdra* in Rumtek, Sikkim. Ideally, each of the two traditions would have their own monastic facility. The Geluk School also divides its institutions of learning into two types, *drasa* (grwa sa) and *gyudra* (*rgyud drwa*). These two facets of monastic learning are not only found in Tibetan Buddhism but in other traditions as well. In Japanese Zen Buddhism, the two are combined within one monastic institution: Victor Hori (1994, 5) describes the monastic educational training as comprising both “ritual formalism” and “mystical insight.” This is similar to the Tibetan differentiation between *shédra* and *drikdra*, although the physical and educational independence for Geluk and for Karma Kagyu (the Sixteenth Karmapa planned to establish a separate *drikdra shédra* in Rumtek) is an interesting difference.

In a Karma Kagyu *drikdra*, this training method is called, “transmission through seeing (imitation)” (*mthong ba brgyud pa'i phyag len*). The learning system in a tantric institute (*drikdra*) is similar to what Hori describes as “ritual formalism”: repeating and observing one’s teacher in pursuit of a mastery of ritual technique. In this type of learning, memorization is more important than understanding meaning (1994, 6). On the other hand, there is the scholastic institute (*shédra*), which specializes in Buddhist philosophical training. This institution is dedicated to “insight” based on an understanding of ideas and argument; this insight is often reached—as Hori describes (1994, 7)—through a process of memorization and repetition, but the insight itself is more important than the repeated, ritual action. What Zen Buddhist monasteries do in one institution, Tibetan Buddhism splits into two. Although recitation and rote memorization are part of *shédra* training, it is meant to be a learning process that leads to comprehension and the most important skill of analysis.

The differentiation of the Buddha’s teachings into two distinct categories, and situating them within two different types of monasteries, provides a concise and complete model for Tibetan Buddhist education. Although the Kagyu appears non-scholastic today, this is not simply a sectarian difference. According to contemporary scholars such as George Dreyfus (2003, 27),

one needs to view Tibetan Buddhism within its context and not as confined to a religious sphere. Likewise, the “four schools” are not simply sectarian organizations or markers of doctrinal difference, but also name Tibetan sociopolitical institutions. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> century, those schools allied with Tibet’s political sphere have had a mutually beneficial relationship with power. The Kagyu and Geluk schools became strong contenders for control of the Tibet state in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which resulted into a civil war, Geluk victory, and suppression of Kagyu educational institutions. The First Jamgon Kongtrul was attempting to bring a suppressed tradition of scholastic training back into the Kagyu school.

Most of the Kagyu history books identify the Fifth Karmapa as the greatest religious leader in Tibet in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Yongle Emperor asked the Fifth Karmapa, “There are various religious sects in Tibet. It will cause dispute in the future.... To prevent that, just like, Mongols and Sakya, I will unify all sects into one, that would be your way so you can turn the great wheel of Dharma” (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 543) (See Appendix Five, CGT-1). But, the Fifth Karmapa disagreed, giving this reason, “One sect would not train and benefit all sentient beings, the help of Buddha manifests in diverse religious paths accordingly to one’s disposition and wish, therefore, to practice one’s own sect sincerely is the satisfactory way to engage with the Buddha Dharma” (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 543) (continuation of CGT-1). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the Mongols made a similar offer of unification to Geluk leaders, it appears that the Geluk approved. They saw advantage in gaining sectarian power and established a theocratic state, subjugating the other schools, particularly the Jonang and Karma Kagyu (Lempert 2012, 46). The scholastic tradition (*shédra*) of the Karma Kagyu school was not fully restored until the 1960s.

## 1.2 Outline of the Karma Kagyu School

Karma Kagyu is one of the sub-schools of Kagyu Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Kagyu school was founded by Marpa Lotsawa (Chökyi Lodro, 1000-1081)<sup>6</sup> or Marpa, the great translator. However, the great monastic tradition of the Kagyu school was developed by Gampopa (Sonam Rinchen, 1079-1153), who merged his monastic upbringing in the Kadam school with the Buddhist tantra<sup>7</sup> teachings such as *tummo* (*gtum mo*) or “inner-heat” instructions he received from Milarepa. Since then, the members of this school shifted from lay celibates to monastics who integrated both scholasticism and meditation in their path of practice (Smith 2001, 42). There are four major and eight minor schools (*che bdzi chung brgyad*) in the Kagyu school.<sup>8</sup> The four majors are Phagdu, Kamtsang, Barom and Tsalpa (*phag dru, kam tshang, 'ba' rom, tshal pa*) and the eight minors are Drigung, Taklung, Drugpa, Yasang, Trophu, Shugsep, Yelba and Martsang Kagyu (*'bri gung, stag lung, 'brug pa, gya' bzang, khro phu, shug gseb, yel ba, smar tshang*) (Situ Belo and Yugyal 2010, 1:100; Smith 2001, 39).

Despite their historical proliferation inside Tibet, some of the institutional forms of Kagyu schools, i.e., Karma Kagyu, Drigung, Drugpa, Taklung and Martsang, only survive in present day. One should not construe that minor implies a smaller or lesser group. The four major and eight minor schools are based on the chronological order of their origin and identify

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<sup>6</sup> Cecile Ducher did PhD on Marpa's life. She gave some options for the his birth and death years and above date is the closest one as she assumes (Ducher 2017, 302).

<sup>7</sup> The Buddhist tantra in this context means the secret teachings that Marpa brought from India to Tibet. In general, Tantra is a Sanskrit term commonly used by both Buddhist and Hindu. The Tibetan term for tantra is *gsang sngags* or *rgyud sde*. Alternative translation for Buddhist Tantra in English is found as esoteric Buddhism which is too broad in my opinion, because shamanism can be an esoteric practice in contemporary studies but not tantra practice in the traditional Tibetan perspective. Thus, I deployed the term tantra in this thesis in the Tibetan Buddhist context.

<sup>8</sup> I used English terms *major and minor* to distinguish the two sets of Kagyu lineages by following the original Tibetan words *che* and *chung*. That is to say that some contemporary translators translated them into English terms *primary* and *secondary*, or *main* and *additional* lineages.

whether they were the direct or indirect descendents of Gampopa. All of the eight minor schools were directly descended from the Phagdu Kagyu (Quintman 2004, 1:48).

The First Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa founded the Karma Kagyu (*karma bka' brgyud*) or Kamtsang Kagyu (*kam tshang bka' brgyud*) in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Tibet. The name of the school was thus formed after the names of the place *Kam* and the person *Karma*. The First Karmapa received all sutra and tantra teachings from various masters. At the age of thirty, he eventually met Gampopa in Central Tibet. He received all major instructions and trained under his strict guidance for some years and became one of the Gampopa's best students. At the time of departure from the monastery, his teacher Gampopa suggested that he meditate at the Kampo Gangra (*kam po gangs ra*) Mountain in Eastern Tibet to better his future activities of propagating the Dharma.

In addition to the important Kagyu teachings of the Six Yogas of Naropa (*nwa ro chos drug*) and Mahamudra (*phyag rgya chen po*), Karmapa also received secret instruction called "Union of Coherent Existence of Generating Stage" (*bskyed rim lhan gcig skyed sbyor*) and "Non-Dual Practice of Energy and Mind" (*rzogs rim rlung sems dbyer med*) from Gampopa (Pawo 2003, 1:862). These two secret instructions later became a landmark for the Karma Kagyu school that traditionally passes instruction secretly from master to a single worthy student (*chig grgyud*), who would be the successor to the master. There are other tantric transmissions, such as the "Twelve Diverse Tantra" teachings which Marpa brought from India and were later unified into a single set called the *Tantric Treasury of Kagyu* (*bka' brgyud sngags mzod*) by the First Jamgon Kongtrul. This subject is further discussed in Chapter Four, which details the Karma Kagyu monasticism and its tantric training. However, the ways in which the First Karmapa was trained proves that, since the beginning, Karma Kagyu was structured with both a scholastic tradition and a meditation tradition (Pietcsh 2000, 1287).

As Tibetan Buddhism in general, Karma Kagyu Scholastic institution is male-dominated. Some accounts show that there were around 10,000 Tibetan monks (Bernstorff and Welck 2003, 214) that have been forced into exile since 1959, By comparison, there are only 156 Tibetan nuns who reportedly managed to escape the Communist Chinese occupation of Tibet during that time (Mackenzie 2017, 69%).<sup>9</sup> Those nuns were scattered in different places throughout Nepal and India. Therefore, nunnery *shédra* are not included in this thesis due to the lack of sources to substantiate research. However, the Sixteenth Karmapa built a nunnery at Rumtek, Sikkim along with the male monastery. He is likely the first Tibetan lama to promote full ordination lineage for females in Tibetan Buddhism. He sent Freda Bedi (Sister Palmo) to Hong Kong for full Bikhuni vows in the Chinese tradition in 1971 (Mackenzie 2017, 77%). In line with his aspiration, the future development of the Karma Kagyu monastic education system should be developed equally for all genders and races.

### **1.3 The Sixteenth Karmapa and a New Chapter for the Karma Kagyu School**

The Sixteenth Karmapa's contribution to the Karma Kagyu school has been different from those of his predecessors. He successfully lifted the ban on the Karma Kagyu school imposed by the Tibetan Government in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and renewed the school's relationship with the Dalai Lama's Government. He firmly supported the Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Tibetans in the most difficult part of their history during the Chinese (CCP) invasion in Tibet in the early 1950s (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 3:570). All of this aided him as he reconstructed the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition.

The Sixteenth Karmapa (Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje) (August 14, 1924 – November 5, 1981) is the religious head of the Karma Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism and

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<sup>9</sup> Note that page numbering here goes with a percentage as an e-book citation, not by cardinal number.

the head of the overall Kagyu School in-exile since 1963, when he was elected at the first conference of Tibetan Buddhist leaders in Dharamsala (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 3:573). He represents the first official reincarnated lama of Tibet and the holder of the revered “Black Crown.” He was considered the reincarnation of the Fifteenth Karmapa (Khakhyab Dorje 1871-1922), and born on a full moon day in the Athup (*athub*) family at Denkhok (*ldan khog*) in the Derge Province of Eastern Tibet. On this auspicious day and place, the father Tsewang Phuntsok (*tshe dbang phun tshogs*) and mother Kalsang Chodron (*bskal bzang chos sgron*) gave birth to the Sixteenth Karmapa (Shamar Rinpoche 2013, 15). They had four sons and four daughters in total and he was the fifth.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the prophecy letter left by the Fifteenth Karmapa and the extraordinary signs and self-proclamation of a noble being, the boy was officially recognized as the reincarnation of the Fifteenth Karmapa. The Second Jamgon Kongtrul Palden Khyentse Ozer, the First Beru Khyentse Rinpoche,<sup>11</sup> the Eleventh Situ Pema Wangchok Gyalpo, and the Thirteen Dalai Lama (Representing the Government of Tibet) mutually agreed that the boy was the Sixteenth Karmapa and held an enthronement ceremony at Tsurphu (*mtshur phu*), the main seat of the Karmapas in Central Tibet. Subsequently, he proceeded with all the necessary ritual and philosophical training with various great masters from an early age. By the age of 18, the Sixteenth Karmapa had completed the majority of his monastic training and education. He began

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<sup>10</sup> The four daughters are Tsewang Dolkar, Tsewang Lhamo, Yangchen Dolkar (Topga Rinpoche’s mother) and Tsering Dolma. The four sons are Dzogchen Pönhop, Rigpe Dorje, Drilkar Tulku (Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche’s father) and Dozong Shapdung. The names of the Sixteenth Karmapa’s siblings were noted here based on the oral information given by his personal attendant, Solpon Tsultrim Namgyal. I included their names here because I could not find their names in most of the Sixteenth Karmapa’s hagiographies.

<sup>11</sup> Just a small note that although Gerd Bausch (2018) mentions in his book that the Beru Khyentse who played a significant role to recognize the Sixteenth Karmapa as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Beru Khyentse but historically he should be the 1<sup>st</sup> Beru Khyenste “Karma Jamyang Khyentse Ozer” since his previous life was the famous Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. <http://www.khyenkong-tharjay.org/bkr1.htm> (Accessed date: February 13, 2019).

traveling inside and outside Tibet, giving Dharma teachings and performing religious ceremonies.

In 1944, he traveled to Bhutan following an invitation from the Bhutanese royal family. He made similar tours to India, China, and Nepal in the following years (Thrangu and Tengye 2008, 344), combining the foreign tours with pilgrimage to sacred Buddhist sites. From his teen years, the Sixteenth Karmapa is said to have had visions of the future situation of Tibet and wrote a prophecy letter of future Tibet at the age of 16 (Wong 2010, 69). The Sixteenth Karmapa left Tibet on the 4<sup>th</sup> of February 1959 from Tsurphu and reached Bhutan around after a month. Soon after he reached there, the Sixteenth Karmapa was invited and offered a residence in Sikkim by its King Palden Dondrup Namgyal. He accepted the King's generous offer and journeyed to Sikkim for the settlement of his new residence at Rumtek. After reaching there in the end of the 1959, he began work on the monastery complex that was to be his new monastic seat. The construction began in 1962 and was completed in 1966.<sup>12</sup> During the time, Rumtek Monastery became the largest Tibetan monastery in-exile. A detailed account of the monastery is analyzed in Chapter Four.

The Sixteenth Karmapa's popularity was not limited to Sikkim and its neighbor states, (e.g., India, Nepal and Bhutan), but also expanded to the West. His activities throughout Europe and North America began in 1974. He was second in the Tibetan hierarchy, after the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, to officially receive the religious title of "His Holiness" from Pope Paul VI on 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1975 in Rome (Bausch 2018, 237). Since then, and until his final days, the Sixteenth Karmapa established more than one hundred Buddhist centers and monasteries all over the world. These centers and monasteries have now grown to over a thousand locations to practice meditation and learn Buddhism. At the same time, he was busy expanding the monastic centers

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<sup>12</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=399:history-of-the-complex&catid=95&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=399:history-of-the-complex&catid=95&Itemid=605&lang=en) (Accessed date: April 5, 2019)

at Rumtek and Delhi as places for academic training. He also continuously trained his close students, namely his four spiritual sons<sup>13</sup> along with most of today's prominent Karma Kagyu teachers. Although he represented Buddhism, he respected and supported the leaders of other religions, e.g., Hindus, Muslims and Christianity, and smaller-scale religions.

From his biographies, both textual and video<sup>14</sup>, we can see that the Sixteenth Karmapa was a charismatic and energetic Buddhist teacher who appeared to selflessly served humankind in addition to his Buddhist activities. Pope Paul VI states, "Like you [Karmapa] have conserved and promoted spiritual as well as moral values of humanity" (Kotwal 2013, 237). With his many accomplishments after only a short period in exile, the Sixteenth Karmapa died at age 58 on 5<sup>th</sup> of November 1981 at the American International Hospital, Zion, Illinois, Chicago, USA. His death was a great loss for the entire world as *Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy*, the Sixth President of India, stated in his condolence letter, "He was a saint with a touch of a divinity. His demise is a loss not only to Buddhists but also to humanity" (Kotwal 2013, 252). Among the Sixteenth Karmapa's major achievements, the reconstruction of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition brought positive change to the international Karma Kagyu communities by incorporating scholastic and modern Buddhist education into a school known for esoteric practices.

## **1.4 Traditional Approaches to Buddhist Scholasticism**

### **1.4.1 Religion and School**

To analyze the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition, it is essential to understand the general concept of *school*, *scholasticism*, and *scholar* because these three words are key terms in this thesis. They are connected in their word root *scholē* in Greek and *schola* in Latin.<sup>15</sup> First, I will briefly

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<sup>13</sup> Four spiritual sons (*rgyal ba yab sras zhi*) are Shamar Rinpoche, Situ Rinpoche, Jamgon Rinpoche, and Gyaltsap Rinpoche in this context. The list is changeable with time and contributions of an individual teacher to the lineage.

<sup>14</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV0HiKjP\\_pQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV0HiKjP_pQ)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=school> (Accessed on March 15, 2019)

examine the word “school” in the context of Tibetan Buddhism. I employed the term “school” as *chögyü* (*chos brgyud*) in Tibetan in this thesis but some scholars have translated “school” as *chöluk* (*chos lugs*), referring to the system of Dharma or a way of practicing paths. *Chöluk* is often used as the term for “religion” in English language scholarship (Gayley and Willock 2016, 13). That being said the definition of religion in English academia depends on the context of research varies from theology to social science studies.

The Tibetan term *chöluk* is the translation not only for the word *religion* but also for more than ten<sup>16</sup> different English words, many of which describe the Tibetan word *chögyü*, school or sect. More importantly, Dharma as a *chos lugs* or religion is one of the ten polysemic meanings given by Vasubandhu in *Vyakyayukti* and recounted by Buton Rinchen Drup (1290-1364) in his history (Bu Ston and Obermiller 2005, 20). Thus, I am skeptical of John Powers’ statement claiming there is no equivalent term for religion in Tibetan (Powers 2007, 25). The word *religion* can be thus firmly translated as a *chöluk*, and vice versa in a dictionary context, unless one uses it in a different field of study, such as anthropology.

After the term *chöluk* is confirmed as a generic term by Tibetan translators, the historical context demands further a term that can distinguish between the general idea of religion and sectarian groups, such as sub-schools within Tibetan Buddhism. Hence, within the sphere of Tibetan Buddhism, scholars coined a new word *chögyü* (*chos brgyud*), the lineage of Dharma. The word *chögyü* is relatively new, compared to *chöluk*. I do not want to overly complicate the meaning of *chöluk* or religion through additional analysis of the Sanskrit term *dharma* which, I believe, is the primary source of both *chöluk* and *chögyü*. However, *chöluk* is a generic term that

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<sup>16</sup> Dharma Tradition, style of teaching school, system, tradition of teachings, sect, a religion, schools on lineage of Buddhism, religious doctrine, denominations, sects; an organized system of teachings; version of the Dharma (Rangjung Yeshe online dictionary: [http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/chos\\_lugs](http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/chos_lugs))

carries both Buddhist and non-Buddhist meanings, including spiritualism and animistic religions, while *chögyü* remains in usage firmly within the boundary of Tibetan Buddhism.

#### **1.4.2 Scholasticism and Buddhism**

Scholasticism denotes an elite consciousness and is a useful measure of a particular kind of intellectual life both in the east and west. José Cabezón posits that scholasticism is a good lens to understand the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist thought. He states that scholasticism allows him “to picture it as a holistic and unified intellectual tradition engaged in a systematic scholarly enterprise” (Cabezón 1998, 3). The origin of word scholasticism has a long history in the Western education field and there is a wide range of writing on the subject from Aristotle’s logic to Catholic theology. It is later associated with the secular studies of natural science. According to Matthew Kapstein, the term scholasticism is derived from the Latin word “scholium” which means “commentarial glosses on the text, as the written medium for the elaboration and expression of the ideas” (Kapstein 1998, 86). This indicates that scholasticism is associated with the exercise of philosophical thoughts and ideas and textualism.

Similarly, scholasticism is highly-valued in Tibetan monastic institutes. When scholasticism is employed to explicate the Tibetan field of knowledge, it needs to be understood in its own context. Georges Dreyfus considers “the nature of intellectual practice that constitutes scholastic experience [for monastic elites]” regarding which scholasticism “provides an ideal venue for exploring a range of the methods and their results” (Dreyfus 2003, 10). Major scholastic development of Tibetan Buddhism took place in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the period which also gave birth to Karma Kagyu scholasticism. Although the concept of scholasticism has been applied to Tibetan scholastic society, a direct translation for it is rarely found in Tibetan literature.

### 1.4.3 Scholar and Pandita

The defining characteristics of the term “scholar” or *khepa* (*mkhas pa*), like scholasticism, depends on the structure of an institution. Tibetan literature defines a scholar based on the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist scholastic tradition itself. According to Sakya Pandita, there are two types of scholars, a polymath and a specialist. He then defines the meaning of the *khepa* in his book, *The Gateway to Learning*, stating, “If someone should ask, who gets called ‘scholar’?– He<sup>17</sup> is someone who knows without error everything that can be known. Alternatively, for someone who knows teachings in some specific field, in that and that one he gets the name ‘scholar’” (Gold 2007, 155). Sakya Pandita further elaborates on “everything” that makes one a scholar: the Five Fields of Knowledge (Five Sciences); Arts and Crafts, Medicine, Grammar (*sgra*) (inclusive of all aspects of language studies), Epistemology, and Inner Science (Mind-based-Philosophy). The second meaning of scholar can be commonly understood as an “expert” in Western academia.

There is another definition of scholar given by Ju Mipham (Namgyal Gyatso, 1846-1912) in his book entitled *Gateway to Knowledge* (*mkhas pa'i tshul la 'jug pa'i sgo*), “If you desire to attain the discriminating knowledge... you should study these ten topics<sup>18</sup> which cause learnedness” (Mipham and Schmidt 2013, 1:14). His definition is reserved for being a scholar in Buddhism or “Inner Science” which the context is a broad range of studies. In Tibetan, the short form of the title of the book is the same as the Sakya Pandita’s, *Khejug* (*mkhas 'jug*) and it is only the full title of the book that differs.

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<sup>17</sup> I used the English translation of the book for expediency, however, I found that the original syntax of the Tibetan composition is in neutral voice, whereas the translator translated it in the male voice. One should be careful while translating an important text, otherwise such a brilliant author will be a social scapegoat for the translator’s error (Sakya Pandita 1981, 5).

<sup>18</sup> “1) The aggregates; 2) the elements; 3) the source; 4) dependent origination; 5) the correct and the incorrect; 6) the faculties; 7) time; 8) the truths; 9) the vehicles; 10) conditioned things and unconditioned things” (Mipham and Schmidt 2013, 1:14).

In the end, there are four different terms in English found to translate the Tibetan word *khepa* and Sanskrit word *pandita*. Jonathan Gold and Erik Schmidt use the Sanskrit term *pandita* for scholar, but Gold translated as “learning” and Schmidt did “knowledge” for the Tibetan term *khepa*. On top of them, Gene Smith translated *mkhas pa* as a scholar for Sakya Pandita’s book title in English “*Introduction for Scholars*” (2001, 209). Lastly, Dhondup Tashi (2019, 3) posits that there is no equivalent Tibetan word for “intellectual”, thus he offers Tibetan word *khepa* as an alternative translation. But the term *lhoden (blo ldan)* is an existing Tibetan term that corresponds to the English word “intellectual.” Eminent Tibetan scholars, such as T. G. Dhongthog (1988, 227), and non-Tibetans, such as Melvyn Goldstein (2002, 157) and Jeffrey Hopkins (1989, 352), agree with this translation. With various critiques on the term scholar, this short explanation of the terms school and scholasticism should assist readers with a general understanding of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in this thesis.

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

### **1.5.1 The Invention of Tradition**

Most of the current Tibetan monasteries in-exile originated in Tibet, but the modern Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition is arguably a new tradition that was invented by the Sixteenth Karmapa. An invention of a tradition is not something exceptional to Karmapa, but often occurs when a new tradition is intentionally presented as an older established one. Such case is examined thoroughly by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their book “The Invention of Tradition” (1983). They examined academic frameworks in a new light, positing that traditions “which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented” (Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger 1983, 1).

They further elaborate on how a tradition can be invented. “‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual

or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger 1983, 1). I use this model in my analysis of how the Sixteenth Karmapa reconstructed the scholastic tradition with the implementation of new rules, doctrines, and rituals to reinvent the lost Kagyu scholastic tradition. According to Rumtek Shédra’s journal and Rumtek Monastery’s website,<sup>19</sup> the invention of the tradition began with the Sixteenth Karmapa having a mystical vision of Pandita Vimalamitra, an Indian Buddhist scholar who traveled to Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Samten 2005, 16), wherein he was given instruction to establish Buddhist Institutes.

The *Nalandakirti Journal* describes that in the vision Vimalamitra told the Sixteenth Karmapa: “Establish an institute where the teachings will be properly transmitted and studied, and I will emanate as teachers and students throughout thirteen lifetimes” (Goshir Gyaltsab 1989, 84). The prophecy serves as a ritualistic imperative for the Sixteenth Karmapa to revitalize the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. This prophecy also serves to legitimize the Sixteenth Karmapa himself as the person authorized to initiate the academic project.

Other significant rituals that the Sixteenth Karmapa often performed were textual transmissions, which play a significant role across the whole of Tibetan Buddhism in authenticating lineage teachings. The transmission here is usually called “oral transmission” (*lung*), which is a normal part of the larger Tibetan Buddhist framework. The procedure for oral transmission is to read the religious text out loudly so that it is heard by the people who are receiving the transmission. Likewise pass it down to the next generation so as believed that the transmission is carried forward uninterruptedly. Through these rituals, the Sixteenth Karmapa was able to repair the broken transmission of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. He was probably sure that the senior Khenpos at Rumtek Shédra carried the textual transmissions either

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<sup>19</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=400&Itemid=612&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=400&Itemid=612&lang=en) (Accessed on May 5, 2019)

of Sakya and Nyingma School because they were trained at those *shédra* or by Sakya or Nyingma Khenpos in Tibet.

Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel (ARF), a senior Rumtek Shédra's instructor, taught the manner in which the Sixteenth Karmapa gave textual transmissions. He explained that on one occasion, the Sixteenth Karmapa invited Khenpo Tsutrim Gyatso, another senior instructor of Rumtek Shédra, and himself to the Karmapa's audience room. The Sixteenth Karmapa then told them that he was going to give a "textual empowerment" (*dpe dbang*) in order to restore the disrupted transmission in the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. The actual ritual consisted of stacking a number of philosophical texts on a table before them and then the Sixteenth Karmapa remaining in a meditative state for some time. After the meditation, he gave a traditional blessing by touching the texts to the heads of the two instructors. Khenpo Chodrak further shared that the Karmapa instructed: "Now onwards, you have the religious authority to preach these philosophical texts, but always should remember me and supplicate to me while explaining those philosophical books." Traditional ritual theorization aside, the Sixteenth Karmapa was seen as a living Buddha (Bausch 2018, 19; Mackenzie 2017, 106) as well as the head of the school, and so considered that he held the complete religious authority to restore the transmission of those texts.

A further understanding of the invention of tradition is to explore the epistemology of *invention* and *tradition* as separate ideas. First, invention commonly implies the creation of something completely new, but the term here is associated more with reinvention according to the etymology of the word. The Latin word *venire* means "coming upon" or "discovering," which logically implies that there must be something already there to organize or arrange (Desai 1993, 121). Hence, the term invention here is "associated with the power of the agent of invention," as Gaurav Desai asserts (Desai 1993, 121). Second, *tradition* contradicts invention if we examine the conventional definition: "Repeated pattern of behaviors, beliefs, or enactment passed down from one generation to the next" (Green 1997, 799). However, "tradition" with

regard to the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition is pertinent to later theory: “Traditions represent both continuations through time and innovation within particular performances” (Green 1997, 800). Thus, invention and tradition, both implying old and new, mutually support the basic concept of reconstructing or revitalizing the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition.

### 1.5.2 Social Structure of Tibetan Monastic Communities

The literal definition of *gönpa* (*dgon pa*) in Tibetan in the context of Buddhism is a secluded place, located far from where lay householders live (Tsering, Zhapdung, and Dungkar 1985, 461). The term is often translated as “monastery.” (A detailed discussion of the etymology of both *gönpa* and monastery can be found in Chapter Four.) As Berthe Jansen describes, “monasteries came to be major players in politics, economics, culture, arts and society as whole” (Jansen 2018, 1). In Tibetan Buddhism, a monastery does not always house a celibate community. There are lay practitioner or tantric monasteries, *ngakpe gönpa* (*sgnags pa'i dgon pa*). However, monastic communities like Rumtek Monastery and Rumtek Shédra are where the celibate *sangha* resides. These monasteries fall under the rule of the Buddhist monastic code (S. *Vinaya*) and follow Jansen’s definition of a “place where a Sangha lives” (Jansen 2018, 8). A “set of three monastic rituals as described in the *Vinaya*<sup>20</sup> need to be performed (*bshi gsum cho ga*)” and these are “the fortnightly confession for *bhikṣus* (*gso sbyong*, S. *poṣadha*), the ritual start of the summer retreat (*dbyar gnas*, S. *varṣā*), and the ritual closing of that retreat (*dgag dbye*, S. *pravāraṇa*)” (Jansen 2018, 8). These three *Vinaya* rituals are mandated by Constitution Article Number Two of the KSNI’s *Memorandum* written by the Sixteenth Karmapa (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 2).

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<sup>20</sup> *Vinaya* in brief refers to the rules for monks and nuns in Buddhism. The term *Vinaya* is frequently used in the thesis so I suggest that readers, who are not familiar with this term, to check its precise meaning on the glossary with Tibetan translation *dulwa* (*'dul ba*).

The Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition is aligned with the larger landscape of Tibetan monasticism and it is housed in the monastic institution of the *shédra*. According to Erving Goffman, the monastic community is one kind of “total institution.” Among five types of total institutions, Goffman includes religious institutions as the fifth category: “There are those establishments designed as retreats from the world even while often serving also as training stations for the religious” (Goffman 1961, 5). Total institutions are those that are separated physically from other communities, using physical barriers such as concrete walls or distance in the forest, such that it is possible to regulate the entire waking and sleeping lives of their residents. Monastic institutions stress close interaction with other residents and avoiding communication with the outside world (Goffman 1961, 4). Every total institution “captures something of the time and interest of its members and provides something of a world for them” (Goffman 1961, 4). Monastic communities facilitate both religious and educational goals. As such, Karma Kagyu *shédra* are communities of celibate men, designed to train their residents in Buddhist monastic ethics and in scholastic knowledge and analysis. Taken together, the *shédra* promotes the specific religious goal of *nirvāṇa* or buddhahood.

## **1.6 Approach**

Martin N. Marshall suggested that “the research methods should be determined by the research question, not by the preference of the researcher” (Marshall 1996, 522). Following this guideline, a qualitative research method has been employed in this thesis in order to delve into the complexity of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. I seek to understand why this tradition is in decline despite its revival and reconstruction during the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century. The research is based on textual sources, primary texts such as monastic manuals and *shédra* curricula, as well as official online resources, using secondary sources from both Tibetan and English literatures, and the first-person experience and knowledge.

The analyses follows a fluid and multidimensional approach depending on the theme of the chapters. For example, Chapter Two relies on an analysis of premodern texts. In contrast, Chapters Three and Four are an institutional study of both the Rumtek Shédra and Rumtek Monastery (the *shédra* is technically under the authority of Rumtek Monastery), using information collected from various official documents, related websites, institute journals, and personal observations to understand how the Sixteenth Karmapa reconstructed and reinvented the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition.

Positioning myself (author) as a religious scholar and a Tibetan Buddhist Khenpo, I took advantage of my experience and empirical evidence to support my arguments in some parts of my thesis. I have trained extensively, for more than 30 years, in Buddhist philosophy including its related subjects such as language, history and poetry. I was ordained as a Buddhist monk at the age of ten and, following my primary and secondary education, and monastic Tantric ritual training simultaneously, I completed a 7-year Bachelor of Arts in Buddhist Studies, a higher monastic education at Vikrama Shila Buddhist Institute in Pokhara, Nepal, (which is affiliated to Karmae Shri Nalanda Institute). In the year 2002, I moved to Diwakar Buddhist Academy in West Bangel India to study (as an apprentice) under renowned senior professors such as Khenpo Chodrak Tenphel. Among many others teachers, for the longest time, I studied with Professor Sempa Dorje, a retired a Professor of CIHTS. With him, I thoroughly studied the five major Buddhist philosophies in Indian commentaries, or *gyashung* (*rgya gzhung*), such as *Abhidharma*. In 2005, I was awarded the honorable Khenpo title for academic excellence and Buddhist Studies. Since then I give Buddhist teachings, talks, translate and edit Tibetan books. Therefore, this thesis is not only a part of my MA program but also my world.

## 1.7 Literature Review

There are many excellent books about the Karma Kagyu school and its teachings written by both native and western scholars, but it is hard to find any paper on the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. The most comprehensive and single historical source on this topic is found in the First Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye's *The Treasury of Knowledge (shes bya mdzod)*, a compendium of Tibetan Buddhist teachings. This treatise is the only source that provides an account, albeit brief, of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition and its history. There are eight different Tibetan versions of this treatise held by the *Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC)* (the older name was the *Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center (TBRC)*).<sup>21</sup> The version I use here is published in three volumes by Palpung Monastery's Wooden Block Printing House in Eastern Tibet. The information on the Kagyu scholastic tradition is in Volume One under the heading, "How Scriptural Transmissions Came to Tibet."

This treatise is also available in a ten volume English language translation.<sup>22</sup> The Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition is included in Book Four under the same heading mentioned above. I consulted both Tibetan and English sources of this treatise and occasionally provide notes if clarification is required. The treatise has been given two different English titles. The Kalu Rinpoche Translation Group translated it as *The Treasury of Knowledge*, while the BDRC translated it as *Encyclopedia of Buddhist Knowledge*. In my opinion, the first title is syntactically closer to the original because it includes the word *Treasury (mdzod)*. This treatise is one of five major works by the First Jamgon Kongtrul collectively known as the "The Five Great Treasuries."

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.tbrc.org/#library\\_BannerSearchResults-&quot;shes+bya+kun+khyab+mdzod&quot;](https://www.tbrc.org/#library_BannerSearchResults-&quot;shes+bya+kun+khyab+mdzod&quot;) (Accessed date: April 3, 2019)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.shambhala.com/treasuryofknowledge.html> (Accessed date: April 3, 2019)

In addition to this treatise, there are other books, indirectly linked to Karma Kagyu scholasticism, found in both Tibetan and English languages. Among the Tibetan sources, *The Garland of Omnipresent Wishfulfilling Gems* (*rabs 'byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*) is published in three volumes by Shri Diwakar Publications (2010), Kalimpong, India. The *Garland* is a collection of biographies of Karma Kagyu masters which contain scattered refereneses to Karma Kagyu scholasticism. Another relevant source is *Scholar's Feast, Books on Buddhist Religious History* (*chos byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), published in two volumes by Vajra Vidya Library (2003), Sarnath, India.

Among English sources, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping* (2003) by Georges Dreyfus is one of the earliest works in which studies the Tibetan monastic education system post-exile. Dreyfus also describes his own journey as a Tibetan monk at Sera Jey Monastery in the 1970s. This work focused on the Geluk monastic tradition and there is no reference to practices in other Tibetan schools. Another valuable western source is *Discipline and Debate* (2012) by Michael Lempert, who sheds extra light on this field. This book is focused on the Buddhist logic practiced in the Tibetan monasteries. Lempert trained at the Sera Jey's sister institution and neighbour, the Sera Mey Monastery. Although both Dreyfus and Lempert are concerned with monastic education, their approaches are different. Dreyfus analyzes the monastic education from a social and academic institution point of view, while Lempert examines the same topic from the linguistic anthropological perspective. This might be the reason why Dreyfus is reasonably more optimistic about monastic education than Lempert, who is skeptical and calls for systematic modern education to be implemented in contemporary Tibetan monasteries.

There are two shorter accounts on the Tibetan monastic scholasticism. Tarab Tulku gives a concise explanation of Tibetan monastic scholasticism based on the Geluk tradition. He wrote a booklet, *A Brief History of Tibetan Academic Degrees in Buddhist Philosophy* (2000). This booklet is written as an informative report rather than as a critical analysis. Later, Adam Percy

published a research paper on Tibetan monastic education based on the Nyingma school (2015). His focus is not on the general monastic scholasticism, but on the specific curricula of Nyingma monastic institutes *shédra* (*bshad grwa*). A similar article was written by Dreyfus which compares the Geluk and non-Geluk academic traditions (2005). Although he mentions the non-Geluk schools Nyingma, Sakya, and Kagyu, he does not elaborate on the Sakya and Kagyu academic traditions.

There are some scholarly books detailing the lives of the various reincarnations of the Karmapas that provide religious and social information. These books indirectly contributed to my study of Karma Kagyu scholasticism. Ruth Gamble's (2018) book on the Third Karmapa, Ranjung Dorje's life and his work, *Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism* argues that the Third Karmapa was the first person to institutionalize the reincarnation system in Tibetan Buddhism. Jim Rheingans' (2017) Ph.D. dissertation, "The Eight Karmapa's Life and His Interpretation of the Great Seal" gives a detailed account of Eight Karmapa's (Mikyö Dorje, 1507-1554) life and his religious (Great Seal) and scholastic works. It also covers the political dimension of the Eighth Karmapa's time in Tibet.

Another book chronicles the life of the Tenth Karmapa (Chöying Dorje, 1604-1674), *A Golden Swan in Turbulent Waters* (2012) by the Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche (Chokyi Lodro, 1952-2014). This book focuses on the political impact on the Tenth Karmapa life, yet describes his religious practice as well. This book closely examines the underpinnings of the conflict between the Karma Kagyu and Geluk School, which eventually lead the Dalai Lamas to subjugate the entire Karma Kagyu school. In one way or another, all these sources have contributed to this thesis, but my analysis relies primarily on *The Treasury of Knowledge*, the Rumtek Shédra's *Memorandum*, and the *Nalandakirti Journal*.

## 1.8 Chapter Layout

This thesis consists of five chapters. This chapter, Chapter One, provides a brief introduction to the thesis question and its arguments and includes research questions, main arguments, theoretical framework, and a summary of the subsequent chapters. Chapter Two, “Rise and Fall of Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition,” provides the historical background for the thesis. It gives a detailed account of what the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition is, how it began, and what caused it to decline in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Chapter Three, “Reconstruction of Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition,” is a case study of how the Sixteenth Karmapa reconstructed and reinvented the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in-exile post-1959. This chapter thoroughly analyzes the educational system of Karma Shri Nalanda Institute. Chapter Four, “Antagonism Between Monasticism and Scholasticism in the Karma Kagyu School,” is on Karma Kagyu monasticism and its learning pedagogy at Rumtek Monastery. Karma Kagyu scholasticism has been practiced in the monasteries, that is mostly undertaken by monastics. Therefore, it is important to understand the basic structure and infrastructure of the monastic institution and its religious impact on the traditional education system. Lastly, Chapter Five, “Conclusion,” summarizes the findings of the thesis and provides suggestions for the future development of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition and its *shédra* learning systems.

With this research, I cast new light on Tibetan Buddhism in the contemporary academic world. By exploring the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in medieval Tibet and its reconstruction by the Sixteenth Karmapa in-exile post-1959, readers will clearly understand the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the past, present, and its future directions.

## Chapter 2: Rise and Fall of Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the premodern development of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. During the 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Karma Kagyu and its monastic institutes were dominant Buddhist educational centers in Tibet. This institution was lost after the ascension of the Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngawang Losang Gyatso, 1617-1682) in 1642.<sup>23</sup> His theocratic state, aided by the military power of the Mongols under Gushri Khan (1582-1655) (Smith 2001, 42; Prats 2007, 135), suppressed and ultimately destroyed Karma Kagyu monastic institutes. Individual institutes were placed under Geluk control, and many of the scholar-monks perished in armed political conflict, which Sam Van Schaik refers to as a “civil war” (Van Schaik 2011, 112). Only Tsurphu and Yangpachen monasteries were allowed to remain as Karma Kagyu due to the diplomatic petition of the Fifth Gyaltsep Drakpa Choyang (1618-1658) to the Gaden Phodrang Government.

The imposition of Geluk control targeted places of learning and was enacted through forced conversion, the banning of Karma Kagyu texts and rituals, disruption of lineages, and the exile of the Tenth Karmapa and Sixth Sharmapa from Tibet. Since the persecution during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, leaders of Karma Kagyu have expressed a desire to rebuild and return to the pre-Fifth Dalai Lama era. Popularly, it is seen as a “golden age” in Karma Kagyu history and many hope a return to this age will revive the scholastic tradition.

This chapter is divided into two major parts. First, I present a historical description of the Karma Kagyu scholastic institutions at the height of their development based on available evidence. Second, I discuss the sectarian violence and growing power of the Geluk hegemonic state in Tibet, which lead to the destruction of the Karma Kagyu scholastic institutions. In the

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<sup>23</sup> This major political shift in the Tibetan history was accounted in most political or religious history books of Tibet. It is particularly elucidated in fifth Dalai Lama’s autobiography, Shakabpa’s political history book of Tibet and the Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche’s book on Tenth Karmapa’s life, *A golden Swan in Turbulent Waters*.

early part of the chapter, I outline the main institutions, leaders, and its independent scholastic tradition. We know that a set of scholastic texts were used by these institutions, some of which survive today. The second part examines the sectarian conflict between different schools and, in particular, the political struggle between the Karma Kagyu and Geluk priest-patron (*mchod yon*) relationship with the political regents (*sde srid*) of the different regions of Tibet, and mentions the failed reconciliation between Karma Kagyu and Gaden Phodrang Government in 1642.

Traditional Buddhist scholars divide Buddhism into two transmissions: the Scholastic Transmission (*bshad brgyud*) and the Meditation Lineage (*sgrub brgyud*).<sup>24</sup> The First Jamgon Kongtrul argues that this is a logical and systematic way to categorize the Indian Buddhist teachings transmitted within Tibet (2010, 318) since the 8<sup>th</sup> century. These two transmissions are not contradictory; rather they complement each other and are often combined within an individual's practice. Dreyfus shares this view, writing that the "scholarly activities and meditative practices do not exclude each other. Most of the important figures of the tradition combine the two approaches" (2003, 12). Although Karma Kagyu School combines the two approaches, it is best known for its Meditation Lineage. This does not mean, however, that the Karma Kagyu has no history of a scholastic tradition. The First Jamgon Kongtrul, in fact, describes the scholastic tradition of the Karma Kagyu School in his encyclopedic composition *The Treasury of Knowledge* (*shes bya kun khyab*).

The general era of the rise of Buddhist scholasticism in Tibet began in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, but was later destroyed by King named Lang Darma Wudum Tsen (*glang dar ma 'u dum btsan*) (838-842), after which, Tibet remained for centuries without a centralized state (Powers 2007, 147; Samuel 2012, 9; Shakabpa and Maher 2010, 176). This fragmented period of Tibetan politics and religion resulted in the evolution of a new Buddhist structure in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>24</sup> The word "sgrub brgyud" is translated as "Meditation Lineage" in the Treasury of Knowledge but most dictionaries like Tsepak Rigzin and Ranjung Yeshe translated it as "Practice Lineage".

These two distinct periods of Buddhism in Tibet are commonly known as “later dissemination of Buddhism” and “later translation work” (*bstan pa phyi dar*<sup>25</sup> and *phyi bsgyur*) (Cuppers 2004, 49).

The new tradition of Buddhism in Tibet gave birth to the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism: Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Geluk (*rnying ma, sa skya, bka' brgyud, dge lugs*) (Ducher 2017, 22). Nevertheless, the division of four schools does not include all sects of Tibetan Buddhism, such as Jonang School. As such, the First Jamgon Kongtrul provides an alternative, inclusive approach to classify Tibetan Buddhism, under the “Ten Foremost Pillars of Scholastic Tradition” (*bshad brgyun 'degs pa'i ka chen bcu*) and the “Eight Major Chariots of Meditation Practice” (*sgrub brgyud kyi shing ta chen po brgyed*) (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 315, 321). He then explains how the four schools equally carry on these two traditions.

### **2.1.1 Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition**

Most of the Karma Kagyu lineage masters combined the scholastic and meditation practices in their Buddhist path in which scholasticism precedes meditation. The First Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa, Founder of the Karma Kagyu School, is a good example. He was a well-versed Buddhist scholar who studied with the top scholars of Tibet, such as Chawa Choseng (*phyi pa chos seng*) (1109-1169) and Patsap Lotsawa (*pa tsab lo tswa ba*) (1055-1145?)<sup>26</sup> (Thrangu and Tengye 2008, 7) at that time. Chawa is known in Tibet as the founder of the preliminary Tibetan Buddhist dialectic (*bsdus grwa*), and Patsap brought the *prasaṅgika* middle-path school in Tibet. The First Karmapa met his teacher Gampopa (Sonam Rinchen, 1079-1153) at the age of thirty in

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<sup>25</sup> Regarding the Tibetan word “*chidar*” (later propagation or dissemination, Geoffrey Samuel misplaced *chidar* and *ngadar* (earlier propagation) vis-a-vis their English connotations at the beginning of his book “Introducing Tibetan Buddhism” (Samuel 2012, xi). I have no doubt as to the level of their scholarship, but these mistakes would be blind reference sources for a student who does not read Tibetan and so mentioned here.

<sup>26</sup> I copied the date from Rigpa wiki online with its question mark.

[https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Patsab\\_Nyima\\_Drak](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Patsab_Nyima_Drak) (accessed March 16, 2019).

central Tibet. By that time, he was already highly learned in sutra and the many tantra teachings of Buddhism. From an early age, he traveled from eastern to central Tibet to meet diverse and eminent scholars, but was not satisfied with his progress until he met his main teacher Gampopa (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 106).

It is true that First Karmapa did not lead and encourage his students in scholasticism because many of the students like Drogon Rechen (*'gro mgon ras chen*) (1148-1218) and Lholayakpa Jangchub Tsondru<sup>27</sup> (*lho la yag pa byang chub btson 'grus*) were already highly learned scholars when they first met the First Karmapa. Similarly, his teacher Gampopa was a physician and Kadampa master. We can get a sense of his scholasticism from his early life, but he was looking beyond the Kadampa tradition in his religious path (Smith 2001, 41). His quest brought him to Milarepa, the greatest yogi of Tibet. Like their masters, most of the Karma Kagyu religious heads were distinguished scholars, but always pursued their religious paths by focusing on the esoteric and Great Seal (*S. Mahāmudra*) meditation practices. Thus, their accomplishments were most evident in those particular areas.

Karmapakshi is well known for performing miracles and magic by leading a yogic life, but has recorded as having written many Buddhist books, including texts on epistemology and the philosophical tenet system (Kapstein 2000, 119). Dreyfus states, “Though Tibet has a firmly established tradition of hermits engaging single-mindedly in solitary meditation, many of these yogis retreat to their practice after undergoing a scholastic training” (Dreyfus 2003, 10). As he mentions, most Karma Kagyu masters combined both scholasticism and medication in their paths. However, among the Karmapas, The Third, Seventh and Eighth were gifted scholars who greatly expounded the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition along with the meditation practice.

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<sup>27</sup> His birth and death years are not found on the sources used in this thesis.

The stereotype of the Karma Kagyu not having a scholastic tradition predominates its image from medieval Tibet to the present day. This is perhaps the reason why Karma Kagyu scholasticism has remained relatively untouched in contemporary Buddhist studies in Western academia. Generally speaking, all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism are equally rich having their source in the older Indian texts and transmissions, which are as “authentic,” as Samuel (1993, 273) states, and as “apocryphal”, as Kapstein (1989, 221) concludes. Thus, the size, power and prestige of the individual schools, does not measure the authenticity of its teachings and the teachers’ quality; however, they are more likely to indicate the political ties with states and the coercive suppression of one school by another.

A similar condescending notion of the Karma Kagyu as being a non-intellectual school has been portrayed in Western academia. Jonathan Gold, a contemporary scholar, presents Karma Kagyu practice and scholasticism as a contradiction. He gives the example of the debate between Milarepa and Geshe Tsakpuhwa (*dge bshes tsag pu ba*). He asserts that since Milarepa was not a scholar, Geshe’s debate was a threat to his lineage (2007, 2). Gold, however, did not mention that his teacher Marpa had three other eminent students, such as Ngog Choku Dorje (*rgnog chos sku rdo rje*) (1023-1090), who studied exegetical tantra with Marpa and carried on his scholastic transmissions (Ducher 2017, 54; Smith 2001, 41).

Although Dreyfus claims that, generally, Tibetan masters combine scholasticism and meditative practice, he still labels the Second Karmapa Karmapakshi (1204-1283) an “anti-scholastic” thinker compared to Sakya Pandita. If there was any antagonism between these two great masters, it could be logically explained by political factors, such as negotiating Mongol invasion of Tibet lead by Godan Khan in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Smith 2001, 241). In contrast, Samuel posits that both the Kagyu and Sakya Schools are “clericalized” and originated from Indian Buddhism (Samuel 1993, 273). It is thus erroneous to overgeneralize about the nature of Kagyu

scholasticism based on an individual master and his individual path to accomplishment, style of teaching, or from a particular political incident.

## **2.2 Emergence of the Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition**

### **2.2.1 Founder of the Karma Kagyu School**

The First Karmapa (Dusum Khyenpa) was born in the Treshod (*tred shod*) valley of Kham, Eastern Tibet in the year 1110. Since early age, he learned Tibetan literacy and basic Buddhist education from his father. According to the traditional historical sources, such as *Kagyü Golden Rosary (bka' brgyud rnam mthar)* (Situ 2010), his parents were Yogi and Yogini, meaning secret Buddhist tantric practitioners, through whom Karmapa also first received some primary Tantra initiations. He later took full ordination (a Buddhist monastic vow) from Khenpo Chokyi Lama and Chapa Chokyi Senge and became a Buddhist monk at the age of sixteenth and joined a monastery. Since then he studied with from various masters from diverse traditions.

He met Gampopa at the age of thirty and receive key tantric transmission, i.e., *Hevajra* and *Mahamudra*, which became the central focus of his teaching for the rest of his life. Within a short period, he became one of the top students of Gampopa among nine hundred other successful students. His accomplishment in Dharma practice and attracting followers encouraged him to start an independent group, which later evolved into the Karma Kagyu Lineage (Douglas and White 1976, 33). Early Tibetan historians also acknowledge the Karmapa was the oldest lineage of reincarnated lamas in Tibetan Buddhism. The reincarnations have reached seventeen today.

According to important works on religious history, such as the *Blue Annals (deb ther sngon po)*, the First Karmapa gained enlightenment or Buddhahood within his lifetime ('gos-lo gzhon-nu-dpal 2003, 1:563). After gaining all spiritual insights, his fame grew fast across Tibet, and he was approached by many people for his teaching. That was the beginning of the Karma

Kagyü School. The school name either followed a place or person depending. At Kampo Nenang (*kam po gnas nang*), the Karmapa remained continuously in mediation for many years so the school was gradually named after the “Kam” mountain region, “Kamtsang Kagyü.” Or, at a later time in his life, the Karmapa built a monastery at Tsurphu in central Tibet, because he built it, “Karma” became an alternative name for the school, “Karma Kagyü” (Dungkar 2002, 23). However, traditional Tibetan history tells that all the Tibetan Buddhist schools were formed gradually and non-strategically, except for the Fifth Dalai Lama’s imposition of a hierarchical stratification of the Tibetan Buddhist school leaders under the Tibetan state policy (Gyatso 1991, 2:271).

Tibetan masters have idealized and codified the thematic approach of scholarship in Buddhism by neologism, *khedup (mkhas grub)* (Dreyfus 2003, 12), learned and accomplished ones. Karma Kagyü masters are endowed with this title *khedup nyidan (mkhas drub gnyis ldan)*. Most Karma Kagyü masters emphasized the meditation as their primary vehicle for accomplishment in their lifetimes, but some masters showed their strength in scholasticism and academic performance. Accomplished masters in this tradition, in particular, were the Third through the Ninth Karmapas, the Fourth to Sixth Shamarpas, the Eighth Situ Chokyi Jungne, Golo Shonnupal, Pawo Tsuglak Trengwa, and the First Jamgon Kongtrul. There are surely more scholars in the tradition when it comes to *Mahamudra* and tantra commentaries, who are not all named here. The scholarship of these masters is not limited to Buddhist philosophy but also covers Five Fields of Knowledge (*rig pa’ gnas lnga*), a common topic for all Buddhist students in Tibet.

## **2.2.2 Founders of the Karma Kagyü Scholastic Tradition**

Among the aforementioned scholars, the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje was renowned for his scholarship. From a very young age, he showed unique qualities such as recalling past lives and recognizing his predecessor’s (Karmapakshi) students and personal religious objects. Besides his

mentor, Khedrup Ogyenpa, he studies with various masters and received education in a wide range of subjects. It is thus believed that the Third Karmapa not only reshaped the identity of the lineage, but also was influential in the other schools by composing and teaching on diverse topics. Ruth Gamble writes:

On the basis of his reincarnate status, Rangjung Dorjé was granted an education to which few Tibetans, let alone potters' son, could aspire. He was taught philosophy, literature, medicine, and astrology. He was introduced to the rituals, practices, oral traditions, and texts of his own Kagyü and other Tibetan Buddhist lineages. (Gamble 2018, 2)

Nevertheless, it is important to caution that Gamble's hypothesis that the Third Karmapa was the founder of the reincarnation system in Tibet is not widely accepted. According to traditional sources (Religious History Books) such as the *Kagyü Golden Rosary* (Situ 2010, 1:174) and *Scholars' Feast* (Pawo 2003, 1:576), the Second Karmapa, Karmapakshi described his previous life as the First Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa.

After becoming highly learned in all fields of knowledge, Third Karmapa began composing commentaries on a wide-rangings topics, but his emphasis remained on the tantric philosophies. He wrote some unique and essential tantric texts such as *Profound Inner Meaning* (*zab mo nang don*) which allows students easily to comprehend the vast and profound subjects of sutra and tantra. These commentaries become the core texts and links between the sutra and tantra philosophies for the Karma Kagyu school. Therefore, the First Jamgon Kongtrul credited the Third Karmapa as the founder of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition:

My<sup>28</sup> tradition, from omniscient Rangjung Gyalwa,  
Mainly emphasizes the teaching doctrines of the Profound  
Inner Meaning, The Vajra of Delight Tantra's Two Chapters,  
And The Highest Continuity (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 317).

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<sup>28</sup> "My" tradition here in Tibetan word is "*rang lugs*". The word "rang" in suitable English is "self" because the author compared the word with "other" in the text rather than mine and yours (kong sprul 1985, 1:505).

In the *Treasury of Knowledge*, Kongtrul clarifies that the Third Karmapa's work *Profound Inner Meaning* (*zab mo nang don*), the Second Chapter of the *Hevajra Tantra* (*brtag gnyis*) and *The Highest Continuity* (*rgyud bla ma*) are the three principle doctrines that establish the scholastic tradition. He further states that these three are sufficient for practitioners to traverse the entire path within the Vajrayana tradition to attain Buddhahood (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 317). Therefore, these three texts, better known as '*nang brtag rgyud gsum*,' became crucial texts for all Karma Kagyu students for their formal studies.

By following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the Fourth Karmapa (Rolpai Dorje 1340-1383) continued to develop the scholastic and meditation traditions of the school by learning and teaching both sutra and tantra. According to the *Scholars' Feast*, the Fourth Karmapa spent most of his time teaching and practicing meditation. It is said that there were more than ten thousand students in attendance at his teachings on a daily basis. He had prestigious students like Je Tsongkhapa (Losang Dakpa, 1357-1419), founder of the Geluk School, who was predicted and ordained by the Fourth Karmapa to be a noble being. There were other notable students like Yagde Panchen (Tsondru Dargye, 1299-1378) and Rongton (Sheja Kunrig, 1367-1449) who were pre-eminent scholars from the Sakya school (Pawo 2003, 1:972).

Historically, the lineage of the Karmapa had a special bond with the Chinese and Mongol Emperors. The Fifth Karmapa (Deshin Shekpa, 1384-1415)<sup>29</sup> strengthened this connection closer through their priest-patron relationship. He was invited by Yongle Emperor (personal name Zhu Di) (1360-1424) of the Ming dynasty. Despite undisputed historical facts, *Suolang Qujie* argues in his Master's thesis that the Fifth Karmapa's primary reason for traveling to China at this time was to perform a ritual to legitimize newly enthroned Yongle Emperor and in return receive tremendous wealth and title (Qujie 2002, 74). He supported his assertion by

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<sup>29</sup> Shakapba states Deshin Shekpa as the Fourth Karmapa but he did not give a reason for his stereotype since Deshin Shekpa is commonly accepted as the Fifth Karmapa in his reincarnation line (Shakapba 1984, 83).

recounting how many gifts were offered to Karmapa and how those gifts were used. Receiving gifts of appreciation does not indicate the motivation for the Fifth Karmapa's visit to China, however, the fact that the gifts from the Chinese Emperor were in fact donated not only to Kagyu monasteries, but also to other monasteries of the other schools.

In contrast, Pawo (Tsuglak Trengwa, 105-1562) states that major reason for the Fifth Karmapa's acceptance of the invitation from the Ming Court was to protect Tibet from Chinese war (Pawo 2003, 1:1012). *Quije* also acknowledged it in his thesis (Quije 2002, 45). Therefore, In agreement with other scholars, I disagree with Quije's assertion; otherwise, his thesis gives a good account of the 15<sup>th</sup> century political relationship between Tibet and China, with additional information from Chinese sources.

### **2.2.3 Adopting the Scholastic Tradition from the Sakya School**

According to the First Jamgon Kongtrul, there is no record of separate Karma Kagyu monastic institutes (*bshad dra*) dedicated for philosophical studies until the time of the Sixth Karmapa (Thongwa Donden, 1416-1453). Prior, the teachings of the dual traditions of Tibetan Buddhism were transmitted to students outside of formal scholastic institutions (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 318) and given in monasteries, hermitages (*ri khrod*), or camps (*sgar*). As mentioned previously, many of the top Sakya scholars were the students and teachers of Karmapas in the case of the Fourth to the Eighth Karmapas. This relationship had great benefit for the Karma Kagyu to propagate its independent scholastic tradition. The Sakya scholars with early connections included Rongton Sheja Kunrig, who passed down the Buddhist philosophical traditions to the Sixth Karmapa. The Sixth Karmapa later established many Karma Kagyu monastic institutes in Tibet and spread philosophical transmissions.

Kongtrul further confirms the new development of the school in his book, stating that "Previously in this lineage of meditation practice, there were never a great number of monastic

colleges for the study of the way of philosophical systems. The sixth lord [Karmapa] Tongwa Donden studied many scriptural traditions with omniscient Rongton Sheja Kunzik” (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 318). After Sixth Karmapa established formal institutes, the first Je Karma Trinleypa (*rje karma phrin las pa*) was an influential figure in continuing the philosophical tradition between the Seventh and Eighth Karmapa. He was a great learned scholar in both Kagyu and Sakya traditions and also a student of both Rongton and the Seventh Karmapa. His academic title “Rabjampa” means boundless knowledge and was most likely the highest academic degree awarded during that time. He later became an instructor for the Eighth Karmapa, who was a gifted scholar in his own right and a prolific writer.

#### **2.2.4 Re-invention of the Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition**

The Eighth Karmapa (Mikyö Dorje, 1507-1554) is arguably the most renowned scholar in among all the Karmapas due to his broad scholarship and numerous compositions. He composed scholarly commentaries from when he was in his teenage years and collaborated with scholars from the other schools. The Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche writes in his book about the high stature of the great Eighth Karmapa, “His [Eighth Karmapa] knowledge of Dharma was unparalleled. He was a paragon bodhisattva revered by all sects. His prestige helped to heal the rift between the Geluk and the Karma Kagyu sects” (Shamar Rinpoche 2012, 10). The establishment of the formal scholastic tradition in the Karma Kagyu School was finally completed with the Eighth Karmapa’s composition of the commentaries for the *Five Great Texts* (*gshung chen bka’ pod lnga*). This topic will be discussed more in the following chapter.

Although the Seventh Karmapa wrote an extensive commentary on epistemology, the Eighth Karmapa edited and revised it as a final development of the work. Karma Kagyu now had its own compilation of core philosophical texts which established it as an independent scholastic tradition, as Kongtrul highlights:

Mikyo Gawa [more commonly Mikyö Dorjé], received countless scriptural traditions. With his omniscient wisdom, and without relying on others' works, he initiated a new system. He composed such texts as a commentary to the collection on monastic discipline, *The Disc of the Sun*; a commentary to the collection on observed phenomena, *The Sovereign of All Eloquent Speech, Milking the Splendor of Easy Accomplishment*; *The Lord of Rest*, a commentary to *The Ornament of Manifest Realization*; *The Path of Pleasant Travel*, the *Chariot of the Dakpo Kagyu Accomplishment*, a commentary to *Entering the Middle Way*; and a commentary to texts on logic. (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 319)

Currently, there are twenty-six volumes of the Eighth Karmapa's writings mentioned by Jim Rheingans, who completed his doctoral dissertation entitled, "Eight Karmapa's Life and His Interpretation of the Great Seal" (2017, 49). He also asserts that the Eighth Karmapa systematized Karma Kagyu philosophical studies. The Eighth Karmapa built many new monastic institutes in Tibet such as Dhakpo Lekshey Ling (*dwgs po legs bshad gling*) and Dhakpo Shedrup Ling (*dwgs po bshad sgrub gling*), and developed teaching pedagogy (Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 319). This was a major shift for Karma Kagyu school from a hermitage community to a formal scholastic institution. The Eighth Karmapa also produced many learned scholars those who carried on his scholastic transmissions. Shamarpa Konchog Yenlag, Pawo Tshuglag Phrengwa, Situ Chökyi Gocha and Gyaltsab Dagpa Paljor are among his many distinguished students.

The Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition continued during the lifetime of the Ninth Karmapa (Wangchug Dorje, 1556-1603) and his student the Sixth Shamarpa (Garwang Chökyi Wangchug, 1584-1630).<sup>30</sup> The Ninth Karmapa was a highly learned scholar as his predecessor, trained under the guidance of Fifth Shamarpa. However, he did compose new commentaries on Buddhist philosophies; rather, he synthesized the Eighth Karmapa's commentaries and the

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<sup>30</sup> <https://shamarpa.org/history/the-6th-shamarpa-shamar-mipam-chokyi-wangchuk-1584-1630/> (Accessed date: March 17, 2019)

*Mahamudra* teachings into short form, and longer versions of the *Mahamudra* commentaries. Those texts were more useful as they served as a clear and concise guides for students by reducing the lengthy commentarial arguments. Along with other Karma Kagyu texts, the philosophical writings of the Ninth Karmapa were only recently discovered in Tibet as they had been banned by the Tibetan government, headed by the Fifth Dalai Lama. They had remained buried under the Potala Palace since the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Ninth Karmapa 2003, 5).

His student, the Sixth Shamarpa, also another brilliant Karma Kagyu scholar. At the age of sixteen, he traveled to the major monastic colleges of other schools in central Tibet, including the three major Geluk colleges and Sakya College to expand his philosophical training and demonstrate his scholarship. At the same time, he made offerings and paid reverence to the monasteries and their scholars (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 1:420). The Fifth Dalai Lama stated the first three Shamarpas were the foremost students of Karmapas, but since the time of the Fourth Shamarpa, due to his scholarship and political role in Tibet, they were seen equally realized and as one in the same position (Gyatso 1991, 359). Since that time, they became teacher and student for each other throughout their subsequent reincarnations and the Sharmapas served as head of the lineage until the next reincarnation of Karmapa was ready to assume the role.

From the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Karma Kagyu school in general and its scholastic tradition in particular, continued to grow. The school become one of the largest in Tibet in every aspect: academically, spiritually, and financially. Retreat centers and monastic institutes were established across Tibet. However, traditional historical sources show that the Karma Kagyu did not attempt to subsume all schools under its dominance and assume political power; as a result, Tibet remained a secular state during that time. The Karmapas' principle of non-violence throughout each lifetime might serve as evidence of the school's focus on religious matters and education, not on politics or hegemony. The Karmapas have consistently proclaimed to this day

that they deny conflict and war and the suppression or attack of anyone, including those who harm them.

Further, the Karmapas never permitted kings, regents and their administrations to undertake any of these violent actions. The Fifth Karmapa's advice to the Yongle Emperor, the Seventh Karmapa guidance to the Tibetan regents and their followers, and the Tenth Karmapa's instruction to the Mongols are all strong evidence of Karmapas harmonious intentions (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 543; Pawo 2003, 1:1011). Due to the unusually long period of peace and emergence of many distinguished scholars during that time, it can be justly claimed that the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries in Tibet was a "golden age", as described by Sam Vak Schaik (2011, 85).

## **2.3 Decline of the Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition**

### **2.3.1 Political Tension and Sectarian Turmoil**

The successful construction of Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in premodern Tibet did not last long. This section, the second part of the chapter, analyses the cause of declining of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. It was due primarily to sectarian conservatism in Tibetan Buddhism had grown gradually since the emergence of four schools since the fourteenth century. As sectarianism between the schools grew stronger, the priest-patron relationship between the religious leaders and the state rulers was rapidly transformed into politics. By the time of the Tenth Karmapa in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Karma Kagyu school fell into the most difficult time in its history (Van Schaik 2011, 122) due to the religious bias held by the regents of Tibet that resulted in the formation of a new system of governance that unified politics and religion.

Contemporary Tibetan historians such as Beri Geshe Jigme Wangyal (*be ri 'jig med dbang rgyal*) describes the 17<sup>th</sup> century as the peak of sectarian conflict in Tibet (Gelong 2012). He further posits that Mongolian Emperor Khado Tenkyong (*mkha 'gro bstan skyong*) and

Chagzod Gyale (*phyag mzod rgya las*) General Secretary to Fifth Dalai Lama or Regent Sonam Paljor (*bsod nams dpal 'byor*) were responsible for causing the civil war in Tibet during that time and creating enmity between the Karma Kagyu and Geluk schools. The fighting in the 1630s escalated from a minor monastic conflict to a major civil war between Ü and Tsang, the two central regions of Tibet. This very conflict ended to closures of almost all of the Karma Kagyu monastic institutes, first in central Tibet and later in the Eastern part of the country. Major Karma Kagyu philosophical texts were burned or buried, and the teachers were physically punished or deported, including the Tenth Karmapa and the Sixth Shamarpa.

The civil war was perpetuated by sectarianism within the Kagyu and Geluk schools (Goldstein 2010, 1). At that time, the regent of Tsang (Karma Tenkyong Wangpo 1606-1642), was a follower of Karma Kagyu school, and the regent of the Ü was Desi Sonam Chopal (---- d. 1658), a representative of Dalai Lamas and Geluk school. In the end, they both exceeded their authority and circumvented the control of their religious teachers, the Tenth Karmapa and Fifth Dalai Lama (Shakabpa 1984, 92 -106). The internal fighting between the two regents turned brutal in 1639 when Desi Sonam Chophel invited Mongol troops for support. The troops entered Tibet from the east, battling the Khampa warriors in the region (Shakabpa 1984, 106). Two different Mongol troops backed the political regimes of two counter regents: the Qoshot Mongols, lead by Gushri Khan, supported the Dalai Lama, and the Chogthu Mongols lead by Arsalang, supported by Karmapa. Although Karma Tenkyong Wangpo won a battle against Ü and the Qoshot Mongols, ultimately the war was lost and he was put to death during the massive destruction of the Karma Kagyu school.

In the aftermath of the war, some Geluk monks were injured when their monasteries were closed or forcefully converted to the Kagyu school, but their later revenge was pales in comparison. The Jonang and Karma Kagyu schools connected to Desi Tsangpa were decimated. In fact, the Jonang School was annihilated, ceasing to exist after the Ü revenge campaign. The

Karma Kagyu School was almost extinguished and both the Tenth Karmapa and the Sixth Shamarpa were forced to into exile. Approximately seven thousand Karma Kagyu monks were executed and over “one hundred thirty monasteries were burned, demolished or forcefully converted to Geluk school” (Phuntsok 2006, 372; Gelong 2012, xxxi). Furthermore, in a final victory in 1642, Gushri Khan declared the Fifth Dalai Lama as the religious and political supreme ruler (Monk and King) of Tibet. His private monastic administration of Drepung named “Gaden Phodrang” was upgraded to the Tibetan state administration (Shakabpa 1984, 111). It was at this time that the secular government was replaced by a theocratic state called the “unified system of religion and politics” (*chos srid zung 'brel*) which was abandoned only in 2011 (Karmay 2014, 194).

#### **2.4 Symbiotic relationships between religions and politics in Medieval Tibet**

Theocratic governance under the *unified system of religious and politics*<sup>31</sup> played a crucial role not only in Tibet, but also spread to neighboring Bhutan. The foundation of this theory is laid under the concept of Tibetan political ideology called “two-fold system” (*lugs gnyis*), religion and politics. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between the fundamental meaning of the *two-fold system* and the *unified system*, (*zung 'brel*). Two fold system of the state in Tibet started during the King Songtsen Gampo in the 7<sup>th</sup> century while the unified system was initiated by Drogon Chogyal Phakpa (1235-1280) who was the Head of Sakya school. Later he became the ruler of Tibet and brought this system in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He was offered the title “Owner of religion and politics of Tibet” (*bod chos srid gnyis kyi bdag po*) along with Tibet by Mongol King Kublai Khan (1215-1294) in return of secret Vajrayana initiation (*dbang*) granted to the king (Phuntsok 2006, 242; Shakabpa and Maher 2010, 199). Although Shakabpa defines the

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<sup>31</sup> “Chos srid zung 'brel” of Tibetan terms for the unified system of religion and politics was translated into English in different forms. Samtem Karmay translated it as “Coalition of Religion and Politics” (Karmay 2014, 193); Cuppers translates it as “The Relationship between Religion and State” (Cuppers 2004, 8).

Sakya of Tibet and Khan's relationship as "preceptor-patron relationship" they politically legitimize each other for their new positions.

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a new government in Tibet was established under the Phakdru (*phag dru*) regent lead by Tasi Jangchub Gyaltzen (1302-1363) which stemmed from the decline of Sakya's rule (Shakabpa and Maher 2010, 245). The new government revived the secular status of the Tibetan government which persisted until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to John Ardussi, by that time, the nation of Bhutan was emerging through the efforts of the Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (*zhab drung ngag dbang rnam rgyal*) (1594-1654), who was chased away by the Tibetan army to the southern Tibet (Cuppers 2004, 35). The fighting between Shabdrung and Tibetan government over the dual reincarnation conflict of Kunkhyen Pema Karpo (*kun mkhyen pad ma dkar po*) (1527-1592), the religious head of Drupka Kagyu school. Tsangpa Desi Phuntsok Namgyal (*gtsang pa de srid Phun tshogs rnam rgyal*), regent of Tibet, and Shabrung also had a dispute over the property of Kunkhen Pema Karpo. Shabdrung confronted the Tsangpa regent and established a new rival government some distance away, in present-day Bhutan. Shabdrung established a government that is similar to the Sakya, a unified system of religion and politics (Cuppers 2004, 36) but it was collapsed soon after its establishment.

However, at the time of Ogyen Wangchuck (*ao rgyan dbang phyug*), the first hereditary king of Bhutan in 1907 separated the state from a religion and the system is called *chosi nyiden* (*chos srid gnyis ldan*) which means the "dual system of religion and politics" (Aris 1979, 266). The same system continues today even after Bhutan became a "Democratic Constitutional Monarchy" in 2008.<sup>32</sup> This system is similar to that of Fifth Dalai Lama's Tibetan government, but significantly different in its government system. While Bhutan is called a "dual system," Tibet is a "unified system." The result of these two similar yet distinctive policies is whether one

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<sup>32</sup> [http://www.nationalcouncil.bt/assets/uploads/docs/acts/2017/Constitution\\_of\\_Bhutan\\_2008.pdf](http://www.nationalcouncil.bt/assets/uploads/docs/acts/2017/Constitution_of_Bhutan_2008.pdf) (page 9)

person can hold both religious and political power in the state or not and whether the government allows religious leaders to interfere in politics or not.

I clarified the ambiguous subjects of *chos sri gnyis ldan*, the “dual system” of religion and politics, and *chos rnyi zung 'brel*, the “unified system” of religion and politics here because some non-native scholars such as John Ardussi and Christoph Cuppers used them as synonyms or as interchangeable (Cuppens 2004, 49), which is not the case in terms of traditional Tibetan political connotations.

#### **2.4.1 Causes of the Karma Kagyu and Geluk Dispute**

The war between Ü and Tsang was essentially a war between the Karma Kagyu and Geluk schools, rooted in politics rather than disagreement over the tenets of religious doctrine. The cause of the civil war described in traditional Tibetan histories is resentment, misunderstanding, or misinterpretation of letters between the leaders of the two schools. Moreover, it is believed that the attendants played a significant role in the deterioration of relations between the two leaders by misrepresenting communications in order to create mistrust and division out of personal interest. I will briefly go through some important documented events that occurred which provide insight into the source of the division between the two schools.

Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungney wrote an account of the dispute between the Karma Kagyu and Geluk schools. According to his book, *Biographies of Kagyu Golden Rosary (bka' brgyud gser phreng rnam thar)*, the dispute between Karma Kagyu monasteries and the Geluk Sera Drepung monastery occurred during the Seventh Karmapa Chodrak Gyatso's time at the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa. The Seventh Karmapa had three visions of Maitreya Buddha warning him of the danger to the Jokhang Temple due to pollution from the growing number of lay family houses crowding it, and that if a monastic community would surround the temple, the Buddha Dharma would last for a longer time in Tibet. Based on these visions, the Seventh Karmapa

began building monastic quarters around the temple which was interpreted by Sera and Drepung monks as an attempt to expand Karma Kagyu power in Lhasa. They subsequently attacked Karmapa's camp (*sgar chen*) and demolished the newly-constructed buildings (Van Schaik 2011, 112). Despite the brutality of the attack, Karmapa refused to allow any of his followers, including ruling Rinpung Regent, to punish or fight against the Sera and Drepung monks (Situ, Belo, and Yugyal 2010, 57). However, since that time, the Karma Kagyu and Geluk, and more specifically Sera and Drepung monasteries, have remained at odds.

The Fifth Dalai Lama's autobiography (*rang rnam du kwu la*) provides another incident that contributed to the major war between Ü and Tsang. According to his account, the hostility between Karma Kagyu and Geluk schools began at Tsurphu Monastery during a meeting between the Third Dalai Lama (Sonam Gyatso, 1543-1588) and the Ninth Karmapa, who was accompanied by the Fifth Shamarpa, when the Third Dalai Lama felt they did not treat him with the high courtesy due his position and title. Later, when attendants informed the Fifth Dalai Lama that the Seventh Shamarpa (Yeshe Nyingpo, 1631-1694) was coming to see him, they suggested that the Dalai Lama should not receive him with high courtesy because the Karmapa and Shamarpa did not do the same during the Tsurphu Monastery meeting. The Fifth Dalai Lama responded "Shamarpa is a renown high lama. If you do not greet him with respect, it is our fault. Moreover, I come from an aristocratic family (*'phyong rgyas stag rtse*), having poor manners would be such a shameful, so I prepared a warm reception with full respect for Shamarpa" (Gyatso 1991, 2:356) (CGT). From this incident, it can be understood that the spark of the civil war was based on resentment held and passed down from earlier generations. Additionally, it can also be seen that the attendants and advisors made attempts over several generations to destroy friendly and cooperative relations between the two leaders due to a perceived, historical slight. One thing to observe is that the Fifth Dalai Lama's attendants likely did not consider that, during

the Third Dalai Lama's time, Karmapas were an officially higher position than Dalai Lamas. Until the Fifth Dalai Lama, they only served as abbots of Drepung Monastery.

The last contributing event has been mentioned in many sources, but I have recounted the matter as described in Shakabpa's book *Tibet's Political History*. This particular incident occurred in Lhasa during the time of Fourth Dalai Lama (Yonten Gyatso, 1589-1617), who was the great-grandson of Altan Khan, and Sixth Shamarpa. After Yonten Gyatso was recognized as the Fourth Dalai Lama, he was taken to Gaden monastery in Lhasa. On this occasion, Sharmapa sent a congratulatory poem to the young Dalai Lama; but the attendants either due to a lack of education or intentionally misinterpreted it and replied with a spiteful letter. After receiving the reply, rumors spread among Shamarpa's monks that the Dalai Lama's monks were uneducated.

The Dalai Lama's monks learned of the insult and, in return, they invited Mongols warriors who robbed Karma Kagyu monks and monasteries (Shakabpa 1984, 97). It is hard to believe that the Dalai Lama's attendants were unable to understand the congratulatory nature of the poem and, therefore, likely that they took advantage from the letter and create a problem as they thought they were getting stronger with the Mongol's patrilineal support to take revenge to the Karma Kagyu school from the previous dispute. These tiny causes later grew into significant conflicts between the religious groups and regents in Tibet.

#### **2.4.2 Hope for Reconciliation**

Despite the ongoing conflict between the Karma Kagyu and Geluk schools, known efforts at reconciliation were attempted by both sides on several occasions. Shakabpa recounted that, on one occasion, the Fourth Dalai Lama arrived coincidentally in Gonkar region, while the Sixth Shamarpa was residing there. Both were eager to meet, but their attendants prevented the meeting by arranging a swift departure for the Dalai Lama. Shakabpa speculates, "Such meeting might have ended the rivalry between Ga-luk-pa and Kar-ma-pa sects, but the attendants of both

the Dalai Lama and Karmapa do not want the truce, and Dalai Lama's followers hurried him away to Drepung Monastery" (1984, 98). Since Shakabpa clearly indicates that attendants of both leaders did not wish for them to meet, it is doubtful that it was only the Dalai Lama's attendants who prevented opportunities for reconciliation.

Around in 1642, another attempt of reconciliation was made between the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Tenth Karmapa. This event is also mentioned in many sources. Mendong Tsampa (Karma Ngedon Tengye) recorded it in his book of *Karmapas' Biographies* (2008, 178). It is widely accepted that the Geluk school was gaining power during this time, and some of Karmapa's followers arranged a meeting between the Gaden Phodrang representatives and the Tenth Karmapa to attempt to subdue the expansion of Geluk power. The Gaden Phodrang asked the Tenth Karmapa to take an oath not to harm Geluk school from that time onwards. The Karmapa protested (Van Schaik 2011, 122). According to Tibetan sources, the Karmapa responded provocatively that he could promise never to hurt the Geluk school in the future, because he had never hurt the Geluk—or anyone—in the past. The Gaden Phodrang representatives misinterpreted the Karmapa's statement and said that Karmapa intentionally twisted the sentence to avoid the oath because he wished to harm Geluk in the future. This interpretation led to failure of final opportunity for reconciliation. Soon after, the civil war broke out and almost all Karma Kagyu monasteries in Tibet were burned, sealed, or converted to the Geluk school along with all the resident monks and nuns—who were either killed or converted (Thrangu and Tengye 2008, 178).

In 1669, the Fifth Dalai Lama invited the Tenth Karmapa, who had been in exile for three decades, back to Tibet in order to compensate him for the losses caused by his administration's actions against Karma Kagyu. The Dalai Lama received him in the Potala Palace in Lhasa, where it is said that they had lengthy, profound discourses on philosophy and the Dharma. In addition, Dalai Lama granted Karmapa permission to return to his seat at Tsurphu Monastery.

Yet, the ban on and suspicion towards Karma Kagyu continued in subsequent generations. Both the Eighth Shamar (Palchen Choskyi Dondup, 1695-1732) and the Twelfth Karmapa died en route to China on consecutive days. It was believed that they were killed by the black magic of Lama Thwuken Chökyi Gyatso (*thwu'u bkan chos kyi rgya mtsho*) (dpal bzang 1995, 446), a Geluk representative in China at the time. It was felt that their visit to China threatened the Geluk school as a whole and the theocratic hegemony of the Dalai Lama Chinese emperor himself had invited them. Although the Fifth Dalai Lama allowed the Tenth Karmapa to return to Tibet, none of the converted monasteries were returned to the Karma Kagyu and restrictions on Karma Kagyu activities continued. They were not allowed to build new monasteries or ordain new monks and nuns. In this situation, the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition could not be restored until the Sixteenth Karmapa left Tibet in 1959, following Chinese occupation.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided the historical account of Karma Kagyu School, the development of its institutionalized scholasticism and its subsequent decline due to the intermingling of politics with religious sectarianism. These historical events also explain why the Sixteenth Karmapa was desperate to reconstruct the scholastic tradition in-exile and why it had not been revived in the intervening centuries since the Ü and Tsang civil war. The Third Karmapa established the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Sixth Karmapa brought scholastic transmissions from the Sakya school, and the Eighth Karmapa stabilized and flourished the tradition by writing the major philosophical texts. However, the tradition survived only for 350 years before it collapsed due to a sectarian infighting that culminated in a civil war.

The sectarianism within Tibetan Buddhist schools is likely the fundamental cause of the civil war and the decimation of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Such sectarian power was later transformed into state policy in Tibet a Buddhist theocracy, called the

unified system of religion and politics. In Tibet, sectarianism was used to achieve political goals and resulted in Tibetan religious leaders committing violent acts.

This sectarian ideology in Tibetan Buddhism is deeply rooted in the major male-dominated Tibetan monasteries, particularly in the Geluk monasteries, and has been passed down from older to younger generations, even after the mass exile following Chinese occupation of Tibet. Based on this view, I conclude that, similar to governance in medieval Europe, the dissonance of combining religion and politics in the 17<sup>th</sup> century caused Buddhist warfare in Tibet and divisions that have been irreparable since. In fact, it is these very divisions made it easier for an outside power to overtake Tibet in 1959, resulting in the loss of important Buddhist institutions built over many centuries. Thus, unless one separates religion from its politics, Buddhist extremism will always remain in Tibetan Buddhism.

## Chapter 3: Reconstruction of the Karma Kagyu Scholastic Tradition in-Exile

### 3.1 Introduction

Rumtek Shédra, officially named Karma Shri Nalanda Institute (KSNI), represents the best example of modern attempts to revive the institution of Karma Kagyu scholasticism that was destroyed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This revival constitutes a creative reinvention of the premodern Kagyu doctrinal lineage,<sup>33</sup> and so I label it a “tradition” in its own right. The new tradition is based on the First Jamgon Kongtrul’s basis of the two categories of Tibetan Buddhist education (2010, 317), i.e., scholasticism and meditation, while incorporating modern elements. As elucidated in the previous chapter, the lineage was decimated in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and not measurably restored until 1980. The Sixteenth Karmapa, from his early life, felt responsible to reconstruct the lineage following his exile post-1959. He built the Rumtek Shédra in Sikkim and wrote the *Memorandum* that contains its constitution, curriculum, class schedule, and holidays.

This chapter seeks to answer the second part of my research question: How did the Sixteenth Karmapa reconstruct the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition? In fact, he not only reconstructed the tradition, but also fused it with the modern education system. I argue that although he was successful in reinventing the tradition, it immediately began to decline after the graduation of its first class of students in 1990, primarily because of internal monastic conflicts, such as the controversy after his death between Rumtek Monastery (*dikdra*) and *shédra* over his true reincarnation.

Rumtek Shédra is not only a new model for a Tibetan monastic learning center, but also most likely the first one to affiliate with a modern university (Sampurnanand Sanskrit University) in-exile. The Sixteenth Karmapa established the initial conditions for the *shédra*, for

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<sup>33</sup> *bka' brgyud kyi bshad pa'i bka' bbs*. Although the First Jamgon Kontrul writes Kagyu, he exclusively explains the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition but not covering all Kagyu schools.

constructing the site, drafted a detailed memorandum organizing its structure, and determining all the required textbooks for its students. Since its inception, the entire degree program at Rumtek Shédra, including all meals and accommodations, is free of cost so that the people from poor rural and underdeveloped regions in the Himalaya can receive a quality Buddhist education.

### 3.1.1 Mapping the Rumtek Shédra

Before analyzing the Sixteenth Karmapa's memorandum, it is helpful to briefly summarize the location and physical layout of the Rumtek Shédra. In 1959, the twelfth King Of Sikkim (*chos rgyal*) (Palden Dondup Namgyal, 1923-1982) offered 74 acres<sup>34</sup> land in Rumtek to the Sixteenth Karmapa to establish his new seat or monastery in-exile (Ecclesiastical Department 2016, 69). Sikkim was a small independent monarchy state in the Himalaya region until 1975. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1975, Sikkim officially was annexed into India during the time of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Prime Minister of India.<sup>35</sup> However, the Indian Government did not change the decision over the property given to the Sixteenth Karmapa and even financially supported the monastery construction project. In order to revive the Karma Kagyu tantra and sutra transmissions, the Sixteenth Karmapa established his main seat at Rumtek Monastery for tantra training, and at Rumtek Shédra for the Buddhist philosophical training, the two institutions at the same site (Bausch 2018, 112).

The *shédra* is located within the compound of Dharma Chakra Centre (P.O. Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim 737135 India).<sup>36</sup> A detailed account of Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center will be discussed in the following chapter. The Institute is situated on the slope of a mountain in East Sikkim, an hour by vehicle from its capital, Gangtok. The Institute is housed in three separate buildings, and the age of each building marks of the gradual development of the institute. The

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<sup>34</sup> Sikkim King's land granting letter says the size of the land is 74.86 acres.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.sikkim.gov.in/asp/Misc/aboutsikkim.htm> (Accessed on February 22, 2019)

<sup>36</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=k1bootstrap:longdesc&id=96&Itemid=588&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=k1bootstrap:longdesc&id=96&Itemid=588&lang=en) (Accessed on February 22, 2019)

primary building, Karmae Manju Shri House (*karma'i 'jam dbyangs khang*), was built in the late 1970s (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 84). The second building of the shédra was constructed under the direct supervision of the Sixteenth Karmapa and officially inaugurated in 1981. The construction of the third building began in 1984 and was finished in 1987 under the supervision of the Third Jamgon Kongtrul (Lodro Chokyi Senge, 1954-1993), one of the directors of the Institute (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 86).

### **3.1.2 Beginnings of the Rumtek Shédra**

After the establishment of *Gaden Phodrang Government Of Dalai Lama* in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Tibet, Karma Kagyu remained without a formal monastic institute for the study of Buddhist philosophy despite producing some notable scholars such as the Eighth Situ Panchen and the First Jamgon Kongtrul. Thus, Eleventh Situ (Pema Wangchok Gyalpo, 1894-1950), one of his main teachers, encouraged the young Sixteenth Karmapa to establish a Karma Kagyu *shédra* at Tsurphu in Central Tibet (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 84). The Sixteenth Karmapa conceptualized the reconstruction project of the Karma Kagyu's scholastic tradition at an early stage of his life. In the early 1940s, Karmapa started to establish a shédra in Central Tibet but failed due to a lengthy process of getting permission from the government of Tibet and subsequently the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) invasion of Tibet in 1959 (Ecclesiastical Department 2016, 69). Transitioning period and the Tibetans' reestablishment of Buddhism in-exile post-1959 was already discussed in the introduction.

In 1978, the Sixteenth Karmapa began his shédra project in-exile by first creating a monastic primary school (*gdzi rim slob grwa*) named Karmae Manjushri House at Rumtek, Sikkim. He also prepared a five-year basic curriculum for the school (Rigpe Dorje and Josayma 2016, 3:143). Later, the school was expanded to include an institute for higher Buddhist studies, which was named Karma Shri Nalanda Institute, named for the famed ancient Buddhist university "Nalanda" in the Bihar state of India. He even began the formal process to affiliate the

new institute with Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in Varanasi, India. The affiliation process was completed in 1984 by his successors, the Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche (1952-2014) and the Third Jamgon Rinpoche (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 84).

Due to delays in the bureaucratic process with the Tibetan government, monastic internal resistance against the shédra training and other reasons, it took almost the entire life of the Sixteenth Karmapa to reconstruct the scholastic tradition. Having begun reconstruction efforts in Tibet in the 1940s while still young, he only succeeded in completing this project in 1981. In fact, Rumtek Shédra was officially inaugurated on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 1981, fourteen days of his death. The inauguration was held on the auspicious Buddhist holy day of Lhabab Duchen, which commemorates Buddha's descent from the God's Realm, thereby as fulfilling the Sixteenth Karmapa's final wish (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 85). The Institute was then continued by his four spiritual sons (*rgyal ba yab sras zhi*) namely Shamar Rinpoche, Situ Rinpoche, Jamgon Rinpoche, and Gyaltsap Rinpoche. Rumtek Shédra celebrated its silver jubilee in 2008 and has produced many learned Karma Kagyu scholars who have since propagated Buddhist teachings around the world (Ecclesiastical Department 2016, 71).

The analysis of Rumtek Shédra in this chapter coincides with the order of the topics contained in the Sixteenth Karmapa's memorandum booklet: 1) the Constitution and exam regulations; 2) years and the curriculum; 3) class schedule and daily routine; and, 4) special days and vacations (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 4). However, the scope of the analysis is limited to the first three topics. Karmapa wrote the memorandum and signed it on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1981, three months before his death. Besides the main body of this chapter, introduction and conclusion state and restate some key arguments and summarize the major events of the shédra occurred during the twenty-five years (1981-2006).

### 3.2 The Rumtek Shédra Memorandum

The memorandum is the textual foundation that the Sixteenth Karmapa constructed for initiating the new Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. Therefore, it is a substantial source that is analyzed in this chapter. It is published in the form of a booklet and given to new students for their guidance. It is written in Tibetan, but the title is translated into English and printed on the cover page as *The Constitution, Code of Conduct and Curriculum of Shri Karmae Nalanda Institute for Higher Studies* (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 1). The name reflects the key topics of the memorandum. However, the English translation does not match the Tibetan title because the Tibetan does not specify the three points. Instead, it is translated as “The Students’ Practical Guidance Document of the Karmae Shri Nalanda Institute for Higher Studies” (CGT) (*dpal karma’i na lan dra ches mtho’i bshad grwa chen mor slob gnyer ba rnam kyis nyams len zhu sgo’i yig cha*). One can understand from different formats of the memorandum that it was later compiled into a booklet and distributed to the students because there is a recent publication of three volumes of the Sixteenth Karmapa’s work (Rigpe Dorje and Josayma 2016, 3:134).

### 3.3 The Constitution

The constitution is the first and a most important part of the memorandum which contains thirteen regulatory points to reconstruct and administer Rumtek Shédra. Among them, the first, second, eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth points will be discussed in this section since they comprise the primary rules. The memorandum starts with its purpose, stating:

For the preparation of establishing a new *shédra*, (Karma Shri Nalanda Institute for Higher Buddhist Studies) and for the existed primary school of Karmae Manju Shri, [I, the Sixteenth Karmapa] will ascertain the necessary documents for supervising its teachers and students. Among them, the first is the religious constitution including the exam regulations. (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 4) (CGT-2)<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> The document is translated from Tibetan to English by Chulthim Gurung as a part of the thesis work.

The word “document” in its Tibetan form is *yig cha* which implicates more a legal document, therefore, it is translated as a memorandum in the *shédra*’s first journal (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 85).

### 3.3.1 First Article: Appointment of the Director and Abbots

The first two points of the constitution are to identify the leaders and the students of the institute. To be precise, the first point is specifically about the appointment of directors and abbots of the institute, “The first point is: The director (*slob spyi*)<sup>38</sup> of this *shédra* is *four sons of victory* (*rgyal ba yab sras dz'i*). Next to them, dignified senior abbots (*mkhan po*)<sup>39</sup> should lead the institute” (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 5) (CGT-3). The Sixteenth Karmapa did not mention specific names of the “four sons” and the abbots in the constitution, but I found them in the institute’s journal which is mentioned earlier. The session for the directorship is three years in rotation between the four spiritual sons. The abbots are Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, and Khenpo Chodrak Tenpel Rinpoche (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 86). Among them, the first two senior Khenpos, according to their biographies, were trained under the Nyingma and Sakya masters in Tibet. Later, they both continued their studies at Buxa Daur in-exile in India and earned Geshe degree. Subsequently, Sixteenth Karmapa invited them to teach at the Rumtek Shédra.<sup>40</sup>

We can understand from the first point that the Sixteenth Karmapa appointed the directors of the institute in order to create an equal distribution of power and shared

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<sup>38</sup> *Slob spyi* is a Tibetan term can be translated into English as both a director or a principal.

<sup>39</sup> Tarab tulku use the English word ‘abbot as an Tibetan translation of Khenpo by giving option of Lobpon, but in the footnote he argues that function of a khenpo is not like the function of an abbot in antient times (Tulku 2000, 8). In this context, *The Treasury of Lives* online resource concludes that *Geshe, Tripi, Trizin, Khenpo*, and *Khenchen* all are different terms for abbots (<https://treasuryoflives.org/institution/Abbots> (accessed on March 16, 2019).

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.rinpoche.com/trlife.html>, <http://www.ktgrinpoche.org/about/biography-dzogchen-ponlop-rinpoche>

responsibility between his trusted students who would administer the institute. One can also see that the head of the institute carries the legacy of Karma Kagyu school so that the identity and the tradition would remain unmixed with other schools. However, if one analyzes this point based on the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India,<sup>41</sup> one might have to conclude that this act is considered as an unregulated act because the power of the decision-making comes from an individual rather than a unanimous decision. Another practical issue one can raise here is that did Karmapa think about if they all are equally qualified for being a candidate for the director position. Even if so, would they all have time to hold the chair and work in the office daily?

It is, therefore, important for an educational institute to appoint someone based on his or her qualifications and experience related to the education and the field of study. Due to the lack of this fundamental system and the devastating effects of the Sixteenth Karmapa's reincarnation controversy, Rumtek Shédra was faced with various difficulties (Ecclesiastical Department 2016, 71). Gyaltsab Rinpoche, director of the institute, could not find a candidate as described in the constitution, so along with others, he had to choose someone from the outside. In 2016, Rinpoche appointed Khenpo Kalsang Nyima (*mkhan po bskal bzang nyi ma*) as the new director of the institute at the time of Rinpoche's retirement.<sup>42</sup>

### **3.3.2 Second Article: Vinaya and Banishment of Students**

The implementation of *Vinaya* rules in an organization transforms its identity, including how its members are recognized. The detailed explanation of *Vinaya* will be given in Chapter Four. The point is that *Vinaya* or monastic rules draws a distinct line between a lay and monastic

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<sup>41</sup> “The UGC, however, was formally established only in November 1956 as a statutory body of the Government of India through an Act of Parliament for the coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of university education in India.” (Source: <https://www.ugc.ac.in/page/Genesis.aspx> accessed date: June 18, 2019)

<sup>42</sup> (<http://mahappiness.com/about/> 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019)

community. Thus, the second point of the Constitution requires compulsory adherence to Vinaya makes Rumtek Shédra not only a Buddhist institute but also a Buddhist monastery for Buddhist celibates:

The second point is; this institute should follow the rules of *Vinaya* (*'dul ba*), monastic ethics, accordingly as the teacher, Samyaksambuddha taught it. Based on this teaching, the practice of three foundations (*gzhi gsum*) should maintain without damage. Thus, a student who breaks the fundamental *Vinaya* precepts; four roots (*tsa ba bzhi*) and alcohol, and other major faults such as gambling will be banished (*gnas dbyung*) from the institute on top of facing the punishment mentioned in the [Rumtek] monastery's constitutional manual. (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 5) (CGT-4).

Combining the adherence to Buddhist monastic rules as a part of a Buddhist educational center is not exclusive to Rumtek Shédra, but is a general feature of Tibetan monastic institutes.

Therefore, those who wish to join a traditional Buddhist institute must be celibates (monks or nuns). This is because the basic rules of the institute are fused with *Vinaya*. From the social point of view, there is a disadvantage in it because it prevents the lay society from receiving traditional education, especially in Tibet prior to 1959.

Since Buddhist education is provided in monasteries, it is arguable that the Tibetan term *shédra* (*bshad grwa*) or *drasa* (*grwa sa*) should be reserved for the monastic education. Therefore, its appropriate translation into English would be “Buddhist Monastic Institute”. However, different translations exist for those two terms given by different scholars. Dreyfus and Pearcey translate “the Commentarial School” for *shédra* (Dreyfus 2005, 273; Pearcey 2015, 451), but Rich selected “Monastic College” (Rich 2016, 3). Jeffrey Hopkins translates *drasa* as a “Monastic College” in his dictionary.<sup>43</sup>

As for the second point, students who break these rules would be banished from the *shédra*, which often leaves them homeless. This punishment is not like being expelled from a

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<sup>43</sup> [http://haa.dila.edu.tw/Hopkins\\_Tibetan\\_Dictionary.pdf](http://haa.dila.edu.tw/Hopkins_Tibetan_Dictionary.pdf) accessed on February 23, 2019, Page 53.

regular university; this is a much more severe punishment. First, the students who are expelled from the *shédra* not only lose their ability to educate themselves, but also lose their monastic identity. Second, it is common for them to lose their social status because, even today, traditional Tibetan society stigmatizes those expelled from the monastic order, especially conservative Buddhist practitioners and this usually includes the expelled student's family and friends.

Third, many students who are banished are not equipped to handle the situation. They often do not know where to go since most of the students in the *shédra* have grown up in monasteries, having come from distant Himalaya regions of India and Nepal, such as Ladakh or Manang, and at a very young age. Even if the expelled monk wishes to continue his studies, the traditional monastic educational pedagogy does not correspond with a mainstream educational model. Therefore, the students have little chance to continue their education after being expelled from the institute.

Bearing all those drawbacks in mind, Tibetan Buddhist educators, i.e., monastic heads and abbots, need to reconsider this system and whether the fusion of *Vinaya* and education is beneficial in the 21<sup>st</sup> century for younger generations. The fundamental *Vinaya* rules such as banishment have a huge impact on many young adults, especially in the Himalaya region. Expelled monks and nuns rarely get a second chance to become educated. A feasible solution for mitigating such a situation would be to let the students finish their studies while arranging their accommodation outside the monastic hostel.

### **3.3.2.1 Ambiguity in the Admission Procedure**

Although admission is the first step to get into the *shédra* program, there is no clear instruction on the admission process for Rumtek Shédra in the memorandum booklet. This leaves the admission process either too simple or ambiguous. Article Two in the *Memorandum* suggests that the new *shédra* student must be a monk because the Rumtek Shédra itself is a monastery, as

mentioned earlier. Besides the religious or moral status, it is commonly understood that the students also need a primary education in order to follow *shédra*'s curriculum.

To fill this educational gap, the Sixteenth Karmapa first opened a preliminary school at Rumtek Monastery (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 83). The school produced potential students for the Rumtek Shédra, however, the *shédra* students were not only monks from the Rumtek Monastery, but also young monks from different monasteries in the Himalaya regions of India, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, Sakya Tharig Monastery and Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling in Nepal. Each monastery was offered admission for two students and 40 students were enrolled when the *shédra* first opened in 1981 (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 84).

According to Rumtek Shédra's website, the admission process became more complicated after its affiliation with the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University. Previously, the only requirement for being admitted into the *shédra* was an official recommendation letter from an individual monastery, acknowledging that the prospective student is a monk of that monastery. Later, students also needed a "Class-eight" certificate or an equivalent monastic education certificate in order to receive admission to the Institute. The KSNI website adds that prospective students are required to take an entrance exam at the Sanskrit University.<sup>44</sup> The gradual changes in the admission process show that the Institute has improved and expanded its admission criteria based on the Indian university's prerequisites.

Most of the Buddhist monastic institutes in-exile mention similar admission criteria for their institutes. However, one additional rule was mentioned by the *Ngagyur Nyingma Institute* in South India, the largest Nyingma Shédra in exile. As part of the application, the new student who wish to study in the institute, must take the following oath and sign the corresponding document:

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<sup>44</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=402:students-curriculum-and-daily-schedule&catid=96:nalanda-institute&Itemid=614&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=402:students-curriculum-and-daily-schedule&catid=96:nalanda-institute&Itemid=614&lang=en) (Accessed date: 02/24/2019)

**Oath of Allegiance:** All students of NNI must sign the following Oath of Allegiance: On this day...I pledge solemnly to remain myself an industrious member of the institute and to work towards its noble goal, namely to uphold and propagate Buddhism in general and the unique teaching of the supreme Ngagyur Tradition in particular.<sup>45</sup>

Although transparency in the information is laudable, emphasis on such matters in admissions would make a Tibetan Buddhist *shédra* more of a sectarian institution than an educational institute. It is important to distinguish between the ideologies of religion and education in this semi-public space. In addition to the admission process of the *shédra*, Tibetan monks usually follow the traditional ordination ceremony, which is a different form of admission but carries a similar meaning. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

### **3.3.3 Eleventh Point: Degrees and duties of the students**

The tradition of awarding an academic degree after the completion of one's studies in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism first occurred at Nalanda University in India; a similar tradition followed in Tibet in the 8<sup>th</sup> century (Tulku 2000, 1). The eleventh point of the constitution briefly mentions about conferring a degree on graduates and their duties after graduation. However, there is a very short description for this topic:

Article Eleven is based on the annual exam result, the final certificate will be granted [to the students] accordingly. In addition, non-residential graduate students must follow additional regulations as it is mentioned on the 81-letter document,<sup>46</sup> which is a policy letter of non-residential students' admission. Residential monks [monks belong to the Rumtek Monastery] after obtaining the certificate, should agree to follow the instructions given by the monastic office that is generally only to serve the Buddha Dharma. (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 8) (CGT-5)

From this point, we can understand that the goal of the *shédra* education is to propagate Buddhism. To further this goal, a certificate is issued after graduation from the Rumtek Shédra

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<sup>45</sup> [http://www.palyul.org/eng\\_shed07\\_entrance.htm](http://www.palyul.org/eng_shed07_entrance.htm) (Accessed date: 02/24/2019)

<sup>46</sup> I could not find this document neither some could tell me about it.

and residential students have additional requirements in comparison with non-residential students. Khenpo Tsultrim Tharchin, an alumnus of KSNI and abbot of the Vikrama Shila Buddhist Institute in Pokhara, Nepal, provided copies of both the Tibetan (See appendix-1) and Sanskrit Acarya (Master) degree certificates.

Both certificates indicate that the graduate is awarded a master's degree. The Tibetan certificate is issued by Karma Shri Nalanda Institute, and Sampurnanand Sanskrit University Varanasi India issues the Sanskrit certificate. Practically speaking, the Sanskrit certificate carries more weight in the academic world and for a job search because of the national recognition and accreditation. One thing to note about the Tibetan certificate is that there is no certificate serial number on it, which might cause a problem to the holder of it in the Indian bureaucracy.

Obtaining the national recognition and accreditation for Tibetan monastic institutes in India and Nepal has been a long struggle for the Tibetan monastic institutes. Although some monasteries are concerned about losing their independence and control of the traditional religious education system by affiliating with an outside university, most monastic education centers are not able to affiliate due to the lack of qualified teachers and structured curricula. The Sixteenth Karmapa began the affiliation process of Rumtek Shédra long before the construction of the physical institute. Although the affiliation of Rumtek Shédra to Sanskrit University was completed in 1984, the official certificate was handed to the *shédra* during the opening ceremony of the *shédra* new building in 1987 (Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche et al. 1989). This is one of his major steps towards inventing a Karma Kagyu academic tradition: hybridizing it with a contemporary educational system by affiliating with a modern and accredited university and adhering to higher standards and requirements.

### 3.3.3.1 Ambiguity of the Khenpo Title

Nowadays, the title the *khenpo* (*mkhan po*) creates some confusion in society, especially in academia, as it is not clear if it is a religious title or an educational degree. To elucidate, I briefly analyze the title *khenpo* used in the Nyingma, Kagyu and Sakya schools, and *geshe* in the Geluk School. According to the following sources, these titles are not only spiritual titles but also indicate an academic degree. Many Western scholars try to equate these two traditional titles with a Western academic degree. David Germano states that Khenpo in Nyingma and Geshe in Geluk and doctorate degrees in Western universities are equivalent (Goldstein and Kapstein 1998, 65).

In the Karma Kagyu School, the title *khenpo* is not a part of formal degree; rather it is given as an academic title to a selected graduate in addition to the degree. In the certificate, the official title of the degree is called *karapjam* (*bka' rab 'byams*), and the official English translation is written as *Master of the Buddha's Teaching in Sutra Tradition*. Since I could not find the term *khenpo* on the degree, I sought help from a person who holds this title (see Appendix 1). Khenpo Tsultrim Tharchin explained how he received the *khenpo* title and why it is not written on the degree certificate. He told me that only nine students out of twenty-nine graduates were given the *khenpo* title in a special ceremony which allowed them to serve as an instructor at the *shédra* as well as in different monasteries. He further confirmed that the selection criteria of the *khenpo* title are based on the student's final exam grade and practice of moral ethics.

In contrast, according to Tarab Tulku, the *geshe* title is a distinct and codified degree in the Geluk scholastic tradition which began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. According to his description, the *karabjam* degree awarded by the Rumtek Shédra is one of the *geshe* degrees (Tulku 2000, 11). From that explanation, Kagyu and Geluk should have some commonalities in their philosophical pedagogies, and *Geshe* and *Khenpo* should carry an equal value of Buddhist education to a

certain extent. However, the Geluk school inculcate the *geshe* title with its certificate granted by Geluk Universities (see Appendix-2). First, it is written *geshe* as a part of the title on the certificate, *geshe lharam* (*gde bshes lha rams*), in English “Doctorate in Buddhist Philosophy”. Second, the *geshe* title is used as a generic term and is defined by *lharam* which means there are different types of *geshe* degrees and *lharam* is considered as the highest degree in the Geluk tradition.

Primarily, the term *khenpo* found in the *Vinaya* refers to a ritual officiant. The renowned Tibetan bilingual dictionary called *Great Tibetan and Chinese Dictionary* (*bod rgya tshig mdod chen mo*) gives its definition for the word *khenpo* as follows:

Either a head of a working team or a professional [e.g.,] a poet. Or, *upādhaya* [in Sanskrit] who gives the [Buddhist] celibacy<sup>47</sup> and full ordination precepts, [e.g.,] abbot of the monasteries. (Tsering, Zhapdung, and Dungkar 1984, 296) (CGT-6)

Dungkar Lobsang Thrinley, in his *Tibetological Great Dictionary*, further elaborates the functions of *khenpo* in the *Vinaya* context:

The function of Khenpo: Granting precepts to others accordingly with the (Buddhist) *Vinaya* text '*dul bai*' *gzhung*). It is a person who grants the novice (*dge tshul*) and full ordination vows (*dge slong*). And, the person who gives *Vinaya* training, daily ethical guidance, and *Vinaya* textual explanations [to the monastic students]. (Dungkar 2002, 426) (CGT-7)

From the above accounts, *khenpo* is a polysemic term having at least three distinct meanings in Tibetan Buddhism. It can be conferred as an additional honorific distinction to the master's degree, or either be the title of a person who grants Buddhist precepts, such as Khenchen Shiwatso (*mkhan chen zshi ba mtsho*), or a professional such as a carpenter. The bottom line is that those who earn a master's degree from the Rumtek Shédra and have the additional title of

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<sup>47</sup> The definition of “celibacy” may vary in different religions. I translated the Tibetan word *rab byung* (Skt: Paribrajaka), rooted in Buddhist *Vinaya*, as celibacy which requires a strict ritual performance to become a celibate or monks and nuns in Buddhism.

*khenpo* are of the highest moral and academic standard. The bigger question in this regard is whether the academic award of *khenpo* title is applicable for lay graduates in the future. The *geshe* title was already in use for lay graduates in Tibet before 1959, according to Prof. Sempa Dorje, director of Karmapa International Buddhist Institute, during an interview on this topic.

Most Tibetan English dictionaries confirm that *khenpo* is translated as “abbot.” In that case, *The Treasury of Lives* online resource defines abbot as “the heads of the monasteries and associated colleges.” The category here refers to the Tibetan Buddhist world.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, in the *Vinaya* teaching, *khenpo* holds the highest position in the Buddhist monasteries. Since Tibetan Buddhism is intertwined with politics, however, heads of the major Tibetan monasteries are often decided based on a different set of skills, such as domestic politics and traditional administrative skills. Additionally, for the sake of gaining power, publicity and financial strength of the monastery, many religious leaders with titles such as *lama*, *guru* and *tulku* (reincarnation) are often hierarchically placed above the *khenpo* post and act in a superior capacity which can morally jeopardize the religious orientation of the Buddhist monasteries in Tibet as well as in exile (Dreyfus 2003, 62).

### **3.3.4 Twelfth and Thirteenth Points: Room for rules’ amendment in the Future**

Although the selection of the director of Rumtek Shédra is not democratic, the Sixteen Karmapa left the future administration of Karma Shri Nalanda Institute open to the democratic and unanimous decision of its staff members. He devoted the last two articles, twelve and thirteen, to the amendment of the rules in the future during his absence. He writes in Article Twelve:

Regardless of whether it is clear or not in the previous points, all matters of the *shédra* administration, small or big, should be decided unanimously in a meeting of the leaders, abbots, discipline master (*dge skos*) and staff members according to the time and situation. (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 9) (CGT-8)

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<sup>48</sup> <https://treasuryoflives.org/institution/Abbots>

This point indicates that any future matters of the Rumtek Shédra should be discussed in the meeting and agreed to by all, so that any decision affecting the *shédra* will not be biased an individual's or smaller faction's views. A similar theme is mentioned in the Article Thirteen but more exclusively:

The Thirteenth Article states: The years of classes, the daily class schedule, vacations, and auspicious days ceremonies should be further revised although there are explicit on a separate document. And the rest of the constitutional points of the *shédra*, which I have confirmed, should be corrected and changed under my name if misappropriation occurs when they are practiced. (Rigpe Dorje 1981. 10) (CGT-9)

In this article, the Sixteenth Karmapa allowed changing the fundamental constitutional points which is prudent and forward-thinking. However, unless the change is made through the general meeting, it can sometimes be dangerous involving personal interest and agendas. These two articles allow the constitution of the institute to adapt to changing times and different generations. Analysis of these two last brief articles is necessary to understand the organization and its long-term operation, especially after the death of its founder.

### **3.4 The Curriculum**

The curriculum of Rumtek Shédra plays a significant role in reconstructing and reinventing the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. Revival of the tradition must strike a careful balance between old and new. While filling the historical gap of this tradition, the Sixteenth Karmapa took the opportunity to upgrade the curriculum by combining traditional and contemporary subjects, which I describe as a “hybrid” of traditional and contemporary education. The curriculum heading reads, “Ascertaining the Classes of the Year for the Karma Shri Nalanda Institute for Higher Studies” (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 12). In this section, there are three major points to be analyzed. The first is the length of the program at Rumtek Shédra, the second is which subjects are taught during those years, and the third is a sectarian approach of the curriculum.

### 3.4.1 Length of the Traditional Degree Program

The curriculum of the institute clearly explains that the duration of the program is eleven years. The first eight years are dedicated to the study of sutra (philosophy) and the last three years are reserved for tantra (esoteric) studies. To be precise, the tantric study here does not refer to esoteric rituals, but to study of the philosophy of Buddhist tantra texts. The degree titles were mentioned at the end of each of the two-course descriptions contained in the Sixteenth Karmapa's memorandum. At the end of the eight-year course, "by studying these, one obtains the title and degree of *karapjampa (bka' rab 'byams pa'i mtshan gnas lag khyer thob)*" (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 15) (CGT).

At the end of the eleventh-year course, it states that, "After accomplishing the studies of these subjects, one will be awarded the degree of a great scholar of both sutra and tantra traditions, the ornament of illuminating the supreme Dharma (*mdo sngags yongs kyi pan dzi ta chos rab rnam par 'byed pa'i rgyan)*" ((Rigpe Dorje 1981, 17) (CGT). Nevertheless, Rumtek Shédra has not yet conducted the second degree program. Moreover, in practice, the degree program at the *shédra* is a nine-year course.

It is clear that the nine-year degree program of "master" or *acarya* was developed after the *shédra*'s affiliation to SSU. A similar program was used by the Center Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS),<sup>49</sup> Varanasi, which is also affiliated to SSU. The difference at the beginning between the Rumtek Shédra and CIHTS was that the *shédra* had not mentioned the specification of the nine years. CIHTS follows that mainstream education program of SSU, which is four years of higher secondary education, three years of BA studies, and two years of MA program in early 1980s. In this way, a student completes the nine-year program, and then one can pursue a M. Phil or Ph.D. Perhaps it was too early for the Sixteenth Karmapa to

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.cuts.ac.in/index.php?url=content/ac3c> (Accessed 02/25/2019)

speculate and draft Rumtek Shédra's curriculum in accord with that of SSU and there is no other apparent reason for the *shédra* program to be lengthened from eight to nine years.

### 3.4.2 Subjects Taught at Rumtek Shédra

Generally speaking, the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism and their academic institutes agree upon the basic philosophical subjects of study. All the major fields of study are comprised in five major topics called “The Five Great Works” or “The Five Classic Works” (*gzhung chen bka' pod lnga*): morality, metaphysics, middle-path, realization of path, and Buddhist epistemology (*'dul ba, mngon pa, dbus ma, phar phyin and tshad ma*) (Tulku 2000, 11). These thematic names stand for both texts and topics in Tibetan Buddhism. These texts are commonly studied in almost all Tibetan monastic institutes. It is not the case that the “Five Great Works” are specific to the Geluk School. Dungkar Losang Trinley, a native contemporary Geluk scholar, posits that the Five Great Works are common fields of study in Tibetan scholasticism (Dungkar 2002, 1795).

Furthermore, one should understand that scholars from each of the four schools have written numerous commentaries for the Five Great Works, which are also known as root texts. Those commentaries later became the key elements to identify the tradition of the individual schools. In addition, each of the individual schools have their own core specialized texts and topics integrated into their curricula. The Sixteenth Karmapa added three core Karma Kagyu texts: *Gyudlama* (*rgyud bla ma*), *Taknyi* (*brtags gnyis*), and *Sabmo Nangdon* (*zab mo nang don*) (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 15). In this way, he sought to ensure that Karma Kagyu students will be thoroughly qualified in the eight major core texts and the topics of sutra and tantra philosophies (*mdo sngags zhung chen rgyad*) at Rumtek Shédra. A discussion of the Karma Kagyu's core texts and its pedagogical approach can be found in Chapter Two.

Based on *The Eight Great Texts*, the structure of the KSNI curriculum is classified into three categories: philosophy, epistemology, and languages. Students must study philosophy and

epistemology from both Indian and Tibetan commentaries. Language is divided into two: Tibetan and foreign. The Tibetan language includes the subjects of Tibetan grammar, poetry, and Buddhist religious history. Foreign language includes the study of English, Hindi, or Sanskrit, but are optional. Following is the translation of the first-year curriculum of KSNI as in the booklet:

First year: [1] Commentary on epistemology abstracted from Treasury of Knowledge written by [1<sup>st</sup>] Jamgon [Kongtrul]. [2] The essence of the logic of seven treatises written by Pema Karpo. [3] Indian commentary on Bodhisattva's Way of Life written by Gewe lha. [4] Tibetan commentary on Bodhisattva's Way of Life, *Thegchen Chokyi Gyatso* written by Pawo Tsuglak Trengwa. [5] Tibetan Grammar: *Sumtak, Situi Drelchen* written by Situ Chojung. [6] Any of the [additional languages] English, Hindi, and Sanskrit. (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 12) (CGT-10)

From the emic perspective, one can easily identify the individual Tibetan school (i.g., Kagyu or Geluk) from the curriculum due to its core text preference. This also implicates the textual authority and sectarian approach in the different Tibetan monastic institutes.

### **3.4.3 Sectarian Ideology in the Curriculum**

Selecting particular authors and their commentaries as core texts (*yig cha*) for the curriculum is the method by which sectarianism embedded in the Tibetan monastic curricula. However, students native to India and the Himalayan regions can easily identify which Tibetan Buddhist school Rumtek Shédra belongs to from the texts and commentaries included in the curriculum. Let us take the example of commentaries for the *Bodhisattva's Way of Life* used by the Karma Kagyu. The third commentary for the root text is written by an Indian author, which demonstrates that the institute follows the Indian source. The fourth commentary is from Tibetan author Pawo Tsuglak Trengwa of the Karma Kagyu school.

The selection of this commentary does not only emphasize the high-regard for the composition and its author, but also reveals how the Karma Kagyu school interprets the specific

meaning of an Indian philosophical text. In this way, the students are taught dual aspects of the texts, Indian and the individual school's approach, which a school turns to for textual authority. Georges Dreyfus calls this sectarian approach "commentarial hierarchy," and he divides the organization of the curricula of institutes into three textual layers: Indian texts (*rgya gzhung*) Tibetan commentaries (*bod 'grel*) and individual monastic manuals (*grwa tshang yig cha*). He confirms that the Tibetan commentaries not only clarify the meaning of Indian texts, but also define the doctrinal position and impose the textual authority of the school (Dreyfus 2003 106).

It does not mean that commentarial interpretations for the root texts are different between the four schools, but that certain subtle distinctions create an individual philosophical view. This notion is not only found in the Karma Kagyu, and the other three schools often have stronger opinions on this matter especially the Geluk school. For example, in the curriculum of Sera Jay Monastery, one of the largest Geluk monasteries located in South India,<sup>50</sup> we can find only the commentaries of Je Tsongkhapa and Sera Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltzen (1464-1544), the founder of Sera monastic studies, are included. In fact, all of the individual Geluk monasteries, including Sera Jay, Sera Mey, Drepund and Gaden, are so proprietary that they do not even include commentaries of scholars from neighboring Geluk monasteries.

We can find a similar sectarian approach in the Nyingma school in that the core philosophical commentaries are either from Khenpo Zhenga (Zhenphen Nangwa, 1871-1927) or from Ju Mipham Rinpoche (Jamyang Namgyal Gyatso, 1846-1912). Khenpo Zhenga is the major source of the Nyingma school's rich and independent philosophical texts. He wrote "Thirteen Great Texts" (*gzhung chen bcu sum*), a collection of major annotated commentaries for important Indian Buddhist philosophies. One can find detailed information of the Khenpo Zhenga's work and the Nyingma scholastic tradition in Pearcey's work on the Nyingma

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<sup>50</sup> (<https://www.serajeymonastery.org/> February 12, 2019)

Institute's curriculum (Pearcey 2015, 451), and on the Ngagyur Nyingma Institute's website<sup>51</sup>. However, Ju Mipham is arguably the most important Nyingma scholar, writing extensive commentaries on Indian Buddhist philosophical texts mainly of "Five Great Works" in the Nyingma School.

A similar sectarian approach can be found in the Sakya School. Although the Sakya *Khyentse* lineage is famous for its non-sectarian approach, interestingly their institute inculcated Sakya sectarianism in its curriculum. The curriculum of *Dzongsar Khyentse Chokyi Lodro Institute* of Sakya School<sup>52</sup> in Himachal, India is a prime example of this. Also, I saw a similar approach in *Khenpo Choying Dorje's* public talk (*Title: Monastery as Home*) at UBC, Vancouver, on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 2019.<sup>53</sup> He is the director of the *Dzongsar Institute* in India. During the talk, Khenpo presented the institute as a non-sectarian Buddhist college, even though the institute strictly follows Sakya scholastic tradition. In general, philosophical studies at Sakya institutes are based on Gorampa's (Sonam Sengye, 1429-1489) commentaries, who was a revered Sakya philosopher. Most of the current Sakya institutes (i.g., *Dzongsar Shédra* both in India and Tibet and Sakya College, in Dehradun India) study Buddhist philosophies based on Gorampa's commentaries.

There are exceptions to this sectarian exclusivity when a does not have a key commentary from their school for an important root Indian philosophy, such as the *Mulamadhyamikakarika*. Most renown Tibetan Buddhist scholars after the fourteen-century were from the Sakya and Geluk schools, therefore, they have not faced this problem, but the Kagyu and Nyingma do. To fill the gap, the Sixteenth Karmapa borrowed commentaries first from Nyingma scholars, e.g., Ju Mipham's *Khejug*, and from Sakya school, e.g., Sapan's *Tsema*

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<sup>51</sup> [http://www.palyul.org/eng\\_shed\\_popup.htm](http://www.palyul.org/eng_shed_popup.htm) (Accessed on February 12, 2019)

<sup>52</sup> <http://dzongsarinstitute.org.in> (Accessed on February 12, 2019)

<sup>53</sup> <https://himalaya.arts.ubc.ca/events/event/monasteries-as-home-facing-challenges-of-modernization-in-tibetan-monastic-education-and-leadership/> (Accessed on March 26, 2019)

*Rigter*. The commentaries were selected based on commonalities in their philosophical view and path of practices.

From the philosophical point of view, the commentary to the middle path texts, and more specifically their view, makes Tibetan Buddhist schools different from each other. Therefore, individual schools prefer to use their own commentaries so that the student's final philosophical view is in align with that school's fundamental ideology. All Tibetan Buddhist institutes need to ensure that their Buddhist education is not dogmatic or sectarian, but in line with critical approach and connected to rest of the Buddha's teachings. To be clear, it does not mean here that sectarianism is always bad, but it might become a cult if the curriculum does not include critical and comparative aspects of the philosophical studies.

The brief account of how the Sixteenth Karmapa organized the curriculum should let us have an overview of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the twentieth century. Although the complete duration of the degree program of Rumtek Shédra was shorter in the beginning, it has been fixed to nine years by following the SSU's program. The sectarian approach in the Tibetan monastic institutes is the underpinning to maintain the individual philosophical view, which historically has served to divide the schools. Therefore, it is important to train the monastic students not only in an individual school's philosophy but also to broaden the common Buddhist view and philosophical horizon. In this way, despite having the individual schools commentaries, one can harmonize and uniformize a common Tibetan Buddhist scholastic identity within the different lineages and could represent single and intact Buddhism to the world.

### **3.5 Daily Routine and Class Schedule**

The schedule of the Rumtek Shédra tells us not only about the class timing but also the daily life of its students. The below chart is an example of the daily schedule at Rumtek Shédra, including

the class schedule and meal times. The course and the class schedule must correspond properly to present classes. Therefore, it is important to discuss here how the curriculum is presented the institute. The hourly schedule is presented in the memorandum as following:

04:00 – 4:30 am:	Cleaning and refreshing ( <i>khrus kyi bya ba</i> )
04:30 – 5 am:	Supplicatory prayers to Gurus and Manjushri (Group)
05:00 – 7:30 am:	Memorizing root philosophical texts and self-study
07:00 – 8:30 am:	Breakfast
08:30 – 10 am:	Class for new lessons and giving oral memorization dictation
10:30 – 11:30 am:	Review class of the philosophical text
11:30 – 1:00 pm:	lunch break
1:00 – 2:00 pm:	Tibetan Grammar and oral dictation of text memorization
2:00 – 3:00 pm:	Additional (Foreign) language classes
3:00 – 4:00 pm:	Review of a philosophical class by Reviewer ( <i>skyor dpon</i> ) (Junior teachers or senior students)
4:00 – 5:00 pm:	Tea break
5:00 – 5:30 pm:	Grammar review class; practical writing session
5:30- 6:30 pm	Self-study of philosophies.
6:30 – 7:30 pm:	Dinner break
7:30 – 8:00 pm:	Short Mahakala Puja (Evening Ritualistic gathering)
8:00 – 9:00 pm:	Group debate session (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 17) (CGT) [9 pm to 4 am is assumed as sleeping hours]

Before going into the detail of the daily routine, one needs to understand that all students in the *shédra* follow the same schedule six days a week, with Wednesday as a holiday day. The 24-hour schedule can be summed up into five major activities. First, there are seven classes per day, the shortest in duration is thirty minutes and the longest is 90 minutes, for a total of seven hours of classroom instruction per day. Second, there are two self-study periods in the morning and evening for a total of three and a half hours. Third, four meal sessions and rest periods are five hours plus a half hour in the morning for cleaning. Fourth, there are two puja or worship sessions a day that are thirty minutes each. Fifth, the sleeping and resting time at night is seven hours long from 9 pm to 4 am. Within the five segments of the schedule, I will briefly examine four focal points: the Buddhist concept of time management; the irrelevance of class time and self-study period; third, the worship session as a part of hostel rule; the unparallel between designed courses and the class schedule.

### 3.5.1 Buddhist Understandings of Time Management

It is helpful to understand the value of time in Buddhist context because such a structured and busy schedule at the Rumtek Shédra stems from the general concept of time management.

Although the Sixteenth Karmapa incorporated a weekly and annual vacation for the *shédra* students, traditionally speaking, Buddhism fundamentalism places little value on holidays and free time and sometimes diligence appears to be overemphasized in Buddhist teachings.

However, most Buddhist masters including Buddha himself agreed that constant enthusiasm, perseverance, diligence, and hard work are the key methods to achieve one's goal to reach enlightenment (Buddhahood).

The necessity of hard is not only necessary to achieve to the goal, but is also due to the impermanence of life. Therefore, the last advice Buddha gave to his disciples (Bhikkhus) emphasized impermanence of one's very lifespan, "Bhikkhus!... It is in the nature of all formations to dissolve. Attain perfection through diligence" (Ñanamoli 1972, 324). After this line, he closed his eyes forever. Even greater emphasis on impermanence was expressed by Nalanda master Shantideva, "When having blocked off every (escape) route, The Lord of Death is looking (for someone to kill). How can I enjoy eating? And likewise, how can I enjoy sleeping?" (Shantideva and Batchelor 2007, 7/77). However, the understanding of "diligence" between Buddhists and non-Buddhists is often different because Shantideva states that diligence means to find joy in working towards meritorious action (Shantideva and Batchelor 2007, 7/74). This means not all efforts are considered diligent. Based on this fundamental concept of impermanence, dedicated Buddhist practitioners practice day and night; likewise, Buddhist leaders designed the schedule of Tibetan institutes in this same manner. This busy schedule is not exceptional to Rumtek Shédra, but can be found in other Tibetan Buddhist Monastic

institutes, such as *Dzonsar Institute* in Himachal India<sup>54</sup> and *Ngagyur Nyingma Institute* in South India.<sup>55</sup>

### 3.5.2 Irrelevance of Class Time and Self-Study Duration

Second, the number of classes per day at the *shédra* comparing to the self-study periods is not deficient. Out of the seven hours of class instruction each day, students only get a three-and-a-half hour self-study period. Typically in western colleges, students are advised to spend an hour-and-a-half to two hours or more of study time for each hour of classroom instruction, especially for more difficult classes the philosophy. There are two review classes each day, but the monastic review classes are simply a repetition of the previous class, rather than a group discussion. This means there is a high likelihood that one will not understand the subject if one did not understand it in the previous class. Also, the debate class provides an opportunity for a review of the material; the smarter and gregarious students dominate in Tibetan debate, so it is less likely that the slower or shy students to refine their understanding of the material.

### 3.5.3 Mandatory Worship

Third, the schedule tells us that on top of education, students have religious obligations at the monastic institute that are held in the early mornings and evenings. These sessions consist of group prayers, rather than the actual practice of meditation. In fact, it is a stereotype in the Western world that all Tibetan monastics practice meditation. In reality, they are busy with praying to Triple gems (*dkon mchog gsum*), gods<sup>56</sup>, and gurus loudly and enthusiastically at the session, whereas actual Buddhist meditation demands a peaceful and quiet place and usually practices alone.

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<sup>54</sup> <http://dzongsarinstitute.org.in/en/schedule/> (Accessed on February 12, 2019)

<sup>55</sup> [http://www.palyul.org/eng\\_shed06\\_daily.htm](http://www.palyul.org/eng_shed06_daily.htm) (Accessed on February 12, 2019)

<sup>56</sup> God in Tibetan is *lha* which is a broad term having many meanings but I mean here is deities (*yid dam chos skyong*) like Tara, Manjushri and Mahakala.

Another function of the ritual gatherings is to check on student attendance. If a student leaves the *shédra*'s without permission, he must return for these puja sessions; otherwise, faces punishment. Typically, every student sits at the same place in the puja, so that the discipline master can easily determine the absence of an individual simply by observing the any spaces in the seating. However, students in the *shédra* are also monitored by discipline masters and teachers continually throughout the day.

### **3.5.4 Discrepancy Between Course Design and Class Schedule**

Lastly, there is a discrepancy between the curriculum and the class schedule. According to the schedule, new material is covered in three sessions per day, covering philosophy, Tibetan grammar, and the extra language course. But in the curriculum, there are almost five to six subjects varying class level. It is not like a lecture or seminar in North American universities. For example, in the University of British Columbia, Vancouver at where I study, graduate students take an average of three courses per term, and each class is scheduled for three hours per week, totaling nine hours of classroom instruction per week. In contrast, the students at the *shédra* take five classes during the three scheduled sessions, each lasting one hour every day for five days. This adds up to 30 hours of classroom instruction per week.

The *shédra*'s schedule, thus, might be suitable only for a few, but the majority of students may not succeed in their studies because of the large number of courses studies within a compressed period of time. That is the reason why only nine of twenty-nine students at Rumtek Shédra were able to become Khenpos and authorized to teach after graduation. That also indicates that perhaps the rest of the student did not learn much during their time at the *shédra*. The reason for pointing out this matter is that when one designs a large program, it is important to meet a specialist or an expert who has a qualification and experience in that field, so the educational organizations have better chance to achieve the set goal. I have observed that this is a common weakness in Tibetan monasteries not seeking expert's guidance of sound educational

practices and method. My experience in the monastery implicates that most of the management team in the monasteries or its institutes are not particularly qualified meaning has no systematic training for the given work. As a result, such a task puts whole organizations in risk or does not bring the intended result.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Detailed analysis of the memorandum of the Rumtek Shédra in this chapter shed light on the ways in which the Sixteenth Karmapa reconstructed the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. He reconstructed the Karma Kagyu scholastic institution in a traditional way, yet with innovative improvements. Rumtek Shédra or Karma Shri Nalanda Institute became a role model for Karma Kagyu institutes both in-exile and inside Tibet in the early 1980s. It was a celebrated development for all Karma Kagyu to have their own prestigious *shédra*. Construction of the *shédra* buildings at Rumtek *Shédra*, selecting and publishing the necessary philosophical texts for the program, and writing the memorandum for the administration are the three main elements that Karmapa employed to successful restore and reinvent the tradition.

However, after a decade since its inauguration in 1981, the institute has slowed performance. As discussed in this chapter, there have not any significant changes or improvements in the *past* twenty-five years since the its first class of students graduated in 1990. The is mainly due to the Sixteenth Karmapa's reincarnation controversy which erupted in 1993 and caused the stagnation at Karma Shri Nalanda Institute along with the decline of almost all of the typical activities of Karma Kagyu School. Since then, the Karma Kagyu monasteries, centers and institutes have divided into two groups, each supporting a different reincarnate candidate, and both groups legitimize and claim to be the supreme order of the school and that its counterpart is fake. Due to this situation, many Karma Kagyu students, monastics and laities, have joined other schools for their Buddhist philosophical studies or the religious practice.

Another reason for the stagnation is the *shédra*'s relations with the broader Rumtek monastery. The *shédra* education is seen as a threat to the conservative traditionalists in the administration of the Rumtek monastery, has thus contributed to the institute project. Furthermore, my research shows that there is also a lack of resources and care of by the *shédra* administration, which is why necessary infrastructure and accommodations have not been improved since 1987. The detailed account of *shédra*'s link to the Rumtek monastery will be discussed in the following chapter.

Regardless of challenges and issues at Rumtek Shédra, arguably the Sixteenth Karmapa's revival of the *Karma Kagyu Scholastic Transmission* in the contemporary world is remarkable and distinguishes him from his predecessors in this great achievement. During my visit to Rumtek Shédra in January 2019, the *shédra* is in operation. The Rumtek graduates have carried on the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition and fulfilled the Sixteenth Karmapa's dream of propagating Buddha Dharma to the world.

## Chapter 4: Antagonism Between Tibetan Monasticism and Scholasticism

### 4.1 Introduction

Monasticism and scholasticism are intertwined inextricably in Tibetan Buddhism, particularly in the Karma Kagyu School. By extension, a Tibetan monastic institute (*bshad grwa/grwa sa*) is not only an educational center, but also a monastery. Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and the monastic institutes are look physically similar, and basic monastic rules are shared. It has been in this way throughout Tibetan history, as Adam Pearcey points out (2015, 452). Rumtek Shédra (or *Karma Shri Nalanda Institute*) is one such institutes based on Buddhist monasticism. The Sixteenth Karmapa organized the *shédra* under the umbrella of Rumtek Monastery<sup>57</sup> (or *Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center*), uniting them with a common administration, bound under the rules of the *Vinaya* (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 5). However, the Rumtek Shédra and its philosophical training is considered less important than the monastery because the romanticism of Tantric rituals and meditation practices are exemplified as the superior practice of the Karma Kagyu School.

This chapter analyzes the institutional formation of Rumtek Monastery, which stands as the counterpart of the Rumtek Shédra. This chapter investigates stagnant status of Rumtek Shédra mostly post-1993 and determining causes that contributed to its stagnant performance beyond the effect of the Sixteenth Karmapa's reincarnation controversy. It cannot be the sectarianism that exists between the schools as it did so strongly historically in Tibet because such political influence of the Geluk hegemonic power effectively declined in 1959 and all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism have established their independent institutions in India with equal sovereignty. The antagonism between Karma Kagyu monasticism and scholasticism continues to affect the its Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and negates its independent

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<sup>57</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=399:history-of-the-complex&catid=95:rumtek-monastery&Itemid=605&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=399:history-of-the-complex&catid=95:rumtek-monastery&Itemid=605&lang=en)

identity because the religious nature of the institute is dominant over the education aspect, just like the education system in medieval Europe (Axtell 2016, 3).

The dual form of Buddhist monasticism and scholasticism was well-established and prevailed in India long time ago when Buddhism first arrived Tibet. Students from neighboring countries traveled to India for the education in the famous Buddhist universities such as *Nālandā*, *Odentapuri*, and *Vikramaśīla* (Dutt 1924, 1). In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Indian scholar and monk Ācārya Śāntarakṣita brought this two-pronged form from India and implemented it in *Samye Monastery*, the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet. It was built under the patronage of King Trisong Deustsen and designed by Śāntarakṣita with the help of Padmasambhava (Johnston 2000, 1279). These three are thus known under one abbreviated title “*mkhen slhob chos gsum*” meaning abbot, master, and dharma king, and credited with establishing a complete form of Buddhism in Tibet. It is said that Śāntarakṣita copied the architecture for *Samye* from *Odentapuri Vihara* of India (*rgyal mtshan* 2008, 15).

*Samye* was the first successful pilot project of monasticism and scholasticism model of a Buddhist monastery as well as an academic institute in Tibetan history. Since then and to the present day, the tradition has continued in-exile post-1959. Over six thousand Buddhist monasteries were built in Tibet before 1959 (Jansen 2015, 5) and hundreds of similar monasteries have been built in other countries after Tibetan diaspora post-1959 (Bhatia, Dranyi, and Rowley 2002, 417). Within all these monasteries, broadly speaking, their activities can be thematically categorized into either monasticism and scholasticism. Some monasteries focus more on the monasticism by applying more ritual elements while others promote philosophical training foremost.

The Sixteenth Karmapa confirms in the memorandum of Rumtek Shédra that the Institute must follow the monastic constitution of Rumtek Monastery even though it is designed for a different type religious training (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 5). There is no difference in *Vinaya* practice

between the two institutes. In fact, they join together for grand religious ceremonies, such as the annual summer rain retreat (*lbyar gnas*), one of the three vinaya rituals discussed in the chapter one, and the annual grand Mahakala puja. In the early 1960s, the Sixteenth Karmapa established his main seat, *Rumket Dharma Chakra Center*, in Sikkim, India, commonly known as *Rumtek Monastery*. To the outer world, the monastery is better known as the Sixteenth Karmapa's main seat but internally this is an institute for Karma Kagyu tantric training where monastics receive the most rigorous, systematic and extensive Buddhist tantric education under the practice of strict *Vinaya* rules (Buddhist moral ethics). The Buddhist tantric training and the ritual performances distinguish Tibetan monasteries from the monastic institutes. However, the downside of this education, based survival skill is that most of the training is not applicable outside of the monastic community because these skills are not useable beyond the Tibetan monastic rituals. Therefore, the students who leave the monastic life have fewer options to support their lives through making use of what they have learned in the monastery.

As I discussed in previous chapters, the First Jamgon Kongtrul's fundamental construction of Tibetan Buddhism into two major transmissions, *Scholastic Transmission and Meditation Lineage*, are the two seminal units of Buddhism in Tibet (2010, 249). This paradigm is not only valid for constituting the Karma Kagyu scholastic institution but also viable for constructing the Karma Kagyu Tantric institution. To be precise, Meditation Lineage here does not mean a solo and isolated medication practice, but refers to the holistic approach of the systematic transmission of Buddhist Tantra. These two type of training are aligned distinctly within two separate institutes, *shédra* and *drikdra*; therefore, it is important to maintain the order of the two different Buddhist institutes and is commonly accepted in each of the four schools and their training centers. For the Karma Kagyu School, the Sixteenth Karmapa revived the entire institution of Karma Kagyu Buddhism in-exile post-1959 by reconstructing the Rumtek Shédra and Drikdra in Sikkim.

This chapter is arranged within the four major parts: introduction, key elements of Buddhist monasticism, monastic training system of Rumtek Monastery, and the conclusion. As in the other chapters, the introduction includes key themes and layout of the chapter. The second point shortly examines the etymology and origin of Buddhist monasticism and then elaborates Tibetan monasticism. This part, eventually, analyzes the formation of Karma Kagyu Sangha (*dge 'dun*) or monastic community. The third point discusses detailly the institution of Rumtek Monastery and its tantric training system. Both Berthe Jensen's *The Monasteries Rules* (2018) and Michael Lempert's *Discipline and Debate* (2012) conducted meticulous research on Tibetan monasteries, focusing mainly on Geluk monasteries. Hence, this chapter is not only additional research into Karma Kagyu scholasticism but attempts to introduce Karma Kagyu monasticism that was started by the First Karmapa in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

## **4.2 Key Elements of Buddhist Monasticism**

### **4.2.1 The Etymology of Monasticism and the Sanskrit *Vihāra***

There are some key defining features such as etymology and the definition of terms of monastics and monasteries that institutionalize the Tibetan Buddhist monasticism. The origin of Buddhist monasticism dates back to the lifetime of the Buddha (Siddhārtha Gautama in 600 BCE) (*klu sgrub* 2009, 5). Thus, India is not only the origin of Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism, but also of Buddhist monasticism which later developed in its own individual styles and expressions, such as the monastic robes or dress at the time, due to geographical and cultural differences between India and Tibet. To understand Tibetan Buddhist monasticism, I first analyze the etymology of monasticism then explain some of the its defining characteristics.

Greek and Sanskrit are the two root languages to trace the etymology of the word *monasticism*. The English word monasticism is taken from the Greek word *monos* which means “one” or “alone” (Jones 2005, 6121). This etymology constructs the fundamental ideology of the

monasticism as being in an isolated state. This also describes the lives of early monastics in Christianity. Monasticism is an ideology of monastics that necessitate constructing the physical monastery. A monastery is primarily a resting place or house for monastics which later developed into a religious community both in Christian and Buddhist religions (Johnston 2000, 960).

The second etymological concept of monasticism, specific to Buddhism, is rooted in the Sanskrit terms *vihāra* and *aranya* (Dutt 1924, 121). *Vihāra* primarily means either the central courtyard of a house or resting place where pilgrims, travelers, and hunters in the forest took rest in general, especially during the rains (Apte 2010, 881). When Buddhism was founded in India, the number of religious wanderers and ascetics grew rapidly and, according to the rules of *Vinaya*, Buddhist monks and nuns are not allowed to stay overnight in a family house. Therefore, *vihāra* became the dominant place for Buddhist Sangha to dwell. On the other hand, people offered monastic residences, such as *Jetavana*, to the Buddha for his monks and nuns which lead Buddha to add monastic rules for the monastic congregation. One can find those rules in the *Vinaya* teachings on *Kangyur* (sde dge bka' 'gyur), volume 5-7,<sup>58</sup> Translation of the Buddha's Words.

Another Sanskrit term related to monasticism is "*aranya*," which means "dwelling in woods" or "being in a forest" (Apte 2010, 144). The forest dwellers here are referring to specific monks, who left their families behind to retire from societal life and became a hermit. Over time, the literal meanings of *vihāra* and *aranya* developed to describe either the house of a solitary Buddhist hermit-monk (*aranya*) or a monastery which housed an entire community of monks (*vihāra*). Additionally, these terms also generally describe the types of each of these monastic houses: a Buddhist coenobite who lives in a monastery is engaged in academic work, such as

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<sup>58</sup> <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W30532>

exegesis and philosophical training; and *aranya* being a place for Buddhist eremites who lead a solo lives secluded places undertaking deep meditative practices.

#### 4.2.2 Characteristics of the Buddhist Monastics

The etymologies of Christian-usage of “monasticism” and Buddhist-usage of *vihāra* are similar, but Christianity and Buddhism developed their own ways to define the monasticism according to the practices and rules of their religion. Buddhist monasticism is constructed and formulated within the *Vinaya* rules. After reaching the enlightenment or Buddhahood, Shakyamuni Buddha taught his religious path with its result being completely free from suffering. Many people later follow his path. Among his many types of followers, those who fully committed themselves to the path of Moksha (Liberation or salvation), are described by the Sanskrit term *paribrajaka* (T. *rab byung*), translated as “gone beyond”, such as Buddha’s five noble disciples.

According to the *Vinaya*, I synthesize the meaning of *Paribrajaka* given in the *Domsum Namnge* (*sdom gsum rnam nges*)<sup>59</sup> (*Certainty of Three vows*) written by Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal (*mnga’ ris pan chen pad ma dwang rgyal*) (1487-1542). One becomes a *paribrajaka* by taking the *pratimokcha* vow (or precept with five conditions): having the motivation to renounce Samsara; taking the vow for the sake of attaining nirvana; physically shaving one’s head and facial hair; wearing saffron colored clothes; and, leaving one’s family and home (Mnga’ ris pan chen 1996, 49-51).

Sukumar Dutt gives a similar definition for the *paribrajaka* is found in the Pali scriptures of the Theravadan tradition, “Passes from the household to the homeless state...we have called all these sorts of religious wondering by the general name of *Paribrajaka*” (1924, 40). Other than the language of the text, major difference between the Tibetan and Pali *Vinaya* practices is

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<sup>59</sup> This is an important text studied in Nyingma and Karma Kagyu schools for the monastic guidance with regard to the three vows; Pratimokcha, Bodhisattva and Vajrayana Samvara.

the lineage, not the essence. Tibetan *Vinaya* follows the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* (*gzhi thams cad yod par smra ba*) Tradition while Pali *Vinaya* is based on *Theravāda* Tradition.

*Paribrajaka* is a common name for Buddhist monks and nuns. Under this generic name, there are five different types: *Shramanera*, *Shramanerika*, *Shikasamana*, *Bhikshu*, and *Bhikshuni*, observing five different precepts. First three are the novice monks and nuns and the last two have received complete ordination (*bsnyen rdzogs*) (Gampopa and Rinpoche 1998, 144). The actual monastic community, or *sangha* (*dge 'dun*), is formed and identified when at least four or more *Bhikshu* or *Bhikshuni* are assembled. An exception to this rule is that if someone has reached the noble Bhumi state<sup>60</sup>, then a single monk or nun can represent a *Sangha*. This gives us an idea that a single monk or a nun is a part of *Sangha* but cannot be a monastic community. For example, after attaining the Buddhahood, Buddha's five noble disciples, *Kauṇḍinya*, *Bhadrika*, *Vāṣpa*, *Mahānāman*, and *Aśvajit*, became the first Buddhist monks as well as the first Buddhist Sangha (Bhikkhu 1972, 45).

After receiving monastic precepts, one transforms to a religious life of celibacy and becomes a member of the monastic community. Such a life can also be defined as a *consecrated life* due to the moral reconstruction of life (Zuidema, ed. 2015, 5). It is important to note that without taking this commitment under the *Vinaya* ritual procedure, one would not become a monk or nun in Buddhism, even one lives an abstinent and ascetic life. The antonym of *paribrajaka* in Sanskrit is actually *grhastha*, which literarily means *householder*, but the house in *Vinaya* context is not only a physical home but also the Samsara as a bigger home metaphorically, therefore, unless and until oneself is conditioned within the five criteria mentioned before according to the *Vinaya* one cannot become a *Paribrajaka* in Buddhism.

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<sup>60</sup> From a Buddhist soteriological perspective, noble Bhumi is the state of a person who gone beyond the boundry of Samsara or karmic-cyclic-world.

The third etymological source of monastery is the Tibetan words of *Tsuklakhang* and *Gönpa* (*gtsug lag khang* or *dgon pa*),<sup>61</sup> which denote a physical solitary space where monks and nuns dwell temporarily or permanently and is at minimum one mile from a village (Dungkar 2002, 615). Most bilingual or trilingual dictionaries of Sanskrit-English and Tibetan agree upon the translation of words *Vihāra* and *Aranya* into the Tibetan words, *Tsuklakhang* and *Gönpa*, and all equating the English word monastery. *Mahavyutpatti*, Chandra Das dictionary, Hopkins' dictionaries, *Ranjung Yeshe* and *bod rgya tshig mdzod* are a few of the many dictionaries where one can find this translation.

Like their Indian terms, *Tsuklakhang* and *Gönpa* are later applied to signify the type of monastery in terms of the religious practices done there. *Tsuklakhang* is used to depict the Buddhist monastic Institutes, while *Gönpa* is a traditional monastery where either liturgical services are performed or where monks and nuns receive Tantra and ritualistic training, such as at Rumtek Monastery. The ancient stone pillar of *Samye Monastery* provides evidence of this distinction with its inscription describing *Samye* and *Potala* as *Tsuklakhang* (*gtsug lag khang*) and not *gönpa* (*dgon pa*) (*rgyal mtshan* 2008, 21). In present day, such precise usage in the Tibetan terminology has diminished. As a result, a multitude words for monastery exist in common usage, such as *chos grwa*, *grwa tshang*, *gdan sa*, and *lha khang*, but not all correspond to the *Vinaya*'s definition of a Buddhist monastery (Jansen 2018, 9).

### 4.2.3 Vinaya Transmission to Tibet

Tibetan Buddhism places Buddhist monasticism, monastic and monastery under the purview of the rules of *Vinaya* (*'dul ba*). *Vinaya* literarily means "to lead out," but according to the Tibetan term, it literarily means "to tame." The applied meaning is that the taming mind is the way of leading one out from the Samsara or suffering. *Vinaya* is one of the three baskets (*sde snod*

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<sup>61</sup> *Gumba* and *Gompa* are deviated form of the word *Gönpa* used in Nepali language. These words are used by none Tibetan scholars in the context of Tibetan monasteries such as Geoff Childs (2004) and Geoffrey Samuel (2012).

*gsum*) that form the full collection of Buddha's teachings and elaborates the precise instructions on Buddhist discipline and morality (*tshul khrims*). In simple language, one can say that *Vinaya* is the socioreligious basis constituting a Buddhist constitution. There are thirteen volumes of *Vinaya* teachings in the Tibetan version of the *Kangyur*.<sup>62</sup> An important point to highlight of the *Vinaya* teachings is that it becomes a sort of less valuable if there is a no person to live on it. This is unlike a Buddha's Sutra teachings, which are more philosophical to understand Buddhist theories and views, but the *Vinaya* teachings are practical based, about the ethics of one's daily life and associated with lay societies. Therefore, the humanistic form of *Vinaya* in its transmission is paramount in Buddhism.

Three lineages carry *Vinaya* transmissions (*sdom rgyun*) in Tibetan Buddhism but they all belong to the same Indian monastic tradition, *Mūlasarvāstivāda*. Master Śāntarakṣita formed a monastic community in Tibet and passed down the *Vinaya* transmission of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda*. Therefore, King Trisong Deutsen made a law in Tibet stating that not allowed to bring other *Vinaya* tradition than *Mūlasarvāstivāda*. It is said that due to this rule, Atisha did not spread his *Vinaya* tradition in Tibet because his *Vinaya* tradition belongs to the *Mahāsamghika* tradition (First Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 244). Among the three lineages, the first is from Śāntarakṣita (*Tib: zhi ba 'tsho*) (725-788), second is from Lachen Gongpa Rapsel, 832-915), and the third comes from Śākyaśrībhadrā, the *Kashmiri Pandita* (1127-1225). The first and the third *Vinaya* tradition were directly brought from India, but Lachen Gongpa Rapsel's tradition was a revived *Vinaya* tradition of Śāntarakṣita after it was disrupted by King Langdarma's revolution of Tibetan civilization (First Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 244).

Among the four schools, Sakya School follows the Śākyaśrībhadrā's lineage because Sakya Pandita ordained and studied under him. Nyingma and Geluk School follow the Lachen

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<sup>62</sup> <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=W4CZ5369>

Gongpa Rapsel's tradition. Kagyu School also primarily follows Lachen's tradition transmitted by Gampopa since the Eighth Karmapa was ordained in the Śākyaśrībhadrā tradition which originated in the Sakya School. Those three Vinaya lineages are technically called *three monastic disciplines* (*so thar sdom rgun*) and roughly correspond to a geographic region in the great Tibetan region: Śāntarakṣita's tradition is found mainly in the Lower Tibet region; . Śākyaśrībhadrā's order in Kashmir (*kha che sdom rgyun*); and Lachen Gongpa Rapsel's tradition is found in Upper Tibet (*stod 'dul*). A detailed account of the *Pratimokcha* vows, and the First Jamgon Kongtrul describes the three monastic discipline transmissions in the *Treasury of Knowledge* (2010, 243-48). The proper understanding of the concept of Buddhist monasticism, thus relies on a correct understanding of monastic life, the textual sources of *Vinaya*, the physical space of monastery, and the unbroken transmission of *Vinaya* tradition that was brought from India.

#### **4.2.4 Karma Kagyu Monasticism**

Based on the above explanation of Tibetan monasticism, the first independent Karma Kagyu monastic institution was started by the First Karmapa in the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Tibet. Just like at *Samye* Monastery, Karma Kagyu monasticism was only based on a *Vinaya* tradition but also both on the Bodhisattva and Vajrayana traditions. The trilogy approach of monasticism is underpinned by teachings called *sdon gsum* or three precepts, *Pratimokcha*, *Bodhissatva* and *Vajrayana Vows* (*so thar, byang sdom, sngags sdom*). There are numerous commentaries written on this model such as Sakya Pandita's *sdon gsum rab dbye*, *Ngari Panchen's sdom gsum rnam nges* and the First Jamgon Kongtrul's *sdon gsum* in *the Treasury of Knowledge*. This model makes Tibetan Buddhism distinct from the Theravada monasticism.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the First Karmapa built a few monasteries, but Tsurphu (*mtshur phu*) monastery in central Tibet became the most prominent seat of the Karmapas until Chinese Communist Party's invasion of Tibet in 1959 (*dpal bzang* 1995, 274). However, the invasion did

not disrupt the Karma Kagyu monasticism which was later successfully restored in Sikkim in-exile. The Sixteenth Karmapa revived the physical and socio-religious structure of Karma Kagyu monasticism in-exile. In 1966, he successfully established his new seat in exile in Sikkim, and named “Rumtek Dharma Chakra Center” (Tibetan name: *dpal karma'i gdan sa bshad sgrub chos 'khor gling*). It is locally referred to as *Rumtek Drikdra* to distinguish it from *Rumtek Shédra*.

The institution of *Rumtek Drikdra*, including human resources, is different from the *shédra* because the system of the monastery was a continuation of system at *Tsurphu* Monastery. Vajrayana training and ritual performances at Rumtek Monastery are the same as it was at the *Tsurphu* because the staff members, including the senior-most teachers of *Tsurphu*, accompanied the Sixteenth Karmapa during the escape and established the same structure in-exile. Therefore, Rumtek Drikdra was the earliest and arguably the most systematic and authentic Buddhist Tantric training center in Tibetan Buddhism in-exile post-1959.

### **4.3 Karmapa Institution in-Exile Post-1959**

#### **4.3.1 The Formation of Legal Bodies**

The Karmapa institution is historically constituted within the Tantric form of the monastery so as the Sixteenth Karmapa in Sikkim. The Rumtek Monastery represents that legacy, and it became one of the biggest Tibetan monasteries in the 1970s in-exile post-1959. The analysis of the monastery can be summed up within the four major activities undertaken there: the formation of the legal body and its ongoing administration, monthly tantric rituals performed by the monastic community, the tantric curriculum and training methods taught there, and admission procedure which together contributes to demonstrating how the Rumtek monastery subordinates the Rumtek Shédra.

The Sixteenth Karmapa confirmed the above matters in the Rumtek monastic manual (*bca' yig*) (Rigpe Dorje and Josayma 2016, 3:119). First, concerning the formation of legal

bodies, Sixteenth Karmapa set up his new seat, Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim, with the land registration. As described in Chapters One and Three, on Chogyal Tashi Namgyal of Sikkim offered a 74.86 acre tract of land to Karmapa for the construction of a monastery and residence for his people who escaped from Chinese-occupied Tibet. The King offered it in a formal order letter (*bka' shog*) dated January 20, 1961.

Karmapa formed a legal trust, named “Karmapa Charitable Trust”, in August 1961 and registered it with the Indian Government through the Political Office of India in Sikkim. His entire property, including Rumtek Monastery, was secured under the trust to continue in perpetuity for his subsequent reincarnations. Original administration of the Trust included seven trustees, including Karmapa’s Senior and Junior General Secretaries, Thamcho Yongdu and Jewon Drakpa Yongdu respectively. The Trust Deed<sup>63</sup> specified that while Sixteenth Karmapa was alive, fourteen administrative members, including the Sixteenth Karmapa himself would govern the trust. Most of the administrative members were senior monks from Tsurphu Monastery, but the majority of executive members were lay elites devotees of the Sixteenth Karmapa from Nepal, Sikkim, and India.<sup>64</sup> Therefore, Karmapa established his institution at Rumtek Monastery was constructed upon a strong legal foundation in India.

The Administration of Rumtek Monastery is traditionally called *Garchen Ladang* (*sgrar chen la brang*) and divided into two central bodies. First is the *Labrang* administrative office and its staff members look after the external affairs of the monastery, constructions legal matters, and the financial accounts of the monastery. The administration is lead by the General Secretary (G.S.) of the Sixteenth Karmapa. The G.S. is also the head of Karmapa’s Private Office and responsible for all of Karmapa’s private activities, such as scheduling and travel. The second is the Sangha staff (*dbu chos las byed*) which takes care of all the internal matters of the monastery,

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<sup>63</sup> I received a copy of Karmapa Charitable Trust Deed but I did not get permission to publish it.

<sup>64</sup> <https://karmapaissue.wordpress.com/the-karmapa-charitable-trust/>

such as organizing tantric ceremonies (*pujas*) and managing the tantric training given to young monks.

The Sangha board is comprised of senior members of the monastery, including the chief priest (*rdo rje slob dpon*), chief abbot (*spyi khyab mkhan po*), the chanting master (*dbu mzad*), and the discipline master (*chos khrims*).<sup>65</sup> These four executive members manage *Rumtek Monastery* and hold all the internal power at the monastery. The offering master (*mchod dpon*) also played a vital role in the monastery but is placed lower in rank and not an executive member of the Sangha board. Any monks can occupy these positions after completing their monastic training and obeying monastic rules in a pure way (dpal bzang 1995, 274). Branch Karma Kagyu monasteries across the Karma Kagyu monastic institution also have these specific executive Sangha positions.

#### **4.3.2 Annual Tantric Ceremonies or Rituals**

Vajrayana or Tantric practice and the tantric training of the younger generations are the essential activities of the monastery. Throughout the year, *Rumtek Monastery* remains busy with organizing and performing various grand Buddhist Tantric pujas.<sup>66</sup> These ceremonies require huge outside financial support and a variety of monastic experts for each ceremony. Annual monastic activities at *Rumtek* start with the Tibetan New Year celebration, which lasts for eight days, according to the Tsurphu Tibetan Calendar. After the New Year (*lo gsar*) celebration, on the ninth day of the first month of the year, the monastery performs a six-day longevity puja called *tshe sgrub thabs shes kha sbyor*. Second month, *White and Green Tara pujas* are performed for two weeks and then one week of *Vajrayogini puja*. In the third month, *Kalachakra puja* is performed for one week. The fourth month consists of one week of *Vajrakilaya puja* and

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<sup>65</sup> The term *Chos khrims* is used in the Karma Kagyu school but other schools spell it as *dge bskos*. Their functions are same who are the in-charge of maintaining the monastic disciplines and order.

<sup>66</sup> Puja is a Sankrit term, literally means pleasing through offerings, locally and commonly used by Buddhist and Hindus to refer any religious ritualistic performance.

the *tshes bcu* vajra dance performances on *Eight Manifestations Of Padmasambhava*. In the fifth month: a one-week *Chakrasamvara puja* is performed, followed by the *Hevajra puja* during the next week. In the sixth month, *Chod puja (gcod tshogs yon tan kun 'gyung)* for one week.

Beginning in the second half of the seventh month, the monastery starts the *Summer Retreat (dbyar gnas)* that lasts for one and a half months. During this time the Sangha practise *Chos spyod rab dsal* and *Kagyü mgur tsho*. Eighth month: *rgyal ba rgya mtsho puja* for one week. Ninth month: The Sixteenth Karmapa *Guruyoga puja*, and *Kar gling zhi khro and padma vajra* by turn annually. Tenth month: *Vairocana or Kun rig puja* and *Akshobhya or mi 'khrug pa puja* for one week. The eleventh month: Four arms *Mahakala puja* and the ritual ceremony for one week. Twelfth month: The grand *Mahakala puja* for nine days with vajra dance on the last day.

Many of the months also have two additional ritual ceremonies corresponding to the full and new phases of the moon. All these Tantric rituals require preliminary preparations and post-ritual activities along with huge amount of ritual substances, such as brocade uniforms and mandala decorations. Above information is taken from the monastic notice page (Appendix-3).<sup>67</sup>

### **4.3.3 The Curriculum of Tantric Training**

Among the Tibetan monasteries in-exile, Rumtek Monastery has been exemplary for Vajrayana training from the ritualistic aspect. Tantric training is based on the twelve sets of Tantras (*rgyud sde bcu gnyis*) that were brought by Marpa the Translator from India to Tibet (Smith 2001, 41). The First Jamgon Kongtrul later codified them in *Kagyü Ngagzod (bka' brgyud sngags mzod)* or *The Treasury of Kagyü Tantra* and combined them in one of the *Five Great Treasuries*. On top of these texts, one also needs to learn many of the old tantras that is brought by *Padmasambhava*, which are mentioned in the above annual tantra programs and the textual

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<sup>67</sup> All the Tantric pujas and their text names mentioned here are in Tibetan and Sanskrit, not in English.

memorization certificate. An average length of tantric training at Rumtek Monastery is nine years.<sup>68</sup> Students spend the first five years writing and reading practice, and most importantly, the textual memorization.

There are a total of 30 books<sup>69</sup> in varying lengths from a single page to a book of 247 pages and approximately 1,000 folios in the 30 books, which corresponds to two thousand pages according to the modern page numbering system, which counts number of printed pages not sheets of paper. The texts are combined in the form of a traditional page style called *pecha* (*dpe cha*), which is typically landscape and horizontal line. A detailed list of the individual texts is shown on the memorization certificate (appendix 4) issued to students.

A unique feature of the tantric training at Rumtek Monastery is the role and method of teaching by rote memorization. Some students memorize all the texts within two years, while others may take longer than the average time. There are also students are never able complete memorizing the texts. Memorization is the foundation to the remainder of monastic training; therefore, those who do not finish the text memorization are not qualified to hold titled position in the monastery.

Students are trained extensively in the tantric performances for the last four years of their education. The training includes learning to draw different mandalas, to play various musical instruments used in the ceremonies, and different melodic prayers for the different puja performances. After completing nine years of rigorous training, culminating with oral final exams, the first title and post a graduate earns is that of *Uchung* (*dbu chung*). *Uchung* is below the *Uze*, indicating a person who has mastered and leads the Buddhist tantra ritual performance. At Rumtek Monastery that the two front rows are reserved for the monks who have memorized the tantric text.

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<sup>68</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=394&Itemid=608&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=394&Itemid=608&lang=en)

<sup>69</sup> [http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=394&Itemid=608&lang=en](http://www.rumtek.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=394&Itemid=608&lang=en)

#### 4.3.4 Teaching Methods and Learning Environment

Concerning the training method at Rumtek monastery, it is idiosyncratic, and apprentice-based practice. Contemporary scholars such as Michael Lempert points out that the text memorization is one of the key training methods in Tibetan monastic institutes (Lempert 2012, 34). Text memorization is a common method used at both Rumtek Monastery and Rumtek Shédra, whether the student comprehend the meaning of memorized texts make the distinction. For the students of Rumtek Monastery, chanting together in a group during the tantric ceremonies demand memorization of the text and the form of the ritual, but an understanding of the esoteric texts is not required. On the other hand, Rumtek Shédra 's students are required to memorize the root texts of Buddhist philosophy in order to follow their meaning as explained in the commentaries. In this case of the Institute, understanding of the texts is vital to the education. The commentaries and teachers explanations help students understand the meaning of the root texts and the root texts help students decipher the specific meaning contained in the commentaries.

Georges Dreyfus (2003, 79) also describes the process of text memorization in the Tibetan monasteries.<sup>70</sup> Beyond a simple education method, memorization of Buddhist sutras and tantras are consisted virtuous acts according to the Buddhist soteriology. The Ornament of Realization (*mngon rtogs rgyan*), one of the key Mahayana Buddhist philosophical texts, explains ten virtuous endeavors<sup>71</sup> that Buddhist monastics should engage in (Nagarjuna and Kirti 1994, 344) and one of them is memorizing Buddha's teachings. Therefore, text memorization is not only an important method in Buddhist education, but also a way to accumulate merits.

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<sup>70</sup> <http://www.thlib.org/places/monasteries/drepung/essays/#!essay=/dreyfus/drepung/monasticed/s/b21>

<sup>71</sup> The ten virtues endeavours are: 1. transcribing the Sutras, 2. making offerings, 3. practicing generosity, 4. listening to Dharma teachings, 5. reciting the Sutras, 6. memorizing the Sutras, 7. reading the Sutra loudly for others to hear, 8. putting the teachings into daily practices, 9. contemplating the meaning of the Sutras, and 10. meditating upon them (Dungkar 2002, 854).

While students are developing their basic skills, they also begin to focus on an individual field of interest. The basic concept of Rumtek monastic training is found as both nature and nurtured, and their potential result of expertise is multidimensional. Some chose to specialize in ritual music (*gdun rgya rag*), others may learn more about melodic singing (*'don gdangs dbyangs*), and some are more gifted in arts and crafts (*gtor bzo dkar rgran*). However, to become an expert in an individual field, one first needs the teachers' approval to ensure that student's talent is matched to his interest. In contrast, unless one is exceptionally talented in a particular aspect of philosophy, students at Tibetan monastic institutes, including Rumtek Shédra, are trained with a singular goal, i.e. to produce philosophy scholars.

In addition to memorization, debate and discourse are other methods employed in the institutes to expand the students learning and skill. One major difference between the tantra and sutra trainings is the visual and cognizing methods used in the institutes. Most of the tantric ritual training is based on reading, copying and memorizing the sutras; however, sutra trainings at *shédra* are more contemplative and reflective. In the present day, monasteries and monastic institute can integrate both audios, visual and cognizing learning techniques so that the students can learn better and faster.

One drawback of the Tibetan monastic training methods used at both *drikdra* and *shédra* is teaching through physical punishment. The method is used far less now compared to the 1970s but not completely eliminated. There are different types of physical punishments that are exercised in the monasteries. One of the most common and minimal physical punishment is prostration, a minimum of ten to thousand at a time. For example, the Sixteenth Karmapa confirms in the Rumtek Shédra's memorandum that monks who were late for the communal morning puja by a short time have to do twenty-one prostrations as a punishment, but the number of prostration will be increased by minutes of their further delay (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 8).

However, in the religious texts, such as Torch of Certainty, prostration is a method to purify one's negative karma but if one link it to the punishment, it imprints negative thought about prostration because it becomes an undesirable consequential act of monasteries. Although there are socially demeaning punishments such as accepting mistake in the public in the Vinaya texts, there is almost no mention of physical punishment. Therefore, such rules and mode of physical punishment of beating brutally by weeps, electric wires, bamboo sticks, and dropping meals are a violation of the fundamental ethics of Buddhism thus should be stopped.

#### **4.3.5 Going Beyond House and Home**

In the early 1970s, Rumtek Monastery was famous for having the best monastic training. The fame is also because the monastery is the main seat of the Sixteenth Karmapa and directly under his care and guidance. Therefore, people from the Himalaya regions, including inside Tibet, feel great pride if their sons are accepted at Rumtek Monastery. Chotrim Lungtok Dawa, the former discipline master of Rumtek monastery, shared his experience of Rumtek Monastery with the students of Shri Diwakar Shédra at Kalimpong India. It was during my trip, and I was permitted to record his talk. According to him, parents must submit a written application or verbal request to the General Secretariat Office to ordain their sons at Rumtek Monastery one to three years in advance. If accepted, parents and relatives bring their sons to the monastery. The youngest age of ordination at Rumtek Monastery is eight years old (ARF).

Dawa also explained that the actual process of becoming an ordained monk at Rumtek Monastery is lengthy and complex. After gaining approval for ordination from the General Secretary Office, parents must first bring their son to Karmapa or one of his representatives, such as the Vajra master, for the ordination. This ordination ceremony is called the hair-cutting ceremony (*skra phud phul*), where the young boy takes refuge vow (*skyabs sdom*), receives a new monastic name, has his head shaved, and is given monastic robes. The second step is to meet the discipline master (*chos khrims*) to determine the date when the boy will “enter the

monastery” (*sgrigs zhug*). This is the day when one’s ordination name will be announced to the Sangha, the new monk will be given a monastic cup (*tshogs phor*) and places his seat in the last row of the main shrine hall. The parents prepare tea refreshment (*sgrigs ja*) and offer a scarf (*khatag*) to the Sangha. In contemporary terms, this is a tea party to celebrate the new member in the community. While tea is served, the *Uze* recites prayers for the monk’s good luck and then the *Chos khrim* reads the official announcement letter (*skyabs tho*) to the Sangha (ARF).

Tea plays a large role in a Tibetan monastery. One must offer tea to the Sangha when a monk or nun first joins the monastery; one also must serve it in the form of punishment (*nyes ja*) e.g., when one leaves the monastery) (*dpal bzang* 1995, 257). In addition to his studies, the new monk also must do community service which starts with post of serving tea as a waiter (*ja ’dren*). With their first welcome tea, if the parents are rich, they will distribute a small amount of money (*sku ’gyed*) to the Sangha and the new monk will be exempted from the tea-serving community service. Otherwise, the new monk serve as tea waiter until one finishes his memorization of the texts from the second year of his admission. At both Tsurphu and Rumtek Monastery, accordingly to this rule, some elderly monks serve as tea waiters, for almost their entire monastic life; although at some point, the senior tea waiter will be granted a supervisory tea waiter title called Jadren Genpa (*ja ’dren rgan pa*).

The “Entering the Monastery Ceremony” is the formal acceptance of the new member into the individual monastic society and only after the ceremony is considered a member. As a member, one has the right to share in the monastic property, including occasional foods and monetary offerings made donors and devotees. The situation creates not only a religious bond but also an emotional connection between the new monk and monastic community. Also, he will be a subject to the rules of the monastery after the “Entering the Monastery Ceremony”. This is also the first step of identifying his individual school in Tibetan Buddhism. The new monk

automatically belongs to the individual school from whom and which school one first took hair cutting ceremony and organized the monastic entering ceremony.

The third step of admission and ordination of the new monk is to find his individual teachers, similar to finding a supervisor in universities. There are usually three teachers that parents need to find for their son. The first teacher is called a food-giving teacher (*lto gter dge rgan*)<sup>72</sup> who functions as their guardian at the monastery and is responsible for his nourishment and teaching the Vinaya rules. The food-giving teacher is someone whom the parents trust in ensuring good care of their son. The second teacher is called a textual teacher (*dpe cha'i dge rgan*). This teacher is someone who is qualified to provide his monastic education. In consultation with the discipline master, either an active or a retired senior master should be requested for their son's teacher. The student's monastic education depends almost entirely on this teacher. The third teacher is called the guaranteed teacher (*khag theg dge rgan*), who is a senior member of the monastery and someone who takes the responsibility for the boy's legal matters. For example, the office of the monastery would question the guaranteed teacher first if the boy breaks any major monastic rules (*dpal bzang* 1995, 256).

The lengthy process of becoming a monk at Rumtek monastery is another way to become the *shédra* student because of its close allies with the monastery. However, according to Lungtok Dawa, the time has changed, and the value of Tibetan Buddhist monks seemed diminished because these days he heard that monastic staff members travel villages in the Himalaya regions to get children for their monasteries due to the sharp depopulation of monastic members.

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<sup>72</sup> *Gter* is a wrong spelling seen in the book, *Tsurphu Karchag*, in this context because this means treasury. Although pronounce same it should be spell *ster* means to give (*dpal bzang* 1995, 255).

#### 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter firmly concludes that Buddhist scholasticism grew out of Buddhist monasticism, and is now a separate system in its own right to some extent. It further attempted to illustrate how Tibetan scholasticism is rooted in Tibetan monasticism in general. Moreover, it explained how the monastic structure of Tantra education is different from monastic institutes. Tantra and philosophical training have different focus in their education and practice. Thus they conceptually do not get along. Such contrasting nature between the two institutions was the major reason behind the debilitating situation of Rumtek Shédra. Although I could not go into detail, but in brief, periodizing the Tantra training over philosophical studies stigmatizes and slows down the general development of the *shédra* institute.

I do not propose to alter Buddhist monastic institutes into secular schools but segregate it from the Tantric, religious, and ritualistic aspects of the monastery physically and institutionally. By doing so, the Tibetan monastic institutes can get a better place in the academic world and Buddhism can be more useful to the contemporary society whereas religion has been pushed aside from the public domain (Zuidema, ed. 2015, 13). This will also make it easier for *shédra* students to pursue their education.

Most importantly, tantric training at Tibetan monasteries, such as *Rumtek* Monastery, is not particularly concerned with the comprehension of and practice of transcendental methods in Buddhist Tantra. Rather, training is focused on the learning and practice of the form of the tradition with its rituals, arts and crafts, and musical performance aspect. Hence, it is crucial to differentiate the fundamental construction of Buddhist monasticism and scholasticism.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis restates the answers to its two research questions; why there are few Karma Kagyu monastic scholars and *shédra* in-exile post-1959 and how did the Sixteenth Karmapa reinvent the Karmapa Kagyu scholastic tradition. Answers to these questions not only serve the purpose of this thesis but also serve as an empirical part of my world because I grew up and educated in a Tibetan monastery. This research concludes that despite the Sixteenth Karmapa's successful revitalization of the scholastic tradition, the entire Karma Kagyu scholastic institution is in a perplexing state in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Such situation might be an invisible fact for many because there is not much research done on this topic. Therefore, I am concerned about the fading of the tradition if one does not work on it from now. My major arguments in this thesis are for the sustainability of the scholastic tradition by upgrading the entire Karma Kagyu scholastic system that should be compatible with the contemporary and mainstream educational model. By doing so do then younger generations, who are there or who would join *shédra* can get a better education.

Since the early 90s, I witnessed that many Karma Kagyu young adult monks left their monasteries because they don't get a systematic Buddhist philosophical education. They were specific ones who were passionate to study Buddhist philosophies and aimed to become a Buddhist scholar. However, many lost their hope to do so in the Karma Kagyu monasteries, so they joined Nyingma, Sakya and Geluk School. For example, Khenpo Wanchuk Sonam from Rumtek Monastery, joined Ngagyur Nyingma Institute in South India early 1980s.<sup>73</sup> After the graduation, he became one of the senior faculty members of the institute. Some of those graduated from the other lineages returns to the monasteries of their origins and taught Buddhist

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<sup>73</sup> [http://www.palyul.org/eng\\_biokhenpo\\_wangchuk\\_sonam.htm](http://www.palyul.org/eng_biokhenpo_wangchuk_sonam.htm)

philosophies. However, their philosophical approach and core texts used for their teachings were mostly from the other schools.

On top of it, for many years, I have observed that many Karma Kagyu masters opened dual functioning monasteries and shédras, but they are not an academic institute. Most of these schools have no academic structure, neither qualified teachers, and asserted curricula. They run quasi schools and institutes, which are monasteries in realities. Nepal alone has more than two thousand monasteries that follows that Tibetan Buddhism (Buddhist Directory 2015, 77).<sup>74</sup> The worst thing is that neither from a religious head nor from the education department of a country inspects the quality of those monastic schools and institutes. As a result, majority of the students remained illiterate, especially the writing skills when they grew up. Therefore, Michael Lempert's argument against the contemporary Tibetan monastic education system in phrase stating that "Monasteries are not schools, and Monks are not schoolteachers" is relevant for the Karma Kagyu monastic institutes as well (Lempert 2012, 157).

From his early life, the Sixteenth Karmapa put great effort to reconstruct the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. He managed to lift the ban on Karma Kagyu institutes imposed by *Gaden Phodrang* Government during the Fifth Dalai Lama's rule. He was successful in reconstructing and reinventing the scholastic tradition in-exile post-1959 (Goshir Gyaltshab Rinpoche et al. 1989, 81). According to Sylvia Wong, the sixteenth Karmapa first planned the shédra project in Bhutan. In the year 1966, Third Druk Gyalpo (King Jigme Dorje Wangchuck, 1929-1972) of Bhutan offered an old palace named *Tashi Choling* (*bkra shi chos gling*) to the Sixteenth Karmapa for establishing a Buddhist monastic college (Wong 2010, 232). Karmapa accepted the offer and initiated its new construction, but his General Secretary, Dhamcho Yongdu did not take the project seriously, so it remained unfinished forever. Later the King's

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<sup>74</sup> This document was published by the Government of Nepal without naming an individual author.

office repurchased the palace. This report shows how Rumtek monastic administration was not interested in shédra project.

When Karmapa learned that his project in Bhutan would not be successful, he then started a new *shédra* project within the Rumtek Monastery so himself could see the lead. The project of Rumtek Shédra was a successful to reconstruct the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. However, due to the Sixteenth Karmapa's reincarnation conflict and the shédra's close allies with Rumtek Monastery, the academic institution was once again failing from within after a decade of its successful running.

This thesis argued that the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition has had a turbulent journey both in Tibet and in-exile. Traditional and contemporary historical sources support this argument. There are multiple causes behind this fact, but this thesis substantiates it on two major factors, which are outer and inner causes. This thesis concludes that the outer factors are sectarian ideology in Tibetan Buddhism, Geluk hegemonic power caused civil war, and the state's policy of a "unified system of religion and politics" in Tibet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Such sectarian ideology of Tibetan Buddhism is deeply rooted in the major male-dominated Tibetan monasteries, particularly in the Geluk monasteries which have been passing down from older to the younger generations even after they come to exile. Based on this view, I conclude that Just like medieval Europe, the dissonance of inextricably fusing religion and politics in the 17<sup>th</sup> century caused Buddhist warfare in Tibet. Thus, by learning a lesson, unless one separates religion from its politics, the sectarian fight and hatred between Buddhist extremists will not disappear in Tibetan Buddhism.

The internal cause is associated with Tibetan monasticism. I analyze the Rumtek Shédra, officially called, Karma Shri Nalanda Institute (KSNI), represents the most significant attempt to revive the premodern Karma Kagyu scholasticism. I conclude that this revival is a creative hybrid, a reinvention of the premodern Kagyu scholastic tradition. This traditional lineage is

based on the First Jamgon Kongtrul's explanation (First Jamgon Kongtrul and Zangpo 2010, 317) while incorporating modern elements. The Sixteenth Karmapa, since his early life, took the responsibility to reconstruct the lineage that was followed in-exile in post-1959. He built the institute in Sikkim, wrote a memorandum that includes the constitution, curriculum, class schedule and holidays. He not only reconstructed the tradition but also fused it with the modern education system. I restate that although the Sixteenth Karmapa was successful for reinventing the tradition and survived for a while, it started to decline after the graduation of its first batch in 1990 mainly because of internal monastic conflicts such as his own reincarnation's controversy.

The bulk of this thesis and its major conclusion has been the Sixteenth Karmapa's reinvention of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. As a result, his contribution, Rumtek Shédra or Karma Shri Nalanda Institute emerged as the first contemporary Karma Kagyu monastic institute outside Tibet. The institute is not only a new model for Tibetan monastic learning center but also probably the first one to affiliate with an Indian university (*Sampurnanand Sanskrit University*) in-exile. Karmapa brought together all the initial conditions to establish the institute; the physical building of the institute, writing a memorandum and curriculum and arranged all the required textbooks for students. Since the beginning, the entire education, including meal and accommodation at the Rumtek Shédra is given free of cost so that the children from the Himalaya can get education.

This thesis concludes that among many contributions, the memorandum of the Rumtek Shédra was a major phenomenon of Sixteenth Karmapa for inventing the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition. The memorandum shows that how he reconstructed the scholastic institution were traditional yet innovative. The memorandum contains four key elements; the Constitution and exam regulations, years and the curriculum, class schedule including daily routine and special days and vacations (Rigpe Dorje 1981, 4). Rumtek Shédra became a role model for Karma Kagyu institutes in-exile and in Tibet as well in the early 1980s. It was an easing news

for all Karma Kagyu members for having their own prestigious shédra after its long gap. That being said, there are some drawbacks in the memorandum that has effects on the shédra's future such as the institute was categorized under the Rumtek monastery, and there is no instruction about the admission procedure.

This thesis further concludes that there is not much changes and development in the shédra for twenty-five years except producing its first batch in 1990. There are multiple reasons behind its partial failure but mainly due to the Sixteenth Karmapa's reincarnation controversy which outbroke in 1993. It caused to stagnant the development of Karma Shri Nalanda Institute along with general activities of Karma Kagyu School. Since then many of the Karma Kagyu monasteries, centers and institutes have been divided into two groups. Both groups legitimize and claim to be the supreme order of the school and its counterpart as a false.

Furthermore, many senior members of the Rumtek Monastery perceive the shédra a threat to the traditional Karma Kagyu institution, many seen a shédra's education as clerical and political. Thus, the reconstruction project of the shédra was delayed to the end of Sixteenth Karmapa's life. Furthermore, there was also a lack of resource and care from the shédra administration, which is why basic infrastructure such as accommodation has not been improved since 1987. This also could be the reason why Tashi Choling monastic college project of the Sixteenth Karmapa in Bhutan was failed.

Regardless of its stagnancy, his contribution of reviving *Karma Kagyu Scholastic Transmission* in the contemporary world was remarkable and made him distinctive from his predecessors. I observed during my visit to the Rumtek Shédra in January 2019 that the shédra is running to the current date. In the year 2008, the institute celebrated its silver jubilee. Up to that year, more than two hundred students were graduated from the institute. Among them, some continued doctorate studies while many others work at Buddhist institutes, Buddhist centers, and

universities worldwide (Ecclesiastical Department 2016, 71). In this way, they carry on the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition and partially fulfill the Sixteenth Karmapa's dream.

Another major conclusion of this thesis has been the adverse result of intertwining Buddhist monasticism and scholasticism in Tibetan Buddhism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The two central institutions of Karma Kagyu School, Rumtek Drikdra and Shédra is a good example. The former represents Tantric, and the later one is philosophical training center. They have different value judgments on their practices, yet they are grounded on the same basis, *Vinaya*. The major reason behind the debilitating situation of Rumtek Shédra is its close allies with Rumtek Monastery. I propose to segregate it from the Tantric, religious, and ritualistic aspects of the monastery physically and institutionally. By doing so, the Tibetan monastic institutes can get a better place in the academic world and Buddhism can be more useful to the contemporary society whereas religion has been pushed aside from the public domain (Zuidema, ed. 2015, 13). This system will also make it more straightforward for shédra students to pursue their education.

Furthermore, there are enormous researches on how Tibetan Buddhism has been transitioning from the monasteries to the secular universities in the form of hermeneutic studies (Jong 1997, 77) or secular approach of religious studies without having a religious responsibility over one's studies (Lopez 1995, 7). Since Tibetan Buddhism, along with Tibetan master, came in Exile, the secularization process of the Buddhist education has begun. Hence, instead of denial, the monasteries should accept the fact and find a way to secure traditional Buddhist training tradition. Otherwise, this change would lead to losing a significant part of Buddha's teachings, which contributes the inner value of humankind.

Most importantly, the tantra training at Tibetan monasteries such as Rumtek Monastery rather based on the form of the tradition, and it's ritual and artistic aspects of Buddhist Tantra. Also, tantra is an individualistic practice and beyond the reach of common perception, whereas institutional education needs to be tangible and digestible by ordinary people. This conclusion

does not mean that systematic tantric training is pointless but along with the ritual training, a student should understand the essence of what they are doing because the real practice of tantra is not extroverted but introverted and visualization. Therefore, the essence of Buddha's teachings cannot deliver in public through such a tantric training at monasteries, but it significantly relies on the philosophical training at shédra. Hence, it is vital to differentiate Buddhist monasticism and the scholasticism yet complementing each other.

With those analyses and the conclusions, I hopefully cast new light on Tibetan Buddhism in the contemporary academic world. By exploring the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the premodern time and its reconstruction in-exile post-1959 by the Sixteenth Karmapa, readers will clearly understand the unstable journey of Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the past, present and its future direction as well. Nevertheless, this is an academic paper that comes with its limitation for creating an effective change on the physical Karma Kagyu monasteries and shédra where thousands of the Himalayan children are admitted. Therefore, besides this thesis, the future of the Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition and the monastic institutes rely on the present Karma Kagyu followers and its leaders. I hope this thesis would help them to lead to the right direction of the development of Karma Kagyu scholastic tradition in the near days to come.

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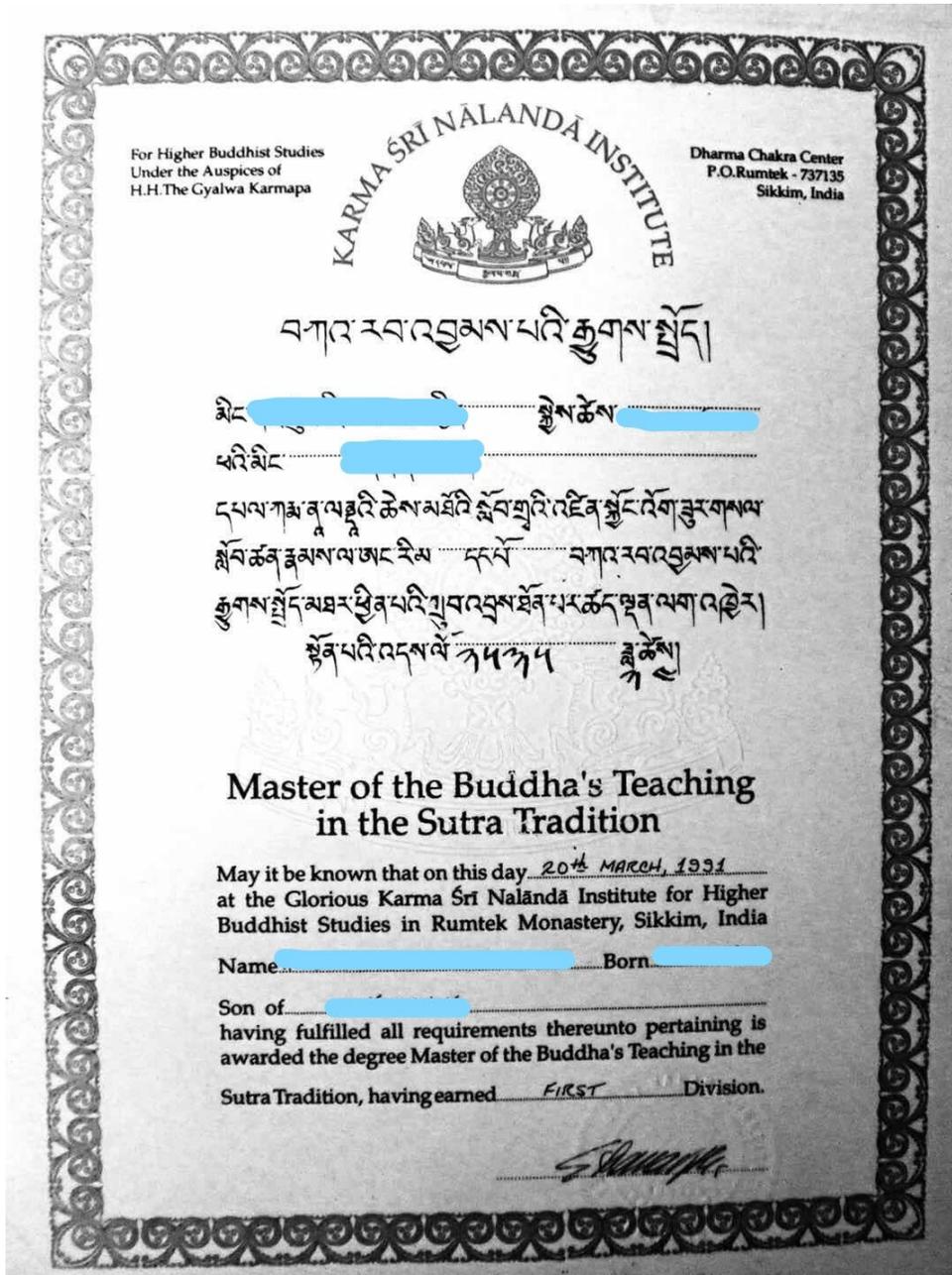
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Appendices

Appendix 1



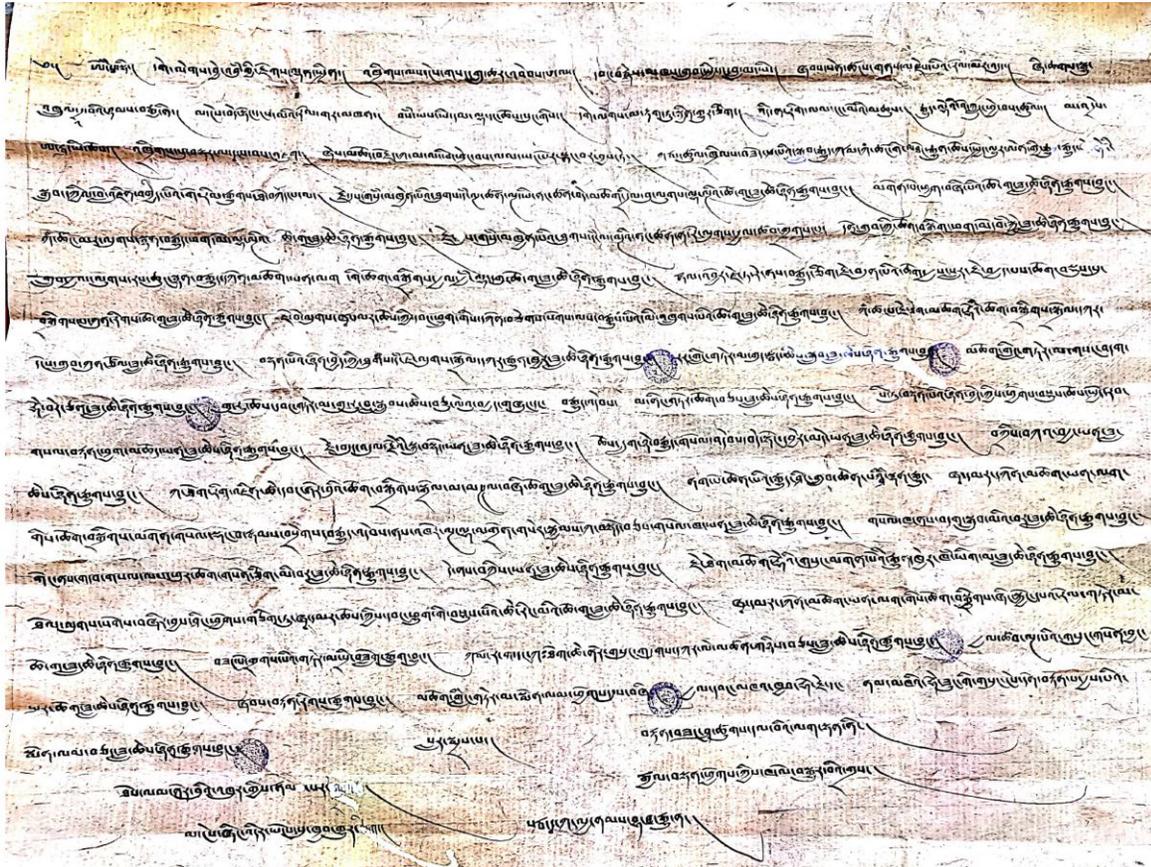
Appendix 2



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[https://www.google.ca/search?dcr=0&biw=1283&bih=615&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=JSneXO3kFqjY0gKc3qTgBA&q=Geshe+certificate&oq=Geshe+certificate&gs\\_l=img.3...16422.22235..23059...7.0..0.57.1213.25.....0....1..gws-wiz-img.....0i67j0i7i30.HTpozma36vk#imgrc=cGiDyPYH9O7wSM](https://www.google.ca/search?dcr=0&biw=1283&bih=615&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=JSneXO3kFqjY0gKc3qTgBA&q=Geshe+certificate&oq=Geshe+certificate&gs_l=img.3...16422.22235..23059...7.0..0.57.1213.25.....0....1..gws-wiz-img.....0i67j0i7i30.HTpozma36vk#imgrc=cGiDyPYH9O7wSM): (accessed date: April 6 2019)



Appendix 4



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## Appendix 5

Following are the Wylie transliterations of the selected Tibetan sources that were translated into English and cited in this thesis. Headings include the reference code, the name of the books and their page numbers.

[CGT-1 (Golden Rosary, Kamtsang history book vol. 1, 543)]

bod yul de na chos brgyud sna tshogs pa yod par 'dug pas de rnams rtsod pa 'ong / dmag dngos  
btang na chos rje mi mnyes par 'dug pas/ gser thog gi gyo mo ga chur lus pa rnams skyel ba dang  
sbrags pa'i rta pa thor tsam zhig gtong / de tsho rta'i snga shas la gyo mo re khyer bas bde bar  
'drongs 'gro/ chos brgyud thams cad khyed rang gi lugs su 'dril/ lo lo bzhin mdo khams rnams  
rab sgang dang dbus gtsang rnams chos 'khor chen po bskor ba byed pas gnang ba zhu zhus  
kyang /

chos brgyud gcig kho nas sems can mi thul so so'i mos pa bzhin sangs rgyas kyi thugs rje 'jug pa  
yin/ so so rang gi lugs kyi chos tshul bzhin du byas na des chog pa yin gsungs nas ma gnang /

[CGT-2 (Memorandum 4)]

bshad grwa dge slob so sos nyams len dgos pa'i yig cha khag gtan la phab pa las dang po  
ni/ \_dpal karma'i nA lan+d+ra ches mtho'i bshad grwa chen mos gtsos yan lag karma'i 'jam  
dbyangs khang gi gzha rim slob grwa gcig 'thus su bca' ba chos kyi khrims dang / \_rgyugs sprod  
bcas gsham gsal/

[CGT-3 (Memorandum page 5)]

don tshan dang por/\_ bshad grwa 'di'i slob spyi 7 rgyal ba yab sras nam pa bzhi/\_de 'og mkhan  
po mtshan gnas ldan pa bcas kyi dbu khrid gnang dgos rgyu/

[CGT-4 (Memorandum 5)]

don tshan gnyis par/ ston pa rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi gsung chos 'dul ba'i lugs bzhin/ bshad  
grwa 'di la yang / dge 'dun gzhi gsum gyi phyag len gyis khog dbub bas 'dul ba'i phyag bzhes  
gtsang seng nge ba zhig dgos pa gtso bor bton te/ r+ca ba bzhi chang lnga/ sho bag sogs nyes  
pa'i skyon gyis r+ca ba nas 'gal rigs la nyes gcod dgon pa gzhung gi bca' khrims rin po che gzhir  
bzhag gi nyes chad khar dmigs bsal bshad grwa nas gnas dbyung gtong rgyu/

[CGT-5 (Memorandum 8)]

don tshan bcu gcig par/ lo rim rgyugs sprod kyi ang rim rtsis gzhir bzhag pas/ tha ma lag khyer spyi srol dang mthun pa sprad rgyu ma zad/ phyogs grwa bsdu 'gugs kyi yi ge 81 'khod pa'i yig char gsal ba gzhir bzhag lag len bstar rgyu dang / 'di ga dgon gzhung gi dge 'dun pa rnams kyang mkhas pa'i lag khyer spyi srol bzhin thob mtshams bstan pa kho na'i sri zhur gang la de 'tshams 'di nas lam ston gang byas la thad kar khas len gnang rgyu red/

[CGT-6 (Great Tibetan and Chinese Dictionary, 296)]

[(1)] las kyi 'go byed dam byed pa po/ snyan ngag mkhan po/ [(2)] [(JupAd+hAya)] rab byung dang bsnyen rdzogs kyi sdom pa 'bobs mkhan/ grA sa'i mkhan po/

[CGT-7 (Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary, 426)]

mkhan po'i bya ba/ 'dul ba'i gzhung nas gsungs pa'i mkhan po'i bya ba ste/ gzhan la dge tshul dang / dge slong gi sdom pa gnang rgyu dang / 'dul ba'i bslab bya lag len gzhung don bcas slob khrid gnang rgyu de yin/

[CGT-8 (Memorandum 9)]

gong du gsal min la ma ltos par bshad grwa 'dzin skyong gi las don che phra mtha' dag dbu 'dzin khag dang / mkhan po rnams/ dge skos/ las byed bcas lhan tshogs nas skabs don la ran pa'i thag gcod bya dgos so//

[CGT-9 (Memorandum 9/10)]

don tshan bcu gsum par/ lo rim 'dzin grwa dang / nyin re'i 'dzin grwa tshogs dus/ gung seng dang / dus chen gtan 'bebs bcas yig cha zur yod ltar la so gnas brtan po dgos rgyu dang / bshad grwa 'di'i ched du ngos nas gtan la phab pa'i yig cha rnams la lag len dngos gzhi 'gel skabs gnas tshul dang ma mtshams pa'i gnad don skyon can rigs shar na/ nga'i ming thog nas thad kar bsgyur bkod gtong rgyu/

[CGT-10 (Memorandum 12)]

lo rim dang po/ 'jam mgon gsung shes bya kun khyab las zur bkol tshad ma'i rnam bshad/ pad dkar gsung sde bdun rig pa'i snying po/ spyod 'jug rgya 'grel dge lha'i gsung dang / bod 'grel dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba'i gsung theg chen chos kyi rgya mtsho/ sum rtags si tu'i 'grel chen/ dbyin rje/hin d+hi/ sam kri ta sogs skad yig gang rung bcas/

The Wylie transliterations are converted from the Tibetan script to the English through online converting service provided by *The Tibetan & Himalaya Library*.

<http://www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/wyconverter.php>