

The XIV Gyalwa Karmapa— His Divine Personality

B. Ghosh

The sad demise of XVI Gyalwa Karmapa has created considerable vacuum in the Buddhist world. H. H. created great impact in the minds of his world wide followers of the order.

H. H. late lamented Gyalwa Karmapa emanated in the world of Tibet at a turbulent period of Tibetan history when the whole humanity first witnessed the total fearful destruction of first World War, 1914-1918, owing mostly for scientific and technological advancement and resultant discovery of vast destructive weapons. The world in the wilderness had some solace due to existence of oasis of spiritual giant all over the world. H.H. was born in the world, which was just arising out of the vast ruins of psychological disbalance, facing ideological conflict—this was the year 1924.

The supreme head of Siddha of Kargyu school was born at Denkhok in Dergye [Kham--Eastern Tibet] on the full moon day of the sixth month of the Male-wood mouse year corresponding to 1924.

It may be noted here that the Gyalwa Karmapa's reincarnation lineage started from first Karmapa Dhusum Khyenpa, as in the case of the previous Karmapa. H. H. was also discovered and recognized through the will left by his predecessor predicting his next incarnation. As a child he displayed tremendous natural spiritual insight and received complete meditative training and practice traditional for a Gyalwa Karmapa.

The Gyalwa Karmapa is the enlightened embodiment of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattavas that have recreated themselves for over eight hundred years to continue the work on earth for the well-being of all sentient beings.

Here we are not going to elaborate his life and various activities to understand this divine personalities he represents. From 1924 to 1981 the divine personality of H.H. blazed with actions,

it is unimaginable how he established a spiritual link throughout the world establishing numerous Dharma Chakra Centres in many countries within a short span of time, with dedicated efforts of limited and devoted incarnate Lamas and devotees and admirers. H.H. devoted his whole life for propagation of Dharma, peace and harmony of the world.

To understand properly H.H. Karmapa's personality we must know the origin of the Buddhist Siddha school which he commanded for long.

This historically and spiritually important school of Siddhas has an important place in Buddhism. The Tantric practices (Sadhanas) and sublime doctrine from the primordial Buddha Vajradhara (Rdo-rje-hchang) transmitted the esoteric teaching to Tilopa. The female divinities, MKhah-hgromas are said to have been responsible for the communication. First transmission of doctrine was by Dakinis to Khyenpo, the second to a Bengali ascetic Tilopa 975 A. D. from Buddha Vajradhara and Tilopa communicated the same to Naropada (Tib. Narota, Naropa, Naro) who was a Junitor of Nalanda Mahavihara 1039 A.D.

He communicated the sublime teaching to his Tibetan disciple Marpa (Marpa Lotsawa --Marpa the Translator) 1012-96 A. D. and Marpa passed on the esoteric doctrine to celebrated Tibetan wizard turned Yogi--Milarepa, the Cotton-Clad Mila, Naropa preached six different kinds of doctrine, popularly known in Tibet as "Naro Chos Drug" six doctrine of Naropa.

Bhutanese bKah--brgyud-hbrugpa text mentions the Kagyupa sect, It is stated therein that in its earlier period Marpa, Mila and successive disciples wore white robes and that is why, they were called "White Ones" from the word "dKar" meaning "White". It may be recalled that the white robes in ancient times were distinctive garb of the Yogins (Naljorpa) in Tibet. The word "dKar" it appears to has been replaced by the word "bKah" meaning "Command", has

been adopted. The term bKah-brgyud means "Oral Tradition", the succession of those who transmitted the orally available teaching of the Master—The Buddha Vajradhara and the like.

Let us now mention the names of the sects and sub-sects that arose out of the Kagyupa sect. The following are the different sects and sub-sects:

	1. Shangspa	bKah brgyud
Sects and Sub-sects	2. Dwagpo	bKah brgyud
of the school	3. Karma	bKah brgyud
	4. Hbahram	bKah brgyud
	5. Phagmo	bKah brgyud

From Karma bkah rgyud (No.3) arose the following sub-sects—the Black hat sub-sect and the Red-hat sub-sect.

Following sub-sects issued out from the Phagmo-bKah brgyud (No.5) Hbrigung sub-sect, Staglung sub-sect, Khro Phu sub-sect, Hbrugpa sub-sect, Smartsang sub-sect, Yelpa sub-sect, Gyab-bzang sub-sect and Chujgseb sub-sect.

We have already mentioned the transmission of the esoteric oral teaching from Buddha Vajradhara to Milarepa.

Next in the line is the Milarepa's celebrated and learned disciple Choje Gampopa, a great exponent of Buddhist philosophy and meditation, who was the Guru of first Karmapa Dhusum Khyenpa (1110-1193 A. D.) It was Gampopa, who Karmapa by Gampopa recognised Dhusum Khyenpa as first Karmapa, a manifestation of Avalokitesvara, whose existence has been prophesised by Buddha himself in the Samadhirajasutra. He laid special emphasis on meditation within the Kagyu order.

Etymologically Karmapa means one who manifests the action-aspect of all the Buddhas. The late lamented Gyalwa Karmapa, Rang-hbyung-rig-pai rdo-rje, was the 16th in the succession of incarnation. He embodied, represented and guided the accumulated spiritual energy. According to tradition the Karmapa has been universally reputed to have passed and demonstrated in action the supreme spiritual power of predicting their next birth of the succeeding Avatars. Prior to their demise, on each successive occasion, the prediction

provided full information, such as, the names of the would-be parents, the place, date and time of birth. It is also well-known that the present one had left behind some indications of forthcoming reincarnation.

Throughout his divine life extending from 1924 to 1981, H.H. blazed like the crescent moon diffusing smiling fragment to whomsoever, who sat near his holy feet, and generously offered loving kindness to humnity at large.

Karmapa was an unparallel and unique divine and majestic personality in a human garb. It was after H.H. entered into final sublime Samadhi, his entire divine personality was revealed to us by H.H. the Dalai Lama with other reincarnated Tibetan lamas. This has been beautifully and tangibly manifested in spontaneous prayers offered by nine lamas for prompt reincarnation during the funeral ceremonies, which took place on 25th day of 10th Tibetan month corresponding to 20th, December 1981.

It may be pointed out here that nine incarnated Lamas composed most appealing religious prayers, individually indicating complete theory of Trikaya concept and reincarnation thereof.

It would not be out of place to discuss briefly the Buddha-Kaya concept for clear understanding the Karmapa as an embodiment of supra-mundane cosmic manifestation as celestial Bodhisattava and mundane human Buddha.

The Central concept of Mahayana lies in the Trikaya — three bodies of Buddha and Bodhisattva, along with the conception of Prajna and Karuna.

The Hinayanist reveres Buddha as a superior human being (Narasimha), who attained perfection of wisdom in this life through accumulated merit arising out of Punya and Jnana of his past lives. In Pali tradition he has also lokottara (Supra-mundane) besides mundane form.

The Mahayanist conceives Buddha in three forms: (a) Nirmana-Kaya (creative body), as Sakyamuni who revealed twelve deeds and entered into Nirvana, (b) Sambhoga-Kaya (enjoyment body), as Buddha ideal, who enjoyed a refulgent body and preached to the Bodhisattvas (enlightened beings) and (c) Dharma-Kaya (transcendental form) the supreme being comprising all dharmas, the essence of wisdom and compassion.

It may be pointed out in this context that conception of Tulku (sprul-sku) in Tibetan answers to that of the Nirmanakaya

The Buddha in Kaya concept is not completely three different entities three aspects of one Buddha concept. From absolute universal point of view, he is the transcendent, Dharmakaya; from the point of view of ideality he is Sambhoga-Bodhisattva to help sentient being; from human point of view he is the Nirmanakaya the Sakyamuni, son of King Suddhodana who attained bodhi and entered into Nirvana (final bliss).

It is known that Ananda being asked told him that "The Tathagata has three bodies". These three bodies are three aspects of one Buddha Tathagata. They are essentially the same but distinct in their nature. But the Dharma-kaya is not only an abstract principle, but a living reality, which manifests itself in different forms.

Lastly, it may be noted in passing that the Rinpoches and learned lamas consider H. H. Karmapa to be the embodiment of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other Tantric manifestation of Buddha. All of them pray for Holiness' prompt reincarnation for liberating all beings from the mundane sorrow.