



A Few Accounts About the Wondrous Activities of His Holiness the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje

**Narrated by
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Zhanag Dzogpa Tenzin Namgyal (1933-2005) was the General Secretary of His Holiness the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa until He passed into Parinirvana in 1981. He was the first General Secretary of His Holiness the XVIIth Gyalwa Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje until 2005. Tenzin Namgyal, Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche's brother-in-law, narrated this account at Thrangu Tashi Chöling in Bodnath, Nepal, in 1989.

Until 1981 I was the personal secretary of His Holiness the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa. For the last thirty years of my life, I was next to the Karmapa most of the time and wrote down almost every word that he said, teachings that he gave, and letters that he wrote, including the recognition letters of the various *Tulkus*. I have wanted to write an official biography of the Gyalwa Karmapa and to speak about another side of the Karmapa, which I will do now.

The subject of my talk is about the activities of Buddha Karmapa, the ocean of unlimited activities of the Karmapa's three secrets of body, speech, and mind. It is something really indescribable. No one would really be able to describe it, but the Karmapa appeared in this world as a human being, and I had the good fortune of being his attendant for thirty years. So, what I will describe is what I witnessed. In fact, it is impossible to convey everything, so all I can do is share the main things I experienced with you by presenting a brief account.

One of the main activities of the Karmapa is to wear the Black Crown in order to benefit many beings. I will give a brief history of the Black Crown.



The Black Crown

Many eons ago, during the time of the Buddha called Driamkyi Gyalpo, there was a king called Yulpo Kyong ('Protector of the Surrounding Land'). The king had a younger son called Chökyi Lodro ('Wisdom of Dharma'). Chökyi Lodro went into the mountains and meditated *vipassana* ('insight meditation'). He remained in *samadhi* for hundreds of thousands of years and became known as Rishi Gompa-kye ('Sage Who Gave Rise to Realization'). The Dakinis had great faith in him and assembled before him; each Dakini pulled a strand of hair from their head and offered it to him. He accepted their present and made a crown out of their hair. They all had black hair, so the crown became known as "The Black Crown." It is a manifestation of self-arisen wisdom because all Dakinis who offered their hair were wisdom Dakinis; therefore this crown is a manifestation of ultimate wisdom. They crowned the sage and saint with this very crown of empowerment that is adorned with symbols of the sun and the moon.

The Origin of the Inner and Outer Black Crown

In his next life, Rishi Gompa-kye was known as Pö Senge; in his next life he was Drupon Sinam ('Overcoming all Maras'). In his next life he was Drimed Karpo ('Stainless White One'). His next life was Pema Namdol ('The Play of Lotuses'). His next life was Lu-yang Ningpo ('Essence Melody of the Nagas'). Then he was Karma Wanu ('Cow'). Then he was the great Brahmin Saraha. After his life as the great tantric master Saraha, he was reborn in Tibet as Düsüm Khyenpa, the First Glorious Karmapa.

The Black Crown was worn throughout all their lifetimes by the Karmapas; it was ever-present as the spontaneous manifestation of ultimate wisdom and was not something that

could be obtained. The Karmapas have had the Black Crown from the First Karmapa and through all successive lives. Having realization of ultimate wisdom, this crown is naturally present. Therefore, all Karmapas have had the crown continuously, up to the XVIth Gyalwa Karmapa. If someone has clear awareness and very pure karma, they can see it, which is the spontaneous manifestation of wisdom. I have heard accounts of people having seen it.

The Vth Karmapa Deshin Shegpa was invited to China. The Emperor of the Ming Dynasty during those times was an emanation of Manjushri, so he had very pure karma. He saw the crown on the Karmapa's head and said to him, "You are wearing a wonderful and excellent crown. If it were possible to have people see it, if I could have one made that looks the same, you could wear it so that others could see it. Would that bring great benefit to beings?" Karmapa Deshin Shegpa replied, "It is all right for you to make one. It will be of great benefit to beings." So the emperor had a replica of the crown made, which is the outer crown that the Karmapa puts on during a grand ceremony for people to see - they see the outer crown, which is a replica of the inner wisdom crown. That was a description of the origin of the inner and outer Black Crown, which is a manifestation of wisdom and is always inseparably present with all Karmapas.

Question: "Did anyone see the inner crown during the life of the XVIth Karmapa?"

Tenzin Namgyal: Yes, there were people who saw it. I will describe this.

The tradition says that it is necessary for the Karmapa to visit and pay respect to the Dalai Lama. All Karmapas would go to see him; they would take off their hat and prostrate to him. When the XVIth Karmapa was in his 8th year, together with his father, he went to the Dalai Lama, the XIIIth at that time. The Dalai Lama and his minister entered the audience room and the Karmapa performed the prostrations. The Dalai Lama and his minister noticed that the Karmapa was wearing a hat, so the minister said, "Why are you prostrating with your hat on? That will not do!" He asked the father, "Where do you come from, a remote valley? Don't you know that it is not allowed to wear a hat when you prostrate? That is a big mistake." The father responded, "He is not wearing a hat. He hasn't even brought a hat along. The Karmapas always have a wisdom hat on, so probably this is the hat that you see him wearing." Having heard this, the Dalai Lama and his minister were amazed and felt great faith in the Karmapa. Then the Dalai Lama wrote a long-life prayer for him. This was the first occasion on which the secret hat was seen in the life of the XVIth Karmapa, so it is quite an extraordinary incident.

Later, when the Karmapa was staying at Palpung Monastery to receive teachings from the previous Tai Situ Rinpoche, he travelled to a monastery in Litang. On the way he and his escorts passed Dzongsar Monastery, the monastery of Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche. The first and previous Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche was there. At that time, Jamyang Khyentse saw the Karmapa as Düsüm Khyenpa, the First Karmapa, and saw the Black Crown floating in space above his head while he was prostrating to him. So, he saw this and they heard Jamyang Khyentse describe what he had seen.

In 1944, when the Karmapa was going on pilgrimage through the south of Tibet, the IIInd King of Bhutan, Jigme Wangchug, invited him to Bhutan. When the king met the Karmapa, he saw the Karmapa's crown and felt very great devotion for him from the depths of his heart. When the Karmapa left, the king cried like a little child – he cried because of his great devotion and perfect faith after having met the Gyalwa Karmapa.

In 1967, the Karmapa was invited to Ladakh. At that time, a girl from Kashmir without any faith came to see him. As the Karmapa performed the Black Crown Ceremony, the girl saw the inner wisdom hat inseparably on his head; when he placed the fabricated outer crown on his head, she saw the inner one inside the outer crown. This happened in Ladakh at that time.

Tashi Lada, who was responsible for looking after the college in Rumtek, once lived near Tsurphu. When he was 11 years old, he escorted his father to pay respects to the Karmapa. Next to the Karmapa's seat in his room was a statue of the Karmapa. When Tashi Lada entered the room, he saw two statues and saw one moving about. He told his father, "There are two statues of the Karmapa. One is motionless and the other one is moving about. Which is the real one?" He had seen the statue with the Black Crown and he could see the real Karmapa with the inner crown; they were identical, while one was moving about. He was very young when this happened and did not know anything about the Black Crown at that time. There are many other accounts about people actually seeing the inner Black Crown.

Wonders So True

When the Karmapa was 12 years old and travelling from Tsurphu to Kham in East Tibet, he came to a village called Drome that is situated in an area called Tsumbu. At that time, the river was frozen and he went to play on the ice. Later when the ice melted his footprints could be seen on the water and they remained there. Apart from Padmasambhava, the Karmapa is the only great master known to have left his footprints on water.

When the Karmapa was travelling in Kham, he reached a place called Chang Tang, the location of the monastery of Dechen Rinpoche. The Karmapa had a young antelope that had been given to him and also had his tiny pet puppy, called Yidrug, along with him. When they arrived at the monastery with his dog and antelope, both animals left footprints on a stone, which can still be seen.

When the Karmapa went to a nunnery to bless the site, he threw kernels of grain into the room; they usually do not roll under objects. But when the Karmapa threw the grains there, they rolled underneath all the objects in the room – they rolled under the feet of the statues and many lay in the hands of the statues. Half of some and the whole of other kernels transformed into *ringsel* ('precious white relics'). Some have been preserved from that consecration and are now at Rumtek.

One time the Karmapa went to Phayul Monastery. The abbot there was a famous and great Siddha. When the Karmapa arrived, he tied the sword he had into a knot. He gave it to the Siddha and told him, "I am a Siddha, too."

When the Karmapa went to a Bonpo Monastery in Nitang with Tai Situ Rinpoche, they both left footprints in the stone; their horses did too.

How the XVIth Karmapa Recognized Reincarnations

The Karmapa recognized the XIIth Tai Situ Rinpoche after he returned from a visit to China. He did not perform a divination with a *mala* or throw dice, as is sometimes the case. The same morning the child was born, the Karmapa chanted, rested in meditation, and immediately described where the Tai Situpa could be found. I was the secretary and had to write it all down - where he was born, what his name was, his father's name, his mother's name, what direction his house faced, and how far away they were, what year, whether the

family was noble, poor, or wealthy. He described everything while in meditation, and I wrote it all down. He saw everything very clearly, like looking into a mirror.

It is quite marvellous how the Karmapa recognized the Rinpoches Tai Situ, Jamgon Kongtrul, and the Sharmapa. For example, after recognizing Tai Situ Rinpoche and Shamar, the Karmapa found Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche in the same way. He specified all the details of where he was born. He said that there were seven people in the family of Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, so a search team was sent to find the family according to these instructions. However, they found the family, but there were only six members. The search party returned to the Karmapa and told him that everything accorded with his description, the position of the house in relation to the Jobo Temple in Lhasa, and so on. They told him that there were only six instead of seven family members, though. The Karmapa answered, “One is inside the mother.” He was Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche’s younger brother.

Then there was the recognition of Gyaltsab Rinpoche. In his letter, the Karmapa described everything, even told the name of his father, Tutob Lodrö. The search party found the house and the mother living with the baby, but the father’s name was Tenzin Chögyä. They found out that Tenzin Chögyä was Tutob Lodrö’s brother. Tutob Lodrö had left to live somewhere else, so people assumed that Tenzin Chögyä was the father of Gyaltsab Rinpoche. The Karmapa identified the real father. Not only was he able to recognize the birth of a Tulku, he also recognized the father.

When seeing the rebirth of Sangyā Nyenpa Rinpoche, in his letter the Karmapa said that his father’s name was Sangyā Legpa, the Tibetan name for the Buddha. The party with the letter in their hands went to Bhutan; they looked all around the area for someone with that name, but they could not find him. In fact, the father was the steward of the Guru Rinpoche Temple, and everyone called him Kungnyo (‘Steward’); nobody called him by his real name. The search party gave up and reported back that they could not find anybody with the name Sangyā Legpa; only a steward looking after the Guru Rinpoche Temple lived there. The Karmapa replied, “It is the steward. Go back and ask him his name.” They did and found out that his name was Sangyā Legpa.

The Karmapa recognized Sönam Garwang when his father visited him. He told his father that the baby his wife was carrying in her body was Tulku Sönam Garwang. In this way, he recognized Pawo Rinpoche and many other Tulkus, too. There isn’t a tradition of sorting out the children to recognize who is who. The Karmapa recognizes them directly through his clairvoyance. This is truly amazing.

The monasteries of the Karmapa and Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche in Tibet are very far apart. One time someone came to the Karmapa to find the incarnation of Traleg Rinpoche. At that time, the Chinese were always in the country, so the search party asked the Karmapa to please give them a direct answer due to all the difficult circumstances in those times. The Karmapa did this; he wrote that Traleg Rinpoche was still in the body of his mother and that they may only open the letter on the 12th day of the 1st month of the following year. They did as told and on that particular day they opened the letter stating where he had been born. In fact, Traleg Rinpoche was born on the 8th day of that month, exactly 4 days before they opened the letter.

There are many Throne-Holders and great masters of the teachings, but the Karmapa is the most significant when it comes to recognizing Tulkus. When Düsum Khyenpa, the First Karmapa, lived, there was no tradition or institution of Tulkus. When the First Karmapa was born as the IInd Karmapa, this was the beginning of the institution of Tulkus, reincarnate

Lamas. Recognition of rebirths and enthronements have developed and spread in Tibet since the succession of the Glorious Karmapas.

I don't want to bore anybody, so you are welcome to ask any questions you might have.

Questions & Answers

Question: “What do the footprints in the water look like? Are they made of ice or something?”

Tenzin Namgyal: At the time, the Karmapa was 12. I wasn't there, but people witnessed this and described them as whole footprints on the water. First they were ice. They were made on the ice and when it melted the footprints remained on the water. For as long as he was in Tibet, the footprints remained in Drome, which is situated in the area of Tsumbu. However, I don't know whether they are still there now.

Question: “Would you say something about the birth of the Karmapa himself?”

Tenzin Namgyal: About the XVIth Karmapa and the XVIIth? I can tell you about what has happened in the past but not about what is going to happen in the future. Regarding the Karmapa's prophecy letter, a letter for the birth of the XVIIth Karmapa, as seen by the Tulkus, has to be written by himself. If someone else wrote it, people might doubt that it is genuine.

The Karmapa recognizes and identifies his own rebirth. It should be interesting for scientists to discover evidence for a future and past life and to explain how the Karmapa identifies his next birth. Wouldn't that astound scientists?

I have a copy of the letter written by the XVth Karmapa to identify the XVIth, so I know what was written. In the letter, the XVth Karmapa stated that he would be born east of Tsurphu, near the shore of the Golden River (the shore at which he was born), at the Glorious Mountain (the mountain behind which he was born), Atup (the family name), the ox (the astrological month in which he was born), the mouse (the year he was born). The XVth Karmapa wrote the letter like that and this accorded with his next birth. The XVIth Karmapa also wrote and left a letter to identify the XVIIth Karmapa.

Question: “Did the First Karmapa see how many incarnations of Karmapas there would be?”

Tenzin Namgyal: This is an important subject, which you find in the Buddha's teachings. The Buddha spoke of the Karmapa's coming. Guru Rinpoche also prophesied the coming of the Karmapa in hidden texts; in the *termas* it is stated that there will be 21 Karmapas in all.

Question: “I heard that the XVIIth Karmapa is going to be the most powerful of all. Is that true?”

Tenzin Namgyal: It is said that the sacred power of the Karmapa will depend upon living beings and disciples. There is no difference in the power and blessings of the Karmapas, but it just depends upon the followers. Just like the moon in the sky, its reflection depends upon the water on which it is reflected. If you have pure and undisturbed water, the reflection is perfect, otherwise not, but the moon stays the same. This is the same with the Karmapas - their blessings and sacred power are the same, but it all depends upon the recipients.

Question: “What will happen when the XXIst Karmapa dies? What is the reason?”

Tenzin Namgyal: We see only one Karmapa – that is our way of seeing things. In fact, there are hundreds of millions of Karmapas emanating wherever help is needed. We hear that the

XXIst Karmapa will pass away and that there will not be any more. The reason for this is that he works to help all beings in this world. When this world is finished, he will have finished, too, and will then move to another realm.

Question: “What was the main practice of the Karmapa?”

Tenzin Namgyal: The main practice of the XVIth Karmapa was Tara, a practice he always did. Every morning of every day, he would do the Vajradhara, Manjushri, and Tara Sadhana, and in the evenings he always did the Mahakala Sadhana, the Protector Practice. However, you could say that his main practice was the great non-meditation practice. There are different levels in Mahamudra practice: lesser, middle, and great one-taste, the last level being non-meditation, which also consists of lesser, middle, and great. The Karmapa’s practice was great non-meditation. We know this, because once he was talking to the IIInd Jamgon Kongtrul Rinpoche, Khyentse Öser, and they discussed this practice. Khyentse Öser told him, “Your realization is right at the state of great non-meditation. That is your practice.” He wrote that down in the account of his life, so it is definitely true. So, his real practice was great non-meditation.

Question: “Why did only one Karmapa marry?”

Tenzin Namgyal: The reason why only one Karmapa married, while the others hadn’t, was that he was practicing Nyingma teachings as well as Kagyü teachings; following the Nyingma Tradition, he married. However, it really makes no difference whether he married or not; it is not the same as thinking, “It’s better to be married” or “It’s worth being married” – it really makes no difference.

Question: “There’s a photo of the XVIth Karmapa - he is sitting on his throne and his body is translucent. Can you explain this?”

Tenzin Namgyal: Yes, I have seen the picture. If one has faith and devotion in the Karmapa, then seeing this picture will really increase one’s conviction in him. The photograph was taken while he was in meditative *shunyata* – then his body became translucent and you can see through it.

Question: “Do beings such as the Karmapa always appear as Lamas? Do they appear as other beings, perhaps even as women?”

Tenzin Namgyal: Many beings become manifestations of Lamas – high people, low people, and animals. Buddhas also take birth as animals, or as parks, bridges, and so on. They manifest in all sorts of ways. The Dakinis who offered their hair for the Black Crown were also emanations, so there are lots of female beings.

In the Tibetan tradition, there are great female masters, such as Machig Labdrön and the consort of the XVth Karmapa; her name was Khandro Chenmo (‘Great Dakini’). If you look at the history of India, there was Gelongma Palmo, who benefited beings immensely. In terms of emanations, there is no distinction between male and female – whatever benefits beings.



Wondrous Activities

The Karmapa left Palpung Monastery for Tsurmang Monastery of Garwang Rinpoche in 1940. Since it was very cold, he stayed there that winter. During that time, there was a special day for Jetsün Milarepa. On this day, the Karmapa did Milarepa Guru Yoga and had a vision of him in a great sphere of light. The Karmapa wrote a prayer to Milarepa that reads: “Milarepa appeared in the midst of all this light, like the bright sunlight.” This prayer still exists in his own handwriting, and we can see it.

Many miracles happened while the Karmapa was staying at Tsurmang. When the Karmapa was in his own room and looking out the window onto the courtyard, he saw two horses, one called Zhutrul (‘Miracle’), which belonged to Situ Rinpoche, and the other called Tamug (‘Brown Horse’), which belonged to Beru Rinpoche. In fact, the miracles I mentioned about the horses leaving footprints on stones were by these horses. This time they were being groomed and fed to become even more beautiful so that they could be presented as a gift. These horses were very renowned for having left their footprints in many places. In a text, Chökyi Dekyi Lingpa Rinpoche wrote about what these horses with great power would become and this happened. Not only one or two people witnessed the footprints these horses left in stone, but also everybody saw them.

At that time, the Karmapa told the previous Tsurmang Garwang Tulku that he was going to give him a very big present. Tsurmang Tulku pondered, “Oh, I wonder what that is.” The Karmapa brought a crystal about the size of a hand and Tsurmang Garwang wondered, “Why is he giving me a crystal that’s not very valuable? But he gave it to me, so it’s an important present.” He then went to the window and threw the crystal onto the stone pavement of the courtyard. The crystal cut into the stone and stuck there, not broken or split. Garwang ran downstairs and thought, “He is a great Siddha and he gave me such a fabulous present.” He called everyone to come and see how the crystal stuck in the stone. He kept this crystal as a

great blessing and this was something that everyone could witness. I wasn't there at the time, but all of the Karmapa's attendants told me about this event. I have seen the crystal because Tsurmang Garwang Rinpoche kept it.

A new temple was being built next to the older temple at Tsurphu, so there were lots of monks as well as older people working there. One night when the Karmapa was there in 1944, he told one of the treasurers at Tsurphu to go and check the area. He told him that there would be a sign there. The treasurer went at night with the secretary of Tsurphu and someone called Norbu. They searched for a sign, but the only thing they saw was a stone that looked like the surface of water. It had the colour of water and the designs on it were like ripples on water, so it was the only interesting thing they could see. They returned to the Karmapa and told him. He replied to them, "Yes, that is it, so everything is fine. The signs are there, so tomorrow something will happen." The next day the workers dug about 5 ft. under the stone and found a treasure of gold, the amount a coolie could carry in a bag. They laid a khatag on the stone and told the Karmapa what had happened. He reacted in a way that showed that he already knew and told them, "So, you have found the gold." He asked them, "How did you find it?" They told him the story, and he remained as calm as someone who knows. Then he told them, "You must look after this gold very well and not let anyone else get their hands on it, because it is a gift from Karma Dorje Gyalpo, one of the guardian deities of the Karmapas, also one of the water deities. He continued, "Nobody else should use it, because it is a gift for the monastery." So they used the gold for the Tara statues, for the *gyanjara* on the top of the roof of the temple, and for all the sacred things in the temple. Everybody saw the gold that was found.

After the 21 Tara statues at Tsurphu were completed and the mantras and all the things necessary to fill the inside of the statues had been done by Yeunzin Rinpoche, the Karmapa performed the ceremony of blessing the statues. When he did this and threw the grains, everyone saw that the main Tara not only moved but also grew in size. The Tara statues had been placed in boxes designed specifically for them, but the main Tara was now 5-finger widths too big for the box after the blessing ceremony, because the wisdom deity who had been invited merged into her. When the XVIth Karmapa blessed this statue, the Great Buddha Statue at Tsurphu moved. This also happened when the IInd Karmapa blessed a statue there.

One time when the Karmapa and his escorts were travelling from Tsurmang to Tsurphu, they were going through the area of Aniöd. Ani Pen-kye is the local deity of that area, who had made offerings to previous Karmapas. The deity had offered a huge *phurba* to the XIVth Karmapa, Tegchog Dorje, for the practice of Dorje Phurba, Vajrakilaya. This deity gave the XVth Karmapa a sword. When the XVIth Karmapa was travelling through the area, the deity came to greet him. The Karmapa was sitting at the table with his escorts and they saw a big *zhee* (a black and white onyx stone) on the table. Nobody saw where it had come from. The monks looked around but didn't see anybody, just the precious stone, which was called Mame ('Precious Stone without a Cord'). As they continued along their journey and reached a mountain, the Karmapa blessed and offered a white yak to Ninchen Tangla, the local mountain deity; then they set the yak free. The yak went straightforward as though it was being led, but it was on its own. The Karmapa explained that Ninchen Tangla had actually arrived to greet him and that the deity was there to accept the yak and lead it away. It is said that Ninchen Tangla is a Bodhisattva on the 8th *bhumi*, and the Karmapa told us, "Having met him, this is true, and he looked very majestic. These deities are on the side of goodness, on the white side, and he is one of the most powerful ones."

In 1947, the Karmapa was 24 years old and went to West Tibet. At one point the group had to cross the Upper Tsangpo River, which isn't deep in the morning but becomes a torrent when the snow melts during the course of the day. The group told the Karmapa, "We have to leave very early in order to cross the river, otherwise we can't." The Karmapa seemed annoyed about leaving so early. A few in the group left on their own at dawn, but the Karmapa didn't leave until 10 or 11 a.m. and by then the river was very deep. Those who stayed behind with him thought, "Now it is too deep." The Karmapa was travelling in a palanquin given to the Vth Karmapa by the Ming Emperor; it was attached to two strong poles and eight people who had specific uniforms and wore special hats had to carry it. The Karmapa insisted that they cross the river and that two mules pull the palanquin. The mules could not reach the ground when they were in the middle of the river, so they swam while the palanquin rose higher and higher. The carriers held it firmly, hoping it would not tip over. Two carriers, Chig Tarche and Rinchen Puntsok were shorter than the other six and held on for their lives when they both lost their grip, fell into the river, and were swept away by the current. Thousands of people who lined the shores to see the Karmapa saw Chig Tarche and Rinchen Puntsok sitting on the bank of the other side of the river with their clothes and hats on, as though they had stepped off a boat. Everyone was astounded about their ease; this is another miracle witnessed by many people. Actually, they had assembled along the shores to witness the Karmapa and now they saw that even his carriers had miraculous powers. But it wasn't their doing, rather that of the Karmapa.

The Karmapa continued the pilgrimage to Bodhgaya, India, from West Tibet. There is a mountain near Bodhgaya, which is the base of the 6-armed Mahakala, and this is the location of the Jetavana Charnel Ground. When there, he actually saw the 6-armed Mahakala, who told him that he would protect his teachings. Ever since then, this has been true.

The Karmapa loved birds and had many that he fed every day. Birds usually fall over when they die, but when the Karmapa's birds died, they sat upright for 3 or 4 days, like advanced meditators.

The Karmapa's dog, called Yidruk, who left footprints in rocks, always sat on the Karmapa's lap. While in West Tibet, many worms crawled around a wound that Yidruk had; the wound became bigger and bigger and more worms crawled over the dog's entire body as a result. People who saw this felt so sorry for Yidruk and asked the Karmapa to please do something about it. He didn't seem to respond, though, and the people begged, "We must use medicine against these worms." The Karmapa told them, "No, there is no need, because this dog is Bodhisattva Maitreya." You know the story about Maitreya appearing to Asanga as a dog? Therefore the Karmapa told them, "This is Maitreya." There is a cemetery called "The Cemetery of the 500 Arhats" in West Tibet. When Yidruk died, the Karmapa took his remains there personally.

Question: "I heard that when the XVIth Karmapa was cremated, his heart came out."

Tenzin Namgyal: When he passed away in 1981, he was cremated. There are 4 portals in the Stupa, one in each cardinal direction, and Tai Situ Rinpoche was standing at the side from which it came out. This is something that happens when exceptional teachers like Gampopa and the XVIth Karmapa are cremated: their eyes, tongue, and heart gather into a lump. This exceptional relic of the XVIth Karmapa is inside the Great Stupa in his room at Rumtek Monastery. One must see it when one goes to Rumtek and do wishing-prayers there. Whatever you wish for there will come true.

When we fled Tibet in 1959, I was asked to be one of the Karmapa's attendants. I was all alone, without my family, and the Karmapa's driver could not take the car, because the Chinese had destroyed it. They fled on horseback and reached Drongsa in Bhutan; I was young, so I walked. I was very tired when we reached the refugee camp and ate the joints of animals that the Bhutanese generously cooked for us. Exhausted from all the duties that needed to be done, one day I leaned against a tent while chewing on a cooked bone. I accidentally breathed in the bone when I slipped and fell and woke up choking. I tried everything to get it out, coughed and drank so that it would come out, but the bone was stuck in my lungs; blood and puss came gushing out of my mouth when I coughed for 6 whole months. When I arrived at Rumtek, everyone thought I had tuberculosis. People always received medicine from the Karmapa when they were sick and they recovered quickly - not me. He told me, "It looks like your illness is due to past karma. The best treatment is to drink my urine. Maybe this will help." I did so every day from then on. A few weeks later we were climbing up and down the steep gorge that separates Rumtek from Gangtok. When we arrived at Gangtok, I spat out a glass-full of puss every time I coughed every night. The Karmapa told me that he could smell the puss on my breath when I opened the door to his room. The Karmapa and his escorts then returned to Rumtek on horseback; he told me to stay behind another day. I was very upset and thought, "I have been working for the Karmapa all these years and this is how he treats me." That night I thought, "The Karmapa is behaving very badly towards me. All the others are healthy and may ride on horses, but poor me, I have to walk." I was very annoyed all night, because I couldn't say anything to the Karmapa but simply had to wait.

The next day I had to scramble down the slope to return to Rumtek and didn't cough. When I climbed the steep slope to reach the monastery, I could only take 10 steps and then had to sit down and rest. I coughed puss and blood again and again. Then I felt a huge lump in my throat and thought a neckbone had broken from coughing so much. Frightened terribly, something came out of my mouth and it looked like my whole neck. Then I recognized that I was holding the bone that I had swallowed months earlier in my hand and was very happy - I felt the same joy it is said that practitioners experience when they attain the first Bodhisattva bhumi. Now I know what that joy is like and felt inconceivable conviction in the Gyalwa Karmapa. Had I left a day earlier and gone by horseback, the bone would never have come out and I would have died. I was already as thin as Milarepa probably was - just skin and bones. People were already whispering to each other, "He will die soon." Having spit out the bone, I was able to reach the top of the hill in one go. Ever since then, I have total certainty and pure devotion in the Karmapa, not just faith, but changeless and unshakeable conviction and I do whatever he says. The Karmapa saw what was taking place and saved my life. This is truly amazing.



Blessings and prayers!

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