

The Infancy of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506): Renewing the Bond with His Former Disciples

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1. Introduction¹

In this study, an annotated translation of passages from two sources describing the infancy of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506), along with an analysis of their content, symbolism, and historical context within the framework of Vajrayāna Buddhism is presented. The recurrent theme of the text is the renewal of the teacher–student relationship between the young Karma pa and his disciples from his previous life. The text mainly recounts his travels, describing numerous visions, miracles and pointing-out instructions addressed to various individuals or groups of disciples. The sources used are the *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (“Feast of the Wise”) by dPa' bo gTsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/66) and the *Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* (“Golden Garland of the Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud”) by Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774) and his student 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab (1718–ca. 1790), the *rnam thar* of the Seventh Karma pa having been composed by the latter.

Life stories (Tib. *rnam thar*) of Tibetan Buddhist masters exhibit different levels of content, classically divided into outer, inner, and secret life stories.² The genre of *rnam thar* is meant to depict the “complete liberation” of the protagonist, as its Tibetan name suggests. In this respect, the secret life story (Tib. *gsang ba'i rnam thar*) may be the most defining for the genre, since it contains mystical events experienced by the protagonist—miraculous dreams, visions, and supernatural phenomena—all representing realization of the nature of mind.

On the outer level, the passage analyzed here presents the infant Karma pa's travels to meet the disciples of his predecessor at various

¹ I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Tashi Bhutia for his valuable comments on an earlier version of this paper, which I greatly appreciated.

² This classification is attributed to sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) (Vostrikov 1994, 186–87).

Karma bka' brgyud sites. However, the situations described at each location can almost entirely be ascribed to the secret level. The infant performs miracles such as recognizing possessions of his predecessor, recalling details about former disciples, and speaking at an early age.³ Furthermore, he shares his pure perception (Tib. *dag snang*) of the world, seeing meditational deities in the sky around him or emanating himself as one.⁴ In all these situations, the recurring theme is the renewal of the Karma pa's bond with his previous disciples. Whatever the infant does, the result is always that the audience gains trust in him. It becomes evident from the text that these are not mere displays of "magic," in the sense of spectacular external phenomena one cannot explain, but manifestations of blessing (Tib. *byin rlabs*)—explicitly or implicitly conveyed—that transform the audience and remove all doubt. To bestow blessing is precisely the function of the lama according to the Buddhist doctrine. It ultimately demonstrates his realization of the nature of mind, which is the purpose of the secret level of *rnam thar*.

At several points, the young Karma pa also imparts short teachings to his students which can be regarded as "pointing-out instructions (into the nature of mind)" (Tib. *sems kyi ngo bo la ngo sprod pa*, often shortened to *ngo sprod*), a distinctive feature of the bKa' brgyud Mahāmudrā tradition.⁵ This term refers to a moment in teacher-student transmission when the lama gives a concise instruction intended to induce immediate recognition of the nature of mind. Such instructions are typically terse and employ aphoristic or list-like phrasing that discourages conceptual elaboration.⁶ Pointing-out instructions may be transmitted in words, through a look or gesture, or even in a moment of silence in the teacher's presence. Their defining feature is not the mode of expression but the purpose—to serve as a direct means for disciples to recognize the nature of mind. The text under consideration also includes examples of this non-verbal form of *ngo sprod*.

The paper draws on two different sources describing the infancy—and indeed the entire life—of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506). The first is a historiographical work of the "Religious History" (Tib. *chos 'byung*) genre called "Feast of the Wise" (Tib. *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*; hereafter CKG), composed by the historian dPa'

³ For a brief introduction into miracles in *rnam thar*, see also Dell 2021c, 10–14.

⁴ For a brief introduction into visionary experiences in *rnam thar*, see also Dell 2021a, 13–16.

⁵ A term closely related to this is *sems ngo 'phrod pa* ("encountering the nature of mind"). This rather refers to the experiential event or result of the pointing-out instruction (sGom sde lha rams pa thub bstan 2005–2016, s.v. *sems ngo 'phrod pa*).

⁶ For a recent and more extensive introduction into *ngo sprod*, with many references—both within and beyond the bKa' brgyud tradition, see Apple 2020, 170–73.

bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/66).⁷ The second is also historiographical, belonging to the “Golden Garland” (Tib. *gser 'phreng*) genre, often referred to as the “Golden Garland of the Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud” (Tib. *Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng*; hereafter KSP) or by its ornamental title “Moonstone Water-Crystal Mālā” (Tib. *Nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*, often shortened to *Zla ba chu shel*). It was written by the polymath Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774), also known as Si tu Paṇ chen, and his student 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab (1718–ca. 1790).⁸ The part concerned with the Seventh Karma pa's life was written by 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab.⁹

The KSP has become the standard reference for Karma bka' brgyud scholars concerned with the lives of their lineage's masters. Its language is relatively accessible, and its organization is more chronological than that of the earlier CKG, another foundational Karma bka' brgyud historical work.¹⁰ As for the passages considered in this paper, both sources follow the same storyline and content, but the CKG is generally more detailed. The Seventh Karma pa died in 1506, while dPa' bo was born in 1504. Being almost a contemporary, he likely had access to informants who knew the Seventh Karma pa personally. Nevertheless, he must also have relied on earlier written sources, not all of which might have come down to us; identifying them remains a task for ongoing and future research.¹¹

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents an annotated translation of both texts, Section 3 analyzes their content, and Section 4 offers concluding remarks. An appendix (Section 5) contains an edition of the Tibetan text.

⁷ For an overview of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, see Dell 2021d. For the life of its author, see Bjerregaard and Dell 2022.

⁸ For an overview of the *Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud gser 'phreng* and references concerning the lives of its authors, see Dell 2023. For the life of 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab, see also Bhutia 2023, 7–9.

⁹ Dell 2023 40; Bhutia 2023, 8.

¹⁰ Rheingans 2017, 69.

¹¹ Tashi Bhutia of the University of Vienna is working on a PhD project entitled “The Life and Contribution of the Seventh Karmapa: Leadership and Scholarship in Tibetan Buddhism,” in which he analyzes the different sources on the Seventh Karma pa's life. He pointed out to me that an extensive *rnam thar* contained in the Seventh Karma pa's *Collected Works* may have served as a major source for both the CKG and the KSP (Chos grags rgya mtsho 2013). He also shared that, unfortunately, this text is incomplete, and the author and date of composition are unknown, and that further close reading and comparison will be required to understand the intertextual relationship among these three texts (personal e-mail October 8, 2025).

2. Translation

In this section, I provide an annotated translation of the opening portion—up to about age two—of the Seventh Karma pa's life story from two sources. The older source, the CKG, is generally more extensive, while the later KSP, is slightly more concise, omitting some passages. However, the two are not contradictory.

The opening of the Seventh Karma pa's life story in the CKG, covering his birth and preceding events, has already been translated elsewhere.¹² Therefore, I do not reproduce it here but summarize it in the analysis section. As for the KSP, to my knowledge, the corresponding part has not been translated previously. Therefore, it is included here.

2-1. Translation from the CKG 2-1-1. Meeting with Chos dpal 'byor

Although [the Karma pa's] parents had promised to [keep the birth] secret, after [someone] announced, "A Dharma master has been born to a male and a female hermit in sPyi nang", [the news] spread in all directions like the wind. All spiritual and worldly leaders, as well as laypeople and monks, [within] a three-day journey gathered [there]. Thus, [the matter] could not [remain] secret.

When Chos dpal 'byor,¹³ holder of the seat of sNye bo da ra steng,¹⁴ heard [this], [he] thought about going to meet [the infant]. In a dream, [he] saw [the infant] seated on [his] mother's lap and offered him [his former] hat. [He] then recounted the story to an elderly lama, [adding,] "I dreamt of the sun and moon shining on the mountain pass of sPyi lha and merging into one." [The elderly lama] replied, "There is no need for doubt! Take the hat, clothes, and boots of the previous master and go!"

¹² This part of the *rnam thar* was translated and analyzed in four separate papers covering the account of the intermediate state between the two incarnations (Dell 2020), visionary experiences prior to the birth (Dell 2021a), the description of the birthplace (Dell 2021b), and the auspicious signs and events at the birth (Dell 2021c).

¹³ For a discussion of this figure's identity, see the analysis section of this paper.

¹⁴ Tib. *snye bo da ra steng*. The first part *snye* probably refers to *snye mo*, a district in Tibet (BDRC, G3CN138). In the CKG, it clearly reads *snye bo da ra steng*. Later in both the KSP and CKG, the place name again appears as *da ra steng* in the region of *snye bo*. However, in the parallel passage in the KSP, the term clearly reads *snye bong ra steng*, which in Tibetan script looks almost identical. The part *bong ra steng* is found in BDRC as a hamlet (BDRC, G1258). Still, for the given reasons, *snye bo da ra steng* seems the more convincing reading. BDRC stands for Buddhist Digital Resource Center (<https://www.bdrc.io/>). In the following text, footnotes, and bibliography, I frequently use the abbreviation BDRC followed by an alphanumerical code identifying the person, location, or work in the BDRC database.

[Chos dpal 'byor] arrived fifteen days after the birth. Seeing him, [the infant] laughed and was delighted. [Equipped] with the clothes and the hat of the previous master, [Chos dpal 'byor] offered the clothes and the hat of the master rTogs ldan pa [to the infant]. [The infant] took the items of the previous master with [his] hands but did not accept anything else. [Chos dpal 'byor then] entreated [him]: “If you are the omniscient mThong ba don ldan,¹⁵ please bless me.” Therefore, [the infant] placed both hands on the crown of [his] head and repeatedly bestowed [his] blessing [upon him], thereby dispelling all doubt.

2-1-2. Reincarnation of the Zhwa dmar pa taken for the Karma pa

Furthermore, in the [water-]monkey year (1452/53), the tulku Chos dpal ye shes¹⁶ [Third Zhwa dmar pa] passed away. Just after the New Year of the [water-]bird year (1453), the previous master mThong ba don ldan had passed away. Likewise, in the [water-]bird year (1453/54), the tulku [Chos dpal ye shes] was reborn in Kre khang dmar¹⁷ [as] the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa.¹⁸

Many miraculous signs appeared, and because [the baby] immediately uttered “Karma pa” after [his] birth—understood as “I am the Karma pa”—[he] was, for a short time, also known as the seventh [incarnation of the] master.

Later, when the actual tulku was born, some doubt arose as to which of the two was the [genuine] tulku, but [the matter] was resolved [through the recognition of the real Karma pa]. Likewise, the tulku of Kre [khang dmar]—this very reincarnation—was thus recognized as the [rightful] holder of the red crown. Afterward, the holder of the seat of Da ra¹⁹ stayed as an attendant and served to the tulku's successor.

2-1-3. Public performance in A rig thang at age two months

When [the Karma pa] reached two months of age, all monks and

¹⁵ Name of the Sixth Karma pa (1416–1453); see BDRC, P1006.

¹⁶ BDRC, P1010: Third Zhwa dmar pa, Chos dpal ye shes (1406–1452).

¹⁷ Here, Kre khang dmar. In BDRC, G667, the birthplace of the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa is listed as Kre shod khang dmar or Tre shod khang dmar (the name of a valley).

¹⁸ BDRC, P317: Fourth Zhwa dmar pa, Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524).

¹⁹ I was unable to identify the place called Da ra or the person referred to as the holder of this seat. However, in the previous section, Chos dpal 'byor was described as the “holder of the seat of sNye bo **da ra** steng.” Thus, it is probably the same person.

householders of the rNgod [region] invited [him] to A rig thang.²⁰ [He] sat upon the Dharma throne of the previous master, and when [he] showed [his] face on the great marketplace, [he] accepted gifts one after another with [his] hands.

After bestowing blessings, [he] looked slowly at the crowd and gently wiped [his] face three times with [his] right hand. [He] then dwelled in meditative equipoise and practiced gazes. As [he] remained [in that state], having a radiant body, [everyone present] was awestruck and filled with faith.

*2-1-4. Spreading of the news that
the Karmapa's reincarnation was found*

The holder of the seat²¹ even sent a messenger to deliver the good news to dBus,²² Karma [dgon]²³, and other places.

When the venerable Go shrī pa²⁴ was fulfilling the golden pinnacle of wishes of the deceased [Karma pa], leading [his] encampment to dBus, [he] was overjoyed that the arrival of the good news coincided with the rising sun, the first cuckoo's call this year, and the sound of thunder. Having consulted the venerable 'Jam dbyangs chen po²⁵, [he] confirmed that the names of the [Karma pa's] parents and his birthplace matched [his] dream. [Thus,] the two Go shrī²⁶ resolved the

²⁰ Tib. *a rig thang*. This could also be rendered as "the plain" or "flatlands" of A rig. I could find references only to a place called A rig in the A mdo region. However, in this context, A rig must be located in the rNgod area, which is part of Kong po.

²¹ In the text at hand, Chos dpal 'byor is first referred to as the "holder of the seat of sNye bo **da ra** steng," then as the "holder of the seat of Da ra," and now simply as "the holder of the seat." Given the context, it is likely that these all refer to the same person—Chos dpal 'byor.

²² A large area also denoted as Central Tibet in English.

²³ An important Karma bka' brgyud monastery located in Khams (eastern Tibet) and founded by the First Karma pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa in 1184 (BDRC, G35).

²⁴ The person referred to as Go shrī pa is the First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, Go shrī dPal 'byor don grub (1427–1489); see BDRC, P1380. He served as the regent of the Karma bka' brgyud lineage between the Sixth and the Seventh Karma pas (Gardner 2011a). He was previously mentioned in the CKG (Dell 2020, 48) and the KSP (translated in this paper) as the one to whom the Sixth Karma pa entrusted his testament and the names of his parents.

²⁵ The person referred to as 'Jam dbyangs chen po is again mTshur phu 'Jam dbyangs chen po, Don grub 'od zer, also known as Go shrī Don grub 'od zer; see BDRC, P1417. He served as abbot of mTshur phu Monastery until 1449. For more information, see Schuh, 2010. He and his dream were mentioned earlier in the CKG text (see Dell 2021b, 87) and also in the KSP, translated in the paper at hand.

²⁶ Both individuals bear "Go shrī" as part of their title, as noted in the preceding footnotes. The First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, **Go shrī** dPal 'byor don grub, was the regent at that time and consulted mTshur phu 'Jam dbyangs chen po, Don grub 'od zer—also known as **Go shrī** Don grub 'od zer—who had a prophetic dream concerning the Karma pa's parents and birthplace.

matter without dispute. [Then, they] sent an attendant to serve tea.²⁷

The good news reached Karma [dgon] during the waxing moon of the third month, and the meeting brought great delight. At that time, Khams²⁸ [was suffering] a severe drought, but from that very night, heavy snow began to fall.

Many [individuals]—among them the lama of 'Brug grag, Tshogs chen bSod rnam rdo rje²⁹—dreamt of great auspicious banners being drawn from a mountain peak before [them]. After [these] banners appeared, [they] were hoisted on the rooftops of a monastery³⁰ in the mountains; conch shells were blown and other [auspicious signs followed]. As a result, everyone's doubts were dispelled.

2-1-5. Utterance in Ber bsnol at age three months

When [the Karma pa] was three months old, in Ber bsnol³¹ in the rNgod [region], bZher bla³² made a provocative request. [He] said: "It seems to people that you are not the Karma pa. The previous masters, among other things, began to speak at this [age of three] months. [They] showed many signs of accomplishment. If you are mThong ba don ldan, [you] need to [show] signs of trust and start speaking."

He replied:

"I [am] the one named Karma [pa].

A person like me is rare.

There are some who have a connection with me.

I have the aspiration not to deceive [those].

Until [my] thirteenth month is completed,
These words [will be] sealed [with] great secrecy.
Then, the signs of my being beyond dispute

²⁷ Tib. *gsol gzims gnyis ja 'dren la btang/*. This sentence is difficult to translate and could have a different meaning altogether. The phrase *gsol gzims gnyis* is especially difficult to analyze. I found *gsol gzims mchod gsum* used to denote an attendant responsible for the domains of nutrition (*gsol*), bedroom (*gzims*), and ritual (*mchod*); see Yísün, 1985, *s.v.* *gsol gzims mchod gsum*. Accordingly, *gsol gzims gnyis* should refer to an attendant responsible for nutrition and bedroom duties.

²⁸ Tib. *mdo khams*. This is a region in eastern Tibet whose name is usually shortened to Khams.

²⁹ I could not find any reference to this person or the related place name.

³⁰ Tib. *gling*. The word can refer to different types of places, such as "continents" or "parks." However, because the term also appears in the name of many monasteries and context indicates a building, it most likely refers to a monastery.

³¹ I could not find any reference to this place, but it can at least be identified as a location in the rNgod region.

³² I could not find any reference to this name, nor to the variant bZher bya in KSP.

Will gradually become clear.”³³

2-1-6. *Visit of the sNye bo region at age five months*

Then, when [he] was invited to the sNye bo region and stayed [there] at Da ra steng, a letter from the Karma Si tu pa³⁴ was presented to the Karma [pa] by the lCags mo dbon po,³⁵ gSer bya bral ba bsod ye,³⁶ and others. [He] took the letter, placed [his] finger on the lines and sequentially looked at [them]. Then, [he] appeared to read with a barely audible voice.

After having uttered “dPal ldan rdo rje” (Glorious Vajra),³⁷ [he] came to the lap of lCags mo dbon po. [He] took the hand of the renunciate,³⁸ and was very delighted. Since [he] mentioned the names of most of [his] former disciples, all developed faith. Remembering past situations, [they] cried and fainted choked up by faith. After that, gSer bya bral ba³⁹ served [the Karma pa] with his body and followed [him] like a shadow.

When [the Karma pa] was staying in sNye bo'i ga gor kha⁴⁰ at the age of five months, someone displayed some kind of rough behavior

³³ In Tibetan, the Karma pa's speech is composed in verse—eight lines of seven syllables each. Accordingly, in English it is rendered in verse-like formatting.

³⁴ In the present scene, the Karma pa is only between three and five months old, meaning that it must take place in 1454. At that time, the Second Si tu, bKra shis nam rgyal (1450–1497) (see BDRC, P820), was only four years old. Nevertheless, he had already been recognized as a tulku by the Sixth Karma pa (Gyatso 2014a). Given that tulkus often possess unusual abilities, it could have been he who wrote the letter or some from his entourage on his behalf, although it might also have been written by his predecessor, the First Si tu, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1377–1448) (see BDRC, P3572; Gyatso 2014b).

³⁵ I could not find a reference to this personal name. As for the first part (*lcags mo*), it could be a place name. The only reference I found to this place was in Dan Martin's “Tibetan Proper Name Index,” which cites a book chapter mentioning it as an area in eastern Tibet (Tsering 1992). The second part (*dbon po*) means “uncle's nephew” and may indicate that he belonged to a hereditary succession line from uncle to nephew, which was not uncommon in Tibet (Duff 2009, s.v. *khu dbon*).

³⁶ It is not entirely clear whether this is an apposition to the preceding name or a separate name in a list. However, since the two are separated by a *bshad*, they are probably distinct names. In any case, I could not find any reference to this second name.

³⁷ Tib. *dpal ldan rdo rje*. From the context, it seems that the infant Karma pa refers to the Si tu pa when uttering “dPal ldan rdo rje,” after having read Si tu pa's letter, and then goes to the lap of lCags mo dbon po who—having brought the letter—represents the Si tu pa.

³⁸ Tib. *bya bral*. This must refer to of lCags mo dbon po.

³⁹ This name was mentioned a few sentences earlier.

⁴⁰ The first part of this place name already appeared earlier in the text and refers to the sNye bo region. Even though I could not find a reference to the second part, it must be a locality—such as a town, village, or monastery—within that region.

in front of [him], therefore, he said:

“Aham! The illusory expression [of] bliss-emptiness,
In the play [of] manifold wisdoms,
Is seen as true by the immature.
I am free from arising, ceasing, and abiding.”⁴¹

*2-1-7. Meeting with Go shrī Rin po che in sNye bo
at age nine months*

When [the Karma pa] was nine months old, Go shrī Rin po che⁴² came from dBus and met [him] in the new monastery of sNye bo. [The Karma pa’s] body was endowed with brilliant splendor. [He] was delighted and accepted [Go shrī Rin po che’s] gifts one by one.

Holding a conch shell in his hands, [the infant] said: “This is mine!” Considering [this] and other inconceivable miracles, [Go shrī Rin po che] bestowed upon him the name Rang byung kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po (Self-Arisen All-Knowing King of the Dharma).

In the great encampment known as “Great Ornament of the World”, [the Karma pa] sat upon a lion throne.

2-1-8. Visiting Nags phu at age eleven months

At the age of eleven months, [he] was invited by [the abbot of] Nags phu [Monastery]⁴³ and recited the alphabet before the people gathered in the market of Nags mda’.⁴⁴

2-1-9. New Year at mDo chen at age one (1455)

When he was staying at mDo chen⁴⁵ for the New Year of the [wood-

⁴¹ In Tibetan, the Karma pa’s speech is composed in verse, consisting of four lines of seven syllables each. Accordingly, in English it is rendered in verse-like formatting.

⁴² Already mentioned earlier in the text: the First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, Go shrī dPal ’byor don grub (1427–1489); see BDRC, P1380.

⁴³ Nags phu is a monastery in the Kong po region founded by the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339); see Roerich 1988, 529. Literally, *phu* means “upper reaches,” and *mda’* means “lower reaches.” Thus, these are probably two places close to each other—a monastery in the mountains and a village in the valley.

⁴⁴ Nags phu and Nags mda’ are probably two places close to each other: a monastery in the mountains and a village in the valley.

⁴⁵ There is a rNying ma monastery called *mDo chen dgon* located in eastern Tibet and founded in 1311 (BDRC, G1KR43). However, it is unclear why the Karma pa would have stayed in a monastery belonging to another lineage. There is also a sub-branch of the ‘Brug pa bKa’ brgyud called *mDo chen bKa’ brgyud*, active in Mang yul Gung thang, whose name originates from a place in that region—*mDo bo che*

lpig (1455), he declared: "I am Vajradhara."⁴⁶ Offering an aspiration prayer for someone, [he] said: "May you be reborn in Tuṣita."⁴⁷

Also, when others asked questions, [he] replied:

"There is no need for doubt. [You] should rely on the words of the bKa' brgyud lamas. Ḍākinīs⁴⁸ and Dharma protectors⁴⁹ will perform enlightened activity and be there. Saraha, Virūpa and Kukkuripa⁵⁰ are abiding in the sky. I adhere to the life stories of these three."

Then, [he] pointed to the sky. [His] mother also saw their faces.

At the upper reaches of mDo chen, [the Karma pa] said [to her]: "[You] should manage to sever [it]."

[His mother] asked: How does one sever [it]?"

[He] replied: "The [dualistic] mind itself is severed from [its] root."

[The mother] asked: "How does one sever [it] from the root?"

He replied: "Through meditation."

[The mother] said: "[I] don't know how to [do that]."

Therefore, pointing to the sky, [he] replied: "[It] is without center or boundary."

2-1-10. Visit of the Long po region

[The Karma pa] was invited to the Long po [region,⁵¹ where] all [those present] attained unwavering faith.

2-1-11. Emanation as Hayagrīva at age two

In the [fire-]mouse year (1456/57),⁵² when [he] was residing in sPug

in Phu lag (Erhard 2008, 27–28). Hence, it is difficult to determine precisely which place is referred to here.

⁴⁶ Tib. *rdo rje 'chang*. Vajradhara is considered the primordial Buddha in the bKa' rgyud tradition and is often used as an epithet for one's own lama (Duff 2009, s.v. *rdo rje 'chang*).

⁴⁷ Tib. *dga' ldan*. According to Buddhist tradition, Tuṣita is the heaven where Buddhas reside before taking birth in the world. According to his account of the intermediate state (*bar do'i rnam thar*), the Seventh Karma pa also dwelled in this realm before his birth (Dell 2020, 50).

⁴⁸ Tib. *mkha' 'gro (ma)*. Skt. *dākinī*. Ḍākinīs are female Buddhas often depicted naked and semi-wrathful. They are associated with wisdom but also with protective activity (Buswell and Lopez 2014, 209).

⁴⁹ Tib. *chos skyong*. Skt. *dharmapāla*. This term can refer either to enlightened beings who appear in wrathful form to protect the Dharma or to local deities who were subdued and converted into Dharma protectors (*ibid.*, 249–50).

⁵⁰ Tib. *sa ra ha birwa pa ku ku ri pa gsum*. Saraha, Virūpa, and Kukkuripa are three of the Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas and are regarded as the Indian forefathers of the bKa' brgyud lineage transmitted to Tibet by Marpa through Nāropā. For further information on the Mahāsiddhas, see Dowman 1985.

⁵¹ Long po is a large area located in Kong po (BDRC, G3491).

⁵² At that time, the Seventh Karma pa was about two years old.

do bo,⁵³ [his] mother witnessed [him] emanating as Hayagrīva⁵⁴ [with] a wheel of weapons.

[She] asked: “Why are you acting like this?”

[The Karma pa] replied: “I have subdued obstructing forces. Don’t tell anyone!”

On the tenth day [of the month, he] declared, “I [am] the Karma pa, the guide of beings,” and [began to] dance. Immediately, [his] body vanished and reappeared in an instant.

2-2. Translation from the KSP

2-2-1. Birth

The Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho

[This section] concerns the seventh in the line [of incarnations], the master Chos grags rgya mtsho. At the time of dissolving his form body⁵⁵ into the nature of phenomena⁵⁶, the dharma master, Thong ba don ldan,⁵⁷ entrusted his testament, together with thirteen seals, to Go shrī Rin po che⁵⁸ prophesying that [his] reincarnation⁵⁹ would appear in the north, in sPyi lha⁶⁰. Along with [this, he also provided the names of his future] parents.⁶¹

In his account of the intermediate state,⁶² Amoghasiddhi in the north told [him]: “You will be born into the world⁶³ from [your] father, Grags pa dPal grub, and [your] mother, lHa mo skyid.” [This] has been told by the tulku himself afterwards.⁶⁴

⁵³ In the KSP, the spelling of the place name in the parallel passage is slightly different: it reads sPug ngo bo instead of sPug do bo. Such variation can easily occur, as the Tibetan letters *nga* and *da* look very similar. I could not find a reference for either spelling variant.

⁵⁴ Tib. *rta mgrin*. Hayagrīva is a horse-headed, wrathfully depicted enlightened form (Beer 1999, 77, and 246).

⁵⁵ Tib. *gzugs sku*, Skt. *rūpakāya*.

⁵⁶ Tib. *chos dbyings*, Skt. *dharmadhātu*. Ultimately, the entire phrase is simply an elaborate way of saying “at the time of his death.”

⁵⁷ Name of the Sixth Karma pa (1416–1453); see BDRC, P1006.

⁵⁸ Also known as the First mTshur pu rGyal tshab, dPal’ byor Don grub (1427–1489); see BDRC, P1380.

⁵⁹ Tib. *sprul sku*, Skt. *nirmāṇakāya*, Eng. also “emanation body” or “tulku”.

⁶⁰ Possibly the same place referred to in BDRC, G1203. Otherwise, no reference found. Later in the text, this place is also referred to as sPyi mda and sPyi nang.

⁶¹ This information is also provided in the CKG, however phrased differently; see Dell 2020, 48.

⁶² Tib. *bar do’i rnam thar*.

⁶³ Tib. *dzambu’i gling*, Skt. *jambudvīpa*.

⁶⁴ This paragraph also appears almost verbatim in the CKG; see Dell 2020, 51.

Likewise, 'Jam dbyangs chen po [from] mTshur phu⁶⁵ once said, during the seventh month of the bird year (1453), to the many [monks sitting in] rows [having] tea: "According to my dream, now, someone called Pal grup became the father of the tulku."⁶⁶ In the same way, Kun mkhyen Ban sgar ba⁶⁷ prophesied that the tulku would appear directly to the East of mTshur phu.⁶⁸ In accordance with [this prophecy], the site called sPyi mda' [in the] rNgod [area]⁶⁹ was a place of accomplishment, a hidden land⁷⁰ of the *dākinīs*.⁷¹

The owner of that place [is] called sPyi lha ("general deity"), since [he] is like the general leader (Tib. *spyi dpon*) of all local deities (Tib. *gzhi bdag*) or the deity (Tib. *lha*) or lord (Tib. *jo bo*) of all.⁷² In the past,

⁶⁵ Probably, mTshur phu 'Jam dbyangs chen po Don grub 'od zer, also known as Go shrī Don grub 'od zer; see BDRC, P1417. He was the abbot of mTshur phu Monastery until 1449. For more information, see Schuh, 2010.

⁶⁶ This paragraph also appears verbatim in the CKG; see Dell 2021a, 17.

⁶⁷ BDRC, P467 (Ban sgar ba 'Jam dpal bzang po). He was a close disciple of the Sixth Karma pa and a teacher of the Seventh Karma pa. For more details, see Gardner 2011b.

⁶⁸ At that time, mTshur phu dgon is the "chief monastery of the Kaṃ tshang bka' brgyud pa in Central Tibet located to the north of Lhasa" and the seat of the Karma pas (BDRC, G33). This sentence also appears literally in the CKG; see Dell 2021a, 17.

⁶⁹ Tib. rmgod spyi mda'. rNgod is an area in or near Kong po (BDRC, G4880). sPyi mda' must be more or less the same place as sPyi lha in the rNgod area, the birth-place of the Seventh Karma pa mentioned earlier in this text.

⁷⁰ Tib. *sbas yul*, lit. "hidden land," paradisiacal lands considered safe havens that enemies of the Dharma cannot enter. They are similar to pure lands (*dag zhing*) in their description but, unlike those, are believed to be located on earth (often in the Himalayan region). Hidden lands are especially associated with Padmasambhava, who is said to have left treasure texts (*gter ma*) there, converted the local gods, and sealed the lands for future discovery—usually to be opened by a lama. See Buswell and Lopez 2014, 790. As we learn from the next paragraph, in this case, it was not Padmasambhava who converted the local gods and sealed the land, but the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje.

⁷¹ This sentence also appears almost verbatim in the CKG; see Dell 2021b, 87.

⁷² In the CKG, this local deity is referred to simply as *gzhi bdag spyi lha* in one term (Dell 2021b, 88), while here the *sPyi lha* is explained to be the leader of all the other local deities (*gzhi bdag*) of the area. In general, *gzhi bdag*, lit. "locality owner," designates a class of spirits belonging to the worldly gods (*'jig rten pa'i lha*) and is often mentioned together with *yul lha*, "country gods" (Yisūn 1985, s.v. *'jig rten pa'i lha*). These two categories do not seem to be clearly distinguished in the literature. It appears that *yul lha* is a rather broad term encompassing many ancient local deities (de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996, 4), while *gzhi bdag* is somewhat more specific. They also belong to the class of *'khrungs lha*, "birth gods," who "are the deities in whose area of influence one had been born" and who should be worshipped to avoid misfortune in one's life (*ibid.*, 305). The *gzhi bdag* are the "divine rulers of rivers, lakes, or ridges, but most seem to be personifications of mountains" (*ibid.*, 226). Here, *sPyi lha* is both the name of the place where the Seventh Karma pa was born and the name of this local deity, which is plausible insofar as *gzhi bdag* are identified with specific places. On a list of names of different *gzhi bdag* provided by de

while the master Rang byung rDo rje [the Third Karma pa] was residing in bDe chen, the hermitage of mTshur pu, [this deity] took the lay practitioner's vows and promised: "From now on, [I] shall be [your] patron and carry out whatever [you] command."⁷³

Having arrived at that site, [the Third Karma pa] was beseeched to stay. Having gone [there] successively, [he eventually] tamed [the place]. [This is] a secret place of the *ḍākinīs*, a branch of the great Indian sacred sites that are consecrated as the fields where future emanations would appear.

The father [of the Seventh Karma pa], a great being who had attained accomplishment and who belonged to the great sNgong clan, [was] one of the two heroes in [the place of] sPyi nang that has the special quality [of] a supreme place where those to be tamed turn [their experience] into the experience of solely pure perception.⁷⁴

[The Seventh Karma pa] was born in the morning of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month in the male wood-dog year, as the son of [his father,] Grags pa dPal grub, and [his] mother, Jo dar bza' lHa mo skyid, an emanation of the wisdom *ḍākinī*. [His birth was] accompanied by many miraculous signs, such as a five-colored rainbow like a painting in the sky, a rain of flowers, and the sound of thunder.⁷⁵ Immediately [upon birth, he] exclaimed "A la la!" and laughed.

Six self-arisen [signs] appeared clearly on [his] body: many types of flowers on the skin, an image of Vajradhāra on the crown of [his] head, the letter "a" formed by the veins at the heart chakra, a *dharmodaya*⁷⁶ and a wheel at [his] secret place,⁷⁷ and wheels upon [his] feet. [His] urine flowed down as milk, and everything was pervaded by the

Nebesky-Wojkowitz (*ibid.*, 227) appears *sPyi yi brag la mda' brug*. It contains the syllables *spyi* and *mda'* that also occur in the place name *sPyi mda'*. Hence, it may be identified with the *gzhi bdag* mentioned here.

⁷³ More or less, the same information—including the sentences about the place that follow—is also conveyed in the CKG, though phrased somewhat differently and in slightly less detail; see Dell 2021b, 87–88.

⁷⁴ Tib. *dag pa'i snang ba* or short *dag snang*, "pure perception," is the "Vajrayāna principle of regarding the environment as a buddhafield, self and others as deities, sounds as mantras, and thoughts as the display of wisdom" (Rangjung Yeshe Publications 2025, s.v. "Pure Perception").

⁷⁵ The same signs are also mentioned in the CKG, though phrased differently; see Dell 2021c, 15–16.

⁷⁶ Tib. *chos 'byung*, Skt. *dharmodaya*, lit. "source of dharma[s]/[all] phenomena." "Secret mantra terminology. The name of a particular part of the iconography of certain deities. It represents the source from which all dharma[s] arise" (Duff 2009, s.v. *chos 'byung*). It consists of two triangles that are combined to form a star shape similar to the "Star of David."

⁷⁷ Tib. *gsang gnas*, lit. "secret place." This term denotes the area of the genitals as well as the lowest of the five *cakras* (energy centers of the subtle body), which is considered to be located at this level of the body (Duff 2009, s.v. *gsang gnas*).

fragrance of fine perfumes.⁷⁸ Among the many utterings [of the infant] that came up within [the first] week, [his] father heard [him] say many mantras, [his] mother heard [him] say vowels, and other [people] heard [him] say the *maṇi* [mantra].⁷⁹

2-2-2. Meeting with Chos dpal 'byor

In spite of the parents' promise to keep [the Karma pa's birth] secret, his own light of compassion shone like the sun in the sky. Although, there was no one to proclaim [it officially], after [someone] had said, "A Dharma master has been born to a male and a female hermit in sPyi nang", [his] fame spread in all directions [like] the drumming of the summer [rain].⁸⁰ All main spiritual and worldly leaders from various directions spontaneously gathered [there]. [Thus, the matter] could not be kept secret.

When Chos dpal 'byor,⁸¹ holder of the seat of sNye bo da ra steng,⁸² heard [this], [he] thought about going to meet [the infant]. In a dream, [he] saw [the infant] seated on [his] mother's lap and offered him [his former] hat and other things. [He] then asked an elderly lama: "What should [I] do with such a story from rNgod?" [He added:] "I dreamt of the sun and moon shining on the mountain pass of sPyi lha and merging into one." [The elderly lama] replied: "There is no need for doubt! Take the hat, clothes, and boots of the previous master, and go!"

[Chos dpal 'byor] arrived fifteen days after the birth. Seeing him, [the infant] laughed and was delighted. [Equipped] with the hat and the other [items] of the previous master, [Chos dpal 'byor] offered the clothes and the hat of the master rTogs ldan pa [to the infant]. [The infant] took the items of the previous master with [his] hands but did not accept anything else. [Chos dpal 'byor then] entreated [him]: "If you are the omniscient mThong ba don ldan, please bless me." Therefore, [the infant] placed both hands on the crown of [his] head and repeatedly bestowed [his] blessing [upon him], thereby dispelling all

⁷⁸ This passage about what happened after his birth and about his marks is also literally contained in the CKG; see Dell 2021c, 16.

⁷⁹ This sentence is also literally contained in the CKG; however, between the preceding passage and this sentence, one sentence is omitted; see Dell 2021c, 16.

⁸⁰ Tib. *grags pa'i dbyar rngas*. Lit. "through the summer drum of fame," rendered here more freely according to context.

⁸¹ For a discussion of this figure's identity, see the analysis section of this paper.

⁸² Tib. *snye bo da ra steng*. The first part, *snye*, probably refers to *snye mo*, a district in Tibet (BDRC, G3CN138). In both editions of the KSP that were consulted, the term clearly reads *snye bong ra steng*, which in Tibetan letters looks almost the same. However, in the CKG it clearly reads *snye bo da ra steng*, and later in the KSP, the place name again appears as *da ra steng* in the region of *snye bo*. Therefore, I have emended it here. Nevertheless, the part *bong ra steng* is found in BDRC as a hamlet (BDRC, G1258).

doubt.

2-2-3. Public performance in A rig thang at age two months

When [the Karma pa] reached two months of age, all monks and householders of the rNgod [region] invited [him] to A rig thang.⁸³ [He] sat upon the Dharma throne of the previous master, and when [he] showed [his] face on the great marketplace, [he] accepted gifts one after another with [his] hands.

After bestowing blessings, [he] slowly looked at the crowd and gently wiped [his] face three times with [his] right hand. [He] then dwelled in meditative equipoise and practiced gazes. As [he] remained [in that state], having a radiant body, everyone present was filled with unwavering faith and was placed on the path to the three higher realms and to Buddhahood.⁸⁴

2-2-4. Utterance in Ber bsnol at age three months

When [the Karma pa] was three months old, in Ber bsnol⁸⁵ in the rNgod [region], bZher bya⁸⁶ asked a naïve question in front of the [tulku]. [He] said: “It seems to people that you are not the Karma pa. The previous masters, among other things, began to speak at this [age of three] months. [They] showed many signs of accomplishment. If [you] are the reincarnation of mThong ba don ldan, please, [show] signs of trust and start speaking.”

He replied:

“I [am] the one named Karma [pa].

A person like me is rare.

There are some who have a connection with me.

I have the aspiration not to deceive [those].

Until [my] thirteenth month is completed,
These words [will be] sealed [with] great secrecy.
Then, the signs of my being beyond dispute

⁸³ Tib. *a rig thang*. This could also be rendered as the “plain” or “flatlands” of A rig. I could only find references to a place called A rig in the A mdo region. However, here, A rig must be in the rNgod area which is part of Kong po.

⁸⁴ Tib. *mngon mtho dang nges legs*. Here, *mngon mtho* literally means “the truly high” and refers to the three higher realms, while *nges legs* means “definitive goodness” and refers to the “goodness of having attained nirvana” (see Duff 2009, s.v. *nges legs*). Here, it is rendered freely according to the meaning rather than literally.

⁸⁵ I could not find any reference to this place, but at least we know that it is a place in the rNgod region.

⁸⁶ I could not find any reference to this name, neither to the variant bZher bla that is given in CKG.

Will gradually become clear.”⁸⁷

2-2-5. Visit of the sNye bo region at age five months

Then, when [he] was invited by [the] sNye bo [region] and stayed [there] in Da ra steng, a letter from the Karma Si tu pa⁸⁸ was offered to the Karma [pa] by the lCags mo dbon po,⁸⁹ gSer bya bral bsod ye,⁹⁰ and others. [He] took the letter, looked through [it] line by line and appeared to pronounce [it].

After having uttered “dPal ldan rdo rje” (Glorious Vajra),⁹¹ [he] came to the lap of lCags mo dbon po. [He] took the hand of the renunciate,⁹² and expressed his delight in various ways. Furthermore, [he] mentioned the names of most of [his] former disciples and recognized [them]. They all remembered the past times and through the powerful yearning of devotion and through being choked up by faith [they] cried and fainted.

When [the Karma pa] was staying in sNye bo'i ga gor kha⁹³ at the age of five months, someone displayed some kind of rough behavior in front of [him], therefore, he said:

“Aham! The illusory expression [of] bliss-emptiness,
In the play [of] manifold wisdoms,

⁸⁷ In Tibetan, the Karma pa's speech is composed in verse—eight lines of seven syllables each. Accordingly, in English it is rendered in verse-like formatting.

⁸⁸ In the scene at hand, the Karma pa is only between three and five months old, i.e., it must be in 1454. At that time, the Second Si tu, bKra shis nam rgyal (1450–1497) (see BDRC, P820) is only four years old. Nevertheless, he had already been recognized as a tulku by the Sixth Karma pa (Gyatso 2014a). Given the fact that tulkus often have unusual abilities in that respect, it could have been him who wrote the letter, but it could also have been his predecessor, the First Si tu, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1377–1448) (see BDRC, P3572; Gyatso 2024b).

⁸⁹ I could not find a reference to this personal name. As for the first part (*lcags mo*), it could be a place name. The only reference I found to this place was in Dan Martin's “Tibetan Proper Name Index,” which cites a book chapter mentioning it as an area in eastern Tibet (Tsering 1992). The second part (*dbon po*) means “uncle's nephew” and may indicate that he belonged to a hereditary succession line from uncle to nephew, which was not uncommon in Tibet (Duff 2009, s.v. *khu dbon*).

⁹⁰ It is not entirely clear whether this is an apposition to the preceding name or a separate name in a list. However, since the two are separated by a *bshad*, they are probably distinct names. In any case, I could not find any reference to this second name.

⁹¹ Tib. *dpal ldan rdo rje*. From the context, it seems that the infant Karma pa refers to the Si tu pa when uttering “dPal ldan rdo rje,” after having read Si tu pa's letter, and then goes to the lap of lCags mo dbon po who—having brought the letter—represents the Si tu pa.

⁹² Tib. *bya bral*. This must refer to of lCags mo dbon po.

⁹³ The first part of this place name already appeared earlier in the text and refers to the sNye bo region. Even though I could not find a reference to the second part, it must be a locality—such as a town, village, or monastery—within that region.

Is seen as true by the immature.
I am free from arising, ceasing, and abiding.”⁹⁴

*2-2-6. Meeting with Go shrī Rin po che
in sNye bo at age nine months*

At [the age of] nine months, when Go shrī Rin po che⁹⁵ met [him], [the Karma pa’s] body was blazing with brilliant splendor. Filled with delight, after bestowing [his] blessing, [the infant] accepted [his] gifts one by one. [Among these, he] recognized a conch shell. [The Karma pa] donned the hat of the previous master—[earlier] offered [to him by Chos dpal ‘byor]—and, holding a vajra and bell in [his] hands, performed the gesture of the Lotus Circling.⁹⁶

[Go shrī Rin po che] regarded the [Karma pa’s] identification of the form of [his] protective meditational deity and other bestowals as inconceivable miracles. Accordingly, [he] bestowed upon him the name Rang byung kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal po (Self-Arisen All-Knowing King of the Dharma).

In the great encampment known as “Great Ornament of the World”, [the Karma pa] sat upon a lion throne.

2-2-7. Visiting Nags phu at age eleven months

At the age of eleven months, [he] was invited by [the abbot of] Nags phu [Monastery]⁹⁷ and recited the alphabet before the people gathered in the market in Nags mda’.⁹⁸

2-2-8. New Year at mDo chen at age one (1455)

When he was staying at mDo chen⁹⁹ for the New Year of the [wood-

⁹⁴ In Tibetan, the Karma pa’s speech is composed in verse, consisting of four lines of seven syllables each. Accordingly, in English it is rendered in verse-like formatting.

⁹⁵ Already mentioned earlier in the text: the First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, Go shrī dPal ‘byor don grub (1427–1489); see BDRC, P1380.

⁹⁶ Tib. *pad kor*. According to Duff, “this is the name of a hand movement used frequently in the higher tantras as a prelude to forming a specific mudra” (Duff 2009, s.v. *pad kor*).

⁹⁷ Nags phu is a monastery in the Kong po region founded by the Third Karma pa, Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339); see Roerich 1988, 529. Literally, *phu* means “upper reaches,” and *mda’* means “lower reaches.” Thus, these are probably two places close to each other—a monastery in the mountains and a village in the valley.

⁹⁸ Nags phu and Nags mda’ are probably two places close to each other: a monastery in the mountains and a village in the valley.

⁹⁹ There is a rNying ma monastery called *mDo chen dgon* located in eastern Tibet and founded in 1311 (BDRC, G1KR43). However, it is unclear why the Karma pa would

]pig (1455),¹⁰⁰ he declared: "I am Vajradhara."¹⁰¹ Offering an aspiration prayer for someone, [he] said: "May you be reborn in Tuṣita."¹⁰²

Also, when others asked questions, [he] replied:

"There is no need for doubt. [You] should rely on the words of the bKa' brgyud lamas. *Ḍākinīs*¹⁰³ and Dharma protectors¹⁰⁴ will perform enlightened activity and be there. Saraha, Virūpa and Kukkuripa¹⁰⁵ are abiding in the sky. I adhere to the life stories of these three."

Then, [he] pointed to the sky. [His] mother also saw their faces.

At the upper reaches of mDo chen, [the Karma pa] said [to her]: "[You] should manage to sever [it]."

[His mother] asked: How does one sever [it]?"

[He] replied: "The [dualistic] mind itself is severed from [its] root."

[The mother] asked: "How does one sever [it] from the root?"

He replied: "Through meditation."

[The mother] said: "[I] don't know how to [do that]."

Therefore, pointing to the sky, [he] replied: "[It] is without center or boundary."

Again, when the mother and son were staying at the courtyard of mDo chen [Monastery], [the Karma pa asked his mother]: "Do [you] see Milarepa abiding [in the sky], singing a song of realization?"

have stayed in a monastery belonging to another lineage. There is also a sub-branch of the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud called *mDo chen bKa' brgyud*, active in Mang yul Gung thang, whose name originates from a place in that region—*mDo bo che* in Phu lag (Erhard 2008, 27–28). Hence, it is difficult to determine precisely which place is referred to here.

¹⁰⁰ He was about one year old at that time.

¹⁰¹ Tib. *rdo rje 'chang*. Vajradhara is considered the primordial Buddha in the bKa' rgyud tradition and often an epithet of one's own lama (Duff 2009, s.v. *rdo rje 'chang*).

¹⁰² Tib. *dga' ldan*. According to Buddhist tradition, Tuṣita is the heaven where Buddhas reside before taking birth in the world. According to his account of the intermediate state (*bar do'i rnam thar*), the Seventh Karma pa also dwelled in this realm before his birth (Dell 2020, 50).

¹⁰³ Tib. *mkha' 'gro (ma)*. Skt. *dākinī*. *Ḍākinīs* are female Buddhas often depicted naked and semi-wrathful. They are associated with wisdom but also with protective activity (Buswell and Lopez 2014, 209).

¹⁰⁴ Tib. *chos skyong*. Skt. *dharmapāla*. This term can refer either to enlightened beings who appear in wrathful form to protect the Dharma or to local deities who were subdued and converted into Dharma protectors (*ibid.*, 249–50).

¹⁰⁵ Tib. *sa ra ha birwa pa ku ku ri pa gsum*. Saraha, Virūpa, and Kukkuripa are three of the Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas and are regarded as the Indian forefathers of the bKa' brgyud lineage transmitted to Tibet by Marpa through Nāropā. For further information on the Mahāsiddhas, see Dowman 1985.

2-2-9. *Visit of the Long po region*

[The Karma pa] was invited to the Long po [region,¹⁰⁶ where] all [those present] attained unwavering faith.

2-2-10. *Emanation as Hayagrīva at age two*

In the [fire-]mouse year (1456/57),¹⁰⁷ when [he] was residing in sPug do bo,¹⁰⁸ [his] mother witnessed [him] emanating as Hayagrīva¹⁰⁹ [with] a wheel of weapons.

[She] asked: “Why are you acting like this?”

[The Karma pa] replied: “I have subdued obstructing forces. Don’t tell anyone!”

On the tenth day [of the month, he] declared, “I [am] the Karma pa, the guide of beings,”¹¹⁰ and [began to] dance. Immediately, [his] body vanished and reappeared in an instant. When mother and son were in the courtyard, [he] prostrated to [his] mother.¹¹¹

3. *Analysis*

Having presented an annotated translation in the previous section, I would like to supplement it with a further analysis of the text in this section. The content of the paragraphs is summarized, and the major events are analyzed against the background of other research or tradition or by relating them to other sources. Finally, possible functions of certain paragraphs are discussed.

¹⁰⁶ Long po is a large area located in Kong po (BDRC, G3491).

¹⁰⁷ At that time, the Seventh Karma pa was about two years old.

¹⁰⁸ In the CKG, the spelling of the place in the parallel passage is slightly different: it reads sPug do bo instead of sPug ngo. Such variation can easily occur, as the Tibetan letters *nga* and *da* look very similar. I could not find a reference for either spelling variants.

¹⁰⁹ Tib. *rta mgrin*. Hayagrīva is a horse-headed, wrathfully depicted enlightened form (Beer 1999, 77, and 246).

¹¹⁰ Lit.: “I, the Karma pa, guide beings.”

¹¹¹ In the CKG, in which this sentence is missing, the passage before it is the last scene before the narrative shifts to age five. Here, it is not entirely clear whether the sentence at hand still belongs to that scene or occurs later in time. Looking at the punctuation in the block print SX1, there is no final particle and no double *shad*. However, in SB1 there is, and afterward a new paragraph begins. Thus, at least according to the interpretation of the SB1 editors, it still belongs to the previous part. I follow this interpretation, since the sentence does not connect naturally to what follows either.

3-1. *Birth*

For this first section, I provided only the translation from the KSP in the paper at hand, as the corresponding part from the CKG was already translated and published elsewhere. Unlike for the subsequent sections, I will not analyze the meaning here. The version in the CKG tends to be more extensive, and an interpretation has already been provided along with its translation. Therefore, there is little additional content to analyze; rather, there are omissions. Nevertheless, a short summary and comparison highlighting the differences will be provided for this part together with references to the CKG translation and analysis which are spread over several papers.

In the first paragraph, we learn about the date of death of the Sixth Karma pa, Thong ba don ldan (1416–1453), who had prophesied the place of birth and the names of his future parents to Go shrī Rin po che, also known as the First mTshur pu rGyal tshab, dPal' byor Don grub (1427–1489), whom he also appointed as his regent at his seat in mTshur phu.¹¹² The latter person is noteworthy, as he will appear again in the account later. This information appears in both the CKG and the KSP.¹¹³

Subsequently, the KSP includes a brief reference to an account of the intermediate state (Tib. *bar do*), in which the Karma pa—between the two lives—meets the buddha Amoghasiddhi, who tells him the names of his future parents. This passage represents only the conclusion of an account presented much more extensively in the CKG. There, he encounters many different buddhas in various pure realms and talks with them.¹¹⁴ This sub-genre, known as *bar do'i rnam thar*, is a particularly interesting topic of research in itself. However, since it has already been discussed in several publications, I will not focus on it here.¹¹⁵

Following the brief extract of the *bar do'i rnam thar* used in the KSP as a reference for the parents' name, the text continues with accounts including similar references: a dream by 'Jam dbyangs chen po from mTshur phu concerning the father's name and a prophecy of Kun mkhyen Ban sgar ba regarding the place of birth. These prophecies preceding the Karma pa's birth are likewise mentioned in the CKG, which then includes additional passages entirely absent from the KSP.

¹¹² His role as regent (Tib. *rgyal tshab*) is mentioned in Gardner 2011a.

¹¹³ For the CKG version, see Dell 2020, 48.

¹¹⁴ For the full account, see *ibid.*, 48–51.

¹¹⁵ These accounts are especially prominent among the Karma pas. The representatives of this sub-genre that have come to my attention and have been translated concern his third (Gamble 2020, 121–27), fourth (Dell 2024a and 2024b), seventh (Dell 2020), and eighth (Verhufen 1992, 75–77) incarnations.

These describe the realization and activities of the parents, the circumstances of the conception—accompanied by meditative visualization—visions experienced by the parents and others, and wondrous events associated with the tulku in the womb, such as hearing him recite mantras or sensing him performing yogic exercises.¹¹⁶

The CKG then shifts its focus to the place of birth, where many people have auspicious dreams and perceive fine fragrances, rainbows, and rains of flowers.¹¹⁷

The next shared elements in both texts include mention of the Seventh Karma pa's birthplace as "a place of accomplishment, a hidden land of the *dākinīs*" and the story in which the Third Karma pa visits this site, tames the local deity sPyi lha, and consecrates the area for his future emanations. However, the CKG inserts an entire paragraph describing the place according to Tibetan geomancy (Tib. *sa dpyad*). At the same time, this passage shows similarities to descriptions found in pilgrimage guidebooks (Tib. *gnas yig*).¹¹⁸

The subsequent passage is nearly identical in both sources. It describes the signs accompanying the birth—such as a five-colored rainbow in a perfectly clear sky, the sound of thunder, and a rain of flowers—all of which allude Buddha's birth story. Moreover, six self-arisen signs appeared on the infant's body, and it is reported that the parents and others heard him recite mantras.¹¹⁹

3-2. Meeting with Chos dpal 'byor

This section relates that the parents tried to keep the birth of the Karma pa secret, but the word spread that a Dharma master had been born by those hermits in sPyi nang, and many spiritual and worldly leaders, as well as laypeople and monks, gathered there. The KSP further mentions that the infant's "own light of compassion shone like the sun in the sky," which made it difficult to conceal him and his extraordinary nature. The comparison between his compassion and the shining of the sun is common in Buddhist literature. It represents the image of ideal compassion that does not discriminate but is directed toward all sentient beings, just as the sun does not discriminate where its rays go.

From the text, we learn indirectly that Chos dpal 'byor safeguarded some important belongings of the Sixth Karma pa, notably his hat,

¹¹⁶ For the full translation, see Dell 2021a, 17–22

¹¹⁷ Dell 2021b, 86–87.

¹¹⁸ For a translation and analysis, see Dell 2021b. For an extensive treatment of Tibetan geomancy, see Maurer 2009.

¹¹⁹ For a translation of this part from the CKG, together with an analysis and interpretation, see Dell 2021c.

which in this context refers to the Karma pa's black crown.¹²⁰ He heard about the infant and had a dream in which he offered the hat and other belongings to the child and saw the sun and moon shining over the mountain pass of sPyi lha and merging into one. When he related his dream to an elderly lama, the lama confirmed that there was no doubt and that he should go to sPhyi nang and offer the hat, clothes, and boots of the previous master to the infant.

The union of the sun and moon in Chos dpal 'byor's dream represents the union of wisdom (sun) and compassion (moon), which is very typical in Vajrayāna symbolism.¹²¹ Here, it marks the place of birth of the Karma pa, who has perfected both compassion and wisdom. This dream aligns with other prophetic and auspicious dreams reported earlier in the text—especially in the CKG—from the time before his birth.¹²²

We learn that Chos dpal 'byor arrived in sPyi nang fifteen days after the Karma pa's birth, and we know from the previous section that his birth took place at the fifteenth day of the lunar month, the full moon. Hence, his arrival occurred at the new moon, both of which are very auspicious days in the Tibetan calendar. This underlines the importance of their meeting. The young Karma pa accepted the items of his predecessor but nothing else. Then Chos dpal 'byor asked for a blessing, which removed all doubt. Presenting the predecessor's belongings together with false items is a typical procedure for tulku recognition, which the infant passed brilliantly. The blessing that removed all doubts goes far beyond this external procedure and represents the teacher-student relationship that is of utmost importance in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

This paragraph introduces the figure of Chos dpal 'byor, holder of the seat of sNye bo da ra steng. Later in the text, he is again mentioned as the "holder of the seat of Da ra" in the context of the recognition of the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa, where it is said that he stayed with him and served him as an attendant. He is also referred to once more simply as "holder of the seat," being the one who sent the news of the Karma pa's incarnation to Central Tibet, to Go shrī pa—identifiable as the First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, Go shrī dpal 'byor don grub (1427–

¹²⁰ The First Karma pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193), is said to have attained enlightenment through dream yoga, after being visited by fifteen wisdom *dākinīs*. According to legend, "[at] the moment of his enlightenment an ornate black crown [...] appeared above the Karma pa's head, woven from the hair of hundred thousand *dākinīs*, symbolizing his knowing of the past, present and future" (Simmer-Brown 2001, 251). This crown is said to be an energy-field, while the black crown worn by the Karma pas at solemn occasions was given only to the Fifth Karma pa, bDe bzhin gshegs pa (1384–1415), by the emperor of China.

¹²¹ For more details, see Beer 1999, 38.

¹²² For those dreams and their interpretation, see Dell 2021a.

1489)¹²³—who served as regent of the Karma bka' brgyud school between the Sixth and the Seventh Karma pas.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the identity of Chos dpal 'byor remains somewhat obscure. Since he safeguarded important belongings of the Sixth Karma pa, he must have played a significant role within the lineage. However, in the *rnam thar* of the Sixth Karma pa in both the CKG and KSP, his name does not appear at all. The same is true for the *rnam thars* of the Third and Fourth Zhwa dmar pa in the KSP, which I have checked, as he appears to have a connection with the Zhwa dmar pa. Likewise, the lists of teachers and students provided in the BDRC entries for the Sixth and Seventh Karma pas and the Third and Fourth Zhwa dmar pas do not contain a name resembling his. I initially considered whether he might be identified with Go shrī dpal 'byor don grub, as their names both contain “dpal 'byor” and because of his seemingly important role. However, Go shrī dpal 'byor don grub is clearly referred to here as Go shrī Rin po che or Go shrī pa, and from the context it is evident that they are two distinct individuals—especially since Go shrī pa later meets the infant Karma pa for the first time at the age of nine months and performs a recognition procedure with some of his belongings similar to that previously conducted by Chos dpal 'byor.

3-3. Reincarnation of the Zhwa dmar pa taken for the Karma pa

This section appears only in the CKG and is entirely absent from the KSP. This omission may have been 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab's deliberate choice to avoid redundancy, as he composed a separate *rnam thar* of the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa included in the KSP, which spans fifteen folios.¹²⁵

The Karma pas are the heads of the Karma bka' brgyud lineage and usually alternate their incarnations with the Zhwa dmar pas, who traditionally hold the position of the second highest tulku in the lineage. However, the Third Zhwa dmar pa, Chos dpal ye shes (1406–1452), died just a few months before the Sixth Karma pa and was reborn shortly before the Karma pa as the Fourth Zhwa dmar pa, Chos grags ye shes (1453–1524). This section relates that at his birth, too, many miraculous signs appeared and that the infant Zhwa dmar pa uttered the name of his teacher, “Karma pa,” which was mistaken as a claim that

¹²³ BDRC, P1380. The BDRC entry gives the dates as 1427–1489, whereas a modern biography lists them as 1420–1482 (rTsis che legs mthong 2016–2024, vol. 1, 18). This needs further clarification, though it is not crucial in the present context.

¹²⁴ For more details, see Gardner 2011a.

¹²⁵ SX1, v. 11, 298r–313r. For an overview of the table of content of the KSP and the position of this *rnam thar*, see Dell 2023, 54. For a similar discussion in the context of the Sixth Zhwa dmar pa's section in the KSP, see Bhutia 2023, 60–61.

he himself was the Karma pa. This created some confusion about who the true Karma pa was, which was ultimately resolved through the recognition of the Seventh Karma pa by Chos dpal 'byor. The text adds that this other tulku was then recognized as the Zhwa dmar pa, the holder of the read crown. It is also mentioned that the "holder of the seat of Da ra" stayed with the Zhwa dmar pa as his attendant afterward. In the section before, Chos dpal 'byor is referred to as "holder of the seat of sNye bo da ra steng," which can easily be shortened to "holder of the seat of Da ra." Thus, it was probably he who stayed with the Zhwa dmar pa.

3-4. Public performance in A rig thang at age two months

The following scene appears again in both sources in slightly different but generally similar wording. The two-months-old Karma pa was invited to A rig thang in the rNgod region, where he was presented on the marketplace sitting on the throne of his predecessor. After accepting gifts and bestowing blessings, the infant made a certain gesture—wiping his face three times with his right hand—and entered a meditative state, practicing gazes, while his body became radiant. This inspired great faith in everyone present.

As in the recognition episode, the extraordinariness of the Karma pa is again emphasized, and many people were impressed and gained confidence that he was indeed the reincarnation of the Sixth Karma pa. However, in the recognition scene, it is not clearly stated how many people were present—it could have been only a few—whereas here it is explicitly a crowded marketplace. This marks only the beginning of a tour through various places that the infant would undertake in the months to come. His gesture, gazes and shared moment of meditative silence could well be interpreted as a non-verbal example of pointing-out instructions, revealing the nature of mind to his students.

3-5. Spreading of the news that the Karmapa's reincarnation was found

Again, the section appears only in the CKG. This omission may have been 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab's deliberate choice to avoid redundancy, as he composed a separate short *rnam thar* of the First mTshur phu rGyal tshab, dPal 'byor don grub included in the KSP, which spans one folio.¹²⁶

In this section, we learn that Chos dpal 'byor (here referred to as

¹²⁶ SX1, v. 11, 263v–264v. For an overview of the table of content of the KSP and the position of this *rnam thar*, see Dell 2023, 54. For a similar discussion in the context of the Sixth Zhwa dmar pa's section in the KSP, see Bhutia 2023, 60–61.

“the holder of the seat”) sent a messenger announcing the Karma pa’s recognition to Central Tibet (dBus), Karma dgon, and other places.

The person leading the Karma pa’s encampment to Central Tibet, in accordance with the wishes of his deceased teacher, is referred to as Go shrī pa and can be identified as the First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, Go shrī dpal ’byor don grub (1427–1489), as mentioned before. The arrival of the good news to him coincides with the rising sun, the sound of the cuckoo’s first call of the year, and the sound of thunder, which fill him with great joy. The rising sun indicates the start of a new day and, here, symbolizes the rise of the new Karma pa. The cuckoo is considered a “messenger of summer” in Tibetan tradition.¹²⁷ The sound of thunder is a typical sign accompanying great events related to Buddhist masters and already appears in the life story of the Buddha, occurring at his birth, enlightenment and death together with trembling of the earth.¹²⁸

It is related that Go shrī pa consulted ’Jam dbyangs chen po,¹²⁹ who confirmed that the names of the Karma pa’s parents and his birthplace corresponded with those seen in his dream—a reference to his prophetic dream mentioned earlier in the text.¹³⁰

In the next paragraph, it is recounted that the good news arrived at Karma dgon in the Kham region at the waxing moon of the third month. The waxing moon signifies growth and is thus related to the Karma pa’s activity. We also learn that there had been a severe drought throughout the region of Kham, and from that night on it began to snow heavily. Again, the reception of the message is accompanied by a miracle—or at least an auspicious coincidence marking the end of the drought.

It is further related that many people dreamt that great auspicious banners were drawn from the peak of a mountain before them and hoisted on the rooftops of a monastery in the mountains, accompanied by the blowing of conch shells. The dream could symbolize the birth or recognition of the Karmapa through hoisting of auspicious banners on the rooftops of his official seat, mTshur phu Monastery in Central Tibet. The blowing of the conch shell may symbolize the Karma pa’s teaching activity. It is said that these dreams dispelled everyone’s doubts. This indicates the Karma pa’s powerful blessing and the openness of his students and thus represents a renewal of the teacher–student relationship from his previous life.

¹²⁷ Beer 1999, 85.

¹²⁸ See, for instance, in the *Lalitavistara Sūtra* (Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2013, paragraph 7.33) and Kieschnik 2004, 542.

¹²⁹ BDRC, P1417.

¹³⁰ Both in the CKG (see Dell 2021b, 87), as well as in the KSP (translated in the paper at hand).

3-6. Utterance in Ber bsnol at age three months

At the age of three months in Ber bsnol, the infant was accused of not being the Karma pa. Previous Karma pas had already begun speaking at this age and had shown other extraordinary abilities. He was therefore asked to start speaking in order to inspire trust. In reply, the infant began speaking eloquently in verse:

"I [am] the one named Karma [pa].
 A person like me is rare.
 There are some who have a connection with me.
 I have the aspiration not to deceive [those].
 Until [my] thirteenth month is completed,
 These words [will be] sealed [with] great secrecy.
 Then, the signs of my being beyond dispute
 Will gradually become clear."

Again, we see the recurring theme of the former students harboring doubts and seeking signs of authenticity, and the Karma pa clearly provides these signs. First, he declares that he is the Karma pa and that someone like him is rare. He grants these words to those who have a connection with him, assuring them that he will not deceive them. Nevertheless, he adds that these words will remain sealed until he reaches the age of thirteen months, at which time it will become evident that he is indeed the Karma pa. It is interesting to consider what he means when he says that these words will be "sealed." He might be planting a kind of mind *terma* (Tib. *dgongs gter*) in the mind of his students—something that generates trust but that they will temporarily forget until the indicated time.¹³¹ It is also noteworthy that the Karma pa wishes to seal this situation, that is, to prevent the spreading of its account. For people who have a connection and openness toward him, this episode can inspire trust in his realization and encourage them to follow his teachings. However, for others lacking such a connection, it might appear more like a "circus attraction" and therefore not be very beneficial.

3-7. Visit of the sNye bo region at age five months

This section is found in both the CKG and the KSP, with slightly different wording but the same meaning. In this scene, the infant is five

¹³¹ For an explanation of *terma* (Tib. *gter ma*), see Buswell and Lopez 2014, 329. Here, I do not apply the term in its more exclusive sense, in which a great master (typically Padmasambhava) places a *terma* in earlier lifetimes, later to be discovered by a *terma* revealer (Tib. *gter ston*) as an extensive teaching or the like. Instead, I apply it to the individual teacher–student relationship, a shorter-term, more informal setting and extent of teaching.

months old and staying at Da ra steng in the sNye bo region, where a letter from the Si tu pa is offered to him.¹³² This must have taken place in 1454, when the Second Si tu, bKra shis rnam rgyal (1450–1497) was four years old.¹³³ Nevertheless, he had already been recognized as a tulku by the Sixth Karma pa.¹³⁴ Given that tulkus are often believed to possess unusual abilities, the letter may have been written by him himself, or perhaps by someone from his entourage on his behalf. It might also have been an older letter from his predecessor, the First Si tu, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1377–1448).¹³⁵ Both sources report, in slightly different wording, that the infant appeared to read the letter himself (in a barely audible voice), which is extraordinary at his age and again a sign of his exceptional abilities. It is related that the Karma pa recognized his former disciples present at this occasion, was delighted to see them, and even mentioned most of their names. This moved them to tears and deepened their faith. One of them, called gSer bya bral ba, from then on followed him “like a shadow” to serve him. Again, this scene features the recurring theme of the Karma pa renewing the bond with his former students and generating trust and openness in them.

Another event recounted from the sNye bo region describes someone displaying rough behavior in front of the five-months-old Karma pa, whereupon he said in verse:

“Aham! The illusory expression [of] bliss-emptiness,
In the play [of] manifold wisdoms,
Is seen as true by the immature.
I am free from arising, ceasing, and abiding.”

This is clearly a pointing-out instruction, using the situation at hand to guide his students toward the dreamlike nature of reality, in which phenomena come and go but mind remains unchanging.

*3-8. Meeting with Go shrī Rin po che
in sNye bo at age nine months*

This section is present in both sources, however. Contrary to the usual trend in the other sections, it is somewhat more extensive in the KSP and shorter in the CKG, though the content is essentially the same. At the age of nine months, the infant was still in the sNye bo region, as

¹³² In both sources, he is referred to as Karma Si tu pa, with “Karma” preceding his title, which is not the usual way his name is found. From context, however, it seems unlikely that this person should be anyone other than an incarnation of the Ta’i Si tu pa line. The addition of “Karma” likely just emphasizes that he belonged to the Karma bka’ brygud lineage.

¹³³ BDRC, P820.

¹³⁴ Gyatso 2014a.

¹³⁵ BDRC, P3572; Gyatso 2014b.

during the episode at five months. He was then visited by the regent of the Karma bka' brgyud lineage, Go shrī Rin po che—identified as the First mTshur phu rgyal tshab, Go shrī dPal 'byor don grub¹³⁶—who came from Central Tibet, likely from his seat at mTshur phu. Earlier, it was mentioned that he had led the Karma pa's encampment to Central Tibet. The final sentence of this paragraph states that the Karma pa sat on the lion throne of this encampment, indicating that Go shrī Rin po che did not travel alone but with the entire encampment. During the meeting, he saw the Karma pa's body blazing with brilliant splendor—a sign not only of the infant's extraordinariness but also of Go shrī Rin po che's realization. The Karma pa bestowed a blessing upon him, accepted his gifts, and among them recognized a conch shell that had belonged to him in his previous life. Wearing the black hat and holding vajra and bell in his hands, he performed a *mūdra*. Go shrī Rin po che witnessed this and other miracles and granted him the name "Self-Arisen All-Knowing King of the Dharma."

The entire scene once again illustrates the renewal of the teacher-student relationship between Go shrī Rin po che and the Karma pa, paralleling earlier encounters with other close disciples. It especially closely resembles the situation described previously when Chos dpal 'byor met the infant. Both figures had the young Karma pa recognize objects from his previous life. Given that Go shrī Rin po che was the regent of the lineage at that time, his recognition of the Karma pa was certainly the more formal and authoritative one.

3-9. *Visiting Nags phu at age eleven months*

This section consists of only one sentence and is identical in both sources. At the age of eleven months, the infant was invited to Nags phu Monastery, where he also appeared in public at the market in Nags mda' and recited the alphabet to the people. This is again an unusual ability for his age. Its demonstration helped the people to relate to him as an extraordinary being and develop trust and openness. Nevertheless, compared with previous sections, it is notable that in larger public settings he seemed to restrain his full capabilities, whereas in smaller circles—perhaps with more highly realized audiences—he tended to display more, such as giving pointing-out instructions in fully elaborated speech instead of "just" reciting the alphabet.

3-10. *New Year at mDo chen at age one (1455)*

This section is again identical in both sources, except that the KSP adds

¹³⁶ BDRC, P1380

one sentence at the end. During the Tibetan New Year of 1455, the one-year-old infant was staying at mDo chen, where he was quite talkative. He said: “I am Vajradhara.” Vajradhara is considered the primordial Buddha in the bKa’ rgyud tradition, and practitioners are often instructed to view their lama as this Buddha form. To another person he said: “May you be reborn in Tuṣita.” According to Buddhist tradition, Tuṣita is the heaven where Buddhas reside before taking birth in the world. According to his account of the intermediate state in the CKG, the Seventh Karma pa also dwelled in this realm before his birth.¹³⁷

In response to some questions, the Karma pa urged his audience to rely on the words of the bKa’ rgyud lamas. He added that Dākinīs and Dharma protectors would perform enlightened activity and that Saraha, Virūpa and Kukkuripa were abiding in the sky, which he then pointed toward. It is said that his mother was also able to see their faces.

Here, the Karma pa emphasized the importance of the transmission lineage in terms of teaching, blessing, and protection. He revealed that he had a vision of three of the Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, considered the Indian forefathers of the bKa’ rgyud lineage. The statement that his mother was also able to see them implies that the others present were not. To see buddha forms or *yi dams* manifesting before oneself is a sign of pure perception (Tib. *dag snang*) and thus of realization, which in this case applies to both mother and son.

The scene continues with the Karma pa and his mother speaking alone about the vision while outside of mDo chen. The infant asked her to dissolve the vision, but she does not know how. This again becomes a pointing-out instruction in which the young Karma pa tries to give insights into the nature of mind by terse instructive sentences to his mother. To see such a vision is a sign of realization, yet unlike the Karma pa, the mother was unable to dissolve it and make it reappear at will. This would again mean to realize the dream-like nature of reality. Later, back at the monastery, he tried again to lift his mother to this level of pure perception and insight into the nature of the mind by asking whether she could see Milarepa abiding before them while singing a song of realization. The latter scene is mentioned only in the KSP.

3-11. Visit of the Long po region

The Karma pa’s visit to the Long po region is mentioned in only one identical sentence in both sources. He was invited there, and “all [those present] attained unwavering faith.” Although, the description is brief,

¹³⁷ Dell 2020, 50.

it follows the same patterns as the other visits. The young Karma pa saw his disciples from his previous life once again and succeeded in renewing the bond and generating trust and openness in them.

3-12. Emanation as Hayagrīva at age two

This section is again identical in both sources, with the KSP adding one sentence at the end. At the age of two, his mother saw the Karma pa emanating as Hayagrīva, holding a wheel of weapons. When she asked what he was doing, he replied: "I have subdued obstructing forces. Don't tell anyone!"

Hayagrīva is a wrathfully depicted, horse-headed enlightened form.¹³⁸ The only reference to a "wheel of weapons" I could find is connected to the wrathful deity Yamāntaka: "his thirty-four arms circle as an impenetrable wheel of sharp weapons, and combined with his body, speech, and mind as the compassionately wrathful thirty-seven practices of a bodhisattva."¹³⁹ Although the Karma pa chose to emanate as Hayagrīva rather than Yamāntaka, the symbolic meaning of the wheel of weapons is certainly similar. The scene shows that the infant was already performing bodhisattva activity on many levels, even on those invisible to most. It is noteworthy that he asked his mother not to tell anyone about it. This is probably because most people—those without the same level of realization as the mother—would not be able to perceive it. Hearing such an account could create mistrust, confusion, or unrealistic expectations. For this reason, lamas often ask their students to keep such experiences to themselves.

In this section, it is also related that on the tenth day of the month the infant said, "I'm the Karma pa, the guide of beings!" He danced, and his body disappeared and reappeared. The tenth day is an auspicious day for practice in the Tibetan calendar. The scene aligns with earlier stories in which the mother was able to see visions of buddha forms. Again, her ability to see this is a sign of her realization, and even more so of the Karma pa's. In the KSP, it is additionally stated that the Karma pa prostrated to his mother. This indicates that he acknowledged her high level of realization.

4. Conclusion

The core of this article is the annotated translation from the Seventh Karma pa's life story as found in the CKG and the KSP, focusing on the period of his infancy (up to age two). The analytical section aimed

¹³⁸ Beer 1999, 77, and 246.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 233.

to contextualize the events and interpreted them against the background of Vajrayāna thought and symbolism.

The recurring theme of the passage is the renewal of the teacher–student relationship between the young Karma pa and his disciples from his previous life. The text primarily recounts his travel itinerary, describing numerous situations involving visions, miracles, and pointing-out instructions given to various individuals or groups.

Regarding the sources used for this paper, the fact that the earlier CKG is, for the most part, more extensive than the later KSP, and that many sentences in the KSP are literally identical to those in the CKG, suggests that the KSP drew heavily from the CKG. Nevertheless, there are a few sentences in the KSP that are not found in the CKG, which indicates that both authors may have consulted earlier sources. A promising candidate for such an earlier source is a text by an unknown author found in the Seventh Karma pa’s *Collected Works* entitled *Rang byung kun mkhyen mtsho skyes rdo rje mi pham chos kyi rgyal po’i rnam par thar pa*.¹⁴⁰ Analyzing the intertextual relationship among these three texts could be an interesting direction for future research.¹⁴¹

Another aspect for future investigation could be to compare the infancy of the Seventh Karma pa with that of other Karma pas. This comparison could be based on the CKG and KSP but could also include additional sources. Several dimensions of comparison are possible. One could examine the content to see whether similar themes and patterns appear across the life stories of the Karma pas. It would also be interesting to compare, within one source (CKG or KSP), the consistency of the author’s style and way of presentation across the different Karma pas.¹⁴² Such an analysis would help determine whether the respective author remained faithful to earlier sources—by reproducing passages verbatim—or imposed his own style by reworking the material. This approach would involve the dimension of intertextuality and could shed light on the methods employed by the compilers of historiographical works such as the CKG and KSP in producing the

¹⁴⁰ Chos grags rgya mtsho 2013. This was pointed out to me by Tashi Bhutia. See also my more extended remark about this in the introduction section.

¹⁴¹ Generally, for further insights into the Seventh Karma pa’s life and works, I would like to refer the reader to Tashi Bhutia from the University of Vienna and his ongoing PhD project.

¹⁴² The CKG, authored by dPa’ bo gTsug lag ‘phreng ba (1504–1564/66), covers the life stories of the First through the Eighth Karma pa. In the case of the KSP, the life stories of the First to the Fifth Karma pa were composed by Si tu Chos kyi ‘byung gnas (1699/1700–1774), while those of the Sixth to the Twelfth Karma pa were written by ‘Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab (1718–ca. 1790) (Dell 2023, 40; Bhutia 2023, 61, n. 169). For completeness, the modern addendum to the KSP authored by sTobs dga’ g.yul rgyal (1940–1997), which covers the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Karma pa, should also be mentioned (sTobs dga’ g.yul rgyal 1993).

rnam thars of the Karma pas.

In general, a complete translation of the CKG and KSP would be a desideratum for addressing a wide range of future research questions.¹⁴³

5. Appendix: Edition

5-1. Edition of the passage from the CKG

An extensive overview of the extant textual witnesses of the CKG was provided in an earlier publication, and the same sigla are used in the present paper.¹⁴⁴ All witnesses derive from a single set of printing blocks—the lHo brag printing blocks. There are several textual witnesses of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, of which the most interesting and original is a reproduction of prints from the lHo brag blocks from Rumtek Monastery in two volumes from 1980 (PX1). This reproduction is also available via BDRC, and it serves as the starting point for the edition provided here. Several other prints or reproductions of prints from these same printing blocks exist. However, since they stem from the same printing blocks, they are unlikely to add significant value for the present purpose and have therefore been omitted from the edition. All other textual witnesses available today derive from these same blocks.

In addition to the block print reproduction, only one contemporary edition has been used: rDor je rgyal po's modern edition in book format, published by Mi rigs dpe skrun khang in 1986, in two volumes (PB2). It is too available via BDRC. The added value of rDo rje rgyal po's edition lies in its correction of numerous spelling errors or non-standard orthographies found in the original block print. Whenever differences occur, they are noted in the apparatus. In general, there are no significant textual variations in the section studied here.

[PX1, vol. 2, p. 189, l. 7; PB2, vol. 2, p. 1037, l. 5] *yab yum gyis gsang bar byas kyang spyi nang du bya bral pho mo gnyis las chos kyi rje sku 'khrungs 'dug zer nas phyogs thams cad du¹⁴⁵ rlung ltar khyab/ nyin lam gsum gyi lha dpon mi dpon skya ser thams cad 'dus te gsang ma thub/ snye bo da ra steng gi* [PX1, vol. 2, p. 190] *gdan sa pa chos dpal 'byor gyis thos nas mjal du 'gro bsam pa na rmi lam du yum gyi pang na bzhugs 'dug*

¹⁴³ In this context, it might be noteworthy that David DiValerio from the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, has taken on the task of translating the CKG in its entirety, beginning in September 2023. However, he recently noted that it could easily be a ten- to fifteen-year project before publication (DiValerio 2025, timestamp 58:30). I am not aware of a similar project for the KSP.

¹⁴⁴ Dell 2021d, 126–41.

¹⁴⁵ *du PB2] tu PX1*

pa la dbu zhwa nag po phul ba rmis¹⁴⁶ pas bla ma sgres po la kha skad 'di 'dra
'dug ces¹⁴⁷ bzlas pas nga'i rmi lam na spyi lha'i la khar nyi zla gnyis shar ba
mal gcig tu¹⁴⁸ 'dus song ba rmis¹⁴⁹ pas the tshom mi dgos drung gong ma'i
dbu zhwa na bza'¹⁵⁰ phyags rnams khyer la song gsungs te¹⁵¹ phyin pas sku
'khrungs nas zhag bco lnga song ba'i thog tu slebs¹⁵²/

khong gzigs pas bzhad cing dgyes par mdzad/ drung gong ma'i na bza'¹⁵³
dang dbu zhwa dang drung rtogs ldan pa'i na bza'¹⁵⁴ dbu zhwa rnams phul
bas drung gong ma'i rnams phyag gis bzhes te gzhan ma bzhes/ khyed thams
cad mkhyen pa mthong ba don ldan yin na nga la byin rlabs mdzad dgos zhus
pas phyag gnyis ka spyi bor bkod de¹⁵⁵ byin rlabs yang yang mdzad pas the
tshom chod/

de yang spre¹⁵⁶ lo la sprul sku chos dpal ye shes gshegs/ bya lo gsar ma thag
drung mthong ba don ldan gshegs/ sprul sku yang bya lo la kre khang dmar
du rje zhwa dmar ba¹⁵⁷ bzhi pa bltams/

ngo mtshar gyi ltas mang du byung zhing 'khrungs 'phral karma pa gsung
bas karma pa yin gsung bar go nas re zhig rje bdun pa yin par yang grags/

phyis sku dngos bltams [PB2, vol. 2, p. 1038] pa na yang zhal rnam pa
gnyis gang gi sprul sku yin the tshom cung zad byung ba 'dis chod/ kre'i sprul
sku yang sprul pa'i sku 'di nyid kyis zhwa dmar cod pan 'dzin par ngos 'dzin
mdzad pa yin no// da ra gdan sa pas de phyin zhabs phyir bzhugs te sku rim
zhabs tog mdzad/

zla ngo gnyis bzhes pa na rngod pa'i lha sde mi sde thams cad kyis a rig
thang du gdan drangs/ drung gong ma'i chos khri la bzhugs nas khrom chen
po la zhal bstan tshe phyag rten rnams phyag gis rim par bzhes/

byin rlabs gnang nas khrom rnams la dal bus gzigs te phyag g.yas kyis
zhal gyi dkyil [PX1, vol. 2, p. 191] 'khor lan gsum dal gyis phyis nas mnyam
bzhag dang lta stangs mdzad de¹⁵⁸ sku gzi brjid dang ldan par bzhugs pas zil
gyis non zhing dad pa thob/

gdan sa pas¹⁵⁹ kyang dbus dang karma sogs su gtam snyan skyel mi btang/

¹⁴⁶ rmis PB2 | brmis PX1

¹⁴⁷ ces PB2 | zhes PX1

¹⁴⁸ tu PB2 | du PX1

¹⁴⁹ rmis PB2 | brmis PX1

¹⁵⁰ bza' PB2 | za PX1

¹⁵¹ te PB2 | ste PX1

¹⁵² slebs PB2 | sleb PX1

¹⁵³ bza' PB2 | za PX1

¹⁵⁴ bza' PB2 | za PX1

¹⁵⁵ de PB2 | ste PX1

¹⁵⁶ spre PB2 | spe PX1

¹⁵⁷ pa PB2 | ba PX1

¹⁵⁸ de PB2 | ste PX1

¹⁵⁹ pas PX1 | bas PB2

drung go'i shri pas dbu mdzad pa'i sgar pa dbus su dgongs rdzogs kyi gser thog sgrub pa'i tshe gtam snyan sleb pa nyi ma shar ba lo de'i khu byug gi skad thog ma grag pa dang 'brug sgra grag pa rnams dus mtshungs pas shin tu mnyes/

drung 'jam dbyangs chen po la zhus pas yab yum gyi ming 'khrungs pa'i yul rnams rmi lam dang mthun par 'dug gsungs nas go'i shri rnam pa gnyis kyis¹⁶⁰ rtsod med du¹⁶¹ thugs thag bcad/ gsol gzims gnyis ja 'dren la btang/

mjal ba na shin tu mnyes par mdzad karmar gtam snyan zla ba gsum pa'i yar tshes la slebs¹⁶²/ de dus mdo khams su than pa cher byung ba la de'i nub mo nas kha ba chen po bab/

'brug grag bla ma tshogs chen pa bsod rnams rdo rje sogs mang po'i rmi lam du mdun ri'i rtse mo nas bkra shis dar chen 'then nas byung ba dang ri gling gi khang thog thams cad du¹⁶³ dar 'phyar dung 'bud pa sogs rmis¹⁶⁴ pas thams cad kyang the tshom chod/

zla ngo gsum bzhes tshe rngod kyi ber bsnol du bzher blas co 'dri zhus te mi rnams khyed karma pa min pa 'dra zer/ [PB2, vol. 2, p. 1039] drung gong ma rnams kyis zla ba 'di la gsung 'di byon sogs 'dug/ grub rtogs mang du bstan 'dug pa/ rang re mthong ba don ldan yin na yid 'ches pa'i rtags dang gsung 'byon dgos zhus pas/

*nga ni karma'i ming cad te¹⁶⁵//
nga lta'i gang zag dkon pa yin//
nga dang 'brel ba gang yod pa//
nga yis mi bslu'i smon lam yod//
bcu gsum zla ba ma rdzogs par//
tshig 'di gsang chen rgya dang ldan//
de nas kho bo rtsod bral ba'i//
rtags rnams rim gyis gsal bar 'gyur//
zhes gsungs/*

de nas snye [PX1, vol. 2, p. 192] bo'i yul du spyang drangs da ra steng du bzhugs pa'i tshe karma si d+hu ba'i zhu yig lcags mo dbon po/ gser bya bral ba bsod yes sogs kyis¹⁶⁶ phul nas zhu yig phyag gis bzhes yig phreng phyag mdzub kyis mnan zhing rim pas gzigs nas gsung mi go tsam chung ngu 'byon zhing klog pa'i tshul mdzad/

dpal ldan rdo rje gsungs rnas lcags mo'i pang par byon/ bya bral gyi lag

¹⁶⁰ *kyis* PB2 | *gyis* PX1

¹⁶¹ *du* PB2 | *tu* PX1

¹⁶² *slebs* PB2 | *sleb* PX1

¹⁶³ *du* PB2 | *tu* PX1

¹⁶⁴ *rmis* PB2 | *brmis* PX1

¹⁶⁵ *te* PB2 | *ste* PX1

¹⁶⁶ *kyis* PB2 | *kyi* PX1

pa la 'jus shing¹⁶⁷ mnyes mnyes mdzad/ slob ma rnying pa phal cher gyi ming
gsungs pas thams cad dad ches sngon gnas dran pas dad pa'i yus kyis ngu
zhing brgyal/ de phyin gser bya bral bas lus dang grib ma ltar phyag phyi
bsgrubs/

zla ngo lnga bzhes pa snye bo'i ga gor khar bzhugs dus kha cig gis sku
drung der tho co 'dra byas pas zhal nas/
a haM bde stong sgyu ma'i rtsal//
sna tshogs ye shes rol pa la//
byis pa rnams kyis bden par mthong//
nga ni skye 'gag gnas dang bral//
gsungs/

zla ngo dgu bzhes pa na go'i shri rin po che dbus nas phebs te snye bo'i
dgon gsar¹⁶⁸ du mjal ba na sku gzi brjid dang ldan pas mnyes par mdzad cing
phyag rten rnams phyag tu bzhes/

sgar dung phyag tu¹⁶⁹ bsnams te nga'i yin gsung ba sogs ngo mtshar bsam
gyis mi khyab par dgongs te rang byung kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal por
mtshan gsol/

sgar chen 'dzam gling gi rgyan chen por seng ge'i khri la bzhugs/

zla ngo bcu gcig bzhes pa na nags phu [PB2, vol. 2, p. 1040] bas spyan
drangs nags mdar khrom chen po la A li kA li gsungs/

phag lo gsar nas mdo chen du bzhugs pa na nga rdo rje 'chang yin
gsungs¹⁷⁰/ cig gis sngo yig phul bas dga' ldan du skye bar gyur cig gsungs¹⁷¹/
yang gzhan gyis co 'dri zhus pa na/ the tshom mi dgos bka' rgyud bla ma
rnams kyi zhal la ltos/ mkha' 'gro chos skyong gis 'phrin las sgrub cing yod/
sa ra ha birwa pa ku ku ri pa gsum nam mkhar bzhugs/ [PX1, vol. 2, p. 193]
'di gsum gyi rnams thar 'dzin mi nga yin gsungs¹⁷² nas phyag mdzub nam¹⁷³
mkhar gtad/

yum gyis kyang de rnams kyi zhal mjal/ mdo chen gyi phu na gcod la 'byon
gsungs¹⁷⁴/

gcod ji ltar byed zhus pas sems nyid rtsad nas gcod pa yin gsungs¹⁷⁵/
rtsad nas ji ltar gcod zhus pas sgom gyis gsungs¹⁷⁶/

¹⁶⁷ shing PB2 | cing PX1

¹⁶⁸ gsar PB2 | sar PX1

¹⁶⁹ tu PB2 | du PX1

¹⁷⁰ gsungs PB2 | gsung PX1

¹⁷¹ gsungs PB2 | gsung PX1

¹⁷² gsungs PB2 | gsung PX1

¹⁷³ nam PB2 | na PX1

¹⁷⁴ gsungs PB2 | gsung PX1

¹⁷⁵ gsungs PB2 | gsung PX1

¹⁷⁶ gsungs PB2 | gsung PX1

*mi shes zhus pas nam¹⁷⁷ mkhar phyag mdzub gtad de¹⁷⁸ mtha' dbus med
pa zhig¹⁷⁹ yin gsungs¹⁸⁰/*

long por spyan drangs thams cad mi phyed pa'i dad pa thob/

*byi ba'i lo la spug¹⁸¹ do bor bzhugs dus rta mgrin mtshon cha 'khor lor
sprul pa yum gyis gzigs/*

*'di 'dra mdzad pa ci lags zhus pas bgegs btul pa yin su la'ang ma bshad
gsungs¹⁸²/*

*tshes bcu'i dus shig¹⁸³ nga karma pa ni 'gro ba 'dren gsungs¹⁸⁴ nas gar
mdzad/*

de ma thag sku lus mi snang bar gyur te¹⁸⁵ yang lam gyis byon/

5-2. Edition of the passage from the KSP

An overview of the different textual witnesses of the KSP was likewise provided in an earlier publication, and the same sigla are used here.¹⁸⁶ There is only one set of printing blocks. Accordingly, one of their reprints has been used below (SX1), comprising volumes 11 and 12 of the *Collected Works* of Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas. For convenience, one of the modern editions has also been consulted (SB1). In the paragraph at hand, there were no significant orthographic differences, and only one place has been emended to match the spelling found in the CKG. In the edition below, page numbers from both textual witnesses are indicated in brackets whenever a new page begins.

[SX1, vol. 11, f. 266r, l. 6 (p. 625); SB1, vol. 2, p. 123] *karma pa sku
phreng bdun pa chos grags rgya mtsho'i lo rgyus/¹⁸⁷*

*/na rim bdun pa rje chos grags rgya mtsho ni/ de nas chos kyi rje mthong
ba don ldan gzugs sku chos dbyings su bsdu kar/ go'i shri rin po che la zhal
chems bka' rgya bcu gsum dang bcas pa gnang/ byang phyogs spyi lha zhes
bya bar sprul sku 'byon par yab yum dang bcas lung bstan/*

*de nyid kyi bar do'i rnam thar las kyang/¹⁸⁸ byang [SX1, vol. 11, f. 266v]
phyogs su don yod grub pas khyod dzam+bu'i gling du/ pha grags pa dpal*

¹⁷⁷ nam PB2] na PX1

¹⁷⁸ de PB2] ste PX1

¹⁷⁹ zhig PB2] cig PX1

¹⁸⁰ gsungs PB2] gsung PX1

¹⁸¹ spug PX1] sdug PB2

¹⁸² gsungs PB2] gsung PX1

¹⁸³ zhig PB2] cig PX1

¹⁸⁴ gsungs PB2] gsung PX1

¹⁸⁵ te PB2] ste PX1

¹⁸⁶ Dell 2023, 21–29.

¹⁸⁷ Title only inserted in the modern edition SB1, not present in the block print SX1.

¹⁸⁸ kyang/ SB1] kyang SX1

grub dang/ ma lha mo skyid las skye bar 'gyur ro gsungs zhes phyis sprul sku nyid kyis bka' stsal/

mtshur phu 'jam dbyangs chen pos kyang bya lo zla ba bdun pa'i skabs shig ja gral ba mang du yod pa cig la nga yi rmi lam ltar na da res sprul sku'i yab la dpal grub bya ba zhig yong ba 'dug gsungs/ kun mkhyen ban sgar bas kyang/ mtshur phu nas shar phyogs drang por sprul sku 'byon zhes lung bstan pa ltar/ rngod spyi mda' zhes pa/ de yang grub pa'i gnas mkha' 'gro'i sbas yul zhig ste/

de'i gnas kyid bdag po gzhi bdag thams cad kyid spyi dpon nam/ thams cad kyid lha'am/ jo bo lta bu yin pas na spyi lha zhes bya ba/ sngon rje rang byung rdo rje mtshur phu'i dben gnas bde chen na bzhugs pa'i dus dge bsnyen gyi sdom pa zhus shing/ phyin chad yon bdag byed cing ci gsung sgrub ces dam bcas/

gnas der phebs nas bzhugs pa'i zhu ba phul bzhin rim par phebs nas zhabs kyis bcags/ ma 'ongs sprul sku 'byon pa'i zhing du byin gyis brlabs pa'i rgya gar gyi gnas chen rnams kyid yal ga mkha' 'gro ma'i sbas lung/ gdul bya dag pa'i snang ba 'ba' zhig gi spyod yul du gyur pa'i gnas mchog khyad par can spyi nang bya [SB1, vol. 2, p. 124] bar/ yab grub pa thob pa'i skyes bu chen po rus chen sngong la nang tshan dpa' ya ste/

grags pa dpal grub bya ba dang/ yum ye shes kyid mkha' 'gro ma'i sprul pa jo dar bza' lha mo skyid gnyis kyid sras su/ shing pho khyi'i lo hor zla dang po'i tshes bco lnga'i snga dror nam mkha' la kha dog lnga'i 'ja' tshon gyi re khA dang/ me tog gi char dang/ 'brug gi sgra dang/ gzhan yang ngo mtshar ba'i ltas du ma dang bcas sku 'khrungs/ de ma thag zhal nas a la la gsungs shing bzhad/

sku la me tog gi rnam pa mang po dang dbu ltag tu rdo rje 'chang gi sku/ thugs kar rtsa ris kyid a yig gsang gnas su chos 'byung dang 'khor lo/ zhabs la 'khor lo ste sku la rang byon drug gsal por mngon la/ gsang chab 'o mar 'babs shing dri bzang gi ngad kyis thams cad khyab/ zhag bdun na gsung mang du byon pa na yab kyis sngags mang du gsung bar go /yum gyis dbyangs yig gsungs bar¹⁸⁹ go /gzhan rnams kyis [SX1, vol. 11, f. 267r] ma Ni gsung bar go/

yab yum kyis gsang bar dam bcas kyang/ nyid kyid thugs rje'i rang 'od mkha' la nyi ma shar ba lta bu'i sgrogs mkhan med kyang spyi nang du bya bral pho mo gnyis las chos kyid rje sku 'khrungs 'dug zer nas grags pa'i dbyar rngas phyogs kun khyab par gyur nas/ phyogs phyogs kyid lha dpon mi dpon gyi gtsos thams cad rang babs kyis 'dus shing gsang bar rngo ma thogs tel/

snye bo da ra steng¹⁹⁰ gi gdan sa pa chos dpal 'byor gyis thos nas mjal du 'gro bsam pa na rmi lam du yum gyi pang na bzhugs 'dug pa la dbu zhwa sogs phul ba rmis pas/ bla ma bsgres po la rngod nas kha skad 'di 'dra lags par

¹⁸⁹ bar SX1] par SB1

¹⁹⁰ snye bo da ra steng em.] snye bong ra steng SX1, SB1

ci byar 'os zhus pas/ nga'i rmi lam na spyi lha'i la khar nyi zla gnyis shar ba
mal gcig tu 'dus song ba rmis pas/ the tshom mi dgos drung gong ma'i dbu
zhwa na bza' phyags l+h+wam rnams khyer la song gsungs te/

phyin pas sku 'khrungs nas zhag bco lnga song ba'i thog tu sleb/ khong
gzigs pas bzhad cing dgyes par mdzad/ rje gong ma'i dbu zhwa sogs dang
drung rtogs ldan pa'i na bza' dbu zhwa rnams phul bas/ rje gong ma'i rnams
phyag gis bzhes te/ gzhan ma bzhes/ khyed thams [SB1, vol. 2, p. 125] cad
mkhyen pa mthong ba don ldan yin na nga la byin rlabs mdzad dgos zhus pas
phyag gnyis ka spyi bor bkod de byin rlabs yang yang mdzad pas the tshom
chod/

zla ngo gnyis bzhes pa na rngod pa'i lha sde mi sde thams cad kyis a rig
thang du gdan drangs/ drung gong ma'i chos khri la bzhugs nas khrom chen
po la zhal bstan tshe/ phyag rten rnams phyag gis rim par bzhes/

byin rlabs gnang nas khrom rnams la dal bus gzigs te phyag g.yas kyis
zhal dkyil lan gsum dal gyis phyis nas mnyam bzhag dang lta stangs mdzad
de/ sku gzi brjid dang ldan par bzhugs pas/ der 'dus pa thams cad mi phyed
pa'i dad pa thob nas/ mngon mtho dang nges legs kyi lam la bkod dol/

de nas zla ngo gsum bzhes tshe rngod kyi ber bsnol du/ bzher byas sku
mdun du col tshig zhus te/ mi rnams khyed karma pa min pa 'dra/

rje gong ma rnams kyis zla ba 'di la gsung 'di byon pa sogs 'dug /grub
rtags mang du bstan 'dug pa/ nyid mthong ba don ldan gyi sku'i skye ba yin
na yid ches kyi rtags dang [SX1, vol. 11, f. 267v] gsung zhig 'byon par zhus
pas/

nga ni karma'i ming can ste//
nga lta'i gang zag dkon pa yin//
nga dang 'brel pa 'ga' yod pa//
nga yis mi bslu'i smon lam yod//
bcu gsum zla ba ma rdzogs par//
tshig 'di gsang chen rgya dang ldan//
de nas kho bo rtsod bral ba'i//
rtags rnams rim gyis gsal par 'gyur//
zhes gsungs/

[SB1, vol. 2, p. 126] de nas snye bos gdan drangs nas/ da ra steng du
bzhugs pa'i tshe/ karma si tu pa'i zhu yig lcags mo dbon po/ lger bya bral
bsod ye sogs kyis phul nas/ zhu yig phyag gis bzhes nas yig phreng la rim par
gzigs nas gsung tshul mdzad/

dpal ldan rdo rje gsungs nas lcags mo'i pang par byon/ bya bral gyi lag pa
la 'jus nas mnyes pa'i rnam 'gyur du ma mdzad/ gzhan yang sngar gyi slob
ma rnying pa phal cher 'ga'i ming gsungs shing ngos bzung mdzad pas/
thams cad sngon gyi dus dran pas yid mos gus kyi gdung shugs drag pos/ dad
pa'i yus kyis ngus shing brgyal bar gyur to/

/zla ngo lnga bzhes pa snye bo'i ga gor khar bzhugs pa'i dus/ sku mdun
 der kha cig tho co 'dra byas pas/ zhal nas/
 a haM bde stong sgyu ma'i rtsal//
 sna tshogs ye shes rol pa la//
 byis pa rnams kyis bden par mthong//
 nga ni skye 'gag gnas dang bral//
 ces gsungs/

de nas zla ba dgu bzhes pa na/ go'i shri rin po che mjal bar/ sku gzi brjid
 kyi dpal 'bar zhing/ rab tu mnyes par mdzad cing byin rlabs gnang ba dang/
 phyag rten rnams phyag tu rim par bzhes/
 sgar dung ngos bzung mdzad/ rje gong ma'i dbu zhwa phul ba mnabs
 shing/ rdo rje dril bu phyag gis bsname nas/ pad kor dril stabs mdzad/
 thugs dam mgon sku ngos 'dzin kyang gnang ba sogs ngo mtshar bsam
 gyis mi khyab par dgongs te rang byung kun mkhyen chos kyi rgyal por
 mtshan gsol/
 sgar chen 'dzam gling rgyan chen por seng ge'i khrir bzhugs/

zla ngo bcu gcig bzhes pa na/ nags phu bas spyang drangs nags mdar khrom
 tshogs la A li kA li gsungs/

phag lo sar nas mdo chen du bzhugs pa na nga rdo rje 'chang yin gsungs/
 gcig gi sngo¹⁹¹ yig phul bas dga' ldan du skye bar gyur cig [SB1, vol. 2, p.
 127] gsungs/

yang gzhan gyis co 'dri zhus pa na/ the tshom mi [SX1, vol. 11, f. 268r]
 dgos bka' brgyud bla ma rnams kyi zhal la ltos/ mkha' 'gro chos skyong gis
 phrin las bsgrub cing yod/ sa ra ha birba pa ku ku ri pa gsum nam mkhar
 bzhugs/ 'di gsum gyi rnam thar 'dzin mi nga yin gsungs nas phyag mdzub
 nam mkhar gtad/

yum gyis kyang de rnams kyi zhal mjal/ mdo chen phu na gcod la 'byon
 gsungs/ gcod ji ltar byed zhus pas sems nyid rtsad nas gcod pa yin gsungs
 rtsad nas ji ltar gcod zhus pas sgom gyis gsungs/ mi shes zhus pas nam mkhar
 phyag mdzub gtad de mtha' dbus med pa zhig yin gsungs/

yang mdo chen gyi bla ye na yum sras bzhugs dus/ mi la ras pas mgur ma
 'then shing yod e mthong gsungs/

long por spyang drangs/ thams cad mi phyed pa'i dad pa thob/

byi ba'i lo la spug ngo bor bzhugs pa'i dus/ rta mgrin mtshon cha 'khor lor
 sprul pa yum gyis gzigs/
 'di 'dra mdzad pa ci lags zhus pas/ bgegs btul ba yin/ su la'ang ma bshad

¹⁹¹ sngo SX1] sngos SB1

gsungs/

*tshes bcu'i dus cig nga karma pa ni 'gro ba 'dren gsungs nas gar mdzad de/ de ma thag sku lus mi snang bar mdzad ste yang lam gyis byon/ yum sras bla ye na bzhuks dus yum la phyag 'tshal lo//*¹⁹²

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