

The Fourth Karmapa, Rölpai Dorjé: A Poet Out of Place

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The fourth Karmapa, Rölpai Dorjé (Rol pa'i rdo rje, 1340–1383), wrote poetry throughout his life. Like many other lineage holders of the Kagyü, and his three Karmapa predecessors, he composed *gur* (*mgur*). According to its loosest meaning, the term *gur* can mean song, but most songs the early Kagyü lineage holders composed were of a type. These were songs with simple compositional structures—often employing short lines and repetition—and profound meanings. By composing songs of this type, the Kagyü sought to emulate their lineal forebear, Milarepa (1040–1123), whose songs and redemptive life story had made him famous.¹ Many of the early Karmapas' songs were composed in three different settings: at spiritual gatherings (*tshogs*), when they experienced realization (*nyams*) or when they wished to make a political or social comment.²

The first and second Karmapas' songs are preserved as individual texts in their collected works or within other, larger compositions such as their biographies.³ The third and fourth Karmapas' *gur* were scribed and collected by their students and retained within anthologies called *Spoken Songs* (*Gsung mgur*). The third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (Rang byung rdo rje, 1282–1339), is said to have composed around 140 *gur*.⁴ Rölpai Dorjé, who was nowhere near as prolific an author as his forebear, composed over a hundred *gur* during his lifetime. These songs are preserved in *The Miscellaneous Songs of Karmapa Rölpai Dorjé* (*Karma pa rol pa'i rdo rje'i gsung mgur thor bu*).⁵ Some of his songs were also included within the various retellings of his life story.⁶

Although most of their poetry is written in the same genre, the *gur*, this genre's simplicity and the directness of its form allows something of each of the Karmapas' characters to shine through in their compositions. The compositions also reflect their broader socio-political circumstances and literary developments. The first Karmapa, Düsum Khyenpa (Dus gsum mkhyen pa, 1110–1193)

1. Tsang smyon He ru ka 1990. It was translated into English as Quintman 2010. See Quintman 2013.

2. For a discussion of these characteristics of the early Karmapas' *gur*, see: Ruth Gamble 2018, 105–120.

3. Jamgon Kongtrul Labrang, ed. 2010, and Karma Pak shi 1978.

4. Rang byung rdo rje 2006b. Rang byung rdo rje 2006c.

5. Karma pa rol pa'i rdo rje, "Karma pa rol pa'i rdo rje'i gsung mgur thor bu, Karma pa sku phreng rim byon gyi gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs", vol. 93, *dPal brtsegs bod yig dpe rnying zhib 'jug khang*, 2013, 420–555. Many of these songs are found in his biographies in shorter forms.

6. There are multiple versions of this story. In this piece, I draw from the songs recorded in Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas, and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab, 1972. I chose this version of his life story because it draws on multiple sources and includes many of his *gur*.

composed many of his *gur* within a growing religious community that seems to have encouraged friendly competition. His works contain bold claims about his realizations and remembrances of past lives but not much about inter-sectarian disputes or politics.⁷ The poems of the second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi (1204–1283), are fewer, more direct, and composed during his many journeys around the Mongol Empire, during which he searched for patronage and protection during difficult times.⁸ The most extensive collection of early Karmapa *gur* is accredited to the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé. His approximately 140 *gur* are collated in two texts, *Rangjung Dorjé's Collection of Songs* and *Rangjung Dorjé's Miscellaneous Songs*.⁹ Rangjung Dorjé's songs cover a wide range of topics. Like Düsüm Khyenpa's songs, some of them reflect his mystical experiences and friendly competition with his contemporaries. Like Karma Pakshi's songs, others reflect on his travels around the empire. But they also include topics as various as protest songs against the Mongol-Sakya governance,¹⁰ descriptions of life in the Mongol capitals,¹¹ and his critical reflections on Tibetan society.¹²

Rölpai Dorjé's *gur* are much more personal and less socially and politically ambitious than Rangjung Dorjé's compositions. He lived his life in even more turbulent times. During the first half of his life, he sought to establish himself as the Karmapas' rebirth, and his extant songs from this period tend to support this goal. During the second half of his life, however, he seems to be trying to avoid the wrong kind of attention. His songs from this second period of his life reflect this life on the move.

I began reading and translating Rölpai Dorjé's *gur* as part of a larger study of the early Karmapas' lives, and particularly the life story and songs of the third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé, for my PhD thesis. In this process, I translated all Rangjung Dorjé's *gur*. Some of these translations have been published elsewhere.¹³ Before beginning to translate the *gur*, I was taken through many of them by Pö Rinpoche (bod rin po che), who lives in Gangtok, Sikkim, and for whom I had previously worked as an interpreter. Pö Rinpoche only had time to teach me about the poems between five-thirty and seven in the morning, so I came to associate them with the cold and steaming tea. Even after this introduction, I struggled to get the religious and sometimes geographical context for the songs and worked on my translations with my fellow PhD candidate at the Australian National University, Lopön Tenzin Ringpapontsang. Eventually, many of the *gur*'s experiential, linguistic and metaphoric patterns became familiar to me. Many of these same patterns are evident in Rölpai

7. Gamble 2018, 117–120.

8. Manson 2022, 258–274, 314–316, 317–320.

9. Rang byung rdo rje 2006b, 2006c.

10. Rang byung rdo rje 2006c, 378.6–380.1. Gamble 2018, 234–236.

11. Rang byung rdo rje 2006c, 414.3–415.1. Gamble 2018, 251–253.

12. Rang byung rdo rje 2006b, 226.1–229.1. Gamble 2018, 208.

13. Gamble 2018. Gamble 2020.

Dorjé's *gur*, and it was, therefore, relatively straightforward to read and translate them—although I am certain that there are probably still mistakes in my translation and others would have chosen different phrasing. From my experience with translating Rangjung Dorjé's *gur*, I learned to translate these songs in language as simple as possible. While the songs reflect profound ideas, and could be translated using highly technical language, it seems to me that this translation choice would not be faithful to their poetic intent, their rhythms, and everyday imagery. I have tried to use word play and alliteration where possible as they are present in the original. I have also tried to be cognizant of Rölpai Dorjé's biographical context when translating the songs.

In seeking to connect Rölpai Dorjé's life story to his *gur*, I am following the lead of his biographers who used these songs to help tell his life story. They provide personal insights into his religious experiences, religious-social interactions, and travels. These personal insights are only sometimes evident in the biographies, which were preserved and promoted by the Karmapa institution for its ends. This short piece will contextualize some of his more cited and unusual songs by situating them within a brief overview of his life.

The child who would be recognized as the fourth Karmapa was born in Kongpo, in southwestern Tibet, a year after the death of his predecessor Rangjung Dorjé in the fabled Mongol Imperial summer capital Xanadu. Before his death, Rangjung Dorjé had proclaimed several times that he would escape the imperial capitals Xanadu and Dadu (Beijing) to return to his cherished mountain retreats in Kongpo.¹⁴ Although the Karmapa reincarnation lineage was still a relatively new phenomenon and existed as a parallel power center to the familial lineage of the second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi, which still controlled the Karmapas' primary seat, Tsurphu Monastery near Lhasa, Rangjung Dorjé's insistence that he would be reborn in Kongpo meant that this was where his students came to look for his rebirth. Kongpo was by no means a center of power in Tibet and was often disparaged by those from the two central provinces of Ü and Tsang.

The stories Rangjung Dorjé's students retold of Rölpai Dorjé's birth are baroque and owe much to the Buddha's hagiographical tradition. In them, he was said to have transformed his mother's womb into a crystal palace, smelled of sandalwood when he was born, and sat straight up before reciting Avalokiteśvara's mantra, *Om mani padme hum*.¹⁵ Later, at age three, he was said to have told one of Rangjung Dorjé's attendants that he was the Karmapa, and desperately needed to return to the Mongol Imperial palace as his students were creating havoc without him.¹⁶ Part of the evidence he and his supporters garnered as proof of his incarnate status were his early *gur*. When he was seven years old, he was said to have composed the following *gur*, which demonstrates an intense confidence for a child.

14. Gamble 2018, 248–261.

15. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 505.

16. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 507.

When I turned four, I was (re)born on a white lotus's surface.
 When I turned five, I explained the *Dharma* to migrators.
 When I turned six, I led sentient beings on the path.
 When I turned seven, I protected migrators from suffering.
 These explanations of mine are precious.
 If you encounter them, you'll no longer migrate to bad destinations.¹⁷

Through such pronouncements, Rölpai Dorjé developed a reputation in his native Kongpo. He stayed in the retreat centers that Rangjung Dorjé had established, such as Nagphu and New Tsari, until he was eleven years old.¹⁸

His local reputation and his claims to be Rangjung Dorjé's rebirth did not lead to an invitation to the Karmapas' seat at Tsurphu Monastery, however. He only travelled there after his mother, who his biographies claim was his ardent supporter and a particularly spiritual woman, took him on pilgrimage there, to Lhasa's sacred sites, and to the other major Karma Kagyü Monastery, Karma Monastery in Kham, when he was eleven years old.¹⁹ The abbots of Tsurphu Monastery, descendants of Karma Pakshi, took the same approach to Rölpai Dorjé as they had to Rangjung Dorjé; they allowed him to visit but did not invest him with any monastic authority. Rölpai Dorjé was not allowed to make Tsurphu Monastery his primary seat, he was not enthroned there and did not become its abbot. He was educated by Yungtön Dorjé Pal (G.yung ston rdo rje dpal, 1284–1365), a student of the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé, but not Tsurphu's abbot,²⁰ nor by Rangjung Dorjé's primary student, a man who would latterly become known as the first Shamarpa, Drakpa Sengé (Zhwa dmar grags pa seng ge, 1283–1349).

After receiving instructions from Yungtön Dorjé Pal, Rölpai Dorjé returned to Kongpo, where he continued developing both his religious and poetic reputations. One of the *gur* he became particularly renowned for was his instruction to a blind person he met in the village of Nyangpo. Distressed by their loss of sight, the blind person began to cry. Ten-year-old Rölpai Dorjé is said to have responded in song:

Do not cry. Look at your mind.
 It has no material, no color.

17. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 507–508. Tib. *nga log bzhi long nas padma dkar po sa khar skyes. Lo lnga long nas 'gro la chos bshad byas/ Lo drug long nas sems can lam sna drang/ Lo bdun long nas 'gro ba'i gdung bya bskyangs/ Rin chen nga yi bshad pa yin/ De dang mjal na ngan song med/*

18. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 505.

19. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 515.

20. 'Gos Lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal lists Mtshur phu's abbots in the *Deb ther sngon po* (Blue Annals). 'Gos Lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal 1984, 615–617.

It is various and indefinite but manifests everything.
It is not real. It is not false. Relax in it.²¹

Another vignette from his life story tells how he used poetry to avert a tragedy. He and his entourage were on the road to Lo (in southern Tibet near Tsari) when a flock of black and white birds swooped down towards them, spooking their yak, *dzo*, and horses, who nearly fell off the narrow path, taking their human companions with them. After using his meditative powers to calm everyone down and ensuring that no one was hurt, Rölpai Dorjé sang a song.

The dharmā's vehicle is the guru and the secret mantra.
Our methods, commitments²² and vows gather interdependent incidents.
They make difficult points—outer, inner, and secret—on the yogis' way.
(On this way), travel to even the slightest goal causes hardship.

When secrets are close, there are narrow paths, obstacles.
Don't be distracted. Rely on continuous awareness and
our method. This is the point of this interdependent incident.
If you're not deluded, without a long delay, you'll arrive at bliss.

This road, this journey is a symbol.²³

Rölpai Dorjé eventually returned to Tsurphu Monastery in his late teens, received further religious instructions, took ordination as a monk from its abbot, and, while he was in residence, wrote more *gur*. The series of *gur* he wrote there highlighted the links between himself and the earlier Karmapas, perhaps to convince Tsurphu's power brokers of his links with their teachers. The songs evoked his connection with the earlier Karmapas indirectly and directly. They suggested an indirect link by suggesting that he, like the earlier Karmapas, had a special connection with the Buddha Amitābha's pure land, Sukhāvātī (Tib. Bde ba can) and could experience it in meditation.

21. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 515. Tib. *ma ngu rang gi sems la ltos. kha dog gzugs su grub pa med. sna tshogs ma nges cir yang 'char. bden med brdzun med glod la zhog.*

22. This is a translation of the term *dam tshig*, which is in turn a translation of the Sanskrit term *samaya*. This term refers to the commitments that tantric yogis make to perform certain actions. Vows (*sdom pa*) refer to the commitments they make to refrain from certain actions. For more details see: Dalton 2022, 270–287.

23. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 565. Tib. *chos theg pa bla ma gsang sngags la/ thabs dam tshig sdom pa rten 'brel tshogs/ gnad phyi nang sang ba'i rnal 'byor tshul/ don cung zad kyang 'da' bar dka' ba yi/ lam 'phrang 'gag dam yang nye ba'i gsang/ yid ma yengs dran pa'i rgyun brten cing/ thabs rten 'brel gyi gnad la ma rmongs na/ dus ring por mi thogs bde bar phyin/ dpe ji ltar bgrod ba'i lam 'di bzhin/*

Out of several songs he wrote at Tsurphu about Sukhāvātī, the most poignant describes a visit he took there in a dream.

I experienced a vision just now.
I was in Sukhāvātī pure land,
all sorts of flowers appeared,
blue flowers, gold flowers, and the rest.

All the children of the gods were there. I could hear the voice of the Bodhisattva
King,
but I couldn't see his face.
I could see the pain that suffering caused.²⁴

The songs also claimed a more direct link with his predecessors by relaying his meditative experience of merging with both Rangjung Dorjé and the first Karmapa, Düsum Khyenpa.

Through the blessings of the guru,
I just experienced a brief vision of
the great meditator, Rangjung Dorjé,
and Düsum Khyenpa, with a red body.²⁵

In this case, his *gur* failed to move the intended audience. Rölpai Dorjé left Tsurphu without receiving a position of authority there. Shortly after his stay there, however, he did attract the attention of another of Rangjung Dorjé's students, and an important patron, Toghon Temür (1320–1370, r. 1333–1368), the last emperor of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). Toghon Temür and his son Ayuširidara wrote and asked Rölpai Dorjé to live with them in the Mongol capitals, Xanadu and Dadu, and teach them. The letter that they wrote to him is extant and reproduced in most Karmapa histories. It is considered historically important because it includes the emperor's recognition of Rölpai Dorjé as Rangjung Dorjé's rebirth, saying in part, "We hear that you have taken birth in the Tibetan regions (*khyed bod phyogs su skye ba bzhes*)."²⁶

Rölpai Dorjé was only eighteen years old when he set out for the capitals. His reputation at

24. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 524–525. Tib. *da lta nyams kyi snang ba la/ bde ba can gyi zhing khams na/ sngo dang ser po la sogs pa'i/ me tog rnam pa sna tshogs snang. lha yi bu nit hams cad dag/ 'phags mchog rgyal po gsung thos kyang/ zhal ni ma mthong pa yis na/ sdug bsngal gis gzir bar mthong/*

25. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 525. Tib. *bla ma rgyal bai byin rlabs kyi/ sgom chen rang byugn rdo rje yi/ thang gcig nyams kyi snang ba la/ dus gsum mkhyen pa sku mdog dmar/*

26. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 536.

court depended on his status as a reincarnate. As Elliot Sperling described in his study of Röl-pai Dorjé's journey to the capitals, the second and third Karmapas had clearly achieved a high rank among the Mongols; Karma Pakshi had been a fixture of court at Mōngké Khan's pre-Yuan Dynasty capital on the Mongolian steppe at Karakorum.²⁷ Rangjung Dorjé had been present at Toghon Temür's coronation and had advised him as a young king.²⁸ Despite the honour of being invited to court, Röl-pai Dorjé seemed hesitant to go, and broke his journey to the capitals with teaching tours and visits to sacred sites, such as the sacred mountain, Wutai Shan, where he composed *gur*.²⁹ When he finally arrived at the court, he spoke of getting lost on the way, but used it as a metaphor for migrators' journeys within cyclic existence, comparing a journey to somewhere with the frivolousness of courtly life, their superficial engagement with physical yogas, and the pitfalls of power and fame.

Again and again, we take the wrong road. It's habitual.
Ordinary beings find it hard to turn our thoughts and speech around.
Those who have tried everything to subjugate (their minds)
should bow to the greatest teaching: it is what it is.

Here in meaningless, essenceless cyclic existence,
our exertions only cause fatigue.
We sit atop the terrible ocean of suffering,
on a throne (held up by) crocodiles, our delusions.

We are never happy, never at ease.
Waves of composed things toss us around.
Kye ma! When will we be free from this watery residue?
When will we arrive on the island of liberation?

Cause and effect are obscured (and obscuring),
So, beings see suffering as a decoration.
Their minds are not pacified.
They dance like children,
and pretend their behavior is beneficial.

27. Manson 2022, 59–79.

28. Gamble 2018, 247.

29. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 538. The *gur* he composed there are recorded in: Karma pa rol pa'i rdo rje 2006b, 487–490.

It is so overwhelming that
it confuses migrators' minds, and
they become famous for immorality.

Even when ten million suns scorch them,
they don't protect their minds.
How wonderful it would be if they'd examine things!

Amid happiness, they hold on to suffering.
In suffering, they grasp at happiness.
Migrators' minds are so confused that
they are famous for immoral actions.

They are devoid of personal discipline,
spend their time making up physical activities,
and abandon composed, spontaneous behavior,
which is true yogic discipline.

[...]

When there is conceptualisation
Then there is cyclic existence.
Nature is nature-less;
see it all as manifestations, illusions, illusions.³⁰

From all available accounts, it appears that Rölpai Dorjé, like his predecessor, did not enjoy the capitals. Not only was he disturbed by their decadence, as he indicated in the previous *gur*, but he

30. Karma pa rol pa'i rdo rje 2006b, 490–491. Tib. *yang yang log pa'i lam la goms pa yis/ so so skye bob lo ngag bzlog dka' la/ gang gang thabs kyis 'dul ba'i mdzad pa rnams/ de de bzhin du ston pa mchog der 'dud/ snying pos dben pa'i 'khor ba 'dir/ ji ltar 'bad kyang ngal ba'i rgyus/ sdug bsngal rgya mtsho 'jigs rung pas/ nyon mongs chu srid 'dzin khri'i gnas/ nam [...]* yang bde ba med pa yis/ 'du byed rba rlabs rnam par gyo/ kye ma srid pa'i chu gter las/ 'gro 'di nam zbig thar gyur nas/ thar pa'i gling du phyin par 'gyur/ las kyi rgyus yis rnams rmongs pa yis/ skye bo sdug bsngal rgyan bzhin mthong/ sems nyid yongs su ma zhi bas/ byis pa sgyur yi gar byed/ sems nyid yongs su ma zhi bas/ byis pa sgyur yi gar byed de/ phan tshun mngon par 'ga' byed de/ phan tshun mngon par 'ga' bzhin spyod/ shin tu bzod par dka' ba yis/ 'gro ba blo gros rmongs pa rnams/ tshul min las la brtson par grags/ gdungs byed bye bas rnams gtsets kyang/ yid ni skyab par mi 'dzin pa'i/ skye bo rnams kyi brtags pa mtshar/ bde la sdug bsngal 'dzin pa dang/ sdug la bde bar 'dzin pa yis/ 'gro ba blo gros rmongs pa nams/ tshul min las la brtson par grags/ yid ni dul ba dang bral zhing/ lus kyi rnam 'gyur bcos pa yis/ brtul zhugs dam pa spangs pa rnams/ lhan cig 'dus bzhin spyod pa bzhin/ (I did not translate two verses here that contained too many missing sections for their meaning to be precise.) *ji ltar ji ltar rnam brtags pas/ de lta de ltar 'khor bas/ rang bzhing med pa yin/ sgyu ma sgyu ma sprul bzhin mthong/*

was also concerned about their longevity. He saw chaos ahead and continually asked permission to leave. The *Blue Annals* records that his main gift to the emperor was a prophetic *gur* advising him to flee. This cryptic statement was “written down by two officials and preserved as a sacred relic.” It read:

It is great indeed when a play ends in front of a large audience!
I do not know governance.
A monk’s duty is to go wherever there is peace.
(There they can) help the teachings and living beings.³¹

His life stories provide no other context for the song. But its message suggests that the emperor or his court had asked Rölpai Dorjé to take on an administrative role and help re-balance their tottering realm. Rölpai Dorjé refused and left. The first line of his statement suggests he should go while still well-liked. The last two indicate that he saw trouble coming to the capitals. His choice to leave the capitals at this point brought a great boon to the Karmapa lineage. It meant he left the capitals before they were sacked and transferred the offerings he had received from the court back to the Karmapas’ monasteries in Tibet.

His next destination was another astute political and economic choice. Rather than traveling straight home, he visited the remnants of the Tangut (Tib. *Mi nyag*, Ch. *Xi xia*) community living between Tibet and Mongolia. In most histories, this kingdom was said to have been obliterated by the Mongols in 1227. But as Elliot Sperling and others have hypothesized, it is more than likely that the remnants of this community moved south into the Tibetan-Chinese borderlands and became involved in the burgeoning tea-horse trade.³² The life stories of the third and fourth Karmapas support Sperling’s claim, as both visited the community on their return from the Mongol court, received their largess, and offered them teachings and *gur*.³³

Rölpai Dorjé spent most of the rest of his life in the lands between the Tangut’s realm and central Tibet. The tradition credits him with instigating the Karmapas’ traveling monastery, Karmai Garchen (*kar ma’i sgar chen*), or Great Encampment.³⁴ He rarely returned to Tsurphu Monastery and only occasionally visited Karma Monastery. One of the few stories from this time in his life tells of the time he dreamed of the goddess Sarasvatī (Tib. *Dbyangs can ma*), who was most closely associated with Indian poetics or *kāvya* (Tib. *snyan ngag*).³⁵ After Sarasvatī offered him yogurt, he

31. ’Gos Lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal 1984, 596. Tib. *khrom che ba’i dus su rtsed mo ’phror bzhag na ngo mtshar ba yin/ nged la rgyal srid kyi bya ba la gtogs pa’i shes sgo gang yang med/ ban de bya ba gar bde sar ’gro zhing bstan pa dang sems can la gang phan byed dgos pa yin/*

32. Sperling 2004. For Rangjung Dorjé’s travels to the Tangut community, see Gamble 2018, 249–251.

33. Karma pa rol pa’i rdo rje 2006b, 495–496.

34. Si tu Chos kyi ’byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 565–578.

35. For an overview of the relationship between *kāvya* and Tibetan poetry, see Kapstein 2003.

reported a profound improvement in his ability to compose *kāvya*. Most retellings of his life story speak of this literary transformation,³⁶ but none of his *kāvya* compositions appear to be extant.

After spending around a decade primarily in this in-between space on the Tibetan-Mongol borderlands, he died early, at age 43, in an unnamed, isolated, hilly area in northeastern Tibet. His last *gur*, quite poignant, was written around this time.

Homage to the gurus.

The view is the Great Garuda's extended wings.
The primordial state extends into space.
In space, there is no fear of the mind lasting and changing.

Contemplation is the Great Garuda's extended wings.
Coemerging actions extend into space.
There is no fear of dullness and agitation, these mental cliffs.

Behavior is the Great Garuda's extended wings.
Whatever disappears and arises extends into space.
There is no fear of the mind's tricks, these mental cliffs.

The results are the Great Garuda's extended wings.
Meaning and spontaneity extend into space.
There is no fear of hopes and doubts, these mental tricks.³⁷

Before he died, he created a symbolic link between his and Rangjung Dorjé's deaths by ensuring they were both cremated with sandal and aloe wood. He asked his students to gather the wood for him without telling them its purpose. As he was dying, he told his students to cremate his body on the hillside using the special wood, as this act would stave off an invasion by the newly forming Ming Empire. He had lived through personal and political upheavals and died wishing this period of turmoil would end. As it happened, the Ming Empire did not invade, and the fifth Karmapa, Deshin Shekpa (De bzhin gshegs pa, 1384–1415), received the patronage of the new emperor.

36. Si tu Chos kyi 'byung gnas and Zur mang Tshe dbang kun khyab 1972, 569.

37. Karma pa rol pa'i rdo rje 2006b, 539. Tib. *Na mo gurubhya/ lta ba khyung chen gyi gshogs brkyangs de/ gzhi gnas lugs kyi mkha' la brkyangs pa lags/ sems rtag chad kyi mkha' la nyams nga med/ bsgom pa khyung chen gyi gshogs brkyangs de/ las zung 'jug gi mkha' la brkyangs pa lags/ sems bying rgod gyi gyangs la nyams nga med/ spyod pa khyung chen gyi gshogs brkyangs de/ yal gang shar gyi mkha' la brkyangs pa lags/ sems zol sog gyi gyangs la nyams nga med/ 'bras bu khyung chen gyi gshogs brkyangs de/ don lhun grub gyi mkha' la brkyangs pa lags/ sems re dogs gyi gyangs la nyams nga med/*

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