



Donald Lopez, Professor of Tibetan studies at the University of Michigan, states, "We may be disillusioned to learn that..." the old "...Tibet is not the place we have dreamed of. Yet to allow Tibet to circulate in a system of fantastic opposites is to deny Tibet its history....Since 100,000 refugees exited Tibet in 1959, "...fantasies of Tibet garnered much support for the cause of Tibetan independence" ...but Dr. Lopez believes" ...that those fantasies are ultimately a threat to the realization of that goal." He concludes that to the extent "...we continue to believe that Tibet prior to 1950 was a utopia, the Tibet..." of today will..." not exist.

In order to present a favorable picture of Tibet, North American "...scholars of Tibetan Buddhism...shy away from certain" categories "...of Tibetan literature..." such as the propitiation of malicious "...deities, exorcism texts,...wrathful deities or mundane ends" and gravitate to "...works on meditation, the path of benefiting other beings to leading them to enlightenment and scholastic philosophy".

John Powers, a professor in Asian Studies and Histories at the Australian National University, states,

"Tibetan authors have seized on..." themes "...with positive resonance for Westerners, such as pro-environment messages, human rights, democracy, gender equality, and spirituality, and have incorporated these into an evolving production of Tibetan identity that is largely created for the benefit of outsiders. The Tibet of their imagination ..." or their fantasy" is one that..." portrays old Tibet as"... a deeply Buddhist nation in which people naturally respected their environment, women were the equals of men, human rights were enshrined in the religious ideals and social practices, and the nation lived in peace and harmony."

Robert Thurman, Professor of Indo-Tibetan studies at Columbia University, former monk ordained by the Dalai Lama in 1965, a close friend, founder of the Tibet House in New York with Richard Gere, father of the actress, Uma Thurman, and the most ardent defender of the Dalai Lama and his brand of Tibetan Buddhism, provides a unique and creative explanation for the 1959 flight of Tibetan refugees from Tibet to India, Bhutan, and Nepal. In his book, Essential Tibetan Buddhism, Professor Thurman notes that, on the ordinary level, the Chinese have attempted to destroy all that has been important culturally and spiritually of the Tibetans. He then asks, "How can this be explained on the extraordinary level?" He states that the most compelling theory is that Vajrapani, a centuries old Buddhist deity representing the manifestation of all the Buddhas' power, emanated himself as Mao Tse tong for the purpose of driving Tibetan's teachers out of Tibet so as to spread the Tibetan Buddhist message to the West. Professor Powers notes that in contrast to other Western and Tibetan writers, Thurman's characterization of Tibet is distinctive in that he appears to recognize no flaws in old Tibet.

Buddha was born between the 5th-6th century BC. After he was enlightened under the Bodhi tree he taught for 45 years. His teachings were written down for the first time on Palm leaves 350 years after his death. They had been transmitted orally from one generation to another during the intervening years. It has also been stated that the reason for all of the contradictions in his teachings was because he would speak to one group and teach one truth based on his inner knowledge of what they needed and then he would speak to another group and, based on what they needed, provide a different truth which would appear to contradict the prior teaching.

According to Buddha we are all in the samsara cycle because of three poisons: greed, delusion and hatred, which means that we are all suffering because we are perpetually being reborn into one of six realms and the only way to get out of the samsara cycle is to reach enlightenment. The 6 realms are listed below:

Samsara – 6 Realms --- Sentient Beings - Enlightenment is the only way to escape out of Samsara



- A. gods
- B. Semi-gods
- C. Humans
- D. Animals/Insects
- E. Hungry Ghosts
- F. Hell- Beings

Which realm we are reborn into depends on how much good karma or merit we have built up in this life and all of our previous lives. All of the beings listed: gods, semi-gods, humans, animals/insects, hungry ghosts or hell-beings are "sentient" beings. So, the term, "for the benefit of all sentient beings" used by the Mayahana and Vajrayana Buddhists, it includes all of the beings in these six realms and not just humans or animals.

Briefly, there are three main schools of Buddhism: Hinayana, Mayahana and Vajrayana. Hinayana Buddhism was the original teaching of the Buddha and is called Theravada Buddhism today. The teachings which came to be known as Mayahana Buddhism had been hidden by Buddha among the sea

serpents and only came forth about 100-150 years after the original teachings were written, when people were able to accept them.

- 3 Types of Buddhism --- Also, The 3 Jewels – 1. Buddha 2. Dharma (writings of Buddha) 3. Sangha (Community)
- A. Hinayana (lesser vehicle) – Theravada (Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Laos, Burma, Thailand)
 - B. Mahayana (greater vehicle) (Bhutan-state religion- Tibet, Nepal, etc)
 - C. Vajrayana - Tibetan Buddhism (The Diamond Way --- advanced practices of Mahayana Buddhism) – (Tibet, Bhutan, N. India, Nepal, SW+N China, Mongolia, various republics of Russia)

The differences between Hinayana and Mayahana Buddhism are described as the difference between one person taking one small boat across a lake to reach the other side by himself compared to taking a group of people in a larger boat to carry others across the lake. Hinayana is described as the one boat or the lesser vehicle and Mayahana is described as the larger boat or the greater vehicle. The Hinayana teaching is designed for a person who is just concerned with getting himself to nirvana whereas the Mayahana teaching is for a person with the outlook of wanting to reach nirvana for the benefit of all sentient beings in all six realms. Both of these types of Buddhism require thousands of lifetimes to reach nirvana or enlightenment.

Varjrayana Buddhism or Tantric Buddhism is an advanced practice of Mayahana Buddhism and allows an individual to reach nirvana or enlightenment within just one lifetime. However, achieving enlightenment in one lifetime practicing Vajrayana Buddhism involves Tantric Sex or at least visualization of the Tantric Sex Act because apparently sex, death and other similar events can create the environment for “ clear light” where it is possible to enter into a state of enlightenment. Therefore, it requires a teacher or guru to help a person to achieve enlightenment in one life time but is considered a dangerous practice without a skilled practioner. Those who practice this type of Buddhism indicate that Buddha had a consort to order to achieve enlightenment in his lifetime. Vajrayana Buddhism is also referred to as the Diamond Way or the Thunderbolt.

Incarnations are an important part of Tibetan Buddhism. There are currently thousands of recognized incarnated lamas. Incarnations in Tibetan Buddhism started in the 12th century with the Karmapa of the Kagyu tradition. This was an individual who had achieved enlightenment but decided to come back in human form to help all sentient beings rather than heading off to nirvana. He reincarnated himself in a womb of a woman and was born as an incarnated lama of the same lineage. In the United States, the mostly widely recognized incarnated lama outside of the Dalai Lama was Chögyam Trungpa who died in 1987. He had built Buddhist centers in Vermont and Boulder, Colorado. In Tibet, recognizing incarnated lamas could be an elaborate undertaking. Currently, the Chinese are requiring an application to be submitted in order for someone to be recognized as an incarnate in Tibet.

In old Tibet, incarnated lamas received special treatment. While it would have normally require 16-20 years to finish a course of instruction to become a scholar in their monasteries, incarnated lamas were thought to have the mind stream of prior incarnations and their studies were reduced by several years. In addition, an incarnated lama would receive all the attendants, manors and estates, serfs, and wealth of the person he was reincarnating. Being recognized as an incarnated lama was often like hitting the lottery. The current Dalai Lama was recognized in 1935. His family was a poor farming family. Not only was he given all the wealth that had accumulated through the years for all prior Dalai Lamas but his

family was given two estates and attendants. In the case of the Dalai Lama, the father insisted on three more estates and was picky as to which ones he was to receive. The Dalai Lama's father also would insist that anyone passing him in the streets on horseback would dismount or he would have one of his attendants beat him. The Dalai Lama's father became such a nuisance in Lhasa that the Lhasa government had to call the National Assembly together to determine how to deal with him.

Below, I have listed three traditions under the "Red Hats" and one tradition under the "Yellow Hats". They are described by the color of hats they wear in their ceremonies but suffice it to say that the Yellow Hats were a reformist movement in the 15th century. They are more monastic and scholastic whereas the Red Hats are more meditative. The Dalai Lama is a Yellow Hat but like many in any of the different traditions, he includes all of the traditions in his teachings, especially since 1959.

Tibetan Buddhist Schools/Traditions -- includes Incarnations

RED HATS

- A. Nyingma (HH Penor Rinpoche – 11th Incarnation)
- B. Sakya (HH Sakya Trizin – 41st in the line of throne-holders -- Emanation of the Manjushri Diety)
- C. Kagyu (HH Karmapa – currently the 17th Incarnation---two claim the name)

YELLOW HATS

- D. Gelugpa (Gelek) - Reformist Movement 14th Century – Je Tsongapa
 - 1. HH Dalai Lama (14th Incarnation -- manifestation of Chenrezig, the Buddha of Compassion and patron saint of Tibet.)
 - 2. HH Panchen Lama (recognized in Tibet by the Dalai Lama but whisked away by the Chinese and never heard of again---the Chinese recognized their own Panchen Lama) – 11th Incarnation

Buddhism first traveled to Tibet in the 8th century eventually replacing the shamanistic and animistic Bon religion as the dominant religion in Tibet but incorporating many of the Bon deities and practices. The Bon religion is still viable in Tibet and is recognized by the Dalai Lama as the 5th Buddhist tradition in Tibet. Over the centuries, Westerners had been fed a diet of myths surrounding the Roof of the World. Until 1959, Tibet remained isolated from the rest of the world and a mystery to be uncovered.

Jesuit John Grueber, who reached Lhasa in 1661, observed the Tibetan Buddhist similarities to the Roman Catholic church reporting that they have monasteries and nunneries, they say prayers over the sick, observe different feasts, undergo severe penances, send out missionaries. The Vincentian missionaries Huc and Gabet, who traveled to China and Tibet from 1844 to 1846, noted the affinities between what they called "Lamanesque worship" and Catholicism as follows:

The cross, the mitre, the dalmatica, the cape which the Grand Lamas wear on their journeys, or when they are performing some ceremony out of the temple; the service with double choirs, the psalmody, the exorcism, the censor, suspended from five chains, and which they can open or close at pleasure, the benedictions given by the Lamas over the heads of the faithful; the chaplet, ecclesiastical celibacy, spiritual retirement, the worship of the saints, the feasts, the processions, the litanies, the holy water, all these are analogies between the Buddhists and ourselves. Now can it be said that these analogies are of Christian origin? We think so.

The only person referred to as "His Holiness" outside of the Pope is the Dalai Lama and other incarnated Tibetan lamas. They also have abbots and senior scholars in their monasteries. They carry and use

"malas" with 108 beads which resemble rosary beads and are used in the same way. One of the reasons that Catholicism could never make any headway in Tibet was because Tibetans already had everything that Catholics had to offer.

In old Tibet, the Tibetans did care about the environment, but not in the context that has been presented to the West. Ethnologist Rene de Nebesky—Wojkowitz from the University of Vienna, states, in his scholarly book, Oracles and Demons of Tibet, that ...

the Tibetan government had three weather makers in its services, who took turns in protecting the Potala Palace, the Lhasa Cathedral, and the palace in the garden of Norbu Linka – the summer residence of the Dalai Lama – against hail, mainly because hail falling on these places is regarded as an evil omen for the future of the land of snows.... One day heavy hail fell on the Tibetan capital, and within a short time the streets and gardens of Lhasa were covered with a high layer of ice. To the astonishment of the population not a single corn of hail fell within the areas of the Potala, the Cathedral, or the Norbu Linka, which had been protected by the skill of one of the weather makers, who had set up a great number of small protective cairns all around these three places.

On another occasion it occurred, however, that a heavy hail fall devastated the garden in Norbu Linka. The head of the Dalai Lama's household ordered the "weather maker on duty" to be called immediately, so that he might be punished on the spot for his negligence. But the magician declared that he was completely innocent. He applied all magical devices which were at his disposal, but in spite of it the hail fell, apparently, because the gods wanted to show their displeasure or perhaps because they intended to warn the Tibetan government by the sign before some approaching disaster. To prove how great his magical powers were the weather maker asked for a sieve to be brought, and under the chanting mantras he poured some water into a sieve. Not a single drop fell through the net of the sieve and only after the magician stop chanting did the water flow immediately through.

The author encountered obstacles in obtaining information for his book, with the chief obstacle being the secrecy with which Tibetans surround the cult of the protective deities, especially the ceremonies involving ritual dances, divination, black magic and weather making.

In December 1933, the 13th Dalai Lama was ill and his attendants called the Nechung Oracle to determine what should be done. The centuries old deity, Dorje Draken took possession of the Oracle who then acted as the deity's mouthpiece. The deity, Drakden, speaking through the Oracle said to give the Dalai Lama the medicine called, "17 heroes for subduing colds". The Oracle even made the concoction himself and gave it to a very reluctant Dalai Lama. Immediately, the Dalai Lama's condition deteriorated and he died shortly thereafter.

In 1951, the current Dalai Lama, at age 16, who had traveled to the southern part of Tibet after the Chinese invasion, had an important choice to make: to travel to the USA with 300 of his entourage which would be paid for by the U.S. despite U.S.'s knowledge of the Dalai Lamas great wealth in gold dust and silver, and with U.S. support, fight a guerrilla warfare or go back to Lhasa and try and work with the Chinese who had already invaded the NE part of Tibet. To make this important decision, his advisors suggested and the Dalai Lama agreed to utilizing the divine lottery:

Amid sacred prayers and incense, the lottery bowl was shaken before the goddess Lhama. When the dough ball that popped out was opened, it said that the Dalai Lama should return to Lhasa". The rest is history.

I previously provided an example of how the Tibetans viewed the environment. In Tibet, prior to 1959, the population, as well as the government, utilized divination, magic, oracles, and others of superstitious means to control weather, their enemies, birth, death, sickness, etc.. Professor Lopez notes, "...it is generally assumed that meditation is the primary form of Buddhist religious practice..." since it is "...certainly presented in this way by contemporary teachers in the West, but historically the practice of meditation has most often been the vocation of a minority of monks and nuns and was rarely practiced by laypeople." Most Tibetans were involved with mountain or river deities or other superstitious practices surrounding their daily life. They also chanted mantras, twirled prayer wheels or prostrated in front of various images or statues or circumambulated around stupas or mountains which were seen as mandalas.

The general population in old Tibet was backward, largely illiterate and mostly poor. Geoffrey Samuel, chair of the Religious Studies Department at Lancaster University in England, notes that their social structure was such that "... polyandrous marriage, in which two or more men are seen as co-husbands of the wife", was common.

There were no schools outside of the monasteries and the monasteries were made up mainly of males. Reportedly, up to 26 % of the males in Tibet were monks in monasteries compared to, for example, Thailand which only had 1-2% of their male population serving as monks in monasteries. Only a small percentage of the monks in these Tibetan monasteries were literate. Only 10% were involved in any serious studies. One major lama, the Shamarpa of the Kagyu tradition, in talking about the monks in the monasteries in old Tibet, stated on his website, "...people became monks because there was free food. There were also enlightened monks but they were not the majority, maybe one in a million. There was enough to eat (in the monasteries) but not much to do." Parents would send their children between the ages of 6-10 to the monasteries, partially, hoping that they would receive some education.

The large monasteries were also large land holders who owned serfs to work the land, pay the monastery taxes or if the monastery wanted to increase their monk population they would tax their serfs for one of their male children. Melvyn Goldstein, a Tibetan social anthropologist at Case University, writes, "With the exception of a handful of aristocrats, all laymen in Tibet were serfs, hereditarily linked by ascription to estates and lords." In addition, he notes, "Tibet was characterized by a form of institutionalized inequality that can be called pervasive serfdom." The Lhasa government even had an office of runaway serfs.

The Drepung monastery, with 10,000 monks, near Lhasa, was the largest land holder in the world. The monasteries focused on the quantity of monks and not on the quality of monks. You could only be expelled from a Tibetan monastery for murder or having heterosexual intercourse.

Professor Goldstein, a Tibetan social anthropologist at Case University, reported that 10-15% of the monks in the large monasteries near Lhasa were called *dobdos* or "fighting" monks. These monks would wear monk robes but would wear them differently and they would put black soot under their eyes to make them look fierce. They would serve as bodyguards for lamas and aristocrats and they participated in dangerous sports. They were known to fight over young boys they wanted as well as

kidnap young boys from the community. The presence of thousands of these worldly, aggressive, fighting monks traditionally afforded the monasteries around Lhasa with coercive leverage over the Lhasa government. The monasteries were so powerful and conservative that they blocked any buildup of an army or any progressive government changes. Twice the monasteries stopped the creation of a school to teach English, which they believed threatened their existence.

Tibet's normal means of punishment was mutilation until the 13th Dalai Lama stopped the practice. After he died, one of the most progressive Tibetans, Lungshear, who had been sent to and trained at Oxford as a physician was framed for something for which he was innocent mainly because he was promoting reform in the Lhasa government. He had his eyes gouged out as punishment.

It is reported that incarnated lamas can read your thoughts. They also are considered to have a higher level of consciousness than human beings. From their perspective, we're just humans caught in the cycle of samsara while these incarnated lamas are in human form but they are enlightened and are no longer in the cycle of samsara. They are simply here to help all "sentient beings". Thus, things that happen around them may seem unusual to us but perfectly understandable to a fully enlightened incarnated lama. The following are a few examples of these realizations:



The 16th Karmapa was an incarnated lama from the Kagyu tradition (red hat) who died in 1981. In 1974-5 he was traveling in Europe. He was giving a ceremony involving various rituals and since he was an animal lover, one of these rituals involved a cat. After the ritual was completed, it is reported and observed that the cat no longer hunted. The cat became a vegetarian. This one and many more "miracles" are reported by Ole Nydahl, a Danish lama, in his book, "Riding the Tiger". He is currently touring the world and has started over 450 centers throughout Europe and beyond, and he has written several more books.

Michelle Martin, translator of oral and written Tibetan, reported in her 2003 book "Music in the sky, the life, art and teachings of the 17th Karmapa", that a group searching for the 16th Karmapa's reincarnation discovered a boy on May 22, 1992 in Tibet who was believed to be the incarnation of the 16th Karmapa. She reports that on May 24, 1992, "...as they journeyed to Karlek monastery, in a vast blue sky, three smaller suns appeared around the sun itself. Everyone in the area saw them clearly, and some 50 miles away in Chamdo, people saw them as well." However, I checked the record myself for May 24, 1992 and there was no significant astrological event reported on that date.

David Germano, Professor of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies at the University of Virginia, describes a remarkable story about a famous incarnate lama, Khenpo Jikphun. He was born in 1933 to nomadic parents. It is reported that he was born with ease with his feet first and head unbent, placenta sack draped around his left shoulder like a monastic robe. He then sat up by his own power, opened his eyes, and then said the Buddhist of Wisdom's personal mantra, seven or eight times. These extraordinary events were detailed by his biographers from the eyewitness accounts of the midwife Drontshe and a man named Tsenseng, both of whom were still living in Amdo in 1990. During his teens he was recognized as the reincarnation of the famed Tertön Lerab Lingpa, who was an important teacher of the 13th Dalai Lama. In the 1990s he met with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala and they revived the tradition

of the Dalai Lama receiving instructions in the Nyingma tradition, just as the 13th Dalai Lama had received them from Terton Lerab Lingpa.

He did not flee Tibet in 1959 with the other refugees but remained in NE Tibet disguised as a Nomadic sheep herder. He was able to evade the Chinese during the Cultural Revolution in this disguise as well as his reportedly magical ability to become invisible.

One time, it is reported, he was identified by the Chinese but apparently his head immediately swelled to such an extent that the Chinese thought he had some kind of infectious disease and let him go. After the Chinese became more lenient towards Tibetan religion he set out to a remote hillside with a few followers and by word of mouth his following grew and he eventually established the Larung Gar Institute in 1987. He travelled to Europe and the U.S. in the 1990s and he met with the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. However, after his institute grew to over 10,000 monks and nuns, and despite the fact that he never was political, the Chinese officials became worried and destroyed a majority of the monks and nuns small single room homes built on the hillside in 2001 overlooking the institute in order to significantly reduce the number of monks and nuns. He died in 2004 in a Chinese military hospital due to ill health. His followers wanted him to lie in state to wait for others who wanted to be with him when he was cremated. The Chinese would not hear of it and scheduled to have him cremated the next day. Despite this, 50,000 attended his cremation.

There are two major controversies currently affecting Tibetan Buddhism throughout the world which highlights their continuing problems with protective deities and incarnated lamas.

The first one is the Shugden Controversy. As a result of a book published in 1975, the Yellow Book and on the advice of the Nechung oracle, the Dalai Lama started asking his followers to not pray to a 17th Century protective deity, Dorje Shugden. If they still wanted to continue with that practice he asked them not come to any of his teachings, because Dorje Shugden is harmful to him and to the Tibet nation. In 1996 and 1997 the Shugden group protested against the Dalai Lama's arrival in Britain and the U.S. In 1996 a high ranking lama close to the Dalai Lama was killed along with two students in Dharamsala, close to the Dalai Lama's residence. Six Shugden followers were allegedly responsible for this act but escaped to Tibet although some of them were recently apprehended in India. There have been numerous threats against the Dalai Lama, some of which have been attributed to the Shugdens.

Shugden is a regional deity of Tibetan origin. However, Shugden supposedly killed the 6th Panchen Lama in the 18th century because the Panchen Lama was involved in studying one of the Red Hat traditions. Shugden has reportedly been involved in killing others who have strayed away from the Yellow Hat tradition. The Dalai Lama doesn't want anything to do with Dorje Shugden, partially, because the Dalai Lama is involved with and teaches all of the traditions, Yellow and Red Hat.



The primary group behind the worship of the protective deity, Dorje Shugden, is the New Kadampa Tradition, headed by Geshe Kelsang Gyatso located in England. This group, the New Kadampa Tradition, is also a reformist group and Gyatso insists that you should only

read his writings and he discourages even marking in his books. One of the reasons Shugden is so important to Gyatso is because Dorje Shugden is what they call a mundane protective spirit deity. He is considered to have human emotions such as jealousy and anger and he is jealous for the Yellow Hat tradition and he will take out his anger on those who compromise its teachings. But, he protects those who study Gyatso's teachings.

Geshe Gyatso is considered to be a fully realized and enlightened being and referred to by his followers as the third Buddha. The Dalai Lama has called the New Kadampa Tradition a cult involved in spirit worship and they are closed to the other traditions. On his website, the Dalai Lama quotes the Fifth Dalai Lama from the 17th century, who states, "Shugden's "...harmful activities only intensified and recently many lay and ordained people have been afflicted with diseases and a few monks have died. "

. In a 1997 Newsweek article, Tony Clifton interviewed Geshe Gyatso, who offered a peace plan to the Dalai Lama. In the plan, Gyatso would have one of his mediums or Oracles contact the 17th century protective deity, Dorje Shugden, and the deity would take possession of the medium, and the medium would become his mouthpiece in order for the Dalai Lama to sit down and speak directly with the 17th century, Dorje Shugden. Gyatso states in the interview, "...the Dalai Lama could speak 'face to face' with Dorje Shugden himself through one of the sect's 'three or four' mediums." Gyatso further stated that "I have spoken to Dorje Shugden many times this way and we could easily arrange for him to talk to the Dalai Lama." Apparently, the Dalai Lama never took him up on his offer.

the Dalai Lama has his own century old protective Deity, Dorje Drakden, with whom he speaks several times a year through the Nechung Monastery's medium or Oracle. Dorje Drakden was the protective deity who told the Dalai Lama to take flight from Tibet in 1959 and the Dalai Lama has considerable confidence in his advice.

The Chinese have become involved in the controversy and this year resurrected a statue of Shugden at Ganden Monastery in Tibet which raised widespread concern among the Dalai Lama faithful in India. The Chinese apparently only approve monasteries in Tibet which worship Shugden because of their opposition to the Dalai Lama.

The second controversy involves the reincarnation of the 16th Karmapa. As I noted, the 16th Karmapa died in 1981.



The **first** 17th Karmapa was discovered and recognized as the 17th Karmapa in 1992 by Situ Rinpoche, in Tibet. The Chinese recognized him as the 17th Karmapa shortly thereafter and, subsequently, after a discussion with Situ Rinpoche, the Dalai Lama recognized him as the 17th Karmapa as well. Situ Rinpoche was one of 4 "heart sons" of the 16th Karmapa and apparently the 16th Karmapa had given him an amulet which Situ wore around his neck. In 1989, Situ apparently took the amulet apart and found a "**prediction letter**" from the 16th Karmapa which described where his incarnation could be found. The "prediction letter" described in some detail where his incarnation would be found to include the names of the parents in the letter. However, Situ did not reveal his new found "prediction letter" until 1992 when he recognized the 17th Karmapa. Shamar Rinpoche was one of the 4 "heart sons" and had been kept out of

the loop by Situ Rinpoche about the "prediction letter". Shamar Rinpoche asked for a forensic test of the prediction letter but Situ refused and compared asking for a forensic test of the "prediction letter" the same as asking for a forensic test of the Bodhi tree to see if Buddha was really enlightened under the tree.

In January 2000 Situ's 17th Karmapa apparently escaped from Tibet under Chinese control into India through the mountainous regions of Tibet. However, the Indians have kept a close eye on him and restricted his travels because of his past association with the Chinese.

The Rumtek Monastery, in Sikkim (an area between Bhutan and Nepal), was the seat of the 16th Karmapa and was in the hands of monks unfriendly to Situ and his Karmapa selection. In 1993, Situ installed his own monks in the Rumtek Monastery by throwing out the monks loyal to Shamar Rinpoche (at least they believed that Situ's prediction letter was not written by the 16th Karmapa), through apparently violent means, although the story is in dispute. What is not in dispute is the legal wrangling which has been going on for years in the Indian courts. The courts in 2005 awarded the Rumtek Monastery to Shamar Rinpoche's "group" but the monks in the monastery who are loyal to Situ have refused to leave and some legal motions have been filed and that situation should be settled sometime in the near future.



In the meantime, Shamar Rinpoche recognized a different 17th Karmapa in 1994. Also, Lama Ole Nydahl, a Danish lama mentioned earlier with 450+ groups and centers in Europe and throughout the world, are loyal to Shamar and Lama Nydahl threw his weight behind Shamar Rinpoche's Karmapa selection. Shamar continues to dispute the prediction letter and on the

	as written by H. H. the 16th Karmapa	as written by Situ Rinpoche	as written in "the" letter
• the syllable "phyogs"			
• two examples of the vocal "e"			
• the syllable "drub"			

website karmapa-issue.org there is a comparison of the 16th Karmapa's handwriting compared to the prediction letter and a comparison of the prediction letter and Situ's handwriting as noted below:

Both of the "17th Karmapas" have been touring wherever possible throughout the world so this controversy will not be concluded any time soon.

In conclusion, because of the isolation of Tibet before 1959, some Tibetan and Western authors have characterized old Tibet in idealistic terms to the West. Certainly some of this is understandable with the Chinese attempting to justify their incursions into Tibet with a very negative description of old Tibet. However, as Professor Lopez has noted, it is robbing Tibetans of their history by creating this Shangri-la idea of what went on in Tibet before 1959. Honesty would be more helpful to them over time. In addition, Tibetans continue similar practices such as divination, various rituals, incarnations and use of Oracles since they left Tibet. You can take the Tibetan out of Tibet but you can't take Tibet out of the Tibetan. On the other hand, Tibetan lamas are prospering in the West and touring year around. Their influence is seen most everywhere in the U.S.

All of this raises questions about the effectiveness of the Dalai Lama in his pursuit of an "independent zone" or peace for Tibetans in Tibet. Also, are Western governments "using" the Dalai Lama in their efforts to deal with China. While the Dalai Lama has gained considerable recognition throughout the world and the Tibetan people look to him as their spiritual and government-in-exile leader it has not been very productive for them. In 1987 (Dalai Lama's presence in U.S. congress) and 1989 (Nobel Peace Prize) there were uprisings in Tibet as a result of both of these events which were crushed by the Chinese and additional restrictions were placed on the Tibetans. In addition, the Chinese government imported thousands more Chinese into Tibet which have left the Tibetans as second hand citizens.