

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF THREE TIBETAN LAMAS  
AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN SIKKIM

SAKYA TRICHEN  
(SA SKYA<sup>1</sup> GONG MA SGROL MA PHO BRANG)

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The 41<sup>st</sup> throneholder of Sa skya order of Mahāyāna Buddhism (*sa skya khri chen*), Ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen dpal 'bar phrin las bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po of sGrol ma pho brang,<sup>2</sup> is the supreme head of

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<sup>1</sup> The Sa skya tradition began in the late eleventh century. Since the earth (*sa*) at the site where Sa skya monastery was established, near dBon po mountain, was grey (*skya*) in color, the new tradition became known as the 'Sa skya pa'. There are three subdivisions within the Sa skya tradition: Sa skya pa, Ngor pa, presently led by H.E. Ngor Klu lding mKhan chen 'Jam dbyangs bstan pa'i nyi ma, and Tshar pa, presently led by H.E. bCo brgyad Khri chen Rin po che. Sa skya Khri chen is the head of the Sa skya pa subdivision, as well as the general leader of the Sa skya pas. In India and Nepal, Sakya College (Dehra Dun, state of Uttarkhand), Dzongsar Institute (Bir, state of Himachal Pradesh), Ngor ma dgon dpal ewam chos ldan (Manduwala, Dehra Dun, state of Uttarkhand), Tshar pa (Kathmandu, Nepal), and many other new institutions were built in order to preserve the lineage in the present day. The main teaching and practice of the Sa skya pas is the Path and Its Fruits (*lam 'bras*), which is based on the *Hevajra Tantra* and which is considered to be the essence of the sūtra and tantra paths.

<sup>2</sup> Since the establishment of Sa skya monastery in Tibet by 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po in 1073 C.E., there have been 41 *Khri 'dzin*, or throneholders, of Sa skya up to sGrol ma pho brang. The first was dKon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102), then his son Kun dga' snying po (1092-1158), then Kun dga' 'bar , bSod nams rtse mo (1142-1182), rJe btsun Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1147-1216), dPal chen 'Od po (1150-1203), Sa skya Paṇḍita (1181-1251), Zangs tsha bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1184-1239), 'Gro mgon chos rgyal 'Phags pa (1235-1280), 'Gro mgon Phyang na (1239-1267), Dharmapālarakṣita (1268-1287), Ratnabhadrā, sLob dpon Ye shes 'byung gnas (1238-1274), bZang po dpal (1262-1324), and dPal Kun dga' blo gros (1299-1327).

Kun dga' blo gros created four *la brang* for his younger brothers: gZhi thog bla brang, Bla brang rin chen sgang, lHa khang bla brang, and Dus mchod bla brang.

(1) In *gZhi thog bla brang*, there were many accomplished masters, from mKhas btsun Nam mkha' legs pa (1305-1343) up to bDag chen Blo gros dbang phyug.

(2) In *Bla brang rin chen sgang*, the lineage was: Kun dga' nyi ma, 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan (1310-1344), and Bla ma bSod nams rgyal mtshan (1312-1375). Then 'Jam dbyangs Don yod rgyal mtshan's son Bla chen Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1310-1358), his son 'Jam dbyangs Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan (-1472), and his sons rGya gar pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1436-1494) and bDag chen Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1436-1486). From among these, in particular, Bla ma bSod nams rgyal mtshan became a great master with many disciples, and his teaching lineage continues to the present day among the Sa skya orders.

(3) In *lHa khang bla brang*, there were many accomplished masters, from the two brothers Ngag dbang Kun dga' legs pa'i 'byung gnas (1308-1330?) and Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1310-1368) up to Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1332-1359) and Kun dga' legs.

(4) *Dus mchod bla brang* is the root of all of the present-day Sa skya lineages. It began with bZang po dpal (1261-1323?), then his three sons bDag chen Kun dga' legs 'byung (1308-1336), etc., Kun dga' legs 'byung's son Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1336-1376), his son rNam sras rgyal mtshan (1360-1408), his son Nam mkha' legs pa, his son Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan, his son Nam mkha' bkra shis, his four sons 'Jam dbyangs Kun dga' bsod nams, Ngag gi dbang phyug, 'Jam dpal grags pa, and Sangs rgyas tshe brtan, and Sangs rgyas tshe brtan's two sons bDag chen Kun dga' bsam 'grub (1515-1572) and Kun dga' rin chen (1517-1584). bDag chen Kun dga' bsam 'grub stayed at rTse gdong (established in 1479 by Nam mkha' bkra shis), and from Kun dga' bsam 'grub to Ngag dbang Nor bu rgyan pa, the lineage is called *rTse gdong gi gdung brgyud*. From Kun dga' rin chen, the lineage continues with his two sons 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams dbang po (1559-) and Grags pa blo gros (1563-1617), Grags pa blo gros's son 'Jam mgon A mes Kun dga' bsod nams (1571-1659), his son 'Jam dbyangs bSod nams dbang phyug, his son Ngag dbang Kun dga' bkra shis (1656-), his son 'Jam mgon bSod nams rin chen (1705-), his two sons Ngag dbang Kun dga' blo gros (1729-), etc., Ngag dbang Kun dga' blo gros's two sons 'Jam mgon dBang sdud snying po and Kun dga' phan bde rgya mtsho, 'Jam mgon dBang sdud snying po's sons Khri chen Padma bdud 'dul dbang phyug (aka Kun dga' bkra shis), Ngag dbang Kun dga' rin chen, 'Jam mgon Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, and Mgon po dNgos grub dpal 'bar.

At this time, *Dus mchod bla brang* divided into two *pho brang*: *sGrol ma pho brang* and *Phun tshogs pho brang*. (a) *sGrol ma pho brang* was established by Khri chen bKra shis rin chen, the son of Khri chen Padma bdud 'dul dbang phyug. bKra shis rin chen was succeeded by his sons Kun dga' snying po and gSang bdag dpal chen 'od po, then the eldest of the four sons of Kun dga' snying po, Drag shul phrin las rin chen, his two sons Ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen and Kun dga' stan pa'i rgyal mtshan, and Ngag dbang kun dga' rin chen's son Ngag dbang kun dga' theg chen dpal 'bar phrin las dbang gi rgyal po (the present throneholder of the Sa skya sGrol ma pho brang). (b) *Phun tshogs pho brang* originated with Ngag dbang Kun dga' rin chen, who was succeeded by his son 'Jam mgon rDo rje rin chen, his sons Khri chen Kun dga' bsod nams and dPal ldan phyogs kyi glang po, Kun dga' bsod nams's son 'Dzam gling che rgu dbang sdud, his sons Khri chen Ngag dbang mThu stobs dbang phyug

the Sa skya pa, which is considered to have descended from three unbroken lineages: the 'sky light heaven' (*gnam lha*) lineage,<sup>3</sup> the 'Khon clan lineage,<sup>4</sup> and the Sa skya lineage,<sup>5</sup> collectively known as

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and Thub bstan mKhas grub rgya mtsho, and their son 'Jigs bral ngag dbang Kun dga' bsod nams (the present throneholder of Sa skya Phun tshogs pho brang).

<sup>3</sup> There are three sky gods: sPyi ring, g.Yu ring, and dBu se, emanations of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī who appeared in the region of upper mNga' ris in far western Tibet. g.Yu ring, the second one, has seven sons known as the *Ma sangs spun bdun*. Among these, the youngest, Ma sangs spyi rje, had a son named Thog tsha dpa' bo stag. His son was Klu tsha stag po 'od can. They all take forms that transcend the human form and live in the realm of space. All of them, up to Klu tsha stag po 'od can's son g.Ya' spang skyes, are called 'the divine luminosity lineage' (*'od gsal lha'i gdung brgyud*) of the Sa skya tradition.

<sup>4</sup> g.Ya' spang skyes of the 'sky-god lineage' subdued the demon called sKya rengs khrag med and took the demon's wife, g.Ya' 'brug si li ma, for his own wife. A son called 'Khon Bar skyes (the first 'Khon lineage holder) was born, and because he born out of a dispute (*'khon*) with a demon, or a mix between these two separate forms, since then he and his descendants have been called the 'Khon lineage. 'Khon Bar skyes's son was called dKon pa rje gung stag (the second 'Khon lineage holder) or 'Khon dPal po che. Later, 'Khon dPal po che was the interior minister of Chos rgyal Khri srong lde'u btsan. His son was 'Khon Klu dbang srung, who was one of the first seven Tibetan ordained monks, ordained by mKhan chen Bo dhi sa twa, and became a disciple of Guru Padmasambhava. His younger brother was the tantric master named rDo rje rin chen (the third 'Khon lineage holder). His son was Shes rab yon tan (the fourth 'Khon lineage holder). His son was Yon tan 'byung gnas (the fifth 'Khon lineage holder). His son was Tshul khri ms rgyal po (the sixth 'Khon lineage holder). His son was rDo rje gTsug tor (the seventh 'Khon lineage holder). His son was dGe skyabs (the eighth 'Khon lineage holder). His son was dGe mthong (the ninth 'Khon lineage holder). His son was Bal po (the tenth 'Khon lineage holder). His son was Shā kya blo gros (the eleventh 'Khon lineage holder). His sons were 'Khon rog Shes rab tshul khri ms and 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po (the twelfth 'Khon lineage holder). From 'Khon Bar skyes up to 'Khon rog Shes rab tshul khri ms, they are known as the 'Khon lineage of the Sa skya tradition, and up to Shes rab tshul khri ms they formed an unbroken chain of tantric masters who practiced the rNying ma tradition.

<sup>4</sup> 'Khon dKon mchog rgyal po became disillusioned with the rNying ma tantras and was advised by his elder brother, 'Khon rog Shes rab tshul khri ms, to study the new tantras with 'Brog mi lo tsā ba. Later he studied with many other masters, including 'Gos Khug pa, Pañdita Shes rab gsang ba, Mal lo tsā ba, Ba ri lo tsā ba, Bla ma sGyi chu ba, Pu hrangs lo tsā ba, the two gNam kha'u pa brothers, sKyur ra a skyabs, etc. Later, in 1073 C.E., he founded the first monastery of the new tantra at Sa skya in the southern part of Central Tibet. When the Sa skya pas converted to new tantra, the only rNying ma tantras they continued to practice were the *Yang dag* (*Vishudha*) and *rDo rje phur pa* (*Vajrakīlāya*) tantras. Since then, the *gnam lha* lineage and the 'Khon family dynasty, along with its religious system and followers, came to be known as Sa skya pa.

the ‘three supreme names’ (*mtshan mchog gsum ldan*). He was born, accompanied by many miraculous signs, on the first day of the eighth month of the Female Wood Cock year of the 16<sup>th</sup> 60-year cycle (7 September 1945), son of the father Kun dga’ rin chen, the fifth incarnation of both the sGrol ma pho brang and the Phun tshogs pho brang, and the mother bSod nams sgrol dkar, from a high-ranking family named Bon shod, at rTse gdong, province of gTsang, Tibet. Soon after his birth, he was given the long-life empowerment by his father, along with the name *Ngag dbang kun dga’ theg chen dpal ’bar phrin las bsam ’phel dbang gi rgyal po*.

When he reached the age of two, he was taken to the great Sa skya monastery. At the age of four, his father gave him initiations in the Vajrakīlāya of the ’Khon tradition (*’khon lugs rdo rje phur pa*), Hayagrīva, Vajrapāṇi, the longevity sādhana, Vaiśravaṇa, and the oath of Tsi’u dmar, the *yakṣa* spirit.

In 1950, when he was five years old, Lama Nga blo Rin po che first taught him the Tibetan alphabet, and the senior tutor, Kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, also taught him alphabet, as well as the reading of the *Gang blo ma*, a praise of Mañjuśrī, etc.

In 1952, when he reached the age of seven, a brief enthronement ceremony was held, and then in 1959, when he was 14, he was enthroned officially, with a grand ceremony, as the religious and secular leader of the Sa skya pa tradition.

Among his teachers were:

The Great Abbot of Ngor e wam chos ldan monastery, rDo rje  
 ’chang Ngag dbang blo gros zhan phan snying po  
 The Great rDo rje ’chang Khang gsar zhabs drung  
 Phan bde mkhan Rin po che  
 The Tutor and Great Abbot, ’Jam dpal bzang po  
 Grub dbang ri rked Bya bral Rin po che  
 The 2<sup>nd</sup> rDzong sar mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros  
 The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, bsTan ’dzin rgya mtsho  
 The Great rDo rje ’chang sKyabs rje bco brgyad khri chen  
 mKhan po Rin chen  
 mKhan po A pad Rin po che  
 Grang che mkhan Rin po che  
 Bya bral Byang chub rdo rje Rin po che

From these and many other scholars and accomplished masters, he received the initiations, transmissions, and instructions of the following teachings: the Sa skya pa teachings, including the Path and Its Fruits (*lam 'bras*), the heart of the Sa skya teachings which runs into 31 volumes, the Hevajra (*kye rdo rje*) teachings, the *Compendium of Sādhanas* (*sgrub thabs kun btus*), the *Compendium of Tantras* (*rgyud sde kun btus*), the textual transmissions of the *Collected Works of Ngor chen dKon mchog lhun grub*, etc.

He also received teachings of other traditions: the Kālacakra (*dus kyi 'khor lo*), the initiations of Avalokiteśvara (*'phags pa thugs rje chen po'i dbang chen*), the *Klong chen snying thig* of the rNying ma tradition (*rnying lugs klong chen snying thig*), the oral transmissions of the phur pa (*snyan brgyud phur pa*), the *Bar chad lam sel* of the Mind Sādhana (*thugs sgrub bar chad lam sel*), and the treasure teachings of A pang gter ston Phrin las gling pa.

In addition, he studied many sūtra teachings, including the middle way (*dbu ma*), logic and epistemology (*tshad ma*), metaphysics (*mdzod*), perfection of wisdom (*phar phyin*), grammar (*sum rtag*), spelling (*dag yig*), and modern English from sKu ngo rgya chos lags and Jam dkyil sras dbang phyug tshe ring. Along with these teachings and studies, he did many meditation practices on the peaceful and wrathful deities (*bla ma zhi khro*), the Vajrapāṇi taming practices (*phyag rdor 'byung po 'dul byed*), the 10 wrathful Gur gyi mgon po dharma protectors (*gur mgon khro bcu*), the Vajrakīlāya based on the 'Khon tradition, etc. Through these meditation practices, he acquired great knowledge and became a master of both teachings and realisations.

From the time he was age 10, in 1955, he gave empowerments and transmissions of the profound Sa skya pa teachings, including the Vajrakīlāya based on the 'Khon tradition, the Path and Its Fruits, the *Compendium of Sādhanas*, etc., bringing to maturity many fortunate beings.

In November of 1956, he met and gave a reception and audience to H.H. the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, who had been invited by the Mahabodhi Society of India on the occasion of the 2500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buddha's *parinirvāna*, and was passing through Gzhis ka rtse on his way to India. After that, Sa skya gong ma travelled to India via Nathula, Sikkim, for the purpose of paying religious visits to major Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India. Following the pilgrimage, he returned by way of Sikkim, where he had an audience with the Dalai

Lama, as well as with rDzong sar mkhyen brtse Rin po che, who was also in Sikkim. Then, in 1957, he returned to Tibet via Nathula.

Then, in 1959, because of the overall dangerous situation in Tibet, he left his monastic seat on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of the second month of the lunar calendar, reaching Kha'u brag rdzong on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Then, at dawn, he travelled secretly through Gzu 'u pass, reaching North Sikkim by way of Lachen after a few days, where he had to remain in exile. While he was staying at Lachen, he heard that Rdzong sar mkhyen rtse Rin po che's health was failing, and immediately went to Gangtok, where he met with Rin po che and performed prayers for his health. Although he prayed for Rin po che's long life in order to benefit the teachings and sentient beings in this degenerate age, because of the low merit of sentient beings, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the lunar calendar, Rin po che was absorbed into the ultimate sphere. Sa skya gong ma performed funeral feast offerings and other necessary rituals. During his one-month stay in North Sikkim, he learned English for the first time from Jo sKal bzang la chen pa. Thus, his first year of exile was spent in Sikkim. In July of 1960, he once again came to Sikkim for the one-year anniversary offering ceremony for rDzong sar mkhyen rtse, where he performed extensive feast offerings along with other prayers and dedications.

Before discussing the many contributions he made to Sikkim since the time he went into exile, I would like first to discuss briefly the well-known earlier historical ties between Sikkim and the Sa skya pas. According to the Sa skya pa histories and descent chronicles, in 1244, when Sa skya Paṇḍita went to Mongolia at the invitation of the Mongol king Ogodai, he was accompanied by his two nephews, Chos rgyal 'Phags pa and 'Gro mgon Phyag na. Sa skya Paṇḍita appointed Shākya Bzang po as the chief administrator of Sa skya during their absence, and he administered for 27 years. During that time, in 1265, 'Gro mgon 'Phags pa returned from Mongolia to Tibet and expressed a desire to build a great temple, at which time Sa skya Bzang po began construction of the temple.

Also, according to a history of Sikkim, in 1268, the Crown Prince of the 25<sup>th</sup> King of Khams Mi nyag in eastern Tibet came to the monastic seat of Sa skya in upper gTsang in southern Tibet, and because no one else was able to raise the four great pillars of the Sa

skya temple,<sup>6</sup> the Prince himself raised them single-handedly. Because he was said to have had the strength of 100,000 men, he was given the name *Gyad 'bum bsags* ('the one who gathers the strength of 100,000'). He stayed for a short time at Sa skya, and married a daughter of the Sa skya family, Jo mo gu ru Shes rab sgrol ma.<sup>7</sup> In 1269, Gyad 'bum bsags and his family left Sa skya and travelled to the area north of Gam pa rdzong, where he built a monastery called Pakshi and established a monastic community. The younger prince of the Mi nyag king (Gyad 'bum bsags' younger brother) was ordained and appointed head lama of the monastery. Then, Gyad 'bum bsags proceeded to Phag ri rdzong, where he remained and founded another monastery, called bSam grub lha khang. It was there that Gyad 'bum bsags' father, the Mi nyag king, passed away.

Gyad 'bum bsags then travelled from Phag ri through Gro mo khang chung and Chu mo gshongs to Chu 'bi, where he built a house and settled for close to three years, but he remained without issue. In accordance with prophecies by a god and a living master, he decided to go to Sikkim with about 17 attendants and many excellent offering materials, travelling by way of bTso la and Sa brtag la to Seng lding long btsugs, and at Rin tsom la, he met for the first time the powerful and realised yogi, The kong teg, chief of the Lepcha tribals, the original people of this land, and his wife Nyu kong ngal. He offered them a variety of priceless rare articles and, as per the prophecies, prayed to be blessed with children. Soon after they returned to Chu 'bi, Gyad 'bum bsags' wife, Sa skya'i rje btsun lha lcam Jo mo Gu ru shes rab sgrol ma, became pregnant, and they travelled to Sikkim to the cave of La rgyab, where she gave birth to a son, who was given the name *Brag btsan dar pa*. The father, Gyad 'bum bsags, went to Ring tsom and performed a grand thanksgiving ceremony in remembrance of the grace

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<sup>6</sup> The 'Four Great Divine Pillars of Sa skya Temple' (*sa skya'i lha khang chen mo'i sprul pa'i ka chen bzhi*) are: (1) dKar po 'dzum legs from Kong po, (2) Ser po 'dzum legs from Lu chu, (3) dMar po phrag mdzod from Gar yul, and (4) Nag po khun shes from La dwags.

<sup>7</sup> There is no indication in the literature who the actual father and mother of Shes rab sgrol ma were. All of the sources say only 'daughter of the Sa skya family'. Zangs tsha bSod nams rgyal mtshan had five wives and eight children, including 'Phags pa and Phyag na, the only ones of whom we know the names. It is possible that one of Shes rab sgrol ma's parents was one of bSod nams rgyal mtshan's eight children. It is clear that Chos rgyal 'Phags and 'Gro mgon Phyag na were not the father, since the former was an ordained monk and the latter was born in 1239, which would make him too young to be her father. We leave this question to future researchers.

of the protector gods and local deities of Sikkim as well as the chief and wife of the Lepchas.

At the place in this land called Ga bhi long btsugs, when the two tribes—the Bhutias, from Tibet, and the Lepchas, the original inhabitants—swore an oath of mutual aid, the son Brag btsan dar pa took as witnesses his ancestors' patron gods and the powerful local deities of this land, and the chief of the Lepchas, The kong teg, took as witnesses all of the Lepcha gods. In this way, the lineage of Gyad 'bum bsags gradually became well established in Sikkim, and later, during the seventeenth century, the seventh-generation descendant of Gyad 'bum bsags, Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, was enthroned as the first Chos rgyal of this land by the three brother yogis, the patron saints of Sikkim, who had come from Tibet.

Because past relations with Sikkim had been good, at the time Sa skya Khri chen arrived as an exile, people very happily welcomed him to Sikkim. His Holiness, for the secular and religious revival of Tibet, established the Sa skya settlement residence for laypeople and monastics and the mother Sa skya monastery, Thub bstan rnam rgyal gling, near the place called Ponda in the state of Himachal Pradesh. On 16 March 1964, in Rajpur, Dehra Dun, state of Uttar Pradesh (presently in the new state of Uttarkhand, which was separated from Uttar Pradesh), he established the exile monastic seat, the religious and political foundation of the Sa skya pa order. From the time he took it as his permanent residence, in order to benefit the Dharma and all sentient beings, His Holiness visited Sikkim four times, as follows:

In response to the long-standing request by the Sa ngor chos tshogs Centre<sup>8</sup> and the lay and monastic disciples of Gangtok, at the age of 42, in the Female Fire Hare year (1987), the first year of the 17<sup>th</sup> 60-year cycle, he arrived in Gangtok with his family and attendants, and performed the inaugural and consecration ceremonies for the Sa ngor chos tshogs Centre, the first and only monastery in Sikkim belonging to the Sa skya pa order, which had been established at his request on a hilltop in Rongyek, about three kilometres from the state capital. The

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<sup>8</sup> The Centre was first established by H.E. Klu sding mkhan Rin po che and the late mKhan po Blo gros bzang po in 1961, under the guidance of H.H. Sa skya Khri chen Rin po che, as a relief camp for the Sa skya pa monks and Tibetan refugees fleeing Tibet at the time of the Chinese occupation. Until 1976, the Centre was housed in a private residence provided by its founder, the late Kazi bsTan po rnam rgyal 'bar phung pa of Khendzong House in Gangtok. The construction for the Centre in Rongyek was begun in 1975.



site had been donated by the 12th Chos rgyal of Sikkim in 1972 in the name of Rin po che himself, and at that same time, the Chos rgyal had made an insistent appeal for him to come to Sikkim. During his stay at the Centre, he gave extraordinary instructions and transmissions to the monks, and bestowed the Hayagrīva, Vajrapāṇi, Garuḍa, and long-life initiations on the general public. He made offerings in front of the reliquary stūpa of mKhyen brtse rDo rje 'chang at the Royal Palace, had an audience with dBang phyug rnam rgyal, the 13th Chos rgyal of Sikkim, and gave the White Tārā long-life and Avalokiteśvara initiations to the general public. At the request of the Sikkim Buddhist Duchon Organisation, he delivered teachings in English on the Festival of the Buddha's Descent from Heaven to devotees at Paljor Stadium. Then, he travelled to West Sikkim with his family and visited a number of important religious sites, including Padma yangs rtse, the premier monastery of Sikkim, Yug sam nor bu sgang, where modern Sikkimese history began, mKha' spyod dpal ri, Brag dkar bKra shis sdings, the center of this hidden land, mKha' 'gro gsang phug, the southern cave of the four supreme caves of the four cardinal directions, etc., where he performed site-purification ablutions, hill ablutions, and consecrations, and gave advice and teachings to the general public. Along the way, he visited the Bon po zhu ri zhing g.yung drung kun grags gling monastery at Ravangla and the Tibetan settlement Kunphenling in South Sikkim. He blessed the main temples at Rum btegs monastery in East Sikkim and Ra dbang la monastery (Tibetan settlement) in South Sikkim.

On 20 May 1992, while he was visiting Rum btegs bshad sgrub chos 'khor gling monastery, the exile monastic seat of the 16<sup>th</sup> Rgyal dbang Karma pa, the two heart-disciples of the Karma pa, H.E. Tai situ Rin po che and H.E. G shi rgyal tshab Rin po che, at the request of the monastic committee, opened the official secret command-seal left by the 16<sup>th</sup> Karma pa containing directions for finding the 17<sup>th</sup> reincarnation, which they offered to Khri chen Rin po che for his viewing, at which time he read it and made prayers for a genuine reincarnation.

In 1994, Rin po che visited Sikkim, and while he was staying in Gangtok for one month, he gave reading transmissions for the six-syllable Avalokiteśvara mantra and the transfer of consciousness practice (*'pho ba*), and the initiations of Hayagrīva, Vajrapāṇi, and Garuḍa, along with a general public audience at Sa ngor chos tshogs Centre. Besides these, he gave a profound and extensive talk on the

need, first of all, to learn well the teachings of the Buddha individually, and then to put them into practice, along with the need to preserve the culture and language of the Himalayas, which are closely connected with the Buddhadharma. During his stay at Gangtok, since Lachen and Lachung have for so many years enjoyed a special relationship with Sa skya, the people of these two valleys in North Sikkim requested that he visit. On the way, at Mangan, the district headquarters of North Sikkim, he was given a grand reception by the local district government officials. During his one-night stay, he held an audience with the general public and gave teachings. Then he visited the monasteries of La chen, La chung, Thang mo chen, bTsun thang, Pho gdang, etc., where he gave teachings, made offerings, and held audiences with, and performed rites for the benefit of, the local people. During his stay in Sikkim, he met with high-ranking officers of the state government. Wherever Sa skya khri chen Rin po che went, whatever offerings he received from monasteries, he returned to the monasteries, along with extra financial support. By these means, he supported the Buddhadharma with great kindness.

In December of 1998, at the time His Holiness travelled to Sikkim, he performed the master offering ritual, or *gurupūjā*, at the relic stūpa of 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse Chos kyi blo gros at the Royal Palace in Gangtok, and gave the reading transmission for the transfer of consciousness practice to the devotees of the Sa skya Tshe bcu Association at Chandmari.

On 1 January 1999, His Holiness visited the Thonmi Sambhota School for Tibetan, which is under the Education Department of the exile Tibetan government, on his way to Lingdum near Gangtok, where he performed the inauguration and consecration ceremonies for dPal kar ma'i zur mang bshad sgrub chos 'khor gling, the new monastery built by H.E. Zur mang Gar dbang Rin po che, and gave the initiation of Amitāyus to the monastics and the general public of the area.

At the Sa Ngor chos tshogs Centre, he gave teachings in both English and Tibetan on the Sa skya teaching called 'the Instructions on Four Non-attachments', as well as the Hayagrīva, Vajrapāṇi, and Garuḍa initiations to the monks of the monastery and the general public who were in attendance. During his stay at the Centre, his eldest son, Ratna badzra Rin po che, of the 'Khon family, blessed the building site of the meditation centre of Sa ngor chos tshogs monastery, and gave it the name *brTse chen bsam gtan gling*, and during the anniversary ceremony of 'Gro mgon chos rgyal 'Phag pa, he performed the master

offering ritual, or *gurupūjā*, and the guardian deities offering. As per the request of the central committee of mTshur phu bla brang of Rum btegs monastery, and H.E. Go shri rgyal tshab Rin po che of dPal chen chos 'khor gling monastery at Ra langs in South Sikkim, he gave the initiation of the Vajrakīlāya of the 'Khon tradition, which is the extraordinary practice of the Sa skya pa order. His Holiness spoke to the Tibetan people of Gangtok about the importance of this land, which was blessed by Guru Rinpoche, and gave them profound and extensive instructions to follow the teachings and wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He met and held free discussions about Buddhism with high-ranking officials of the state government. During this visit, he was accompanied by his two lineage-holder sons and his consort.

Thus, by visiting this hidden land of Guru Rinpoche, he bestowed happiness and benefit on all of the fortunate beings of this land. In every direction of this world, by the unlimited activities of the three wheels—turning the wheel of the profound and extensive Dharma, etc.—and by the incomparable activities of upholding, preserving, and spreading the Buddha's doctrine in general, and the precious Sa skya pa doctrine in particular, he abides as the essence of the three long-life gods for the most excellent benefit of all beings.

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