

**The Sixth Shamarpa Chökyi Wangchuk:
A Critical Analysis of His Life, Biography, and Portrayal**



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Abstract

This thesis examines the life of Chökyi Wangchuk, the Sixth Shamarpa (zhwa mar pa chos kyi dbang phyug, 1584–1630). A prominent monk-scholar and prolific writer of his era, he exerted considerable influence in the religious, social, and possibly also in the political milieu of Tibet. Drawing on his own works, and those of his disciples and later scholars, this study is the first thorough analysis solely devoted to the life of Chökyi Wangchuk. The thesis is divided into three chapters. The first provides a detailed biography, primarily based on the biography written by Belo Tsewang Künkhyap ('be lo tshe dbang kun khyab, 1718–ca.1790). The second chapter offers a rigorous critique of Belo's account with three aspects. The third chapter explores additional facets of the Sixth Shamarpa's life by addressing the depiction of Chökyi Wangchuk's life—by his prominent contemporaries, and by subsequent and modern scholars—followed by three pivotal inquiries pertaining to the life of the subject. This thesis offers a comprehensive and nuanced interpretation of the personality and lasting impact of Chökyi Wangchuk within the context of Tibet and its surrounding regions, specifically during the early 17th century.

Résumé

Cette thèse se penche sur la vie de Chökyi Wangchuk, le sixième Shamarpa (zhwa mar pa chos kyi dbang phyug, 1584–1630). Moine-érudit et écrivain prolifique de son époque, il a exercé une influence considérable dans les milieux religieux, sociaux et peut-être politiques. En s'appuyant sur les œuvres rédigées par lui-même, ses disciples, ainsi que sur celles de savants subséquents, cette étude présente la première analyse consacrée uniquement à la vie de Chökyi Wangchuk. Le document est divisé en trois chapitres, le premier fournissant une biographie détaillée principalement basée sur les écrits du biographe Belo Tsewang Künkhyap ('be lo tshe dbang kun khyab, 1718–ca.1790), le deuxième offrant une critique rigoureuse du compte rendu de Belo avec trois aspects, et le troisième explorant des facettes supplémentaires de la vie du Sixième Shamarpa en abordant les représentations de la vie de Chökyi Wangchuk par des contemporains éminents, des chercheurs ultérieurs et modernes, suivies de trois enquêtes capitales qui gravitent autour de la vie du sujet. Cette thèse vise à offrir une interprétation plus complète et nuancée de la personnalité et de l'impact durable de Chökyi Wangchuk dans le cadre plus large du Tibet et de ses régions avoisinantes, en particulier au début du XVII^e siècle.

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My research endeavors have been propelled by an ardent fascination with Buddhist history and philosophy, leading me to delve into the life of Chökyi Wangchuk for my MA studies. The foundation of my study was enriched by the vast traditional and academic literature, including both online and offline sources. I aspire that this research will make substantive contributions to the field, with the intellectual acuity and rigorous academic endeavor entailed in this study undoubtedly cultivating expertise and furthering my pursuit of doctoral studies.

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Chronological List of Historical Figures

Chögyal Phuntsok Tashi, the 20 th Throne Holder of Drigung	(1547–1602)
Drakpa Döndrup, the Fourth Goshir Gyaltsap	(1550–1617)
Wangchuk Dorjé, the Ninth Karmapa	(1556–1603)
Nāro Tashi Phuntsok, the 21 st Throne Holder of Drigung	(1574–1628)
Tāranātha, a celebrated Jonang Scholar	(1575–1634)
Chökyi Wangchuk, the Sixth Shamarpa	(1584–1630)
Chökyi Gyaltsen, the Fifth Situpa	(1586–1657)
Phuntsok Namgyal, the King of Tsang	(1587–1620)
Jang Satam Gyalpo Sönam Raptan, the King of Jang	(1587–1647)
Yönten Gyatso, the Fourth Dalai Lama	(1589–1617)
Könchok Rinchen, the First Drigung Chetsang	(1590–1654)
Rigzin Chödrak, the Second Drigung Chungtsang	(1595–1659)
Chöying Dorjé, the Tenth Karmapa	(1604–1674)
Karma Tenkyong Wangpo, the King of Tsang	(1605–1642)
Rāga Asya, the First Karma Chakmé	(1613–1678)
Drakpa Chöyang, the Fifth Gyalsap	(1617–1658)
Lakṣmīnaraṣiṃha Malla, the King of Kantipur	(1620–1661)
Chechen Deching, the Lord of Inner Mongolia	(ca.16 th c.)
Khadan, the Lord from Mongol	(ca.16 th c.)

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Introduction

Chökyi Wangchuk (1584–1630) was the Sixth Shamarpa and one of the most renowned scholars and prolific writers of his time.¹ He famously said, “Worldly life has no meaning or end. Therefore, you do not need to reach any goal. Be satisfied with the passing of time. The real enjoyment in life is to achieve enlightenment.”² He traveled extensively and preached to monks, lords, and people in Tibet, Inner Mongolia, Lijiang, and Nepal, making him an influential figure in the early 17th century. Etched in Tibetan history as one of the great luminaries of his age, little is known of him in modern secondary literature. Thus, this thesis explores the Sixth Shamarpa’s life and significance in the domain of religious, social, and political history. Relying on hagiographies, several of his own works, the works of his students, and those of subsequent historians, this is the first focused study of the life of Chökyi Wangchuk. This Introduction will address the background and context, research objectives, structure, methodologies, and finally, it will review the relevant academic literature on the subject.

Research Background

Namthar Genre

Namthar (*rnam thar*) refers to the genres of biography, hagiography, life writing, and/or spiritual biography. While still being conscious of their subtle differences, for the sake of simplicity, these terms will be used interchangeably in this thesis. The word namthar is a contraction of *rnam par* meaning “complete” and *thar pa* meaning “liberation.” From an emic perspective, a namthar is a life story of an extraordinary being which illustrates how someone liberates (*thar*) themselves from suffering and its causes. The story also serves to persuade others to

¹ The biographical subject of this research is known by several primary and secondary names, this thesis has primarily referred to him using either his common name or title: Chökyi Wangchuk (chos kyi dbang phyug) or the Sixth Shamarpa (zhwa dmar drug pa). See “Designation Choices in Addressing Chökyi Wangchuk” sec. in ch. 2.

² An excerpt from Chökyi Wangchuk’s letter to his student Rapjampa (qtd. in Shamar Rinpoche 68–70).

strive for spiritual awakening (*grol*). From an etic perspective, the genre has parallels with spiritual autobiographies and hagiographies. Unlike a conventional biography which may simply recount the events and experiences of an individual's life, the namthar genre employs a multi-layered approach, consisting of outer, inner, and secret layers (*chi nang gsang*).³ These layers are intricately connected and seek to motivate and direct a diverse range of audiences, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, towards an ideal way of life (Smith 13; Jacoby 10–11; Karma Lodrö 22).⁴ Janice Willis categorizes these layers as historical, inspirational, and instructional; this schema serves to simplify the complexity of this genre and offers a useful framework for understanding its underlying principles. The first and third levels of the genre can be considered literary in nature, while the second level belongs to the category of liturgy (Willis 5). Some namthar primarily focus on one of the three components, while others include all three aspects intermingled, as found in the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk. What sets this apart from conventional Western hagiography is its incorporation of tantric meditation instructions (Willis 3, 5). By including such practices, this genre transcends the boundaries of conventional biographical literature to certain extent, providing a unique and multi-dimensional perspective on the subject's life and legacy.

The authorship of namthar has been dominated by male monastic scholars who often

³ The three types of life writing can be divided as follows: (1) the outer hagiography narrates mundane affairs, such as bloodline, birth, educations, which can be parallel to general biography; (2) the inner hagiography narrates spiritual accomplishments, such as receiving teachings (in a dream), transmissions, and empowerments, which includes approach-accomplishment (*snyen sgrub*), manual of signs of practice (*rtags yig*), and spiritual songs; (3) the secret hagiography recounts esoteric experiences (*nyam snang*) of meditation, such as deity visions, or inner realizations of Mahāmudrā (Chakmé *ri chos*; cf. Quintman 8; Willis 5). All three components are essential for lineage continuity. Hence, they are categorized into the three profound layers, which claim to a plant seed (to liberate a person from three lower realms at least if not from *samsāra* and extremes of existence or quiescence) by generating three kinds of faiths and activating the potential of spiritual genes (Skt. *gotra*). Furthermore, an extra layer of dimension is added, stating that since the activities of the body, speech, and mind are considered boundless, even possessing extrasensory divine eye or clairvoyance cannot fully comprehend the actions of the noble one (Lama Tsewang 23). See also Rheingans's "Typologies in Tibetan Literature: Genre or Text Type?" 2015.

⁴ The audience is differentiated according to three levels of mental capabilities—inferior, intermediate, and superior acumens—prior to conferring esoteric teachings. This tames beings according to their individual requirements.

wrote the account at someone's request, such as a student or teacher. If the account is written by the subject themselves, it is called *rang rnam* (autobiography), while if it is recounted by others, mostly disciples, it is called *rnam thar* (biography). Autobiographies may portray themselves with modesty (*khengs pa skyung pa*) and self-criticism; in contrast, biographies tend to employ honorific terms and figurative expressions. Biographies are generally less critical, as they are predominantly written from a standpoint of belief and trust (*vid ches*), devotion (*mos gus*), and pure vision (*dag snang*). As a result, the narratives found in biographies focus more on conveying inspiring meanings rather than supplying specific details such as places, dates, or textual references. Private secretaries (*drung yig*)—who would transcribe, edit, and preserve manuscripts—could have contributed additional information and played a bridging role, but their contributions are not usually credited in the colophon. Namthar can take the form of prose and/or verse, and it favors dharmic language (*chos skad*) rather than colloquial language. The plot is usually presented in chronological order, following the format of a biographic chronicle from birth to death. Over time, two significant changes have occurred to both auto- and biographies: their length and nature. The length of these works gradually and significantly increased between the 12th and 18th centuries, changing from about ten to one thousand folios (Schaeffer 263). Namthar, imbued with a primarily religious essence, underwent a transformative evolution. The ascent of the New Translation Traditions (*gsar ma*)⁵ and dynamic power shifts⁶ or struggles

⁵ The New Schools mainly refer to Sakya (sa skya), Kagyü (bka' brgyud), and Geluk (dge lugs), including Shejé (zhi byed), Kālachakra (dus 'khor), Shangpa Kagyü (shangs pa bka' brgyud), and Nyendrup (bsnyen sgrub), which commenced from Rinchen Sangpo (rin chen bzang po, 957–1055), the first translator of second transmission of the tantric lineage. In contrast, the Old Translation School, Nyingma (snying ma), came to Tibet in the eighth century.

⁶ Three paradigm shifts played a pivotal role in blurring the borderline between the religious and secular approach, which reflects in namthar as well. In 1260, Drogön Chögyal Phakpa ('gro mgon chos rgyal 'phags, 1235–1280), a fifth towering figure in Sakya School, became a vice-ruler of Tibet with the support of the Yuan emperor Kublai Khan (r.1264–1294). This marked the merging of religious and secular interest into a unified system (Dungkar “*chos srid gnyis ldan*”). The trend was revitalized in 1651 when the Gaden Phodrang (dga' ldan pho brang) Government, led by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who covers both state and religious matters, in length, in his biographical works

paralleled an escalation of nuanced sectarian tensions. These intricate tensions can be discerned in both autobiographies and biographies; they include doctrinal debate, hierarchical competition, and rivalries for patronage intricately woven into interactions among the lamas (spiritual teachers or leaders, Skt. *guru*) and their respective proponents (Gyatso 103).

Scholars face two specific predicaments regarding namthar. First, there is the question of how to contextualize the secret biographies (*gsang ba'i rnam thar*) in terms of history, as they contain esoteric elements. Integrating secret biographies into evidence-based analysis can be challenging, but without them, descriptions of esoteric practice or accomplishments would remain untapped. Thus, this level can be seen as the source of “inspiration and encouragement,” as Willis suggests (5). Second, namthar possesses interpretable⁷ and poetical aspects, as some Tibetan biographers use glorifying terms to portray their masters, deviating from scholastic standards (Ducher 206; cf. Gyatso 105; Jacoby 16). For example, namthar texts includes phrases like “the story is a marvelous wonder” (*ngo mtshar rmad byung*), “beyond imagination” (*bsam gyis mi khyab*), or “beyond the reach of experience” (*spyod yul las 'das pa*). This makes it challenging to differentiate fact from fiction, and the historical identity of the subject could be obscured by the author’s interpretation (Jacoby 16; Schaeffer 276). Demystifying certain aspects may help portray a less exaggerated and glorified persona that the reader may be seeking. The first dilemma, concerning secret biographies, comes into play in Belo’s biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, while the latter issue of narrative mystification is present only to a small degree.

(Schaeffer 271; Dungkar “*dga' ldan pho brang*”). Next, the concept of namthar was redefined after 1951, during which a namthar of political leaders were written (Jacoby 9). Finally, the academic approach tends to demystify and added more critical elements to it. In either case, *namthar* has been playing a critical role in its contemporary society and history. However, whether any biography or life writing can be deemed as namthar remains debatable (cf. Gyatso 103, 120).

⁷ For example, some parts of anecdotes are presented as interpretable (Skt. *neyārtha*) while others are considered to have a definitive meaning (Skt. *nītārtha*), in the manner of certain teachings of the Buddha (Drakar 302).

Golden Rosary Namthar

The genre of namthar primarily encompasses Tibetan scholastic variants while also drawing inspiration from Indian literary forms such as the *jātaka* and *avadāna*.⁸ The focus of this research is a specific subcategory of namthar: the style known as “Golden Rosary” (*gser ’phreng*).⁹ The term refers to the noble lineage of Kagyü masters and their life stories, who are regarded “as precious and perfect as the finest gold” (Gyaltsen *viii*), and in which each “strand of lives [is] following one after the next as beads on a rosary” (Quintman 10). The term “Golden Rosary” may have initially appeared in the Drukpa or Taklung Kagyü tradition, as described in a four-volume set, the *Golden Rosary Collection* of Drukpa Kagyü hagiography. Later the term became prevalent in the twelve sub-schools of Kagyü, specifically the Golden Rosary of the Shangpa (shangs pa) or Kamtsang Sertreng (kaM tshang gser ’phreng) (Smith 39; Kapstein 4). In the mid-18th century Chökyi Jungné (chos kyi ’byung gnas, 1700–1774), well-known as Situ Paṇchen (si tu paN chen), composed a text belonging to the Golden Rosary subgenre—Situ Paṇchen was a prominent Kagyü incarnation, Dergé court chaplain, influential grammarian, translator for the Svayambhū Purāṇa, Dergé Kangyur editor, Karma Gardri (*gar bris*) artist, physician (Chaix 18) and a disciple of the Eighth Shamarpa (1695–1732). Situ Paṇchen’s text is known as *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*.¹⁰ His student Belo Tsewang Künkhyap (1718–

⁸ Tucci accurately asserts that namthar displays an inexhaustible range (qtd. Gyatso 107), and Rheingans alludes to the challenges of creating a textual typology due to the inherent blurriness, fluidity, and cultural dependency of genres within a specific historical context (Rheingans 2015, 1).

⁹ Scholars differ on whether “*gser ’phreng*” is a genre or sub-genre. Smith and others suggest it is a genre (Smith 48), possibly based on its conventions, themes, and audiences, while Ducher and others view it as a sub-genre of namthar due to its association with the “accumulation of hagiographies” (Ducher 24, 26). This thesis leans toward the latter, while acknowledging that its classification can be fluid and subject to interpretation.

¹⁰ There is no consistent title established when referring to or writing about the text. In Tibetan, it may be referred to as *zla ba chu shel*, *zla phreng*, or *gser phreng*. In English, it is known by various names including *The Garland of Omnipresent Wishful Filling Crystal Moon*, *A Rosary of Crystal Moon/Moon Crystal*, *The Golden Garland of (Karma) Kagyü Biographies/Masters*, and *Moonstone Water-Crystal Mālā*. The absence of a uniform name can be attributed primarily to the lengthy title in Tibetan: *sgrub brgyud karma kaM tshang brgyud pa rin po che’i rnam par thar pa rab ’byams nor bu zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*. The earliest known copy of *bka’ brgyud gser phreng* is the

ca.1790) compiled, condensed, and composed its second part.¹¹ The two collections contain the biographies of 283 Karma Kagyü lineage masters (116 written by Situ and 167 by Belo).¹² The biography of the Sixth Shamarpa spans forty folios of this rosary (in its 1972 edition), and is one of Belo's works. This text serves as the basis for chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis. Across both volumes, each individual hagiography lacks a formal title; they are arranged in a loosely chronological order. They provide truncated information from birth to death and are primarily intended for Kagyü readers. The corpus recounts the successive lives of esteemed masters and their students, ensuring the preservation and continuity of authentic lineage transmission and its associated practice, stemming from yogīs Tilopā, Nāropa, Marpa (mar pa), and their successors. In the Kagyü tradition (as it may also be in other traditions) the one who carries the concept of lineage integrity from generation to another in an unbroken chain is honored with a prestigious title: the Lord of Dharma (*bstan bdag*). This title entails three esteemed positions: in the devotional prayer (*gsol 'debs*), refuge tree (*tshogs zhing*),¹³ and hagiography (*rnam thar*).

Regarding the prayer and visualization of the refuge tree, Chökyi Wangchuk wrote:

In front of me, in the center of a lake, is a wish-fulfilling tree.
It has one root, one trunk, and four main branches.
At the central fork is [a] lion throne, on which rests a lotus, sun, and moon.
On this sits my root guru as Vajradhara,

Palpung edition, a block print from Derge, Tibet, dating back to around the 18th century. The volumes of *Rosary of Crystal Moon*, comprising 681 and 699 folios respectively, are distinct works. Based on the 18th-century block print of Palpung, over a dozen editions of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* have been published in various forms, including D. Gyaltsan & Kesang Legshay (1972), Sungrab Nyamso Khang (1990), Vajra Vidya Institute (2004), and Mirik Publications (2013). Some later versions, such as those from 2011 and 2005, include Volume Three or Four.

¹¹ Belo's works are considered addendum (*kha skong*) due to his inclusion of biographies before and after Situ's work. Consequently, while Situ refers to the works as volume one and Belo as volume two throughout the text, this classification is merely a simplification. For the analysis of editions, structure, and content of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, see Dominik Dell's "'Moonstone Water-Crystal Mālā': Structure and Textual Witnesses of the Golden Garland of the Karma bKa brgyud by the Eighth Si tu, Chos kyi'byung gnas (1699/1700–1774), and 'Be lo Tshe dbang kun khyab'" in 2023, pp. 1–67.

¹² In the preface of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, Vajra Vidya edition *med cha ka* (2014), includes a concise introduction to the 318 biographies featured in (*xiv–lix*).

¹³ The refuge tree serves as a detailed visual representation of the refuge (Braitstein 32–33).

Surrounded by all the Kagy[ü] gurus. (trans. Braitstein 33–34)¹⁴

In all three settings, the rank of the noble line is organized in strict chronological order.

Therefore, it is possible that the Golden Rosary corpus was initially drafted based on supplication prayers that feature elements similar to the *Short Dorjé Chang Invocation* (*rdo rje 'chang thung ma*) by Bāngar Jampāl Sangpo (ban sgar 'jam dpal bzang po, 15th century) (Quintman 58; Gamble 5). In summary, as noted by the lineage masters and by Quintman (52), the hagiographical subgenre and its life writings were employed to depict exemplary life stories and establish the authority of the transmission lineage, ultimately becoming an integral component of the transmission process.

Belo, the Author

The author of the second volume of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, Belo Tsewang Künkhyap (b.1718, Earth-Dog year), was born at Thopgang (thob sgang), eastern Tibet. He was the son of Be Drölma Gon and Sönam Drölma. While the exact lifespan of Belo remains uncertain, it is estimated that he lived until about 1790.¹⁵ Belo received his primary education—including rituals, memorization, and arithmetic—from his brother (*khu bo*) Karma Tenzin Wangchuk (karma bstan 'dzin dbang phyug), and from Mepo Sangyé Rinchen (mes rin po sangs rgyas rin chen) at Tashi Surmang Monastery (bkra shis zur mang dgon). Between the ages of

¹⁴ The verse is quoted in Mipham Chökyi Lodrö Rinpoche's *Daily Preliminary Practice Manual of Mahāmudrā: Unity of Two Accumulations* (2000, pp. 9–10).

¹⁵ The name “Belo” has two parts: “Be” refers to his father's surname, and “lo” comes from “lotsawa” or *locchāva* in Sanskrit, meaning a scholar-translator. Although Situ Pañchen describes him as a *paṇḍita* or master in five sciences, Belo considers it to be a mere name (*ming skam*) (Belo 2013, 23). He was the nephew of Surmang Chétsang (Sönam) Gyurmé Nyingpo (zur mang che tshang (bsod rnam) 'gyur med snying po) (3), who might have studied under Chökyi Wangchuk. Based on Belo's meeting with the Ninth Situ Péma Nyinjé Wangpo (si tu pad ma nyin byed dbang po, 1774–1853), Thupten Phuntsok estimated his lifespan to be approximately seventy-two years, placing his death around 1790, well after the death of the Eighth Situ in 1774. This is supported by an incident in the latter part of Belo's life, where he left Palpung Monastery (dpal spung dgon) due to friction with attendants of the Fifth Situ's reincarnation and expressed disappointment with the intelligence of the five-year-old boy, the Ninth Situ, in comparison to his predecessor (2018).

fifteen and forty-two, having received extensive teachings of sūtra and tantra, Belo became one of the closest disciples of Situ Paṇchen (1700–1774).¹⁶ It was Belo who requested Situ to compose *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* Volume One, which contains the biographies of 116 Karma Kagyü Lineage masters, including the First through Fifth Karmapas and their respective students. In 1775, one year after his teacher’s death, Belo added a further 167 hagiographies to the composition, composed in Situ Paṇchen’s style, including the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk (Thupten Phuntsok; Sherap Phuntsok *xiv–xxxi*; Mengele 2011, 91).

Interestingly, Belo also wrote an autobiography, which is stylistically different from *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*. The autobiography showcases his straightforward personality and makes abundant use of colloquial expressions (Belo 2013, 1–69). In relation to Belo’s scholarly standing, the highly regarded non-sectarian master, Jamgön Kongtrül Yönten Gyatso (’jam mgon kong sprul yon tan rgya mtsho, 1813–1899),¹⁷ recognized Belo as a scholar who placed a strong emphasis on theoretical explanation (*bshad pa gtso bo mdzad pa’i mkhas pa*), comparing him to Chökyong Sangpo (chos skyong bzang po, 1441–1528), a renowned translator from Shalu Monastery (Jamgön Yönten “*kong sprul ris*” 24). On the other hand, Lodro Donyod (blo gros don yod, 20th c.), a scholarly abbot hailing from Ngari in western Tibet, regarded Belo as primary successor to Situ Paṇchen in the transmission of *Kālacakra Tantra*, adhering to the sādhana, ritual, and practice of the Jonang (jo nang) tradition (Lodro Donyod 513–14).¹⁸ Both

¹⁶ In parallel to the fourth-century Indian scholar Vasubandhu, Situ had four brilliant students, who become more learned than himself, among them, Belo was deemed most learned in language and astrology (*sgra rtsis rang la mkhas pa*). The other three were the Fourth Khamtrul Tenzin Chökyi Nyima (kams sprul bzhi pa bstan ’dzin chos kyi nyi ma), Wön Karma Ngelek Tenzin (dbon karma nges legs bstan ’dzin), Zhapdrung Dokhar Tséring Wangyal (zhabs drung mdo mkhar tshe ring dbang rgyal), who were expert in poetry, medicine, grammar, respectively (Lobsang Monlam “*si tu paN chen chos kyi ’byung gnas kyi rang mkhas slob ma bzhi*”).

¹⁷ Jamgön Kongtrül the Great is known as both Yönten Gyatso and Lodrö Thayé (blo gros mtha’ yas); he was a celebrated scholar, non-sectarian (*ris med*) master, and composer of *The Five Great Treasuries* (*mdzod lnga*).

¹⁸ Belo’s two well-known students were Tsaptsa Trülku Karma Rinchen (tshab tsha sprul sku karma rin chen) or Karma Ngedon Tenzin Rapgyé (karma nges don bstan ’dzin rab rgyas, b.1770) who was the Fifth Riwoché, the head

Jamgön and Lodrö's assessments contribute to Belo's recognition and influence as a teacher and writer. Given his significant legacy, further study of Belo's work is warranted.

Shamarpa Line

Having addressed the genre and biographer, I will now examine the background of the subject: Chökyi Wangchuk, recognized as the Fifth embodiment, Sixth throne holder of the Shamarpa¹⁹ Trülku Line (*zhwa dmar sku phreng rim byon*), and Twenty-ninth lineage holder of the Golden Rosary within the Karma Kagyü tradition. With its origin traced back to 1283, this lineage is considered to be the second oldest (*rim pa gnyis pa*) living reincarnation tradition in the history of Tibet, second only to the Karmapa line (Roerich 552; Cabezón 4, 7,16).²⁰ The significance of the Shamarpa lineage is evident in the visual representation of the Karma Kagyü refuge tree, which is a symbolic depiction of the continuous transmission of teachings (*don brgyud*) across generations. According to Karma Kagyü history, the transmission lineage was upheld by six successive reincarnations of the Shamarpa, which form an essential bridge in the lineage.²¹ Their accomplishments and contributions are chronicled in *The Rosary of the Crystal*

of the major Taklung Kagyü monastery in Kham (Lodro Donyod 513), and Takgang Khechok Ngawang Lodrö (stag sgang mkhas mchog ngag dbang blo bro, b. 18th c.), a Nyingma master who composed *Gu Tashi's Dharma History* (*gu bkra'i chos 'byung*). Besides Volume Two of *Rosary of Crystal Moon* and an autobiography, Belo is credited with a wide range of compositions, only some of which are extant.

¹⁹ Shamarpa, which literally means “the One with Red Hat,” derives its name from the symbolic significance of the headgear to which the title refers. This deep connection is exemplified by an act of profound symbolism, as the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorjé (rang byung rdo rje, 1284–1339), bestowed the title of “Shamarpa” upon the First Shamarpa and presented him with a replica of his revered Black Crown (Dronma 11–12). However, in *bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, it is stated that “in the sixth *rab byung*, the King of Hor offered a red ceremonial hat (*las zhwa dmar po*) to Tokden Drakpa Sengé (rtogs ldan grags pa seng ge), a disciple of Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé. As the red hat was offered to the lineage, the lineage was then known as that of the Shamarpa” (Shang Yisun “zhwa dmar pa”). For a detailed analysis of the characteristics of the red hat see Watt's article, “Subject: Hats (Shamarpa),” 2010.

²⁰ The trülku recognition system is believed a living practice in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, in which a person intentionally reborn in the world for the sake of others; however, in practice, many reincarnations do not seem to inherit their predecessors' qualities such as their knowledge. A newborn is searched and verified based on a wide range of criteria, such as visions, and oral or written messages (*rtags yig*) like the one Künchok Yenlak (dkon mchog yan lag, 1525–1583), the Fifth Shamarpa, left before his death (Karma Shenphen 70).

²¹ The Shamarpas, embodying the Second, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, and Tenth, have firmly established themselves as—the Eighteenth, Twenty-seventh, Twenty-ninth, Thirty-first, Thirty-third, and Thirty-seventh—

Moon and in prayer texts. The various successors of the Shamarpa line are credited with recognizing seven of the Karmapas' embodiments, who affirmed these manifestations as their emanation bodies. The Fourth Shamarpa (chos grags ye shes, 1453–1524) exercised temporal authority as a king (and advisor of Desi Phakmodrupa), effectively ruling for eleven years starting in 1493 (Water-Ox) (Douglas and White 70; Belo 2011, 105). Consequently, in the hierarchical rankings of the Fifth Dalai Lama, the Shamarpa lineage holder is the second-highest ranking lama in Tibet, with a status equal to that of the Karmapa.²²

Despite its prominence and importance, the Shamarpa lineage has faced challenges and setbacks. The lineage's celebration fell into controversy at the time of the Tenth incarnation, Chödrup Gyatso (1742–1792/3), who was allegedly involved in the war between the Gurkha army and Tibet from 1790 to 1792.²³ As a consequence, following a decree by the Qing Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1795), a Geluk regent Taktsak Tenpé Gönpö (rta tshag bstan pa'i mgon po, 1760–1810, r. 1789/91–1810) implemented a directive to deprive Chödrup Gyatso of his Red Hat (zhwa dmar) and seize all of his monasteries, which were subsequently converted to the Geluk sect. Moreover, a ban was imposed on recognizing or enthroning the three subsequent reincarnations of the Shamarpa lineage, a prohibition that remained in place until the lineage was

lineage holders of the Golden Rosary within the Karma Kagyü tradition, owing to their substantial contributions. For detailed information on the Sixth Shamarpa's image, position in the refuge tree, and the complete list of the forty-four lineage holders, see "Karma Kagyu Refuge Tree Masters" at www.palpong.org.

²² The Fifth Dalai Lama placed the Shamarpa line as second-ranking lamas because "ever since [the Fourth Shamarpa] ascended the throne of the Phakdru Dynasty [phag gru sde srid, r. 1354–1618], there was no longer any difference between the Red Hat and the Black Hat Karmapas. This was the reason why I afforded them both equal [statuses]" (qtd. in Shamar Rinpoche 220).

²³ N.B.: Kagyü scholars view the event as a "political opportunity" driven by narrow sectarian minds, in fact, he was in pilgrim in Nepal, who acted as a mediator rather than a conspirator (Douglas and White 150; cf. Dhungel 190–94; Dronma 41; Van Schaik 232). According to another source, during the Nepal-Tibet conflict, Sikyong Künling Taktsak Rinpoche Tenpé Gönpö (srid skyong kun gling stag tshag rin po che bstan pa'i mgon po) instructed the Tenth Shamar to mediate (*ching sgrig*) in Nepal due to their strong guru-patron relationship. However, while Shamarpa was en route, Nepal's army attacked Tibet, leading to accusations against him for not obeying the command and being biased towards the enemy (Khetsun 1977, 551–52). This hotly debated historical event will be further elucidated in Lara Braitstein's forthcoming publication, *Recovering the Red Crown: A study of the 10th Shamarpa Chödrup Gyatso*.

re-established in 1963. Consequently, the lineage currently comprises only eleven throne holders, despite encompassing fourteen successive reincarnations that were clandestinely acknowledged by the Karmapas (Dungkar “karma zhwa dmar”; Douglas and White 142–152; Minyak Gönpö 595–96; cf. Dhungel 184–195).²⁴

Research Objectives

Several historical figures in turbulent 17th century Tibet have been studied in the academic literature. Both traditional and modern works on the subject have been focused on contemporaries of Chökyi Wangchuk. These subjects include: Tāranātha, a proponent of Jonang School (1575–1634); Yönten Gyatso, the Fourth Dalai Lama (yon tan rgya mtsho, 1589–1617); Chöying Dorjé, the Tenth Karmapa (chos dbyings rdo rje, 1604–1674); and Rāga Asya, the First Karma Chakmé (rA ga a s+ya, 1613–1678), among other figures. Consequently, there has been a lack of in-depth study on the life of Chökyi Wangchuk, despite his pivotal role in the political, social, and religious dynamics of multiple kingdoms for an extended period.

This study addresses this lack, with a comprehensive study of the life of Chökyi Wangchuk. To achieve this objective, the thesis examines Chökyi Wangchuk’s life, role, and significance through the perspectives of Belo and other intellectuals. It also analyzes the approaches and works of critical scholars in the field. Overall, the thesis answers three main questions: (1) Who was the Sixth Shamarpa Chökyi Wangchuk, and what role did he play in early 17th-century Tibet?; (2) What sources, style, and content were employed by the author of his hagiography, Belo, to narrate the life of this celebrated scholar?; and (3) How have contemporary, subsequent, and modern scholars depicted the life of Chökyi Wangchuk? To provide a comprehensive analysis, the study incorporates a thematic analysis of several crucial

²⁴ For a full list of the Shamarpa lineage, see appendix C, table 2.

aspects related to Chökyi Wangchuk, exploring them in the second half of chapters 2 and 3.

Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 reconceives the life of Chökyi Wangchuk through the lens of Belo. Chapter 2 conducts a critical discussion based on Belo's presentation and attempts to bridge certain gaps in understanding. Chapter 3 examines, in chronological order, how Chökyi Wangchuk's contemporary, subsequent, and modern scholars have portrayed him, followed by analyzing three notable matters. Finally, the thesis concludes by addressing all the findings, limitations, and possibilities for future studies.

Methodology

To reimagine the life of Chökyi Wangchuk, this research adopts a range of textual analysis approaches based on the combination of primary and secondary sources which have been selected for each chapter. Having conducted a preliminary survey, it became clear that Belo's biography of Chökyi Wangchuk is the primary substantial work on the subject. However, due to its style and length, the entire translation is not presented here. Instead, I follow a more descriptive approach which intends to strike a balance between biographical research and the traditional approach of scholarly chronicles.²⁵ Next, to understand Belo's work in depth, I conduct a qualitative content analysis, which shows the work's implicit contents. My analysis

²⁵ N.B.: While translating Tibetan sources, I followed the methodical approach of the "84000 Guidelines for Translators" to preserve "accuracy of meaning, clarity, consensuality, consistency, and flexibility" (7); I use the phrase "trans. mine" to indicate my own translations. To avoid conflicts with Sanskritized Tibetan words, all Wylie transcriptions are written in lowercase; *wa sur* remains unchanged, i.e., in the cases of *zhwa dmar* or *dwags po*. Sanskrit terms are abbreviated as "Skt.," while Tibetan terms in Wylie transliteration remain unindicated for brevity. The term "rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul" (India, the Land of Noble Ones) in Tibetan Buddhism is translated as "India." Although the linguistic, cultural, and historical aspects of the term may encompass both ancient and modern India, here, it primarily refers to the early modern India. Numerical designations in Tibetan Buddhism's lineage heads, such as the Tenth Karmapa, are capitalized to convey respect, honorific titles, and distinct identities. "Dharma" is capitalized for Buddha Dharma or the Truth, distinguishing it from general principles, phenomena, laws, or duties, while god (s) (*lha*, Skt. *deva*, celestial beings) are written in lowercase to differentiate them from the concept of the creator God ("84000 Guidelines for Translators" 12, 7).

follows the methodology of *explication de texte*, which assesses sources, structure, and content. Initially, the focus revolves around Belo's work. To evaluate and represent approaches others have taken to Chökyi Wangchuk's life, I examine most of the available traditional and modern biographies that discuss the life of Chökyi Wangchuk and delineate six major trends. While focusing primarily on his life, I also include brief excerpts of Chökyi Wangchuk's works in relevant chapters. These serve as a medium for analysis and enhance our understanding of his fulfilled life.

Literature Review

The main sources for this study include both primary and secondary texts. Accordingly, this review is organized into two parts. The four existing primary sources in Tibetan are: *Rosary of Intertwined Jewels, A Travelogue to Nepal* (*bal yul du bgrod pa'i lam yig nor bu spel ma'i phreng ba*, 1629–30), in which Chökyi Wangchuk recounts the end of his life; the works of his student Khédrup Nedo Karma Chakmé (*mkhas grub gnas mdo karma chags med*, 1613–1678, written in the 1630s), which provide scattered yet significant information; the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorjé's (1604–1674) *The Bountiful Cow: Biography of a Bodhisattva* (*byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs brjod 'dod 'jo'i ba mo*, 1648); the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngakwang Losang Gyatso's (*ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*, 1617–1682) two distinct accounts²⁶ of his predecessor and teacher; and finally, Belo Tsewang Künkhyap's biography in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* Volume Two, which was written in 1775. Belo included the first source (*Rosary of Intertwined Jewels*) and excluded the rest while narrating Chökyi Wangchuk's life, likely to avoid repetition. Amongst these, the works of Karmapa and Belo are extensively cited in both traditional and academic works regarding Chökyi Wangchuk.

²⁶ These two accounts refer to the biographies of Yönten Gyatso, the Fourth Dalai Lama (n.d.), and Nyangtön Tratsangpa Lochok Dorjé (*nyang ston khra tshang pa blo mchog rdo rje*, 1607–1671, written in 1676).

In terms of secondary sources, there are four recent academic works which have been valuable for this research. These include Irmgard Mengele's *Riding a Huge Wave of Karma: The Turbulent Life of the Tenth Karma-pa* (2005); the Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche's *The Golden Swan in Turbulent Water* (2012); and *The Tenth Karmapa & Tibet's Turbulent Seventeenth Century* (2016) by Karl Debreczeny and Gray Tuttle. These three works focus on the work and life of the Tenth Karmapa, and also elucidate *The Bountiful Cow* to some extent. The fourth work is Navina Lamminger's *The 6th Zhva dmar pa Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630) and the Account of his Journey in the years of 1629/1630: Critical Study, Edition and Translation* (2013), a study in German which provides the most comprehensive overview of Chökyi Wangchuk to date. Overall, considering the requisite depth of analysis and contextualization that the aforementioned eight works of both primary and secondary literature demand, their analysis takes up both the source section of chapter 2 and the preliminary stages of chapter 3.

Some minor secondary research publications related to Chökyi Wangchuk are also available, including five brief biographical studies. One of the first works available in English was Nik Douglas and Meryl White's *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (1976), which presented brief biographies of thirteen Shamarpas in its appendices (143–152). It was possibly compiled from a collection of sixteen different life-stories of Karmapas (146–49) and other works, although the sources are not specified. This account discusses Chökyi Wangchuk for about two and a half pages and includes four details that Belo did not raise.²⁷

In 1992, Yeshe Dronma composed *The Reincarnations of the Kunzig Shamarpa, the Red Crown Lama of Tibet*, in which she briefly presented biographies from the first to fourteen successive Shamarpas (1–70). It contains a four-page long biography of Chökyi Wangchuk,

²⁷ See “Incomplete Picture,” “Sanskrit Knowledge,” and “Scholars of His Time” sections in chapters 1–3.

which is based on *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*. It additionally provides three points that do not align with Belo.²⁸ It became a relevant source of reference for English readers and writers, as it has been excerpted on the official website of the Fourteenth Shamarpa.²⁹

In 1994, an unnamed author composed *A Short History of the Karma Kagyü Lineage*, which provides accounts of six Shamarpas who secured the seat in the Golden Rosary Lineage. Despite claiming Belo's work as its source, it contains three major points that do not correspond to Belo's account: his death place was identified in "the mountain of [Helambu] in Nepal," his death year included as 1629, and it limits his compositions to only ten treatises ("*A Short History*" 35–36). Given the relatively early date of publication, this work might have been deemed as a reference point by some subsequent scholars and internet sites.³⁰ Although the above three works lack critical analysis and in-text citation, they nevertheless have several insightful descriptions of the events, which have been noted in the respective section of this thesis. Up to this point, the presentation approach in all reviewed sources is based on the traditional method, which depicts his life in chronological order from birth to death, with limited analysis, interpretation, or citation.

In 1997, Franz-Karl Ehrhard authored a ten-page article titled "The Lands are like a Wiped Golden Basin," which provides a concise overview of Chökyi Wangchuk's *Travelogue to Nepal*. The article analyzed the purpose of his travel, his relationship with rulers of Nepal, and in its final part focused on the ethnography of Manang District and Neshang locality in the northern part of Nepal (125–38).³¹

²⁸ See "Rising Scholar" section in chapter 1, "Modern Scholar," and "Meeting the Chinese Emperor" in chapter 3.

²⁹ See the excerpts on www.shamarpa.org/history/. Accessed 19 Oct. 2022.

³⁰ See the rebuttal at "Passing into Nirvāṇa" in chapter 1 and "Collected Works" sections in chapter 2.

³¹ In 1992, as part of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP), Franz-Karl Ehrhard discovered and microfilmed the *Travelogue to Nepal* in a small monastery located in Samagaon at the base of Manaslu, Nepal (Lamminger 2). See the "Three Sources" section in chapter 2.

Ramesh Dhungel's "Nepal-Tibet Cultural Relations and the Zhva-dmar-pa (Shyamarpa) [sic] Lamas of Tibet," as the title suggests, concisely highlights the Fourth, Sixth, Tenth, and Fourteenth Shamarpas' relation to Nepal, which he deemed as "one of the most important in the study of Nepal-Tibet bilateral relations" (1999, 186). This thirteen-page (183–208) article includes two pages on the Sixth Shamarpa, based mainly on Ehrhard, Douglas and White, and Hemaraja Shākya's *Svayambhūmahācaitya*. The third source—which claims to be derived from a local Newar historical text—confirms the veracity of Belo's report with five substantiating points (187–90).³²

Since 2007, five translations of Chökyi Wangchuk's works have been published.³³ Two studies in the Tibetan language³⁴ analyze authorship of a logic text that is debated among Kagyü and Geluk scholars. Despite this debate, these remain essential works which reveals Chökyi Wangchuk's philosophical views and also his secondary name: Jamyang Shepa ('jam yang bzhed pa) or Jamshé in short ('jam bzhad).³⁵

³² Ibid.: The five points from Newari sources: (1) It reconfirmed the Shamarpa's renovation and offering of "four artistic golden tympanums (*toraṇas*)" to Svayambhūnath stupa in February 1629. (2) It added that he "donated property to the Hārati temple" which was adjacent to the stupa. (3) Lakṣmīnārasimha Malla, the king of Kantipur or Kathmandu (r. 1619–1641), not just granted permission for the project but he attended the consecration ceremony of the stupa. (3) He conferred a Dharmic sermon in Sanskrit to the kings of Kantipur, his relatives who had shown great faith in him. (4) He made a crucial religious and cultural bond with some of the key monasteries in Kantipur. Consequently, he gained popularity and respect in Nepal.

³³ Karl Brunnhölzl (2007) translated a spiritual song entitled *A Pronouncement of Realization: A Song on View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* (*rtogs brjod lta sgom sypod 'bras kyi glu*) in *Straight from the Heart* (343–382). Its commentary by Khenpo Lama Thupten, which contains a concise, compact, and comprehensive biography of Chökyi Wangchuk which lacks citation; it may be drawn from Douglas and White (1976). Yeshe Gyamtso (2007) translated the aspirational prayer: *Bardo Interval of Possibility* with a concise commentary by Karthar Rinpoche. Further, in 2010, two other works were published. The Nalanda Translation Committee translated two short spiritual songs excerpted from *The Rain of Wisdom: The Essence of the Ocean of True Meaning* (*bka' brgyud mgur mtsho*), and Peter Alan Roberts' instructions related to Mahāmudrā: "The Quintessence of Nectar: Instructions for the Practice of the Six Dharmas of Nāropa." The two texts are translated with a brief biography of the author.

³⁴ Sempa Dorjé (1926–2022) composed a comprehensive Tibetan commentary on the root text of *The Treasury of Reasoning: An Essential Compendium of All Teachings* (*bsdus sbyor gyi snying po kun 'dus rigs pa'i mdzod*) in 2015. Another version of the textual analysis was composed and published by the Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje and Kagyü Güñchö Textbook Preparation Committee in 2016.

³⁵ For four reasons, this logical text is deemed as the work of the Sixth Shamarpa. (1) In the colophon of *The Flower of Vine: The Bodhisattva's Avadāna*, Chökyi Wangchuk explicitly states that his alternate name is Jamyang Shepa

In 2009, while dating the mural paintings of Dabaojigong Temple in the Kingdom of Lijiang, Karl Debreczeny discussed various crucial aspects related to Chökyi Wangchuk. These include the dates he visited the site (1610 and 1621), the existence of three mural paintings also reported by Belo, the construction of three Kagyü temples,³⁶ the recruitment of six Nàxī disciples, and speculation about Chöying Dorjé's decision to exclude his teacher's figure from the Mahāmudrā lineage (118–22). I will address each of these topics within their relevant contexts in chapters one through three.

A complete account of Chökyi Wangchuk's life cannot be limited to the foregoing sources, as the information is scattered and paints a partial picture. For example, the text *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet* by statesman Tsipön Wangchuk Déden Shakabpa (rtsis dpon dbang phyug bde ldan zhwa sgab pa, 1907–1989) highlights regional political dynamics, whereas biographies of Chökyi Wangchuk's father and three siblings illuminate his family ties. Similarly, Jampa Samten Shastri and Jeremy Russell's *Notes on the Lithang Edition of the Tibetan BKa'-Gyur* (1987) provides insight into the Lijiang. Furthermore, there are several other concise biographies of Chökyi Wangchuk that can be found in English, other languages, and especially in Tibetan. For example, Khetsun Sangpo's *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism, Part One* (1977), provides a biography

(f. 118b). (2) Karma Chakmé confirmed in *The Mountain Dharma* that his teacher Chökyi Wangchuk and Jamyang Shepa are the same person. (3) In *The Treasury of Knowledge*, Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé (1813–1890) regarded this composition as the work of the Sixth Shamarpa, which is said to be enlisted in the Collected Works of the Chökyi Wangchuk (Dorjé *iv-x*). Furthermore, Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje stated that having analyzed the existing works of the Sixth Shamarpa, *The Radiant Laughter of Mañjughoṣa* resembles his composition style, wording, and meaning. Particularly notable is that the doctrinal terms do not match with the general terminology of Geluk tradition when he presented the view of Middle Way School (Madhyamaka). See *bsdus grwa'i sdom tshig mdzad po 'jam bzhad su yin dpyad pa* on www.tbwriters.com/?p=1439. Accessed 18 Sep. 2022. (4) It is believed that during the chaotic period in mid-17th century Tibet, certain prefaces and colophons of texts written by the Fifth and Sixth Shamarpas were removed for political and sectarian reasons.

³⁶ The Sixth Shamarpa erected three main Karmapa temples in the Zhongdian region, under Lijiang's control: Kongxiasi (Zixiasi), Jiaxiesi, and Kangsisi, possibly with Mu Zeng's help (Debreczeny 2009 119). This link provides access to the artworks: projecthimalayanart.rubinmuseum.org/essays/dabaojigong-temple/.

of Chökyi Wangchuk (514–28), based on Belo, and other incarnations of Shamarpas (454–561), which are based on works of Karmapa, Shamarpa, Situ, Gyaltzap (rgyal tshab), and Pawo (dpa' bo) Rinpochés. Part Three (1981) of the same dictionary also includes biographies of Chökyi Wangchuk's Drigung Kyura line (189–203), his father (358–399), and three brothers (400–415).

Based on their contents, it can be broadly concluded that these biographies of Chökyi Wangchuk were primarily derived from works of either Chöying Dorjé or Belo, as Lamminger has also drawn a similar conclusion (9). In summary, with the notable exception of translations and commentaries, which stand out as autonomous pieces of literature, an overall trend is observed in the aforementioned biographical works. The biographies narrate chronologically from birth to death and cover key aspects of his life. Consequently, they are often repetitive, and the content is mostly presented very briefly. They sometimes include a few minor details that cannot be traced back to works of Belo or Chöying Dorjé, which I have analyzed in appropriate sections. The scholarly works, to a large extent, exhibit a paucity of in-depth analysis and comprehensive exploration of the biographical subject. The emphasis predominantly centers Chökyi Wangchuk's works, lineage line, and students, rather than addressing his life.

In terms of source accessibility, primary and secondary sources are available in both print and online formats, with the exception of three secondary English sources, namely *A Short History of the Karma Kagyü Lineage* (1994), and the works of Debreczeny and Tuttle (2016) and Mengele (2012) which are only found in print.

Chapter 1: Through the Lens of Belo

This chapter illuminates the life story of the Sixth Shamarpa Chökyi Wangchuk (1584–1630), as viewed through the interpretive lens of Belo, whose given name is Belo Tsewang Künkhyap (1718–ca.1790). The author structured the biography into five points encompassing the subject’s birth, educational trajectory, noteworthy accomplishments, passing, and the individuals who studied under him. Instead of incorporating a complete translation of the lengthy and information-dense forty-four folios of the biography, I will take a more concise approach. I divide the chapter into its two traditional parts—the outer and inner/secret biographies—and examine them along with several sub-themes.³⁷ The strategy follows a basic chronology within each segment and highlights Chökyi Wangchuk’s deeds in each area. This approach aims to make the biography more appealing, intuitive, and rational for contemporary readers. To ensure traceability, approximate dates are noted throughout.

I. The Outer Biography

Recognition as the Sixth Shamarpa

The Sixth Shamarpa was born at Drigung Sholo (’bri gung gzho lo) valley known as “Trolung” (spro lung) to his father, Drigung Chögyal Phuntsok (chos rgyal phun tshogs, 1547–1602),³⁸ and mother, Longmo Sayang Guk (long mo bza’ g.yang ’gugs), with auspicious signs. He was born, with many virtuous omens, on the early morning of the new moon day, in the ninth lunar month of the Wood-Monkey year (October 6, 1584).³⁹ At the age of four or five (1588), the Ninth Karmapa, Wangchuk Dorjé (dbang phyug rdor rje, 1556–1603), recognized him as the

³⁷ The two categories are loose divisions. Since inner and secret biographies overlap in numerous cases (Willis 6), they have not been categorized separately in this chapter, which is based on Belo’s work unless stated otherwise.

³⁸ He was the 20th hierarch of Drigung Thil Monastery (bri gung mthil dgon) (Cabezón 149). See chapter 2 for more about him and also see fn. 42.

³⁹ Minor discrepancies were observed about Chökyi Wangchuk’s birth (1512/84) and death (1949/83), but they are not discussed here because modern scholars unanimously accept his dates as 1584–1630.

reincarnation of the Fifth Shamarpa, Künchok Yenlak (kun mchog yan lag, 1526–1583), at Drokna (grog sna).⁴⁰ To commemorate this special occasion, the Karmapa performed a hair cutting ceremony and gave him the name Palden Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk (dpal ldan gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug). This was followed by a longevity ceremony: “The Glorious Supreme Guru, embodiment of all Buddhas,” led by the Karmapa and others.⁴¹ Alongside the Karmapa, Chökyi Wangchuk embarked on visits to Dechen Yangpachen and Thil Monasteries.⁴² During these visits, he received the official enthronement on the lion seat and golden throne, and was adorned with the Red Hat, the ceremonial headgear representing his lineage (Belo 418).

Receiving Traditional Education

Following his formal recognition, the Sixth Shamarpa commenced his formal Buddhist training under the guidance of the Ninth Karmapa. Over time, he received a wide range of teachings from the Ninth Karmapa. Seven documented events occurred when Chökyi Wangchuk was around the ages of five, eleven, eighteen, and nineteen. These teachings consisted of reading transmissions and empowerments, which took place at Tsurphu⁴³ and Yangpachen monasteries, among other locations. At eighteen, for example, he received the reading transmission of the collected works of Second, Fourth, and Fifth Karmapas, as well as the Profound Teaching of Drigung (’bri gung zab chos) at Tsurphu. At nineteen, he received the empowerments of the

⁴⁰ The recognition was carried out based on a clear prediction by Künchok Yenlak (Belo 302). According to certain sources, Mitruk Chökyi Gocha (mi ’khrugs chos kyi go cha, 1542–ca.1585), the Fourth Situ, played a part in identifying the Sixth Shamarpa. Given the lack of certainty surrounding Situ’s year of death, combined with his reputed tendency to remain in retreat during the latter part of his life, it seems unlikely that this information can be accurately determined (“The Sixth Zhamarpa” 2022). Also, the monastic college of Dhakpo Shedrup Ling” (dwags po bshad grub gling) was identified as (perhaps one of) the place where Chökyi Wangchuk recognized and enthroned (Brunnhölzl 343; Douglas 147).

⁴¹ Shamarpa is referred as *rgyal ba sku dngos dpal ldan bla ma mchog*, which is addressed by first person, i.e., Karmapa, rather than third person (Belo 418).

⁴² Okmin Jangchup Ling (’og min byang chub gling), renowned as Thil Monastery, was established by Jikten Sumgön (’jig rten gsum mgon, 1143–1217) in 1179, the founder of the Drigung Kagyü tradition (see fn. 186).

⁴³ The main seat of Karmapas, founded by First Karmapa in 1189, is in the west of Lhasa.

Seven Maṇḍalas of Ngok (rngog dkyil bdun) and the Twelve Maṇḍalas of Jong (sbyong dkyil bcu gnis) (423). During this time, embedded within a complete set of Vinaya rituals, the Shamarpa furthermore received full ordination (*bhikṣu*) from the Ninth Karmapa who served as a principal officiator (*mkhan po*). A full official title was bestowed upon him: “Palden Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk Dorjé Gawa Dönkün Yongsu Drubpa Chok Thamché lé Nampar Gyalwa” (dpal ldan gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug rdo rje dga’ ba don kun yongs su grub pa phyogs thams cad las nman par rgyal ba). He received the final teachings from the Ninth Karmapa in 1604, through a vision when he performed a consecration over the bodily remains of Karmapa at Tsurphu.⁴⁴ During the consecration wondrous signs appeared, such as flowers blossoming, and he received a reading transmission of *Mitra’s One Hundred Maṇḍala Empowerment* (*mi tra brgya rtsa*), and *Six Types of Instructions* (*khrid drug*), both being works of Mitra Yogī (ca. ninth c. Indian siddha), and the *Collected Works* of Lama Shang (1122–93).

In the same year, the Tsurphu assembly granted him the official designation of Karmapa’s regent, cementing his authority and position of power in the lineage (424).⁴⁵ Spanning a period of nearly sixteen years (1588–1603), the teacher-student relationship between them was underscored by three defining moments that showcased the depth of their bond. First, during Chökyi Wangchuk’s retreat in the cave of Nyanya (gnya’ gnya’ phug), he experienced a vision of the Ninth Karmapa (419). Second, despite the Ninth Karmapa’s initial lifespan of only forty-two years,⁴⁶ he acceded to Chökyi Wangchuk’s request to extend his life by an additional

⁴⁴ On the 28th day, the first month of Water-Tiger year (1603), the Lord Karmapa Wangchuk Dorjé passed away. The Fourth Gyaltsap and the Third Pawo carried the bodily remains (*sku gdung*) to Tsurphu. Chökyi Wangchuk arrived at Tsurphu, performed the cremation, made an extensive ritualistic offering (Belo 423).

⁴⁵ Previously, the Fifth Shamarpa was also appointed as the regent of the Eight Karmapa (Karma Gyaltsen 134).

⁴⁶ The text does not specify how the disciples knew the Ninth Karmapa’s lifespan or how Karmapa extended his lifespan. However, according to Buddhist tradition, there are three possible interpretations: (1) For ordinary beings, lifespan is influenced by their previous karmas, determining their lifespan and rebirth. (2) However, for someone with Mastery over Life (*tshe la dbang ba*), their lifespan may depend on their own will and/or the merit of sentient

six years, eventually living until the age of forty-eight (423). Finally, the vision after his death has been mentioned in the previous section.

Toward the end of the Ninth Karmapa's life, the Fourth Goshri Gyaltsap Drakpa Döndrup (go shrI rgyal tshab grags pa don grub, 1550–1617) assumed the responsibility of providing advanced training to Shamarpa, bestowing upon him numerous oral transmissions of sūtras and fourteen sets of pivotal tantric empowerments. This comprehensive instruction unequivocally established him as one of Chökyi Wangchuk's principal gurus.⁴⁷ Moreover, Shamarpa received teachings from six other masters, namely Yongzin Namgyal Drakpa (yong 'dzin rnam rgyal grags pa), Jé Karma Künga Namgyal (rje kar ma kun dga' rnam rgyal, 1615–1628), Tserlung Trungpa Künga Gyaltsen (tsher lung drung pa kun dga' rnam rgyal), Sangyé Nyenpa (sangs rgyas mnyan pa),⁴⁸ and two unnamed masters from Gangkar⁴⁹ (Belo 418, 423, 440, 441).

Rising Scholar

Since Chökyi Wangchuk was young, his attendants tried to postpone the commencement of his travels around Tibet.⁵⁰ When he reached the age of sixteen, he refused to listen to them any longer and headed north⁵¹ for a long academic debate (*gra bskor*) to defend and present his views (Belo 421).⁵² Shamarpa first laid out a fundamental premise on Vinaya at the assembly of

beings. For instance, realized beings, such as enlightened masters, can predict and regulate the duration of one's lifespan. (3) Astrological calculations, like birth horoscopes (*tshe rabs las rtsis*), can also estimate an individual's lifespan, assist in extending or avoiding obstacles that may threaten the continuity of life-force (*tshe srog*) through practices such as longevity empowerment. Based on the event, the second option is most likely.

⁴⁷ Gyaltsap completed the reading transmission of Kangyur scriptures in 1604, after which no further teachings are reported. In 1619, Chökyi Wangchuk visited the Gyalstap's kudung stūpa and made offerings (Belo 434).

⁴⁸ Most probably he was Lungtok Raptan (lung rtogs rab bstan), the second incarnation of Sangyé Nyenpa.

⁴⁹ Gangkar (gangs dkar) is a place near Lhasa, Ü-Tsang region, which was ruled under Phakmodrupa.

⁵⁰ His father allowed travel at four or five years of age, under the guidance of the Ninth Karmapa (See "Relationship with Kyura Family" in chapter 2). The voyages appeared brief and limited in distance. This context implies independent travel, devoid of supervision.

⁵¹ "North" in this context possibly pertains to Jang Ngamring Monastery (byang ngam ring dgon) and the surrounding region, which is located in the upper Tsang region (see fn. 146).

⁵² Usually, the process of *drakor* (*dra skor*) begins by a rising intellectual who dispatches letters to many renowned scholars to attend a great debate, in which, one set a basic premise (*dam bca'*) based on primarily the four topics

learned *geshés* (*dge bshes*)⁵³ from nine major monasteries, such as Palkhor Chödé (*dpal 'khor chos sde*),⁵⁴ Kyangdur (*rkyang 'dur*), Jashong (*bya gshong*), Thupten (*thub bstan*), Tashi Lhünpo (*bkra shis lhun po*),⁵⁵ Serdokchen (*gser mdog can*), Dratsang Chenmo (*gra tshang chen mo*), Sungrap Lingpa (*gsung rab gling pa*), and Dreyül Kyetsal (*'bras yul skyed tshal*). Most of the monasteries were associated with the Geluk sect. To prove his memorization skills in authoritative scriptures, Shamarpa gave an assembly oral test (*tshogs rgyugs*)⁵⁶ with thirty-six types of texts, which covers the ten fields of knowledge. As it is said⁵⁷ in his own words:

Humbly I memorized categories of [treatises]:
 A commentary on *Prajñāmūla: Prasannapadā*,⁵⁸
 The [root verses] and auto-commentary of *Madhyamakāvātāra*,
 The *Lalitavistara*, *Viṃśatīalokā*, *Spuṭhārtha*,⁵⁹
 Commentaries on the *Uttaratantra*, and *Sūtrālaṅkāra*,
 Which are memorized categories related to the *Perfection of Wisdom*.
 The *Vinayavastuṭīkā*, its autocommentary,⁶⁰
 The *Prabhāvatī*,⁶¹ and *Vinayāgama*,⁶²
 The categories related to the monastic discipline.

(*bka' bzhi*): the perfection of wisdom (*phar phyin*), the middle way view (*dbus ma*), the monastic discipline (*'dul ba*) and the treasure of knowledge (*mdzod*). To triumph, one must successfully defend a viewpoint of associate doctrine with logic and reasoning. In the beginning it is called “*dra skor*” and later it is known as “*dam bca' bzhaḡ*” (a gathering to assert/defend one’s viewpoint). This tradition is believed to be derived from Sangphu (*gsang phu*) Monastery, the main seat of Kadampa School (Sherap Gyatso 50; Dobi 140; Jamyang 68).

⁵³ A spiritual friend or a monastic degree for nuns and monks in Geluk sect, which can be equivalent to doctorate.

⁵⁴ Palkhor is situated at Gyangtse, Shigatse, founded by Chögyal Raptan Künsang Phakpa in 1413, and hosted sixteen quarters for monks, which included Sakya, Geluk, and Shalu (Dungkar “*dpal 'khor chos kyi sde chen po*”).

⁵⁵ Tashi Lhünpo, founded in 1447 by the First Dalai Lama, is the main monastery of Pañchen Lama’s incarnations in Shigatse, Central Tibet. The logical text of the Sixth Shamarpa might have been first discovered here.

⁵⁶ According to the monastic tradition, completing an assembly test was considered as a final graduation requirement, which might take several days to conclude (Losang Samten 100–102).

⁵⁷ In Tibetan literature, the phrase “as it is said” (*ji skad du*) is used instead of specifying the source; of course, this convention poses a challenge in determining the quote’s exact origin. The practice may be adapted from Sanskrit literature, known as *yathoktam* (according to what has been stated).

⁵⁸ Candrakīrti’s (ca. six–seventh c.) *Clear-word Commentary on the Fundamental Verses of the Middle Way* or *Mūlamadhyamakavṛttiprasannapadā*

⁵⁹ Āryavimuktisena’s (sixth c.) *Illuminating the 25,000 Verses* (*nyi khri snang ba*) refers to *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* and *Prajñāpāramitā Illumination of the Twenty-five Thousand Stanza Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* and Haribhadra’s (late eighth c.) *Spuṭhārtha*, *Clear Meaning*, a short commentary on Maitreya’s *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*.

⁶⁰ Kalyāṇamitra or Dharmamitra’s (ninth c.) *An Extensive Commentary on Basis of Vinaya* (*'dul ba (gzhi) rgya che ba*) on Guṇaprabha’s *Vinayamūlasūtra*.

⁶¹ Śākyaprabha’s (eighth c.) *Illuminating commentary on the Verses for Novices of the Noble Mūlasarvāstivādins* or *Āryamūlasarvāstivādiśrāmaṇerakārikāvṛttiprabhāvatī* and its commentary *'dul ba 'od ldan gyi TI ka*.

⁶² One of the Four Divisions of Vinaya Scripture, the other three being *Vinayavastu*, *Vinayavibhaṅga*, and *Vinayauttama*.

As for *Abhidharma*: the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, *Youthful Play*,⁶³
Abhidharmasamuccaya, and *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇam*.⁶⁴
 As for *pramāṇa*, the *Four Branch Treatises*,⁶⁵ *Nyāyabindu's* commentary,
Pramāṇavārttikāśvavṛtti and the *Ocean of Literature on Logic*.⁶⁶
 A partial section of the field of medicine,
 The grammatical treatise: *Kalāpasūtra*,⁶⁷
 The arts and crafts treatise: *Mirror of the Sun*.
 The autocommentary to *Inner Topics: Clear Meaning*,⁶⁸
Stainless Light, and *Summary of Conduct*.⁶⁹
 The above thirty-one categories of texts are
 remembered clearly on the tip of my tongue.
 Now, following are the categories which are mostly [known by heart]:
 The commentary composed by Ācārya Vinītadeva
 on *Nyāyabindu* and *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition*.⁷⁰
 Sapaṇ's autocommentary of the *Treasury of Valid Reasoning*.⁷¹
 Śākya Chok's composition of *Seven Works: Ocean of Speech*,⁷²
 Darma Rinchen's commentary on *Logic*,⁷³
 Those mentioned above are mostly related to logic.
 Further, Gadong's commentary on *Three Sets of Vows* etc.,⁷⁴
 The [other] texts that [I] studied were beyond expression. (trans. mine)⁷⁵

⁶³ Vasubandhu's (ca. fourth c.) autocommentary on the *Abhidharmakośa* and the Ninth Karmapa's (1556–ca. 1601/3) commentary on Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Abhidharma*.

⁶⁴ Vasubandhu's *Summary of Five Aggregates* (*phung po lnga bo 'i rab tu byed pa*).

⁶⁵ The later four treatises of Dharmakīrti's (ca. seventh c.) *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition*—namely *Hetubindu*, *Sambandhaparīkṣa*, *Samtānāntarasiddhi* and *Vādanyāya*.

⁶⁶ Dharmakīrti's autocommentary on the *Pramāṇavārttikā* and the Seventh Karmapa's (1454–1506) commentary on Dharmakīrti's four chapters concerning logic and epistemology.

⁶⁷ Durgasiṃha's (ca. eighth c.) *Kalāpasūtravṛtti* or *Kātantrasūtravṛtti* (*cha bsags kyi mdo*), a principal Indian grammatical (*śabdavidyā*) treatise translated into Tibetan by Lotsawa Drakpa Gyaltsen (1242–1346).

⁶⁸ The Third Karmapa's (1284–1339) autocommentary on *The Profound Inner Meaning: Illuminating the Profound Reality* (*zab mo nang gi don gsal bar byed pa 'i 'grel pa*).

⁶⁹ Kulika Puṇḍarīka's (Rigden Padma Karpo, 176–76 BCE) commentary on the Kālachakra Tantra known as *Mahābhāṣya Vimalaprabhā* and Āryadeva's (ca. first–third c.) *Lamp that Integrates the Practices* (*spyod bsdus sgron me*), a *Treatise on the Sum Total of Mysteries* (*Guhyasamāja Tantra*).

⁷⁰ A commentary to *The Drop of Reasonings: Benefit to the Disciples* (*rigs thigs kyi 'grel pa slob ma la phan pa*) (Vinītadeva composed commentaries to all *The Seven Treatises* of Dharmakīrti) and a commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Nyāyabinduprakaraṇa*.

⁷¹ Sakya Paṇḍita Künga Gyaltsen (sa kya paN+Dita kun dga' rgyal mtshan; 1182–1251), alias Sapaṇ (sa paN).

⁷² Śākya Chokden's (1428–1507) *tshad ma rigs pa 'i gter gyi rnam par bshad pa sde bdun ngag gi rol mtsho*.

⁷³ The work on logic could be either Yakrong Darma Rinchen's (g.yag rong dar ma rin chen, 14th c.) commentary on *Pramāṇavārttika* as Lamminger stated (35), or Gyaltsap Darma Rinchen's (rgyal tshab dar ma rin chen, 1364–1432) commentary, *tshad ma rig gter dar Tlk dang bden gnyis kyi dar Tlk*.

⁷⁴ *sdom gsum rab dbye 'i TlkA sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa dar zhing rgyas par byed pa 'i thabs rten 'brel bzang po* is a commentary on Sapaṇ's work by Gadongpa (dga' gdong chos rgyal dpal bzang; b.14–15th c.).

⁷⁵ His memorized texts in Wylie: *ji skad du/ nyam chung bdag gis bzung ba 'i rim pa la// dbu ma rtsa she 'i 'grel pa tshig gsal dang // dbu ma 'jug pa rang 'grel dang bcas pa// rgya rol nyi snang 'grel pa don gsal dang // rgyud bla mdo sde rgyan gyi 'grel pa rnams// shes phyin phyogs kyi bzung ba 'i rim pa 'o// 'dul ba rgya cher 'grel dang rang 'grel dang // 'od ldan dang ni 'dul ba 'i lung rnams te// 'di rnams 'dul ba 'i phyogs kyi gzung ba 'i rim// mdzod kyi rang 'grel gzhon nu rnam rol dang // kun btus phung lnga 'i rab byed mngon pa 'o// yan lag bstan bcos bzhi dang*

After several days of reasoning and citing scriptures, Chökyi Wangchuk's audience developed faith in him, establishing his reputation as a famous scholar in Tibet. Several other notable scholarly exchanges warrant introduction here. Gatsal Shungluk Lingpa (dga' tshal gzhung lugs gling pa) and others discussed Dharma with him, and all the scholars touched his feet with veneration. Similarly, during a visit of Dechen Yangpachen (bde chen yangs pa can) and Zadam (za dam) monasteries, he recited memorized texts (*'dzin chos*) flawlessly in front of the Lingpa assembly. Furthermore, when other Tibetan Buddhist scholars could not respond to the debate initiated by thirteen proponents of Indigenous Bön (bon) tradition from Menri (sman ri) Monastery, he effectively countered their arguments using Bön reasoning and scripture, which made them believe, whereupon they showed deep reverence by bowing and touching his feet.⁷⁶ In terms of his philosophical view, he affirmed the Eighth Karmapa's *Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka*; however, he did not accept the concept of disapproval alone (*thal rgyang*) (Belo 418–421).⁷⁷

rigs thig 'grel// rang 'grel rigs gzhung rgya mtsho tshad ma'i skor// gso rig phyogs la rags pa'i rim pa dang // sgra yi rig pa cha bsags mdo dang ni// bzo rig bstan bcos nyi ma'i me long dang // nang don rang 'grel 'grel pa don gsal dang // 'grel chen dri med 'od dang spyod bsdu te// de ltar sde tshan sum cu rtsa gcig rnam// da lta lce la blangs shing gsal bar bdog/ da ni phal cher song ba'i rim pa brjod// slob dpon dul ba lha yis mdzad pa yi// rigs thig 'grel dang rnam nges 'grel pa dang // sa paN gyis mdzad rigs gter rang 'grel dang // shAka mchog gis mdzad sde bdun ngag mtsho dang // dar ma rin chen gyis mdzad tshad ma'i 'grel// de rnam phal cher song ba tshad ma'i skor// sdom gsum 'grel pa dga' gdong gyis mdzad sogs// bltas pa'i rabs la brjod kyis mi langs so// zhes pa rang lo bcu drug gi thog tu bris pa'o zhes 'byung // (Belo 419–20).

⁷⁶ The same incident is interpreted differently in Yeshe Dronma's work: "Thirteen of the most learned Bönpo priests regarding him as a formidable threat to their religion, jointly challenged him to a debate. In defeat, they all became Buddhists" (33). It has not been cited; it may be derived from an oral interpretation or account.

⁷⁷ Tibetan Buddhist philosophers all accepted Candrakīrti's *Prāsaṅgika Madhyamaka* School, based on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, and its interpretation of emptiness based on *Prajñāparāmitā*-literature; however, the specific understanding varies among scholars within each school. Belo's one-sentence statement on Sixth Shamarpa's view serves as a foundational piece of information, but Belo did not delve deeper into this context, leaving two central questions unanswered (429). What was the view of the Eighth Karmapa? and, why did Chökyi Wangchuk negated the concept of disapproval alone? First, according to Situ Pañchen, the Eighth Karmapa was a proponent of emptiness-of-other view—the Shentong *Madhyamaka* School—which is founded by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé (Rheingans 2017, 105). The definite answer of the second part might be clarified in the Chökyi Wangchuk's *General Meaning of Madyahmaka* (*dbus ma'i spyi don*), though the existence of the text is uncertain. Generally, the disapproval alone view, in essence, refers to the Middle Way proponent's focus on dispelling or refuting opponents' distorted perspectives during debates. It is enough to present only the consequence system of the contradictory statement (*'gal ba brjod pa'i thal 'gyur rkyang pa*) to demonstrate the unnecessary nature of opponents' counterarguments, which are established as true reasons from their own side but considered

On the Move

Chökyi Wangchuk, besides being a promising scholar, had a peripatetic nature and began traveling at the age of five, which persisted to the end of his days. In the forty-six years of his lifespan, he visited over 255 places, including Inner Mongolia (sog, hor), Jang ('jang, Lijiāng), and Nepal (bal yul). In Tibet, he extensively explored almost all regions, reaching places like Mount Kailash, Namtso Lake, Kokonor Lake, the Yellow River, and Mount Minya Gangkar (see appendix. C, table 1). Some of the most often visited places were monasteries (*dgon*), retreat centers (*sgrub sde*), lakes (*mtsho*), caves (*phug*), and mountains (*gangs*). Most of his visits entailed conferring teachings and/or empowerments, fulfilling all the wishes of worldly and religious matters in every region. Through an analysis of the biography's language, his journeys can be loosely condensed into four activities: he was invited (*dan 'dren*), travelled via (*brgyud de*), travelled to (*phebs*), and went on pilgrimages (*gnas gzigs, mjal*). He travelled widely: for example, the biography mentions forty-seven sacred pilgrimages.

Bonding with the Tenth Karmapa

When Chökyi Wangchuk was nineteen, the Ninth Karmapa passed away. Shortly after, the Shamarpa predicted the place and region where the future emanation body (*sprul sku*)—the Tenth Karmapa (1604–1674)—would be reincarnated (424). Six years after his rebirth, Shamarpa visited Tsurphu Monastery and informed Garpa (*sgar pa*)⁷⁸ and others that the Tenth Karmapa had been born in Golok (*mgo log*) and that they needed to invite him (429).⁷⁹ However,

superfluous logical syllogisms. When defending the Middle Way position using an assertionless approach, proponents provisionally acknowledge the inferential understanding of common knowledge instead of trying to influence philosophical knowledge to establish common ground and generate valid cognition (Serdok “dbu ma thal rang” 64–67).

⁷⁸ The Great Encampment (*sgar chen*) accompanied the Karmapas. Its members, known as Garpa (*sgar pa*), held attendant rankings, and carried out diverse religious duties. This tradition began with the Fourth Karmapa, thrived under the Seventh Karmapa, and concluded with the Tenth Karmapa (Dungkar “sgar chen 'dzam gling rgyan”).

⁷⁹ Golok ('go log) is an area in Amdo, northeast Tibet.

Shamarpa prophesied how Chakmo Goshri and Gedün Yangri (yang lcags gnyis) would plot wicked plans (431).⁸⁰ As predicted, Chakmo bribed (*bstabs*) the officials (*nang so*) with one hundred offerings; the trip to Mongolia was disrupted as is described later in the “Visit Mongolia and Kings” section (432). Finally, around 1618, an auspicious connection coincided between the master and his spiritual son. From this moment onward, the conditions (*tshogs*) of hindrance were completely expelled (422). At age twenty-one, Shamarpa fully ordained Karmapa according to the essence of the three statements (*tshigs gsum rim nod kyi bsnyen par rdzogs pa*)⁸¹ and named him “Palden Chöying Chökyi Dorjé Trinlé Ngönpar Thowé Pal” (dpal ldan chos dbyings mchog gi rdo rje ’phrin las mngon par mtho ba’i dpal) (447). Then, in 1628 (Earth-Dragon), when Karmapa departed on pilgrimage to Mount Kailash, Chökyi Wangchuk went to see him off, and they experienced situations like not being able to separate (552).⁸² While Shamarpa was in Kathmandu, he sent a person to deliver an Indian mongoose to Karmapa (455). In return, Karmapa sent people to offer tsok-feast (*tshogs ’khor*, Skt. *gaṇacakra*) (456). After Shamarpa’s tour of Nepal, Karmapa came to receive him at Trodé Tashi Gang (spro bde bkra shis sgang), prostrated, and made offerings (*mjal rten*) to the large rock, on which yogī Milarepa (1052–1135) was sitting when Gampopa (1079–1153) met him for the first time. Shamarpa shared many practice experiences (*spyad cha*) in India⁸³ and Nepal with Karmapa. In short, for over a decade, the young Karmapa received a wide range of teachings from the Shamarpa, but

⁸⁰ Chakmo Goshri or Lama was the chieftain of Chakmo in Golok district, who colluded with the two members of Yangri family: Gendün Yangri (dge ’dun yang ri) and Yangri Trungpa Shakrokpa (yangs ri drung pa shag rogs pa). They subjugated, 1608–1614, the child Karmapa and his family for their personal gain (Shamar Rinpoche 83; Mengele 26–57).

⁸¹ A liturgy in Vinaya, during which one consecutively receives the three words of individual liberation precepts (*bslab tshigs gsum*) for *upāsaka*, *śrāmaṇera*, and *bhikṣu*. Thereby the individual is formally considered to be “*upasampadā*” or fully ordained (Serdok “sdom pa gsum” 519–20).

⁸² This closeness may be attributed to their deep friendship, their teacher-student relationship, or the profound spiritual bond they shared.

⁸³ Although Chökyi Wangchuk wished to visit India before and after arriving in Kathmandu, auspicious coincidences did not come about. Hence, he never visited India. Belo was aware of it; as such, he might be sharing an experience from his previous lives when stating that he “missed India” (Belo 453, 435).

most of the recorded teachings were related tantra rather than sūtra. For instance, he received initiation of *The Ocean of Sādhana*s (*Sādhana*sāgara or *sgrub thabs rga mtsho*), empowerments of Dorjé Drolö (rdo rje gro lod) and Mahāmāya, and instruction of Kālacakra, Jinasāgara, and Mahākāla (448–449).⁸⁴ Their final interaction took place on the day of the Shamarpa’s death as described in the “Passing into Nirvāṇa” section below.

Preserving and Establishing Institutions

The Sixth Shamarpa had a close relationship with three monasteries: Tsurphu, Thil, and Yangpachen which were visited twenty, nine, and fourteen times, respectively. After being recognized as the reincarnation of the Sixth Shamarpa, he was enthroned at the above three monasteries (418). After a journey, he returned to one of these three places, but his duration of stay in each place is not reported. He conferred many empowerments, teachings, and vows to the resident monks of these three monasteries. Yangpachen was his main monastic seat (*gdan sa*), and as such he had special responsibilities: he appointed Balé Rabjampa (ba le rab ’byams pa) as the eleventh abbot (*khan rabs*) of the center (447).⁸⁵ Many of his Tsurphu visits were related to Karmapas while Thil visits were for the purpose of pilgrimage, offering tea and/or monetary alms (*mang ’gyed*) (418–440). In terms of establishing institutions, Chökyi Wangchuk founded at least two monastic colleges in Tibet—Thupten Dongak Nyingjé Ling (thub bstan mdo sngags snying rje gling), and Lekshé Ling (legs bshad gling).⁸⁶ He also established a new monastic

⁸⁴ *Sādhana*sāgara is “a distinct collection of 245 short liturgies,” centered on a wide range of deities. See *Ocean of Sādhana*s: read.84000.co/section/O1JC76301JC21626.html. Accessed 3 Mar. 2023. Dorjé Drolö is a wrathful form of Guru Padmasambhāva and one of his eight manifestations.

⁸⁵ After the biography of Fourth Shamarpa, twenty-three brief biographies of line of abbots (*khan rabs*) in the Yangpachen monastery was included in *The Rosary of Crystal Moon*, which invites further research why Belo paid extra attention to the monastery. It started with Gedün Sanpo, which was second in the succession of abbots and ended with the XXIV abbot Goshri Karma Döndrup Ningpo (Situ Pañchen 1972, 624–634).

⁸⁶ Thupten Ling was “the largest religious centre in Tibet [zam brag rdo rje’i spo] at that time,” founded in 1593 (the eleventh day of the seventh lunar month, Water-Snake year); it might have been named after his student, Nyingjé Lingpa (Douglas and White 84–85; Belo 418; Lamminger 91). Lekshé Ling was a college of philosophy (*mtshan*

community in the forest of Küntu Sangpo (443). All of these *vihāras* (monastery or temple) were directly under his spiritual guidance and several spiritual exchanges were made there.⁸⁷

Meetings with Indian Scholars

The encounters with Indian scholars (*paṇḍitas*) tantric practitioners (*yogīs*), ascetics (*saṃnyāsins* or also spelled *sannyasins*), and priestly-caste scholars (*brāhmaṇas*), exclusively among males, become more prevalent during the latter phase of Shamarpa's life. These gatherings reflected his Sanskrit and Tibetan language skills (both translations and spoken), his realizations, and his fame in India. All but one of the thirteen events took place in Tibet, with one in Nepal. The first encounter occurred around 1618 while Chökyi Wangchuk was composing the final note (*mjug byang*) and colophon (*par byang*) of the Lijiāng Kangyur ('jang bka' 'gyur).⁸⁸ He had a discussion with a one-handed *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita* (a high caste scholar), a proponent of sage Vyāsa's philosophical view, who was heading to Candradvīpa.⁸⁹ With an immense faith, the *paṇḍita* requested him for words of advice. Honoring the request, Chökyi Wangchuk composed “*sarvajāti*” (any form of birth) and other verses in Sanskrit and translated them into Tibetan. The *paṇḍita* was filled with contentment when he received the verses written in Lantsa script.⁹⁰

All the visualizations dissolve in absence of apprehension,
All the winds entangled in the aperture of Brahmā,
All the realizations held by the hook of mindfulness,

nyid bshed gwra) at Penyül Zadam ('phan yul za dam), in which, the sūtras and tantra were studied extensively (Belo 447).

⁸⁷ It seems Chökyi Wangchuk founded another monastery. In 1629, he performed a ground-breaking ritual to establish a *vihāra*. Then with his instruction, the secretary Lodrö Norden (drung yig blo gros nor ldan) and hundred students visited Chubar, founded a *vihāra*, which consists of a deity temple (*lha khang*), protector temple (*mgon khang*), and monk's quarters (Belo 448; Lamminger 116). Check fn. 36 for his Lijiāng temples.

⁸⁸ Exact dates of the meetings could not be determined due to the lack of specific mention in Belo's work, and some years were out of chronological order. Therefore, the word “around” has been added before certain dates in this section to indicate approximate timelines.

⁸⁹ Candradvīpa, a small island off the southern coast of Bangladesh, was once a thriving kingdom known for its Buddhist sites. Ācārya Candragomī (ca. late seventh century), a renowned Indian Buddhist scholar, was banished to this place by king of Varendra for declining to marry his daughter (“84000 Glossary”; Losang Chödrak 1187).

⁹⁰ Lantsa (*lany+ dza*), developed in 11th century, also known as Ranjana or Kuitla script, is identical to brāhmī script. It was mainly used for scriptural writings, such as Chökyi Wangchuk's *byang chub sems dpa'i rtoḡs pa brjod pa 'khri shing gi me tog* which is written in this script (“Ranjana script”).

The mind free from activity is the Completion Stage.
 Alas, all the sentient beings are constrained by views,
 On the horse of wind, the personified mind moves,⁹¹
 Indulging in that causes *samsāric* pleasure and pain,
 When the bondage is broken, one is liberated. (trans. mine)⁹²

In 1620 at Khangsar Go (khang sar mgo) in Gyalthang (rgyal thang), Shamarpa had a lengthy conversation with another brāhmaṇa priest, who was a follower of Devadatta.⁹³ As a result, the stories of previous lives (Skt. *avadāna*) of Bodhisattva Kṛikī were completely translated into Tibetan by Chökyi Wangchuk (446). Next, in 1618, near Yartö (yar stod), Shamarpa discussed many teachings in Sanskrit with paṇḍita Chikjungwa (cig byung ba), who was from Godā(varī) valley, India. During their meeting, Shamarpa translated some scriptures (*śāstra*), including the previous life account of Bodhisattva Kṛiśi (442). Around 1623, Cintarūpa (a spiritual friend of Rāhula, the caretaker of Vajrāsana) arrived in Tibet, who was famously acclaimed as a *siddha* (*grub thob*, “accomplished one”) and entreated as the preceptor of Western Mongol (stod hor) King and others. Chökyi Wangchuk received Cintarūpa’s petition letter (*zhu yig*), enclosed with precious rosary beads. He translated the poetic Sanskrit letter into Tibetan:⁹⁴

⁹¹ In the tantric philosophy of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, consciousness is likened to a rider on a wind-horse, moving towards its objects, while thought is compared to a person. The subtle wind element and appearance of consciousness are considered formless and unified, working in harmony like mixing butter into butter (Choné Drakpa 417–18).

⁹² *Sarvajāti* verses in Wylie: *bskyed pa thams cad dmigs su med par bsdu/rlung thams cad ni tshangs pa'i lam du bcings//rtog pa thams cad ni dran pa'i lcags kyes zung //yid la byar med 'di ni rdzogs pa'i rims pa'o//kye ma kyi hud sems can thams cad lta bas bcings//rlung gi rta la rtog pa'i skyes bu g.yo//yid la byas pas bde sdug 'khor bar rgyu//bcings pa grol ba de tshe thar pa yin//* (Belo 435–36).

⁹³ He was possibly a proponent of a view held by a cousin brother of Buddha Śākyamuni.

⁹⁴ The context indicates the letter was written by Cintarūpa in Sanskrit, possibly under the instruction of the King Hülegü’s (1217–1265) successors, who were Kagyü followers (see Samten and Martin’s *Letters for the Khans: Six Tibetan Epistles for the Mongol Rulers Hülegü and Khubilai, and the Tibetan Lama Pagpa*, 305–11). Probably, the first verse expressed a traditional reverence to the Mongol King, whereas the middle lines were metaphorically ascribed to Chökyi Wangchuk, who possesses qualities like the Buddha Śākyamuni, and the last verse represents the composer’s modest notion. Given Belo’s wording, i.e., having received it (*'byor bar*), Chökyi Wangchuk should be the one who translated it into Tibetan. Here, “the Path of Guru” (*bla ma'i lam*) possibly refers to the profound method, e.g., Guru Yoga in Vajrayāna Buddhism, in which the mind of practitioner mingles with the enlightened qualities of deity and guru. I did my best to translate the letter closer to meaning, whereas the more literal translation is difficult to make sense. For example, the last verse: “All the deeds that I have done: have received on an illuminating day, no need for the presence of doer: how could one not protect on the day?”

O Glorious One, your governance unites,
 To accomplish an even greater triumph,
 Bind thoroughly all that is heard in the Northern Land,
 To the form of Dharma.
 The crown[-jewel] of ordained and lay people,
 The guru of beings, god of gods,
 The aspiration prayer maker, master of masters,
 Your auspiciousness is famous among,
 The supreme Śiva and demons,
 Even kings who are ornamented with fame
 Would revere even a fragment of your saffron-colored robe.
 The practices that I have done,
 Have been received from the guru [sun] from afar.
 The guru need not be near [while practicing].
 How could one [the King] not practice from afar!
 Cintarūpa added, as for this, having mastered the Path of a Guru like an illuminating day,
 I have realized the ultimate guru. (Belo 446, trans. mine)⁹⁵

Subsequently, in 1629, a noteworthy encounter occurred in Nepal. Keṣogiri, a paṇḍita from India, greeted Shamarpa in Kantipur (Kathmandu), and they engaged in a Dharmic discussion.

Shamarpa asked Keṣogiri about bondage and liberation, and the paṇḍita replied in Sanskrit:

“*bhutā tam aba man* [sic], etc.” Then, Shamarpa translated the versified saying into Tibetan:

Mind arises from elements and from the mind
 The senses arise, based on an object,
 Attachment towards what is appealing, hostile towards what is unappealing,
 And other mental acts perpetuate blatant pride,
 [Abstraction] arises from it and [mind] is thus bound.
 One withdraws each [sense from external] objects,
 Through breath control and fixation, one cultivates mindfulness,
 Based on one-pointed concentration which arose from solitude,
 A yogī, who is repeatedly trained in absorption,
 Is liberated: not being moved by arising of faculty. (Belo 454, trans. mine)⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Cintarūpa's poem in Wylie: *dpal ldan khyod kyi srid pa ni// rnal 'byor de las rnal 'byor gyi// dang po srid par bsgrub de na// byang gi yul du gang thos pa// chos kyi sku can legs par sdom// ser skya 'dra rnams kyi cod pan// 'gro ba'i bla ma lha yi lha// smon lam smra ba bdag po'i bdag/ mchog gi dbang phyug bdud dang bcas// snyan grags kyi ni bkra shis can// khyab bdag grags pas brgyan rnams kyang // gang gi ngur smrig na bza' ni// de yi grwa la'ang phu dud byed// bdag gis byas pa'i las rnams ni// las byed nyid na mi dgos te// gang gis nyin mo'i dus blangs pa// de yi nyin mor cis mi bsrungs// 'di ni bla ma'i lam las nyin mo bzhin bdag gis chub par byas nas bla ma'i yang dag pa'i rtogs pa'o//* (Belo 446).

⁹⁶ Based on the yoga order presented in verses, the six-fold yoga that includes the terms withdrawal, breath control, fixation, meditation, absorption, and judgement (Skt. *pratyāhāra*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, *saṁādhi*, and *anumṛti* in Buddhist forms of *śaḍaṅgayoga*, respectively) may correspond to the final six stages of the eight-fold

As a result of this discussion, the paṇḍita was encouraged to follow the Buddha’s doctrine and its way. Based on the Buddha Śākyamuṇi’s fasting practice (*gso sbyong*), Chökyi Wangchuk taught many teachings to the paṇḍita, who was filled with faith (Belo 454–45). The same event is noted in the *Travelogue to Nepal* (see fn. 96).

Moreover, seven other partially substantial interactions with yogīs, saṃnyāsis, and brāhmaṇas from India were reported upon, in brief. Chökyi Wangchuk conferred the pre-novice vows (*bar ma rab byung*) to the yogī Rāhula Jaya in Sanskrit. Following this, he met with two saṃnyāsis, one of whom was Jhaṃghama, and two Chinese monks (Pīnyīn: *héshangs*).⁹⁷ Subsequently, they received teachings along with several other yogīs and were furnished with a travel guide/permit (*lam yig*) for a yogī from Kāśīpura (Vārāṇasī). Sathāsiva, a knowledgeable *saṃnyāsi* (renunciate) from Vārāṇasī, who had studied three grammar texts authored by Kalāpa, Candrapa, and Sarasvatī (sgra ka tsan dbyangs gsum), was persuaded to convert to Buddhism. Additionally, Mālavidyā, a brāhmaṇa yogī, demonstrated several physical exercises, (possibly related to tantra) to him. Later, he was granted an audience with fifty saṃnyāsis, including the

yoga (*aṣṭaṅgayoga*) as described in the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali (“Shadangayoga” 2023). During their encounter, Keṣogiri elaborated on the principles of the six-fold yoga through Sanskrit verses and discussed the necessity of utilizing the conventional term for egolessness. Lamminger reported that Chökyi Wangchuk presented above views (151, 190), but Belo’s work implies that the verse may have been written by Keṣogiri (454). See also the *Travelogue to Nepal* fols. 28b–29a. In *Dispelling the Shadow of Doubts* (*dogs gcod mun sel*), Jonang Scholar Tāranātha (1575–1634) critically analyzed Keṣogri’s verses in detail. Given the Sanskrit expertise of the Sixth Shamarpa, Tāranātha firmly asserted that this is not one of his works since it consists of several mistranslations on each line and lacks understanding in the views of non-Buddhist doctrine (255–292). The English translation has adhered close to the Belo’s version rather than Tāranātha’s analysis, which is not focus of this research.

Both Sanskrit and Tibetan versions of Keṣogri’s poem were recorded in the *Travelogue to Nepal* (f. 28b):

*Bhūtātmanotbholbamantindabīṣhayatsaryaḥ, balkusyātrāgābalkudveṣhanyatabhimanāditsaḥ,
deshograhmīdamātdzanamtathātathābhanbhanamdesāḥ, pratihāradaphrāṇābeshadhārāṇātrīṣṭānusmṛitaḥ,
nghanbibiktardzātyeikāgrasamādhisaramaparaḥ, bhalbalbhenyogenḍrabhūtatsalantabimuktaḥ.*

When the *Travelogue to Nepal* and Belo’s Tibetan versions were compared, some minor spelling discrepancies were noted: *’byung ba rnams las yid ’byung yid las ni/ dbang po byung bas yul la spyod par gyur// yid du ’ong la chags dang mi ’ong las// sdang dang gzhan las nga rgyal yul nye bar// len de las skyes ’di de de ltar ’chings// yul rnams so sor sdud dang srog rtsol dang // ’dzin pa de las dga’ ba rjes su dran// dben las skyes pa’i bsam gtan rtse gcig tu// ting ’dzin yang yang goms thob rnal ’byor pa// dbang po ’byung ba g.yo med rnam par grol//* (qtd. in Belo 454; Lamminger 191).

⁹⁷ In Chinese Buddhist traditions, “*héshang*” refers to a Buddhist monk or a venerable monk.

aforementioned yogī Jhaṃghama, who were presented with gifts and *lam yig*. The gathering acclaimed him with twenty-five verses (Skt. *śloka*), each composed by a renown paṇḍita, each verse of which he responded to in kind (Belo 439, 443–44, 446).⁹⁸

Relationship with the Rulers of Tibet

The Sixth Shamarpa shared various dharmic connections with many levels of officials in Tibet—two *desis* (*sde srid*) and more than nine *depas* (*sde pa*).⁹⁹ At age five, the Ninth Karmapa and Shamarpa were invited to Gangkar and presented many offerings by the senior minister (*dpon chen*) of Yartö: Karma Songsten Tsangpa (karma srong btsan tshangs pa) and his son, as well as Depa Chongyépa Topgyal (*sde pa 'phyong rgyas pa stobs rgyal*) and his brother. Then Depa Narthang from Samdruptsé (*bsam 'grub rtse*, the old name of Shigatse in Tsang) received teachings on several occasions and showed great respect to him (442). Besides them, there are seven other Depas who had interactions with him:

Table 1. Exchange with Depas and Desis

Depas	Exchanges	Location
Phodrangpa (pho brang ba)	received poetry teaching and offered winter provisions	Namgyal (rnam rgyal) and Khyung (khyung) Districts
Rinpung (rin spungs)	received <i>upāsaka</i> vow	Serkha Drukdo ¹⁰⁰
Khuwön (khu dbon)	had two audiences	Gangkar (gangs dkar)
Chamdral (lcam dral)	received longevity empowerment	Nakartse (sna dkar tse) ¹⁰¹
Kurba (skur ba)	invited Shamarpa	Yartö (yar stod)
Peljungwa Könchok Trinlé Gyatso (spel byung ba dkon mchog phrin las rgya mtsho)	offered districts and estates (<i>rdzong gzhi</i>)	Nyide Monastery
Desi Jangpa (<i>sde srid byang pa</i>)	offered an extensive offering	Ngamring District

⁹⁸ The content of (the now inaccessible) twenty-five verses is interpreted as an invitation to India by Yeshe Dronma: “Twenty-five of the greatest panditas residing in Bodh-Gaya, invited to teach the Dharma” (33).

⁹⁹ Desi is a title for a political leader during the time when a shared power of religious and secular rule was prevalent in Tibet. It could also encompass a range of positions, including kings, regents, heads of government, and regional in charge (Shamar 231; Dungkar; Shang Yisun “*sde srid*”). Depa was an official position in Tibet, akin to a governor or territory chief. Its origin is traced to the Indian concept of “*deva*” (god). E.g., the Mauryan Dynasty’s final emperor, Aśoka (ca. 304–238 BCE), was titled Devānāmpīya, meaning “beloved of the gods.” In Tibetan, this term was adapted as *wa* (*de wang*) instead of *va*. Initially, Depa was used for appointed roles among western Tibet’s Ngari (mnga’ ris) kings, later extending to those of Rinpung, Nedong, and Tsangpa (Rangjung; Dungkar “*sde pa*”).

¹⁰⁰ At Serkha Drukdo (gser kha drug rdo), Chökyi Wangchuk sang a spiritual song. See Appendix B, T2.

¹⁰¹ One of the thirteen districts in the Lhokha (lho kha) region, southern Tibet.

Unlike Depas, his relationship with Desis seems closer and accounted in more detail. Here, Desi refers to Tsang Desi Phuntsok Namgyal (gtsang sde srid phun tshogs rnam rgyal, r.1618–1620) and Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (bstan skyong dbang po, r. 1620–1642), who are also sometimes addressed as Depa. Belo reports ten interactions between two Desis and the Sixth Shamarpa, which are related to teachings, offerings, and mediation.

Tsang Desi Phuntsok Namgyal might have met Shamarpa five or more times. First, Desi invited Shamarpa to Namling, where the Shamarpa fulfilled the wishes of Depa and some ministers. For instance, he did a mediation (*chings*) between the rulers of Tsang and Mongolia (*sog po*) and performed funeral rite (*rjes sgrub*)¹⁰² for the noble lady of Desi Tsangpa (422–425). In return, Tsang Desi made a large offering and brought about unshakeable faith towards the Shamarpa (419). Their Dharmic relation is reflected in the passage:

With a precious formal attire (*rin chen rgyan sprod*), Desi came to receive him; they visited Gyantse. He offered tea and distributed monetary alms (*ja gral*) to the monastic community including the abbot of the abbey and others and spent one and half months there. Desi made a great offering to him. He conferred empowerments—of Combined Sādhana of the Three Roots, White Tārā, Avalokiteśvara, and Ocean of Jinas, etc.—to Depa Phuntsok Namgyal... [As a gesture of gratitude] Desi offered many offerings to him. (441, trans. mine)¹⁰³

Like his father Desi Phuntsok, Tsang Desi Karma Tenkyong Wangpo invited the Sixth Shamarpa at least five times. Most of these visits were related to Dharmic activities, such as Shamarpa conferring longevity empowerment and reading transmission of the Eighth Karmapa's collected works (443–450) upon the Desi. Except for the last invitation in the Earth-Dragon New Year celebration (1628), the Desi usually met the Shamarpa and the Tenth Karmapa together.

¹⁰² Besides these rites, Chökyi Wangchuk performed six other funeral rites (*rjes sgrub*)—for Ponsa (dpon sa), Depa Topgyal, Depa Drakhapa (grag kha ba), Sangri Ponsa, Jewon, and the Ninth Karmapa (Belo 418–57).

¹⁰³ The term “*rin chen rgyan cha*” refers to the attire of Tibetan kings. It consists of a set of thirty-four precious ornaments and is worn only during a special occasion like New Year or on an official visit (Dungkar). The word “*ja gral*” stands for “*mang ja*” and “*gral 'gyed*,” which is an offering of tea and monetary alms served for gatherings of more than four (fully ordained) monks. Refer to fn. 106 for tea offering details.

Visiting Lijiāng and Printing Kangyur

The relationship between the Lijiāng King Satam (’jang sa dam)¹⁰⁴ and Shamarpa lasted over twenty-three years and are documented in a series of communications which are described in this section. In 1604 (Wood-Dragon year), the first delegate of King Satam arrived with offerings (Belo 424). Then in 1609, Chökyi Wangchuk received a letter from King Satam, requested to borrow a Kangyur (bka’ ’gyur)¹⁰⁵ manuscript and was invited to edit the recently completed copy (*phyi mo*) of Kangyur in Jang. In the following year, two more delegates (*gdan ’dren pa*) of Jang King arrived (428–29). To the first group, Chökyi Wangchuk handed over a copy of Kangyur canon (429). In the same year, the first welcoming party (*ja ’dren*) of Jang King arrived.¹⁰⁶ “The wealth of gods and human beings showered down like rain, beyond articulation and measure” (435). By 1620, the Jang King had completed the printing of Lijiāng Kangyur edition and it was taken to Khangsar Go.

¹⁰⁴ Satam Gyalpo Karma Chimé Lhawang (sa dam rgyal po karma ’chi med lha dbang). The Satam position was conferred to the ruler of Lijiāng during the Ming dynasty (Shang Yisun “*jang sa dam, N.*”). Presently, Jang region refers to the West of Yúnnán territory, which includes Tali and Lijiāng. “Jang” is also referred to as “Jiang.”

¹⁰⁵ The Word of Buddha, translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan. There are many versions of cannon editions, such as Peking (1410), Jang (1608–1621), Derge (1729–1733), Choné (18th CE), Urga (1908–1910), Narthang, and Lhasa (1920), an average of 108 volumes comprises them. See Lijiāng Kangyur Project section in chapter 3.

¹⁰⁶ The term “*ja ’dren*” is mentioned several times in this biography, and its meaning can be inferred from the context. Generally, it refers to serving (*’dren*) tea (*ja*) to a monastic assembly or the public. Adding “*pa*” to the phrase “*ja ’dren*” transforms it into the term for the individual who serves the tea. However, according to Belo’s usage of the term and in the traditional Tibetan hospitality context, it may mean a series of welcoming reception protocols that take place prior to the arrival of especially important person at the venue. The reception process can involve one to three stages, depending on the level of hospitality: a short-distance reception, a medium-distance reception, or a long-distance reception. E.g., the welcoming party from Riwoché arrived in stages (*ja ’dren snga phyi rnams rim par ’byor*) (see *dpal ldan stag lung pa ’i gsung rnams nor bzhi bang mdzod*, 2007, p. 20. BDRC: MW1PD166109). The receptionists who welcome guests in advance may travel by horseback for distances ranging from half a day to three days. The welcoming points may vary slightly between villages, such as a mountain peak or base. In some exceptional cases, receptionists may ride for months to welcome the guest, such as a welcoming party of Jang King—all the way from Jang to central Tibet—came several times to invite or make offerings to Chökyi Wangchuk. The receptionists usually camp on the way to welcome the guest with ceremonial scarves, butter tea, fresh foods, and tribute offerings. For example, extravagant offerings were made when the Jang King’s first group of the tea parties (*ja ’dren*) arrived to receive Chökyi Wangchuk (Belo 434). Based on the discretion of the host, status, and influence of a person, either one or all three services may be adopted for certain guests, representing the degree of respect. The fact that Chökyi Wangchuk received all three types of reception from the King of Lijiāng, as seen in this chapter, implies that he was greatly revered by the king. In this sense, the expression “*ja ’dren pa*” seems to overlap with other phrases in the biography, such as *spyān ’dren pa* or *gdan dren pa* (invite someone), *chibs bsu* (ride to welcome someone), and *phebs bsu zhu ba* (go to welcome someone arriving) (Belo 429, 431, 434).

Finally, in 1621, “the King of Satam came with the power of his tremendous wealth, as though he were competing with Śakra,” the king of the gods in the Desire Realm, to receive him (436). The next day, a preliminary ritual (*rabs gnas sta gon*) commenced for the consecration of Kangyur. On the following day, he performed the main part (*dnegos gzhi*) of the ritual, which was followed by uttering the verses of auspiciousness. A miraculous sign appeared, such as an encircling of white light. Then, the priest and patron (*mchod yon*) together visited Jang (436–37). After that, he secretly embarked on a pilgrimage to Kāśyapa’s meditational place—Bird Foot Mountain (ri bo bya rkang, Pīnyīn: Jīzú Shān).¹⁰⁷

Then, when he returned, the King of Jang came to receive him when visited the Great Stūpa and they visited the palace of Gobé (mgo sbas kyi pho brang). At Chuna Koṭa (chu na ko Ta), he celebrated the New Year and made aspirational prayers. He conferred the empowerment of Mahākāla, Jinasāgara and Vārāhī (nag rgyal phag gsum) and many other initiations to the king. He instructed the Mahāmudra and an introduction to the three bodies (Skt. *trikāya*). Zuriwa (zur ri ba) and others read out the Kangyur of Tsalpa. One day, he was invited to the Dharma throne of Bashé Palace (sba shes pho brang) where he was honored with a grand reception from the king. Having sat on the throne, he gave public discourse on ten virtues to the people of Jang with the help of Chinese and Lījiāng interpreters. He directed many towards the path of benefit and happiness, such as on the contrary to the ten non-virtuous like sacrificing life, [they adopted] reciting the Six Syllable (*maṇi mantra*), and practice fasting. (Belo 437, trans. mine)

In 1627 (Fire-Rabbit), the representative of the Jang King arrived to present him with the inaugural copy of canon printing (*phud*), symbolizing the utmost reverence, thereby concluding the project that had been in progress for eighteen years, since its inception in 1609 (Earth-Bird) (447).¹⁰⁸ Given its complexity and importance, this subject has undergone a more comprehensive exploration from varying perspectives in the “Lījiāng Canon Project” section of Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁷ Bird’s Foot Hill is popular pilgrimage site for Tibetan and Nāxīs is in Dali Prefecture, Yúnnán Province, which is deemed as residence of Srāvaka Mahākāśyapa (Lamminger 80).

¹⁰⁸ A common Buddhist tradition of offering the first and foremost portion (*phud*) to the Three Jewels or high lamas before one utilizes or consumes them, such as grain, food, or texts.

Visiting Inner Mongolia and Kings

Chökyi Wangchuk established a bond with the Mongols when he was around eighteen years old by mediating between them and Tsang Desi.¹⁰⁹ Since then, he had numerous interactions with both kings and common people. According to Belo's work, Chökyi Wangchuk may have visited Mongolia twice, once before and once after Karmapa's enthronement in 1611. This suggests that his first visit possibly took place in either 1604 or 1610, with the second visit occurring in 1611. If the visit in 1610 occurred, it would have been relatively short. However, it is worth noting that Khadan (kha dan) was the first Mongol Lord to meet him in Central Tibet.

[In 1604,] he was invited by Sok King Khadan. The King came to welcome him near Sky-Lake (gnam mtsho). In front of a nomad's tent on the meadow, he conferred a longevity empowerment to Khadan. The King offered a hundred horses, a hundred yaks (*nor*), a hundred sheep, and five-hundred sacks of salt. He performed extensive acts of cultivating virtue and shunning wrongdoing in these regions. (425, trans. mine)

Subsequently, Chökyi Wangchuk visited Mongolia in response to invitations and receptions from various lords. In 1610, while he was revisiting Okmin Karma Göñ ('og min karma dgon) in Kham, the invitees (*spyān 'dren pa*) from Sok arrived (430). The visit unfolded as follows:

In Laptö [of Tsang], the messenger of Thumé (thu med) arrived. The king came to welcome him at Jathang ('ja' thang, hor yul). The patron and priest stayed together at Nyida Sumdo (nyi zla gsum mdo). The King Chechen Deching (che chen de'i ching) presented hundreds of offerings etc. He conferred the empowerment of [Vajra]vidāraṇa and longevity upon him. (431, trans. mine)

¹⁰⁹ In this paper, the terms Sok (sog), Hor, and Inner Mongolia (gnang sog) have been used interchangeably. Sok and Hor are historical names that refer to territories in the western regions. During the 17th century, Mongolia was divided into regions ruled by warlords, such as Kholoji (kho lo ji, whose title was Dai Ching), who referred to themselves as "kings." Kholoji's region of control in Mongolia corresponds to present-day Inner Mongolia (Shamar Rinpoche 100). Due to limited resources and variations in the names of Mongol lords, it is challenging to identify them precisely. However, based on their dates and affiliations, two notable figures emerge. First is Ligdan Khan (1588–1634, r. 1603–1634), the last king of the Chahar Mongols in southeastern Inner Mongolia, who was a patron of Kagyü Tibetan Buddhism in Chakar. The second figure is Choghtu Khong Tayiji (1581–1637), a noble from the Northern Khalkha tribe who supported the Karma Kagyü School in the Amdo region and assisted Ligdan's campaign. The tension between the two factions can be summarized as follows: "Since the end of 15th century, supported by the Pagmodru regime, Tumet tribe, and Khoshut tribe, Gelugpa had struggled with Karma Kagyü and the Rinpungpa regime, the Tsangpa regime and Choghtu Khong Tayiji from Northern Khalkha behind it for over a hundred years" (Chao, Zihao, et al. 8).

In 1611, Thüme and Yongshophu (yong she phu) came to invite the Tenth Karmapa and Shamarpa.¹¹⁰ Upon agreeing to visit Mongolia, some deceitful individuals invited the Karmapa to a Bön Monastery, which would cause a disruption in their travel plans. Despite this, Chökyi Wangchuk embarked on the journey, accompanied by the Fifth Situ and monks of Surchok Monastery (zur lcog) (432). They visited many places en route and around. Upon their arrival at Ratuk Drak (ra thug brag), they were greeted by a welcoming escort (see fn. 106). The next day, King Chechen Deching and about 800 attendants approached to receive them and made a great offering at Chagar Bulak (cha gar bu lag). In return, Shamarpa performed the Red Crown ceremony (432). Belo delineates the historical meeting in the subsequent manner:

The Mongol faction made extensive offerings to him in those regions. King Kholoji presented thousands of each offering: horses, dzé tak, dzö, and yaks.¹¹¹ He wore his crown; the king and his retinues were exhorted to act virtuously. They were matured toward the *maṇḍala* of Kālacakra and Jinasāgara. He visited the great plain of Achen Thang. He was invited, hosted, and served by King Chechen Deching. (433, trans. mine)

His relationships were not limited to Mongol lords; Shamarpa had close interactions with the Mongol people as well. For instance, in 1625, many people of Chahars (cha gar) and Khalkha (khar+kha)¹¹² tribes arrived at Tsurphu Monastery to see him. He conferred the initiation of *The Hundred Means of Accomplishment* (*sgrubs thabs brgya tsa*) upon them (448). Even in Kathmandu, four Mongols from Lahore offered him a gun (*me mda* ') and a shield (*phub*), both of which he accepted (454).¹¹³

¹¹⁰ Thüme probably refers to Tümed, a Tümed Mongol leader or subgroup that may have been linked to Tümed Kholoji (16th century).

¹¹¹ Dzé tak (*mdzed thags*) could not be translated as it is absent in dictionaries. The context suggests it refers to animals, yet word “*thags*” (weave or web) do not align with it. Dzö (*mdzo*) is a crossbreed between a male yak and common cow.

¹¹² Chahars and Khalkha are two of the seven Mongol tribal groups known as “*khal kha tsho pa bdun*” in the north and south, respectively (Dungkar).

¹¹³ Lahore is a city in the present-day Pakistan, where Mongol conquests were robust before it came under Mughal Empire between 1524–1752. Offering a bow, arrow, and gun to Lama symbolizes renunciation of violence; the hunter Gönpö Dorjé did this act in front of Milarepa (Jabb 98–99). This may not be the case for everyone; for

Visiting Nepal and Kings

In Earth-Dragon year 1628, Shamarpa received a letter from the Nepali King to which he responded in Sanskrit, writing in the Nāgarī script (452).¹¹⁴ Soon, he set off for India and Nepal, with the residents of Chubar Retreat Center (chu dbar sgrub sde) joyfully escorting him for a short distance (*skyel thung*).¹¹⁵ During his travels, he visited many sacred places, such as the Godāvarī and the caves of Lapchi (la phyi).¹¹⁶ The Minister of Kantipur (ye rang), Mānapiṣa, accompanied by many servants, came to receive him (452).¹¹⁷ At first, he went on a pilgrimage to Boudhanāth Stūpa and other places in Kantipur (Kathmandu). Later, Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla (1620–1661), the King of Kantipur, along with his *ācarya* and the public, came to receive him with offerings and various symbolic items.¹¹⁸ The king officially received him on multiple occasions, during which he dispatched two elephants each time to welcome him. The Lord himself rode on the elephant and chanted the five hundred aspirational prayers of Buddha (453). As requested, Shamarpa granted blessings and talismans to five people, including the King and Prince Pradhāna Malla.

On another occasion, Chökyi Wangchuk received an invitation to visit the palace of the

instance, some Europeans arrived in Ü-Tsang area and offered a gun to Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (zhabs drung ngag dbang rnam rgyal, 1594–1651) in the early 17th century (Gedün Chöpel et al. 98).

¹¹⁴ The text does not explicitly mention the name of the inviter, but given their status in Nepal, it appears to be Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla. During that period, it seems that Sanskrit was indeed used for religious texts, rituals, scholarly works, and written correspondence, while the vernacular language spoken by the general population was Newari or Nepali, both of which exhibit the influence of Sanskrit.

¹¹⁵ Chubar, a place near the foothill of Lapchi (la chi) mountain range, is considered “a major mountain pilgrimage route in border region of Nepal and southern Tibet” where yogi Milarepa and the Chökyi Wangchuk passed away (Rangjung “*chu dbar*”). However, it is important to note the inaccuracy of several recent online works which state that “he eventually passed away in the mountains of Helambu” (“Approaching Vajrayogin”). Chubar and Helambu are not geographically proximate.

¹¹⁶ According to the *Foundation of All Tantras, The Great Sovereign Compendium* “Emergence from Samputa” (chapter 5, v.5.7), Godāvarī is one of the four auxiliary *pīṭha* (*nye ba'i gnas bzhi*), “a place where yogin’s and yoginīs congregate.” See 84000 Reading Room: read.84000.co/translation/toh381.html. Accessed 13 Jan 2023.

¹¹⁷ Mānapiṣa was the Malla ruler of Lalitpur, Siddhi Narasimha (1620–1661?)

¹¹⁸ Malla was the eighth ruler of Malla Dynasty. Since the early 15th century, Nepal was divided into three small valley-kingdoms—namely Kantipur (Kathmandu), Lalitpur (Patan), and Bhadgaon (Bhaktapur) (Sijapati 13–18).

Kantipur King, where he was presented with numerous offerings, including a treasury of pearls. Additionally, Chökyi Wangchuk had interactions with various Nepali kings and individuals throughout his travels. One such example is when he met with King Vikramaśāhi, the King of Go, who disguised himself as a commoner to receive the Sixth Shamarpa's instruction (*'bul nod*).¹¹⁹ Moreover, the craftsmen of Kantipur held Chökyi Wangchuk in high regard, inviting him to their community and venerating him for his wisdom and knowledge. Finally, after two months in Nepal, during which he fulfilled the wishes of the kingdom's kings, ministers, and subjects, the king bade him farewell in early 1630.¹²⁰ He returned to Chubar via Paltsok (dpal tshogs) and Gangyul (sgang yul) in Yölmo Gangra (yol mo gangs ra), celebrating the Iron-Horse (1630) New Year on the way. Karmapa came to receive him at Trode Tashi Gang (Belo 455–56; cf. “Primary Sources and Authorship” section in chapter 2).¹²¹

Offerings and Their Utilization

Beginning with his installation as Shamarpa, Chökyi Wangchuk received many offerings of material wealth. Belo recorded thirty-four occasions of offerings by ministers and rulers of Tibet, Lijiang, Mongolia, and Nepal. Those who made offerings included disciples, spirits, Indian *ācāryas*, Chinese *héshang*, and a young girl. The offerings consisted of three types, including animals, goods, and rituals: horses, yaks, sheep, calves, feasts, jewels, salt, gold, fabrics, scarves, saffron, a gun and shield, supportive rituals (*zhabs brten*), and dances. Some items were offered in copious quantities. For instance, as mentioned above, the Mongol King offered a hundred horses, a hundred yaks (*nor*), a hundred sheep, and five hundred sacks (*rgyab*)

¹¹⁹ Vikramaśāhi (1602–1631) was an early 17th century king of the Kalyāla Dynasty of the Jumla Valley.

¹²⁰ The king refers to Lakṣmīnaraśimha, accompanied by the Crown Prince Pratapa Malla, who escorted him up to Boudhanāth Stūpa (Ehrhard 130). Belo did not specify Shamarpa's duration of stay in Nepal, but based on the *Travelogue to Nepal*, it took him about four months, including travel time. Refer to pages 58–59 for more.

¹²¹ The innermost part of Yölmo's sacred site is known as Paltsok. Trode Tashi Gang is the former abode of Götsang Rechen (rgrod tshang ras chen) (Ehrhard 131).

of salt (425). Similarly, the King of Lijiang “showered the wealth of gods and human beings like rain” (435). During the 1618 (Earth-Horse) New Year celebration in Tibet, Chökyi Wangchuk displayed numerous exceptional objects as part of his blessing exhibition (*mjal kha*), including a pearl red hat gifted by Jang King, and a variety of scroll paintings (*thang ka*, Skt. *paṭa*) from India and from China (440).

Interestingly, Belo explicitly documented what he did with some of the material offerings; some of his activities indicate how he might have used them. In Tibet, he presented a silver crown, a bundle of offering bowls (*ting phon*), and a cloak to the sacred (*rtsa ris ma*) statue of Lord Marpa (443), as well as presenting some uncut high-quality brocade and a golden *maṇḍala* to the reliquaries of Tsurphu Monastery. He frequently distributed tea and monetary alms when visiting monasteries. In addition, he renovated the three shrine objects (*rtan gsum*) of Thil monastery (427), restored the stūpa of Taksang (stag bzang),¹²² constructed the statues of Mahādeva (lha chen), and placed a white right-spiraling conch between the eyebrows of statue, which had been offered by the Chinese King to the First Karmapa (433, 441). Notably, around 1624, Chökyi Wangchuk extended an invitation to Karmapa in a prominent public setting, presenting him with the entirety of religious headquarters, Great Encampment, and all associated major and minor institutions, including estates, with the exception of a few immediately required possessions (443). Further, he established a new monastic community when he visited the forest of Küntu Sangpo and offered all the endowment for the support of a religious establishments (*chos gzhi*) of big and small monasteries in Tibet, Nepal, and Lijiang (443). Finally, in Kathmandu, he offered a golden parasol to Svayambhū stūpa (*shin kun*), but he noted that “it was not stable due to a blustery wind.” Thus, he constructed jewel vase ornamented *torāṇas* (*bum pa*

¹²² Taksang is the Ninth Karmapa’s birthplace, situated in eastern Tibet.

nor bu rta babs, “gateway arches”) in the four directions, to enshrine the statue of five families of Buddha (455).¹²³

Influential Diplomatic Mediator

A skill in diplomacy seems to be one of the outstanding aspects of the Sixth Shamarpa, who was involved in the early 17th century political realm. He conducted negotiations between Tibetan monasteries, regional lords, and factions, and a mediation between Tsang Desi, the ruler of central Tibet, and a Mongol warlord. Between the ages of 18 and 35, he resolved a total of 12 conflicts, including addressing three wars (*dmag 'khrug*), eight internal conflicts (*nang 'khrugs*), and one lawsuit (*kha mcgu*). Only a few events were described in any detail, including what happened and how he intervened or resolved the disputes. Three incidents are briefly described. First, in 1608, in order to resolve a conflict between Okmin Karma (kar) and Surmang (zur) Namgyaltse Monasteries, Chökyi Wangchuk employed a three-step approach, which involved sending his representative followed by summoning Lama Kham Nyön (kham smyon) from Kar and Pönlop from Sur to a meeting at Sorak Monastery.¹²⁴ After performing a *khram* ritual,¹²⁵ they were able to reconcile their differences and establish a friendship (431). Second, in 1618, to bring an end to the war between Riwoché's and Chamdo, Shamarpa sent his treasurer with numerous goods, including silks and brocades, to compensate for the loss of property and people on the Riwoché side. As a result of this gesture, both sides were able to reconcile and become close friends. Third, around 1618, Shamarpa dispatched his clerical brother (*grog mched*) Lama

¹²³ I could not find any work discussing the remnants of these two contributions. In general, the design of a *torāṇa* is derived from ancient Indian stūpa architecture, which usually includes four stone gateways and surrounding railing, as seen around the Sanchi Stūpa. Later, *torāṇa* evolves to four major styles in India, China, Tibet, and Japan (84000 Glossary; Dungkar). In general, it is a decorative archway symbolizing welcome and good fortune.

¹²⁴ Kar and Sur (dkar zur) possibly stands for Okmin Karma ('og min karma) and Surmang Namtsé (zur mang nman rtse) monasteries. Namkha Ösel was the first incarnation of Dzogchen Pönlop (d.1726).

¹²⁵ A wooden tablet in which one's wishes, or petition are engraved ("*khram*", def, 2, *dag yig gsar bsgrigs*, dictionary.christian-steinert.de/).

Sambrup (bla ma bsam grub) to settle a disagreement between Tsang Desi Phuntsok Namgyal and Depa of Kyishö (skyid shod) (440).¹²⁶ Regrettably, it is unclear whether he was able to effectively resolve the disagreement as the outcome is not mentioned. In addition, there are two recorded instances of mediation related to the public. The first involved saving the lives of numerous individuals when Tsangpa surrounded Neudong Dzong (sne'u gdong rdzong), and the second involved securing the release of numerous prisoners from jail (442, 450).¹²⁷ Table 2 provides a summary of all mediation or reconciliation efforts in a concise format.

Table 2. The Twelve Mediations

Year	Verses	Tensions	Outcome	Belo
1601	Tsang Desi vs Mongol (sog po)	war (<i>dmag 'khrug</i>)	mediated (<i>chings</i>)	422
1603	Geluk vs Kagyü School	conflict (<i>'khrugs pa</i>)	unsettled	424
1604	Öshöpa ('od shod pa) vs Drigung	war	mediated	425
1608	Shokhawa (zho kha ba) vs Orangwa (o rong ba)	fight (<i>'khrug pa</i>)	reconciled (<i>sdums</i>)	427
1608	Kar vs Sur monasteries	dispute (<i>zlos gzhi</i>)	reconciled	431
1609	Hor and Töpa (stod pa) ¹²⁸	internal fighting (<i>nang 'khrugs</i>)	reconciled	429
ca.1618	Riwoché vs Chamdo	war	reconciled	439
ca.1618	Khyungpo vs Riwoché	dispute	reconciled	439
ca.1618	Tsangpa and Kyisho	lawsuit (<i>kha mcgu</i>)	unknown	440
1618	Horchang vs Lagön (bla dgon)	conflict	reconciled	433
1619	Dhol vs Dhol (mdol), Dartsedo	internal dispute	reconciled	433
1619	Nyang Khangba of Kongpo vs Phrakmi	dispute	reconciled	433

Exemplary Followers

In Belo's text, the five categories of Chökyi Wangchuk's disciples are listed in the next section of his biography. The groups are as follows: (a) fourteen principal disciples; (b) sixteen

¹²⁶ Kyishö is a valley below the Lhasa River. Based on the information available, it appears that Belo only documented Chökyi Wangchuk's successes and achievements and did not mention his failure to mediate a war between Mongols and Tsang Desi in 1621 (Mengele 281).

¹²⁷ The conflict could potentially be attributed to a regional faction or lord from Tsang, as it was under the rule of Central Tibet. Nedong Fort, located in southern Tibet, was ruled by the Phakmodrupa family who controlled Tibet during the 14th and 15th centuries. Nedong is one of thirteen districts in the Lhokha region.

¹²⁸ People from Western Tibet are referred to as Töpa. Dartsedo is a district located near the southeastern border of Tibet and China. Khyungpo is an area in eastern Tibet, specifically in Kham. Moving on, Kyisho is a picturesque valley that lies below the Lhasa River.

disciples of higher rank followed the Vinaya vows; (c) eighteen learned disciples; (d) seventeen scholar-yogin disciples; and (e) fourteen sponsors and general disciples (see appendix A for a complete list of disciples). The total number of disciples is seventy-nine, but this is not a comprehensive list as each category is followed by *la sogs pa* (“etc.”) (Belo 457–58).

Prolific Writer

The Sixth Shamarpa is well-known for his great writing skill, having composed praises, commentaries on sūtra and tantra, spiritual songs, and practice-related texts. The circumstances of his compositions are noted, usually after he has experienced visions, been granted, or received teachings, and completed retreats. Despite this contextualization, the specific date or location of these compositions are not mentioned in Belo’s biography. One of Chökyi Wangchuk’s earliest works is seven verses in length, which was composed to prove his memorization skills in authoritative scriptures. Then, having had visions of Mañjuśrī in twelve different forms, he subsequently wrote twelve different praises, which can be found on the “Pure Visions” section. Around this time, he composed several philosophical treatises which distinguished between the internal and external phenomena (*phi nang gyi dbye ba*), which go unnamed. In total, Belo reports twenty-eight compositions, which are mainly related to sūtra, vinaya, and tantra.¹²⁹ Besides these, he sang thirty-three spiritual songs (*mgur*);¹³⁰ most of these were sung after having visions, pilgrimage, restorations of monasteries, or short and long meditations. Only the first line of each of these spiritual songs is recorded. However, Belo inferred that his is not the complete list of Chökyi Wangchuk’s compositions. Belo cites two reasons for this incompleteness. First, there are several instances where he is described as composing texts, but

¹²⁹ With few exceptions, Belo did not write the original title of texts but described them in relation to his topic.

¹³⁰ *Gur (mgur)* is a subgenre within the broader *lu (glu)* genre of religious songs. It is characterized by its experiential components, including realizations and/or instructions. Milarepa played a significant role in promoting this genre in Tibet (Braitstein, 125–26).

their names are not mentioned. For example, he wrote many texts after renovating the three shrine objects (*rten gsum*) of Thil Monastery which are not identified. Second, the term *sogs* (etc.) appears at the end of several titles, which indicates that there were further works beyond those mentioned. This matter is further discussed in the “Collected Works” section of chapter 2 and appendix B.

Artistic Works

The Sixth Shamarpa’s artworks include statues, mural painting, blueprints, and others. Ten works are mentioned, most of which were created in monasteries. One of the Shamarpa’s earliest works was created around age nineteen, when he made a statue of Māyāsaṃvara (424). After that, he handmade (*phyag bzo*) several other statues, including a statues of the Ninth Karmapa, Śrīdevī (dpal ldan lha mo), and Mahādeva, along with complete inner filling of the First and Ninth Karmapa’s statues.¹³¹ In addition, he made a shrine torma (*rten gtor*) of Kṣetrapāla as his representative in the assembly hall of the White Lake in Tsari (Belo 428, 435).

In terms of drawing, Chökyi Wangchuk painted Mahākali (Śrīdevī), Mahākala, and Damchen Garva Nagpo (ma mgon mgar) in the Secret Mantra Temple (gsang snags lha khang), as well as an image of the *Eight Thousand Verses Sūtra* (*brgyad stong pai mdo ris*) in a shrine hall, and more (436).¹³² Additionally, he created three blueprints (*skya bzo*) for the Nyi

¹³¹ Chökyi Wangchuk “hand-made and painted a small clay statue of himself, blessed and consecrated it,” in which he depicted himself with both hands in a meditative stance. The statue still exists to this day in Rumtek Monastery (Douglas and White 147; Shamar R. 66–68). Additionally, he is closely associated with a selection of artifacts comprising two thangkas and three statues dating back to the 17th century. In the first thangka, he is depicted with his right-hand gesturing in a teaching mudrā (gesture) while clutching a sacred text in his left hand. The depictions include Kurukullā, the Fifth Gyaltap, the Fourth Surmang Trungpa Kūnga Namgyal (kun dga’ nram rgyal, 1567–1629), Karma Chakmé, and two unknown figures (Belo 417; Watt). In the second thangka, Chökyi Wangchuk is shown holding a book in his right hand and performing the mudra of explication with his left hand (Watt). Notably, in the statues, Chökyi Wangchuk assumes an earth-touching (Skt. *bhūmisparśa*) mudrā with his right hand while adopting a meditative posture with his left (Patel 2017). Another self-portrayed (*rje nyid kyi phyag nas*) statue shows him with a teaching mudrā on the right hand and a vase on the left (Watt). The red hat is most commonly portrayed.

¹³² Damchen Dorjé Lekpa Garwa Nakpo (dam can rdo rje legs pa mgar ba nag po), the blacksmith who rides goat, is a worldly protector, who is also the attendant of Dorjé Legpa.

Monastery, including a shrine room (*lha*), temples for the protector (*mgon khang*), and Vaiśravaṇa (*rnam sras khang*) (451). He also gave oral instructions on how to build a Chinese-style hermitage at the crag of Jasang (*bya bzang brag*).¹³³ There are two more works which seem to have been commissioned by him. First, he commissioned a brocade thangka of Jinakāya—made from an over seven hundred uncut (*yug*) rolls of fine silk (*bzang gos*)—in accordance with the story (*gleng gzhi*) of the *Hundred Thousand Verses of Prajñāparāmitā* at the *viḥāra* of the late Satam Öser (*za dam 'od zer dam pa*) in Phen valley (*'phan yul*). Second, he made a great curtain (*gos yol chen mo*) at Tsurphu Monastery, which was fabricated from fine textile materials, and inscribed with *Ten Topics* (*gnas bcu*) (Belo 439–40, 448).¹³⁴

Passing into Nirvāṇa

After traveling around Nepal for about three years, on the fourth day of the second month (*dbo zla*) of Male Iron-Horse year (1630), Shamarpa suddenly became ill. Karmapa requested his encampment (*sgar*) and other monasteries (*chos sde*) to perform an extensive healing ceremony (*sku rim*). Karmapa focused his mind intently and prayed for his teacher's long life. There were many developments in the course of his illness, including remission (*dangs pa*), and then increased severity of symptoms. Finally, his wisdom mind dissolved into the sphere of reality (*dharmadhātu*) on the morning of the 28th day of the ninth month (*tha skar*) of the same year (November 2, 1630).¹³⁵ His bodily remains (*sku gdung*) were invited to Tsurphu. The final rites were performed according to the testament of the First and Fifth Shamarpa. They instructed to

¹³³ It is not clear from the context whom he instructed: probably Nyinje Lingpa or monks from central Tibet.

¹³⁴ The *Ten Topics* refers to the presentation of the thirty-third chapter of *Avatamsaka Sūtra*.

¹³⁵ Some sources reported Chökyi Wangchuk died in 1629 or c.1635 (Chodrag Tenpel; Nālandā 164; Karthar Rinpoche 5, 138). These two distinct dates are circulating on both offline and online works, yet the source for these dates is unknown (cf. fn. 39).

place the whole remains inside a pure white stūpa.¹³⁶ As per established instructions (*gtan tshig*), the precious remains were cast with pure silver and enshrined in the Descended from Heaven Stūpa,¹³⁷ which was completed under the supervision of the Tenth Karmapa (Belo 456–457).

II. Inner and Secret Biography

Instructions, Transmissions, and Empowerments

Maintaining an unbroken lineage of instructions, transmissions, and empowerments had been a central focus of the Sixth Shamarpa's life. Those which he received from various qualified teachers including Ninth Karmapa, he then conferred upon thousands of monks, incarnations, kings, and ordinary peoples—but especially upon his seventy-nine main disciples. In the early part of his life, he gave many teachings related to sūtra. At age sixteen, he gave extensive instructions on and transmitted fourteen fundamental sūtras:

He provided textual instruction on various works, dedicating two to three days to each of them. The texts included the *Commentary on Valid Cognition* (*Pramāṇavārttikā*); *Ornament of Clear Realization* (*Abhisamayālaṃkāra*); *Compendium of Abhidharma* (*Abhidharmasamuccaya*); monastic discipline (*'dul ba*); *Treasury of Valid Reasoning* (*rigs gter*); *Three Sets of Vows* (*sdom gsum*); *Root Verses on the Wisdom of the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*); *Introduction to the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakāvatāra*); *Treatise on the Sublime Continuum* (*Mahāyānottaraśāstra*); *Ornament of the Great Vehicle Sūtras* (*Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkārikā*); *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmakośa*); *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* (*Bodhisattvācāryāvatāra*); *Kālacakra Tantra* (*dus' khor*); and finally, after explaining the *Compendium of Logic* (*Pramāṇasamuccaya*), he composed a commentary on it (Belo 420–21, trans. mine).

As observed in this passage, in the early part of the Sixth Shamarpa's life, he conferred more sūtra-related teachings. During the latter part of his life, he gave more teachings on tantric topics like Mahāmudrā. In addition, he gave many teachings which are not specially named, but glossed as “he taught many teachings” (455). The Shamarpa also spent a significant part of his time on

¹³⁶ Belo implied that “this same practice has been implemented for the bodily remains of the predecessors and successors of Zhamarpas,” which has been explored further in chapter 2.

¹³⁷ One of the eight stūpas (*mchod rten cha bgyed*), which represents the Śākyamuṇi Buddha's return from Tuṣitā Heaven—after repaying kindness to mother Māyādevī—to continue teaching the world.

the reading transmission (*lung*), which he offered at least twenty-nine times. For instance, he transmitted Kangyur (108 volumes), and the Collected Works of Gampopa, the Eighth Karmapa, and the Fifth Shamarpa. Finally, conferring empowerments was a prevalent work in his life: he conferred at least fifty-eight empowerments and most of them were major, including Kālacakra, Jinasāgara, and Hevajra empowerments. His biography illustrates that his interactions with monks, kings, and people primarily revolved around these three aforementioned activities.

Engaging in Spiritual Activities

Chökyi Wangchuk actively participated in various spiritual practices. At the age of thirteen, he took part in the Tenth Day ceremonial (*'chams*) dance in Gaden Mamo (dga' ldan ma mo) and continued to engage in different dances throughout his life, including those in Lakha and Chimphu (mchims phu) (Belo 429, 445).¹³⁸ He danced with Karmapa and other disciples, including Situ, Gyaltsap, and Pönlop Rinpochés (418, 428). Additionally, he was offered the Tenth Day and Vajra Dome dances (*gur gar*) on several occasions, such as in Gangkar and Yangpachen (445, 447). He taught the Kṣetrapāla dance to his tantric disciples and composed manuals for dance (*'chams yig*) and oblation rituals (*gtor 'phen*). In a dream, he experienced being offered dances by *dākas* and *dākinīs* (431, 442, 551), as elaborated in the next section.¹³⁹

His spiritual life involved extensive tantric ritual practices, including conducting *gaṇacakra* feasts according to the Guhyasamāja practice manual (*las byang*). He would perform these rituals whenever he visited holy caves such as Denma (*'dan ma phug*), Drogon (*'gro mgon phug*), Miyel (*mi g.yel phug*), Dromalung (*gro ma lung gi phug*), and Chimphu (Belo 427, 429,

¹³⁸ On the tenth day of the waxing moon, after a sādhana pūjā, a ceremonial dance of Padmākara (*slob dpon pad ma'i tshes bcu'i gar 'cham*) was performed according to the collection of teachings from the revelations of Tertön Chöwang (1212–1273) (Deu Karnak). In 1321 (Wood-Tiger), the First Shamarpa Tokden Drakpa Senggé (rtogs ldan grags pa seng ge, 1284–1349) founded Gaden Mamo Monastery in Kongpo, southeast Tibet (Takgang 960).

¹³⁹ *Dākas* and *dākinīs* are realized beings who can appear in visions, show paths, and grant accomplishments.

438, 439).¹⁴⁰ These rituals were often followed by the composition of spiritual songs (see appendix B, table 2). He was also offered *gaṇacakra* feasts on several occasions, e.g., when Karmapa sent a delegation to offer him a feast while he was traveling in Nepal (456).

Throughout his lifetime, he engaged in short and long meditations (*sgom*) and retreats (*mtsams*) whenever he visited sacred sites. The documented retreats encompass twenty-two instances of different durations: one-day retreats (one instance); one-week retreats (nine instances); and three-week retreats (two instances). Additionally, the records indicate the presence of nine retreats with undisclosed durations, alongside a single retreat that extended for a remarkable one-year span. Furthermore, he practiced fasting for fifteen days every month. In his later years, he granted Vinaya vows to numerous monks and fully ordained several reincarnations. Notably, he performed full ordination for nine distinguished individuals:

1. Gampo Karma Mipham Trinlé Namgyal (*sgam po karma mi pham phrin las nram rgyal*)
2. Tsaptsa Trülku Drupgyü Rabphel (*tshab tsha sprul sku sgrub brgyud rab 'phel*)
3. Drigung Chetsang Gyurmé Nyingpo (*che tshang 'gyur med snying po*)
4. Kharek Trülku Karma Tensung (*mkha' reg sprul sku karma bstan srung*)
5. Sangsang Neuringpa (*zang zang ne'u ring pa*)¹⁴¹
6. Chöying Dorjé, the Tenth Karmapa
7. Bodong Chimé Trülku (*bo dong 'chi med sprul sku*)¹⁴²
8. Nedo Karma Chakmé
9. Tréchung (*tre chung*) (Belo 427–450).¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Danma is a place in eastern Tibet where a practitioner Denma practiced *āyu sādhana* and accomplished self-control over birth and death (Dan 151). Miyel cave is situated in Chamlakha, Kham (eastern Tibet) and is the sacred place of yogī Seltong Shogom (*gsal stong sho sgom*; a student of Gampopa, twelfth century). His tomb can be found there (Ga Karma 299). Dromalung is a place in the northeast of Tibet. Chimphu is in east of Lhasa (60 km, 4200 ft). It has numerous retreat caves. In the eighth century, Tibetans attained siddhi under Padmasambhāva's guidance, making them the first monks of Tibet. Thus, Chimphu and Samye (*bsam yas*), located in close proximity, gained significance from the 12th century onward (Fleming 108).

¹⁴¹ His previous incarnation was a student of Drigung Kagyü master Götsangpa Gönpö Dorjé (*rgod tshang pa mgon po rdo rje*; 1189–1258).

¹⁴² Shamarpa named him Chimé Ngakgi Wangpo Choklé Namgyal (*'chi med ngag gi dbang po phyogs las nram rgyal*), and conferred upon him a state teacher title *Guóshī*, *Kālacakra* empowerment, and fulfilled all his wishes (Belo 449). Is it worth noting whether the *guóshī* title can exist independently of Chinese imperial conferment?

¹⁴³ Although the Second incarnation of Shapdrung Trého Rinpoché, Paksam Wangpo (*dpag bsam dbang po*), encountered Chökyi Wangchuk, this may be the Third incarnation, Tenzin Dargyé (*bstan 'dzin dar rgyas*, d. 1699), who received full ordination and many teachings from the Sixth Shamarpa (Karma Shenphen 104).

Perceiving Pure Visions

The Sixth Shamarpa experienced visions of Buddhas, including the Karmapa and Mañjuśrī, as well as of various deities on at least twenty-four occasions. These visions occurred during retreats and after teachings, often inspiring him to compose praises. Around the age of five, he had a vision of Buddha Amitāyus while he was doing a strict retreat at Drigung Padmā Ling (’bri gung padmā gling), which led him to offer praise for the profound blessings of the place (Belo 418). Next, while visiting Drowo Valley (gro bo lung) and engaging in retreat at the cave of Nyanya (gnya’ gnya’ phug),¹⁴⁴ he had a vision of the Ninth Karmapa Wangchuk Dorjé and expressed his spiritual experience through songs and other means (419). Another significant vision occurred at the age of sixteen when he saw Akṣobhya and recited verses such as “I, young novice Chöwang, who is fond of simplicity...”¹⁴⁵ This visionary experience lasted for a few days during which he delivered numerous teachings. Furthermore, in the vicinity of Ngélek Rinchen Ling (nges legs rin chen gling) and Ngamring Monasteries (ngam ring chos sde),¹⁴⁶ he had twelve consecutive days of pure visions of Mañjuśrī in twelve different forms: Mañjuśrī as Maitreynātha, Śākyamuni, Tārā, Sarasvatī, and Avalokiteśvara; Mañjuśrī being encircled by the assembly of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of ten directions; as Medicine Buddha; in the form of his rosary beads; as Kurukulle, Vajrayoginī, and Wrathful King Hayagrīva; and as the assembled monks of Ngamring Monastery. To each manifestation, Chökyi Wangchuk composed profound praise, for instance venerating Vajrayoginī as “the essence of bliss and emptiness of Tathāgata.” Having praised them all, they simultaneously raised their right hands in blessing gestures, and

¹⁴⁴ It is also known as Sangpuk Taknya (zangs phug ltag gnya’), where Milarepa mediated for eleven months while balancing a butter lamp on his head (Gedün Chöphel et al. 107–114).

¹⁴⁵ “Chökyi Wangchuk” is abbreviated to “Chöwang” by using the first two words “*chos*” and “*dbang*.” This method can be applied to almost any common names in Tibetan language, such as “Phagmodrupa” as “Phakdru.”

¹⁴⁶ A name of a place and monastery in upper Tsang region, which was originally a Sakya Monastery in the early 13th century but was later converted to Geluk in the 17th century (“Ngamring Chode”).

spoke thus: “May your conduct, knowledge, and other qualities become the subject of appreciation” (421). Having these twelve extraordinary visions was perhaps the most expansive and profoundly transformative experience he would ever encounter.¹⁴⁷

During his visits to sacred sites, Chökyi Wangchuk had the privilege of experiencing five more remarkable visions. At Sakya,¹⁴⁸ he had a vision of Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251) radiating a brilliant red light and was inspired to compose a praise expressing admiration for his purity: “At where your purity is...” (Belo 422). During his visit to the cave of Phakdru (phag gru, 1235–1280), he had a vision of Sachen with Khön Könchok Gyalpo (1034–1102)¹⁴⁹ on the crown, Sapaṇ (1182–1251) on the right shoulder, Phakdru on the left shoulder, Vairocana on the right knee, and Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen (rje btsun grags pa rgyal mtshan; 1147–1216) on the left knee. In this vision, they made various prophecies, one of which was: “With the name of Khar in future, you will hear of thriving *vihāra*...” (422). The other three visions included the assembly of the deity Vajrakīlaya from Anuttara Tantra, Avalokiteśvara, and the Eighty Accomplished Beings (*mahāsiddhas*). These visions manifested at Oyuk Gön (’o yug dgos sngon) Terlung Dünpa (gter lung bdun pa), and Ritsé (ri rtse), respectively (Belo 429, 447, 451).¹⁵⁰

The tapestry of Chökyi Wangchuk’s spiritual experiences was adorned with four of his

¹⁴⁷ Khetsun believes that these twelve visions should essentially be regarded as “manifesting all appearance in infinite purity” (*snang ba thams cad dag pa rab ’byams su shar*) (1977, 519). Belo recorded only the first line of the twelve different praises. The preface of Chökyi Wangchuk’s debate text (*thun mong bsdu pa’i sdom tshig blo gsal dga’ bskyed*), stated that by envisioning the union of Mañjuśrī, father and mother consorts, he achieved mastery in the skills of explication, debate, and composition, gaining recognition for his inseparable bond with the esteemed Lord Mañjuśrī (2017, 6). Moreover, it appears that Chökyi Wangchuk envisioned Vajrayoginī multiple times, for instance, when he visited Sengé Monastery (seng ge dgon) and engaged in a week-long meditation retreat. It was during this period that he had a vision of Vajrayoginī (Belo 434).

¹⁴⁸ The main seat of Sakya Lineage, founded in 1073 by Khön Könchok Gyalpo.

¹⁴⁹ Sachen Künga Nyingpo (sa chen kun dga’ snying po; 1092–1158) is one of the Five Sakya Forefathers, the son of Khön Könchok Gyalpo (’khon dkon mchog rgyal po), and founder of the Sakya School.

¹⁵⁰ Oyuk is a district in central Tibet, where Padmakāra believed to subdue the twelve Tenma goddesses. Terlung, a secluded mountain in Sabu valley (zab bu lung) of Tsang, where Shangzawa hid the treatise of *rgyas pa phreng ba skor bzhi*, which interprets Padmasambhāva’s *Garland of Views* (Minyak Rongsharpa 501). Ritsé, a mountain close to Drak Götsangchen (brag rgod tshang can), the sacred place of Gyalwa Götsangpa Gönpo Dorjé (Belo 451).

spontaneous visions which left a lasting imprint on his being. First, he had multiple visions of deities and Kṣetrapāla in the form of a black cloud at Padma Shel (pad ma shel) and Tau Chulung (tau chu lung) (433). In another resplendent vision, he beheld the Ninth Lord Karmapa, seated gracefully on the left side of the Nine Deities of Hevajra (dgyes rdor lha dgu) (434). He also experienced a vision of Śambhala and Kalki (rigs ldan), in which he was bestowed with a jeweled crown (*cod pan*). During this vision, teachings were conveyed to him through the gesture of a lady (*brda chos*) who was acting as a representative of the king. Accounts also mention his reception of numerous answers (433). Late in his life, he witnessed *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs* performing dances while Lord Milarepa smiled warmly, adorned in a ceremonial robe (Skt. *saṃghāṭi*). The intensity of the vision led him to lose awareness of his immediate surroundings, marking it as one of his final visions (Belo 451).

During the later years of his life, Chökyi Wangchuk was seen by his student in a vision, and also had a vision while deeply engaged in his spiritual practices. The first occurred during a *gaṇacakra* feast at White Tent Cave (gur dkar phug), where his brother Rigzin Chödrak (rigs 'dzin chos grags) was present.¹⁵¹ Rigzin had a vision of numerous *ḍākas* and *ḍākinīs* participating in a tantric feast and receiving teachings from the Lord himself (Shamarpa) along with the Great Guru Padmasambhāva (ca. 700). Following this experience, Rigzin consistently had a pure vision in which he felt inseparable from the great Padmasambhāva (426).

Interactions with Non-humans

The Sixth Shamarpa's extraordinary encounters with birds, gods, and visits to spirit lands unfolded chronologically, alongside his interactions with enlightened beings. At the age of eleven, he engaged in a direct dialogue with a mystical bird at Shedrup Ling (bshad sgrub gling)

¹⁵¹ Rigzin Chödrak was one of Shamarpa's three brothers and became the First Drigung Chungtsang Rinpoche.

(418). During his visit to Dhaklha Gampo Monastery (dwags lha sgam po),¹⁵² he removed a hat from a statue and then a cloud and rainbow light appeared, and a remarkable sight (*mtshong ba don ldan*) manifested,¹⁵³ as if he were being elevated on a throne (419). When he turned seventeen and journeyed to Sky-lake, numerous miracles occurred, including offerings from Nyenchen Thanglha (gnyan chen thang lha, a native spirit of Tibet) and the presentation of a crown jewel (Skt. *cūḍāmaṇiḥ*) by the spirit of Sky-lake (422). While undertaking a pilgrimage to Bird's Foot Hill, he encountered an eccentric (*smyon ma*) Chinese nun who accused him of being an imposter Karmapa. Recognizing her as a *ḍakinī*, he acknowledged her presence (437).¹⁵⁴ At the age of nineteen, the Karmapa, Shamarpa, and Gyaltsap were invited by a class of evil spirits known as *dön* (*gdon*, Skt. *grahaḥ*), and after visiting their realm, they encouraged virtuous behavior (423). On another occasion, when Namtshodo (gnam mtsho do) lake was frozen, he issued a decree (*bka' shog*) to the lake spirit, resulting in the lake's thawing. At the age of forty-seven, during sojourn in Nepal, he explored the hidden land of Kéwa (skye ba) Valley, known as the mystical land of Oḍḍiyāna (456).¹⁵⁵ The mystical events are woven into Chökyi Wangchuk's historical life narratives and beliefs.

Imprints, Prophecies, and Recognitions

The Shamarpa held the tradition of venerating the footprints of revered beings, leaving his own imprints as a testament. One notable instance occurred after his pilgrimage to

¹⁵² This illustrious monastery was founded in 1121 by Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (sgam po ba bsod nams rin chen; 1079–1153) who was the pioneer of the monastic system within the Kagyü tradition.

¹⁵³ The term itself encapsulates profound significance, thus being referred to as “meaningful to behold,” as the mere sight or contemplation of images depicting realized beings or sacred objects is believed to bestow auspicious merit upon those who gaze upon them.

¹⁵⁴ The actual conversation unfolded as follows: the Chinese nun remarked, “He is an imposter of Karmapa who has come here,” to which Karmapa recognized her face and replied, “She is a *ḍakinī*” (Belo 437).

¹⁵⁵ Oḍḍiyāna (o rgyan) is one of five mythical sacred places located around the north-west of ancient India. Scholars disagree on whether it was a medieval territory in the Swat Valley of Pakistan, or Odisha, India (Keown 203; Rangjung). Since it was a hidden mystical land, it could be anywhere. In general, many places, caves, and mountains in India, Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet are deemed as holy sites of Padmasambhāva.

Padmasambhāva's (ca.700) sacred footprint at Gyala Sengtam (gya la seng gtam), where the Shamarpa left his first footprint (418). Further, he marked Sakyong Ling (sa skyong gling), Bo Gangkar ('bo gangs dkar), Khyungpo (khyung po), Rigyp Monastery (ri rgyab dgon), and Kantipur with his distinct foot and hand imprints (418, 445).¹⁵⁶ The Sixth Shamarpa received and bestowed prophecies on multiple occasions. The esteemed Five Venerable Supreme Masters of the Sakya School foresaw his future, as detailed in the section "Perceiving Pure Visions." A profound prophecy was revealed during his visit to Ritsé. Additionally, he prophesied the location of the Tenth Karmapa's reincarnation and the treacherous schemes devised by Chakmo (424, 431).¹⁵⁷ In 1603, he left a prophetic message and ceremonial scarf in Lhasa (See "Two Enigmatic Poems" section of chapter 3). Notably, the Sixth Shamarpa played a pivotal role in recognizing and affirming the reincarnations of significant individuals such as the Ninth Karmapa, the Fifth Gyaltsap, Dhītsa Trülku, and Thel Khenpo. Furthermore, he acknowledged the sanctity of Nedo Khédруп Karma Chakmé (449).¹⁵⁸

Conclusion

Belo meticulously chronicles the life of the Sixth Shamarpa, providing abundant detail. To maintain conciseness and thematic presentation, I have grouped together significant aspects and activities. Although some details are excluded in this narrative section, additional details can

¹⁵⁶ Here is some related information about the places or monasteries mentioned earlier. Gyala Sengtam is in southeastern Tibet's lower Kongpo. Sakyong Monastery, or Monyul Sakyong Ling, is in Dzachuka, eastern Tibet. Repgongpa's three-volume book provides detailed information on monasteries in the region (195). Minyak Gangkar is a mountain also known as "Bo Gangkar" in Minyak, Kardze, Kham (Minyakpa 100). Khyungpo is an area in eastern Tibet's Kham region. Rigyp Monastery, likely in Kyungpo, has a torma in its shrine built by the Seventh Karmapa (Belo 439).

¹⁵⁷ Belo presented the birthplace of the Tenth Karmapa as Chökyi Wangchuk's prophecy; however, the Ninth Karmapa secretly dispatched a letter to the Sixth Shamarpa, mentioning Golok as his next birthplace (Belo 424, 495; Douglas and White 82).

¹⁵⁸ Dhītsa Trülku Karma Jikten Wangchuk (dhi tsha sprul sku karma 'jig rten dbang phyug; 17th c.), who was also a student of the Tenth Karmapa (Debreczeny and Tuttle 2012 47). Thel Khenpo, an incarnation of Thil Monastery's abbot. Note that "thil" is also spelled as "thel," or "mthil."

be found in the relevant appendices. As shown in this chapter, Belo's work can be organized into two dimensions: worldly and spiritual. The worldly achievements and contributions include educational training, becoming a scholar and teacher, receiving material wealth, traveling extensively, mediating disputes, and forming close bonds with the kings and lords of Tibet, Mongolia, Lijiāng, and Nepal. Through his substantial contributions to the realms of composition, the arts, and translation, his achievements were elevated to even greater heights.

In contrast with worldly achievements, his spiritual accomplishments and contributions involve having pure visions, interacting with non-humans, leaving stone imprints, prophesying future events, recognizing reincarnations, ordaining a great number of monks, practicing meditations, fasting, going on pilgrimage, conferring tantra and sūtra instructions, reading transmissions, and empowerments to diverse groups. By receiving Kagyü transmissions from the Ninth Karmapa and passing them with complete integrity to the Tenth Karmapa, the Sixth Shamarpa became the 29th Karma Kagyü lineage holder, providing opportunities, guidance, and tools for numerous disciples to make spiritual progress.

Chapter 2: Analyzing Belo's Biography of Chökyi Wangchuk

This chapter offers a detailed critique of the account of Chökyi Wangchuk's life which appears in the second volume of Belo's *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*. The biography is divided into two distinct sections: first it narrates the life of Chökyi Wangchuk, and then it gives a comprehensive roster of seventy-nine disciples' names. This chapter conducts a critical analysis of the biography based on three areas: sources, structure, and content. First, I briefly analyze the primary and secondary sources referred to and quoted in the biography and identify their authorship. Then, I discuss the structure of the biography, including Belo's choice of language, grammatical construction, and chronological order. Finally, this chapter focusses on five points that provide a closer look at the life trajectory of Chökyi Wangchuk: family background; number of collected works; inclusion and exclusion of disciples; custom of death rituals; and omissions in the biography.

I. The Three Sources

Primary Sources and Authorship

Some sources for *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* are complete, some partial, and some are absent entirely.¹⁵⁹ Belo's biography of Chökyi Wangchuk falls into the first category, as it is based on three texts: *Raincloud of the Golden Age* (*rdzogs ldan gsar pa'i char sprin*) by Jamyang Karma Tsenlek ('jam dbyangs karma mtshan legs), *Rosary of Intertwined Jewel, A Travelogue to Nepal* (*bal yul du bgrod pa'i lam yig nor bu spel ma'i phreng ba*) by Chökyi Wangchuk, and *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels* (*rnam thar nor bu'i phreng ba*) by an unknown author. Per the colophon, Belo summarized (*bsdus te bkod*) this biography from these three sources (457). Only the travelogue is extant and available. Belo's mention of *Raincloud of the Golden Age* as the first

¹⁵⁹ While the major works in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* are accompanied by a reference to the titles of their sources, there is a noticeable lack of citation in certain minor works.

source—and the inclusion of the proper title and the author’s full name—suggests that it could actually be the primary source for the biography; this text was likely dedicated to Chökyi Wangchuk and possibly describes the early part of his life. However, when attempting to trace the name, life dates of the author, and composition of this text, it is not possible to find any further identifying information, even in several closely associated Tibetan sources.

The second source is *Rosary of Intertwined Jewel: A Travelogue to Nepal*, composed by Chökyi Wangchuk during his visit to Nepal.¹⁶⁰ The manuscript (MS) of the travelogue was found in Laprang Monastery (bla brang dgon).¹⁶¹ It consists of 48 folios and is written in “unheaded” (*dbu med*) letter. It remains uncertain whether this manuscript is in the handwriting of the Sixth Shamarpa; however, there are five of his works that were handwritten, as follows:

MS. 1. Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk’s *Narration of Past Lives* (1602)¹⁶²

MS. 2. *The Flower of Vine, the Bodhisattva’s Avadāna* (1608)¹⁶³

MS. 3. *Bodhisattva Bear, Narrative of Kriśi* (ca. 1628)¹⁶⁴

MS. 4. *Travelogue to Nepal* (ca. 1630), see facsimile section in Lamminger’s work, 2003.

MS. 5. Chökyi Wangchuk’s handwritten letter addressed to Rapjampa (n.d.)¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ The Tibetan facsimile is accessible in Lamminger’s dissertation, pp. 330–77. See also Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project: catalogue.ngmcp.uni-hamburg.de/receive/aaingmcp_tbtdocument_00048464. Accessed 18 July 2023.

¹⁶¹ In 2015, a fire destroyed the 700-year-old monastery, possibly caused by an oil lamp. Numerous old manuscripts were lost (Kaini). It is uncertain whether Chökyi Wangchuk’s travelogue was amongst the lost manuscripts. Fortunately, microfilm copies are preserved and accessible at libraries in Kathmandu and Berlin.

¹⁶² The unpublished manuscript has an identical title to this. It contains 135 folios, lacks colophon, and is incomplete. The manuscript is in the semi-cursive handwriting style (*tshugs ma ’khyug*), used for text scribing, featuring rounded letters and “shorter vowel signs” (“Different Tibetan script styles”). In the old text catalog of Drepung Monastery (*’bras spungs dpe rnying dkar chag*), this work was mentioned as: *The Narration of Past Lives* by Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk (*zha dmar chos kyi dbang phyug gi ’khrungs rabs rnam thar*), which is designated as the autobiography of Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk (*zha dmar chos kyi dbang phyug (gi) rang rnam*) in the column of the composer’s name (“’bras spungs dgon” p.1525). The manuscript is held in Drepung Monastery, Tibet.

¹⁶³ *Flower of Vine, the Bodhisattva’s Avadāna* (*byang chub sems dpa’i rtogs pa brjod pa ’khri shing gi me tog*) comprises 236 folios and is uniquely handwritten in a combination of four different Tibetan scripts: *lan tsha*, *rdo rje gdan gyi yig gsar*, *dbu chen*, and *dpe tshugs*. See the microfilms on Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC): MW3CN22341_BBEC42, n.d., images 456–690.

¹⁶⁴ Chökyi Wangchuk translated the manuscript *dom byang chub sems dpa’i kri shi’i rtogs pa brjod pa’i zin bris (ga)* in the *dpde tshug* script around 1628, based on Dāmodhara Grija’s oral account, noted as the third note “ga” (see appendix B, table 3).

¹⁶⁵ The letter is written in verse and advises Rabjampa not to resign from his post. Rabjampa had been appointed as a secretary of Śrī Karma Rāj Mahāvihāra in Kathmandu by Chökyi Wangchuk (Shamar R. 67–70). This writing is

The calligraphy of MS 4 differs from that of MS 1 and 5, but it bears resemblance to MS 2 and 3. Notably, MS 3 showcases his mastery of calligraphy, meditative focus, and significant dedication. Figures of the manuscripts are withheld due to copyright policies; however, their details are recorded in the respective footnotes.

In the *Travelogue to Nepal*, Chökyi Wangchuk recorded his trip to Nepal in great detail and in chronological order. Belo explicitly mentioned that the last three pages of the biography were excerpted from the *Travelogue to Nepal*. The travelogue begins and ends in Chubar valley, and can be roughly divided into four sections. First, Chökyi Wangchuk presents his motivation, reasons, and route of the journey. Since age nineteen, he had wished to undertake a pilgrimage to India and to China. The journey began around the last months of 1629 when he was forty-six years old. He traveled to Kāthmāndu Valley via Labchi (la phyi), Nyanang (gnya' nang), Gram, and Sago Liti (sa go li ti), which took him 21 days. Second, he narrates his one-month stay in the Kāthmāndu Valley, including pilgrimages to various Buddhist and Hindu sites such as Asura Cave, Svayambhū stūpa, Boudhanāth stūpa, and the three still images of the Ārya Mahākāruṇika brothers (Mṛgasthālī, Paśupatināth, and Cāngu Nārāyaṇa). He had various interactions with four kings: Vikrama Śāh of Jumlā (r.1602–1631), Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla of Kantipur (r. 1619–1641), Siddhinarasiṃha Malla of Pātan (r. 1619–1661), and Jagajjyotir Malla Brahmā of Bhaktapur (r.1614–1637). Third, he returned to Chubar via Thimbu, Helambu, and Mangar (mang kar). On his return, he embarked on a four-day excursion to the summit of (Ama) Yangri (g.yang ril) before heading to Dorjé Ling (rdo rje ling) in Yölmo Gangra.¹⁶⁶ He also visited other sacred places including Pal Tsok (dpal tshogs), Gangyul (sgang yul), Dzodril Monastery, and

attributed to Chökyi Wangchuk and bears a close resemblance to MS. 3. See also “The Sixth Shamarpa Statue and Its Contents,” Fig. 11.3 (bottom), (Shamar Rinpoche 2012, 68).

¹⁶⁶ According to Chökyi Wangchuk’s song, Dorjé Ling is located in the Yölmo Gangra (Dalai Lama V “nyang ston khra” 208) or Helambu regions, which currently fall within the Sindhupālchok District of Nepal.

Milarepa Cave (stag phug seng ge rdzong). During the journey, he took a multi-day break due to exhaustion and illness. The return journey lasted over 60 days. Finally, as a summary of his journey, Chökyi Wangchuk provides some widely ranging observations: the geography of Nepal; the Newar population in the Kathmandu Valley, including their fourfold categories of excellence; the predominance of Hinduism over Buddhism and the lack of active Buddhist practice; insights into the mountain people of Magar (mang kar) and Neshang (snye shang), their way of life, and their gullibility and naivety. The account concluded with reflections on the challenges of the journey and emphasizes the importance of taking precautions while traveling to Nepal. Overall, the journey to Nepal and back, including the approximately one-month stay in the Kathmandu Valley, lasted approximately four months (Lamminger 137–142).

The third source is *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels* (*rnam thar nor bu'i phreng ba*), which is an extensive hand-written manuscript (*zin bris rgyas pa*). The author's name is not mentioned in the text.¹⁶⁷ Based on the wording in Belo's colophon, it suggests that the latter two sources were likely composed by the Sixth Shamarpa. The absence of the author's name in the *Travelogue to Nepal* may indicate that this text and its author were widely known at the time. *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels* is mentioned after the travelogue without attributing authorship, indicating that it may have been written by the same (unmentioned) author of the travelogue, Chökyi Wangchuk himself. The phrasing in the colophon also implies that the final text was a handwritten manuscript by Chökyi Wangchuk. Therefore, *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels* could be considered a draft autobiography rather than a biography.

Without access to these two key sources, many details about the life of Chökyi

¹⁶⁷ There are several other Tibetan biographies which are entitled *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels*, including *rje mar pa nas brgyud pa'i rngog gzhung pa yab sras kyi bla ma'i rnam thar nor bu'i phreng ba*, composed by Ngok Jangchub Pal (1360–1446). However, I could not find the exact biography referred to by Belo under this title.

Wangchuk remain unknown. It is uncertain whether Belo relied exclusively on these three sources, as the two volumes of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* included biographies that lacked proper citation of sources. For example, several short biographies did not include sources, including ones for individuals like Karma Kunga Gyaltsen, who was a teacher of the Sixth Shamarpa (Belo 458–461). This raises unanswered questions about whether the biography is free from oral accounts (*ngag sgras*) or whether some parts of the biography were left without citations. This doubt persists because Belo did not clarify which parts of the account were drawn from each of the three sources. This issue extends beyond *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* and is prevalent in various Tibetan namthar works. Despite the lack of information regarding the exact contents and length of the first and third sources, it is possible that Belo blended these sources where appropriate as he narrated the biography chronologically. Furthermore, considering that Belo summarized (*bsdus*) these sources, it suggests that the two inaccessible sources consist of a detailed account of the subject, which is evident in the coherent flow of reading.

Other Sources

Although many other sources were available to Belo while composing Chökyi Wangchuk's biography, he did not use them. What prompted Belo to leave out the work of Chökyi Wangchuk's closest disciples in his account? It cannot be explained by merely saying that it was either not accessible or not suitable for the biography. Belo extensively refers to *The Bountiful Cow: Biography of Bodhisattva* (*byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs brjod 'dod 'jo'i ba mo*) in the Tenth Karmapa's biography despite its exaggerations, possibly because of its direct relevance to the Karmapa (483–551).¹⁶⁸ In fact, this could be the reason why he did not cite *The Bountiful Cow* in his biography of Chökyi Wangchuk: to avoid overlaps or repeating the

¹⁶⁸ See "Scholars of His Time" section of chapter 3.

information. Similarly, the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk is followed by biographies of one of the Sixth Shamarpa's teachers and six of his students¹⁶⁹ who were not extensively discussed in the Shamarpa's namthar, excepting the Tenth Karmapa. However, though Belo's exclusion may reduce reproduction of content, it makes the biography less comprehensive, requiring readers to consult other related biographies to obtain a complete picture (see "Scholars of His Time" in chapter 3 for *The Bountiful Cow's* content discussion). Based on the lack of attribution in Belo's colophon, Chökyi Wangchuk may have authored an autobiography, *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels*, alongside his *Travelogue to Nepal*. This implies that, based on the additional information included in his work, Belo had access to other written and/or orally transmitted sources. These sources may be related to the Tenth Karmapa or to his teacher (Shamar Rinpoche Intro. ix). Unfortunately, the other sources remain inaccessible, which precludes any further analysis.

II. Structure, Language, Designation, and Discrepancies

The Structure of Chökyi Wangchuk's Biography

The structural study of the biography of the Sixth Shamarpa reveals Belo's narrative style.¹⁷⁰ The general style of Chökyi Wangchuk's biography follows a diary-like format, commencing with his birth and concluding with his death.¹⁷¹ This structure, in general, is

¹⁶⁹ His mentor and six students, in chronological order: Jé Karma Künga Namgyal, Goshri Drakpa Chöyang, Drungyik Lodrö Norden (Belo 458–81), Situ Chögyal Mipham Trinlé Raptan, Kharek Trülku Kama Tensung, Khyapdak Drupchö Wangpo, and Nédo Kama Chakmé (Belo 557–64). See appendix A for the full list of disciples.

¹⁷⁰ The analysis of the structure is based on the second volume of the Diwakar edition, which derives from Karmapa Sungrap Nyamso Khang (karma pa gsung rab nyams gso khang) and shares identical content with Situ's collected works. Although the biography in volume II (bar cha) follows a classical page numbering system, it does not include folio numbers for the front (ba/1a) and back (na/1b) pages, making it difficult to toggle between the two editions. The volume comprises 571 pages, with the biography spanning 40 pages (equivalent to 44 folios) and measuring 5.11 x 8.10 inches per page in size. The text is formatted with 24 lines per page and lacks paragraph breaks, with an average of 17–20 words per line. Topga Yügyal and Thrangu Rinpoche wrote a third volume of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, covering the lives of the 13th to the 16th Karmapas. However, the biographies they added depart from the previous style, necessitating further research into their structure and content.

¹⁷¹ The format is primarily written in the third-person voice rather than the typical first-person voice. Nevertheless, it embodies the essential qualities of a diary by capturing authenticity, personal perspective, intimacy, and uniqueness, but may also incorporate other elements or variations.

consistent across the other biographies in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* series. The biography comprises a compilation of loosely chronological events, presented through a combination of variously lengthy and truncated sentences. Most of the narrative is prose, with occasional exceptions like three extended verses pertaining to Chökyi Wangchuk's memorizations and translations. Each metrical line in the verse consists of nine syllables, although not all verses adhere to the standard four-line format (see "Rising Scholar" section of chapter 1). The sentence construction encompasses a range from three to thirty-six words, with most prose sections consisting of eight to fifteen words.

Belo's presentation lacks detailed context and assumes that readers are already familiar with the background. While he often mentions the *who*, *where*, and sometimes the *when* of events, he rarely delves into the *how* and *why* they occurred. This suggests that Belo closely adhered to Situ's structural approach, which can be understood for two reasons. First, Belo's biographical writing style mirrors that of Situ's previous works. In fact, it is possible that Situ provided oral instructions for its completion, similar to the case of the *Abhidharmakośa*, for which Situ left a note (*phyag lir*) for the composition of a commentary. Belo supplemented the biography in accordance with Situ's discourse style (*gsung sgros*).¹⁷² Second, Belo's autobiographical works (37) and his conversations with Paṇchen Rinpoché reveal his inclination towards criticism, whether directed at himself or others.¹⁷³ This is in contrast to the absence of critical opinions in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*. The facts chosen by Belo shed light on the

¹⁷² Situ's *Abhidharmakośa* commentary follow Nāgārjuna's style of composition in Sanskrit, which differs from Tibetan commentaries which first provide word-for-word commentary and then discuss the main topic. Belo's commentary on it covers the first four chapters of the total ten, leaving the remaining six for other students to explore and access their intellect (Tsering Sherpa xvii).

¹⁷³ *The Rosary of Precious Jewel*, an illustrative account of the great scholar Tsewang Kunkhap (*ma hA paN Di ta tshe dbang kun khyab kyi rnam thar rtogs brjod rin chen nor bu'i phreng ba*) and a discussion between venerable Paṇchen Rinpoché and Surmang Lotsawa Tsewang Künkhyap (*sku zhabs paN chen rin po che dang zur mang lo tsa ba tshe dbang kun khyab rnam gnyis kyis 'bel gtam mdzad tshul*, pp. 535–555, BDRC: I1KG5712).

deliberate exclusion of controversial information, which was “considered too inappropriate” for inclusion in the official Golden Rosary of the Karma Kagyü Lineage (Chaix 19).

As noted in the source section, the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk is presented in an abridged form. Throughout the narrative, Belo condenses the content by various means, including reporting concisely or utilizing the enumerative particle “*sogs sgra*,” which is understood to encompass multiple aspects without explicitly enumerating them.¹⁷⁴ It warrants explanation: Why did Belo adopt this approach? While several factors may have contributed to his choice, two feasible explanations are: that the biography was abridged to fit *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* series’ composition style, which excluded less significant or inspirational passages to enhance its devotional value for disciples. Similarly, Belo’s autobiography was composed for the purpose of providing inspiration and guidance, which are two of the four reasons he gives for the composition. However, he also stated that it was not an imitation of the *namthar* (hagiographical literature) of previous Tibetan masters (Belo 2013, 1). Second, considering the material context of textual circulation in mid-18th century Tibet: Could a technical impediment like scarcity of paper or limited space have contributed to this phenomenon? Oral anecdotes indicate that in certain villages, Dharma texts like Gampopa’s *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (*dwags po thar rgyan*) were scarce, with only a single copy available, causing individuals to wait for months for their turn to read it. Nevertheless, this assertion may not be entirely reliable, given the substantial surge in the length and quantity of biographies and autobiographies produced during the same era. In the 15th century, a biography that spanned sixty folios was considered substantial (*rnam thar rgyas pa*). Conversely, by the

¹⁷⁴ Similarly, the editors, D. Gyaltsen and Kesang Legshay, of the 1972 edition of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* express their disappointment with Belo’s brief treatment of the 10th Karmapa (twelve folios) and the absence of details about Karma Chakmé’s life (three folios) (vol. 2, preface *ii*). However, they do not explore why Belo presented the information in this way.

18th century, a biography consisting of 200 folios was deemed brief (*rnam thar bsdus pa pa*) (Schaeffer 263)! For example, let's consider the outer biography of the Jonang scholar Tāranātha (1575–1634), who lived in the same era as Chökyi Wangchuk. Tāranātha's autobiography comprised 330 folios, despite Belo's work being written at a much later time. This example supports my argument that Belo's approach aimed to offer an inspiring and concise biography, regardless of varying length. The significant contrast between the biographies of the Ninth Karmapa and Seventh Shamarpa further illustrates this point, as they consist of ninety-six and three pages, respectively (Belo 314–404, 554–56).

Language, Grammar, and Related Challenges

While Belo hails from eastern Tibet, his work, particularly Volume Two of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, hardly reflects the Kham dialects, possibly due to intentional omission. Instead, his autobiography employs colloquial language, as exemplified by terms like “*u tshugs*” (insistence) and “*zer kyin 'dug*” (so-called) (37). In contrast, the Sixth Shamarpa's biography is written in Dharmic language (*chos skad*) and is replete with common Buddhist doctrinal and literary terminology in Tibetan. This suggests that the target audience of the text comprises readers who have a doctrinal orientation or who may have required third-person interpretation.

The linguistic framework employed in this work is notably imbued with a significant number of honorific terms, including the associated verbal conjugation of “*phebs*,” (visited) “*gnang*,” (conferred) and “*zhus*,” (received).¹⁷⁵ The narration is characterized by positivity and is free from any tone of sectarianism, sarcasm, or criticism. The life of Chökyi Wangchuk is presented in a factual manner, without mythologization, poeticization, or dramatization. In other

¹⁷⁵ Cross-cultural differences between the source language and its English translation presents a formidable obstacle to the complete encapsulation and expression of the nuances embodied by these honorific terms and associated verbal conjugations.

words, it is written in the form of—and with the tone of—a reliable historical record. Therefore, this biography offers valuable historical insights into 17th-century Tibet. Gene Smith concurs that the *Golden Rosary* is “one of the least studied categories of Tibetan historical literature” despite being a “reliable source of historical data” (39).

In the biography, Chökyi Wangchuk’s life is narrated from a third-person point of view and begins by mentioning the Sixth Shamarpa’s full given name. Belo often used Chökyi Wangchuk’s honorary titles like Lord (*rje*) and Victorious One (*rgyal ba’i dbang po*), but seldomly used pronouns like “he,” “him,” or “his” (*khong, nyid*); in the Tibetan grammatical context, those pronouns are implied where the subject is not mentioned. During my translation of the biography, I came across more than 2,000 instances of these implied pronouns. For example, these two short sentences, “*bsam yas su phebs dbu rtse sogs mjal/ mchims phur phebs*,” drew three subject pronouns: “[He] visited Samye and [he] paid homage to the Central Temple, . . . [Next, He] visited Chimpu” (Belo 445). Based on this observation, it is apparent that a word-for-word translation of Belo’s work into English would yield a monotonous reading experience.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, the biography includes an abundance of recurring words, terms, and phrases. For instance, the words “*phebs*” (arrive / travel), “*la sog*” (etc.) and “*rgyal po*” (king) have been used 256, 128, and eighty-nine times, respectively.¹⁷⁷ This composition style also reduces the flow of the narration, as, for example, the description of the next journey starts without much context to the previous related visit. To narrate the plot efficiently, transitional particles like *de nas* (“then”), *zhes* (“thus”), and *yang* (“again”) were employed throughout the text. Most parts of the

¹⁷⁶ These are some of the reasons why the entire translation of Chökyi Wangchuk’s biography is not included in chapter 1 of this thesis.

¹⁷⁷ It is unclear why a brilliant scholar, who was an expert in the science of Tibetan grammar, poetry, and philosophy would use multitudes of repetitive words; thus, it requires further studies of the life and work of Belo to understand his implication.

transitions are smooth, while some sections turn out rather confusing. For instance, in the following excerpt, it discusses Chökyi Wangchuk's travel and spiritual activities; however, it is unclear which specific year "one-year-long" refers to in this context, as the previous year and the following year are not mentioned in this section of the biography.

Then, [he] visited the Khangsar Go while his entourage and Situ Rinpoché stayed there. The lord himself practiced a strict one-year-long retreat at Kampo Nenang. [He] composed a spiritual song on the view: *sarga lnga pa*. [He] performed the Medicine Buddha ritual for the death anniversary of Gyaltsap. [He] instructed Nangso Lhundrup and others from Ngegowa [Monastery] on *The Four Dharma of Gampopa*, *Chöd-Accomplished in One Sitting*, *Coemergent Union of Mahāmudrā*, and *Six Doctrines [of Nāropa]* (Belo 436, trans. mine).

Similarly, the question arises as to whether all the events mentioned in the preceding phrase took place in the same year or at the same location. The second-to-last sentence of the above translation is a good example. Although Chökyi Wangchuk commemorated the death anniversary of the Fourth Gyaltsap (d. 1617), the exact year of the commemoration remains unclear. The subsequent sentences provide plausible hints, but they do not provide a clear chronology. The ambiguity does not end there; Chökyi Wangchuk's biography contains other grammatical issues that contribute to its lack of clarity. Specifically, there are four sections in the biography where the subject and object of sentences are unclear in all versions. Two examples of these unclear sentences are as follows:

(1) In the presence of Wangchuk Dorjé, [he] conferred (*gnang*) the full empowerment of five groups of Chakrasaṃvara and Four-armed [Mahākāla] (*dbang phyugs rdo rje'i drung nas lnga tshan lnga'i bde mchog dbang dang phyag bzhi pa'i dbang rgyas par gnang*). (2) Then, from the presence of the Ninth Karmapa, [he] conferred (*gsan*) the empowerment of the Seven Maṇḍala of Ngok and Twelve Maṇḍalas of Jong (*de nas rgyal ba'i dbang po'i drung nas rngog dkyil bdun dang sbyong dkyil bcu gnyis kyi dbang gnang*) (Belo 423, trans. mine).

In both cases, the subject and object of the verb are not clearly identified; however, a textual analysis reveals that the Ninth Karmapa, who was the teacher, acted as the agent (*byed pa po*), while the Sixth Shamarpa, who was the student, received the action. In the first case, the use of

the ablative case marker (*'byung khung*) “*nas*” (from) indicates that the subject was the Ninth Karmapa, and the term “*drung nas*” (from him/the presence) is primarily used to imply “to receive something from someone” in Tibetan grammar. In the second case, there seems to be no appropriate reason to mention that the disciple conferred empowerment in front of the master, although it could be an occasional case where the student conferred empowerment in the presence of or even upon the teacher. Nevertheless, if the verb “*gnang*” (confer) is converted to “*gsan*” (receive), then both sentences and plausible meaning are in flow, as follows: “He received the full empowerment of five groups of Chakrasaṃvara and Four-armed Mahākāla from Wangchuk Dorjé.” One explanation is that this is the result of a scribal error during the manuscript’s woodcut process. Some spelling errors are evident in the different versions of Belo’s biography of Chökyi Wangchuk which have been published without correction. For instance, the correct spelling of “*don*,” “*dum*,” and “*grang*” should be “*gdon*,” “*bsdums*,” and “*grangs*,” which mean evil force, reconciled, and number, respectively (Belo 423, 433, 439).¹⁷⁸ Despite the errors and omissions, in most cases these minor issues do not impact the meaning and understanding of the text if one reads the context with close attention.

Designation Choices in Addressing Chökyi Wangchuk and Others

How Belo addressed Chökyi Wangchuk and the reasons behind his various approaches are important aspects to explore in understanding the impact on the identity of the subject. Specifically, examining the nuances in Belo’s language and how it shapes the perception of Chökyi Wangchuk can provide insight into the complex dynamics of teacher and student relationships and the larger cultural context in which these relationships existed. To comprehend

¹⁷⁸ In 1972, D. Gyaltzen and Kesang Lekshay produced a two-volume reproduction of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, based on the Palpung edition that belongs to Namkha Dorjé of Nangchen. In the preface to volume 1, they identified and corrected 44 spelling errors; however, no such corrections were provided for volume 2.

the significance of these choices, a detailed analysis of Belo's usage of different titles and honorifics for Chökyi Wangchuk and other figures.

Belo refers to the Sixth Shamarpa's name only twice in the context of addressing him: at the beginning of the biography, and during the ordination ceremony. In both cases, Belo followed the protocol by using the official name and enclosing it in praise: "The Glorious Lord of the Dharma, who is the Vajra of Bliss, Accomplished All Objects, Victories in All Directions" (dpal ldan (gar dbang) chos kyi dbang phyug rdo rje dga' ba don kun yongs su grub pa phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba, 418). There are two common names which Belo interchangeably uses to address the Sixth Shamarpa, as well as the Ninth and Tenth Karmapa: Gyalwé Wangpo (rgyal ba'i dbang po, twenty-eight times) and Jé (rje, eighty-one times)¹⁷⁹ Only through textual context can one understand to whom he is referring. For instance: (1) "They went to Tsurphu, and he received several empowerments and reading transmissions from Gyalwé Wangpo"; (2) "Some dishonest people invited Gyalwé Wangpo to a Bön monastery"; and (3) "Gyalwé Wangpo was invited to the market" (Belo 418, 432, 443). Although these three sentences appear to be ambiguous, within the context they refer to the Ninth Karmapa, the Tenth Karmapa, and the Sixth Shamarpa, respectively. In the biography of the Third Pawo Tsuklak Gyatso (dpa' bo gtsug lag rgya mtsho, ca. 1568–1630), Belo addressed Chökyi Wangchuk as "Garwang Drukpa" (gar dbang drug pa, the Sixth Lord) twice, and in the Tenth Karmapa's biography, he is frequently referred to as Thamché Khyenpa (thams cad mkhyen pa, the Omniscient One, also used for the Fifth Shamarpa).¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, Belo used only short titles for certain well-known spiritual

¹⁷⁹ Not only was the Sixth Shamarpa referred to as "rje zhwa dmar pa" (the Lord Shamarpa), but his predecessor, the Fifth, was also often addressed as such in the biography of the Ninth Karmapa by Belo (2011, 316).

¹⁸⁰ Additional names associated with him revolve around Chökyi Wangchuk (the Lord of Dharma), either by contracting it as Chöwang or by adding various honorific titles before the name, such as Palden (the Glorious), Bodhisattva (the Heroic Being), Mipham (the Invincible), Gyalwé Wangpo (the Victorious Lord), Gelong (the Virtuous Begger), Garwang (the Lord of Dance or Nāṭeśvara), or Garwang Thamché Khyenpa (the Omniscient

figures, including Lopön (slob dpon), Phakpa (phags pa), and Jetsün, (rje btsun) (422). Given the context, these three titles refer to Lopön Padmasambhāva, Drogön Chögyal Phakpa (1234–1280), and Jetsün Milarepa (1040–1123).¹⁸¹ When Belo refers to political figures, the Mongol warlords are addressed as kings (*rgyal po*) rather than warlords or chieftains. The rulers of Tsang, in turn, were often addressed as Desi and sometimes Depa, which complicates the usage and meaning of the term. However, all Tibetan regional rulers were referred to as Depa, and none of them was addressed as either king or Desi (see “Relationship with the rulers of Tibet” section in chapter 1).

Belo’s linguistic choices in addressing figures provide us with three insights. First, it can be inferred that use of the full name and title is typically reserved for formal contexts. In contrast, a short title is commonly used when referring to one’s teacher; using a teacher’s name directly instead of their title may be considered disrespectful. Interestingly, this could be the why Belo refers to Chökyi Wangchuk as “Shamarpa” only once in this biography, at the end of the text. To some extent, these 17th century practices have persisted to the present.¹⁸² Second, the internal consistency of the biography but inconsistency in the manner of address for the Sixth Shamarpa across different biographies implies that Belo adapted Chökyi Wangchuk’s title and/or name according to each source he consulted. This fact can be corroborated by Karmapa’s *The Bountiful Cow*. However, since Belo did not report Chökyi Wangchuk’s ordination names, such

One). Jamyang Shepa (the Laughter of Mañjughoṣa) stands out as an exception, being a name and not a title, which was not derived from Chökyi Wangchuk. Furthermore, there is a wide range of different spellings observed when writing the subject’s title, commonly rendered as Shamarpa. This variation stems from the inconsistent representation of the consonant “*s/zha*” and “*v/wa zur*” mark, resulting in variations such as Zhwamarpa or Zhvamar. Additionally, the final suffixes “*pa*” (indicating an agent) or “*ba*” (expressing a causative or emphatic sense) can affect the spelling, leading to variations like Zhamarpa or Zhamarwa.

¹⁸¹ The practice of using short titles like Tsawé Lama (rtsa ba’i bla ma, the root-guru) or Yishin Norbu (yid bzhin nor bu, the wise-granting gem) in lieu of direct names for Lamas continues today.

¹⁸² In the spoken tradition, it is customary to attach an honorary phrase before mentioning the teacher’s name. If the teacher is still alive, one should say “saying his/her name for the purpose” (*don gyi slad du mtshan nas smros na*). However, if the teacher has passed away, one should say “a name which is hard to express” (*mtshan brjod par dka’ ba*) followed by the name encapsulated in long praise (Dungkar).

as Jamyang Shepa ('jam dbyangs bzhed pa).¹⁸³ Finally, from the usage of other figures' names, we can infer the cultural habit of addressing public figures with a short title, which not only reflects respect but also their deeds or positions.

Discrepancies in the Chronology

Belo adopted a chronological approach in narrating Chökyi Wangchuk's biography, employing dates and age numbers to signify notable events. Among the twenty-two instances of chronological markers utilized by Belo, the year was used sixteen times (with seven instances lacking specification of the year element), and the age number was used seven times. Only once did Belo combine the year and age number, specifically in the Wood-Dragon year when Chökyi Wangchuk reached the age of twenty-one. This raises a question: Does the absence of chronological markers for twenty-five years of Chökyi Wangchuk's forty-seven-year lifespan mean that some periods are missing from Belo's narrative? This omission does not conclusively indicate that these years of Chökyi Wangchuk's life are completely undocumented. It is plausible that Belo chose not to include dates for unimportant events or years, or that the information was beyond the scope of the three sources he consulted. Table 3 includes dates from Chökyi Wangchuk's birth to death, encompassing age, lunar year, and common year. I have highlighted the lunar year and age that were reported in light grey. Unspecified elements or years are enclosed in parentheses, while the remaining periods are considered unreported (see next page).

Furthermore, in Chökyi Wangchuk's biography, there are two instances where the dates are out of order, significantly impacting the chronology of events spanning a few years. For example, the Sheep year is mentioned after the year of the Iron-Dog (1610). It is likely...

¹⁸³ The colophon of *The Flower of Vine: the Bodhisattva's Avadāna* explicitly indicates that Chökyi Wangchuk was known by the alternate name of Jamyang Shepa: *zhwa dmar cod pan 'dzin pa drug pas mtshan gyis dbang bskur shAkya'i dge slong chos kyi dbang phyug gis/ ming gzhan 'jam dbyangs bzhad par 'bod pa* (118b).

Table 3. Years of Life from Birth to Death

Age	Lunar Year	CE	Age	Lunar Year	CE	Age	Lunar Year	CE	Age	Lunar Year	CE
1	Wood-Monkey	1584	13	(Fire-) Monkey	1596	25	(Earth-) Monkey	1608	37	Iron-Monkey	1620
2	Wood-Bird	1585	14	Fire-Bird	1597	26	(Earth-) Bird	1609	38	Iron-Bird	1621
3	Fire-Dog	1586	15	Earth-Dog	1598	27	Iron-Dog	1610	39	Water-Dog	1622
4	Fire-Pig	1587	16	Earth-Pig	1599	28	Iron-Pig	1611	40	Water-Pig	1623
5	Earth-Rat	1588	17	Iron-Rat	1600	29	Water-Rat	1612	41	Wood-Rat	1624
6	Earth-Ox	1589	18	Iron-Ox	1601	30	Water-Ox	1613	42	Wood-Ox	1625
7	Iron-Tiger	1590	19	(Water-) Tiger	1602	31	Wood-Tiger	1614	43	Fire-Tiger	1626
8	Iron-Rabbit	1591	20	Water-Rabbit	1603	32	Wood-Rabbit	1615	44	Fire- Rabbit	1627
9	Water-Dragon	1592	21	Wood-Dragon	1604	33	Fire-Dragon	1616	45	Earth-Dragon	1628
10	(Water-) Snake	1593	22	(Wood-) Snake	1605	34	Fire-Snake	1617	46	Earth-Snake	1629
11	Wood-Horse	1594	23	Fire-Horse	1606	35	(Earth-Horse)	1618	47	Iron-Horse	1630
12	Wood-Sheep	1595	24	(Fire-) Sheep	1607	36	(Earth-) Sheep	1619			

... referring to the Earth-Sheep year (1619) since the Fire-Sheep year precedes it, and Chökyi Wangchuk passed away before the subsequent Sheep year cycle occurred.¹⁸⁴ The complexity further increases when the Earth-Horse year (1618) is mentioned a few pages later, which should have come before the Earth-Sheep year. Consequently, the chronological sequence of events from pages 436 to 446 may have overlapped to some extent. Additionally, this section of the narrative differs slightly from the rest as Belo uses terms like “*lo gcig*,” “*na ning*,” and “*lo gsar*” (meaning a year, last year, and new year, respectively) instead of specific year names or ages (Belo 436–445).¹⁸⁵ These events could have occurred before or after the year of the Earth-Sheep. Regardless, they likely took place between the year of the Iron-Dog (1610) and the year of the

¹⁸⁴ According to the lunar calendar, each zodiac sign appears once in a twelve-year cycle. For the calculation of equivalents between the Rabjung (rab byung) and Gregorian calendars, see www.tactus.dk/tacom/calendar5.htm.

¹⁸⁵ A similar discrepancy pattern is observed in Belo’s autobiography, *Rosary of the Precious Jewel*. Initially, he provides a detailed account of his life from the ages of seven to twenty-seven. However, following a lengthy narrative, he abruptly jumps to the age of forty-six, leaving a gap of almost twenty years (2013 4–63).

Fire-Rabbit (1627), with a thirteen-year gap between them. While some parts of the text can be reconstructed using internal or external sources, such as the mention of “the Karmapa Chöying Dorjé being fully ordained at the age of twenty-one” (Belo 447), corresponding to the Wood-Ox year of 1625, this does not apply to all events. Despite the inconsistent dates and disorderly format in certain sections, the main events can still be satisfactorily navigated with the assistance of the reported timeline.

III. Five Aspects of the Namthar

Relationship with the Kyura Family

In the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, Belo briefly mentioned his parents’ names and touched upon a few interactions with his two younger brothers (418). Therefore, this section will delve deeper into his familial connections. Chökyi Wangchuk was born into the Kyura Clan (*skyu ra gdung rus*), a prestigious family line that ended in 1659.¹⁸⁶ This lineage is known for its unique characteristics, such as infants not displaying crawling behavior and newborns keeping their eyes open during sleep. Chökyi Wangchuk’s youngest brother displayed these traits (Rongpa 343–47), implying that he himself might share these distinctive features. The biography of his father provides insights into his early childhood:

When the Fifth Shamarpa fell ill, the Lord declared, ‘Shamarpa has passed away.’

¹⁸⁶ Kyura, derived from the legendary *’dru clan*, one of the six legendary Tibetan clans believed to have descended from monkeys (*mi ’u gdung drug*). In brief, Achi Chökyi Drölma, from Drikung and the great-grandmother of Jikten Sumgön (1143–1217), wed a Kyura clan yogi in Kham, forming Jigten Sumgön’s lineage. In 1179, Jigten Sumgön established Drigung Thil Monastery, applying the name of the place to the lineage, and founded the Drigung Kagyü tradition. Initially, almost all of the Drikung Kagyu’s throne holders were chosen from the Kyura clan, with only three exceptions. Despite this trend, there was no set succession rule; Drikung lacked a strict hierarchy. Power was shared: *denrap* held spiritual leadership, *gompa* managed secular matters, both often Kyura (Gruber 61–62). The Kyura line discontinued with the death of Rikzin Chödrak in 1659. Following his death, the Drikungpa started identifying reincarnations for their throne holders, establishing an elder (Chetsang) and a younger (Chungtsang) lineage. Künchok Rinchen became the First Drigung Chetsang, while Rikzin Chödrak became the First Drigung Chungtsang Rinpoche. Despite being called “*che*” and “*chung*” (elder/senior and younger/junior, respectively), they hold an equal rank or seat (Gruber 191–92; Passang 12; cf. Khetsun 1981, 189–203, 401).

In a vision, Shamarpa was seen sitting in a hut facing India. Then, he appeared on the rooftop deck of his house and asked, ‘I need to rent a dwelling place.’ The Lord said, ‘The incarnation will be born here,’ and not long after, Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk was indeed born as his son... One day, a Great Encampment (sgar chen) came to Drigung, and his son was recognized as Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk. They made a great offering to the Lord and requested the consent of the Trülku. He was concerned that Thelpa (thel pa) and other supporters might not allow his departure. However, due to Garchen’s assurance of care, the preservation of pure samaya among Kagyüpas, and for the benefits of teachings and beings, he agreed to allow visits to any of his monastic seats, with stays of a few months, before returning to Drigung for several years of upbringing (Drigung Tenzin 226–227, trans. mine).

The preceding passage suggests that at the age of four,¹⁸⁷ Chökyi Wangchuk was taken under the care of the Ninth Karmapa, who held the position of the head of the Great Encampment (see fn. 78), and “he followed [the Ninth Karmapa wherever he went] and received many transmissions” (Khetsun 1977, 515). This implies that he had limited time to spend with his parents and possibly did not have many interactions with his father, as the child was not mentioned among his father’s students. Chökyi Wangchuk’s father, Chögyal Rinchen Phuntsok (chos rgyal rin chen phun tshogs, 1547–1602, r. 1579–1602) and mother, Longmo Sayang Guk (long mo bza’ g.yang ’gugs), gave birth to four children.¹⁸⁸ Chögyal succeeded as the Twenty-first Throne Holder of Drigung Kagyü order (‘*bri gung gdan rabs*). Among his four sons, three of them became the Twenty-first, Twenty-second, and Twenty-third Throne Holders of Drigung Kagyü. In chronological order, they were: Nāro Tashi Phuntsok (na ro bkra shis phun tshogs, 1574–1628, r. 1603–1615) Könchok Rinchen (kun mchog rin chen, 1590–1654, r. 1615–1626), and Rikzin Chödrak (rig

¹⁸⁷ In Belo’s biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, he is said to “turn five” (418) at the time. However, it’s important to consider that the Tibetan Buddhist tradition calculates age from the time of conception rather than birth. For example, if Chökyi Wangchuk was born in the ninth lunar month, he would be considered one year old after three additional months according to this tradition. Therefore, understanding Chökyi Wangchuk’s age requires considering the unique conventions of the Tibetan Buddhist counting system.

¹⁸⁸ A slight variation in the name of the mother is noted, i.e., Yangkhukma/khap (g.yang khug ma/khab), the daughter of Depa Ngapö (nga phod). Given the similarity in the names, it is possible that these names refer to the same woman. However, the mother of Nāro and Könchok is named Norbu Drölma (Khetsun 1981, 400–401; Könchok Pasang 11; Lobsang “ ‘bri gung chos rgyal phun tshogs bkra shis dpal bzang po”). Their father is also referred to by two names: Phuntsok Tashi (Belo 418) and Rinchen Phuntsok (Gruber 288).

'dzin chos grags, 1595–1659, r. 1626–1659) (Drigung Tenzin 219–256; Gruber 288; Khetsun 1981, 358–399).¹⁸⁹ Chökyi Wangchuk, recognized as the Sixth Shamarpa, did not inherit the Drikung throne. Instead, he was symbolically enthroned at Thil Monastery, the central seat (*gdan sa*) of the Drigung tradition.

Not much is known about Chökyi Wangchuk's relationship with his mother and eldest brother. Most of the accounts focus on his connection with his two younger siblings. According to Belo, Chökyi Wangchuk had the closest spiritual bond with his youngest brother, whom he ordained and named Gyalwang Könchok Rinchen (*rgyal dbang kun mchog rin chen*). Chökyi Wangchuk also bestowed empowerments such as Kālacakra upon him when he was sixteen. Könchok's biography mentions that he invited Chökyi Wangchuk to Drigung and received the Twelve Sets of the Purification Tantra (*sbyong rgyud bcu gnyis*) (Könchok Rinchen 82). On the contrary, Belo implies that the remaining two brothers, particularly the eldest, had minimal engagement with Chökyi Wangchuk. While Belo briefly mentions an incident involving Rikzin Chödruk, namely his extraordinary vision (see “Perceiving Pure Visions” section of chapter 1). However, external sources confirmed that Chökyi Wangchuk had a close spiritual relationship with his second youngest brother. Chökyi Wangchuk ordained him as a novice and named him Rikzin Chökyi Drakpa Thrinlé Nampar Gyalwé Dé (*rig 'dzin chos kyi grags pa 'phrin las nampar rgyal ba'i sde*) and conferred teachings upon him on several occasions. After their father's passing in 1602, Chökyi Wangchuk became one of Rikzin's main teachers and transmitted many teachings to him. For instance, in 1611 (Female-Fire-Sheep), at the age of sixteen, Rikzin

¹⁸⁹ Most members of the family are believed to embody the incarnation of enlightened beings. For example, Phuntsok Tashi was revered as a Vidyādhara, a realized tantric master prophesied in Padmasambhāva's Hidden Treasure (*gter ma*). Similarly, Yangkhuma, his wife, was considered a descendant of the Tsenpo Dynasty and believed to be an incarnation of Vajrāyogīnī. Likewise, Nāro Tashi was believed to be the reincarnation of Nāropa, the renowned Indian yogī who studied under Tilopā and taught Marpa (Rongpa 343–47; Khetsun 1981, 401–15).

received a reading transmission of a collection of mantras in the forest of Küntu Sangpo Monastery. Given that they met frequently, and looking at the length of the following texts, it becomes evident that Rikzin had lengthy spiritual relationship with Chökyi Wangchuk, as it would not have been possible for Chökyi Wangchuk to teach all of that within a short period of time. Rikzin received the reading transmissions of the Kangyur and *Ocean of Eloquent Sayings: An Overview* (*spyi don legs bshad rgya mtsho*), the empowerment of the Twenty-eight Root-Maṇḍalas of Vajra Garland (*rdo rje phreng ba'i rtsa dkyil nyer brgyad pa*), the ritual practice of the various tantras (*rgyud sde'i phyag len*), and teaching on medicine (Döndor and Tenzin 645–46). In fact, Rikzin ascended to the Twenty-third Throne Holder of Drigung through the sincere request (*nan zhus*) of the Sixth Shamarpa, Könchok Rinchen, and Tsang Desi (Drigung Tenzin 274). Considering their profound spiritual connection, Belo positions him and his brother, possibly Rikzin, as one of Shamarpa's second highest-ranking disciples who firmly upheld the Vinaya precepts (*che btsun gyi slob ma*) (Belo 457). In essence, the relationship between Chökyi Wangchuk and his family was depicted as primarily rooted in spirituality, transcending mere worldly associations. Sources shedding light on these social connections are scant, making it challenging to ascertain the social significance of Chökyi Wangchuk's birth into this esteemed family lineage.

The Collected Works

Throughout the biography, Belo reported thirty-two compositions of the Sixth Shamarpa across the biography, which are related to *sūtra*, *vinaya*, *tantra* and other discourses. The titles of the majority of these texts were not documented, and at least sixteen significant works were excluded. What could be the reason for this exclusion? In general, the composition style of *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* lacks a comprehensive record of collected writings, which could

lead to the omission of many works.¹⁹⁰ In this case, there are three conceivable possibilities.

First, it is possible that Belo refers to them only obliquely, included in a list of unnamed compositions:

At the age of twenty-four [Fire-Sheep year, 1607], he renovated [Thil] monastic center's three shrine objects (*rten gsum*), conferred initiations and reading transmission such as Bernakchen (Mahākāla), and composed many texts (Belo 427, trans. mine).

In this case, “many texts” seems to include *The General Exegesis of Abhidharma: Views of Vasubandhu* (*mngon pa mdzod kyi spyi don dbyig gnyen bzhed pa*). Further, it is confirmed in the colophon that Chökyi Wangchuk had started to compose the commentary at the age of twenty-four at Ü-Rutö (dbu ru stod) and completed it around age twenty-seven at Jongtak Sang (ljong stag bzang) in Kham (Shamar Chökyi 2007, 463).

Since Belo did not mention a few other works of Chökyi Wangchuk, there are two other possible reasons. For instance, in 1621 (Iron-Bird), he commenced the composition of *mdo sde'i spyi* (Khetsun 1977, 519). Either Belo was not aware of the existence of those texts, or they were not mentioned in the three primary sources on which the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk was based. It seems unlikely that Belo intentionally left them out, considering that he had mentioned minor compositions such as praises and spiritual songs.¹⁹¹ Appendix B, tables 1 and 3 contain a comprehensive inventory of Chökyi Wangchuk's existing works, comprising a total of twenty-four texts. Appendix B, table 2 also includes a list of thirty spiritual songs. Considering the number of works by Chökyi Wangchuk, he could be considered the second or third most prolific

¹⁹⁰ In the tentative and unpublished catalog of Paltsek Publications, which is entitled: *The Successive Waves of Faith*, a Catalog of Collected Works by Palden Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk (*dpal ldan gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug gi zhal snag nas bstsal ba'i bka' 'bum rnams kyi dkar chag dad pa'i rlabs phreng*), volume “pa” which contains three subsections: “ka,” “kha,” and “ga”. Having thoroughly examined all three categories, I have found three previously unseen texts among the thirty-two texts (see appendix B, tables 3 and 4). The two primary sources consulted by Belo, *Raincloud of the Golden Age* and *Rosary of Jewels*, remain undiscovered. The *Collected Works of Shamarpas*, comprising the works of the First to the Seventh Shamarpas, is said to have been completed in Tibet.

¹⁹¹ Under the authorship of “chos kyi dbang phyug”, many texts can be found in the Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project of Universität Hamburg, but most are not attributed to the Sixth Shamarpa.

writer in his lineage, preceded by his predecessors the Fourth and Fifth Shamarpas.¹⁹²

Known and Unknown Disciples

According to Belo, Chökyi Wangchuk had more than seventy-nine students, and approximately half of them were influential figures during their time. The identity of the other half remains uncertain. Some students are mentioned within the biography, while others are listed separately afterwards, and a few are not mentioned at all. Belo provides separate biographies for certain students, highlighting their relationship with the teacher, while information on others was not included. The exact methodology used by Belo to arrive at the specific number and grouping of students remains unclear.

Of the seventy-nine students, twenty-three were mentioned within the biography, while fifty-one were listed separately afterwards. Most of the names were associated with specific incarnations or monasteries, places, or held titles. Although not all of their sect affiliations were mentioned, thirty of them carried the title “Karma,” indicating their association with the Karma Kagyü School. Belo presents biographies of six disciples in some detail in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*: those who played significant roles in transmitting the tantric lineage (461–564). These disciples were Jé Karma Künga Namgyal (1615–1688), the Fifth Gyaltsap Goshri Drakpa Chokyang (go shrī lnga pa grags pa mchog dbyangs, 1617–1658), the Secretary Lodrö Norden, the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorjé (1604–1674), Kharek Trülku Karma Tensung, Khyapdak Drupchok Wangpo (khyab bdag grub mchog dbang po, ca.1563–1618), and the First Nedo Karma Chakmé (1613–1678). Additionally, there are five students not listed in Belo’s work, who were disciples of Chökyi Wangchuk according to their own biographies. They are Gongra

¹⁹² See also the catalog and brief biography of the Fourth Shamar Chödrak Yeshé (12 great volumes consist of 168 sub-texts: *ka* 11, *kha* 26, *ga* 5, *nga* 10, *ca* 14, *cha* 22, *ja* 6, *nya* 20, *ta* 20, *tha* 13, *da* 1, *na* 1, *pa* 12, *pha* 7) and the 5th Shamar Könchok Yenlak (the first 3 volumes consist of 39 sub-topics) (“zhwa dmar sku phreng rim” 248–271).

Lochen Shenphen Dorjé (gong ra lo chen gzhan phan rdo rje, 1594–1654), Tsültrim Dorjé (tshul khrim rdo rje, 1598–1669), Karma Nyima (“zhwa dmar 06”), Nyangtön Tratsangpa Lochok Dorjé (1607–1671), and Chögyal Phodrangpa, the 12th abbot of Yangpachen.¹⁹³

Is this an exhaustive list of his students? Two observations suggest otherwise. First, Belo consistently used the enumerative particle “sogs” after each enumeration of the five groups of students, indicating that the list is not comprehensive. Secondly, the selection of disciples appears to have been based on the extent of their religious engagement, with the main disciples included due to their deep involvement, while others may not have been included to the same extent. For instance, whenever Chökyi Wangchuk imparted teachings, empowerments, or reading transmissions at Yangpachen, Tsurphu, and other monasteries, there were numerous monks and laypeople in attendance, but only a select few names were reported, leaving the rest unknown.

Additionally, in Belo’s account, there were numerous instances of individuals meeting with Chökyi Wangchuk, but the nature of these encounters remained uncertain. Notable among these figures were Dhakpo Thutop Wangchuk (bdga po mthu stobs dbang phyug) from the Khön lineage; Druk Trülku of Jayul (bya yul nas ’brug pa sprul sku); Tertön Chokden Gönpö (gter ston mchog ldan mgon po), an incarnation of Tertön Dorjé Lingpa (1346–1405); Lhodrak Trülku of Gowö Monastery (rgo bo dgon gyi lho brag sprul sku); Chöje Trechen of Sheling (bshad gling nas chos rje tre chen); Pomgön Lama (spom dgon bla ma) of Pomdrak Monastery; Yuri Lama (g.yu ri bla ma) of Yuri Monastery; Karma Yülgyal (dpon karma g.yul rgyal), the Horpa chieftain from the North; Washul (wa shul), a clan from Amdo; and the King of Liti (li ti rgyal po), Nepal

¹⁹³ Kyapdak was a student of the Ninth Karmapa, as well as the Fifth and Sixth Shamarpas. Gongra received both novice and full monk vows from Chökyi Wangchuk at the ages of twelve and twenty-one, respectively (Shechen Gyalsap 385; Jikdröl 392–93). Tsültrim Dorjé held the third incarnation in the line of Pema Lingpa (1450–1521) (“The Peling Sungtrul Line”). Detailed biographies of these individuals can be found in Belo’s work (457–562). Chögyal Phodrangpa, the incense bearer (*spos ’dzin pa*) of the Sixth Shamarpa, traveled alongside his teacher wherever he went (Situ Pañchen 628–29). The remaining students have already been introduced in the thesis.

(Belo 425–52).¹⁹⁴ It is worth noting that Belo extensively documented Chökyi Wangchuk’s interactions with key personalities, yet some individuals, such as his tutor Namgyal Drakpa,¹⁹⁵ who played a significant role in his teachings, were excluded. Furthermore, the biography did not delve into the details of approximately fifty-one disciples, making it challenging to determine their exact identities. For a comprehensive list of disciples, including potential titles, dates, and affiliations, see appendix A, tables 1–5.

The Funeral Rituals

After the death of Chökyi Wangchuk, many auspicious signs were observed (Douglas and White 149). Belo reports that his *kudung* (*sku gdung*, an honorific term for bodily remains) was brought to Tsurphu Monastery. While sky, water, earth, and fire burials may be regular disposal methods for common Tibetans, some lamas have exceptional methods for treating their physical remains, such as dissolving into a rainbow body or mummification in the manner of the ancient Egyptians. Dungkar explicitly states in the short biography of Chökyi Wangchuk that his remains were mummified, covered in silver, and placed inside the vase of a Descended from Heaven-stūpa (Dungkar “zhwa dmar sku ’phreng drug pa chos kyi dbang phyug”).¹⁹⁶ Khetsun also stated that the kudung was lumped together (*ril bur bzugs*) (1977, 214). With regards to this matter, Belo delineates several pertinent details:

The funeral ceremony was performed according to the testament of the First and Fifth Shamarpas, which instructed to place the whole remains inside a pure white stūpa. For the bodily remains of all the [predecessors of] Shamarpas, this same practice has

¹⁹⁴ Washul is a family name which belongs to one of the eighteen clans in the nomadic region of Amdo (Shang Yisun “wa shul”). Druk Trülku refers to the Fifth Drukchen Paksam Wangpo (dpag bsam dbang po), from Jayul (bya yul) who mingled his mind with Chökyi Wangchuk (Belo 2011, 444).

¹⁹⁵ It is possible that Namgyal Drakpa and Jé Karma Künga Namgyal (Drakpa?) were the same person, considering their shared role as tutors to Chökyi Wangchuk and their similar names.

¹⁹⁶ Dungkar’s mummification statement in Wylie: *zhwa dmar sku phreng rim byon gyi sku gdung zhugs ’bul ma byas par dmar gdung ring por ’jog pa’i srol bzhin dngul gdung lha babs mchod rten gyi bum pa’i nang du bzugs*. Mummification is a rare and uncommon method of disposing human remains that was often reserved for individuals of high spiritual status, although not exclusively so (“Tibetan Death Rituals”).

been followed (Belo 456–57, trans. mine).

This passage raises two further questions. First: What did the testaments of the First and Fifth Shamarpa state about their death rituals? Second: Did all five of the predecessors of the Shamarpa incarnations follow a similar funeral rite? To begin my answer to these questions, I will examine the words of the First Shamarpa in order to gain an understanding of his testament.

Finally, he said, before passing into nirvāṇa: At the moment of my death, I [Drakpa Sengé] do not need others' prayers, the bestowal of empowerment on the bodily remains, rituals, and weekly rites (*bdun tshig*). Let the bodily remains be untouched and in peace for three days. Then, having adorned them with red clothes and bone ornaments (*rus rgyan*), install them on a throne. Make offerings and supplications with more than ten pure *samaya* holders. Then build a pure white silver stūpa, which should face toward the east. I made wishes to guide those who see, hear, or recollect the stūpa. (Shamar II Khachö 200–201, trans. mine)¹⁹⁷

This passage provides several instructions, but it is unclear whether the intention was to cremate the body or not. Similarly, Belo's statement is ambiguous about the mummification status of the remains, simply stating that “the precious remains [of Chökyi Wangchuk] were molded in pure silver and enshrined in the Descended from Heaven-stūpa” (Belo 456–57). The decision to build a Descended from Heaven-stūpa for the relic (*sku gdung gi mchod rten*) may have been a suggestion of the Tenth Karmapa, who oversaw the rites. However, the second half of the First Shamarpa's testament indicates that the funeral practice was specifically for him, as he instructed his students for a certain purpose, further adding:

I thought to achieve the supreme accomplishment (Skt. *paramasiddhi*) in this lifetime and go to Khechara by transforming this body into the rainbow diamond body.¹⁹⁸ I was distracted by the welfare of beings. Though I could not attain it due to temporary obstacles, I will certainly obtain it in the intermediate state (*bar do*). For the

¹⁹⁷ According to the *Anuttaratantra*, bone ornament refers to five or six types of ornaments of male and female deities (Dungkar “*rus rgyan*”). In Tibetan Buddhism, weekly rituals with various deities are conducted during the 49-day bardo state (Skt. *antarābhava*) to aid the deceased through the seven stages of dying. Deceased bodies are not touched immediately after death or before the Consciousness Transference (*pho ba*) practice, as it is believed that the spirit can be displaced wherever it is touched. It may not apply to realized beings or advanced practitioners.

¹⁹⁸ Khechara, the realm of Celestial Enjoyment is the Buddha-field of Vajravārāhī; someone who was able to accomplish enlightenment in one lifetime through a tantric method may reborn there without abandoning his/her body (Dungkar “*mkha' spyod*”).

auspiciousness connection of that, you should practice accordingly. Since I am heading to the pure Buddha-field, you should not mourn, cry, and weep. (Shamar II Khachö 200–201, trans. mine).

Moreover, the remains of the Second to Fifth Shamarpas were each treated differently upon death. The Second Shamarpa's remain was enshrined in a silver vase, the Third was mummified in a stūpa, the Fourth in a majestic silver stūpa, and the Fifth was cremated (“zhwa dmar sku phreng” 1996, 262).¹⁹⁹ While the bodies of certain incarnations received varying treatments upon their deaths, their final wills share common objectives. As an illustration, the Second, Fifth, and Sixth Shamarpas left behind testamentary epistles (*zhal chem*) that revealed, in varying degrees of detail, their foreseen destination of rebirth (Shamar IV Chödrak 390; Karma Shenphen 70).

An Incomplete Picture

As Belo's biography of the Sixth Shamarpa primarily focuses on his religious life, it is reasonable to assume that it is not a complete depiction of his life and works. Several aspects are absent in Belo's work that mostly pertain to the outer biography. As previously detailed, information about Chökyi Wangchuk's family is limited. Second, details about the first four to five years of his life and his recognition are also absent. Usually, auspicious signs or miracles are reported during and after the birth of enlightened figures, such as when the Fifth Shamarpa was conceived, and his mother dreamt of holding a moon in her hand and heard the Six Syllable mantra coming from her belly (Belo 1972, 238). Notably, Belo's account does not mention such

¹⁹⁹ According to an oral history (*kha rgyun*), the remains of the Fourth Shamar Chenga Chödrak's (1453–1524) were kept mummified (*sku dmar gdung*) in a stūpa. During the cultural revolution in China, it was buried underneath the earth and a big stone slab was installed upon it. When the religious right restrictions were relaxed, the remains were unearthed; its hairline had grown to the waistline. Then it was enshrined in a stūpa, which is believed to be the most sacred object of the Yangpachen Monastery. Similarly, regarding the death of the Fifth Shamar Könchok Yenlak (1525–1583), some say that at the end of his life he remained in a meditative state (*thugs dams*), and his physical body shrank to a cubit (*gru mo*), while others say that during the cremation of his body, a part remained and miraculously formed an image (*rang byung*). Both of their remains are enshrined in stūpas of Yangpachen Monastery to this day: the large stūpa belongs to the Fourth Shamarpa and the smaller one belongs to the Fifth Shamarpa. The kudung stūpa and the monastery face towards the east. Possibly, Chökyi Wangchuk's remains are enshrined at Yangpachen Monastery, as the Tenth Karmapa paid respect to the kudung of successive Shamarpas there (Khetsun 1977, 207–208).

preceding or early incidents in Chökyi Wangchuk's life.²⁰⁰ Third, there is no account of his personality, struggles, failures, or challenges. Fourth, Belo seems to give more importance to Chökyi Wangchuk's yogic songs and praises than to his other significant compositions, yet Belo does not quote any of these songs or praises in the biography. Finally, the role of nuns and laywomen in his life is goes almost entirely without mention, except for one instance where Chökyi Wangchuk had a vision of a *ḍakinī* and met an eccentric Chinese woman whom he considered as a *ḍakinī*. Similarly, little is known about his interactions with common people in general. In summary, a clear gap exists between Chökyi Wangchuk's personal and religious lives.

Conclusion

This chapter analyzes three major features of Belo's biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, exploring sources, writing styles, and underlying themes. First, it touches on the authenticity, ambiguity, and limitations of the sources, which shaped the discourse of Chökyi Wangchuk's life. Second, it explores the compositional pattern of the biography from a structural perspective, which bears some resemblances to Situ's style. The biography's compressed and abridged narrative makes it concise, and yet it has a certain contextual, chronological, and grammatical obscurity. Finally, this chapter aims to bridge the gaps in Belo's work, providing a more comprehensive understanding of Chökyi Wangchuk's life and contributions. It explores key areas that were overlooked or insufficiently covered in Belo's biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, including his influential family background, potential impact on students, prolific compositions, death rituals, and further clarifications on Belo's findings. By addressing these gaps, this chapter contributes to a more nuanced portrayal of Chökyi Wangchuk's significance.

²⁰⁰ Belo mentions that Chökyi Wangchuk was born "with many virtuous omens" (418), a statement often associated with incarnations. See also the sections titled "Recognition as the Sixth Shamrapa" and "Relationship with the Kyura Family" in chapters 1 and 2, respectively.

Chapter 3: In the Eyes of Scholars

This chapter aims to enhance Belo's portrayal of Chökyi Wangchuk by exploring additional aspects of his life, addressing three key questions to provide a more nuanced understanding of his character and legacy. First, how do scholars of the past and present depict Chökyi Wangchuk in the historical context of Tibet's social, political, and religious structure? Second, do scholars do justice to his historical roles, position, and contributions? And third, was the life story of this influential figure as free from the cloud of controversies, uncertainties, and assumptions, as Belo portrays in his biography? To answer these questions, the present chapter is divided into two main parts—scholarly depiction and thematic analysis—and further subdivided into several subsections.

I. In the Eyes of Scholars

Scholars of His Time

Chökyi Wangchuk's contemporaries remembered him in two contexts: his work and his life. For the scope of this biographical research, I will focus mainly on the latter. Most of his teachers, students, relatives, and other encounters mentioned few stories about him in relation to their own biographies. However, two influential students recorded the most exclusive life stories about their teacher and are thus particularly noteworthy.

In 1645, years after Chökyi Wangchuk's passing, the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorjé (1604–1674) meditated in a Tsari forest and dreamt of meeting his master in Amitābha's Buddha-field.²⁰¹ Upon recounting the dream to his attendant-friend, Rimdrowa Küntu Sangpo (rim gro ba kun tu gzang po), he implored him to author a text chronicling Chökyi Wangchuk's life (Shamar

²⁰¹ In the context of the secret biography, such a dream might be understood as a pure vision, in which Karmapa interacts with the enlightened mind of his guru.

Rinpoche 165). The narrative biography was entitled *The Bountiful Cow: Biography of a Bodhisattva* (*byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs brjod 'dod 'jo'i ba mo*) and completed in 1648.²⁰² The storyline in *The Bountiful Cow* starts with a vision of Chökyi Wangchuk,²⁰³ followed by a series of exchanges between Karmapa and Küntu Sangpo and ends with the death of the Sixth Shamarpa in 1630. Concisely, the storyline revolves around the relationship of the author and his guru. The latter aspects can be loosely encapsulated in six main points: recognizing the Tenth Karmapa, freeing him from Chakmo's exploitation, appointing the Third Pawo Tsuklak Gyatso as his tutor, transferring the lineage transmission, nursing Chökyi Wangchuk, and performing his death rites.²⁰⁴ It is composed in a combination of prose and verse, is adorned with a sophisticated biographical narrative style of Sanskrit composition known as *avadāna* (*brtogs brjod*);²⁰⁵ it is 333 pages. Overall, “[t]he structure of the writing is very similar to the teaching of the Buddha in the sūtras and tantras” in which Buddha expounded teachings in reply to questions raised by his personal attendant Ānanda (Rabsal 76). Yet sometimes the narration of the author-guru relationship was a mixture of casual and serious activities, which is distinct from the former style of writing. For example:

Bodhisattva Chökyi Wangchuk and I [Karmapa] settled down in that area. We talked about the Dharma, and the different places we visited. We also told jokes. Every day we saw deer and rabbits playing in the fields. Near the stream, the cranes were singing

²⁰² The full title of the written work is *byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs pa brjod pa zhing kun tu rang nyid 'ong ba gdul bar bya ba kun gyi 'dod pa 'jo ba'i ba mo*, which is also abbreviated as *The Wish-fulfilling Cow* (Mengele 299). Belo stated that the composition began in 1645 and was completed three years later—in the eleventh lunar month of the Earth-Mouse year (1648) (300). However, another source notes that Chöying Dorjé completed *The Bountiful Cow* “eighteen years after the death of [Chökyi Wangchuk]” (Lamminger 8).

²⁰³ While Karmapa was living in Tsaritra (*tswa ri tra*) region, “a goddess wearing a white, fluttering, silk robe said, ‘Chökyi Wangchuk, upon finishing his duties in the world, passed away, and like a flock of white geese heading for lakes, his relics went to the land of Dokham in the east,’ and pointed her finger.” Having shared this vision with his attendant Küntu Sangpo, Sangpo requested that he tell the biography (Rabsal 76).

²⁰⁴ These six points are not elaborated here as it has been covered in the first chapter.

²⁰⁵ *Avadāna* is one of the “twelve branches of the scriptures,” which illustrates aspects that have not been understood perfectly (Dungkar “rtogs par brjod pa'i sde”).

Cf. the length and content with “byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs brjod 'jo'i ba mo,” *rje karma bcu ba chos dbyings rdo rje'i gsung 'bum*, vol. 1, si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004, pp. 3–333.

and playing. Bodhisattva Chökyi Wangchuk explained to the disciples there the verses and poems of master Satoshsgyin²⁰⁶—how Buddha [Śāk]yamuni engaged in bodhisattva activities over many lifetimes. I volunteered to hold the umbrella over him to give shade, as it was very hot. He taught for fifteen days. Sometimes we took some days off when we would play and go swimming in the streams (qtd. in Shamar Rinpoche 33).

The text vividly captures the final moments of Chökyi Wangchuk's life. A few months before his death, his behavior changed: he became rather isolated and engaged less with people. He was diagnosed with a wind imbalance—a possible cause of death—which was painless but incurable. This imbalance made him so frail that he could hardly walk or mount a horse. Despite this, he composed *The Song of Perfect Joy* (*rab dga'i glu*) (Khetsun 1977, 213), a “poems of homage conveying the Twelve Deeds of Buddha [Śākyamuni].” He had numerous conversations with Karmapa on topics like the impossibility of reversing death; and he predicted his rebirth in Mar, where the people had pure devotion (Shamar Rinpoche 53–58).²⁰⁷ Karmapa described the final moments of the Shamarpa's life:

I asked the great Bodhisattva Chökyi Wangchuk, “How are you feeling?” He answered, “I do not have any pain, and I feel rested.” I offered him the morning tea. He looked more joyful than ever before. He [drank] tea. Moments after sunrise, Bodhisattva Wangchuk entered [*parinirvāṇa*] without any pain or suffering (qtd. in Shamar Rinpoche 341).

Unlike the traditional approach of auto/biography, Chöying Dorjé was not shy to share his emotional breakdowns and nostalgic feelings related to his master. Several years earlier, for example, when he learned about Chökyi Wangchuk's plan to visit India, he was so concerned about his guru's health and safety that he could neither eat nor drink. Then, when Chökyi Wangchuk passed away, Chöying Dorjé recounted, “I was in tears. At the next moment, I lost consciousness.” His assistant had to sprinkle him with water to make him conscious. A week

²⁰⁶This probably refers to Ācārya Satsöjin's (sa 'tshos sbyin) avadāna: *bdag cag gi ston pa'i skyes pa rabs kyi phreng ba bcu phrag gsum dang bzhi'i bdag nyid can* (Dokharwa 563).

²⁰⁷ As predicted, “I have captured [Mar] in my thought,” Yeshe Nyingpo (ye she snying po, 1631–1694)—the Seventh Shamarpa—was reborn near the Machu River, Golok, eastern Tibet, which also was the Tenth Karmapa's homeland (Belo 554).

later, “Again tears streamed down my face as I was overwhelmed by the memories of Bodhisattva [Chökyi] Wangchuk” (qtd. in Shamar Rinpoche 147, 341, 159). In fact, throughout the text Karmapa regarded, emphasized, and frequently addressed Chökyi Wangchuk as a highly accomplished Bodhisattva, which implied the realization of his guru. In his own words, “Bodhisattva Chökyi Wangchuk was like the moon in this Dark Age” (159). One could argue whether revealing the greatness of Chökyi Wangchuk was the main objective of the text. Compared to Belo’s “sober representation” (Lamminger 2), *The Bountiful Cow* is more lengthy, detailed, and distinct in its narrative style. *The Bountiful Cow* and Belo’s biography of Chökyi Wangchuk overlapped in many stages, although Chöying Dorjé’s work was not cited to avoid repetition in Belo’s biography of Chökyi Wangchuk.

The second account is based on the testimonial of Khedrup Nedo Karma Chakmé (mkhas grub gnas mdo karma chags med, 1613–1678), who was both an exemplary student and a consummate scholar. At the age of fifteen, Chakmé encountered Chökyi Wangchuk for the first time and was given the name “Karma Chakmé” during his *bhikṣu* vow ceremony.²⁰⁸ Upon imparting vital teachings, including Mahāmudrā and the Six Doctrines of Nāropa, Chökyi Wangchuk declared Chakmé to be a saintly being (Skt. *satpuruṣa*) (Jamgön Lodrö Thayé *rin chen gter* 193b/726). At Chökyi Wangchuk’s funeral rite, Chakmé proclaimed him as the ultimate root guru, who had bestowed upon him a spiritual instruction (Skt. *avavāda*) that allowed him to recognize the nature of his mind. Chakmé stated in 1630:

If you doubt who is my guru,
Though I have [spiritual] connections with over thirty masters,
The Paṇḍita of North is my root guru,
The guru Mañjughoṣa in an appearance of Dharma,

²⁰⁸ According to *mkhas grub karma chags med kyi rnam thar*, Chakmé had his first encounter with Shamarpa in central Tibet at the age of nineteen (2012, 2). However, Belo’s account differs, stating that they met before the New Year of 1628 when Chakmé was fifteen years old (449).

Who is the re-blossomed form of Mañjughoṣa,
He is the Omniscient Dharmaś[*v*]āra. (Chakmé's *ri chos*, trans. mine)²⁰⁹

Following that, Chakmé set his finger on fire, offering it as a lamp,²¹⁰ and supplicated to his teacher; thus, he realized the wisdom of the essential meaning (*nying po'i dong gyi ye shes brnyes*) (Belo 449, 456).²¹¹ This exceptional student frequently referred to and acknowledged his teacher's contributions and greatness in his collected works. Whilst it may be impractical to address all facets of Chakmé's work in this research, I will discuss four accounts which offer a glimpse into his perception of his teacher. First, Chakmé's biography (*mkhas grub karma chags med kyi rnam thar* 3, 2012) documents his vision and perception of his guru's identity:

At the beginning of the Fire-Monkey year (1656), he vividly heard the voice of Chökyi Wangchuk, the Lord of the Lineage, who said, "You did not come." He was disappointed. Chakmé said to his monk attendant, "Since the Victorious Amitābha and Shamar Rinpoché are one in essence, is it a signal that I would reach there (Sukhāvātī) soon?" (trans. mine)

Next is a testament to the exceptional level of realization achieved by an ordinary student, thus prompting one to ponder upon the profound depth of insight held by his teacher. In *The Collection of Prerequisite* (*nyer mkho phyogs bsgrigs*), Chakmé recalls a student of Chökyi Wangchuk who dissolved into a rainbow of light without leaving any remains of psychophysical

²⁰⁹ Dharmēśvara, "Lord of Dharma," is the Sanskrit equivalent of the Tibetan name Chökyi Wangchuk. The ode in Wylie: *spyir bla ma sum cu lhag tsam bsten yang / rtsa ba'i bla ma ni zhwa dmar drug pa chos kyi dbang phyug yin te/ ri chos mtshams kyi zhal gdams las/ bla ma gang yin the tshom za ba na// 'brel thob slob dpon sum cu so bgrang yang // rtsa ba'i bla ma byang phyogs paN+Di ta// 'jam dbyangs bla ma chos kyi snang ba can// 'jam dbyangs gsar du bzhad pa zhes bya ba// kun mkhyen d+harma shwa ra nyid yin no// zhes gsungs shing / zhwa dmar drug pa'i sku gdung mdun du phyag sor sgron mer phul nas gsol ba btab pas phyag rgya chen po'i ye shes 'khrungs* (Chakmé's *ri chos*, first chapter).

²¹⁰ Shamar Rinpoche interprets the finger burning: Chakmé "likely wrapped his finger first in cloth and tied a string around it to secure the wrapping. He then dipped the finger in butter and burnt it." The "essence of wisdom realization" is equal to reaching enlightenment (162).

²¹¹ As per Brunnhölzl, Douglas and White, Chökyi Wangchuk's health deteriorated on the fourth day of the second month in the Male-Iron-Horse year of 1630. To safeguard the integrity of their master's legacy, his disciples implored that his demise be postponed until the arrival of Chakmé, who promptly arrived to receive the final teachings (Douglas and White 148–9; Brunnhölzl 343–344). However, according to the accounts of the Tenth Karmapa, Chakmé, and Belo, it is not specified whether Chökyi Wangchuk waited for Chakmé's arrival. They stated that he postponed his death based on a request from the Karmapa (see "Passing into Nirvāṇa" sec. of ch. 1).

constituents in the aftermath of death. Attaining nirvāṇa without remainder of aggregates (Skt. *nirupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*) was (and still is) deemed an extremely rare phenomenon.

At that time, there were two disciples who had achieved rainbow bodies and gone without any remaining physical aggregates: a junior stablehand (*chibs chung ba*) of the Lord Sixth Shamarpa called Taktsang Yangdak (stag tshang yang dag) and Karma Mönlam (karma smon lam), a *bhikṣu* from Chubar. (498–99, trans. mine)

The rarity of such brilliant students was also reflected in Chökyi Wangchuk’s song, composed of alternating poetry and prose in Dorjé Ling, Yölmo Gangra. He expressed, “Alas, the worldly disciples encircle me, adorned with wisdom, discipline, and nobility. Yet, the one who could potentially protect Buddha’s teachings, alas, is emerging exceedingly rarely” (Dalai Lama V “nyang ston khra” 208). The song warrants further examination due to its conveyance of numerous significant internal reflections, which is beyond the scope of this thesis. Third, in *Mountain Dharma, A Pith Instruction for Mountain Retreatants* (*ri chos mtshams kyi zhal gdams*, comp. in 1630), Chakmé referenced his guru a total of eleven times. In this excerpt, he exhorts his followers to study the perspectives of others while maintaining a non-engaged stance:

Chökyi Wangchuk also said, “You should know about many other traditions, [such as] the Indian and Chinese, [but] if you mix too much with these other traditions instead of practicing your own, the guru’s lineage will become corrupted. Your mind [becomes like] a whirlwind, [like the mind of someone preoccupied with] material wealth, anxious about what could happen” (Chakmé’s *ri chos*; trans. Bieler 28).

Finally, Chakmé divulged certain distinct personal attributes and their respective connotations in relation to his teacher. As he writes in his fifth chapter, “How to the Upheld Three Vows”:

Chökyi Wangchuk, my supreme guide;
Rolls the carpets of the shrine hall and puts them on his head,²¹²
Beats a carpet and puts dust on his mouth,
Prostrates to *saṅgha* whenever he visits them,
Never turns his back while visiting [the *saṅgha* and] walks backwards.²¹³
If one examines the meaning of his actions:

²¹² Here, “carpet” refers to *tsokden* (*tshogs gdan*), a long carpet used as seating in monastic shrine halls.

²¹³ Facing high lamas or statues symbolizes reverence during an audience or when leaving a monastery. It is a customary etiquette in Tibetan culture; turning one’s back to a lama or statue is seen as disrespectful.

Unbiased against all ordained ones,
 Never criticizes the faults of others, abandoned wrong views and mistreatments,
 All monks are regarded as an object of refuge,
 Obtained boundless merit through that. (49, trans. mine).²¹⁴

In these examples, Chakmé depicts his teacher as a highly realized being, inseparable from the divine in essence, and whose teachings produced numerous exceptional students. Although the guru sometimes behaved in an unusual manner, his view was uncorrupted by other traditions, and his deeds were not devoid of meaning. These kinds of mystic portrayals and effusive praises were largely evident in the accounts of immediate adherents; however, later scholars tend to avoid such veneration. It is surprising to note that although Chökyi Wangchuk brought forth a multitude of brilliant students, only one, the Tenth Karmapa, undertook the task of composing his mentor's biography. This is in stark contrast to two of his contemporaries, the Ninth and Tenth Karmapas, for whom several biographies were composed by their students.²¹⁵ Consequently, due to the availability of primary sources, modern scholars pay more attention to Chökyi Wangchuk's main student, the Tenth Karmapa. As such, I briefly addressed Karmapa and their relationship, acknowledging the extensive studies conducted by other scholars like Shamar Rinpoche, Irmgard Mengele, Karl Debreczeny and Gray Tuttle.

²¹⁴ Ibid.: The verse in Wylie appears in Chakmé's *Mountain Dharma*, a guide for retreatants: *bdag gi 'dren mchog chos kyi dbang phyug gis// tshogs pa'i tshogs gdan dril nas dbu la bzhag// tshogs gdan rdul sprugs ljags kyi steng du bzhag// rgyun du nam 'byon tshogs par phyag 'bul mdzad// 'byon dus sku rgyab mi ston phyi 'gros mdzad// de dag don la legs par dpyad byas na// phyogs ris med pa'i ser mo gyon tshad la// gzhan skyon mi bya log lta gshe skur spangs// kun kyang skyabs yul dge 'dun yin par bzung // de yis rang nyid bsod nams dpag med 'thob.*

²¹⁵ Four students who composed the biographies of the Tenth Karmapa: (1) The Fourth Goshir Gyaltsap Drakpa Döndrup's (rgyal tshab grags pa don grub, 1550–1617) the biography of the Ninth Karmapa, see Belo 314–404. (2) Lingpön Karma Tenzin Gyatso's (gling dpon karma bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho, b.16–17th c.) (3) *The Excellent Vase of Nectar: A Biography of Jikten Wangchuk, the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorjé, up to the Age of Twelve* ('jig rten dbang phyug karma pa bcu pa chos dbyings rdo rje yis dgung lo bcu gnyis yan chad kyi rnam thar bdud rtsi'i bum bzang), see Mengele 305–309. (4) Tsang Khenchen Palden Gyatso's (gtsang mkhan chen dpal ldan rgya mtsho, 1610–1684), *The Biography of the Most Excellent Chöying Dorje, Combined with Quotations from the Mahāyānasūtralaṃkāra* (rgyal mchog chos dbyings rdo rje'i rnam thar mdo sde rgyan gyi lung dang sbyar ba); see Mengele 309–311.

Subsequent Scholars

After the death of Chökyi Wangchuk, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, (ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617–82) emerged as the most influential figure of his time. Although they never had the opportunity to meet, the Dalai Lama extensively discusses Chökyi Wangchuk in two contexts. First, in the biographies of his predecessors, the fifth Dalai Lama delves into the issue revolving around two poems and a missed encounter between Chökyi Wangchuk and the Fourth Dalai Lama. These aspects are explored in the following section titled “Two Enigmatic Poems.” In the second context, the Fifth Dalai Lama provides detailed accounts in the biography of his teacher, Nyangtön Tratsangpa Lochok Dorjé (nyang ston khra tshang pa blo mchog rdo rje, 1607–1671), composed in 1676 (Male-Fire-Dragon), discussing several key points. First, one portion of the narrative revolves around the relationship between Nyangtön and his teacher, the Sixth Shamarpa, shedding light on the cause of their meeting²¹⁶ and the teachings Nyangtön received.²¹⁷ Second, it is mentioned that Shamarpa fell seriously ill in 1630 (see “Passing into Nirvāṇa” in chapter 1). A possible cause for his illness is suggested: “Lopön Shamarwa fell seriously ill after consuming tainted food, which was believed to have originated from Yangri Trungpa’s side” (“nyang ston khra” 206). However, the Fifth Dalai Lama expresses skepticism about this account, as accusations towards Chakmo and Yangri were often made by the Garpas (see fn. 78).²¹⁸ Third, Shamarpa’s main deed was recognized as “transferring

²¹⁶ Ibid., 204: As the strong supporters of the Tsang ruler became divided over time, internal turmoil arose in the east, west, and central regions of Yarlung. Due to the inability to harvest and the scarcity of food, five lamas from the Nyingma tradition decided to seek shelter at the encampment of Shamar Thamché Khyenpa, with Nyangtön being a part of it. After receiving generous support for a year, four of the lamas requested to return to their own places. This is the primary reason for their visit to Shamarpa’s encampment.

²¹⁷ As The Great Encampment had numerous activities and required frequent travel, Nyangtön did not receive all the teachings he desired (Dalai Lama V 204). Nevertheless, considering the extensive list of teachings he did receive from Chökyi Wangchuk, it is indeed a substantial amount.

²¹⁸ However, the account does not mention the actual cause of Chökyi Wangchuk’s death (212). See fn. 80 for more information on Chakmo and Yangri.

complete worldly and religious responsibility to the Tenth Karmapa” (207). Fourth, the text indicates the perspectives on the Old and New Translation Traditions: “the Sixth Shamarwa is described as accepting most of the teachings in the Sarma Tradition, particularly in dispelling doubts regarding consecration liturgy. Nyangtön holds a high level of faith in Shamarpa’s knowledge of the sciences of learning, discipline, and nobility, regarding his stance as perfect” (208). Fifth, in the biography, Chökyi Wangchuk is addressed as Lopön Shamarwa (slob dpon zhwa dmar ba, likely being the teacher of Nyangtön) or the Holder of the Red Crown. The biography also raises the issue of the Garpas’ poor treatment towards Nyangtön,²¹⁹ which was not considered Shamarpa’s fault. In this context, he is probably referring to a partial song by Chökyi Wangchuk, which consists of alternating poetry and prose and was composed in Dorjé Ling, Yölmo Gangra (208). Lastly, in Nyangtön’s biography, he often used the word “*zer*,” which indicates that he was conveying what was being said rather than necessarily expressing his own beliefs or acceptance of it, while consistently portraying Chökyi Wangchuk as a highly learned figure throughout the narration. In essence, the Fifth Dalai Lama’s works are important as they raise points that were not addressed by the Tenth Karmapa, Karma Chakmé, and Belo. Lamming also arrived at a similar conclusion (9). Chökyi Wangchuk is primarily depicted by his students in the context of spiritual exchanges, while the Fifth Dalai Lama provides a nuanced portrayal that encompasses both spiritual and political aspects. Following the notable literary contributions of the Fifth Dalai Lama, two influential works emerged: Jamyang Tsenlek’s *Raincloud of the Golden Age* and Belo’s *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, Volume Two. These works have been examined in the first two chapters of this thesis.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 206: Externally, Nyangtön was seen as one of his attendants, but in Chökyi Wangchuk’s perspective, he held the status of a guru owing to his scholarly expertise and adept qualities. Nevertheless, among the general populace of Garpas, he was subjected to slander.

Modern Scholars

From the late twentieth century onward, Chökyi Wangchuk's life and writings started to receive attention from western scholars but remained relatively limited among Tibetan intellectuals. I focus on three critical works which will provide the modern scholar's perspective on Chökyi Wangchuk: Lamminger, Mengele, and Shamar.

In 2003, Navina Lamminger studied the life of Chökyi Wangchuk and translated the *Travelogue to Nepal* into German, complementing Ehrhard's research on the same text.²²⁰ Although there is as yet no English translation available, Lamminger's work is perhaps the most extensive, cohesive, and complete research on the life of Chökyi Wangchuk to date. It consists of two parts: the biography of Chökyi Wangchuk and his travelogue. She identifies her sources for the life story of Chökyi Wangchuk as predominantly based on Belo's biography of the Sixth Shamarpa and *The Bountiful Cow* (Lamminger 9). The author accurately notes the absence of any information on Chökyi Wangchuk's early years or the period leading up to his recognition as the Sixth Shamarpa (1590–1593), as well as the lack of concrete details for the ages twenty to twenty-three (7). The author used the biographies of the Sixth Shamarpa's father, three brothers, students, and others to fill some biographical gaps. This is followed by a description of the turbulent political situation during the rule of the Tsangpas (6–27).

The biography's main part unfolds chronologically in six stages, each with multiple subsections. These stages are: (1) His Family, Childhood, and Initial Lessons (1584–1593); (2) Youth (1593–1602); (3) Maturity (1603–1610); (4) Journey into the Eastern Regions (1610–1618); (5) Stay in Central Tibet (1618–1629); and (6) Stay in Chubar, Travel to Nepal, and Passing Away (1629–1630) (17–131). Lamminger raises several critical questions, but some

²²⁰ Her doctoral dissertation, titled *The 6th Zhva dmar pa Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630) and the Account of his Journey in the years of 1629/1630: Critical Study, Edition and Translation*, was completed in 2013.

analyses are incomplete. For example, the author identifies several potential reasons for Chökyi Wangchuk's passing (125–27) but does not draw any conclusion. Upon examining the works of Karmapa and Belo (456), it is evident that the primary cause of death was the imbalance of wind. This conclusion is supported by several factors, including the recurrent nature of the wind disease (*rlung gyi snyun*), Shamarpa's three reasons for seeking medical attention, and the limited treatment options available.²²¹

Next, having presented a thorough introduction to Chökyi Wangchuk's life by drawing a picture of his different activities, Lamminger invokes the view of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) that humans are a “political animal” (Greek: *zoon politikon*). Thus, she concludes that Chökyi Wangchuk ought to have been involved in political activities either within Tibet—in line with the claims of Geluk scholars—or in neighboring regions (Lamminger 132–34). Here, Lamminger deviates from the characterization of the Tenth Karmapa and of Belo, who both describe Chökyi Wangchuk's role as a mediator of disputes, with no consideration for personal gain: both of these biographical documents arguably portray him as non-partisan.

The *Travelogue to Nepal* (*bal yul du bgrod pa'i lam yig nor bu spel ma'i phreng ba*) “resembles a detailed diary” of the Sixth Shamarpa (Lamminger 1). It contains three sections: a general overview, a critical text edition in Wylie, and an annotated German translation of the manuscript. Moreover, it includes twelve field trip images and a microfilm copy of the original manuscript with a missing folio three. Since the structure and content of the travelogue has been discussed in chapter 2 of this thesis, this section will focus on the analysis concerning the

²²¹ Shamarpa's decision to allow the physician to conduct a check-up was driven by three reasons. First, it aimed to alleviate any future remorse that the Karmapa might experience by ensuring that he had taken the necessary step of seeking medical assistance. Second, it aimed to relieve the physician of any potential regrets stemming from not being able to administer treatment. Three, it aimed to provide clarity to others who would come across this account, sparing them from speculation about why the Karmapa, as the attendant, had not consulted a doctor during Shamarpa's illness. This decision also aimed to dispel any doubts regarding the doctor's competence in employing appropriate treatments (qtd. in Mengele 150).

purpose of the trip. Lamminger speculates that Shamarpa's journey to Nepal was not only of personal nature, but that he had a premeditated diplomatic task. This is also one of the main arguments of Erhard (126). Right before the trip to Chubar, Karma Tenkyong Wangpo, the ruler of the Tsang region, invited Chökyi Wangchuk to the Gyalkhartse Palace.²²² Probably Chökyi Wangchuk made the decision to go to Nepal in consultation with the King, since there is no evidence that he had any plans to visit Nepal or India prior to his visit to the Royal Court. He had few contacts with the Tsang King while in Kathmandu, so the practical intention of his trip may have been both business and pilgrimage. One of the tasks could have been related to Nepal's unfavorable *en route* trade tax between India and Tibet, which had to be paid by converting pure silver ingot into inferior Nepalese coins. It could also have been related to inspecting alternative trade routes through Nyanang (gnya nang) to Kathmandu since the Kyirong (skyid grong) route was controlled by Gorkha King Rāma Shah (r. 1606–1633). Finally, the way the kings of Nepal received him with grand receptions infers that he was either a representative or ambassador of the Tsang king. He would have fit in the position mainly on three pragmatic characteristics: having communication skills in Sanskrit, excellent diplomatic experience, and being a high-ranking priest. Ironically, reading the travelogue gives the impression that he seems more interested in visiting holy places rather than executing diplomatic duties (Lamminger 144–46).

The speculation presents itself with two notable deficiencies. First, it undermines Chökyi Wangchuk's declared motive—that he had longed for the pilgrimage to the Vajrāsana since age nineteen—that forms the premise of the travelogue's composition (f.1a). In addition, an incident in the latter part of 1619 suggests that his will was not random: “when Chökyi Wangchuk saw fruit trees (*'bras shing*), mulé dram trees (*mu le gram shing*), sal trees (*sālā*), and buffalos at the

²²² A historical fortress (est. 1364) in Gyaltsé district, Shigatse.

shore of Bale (Ba le), he missed India” (Belo 435). Second, as per Yeshe Dronma’s interpretation, an invitation to India was extended to him.

As the fame of the Shamarpa spread further into India, twenty-five of the greatest paṇḍitas residing in Bodh[ayā], invited him to teach the Dharma. Regrettably, he was unable to accept their invitations. He replied separately, giving individual attention to their very problem. They corresponded in Sanskrit (Dronma 33).

Even if the purpose of his visit were unspecified, why would a Tibetan Lama require a pretext to visit the holiest sites? This has been a frequent practice across generations. Nepal was the ideal route through which travelers acclimatized to the weather, food, and language. Since the eighth century, Tibetan history has been filled with stories of Tibetan lamas such as Marpa Chökyi Lodrö (mar pa chos kyi blo gros, 1012–1097) who visited the Noble Land of India (rgya gar ’phags pa’i yul) three times without any political objective. Moreover, in addition to Lamminger’s exposition, two subsequent critical works not only complement her analysis but also provide a more detailed exploration of the life of Chökyi Wangchuk as depicted in the Karmapa’s *The Bountiful Cow*.

In 2005 and 2012, Irmgard Mengele (*Riding a Huge Wave of Karma: The Turbulent Life of the Tenth Karma-pa*) and the Fourteenth Shamar Rinpoche (*The Golden Swan in Turbulent Water*) studied the turbulent life of the Tenth Karmapa in 17th century Tibet.²²³ Both shed light on Chökyi Wangchuk’s position in history, under the shadow of his prominent student. Similarly, both authors draw on similar sources, and so there is some degree of overlap between them. Mengele leans heavily upon *The Bountiful Cow*, whereas Shamar Rinpoche displays a discerning inclination about the text’s credibility:

²²³ During the publication of *The Golden Swan in Turbulent Water* (2012), the author was aware of the existence of Mengele’s PhD dissertation (2005), even though it was inaccessible to him. In the same year, Vajra Publications brought forth Mengele’s work, which refers to the contributions of Shamar Rinpoche (Intro. vii).

At many points in *The Bountiful Cow*, the Karmapa includes his poetry and long flowery passages that do not convey information about the life of either the Shamarpa or the Karmapa. (Shamar Rinpoche 73)

Throughout their presentation, there is some ambiguity as to whether *The Bountiful Cow* is an autobiography of the author or a biography of his teacher. Mengele claims that “Karmapa finally finished his autobiography, *The Wish-Fulfilling Cow*” while he did not compose any other autobiography besides that. In addition, he covers more about himself than about his teacher (204). Mengele justifies her position:

From the title, the reader would expect the Zhwa-dmar to be the main subject of the story. In fact, the Karma-pa talks more about his own birth, childhood, years of travels, and education than about his teacher. Nevertheless, the Zhwa-dmar plays an essential role, and the Karma-pa describes in detail his close relations to his beloved teacher. (Mengele 300)

Another analysis by Shamar Rinpoche concludes that Karmapa concealed his own stories within a biography of his teacher rather than vice versa. In other words, the text combines both autobiography and biography.²²⁴ The following excerpt illustrates Shamar Rinpoche’s view:

Karmapa does have some autobiographical writings that recount the first 25 years (1604–1630) of his life story. He buries these passages within a biography of his guru, the Sixth Shamarpa (*The Bountiful Cow: Biography of a Bodhisattva*). An autobiography merged into a biography, only an eccentric like the Tenth Karmapa would conceive of such a literary device (Shamar Rinpoche Intro. viii–ix).

Both scholars took thoughtful consideration when it came to the translation of *The Bountiful*

Cow, yet it is interesting to note how they have approached it. For instance, Mengele states:

“When his disciples and numerous people came to hear the Zhwa-dmar preaching, he carefully looked again and again at the whole gathering in a slow manner, like Nepalese cow (*bal glang*),

²²⁴ The latter claim aligns with the view of Karmapa, in which, he clearly conceded that it was a biography of his teacher. The title and contents of the text further support this claim. If *The Bountiful Cow* was Karmapa’s autobiography, then it raises three critical questions. Why did Karmapa only started to compose it right after Shamarpa’s death, and discontinued after his teacher’s death? Why did he not compose any other autobiographical writings for the remaining forty-five years of his life? Instead, he instructed his student Lingwön (gling dbon) twice that “You [i.e., Lingwön] have to accumulate my biography.” As per this wish, in 1619 Lingwön composed an extensive biography—*The Excellent Vase of Elixir* (*bdud rtsi’i bum bzang*)—beginning at age twelve (105).

without saying a single word” (149). Shamar Rinpoche translates this passage as, “I did notice, however, that from time to time, he would gaze at his disciples like a gentle cow (*ba glang*) in the pasture” (153). While both sentences are used in distinct ways to evoke different emotions—a more serious tone versus a more tranquil tone—the earlier version leans slightly closer to a literal translation, while the latter version captures the intended meaning more effectively.²²⁵

In 2016, another work on Chöying Dorjé was published: *The Tenth Karmapa & Tibet's Turbulent Seventeenth Century*, translated and edited by Karl Debreczeny and Gray Tuttle. This work succinctly sheds light on the Sixth Shamarpa's life (Debreczeny and Tuttle 19). Compared to the previous two works, this book offers limited coverage of Chökyi Wangchuk. However, it still provides valuable insights that help fill certain gaps, such as discussing the political dynamics of the time (52–54), exploring Kangyur and Mu Zeng (95–101), and examining the poetry style of *The Bountiful Cow* (76). Across the last three works, all authors presented Chökyi Wangchuk as a secondary subject. The way past and present scholars emphasized the life of the Tenth Karmapa results in the life of his teacher being eclipsed to a considerable extent. For example, “Chökyi Wangchuk served as the conduit of understanding between the Ninth and Tenth Karmapas” (Trungpa 375), yet his role beyond the preservation of lineage continuity seems overlooked. Furthermore, there are several other scholars who have either written a concise biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, such as Dungkar Losang Trinlé (dung dkar blo bzang

²²⁵ In the editions of source texts, variations in content and spelling are observed, as indicated in the parentheses. Thus, an alternative version of translation could provide insights: “Gazing upon the gathering of retinue and many beings who have come to listen to the Dharma, he resembles a (Nepalese) cow watching [her calves], observing them slowly and closely, completely encircling them with her gaze, and repeating this [watchful act] again and again” (trans. mine). The passage in Wylie: *de 'khor dang skyas bo mang pos chos nyan du 'ong ba'i tshogs la bal (ba) glang mos (b)lta ba bzhin du yang nas yang du kun nas bskor ba'i dal gyis (gzigs shing kun nas) gzigs par byed do* (qtd. in Mengele 149). See alternative version at si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2004, vol.1, p.281, BDRC: MW28887_59125A.

’phrin las, 1927–1997) or Shakabpa’s take on the congratulatory message. I have presented these findings throughout the three chapters rather than sequestering them here.

II. Exploring Key Aspects

Lìjiāng Canon Project

One of Chökyi Wangchuk’s greatest contributions was supervising the printing of the wood-carved edition of the Lìjiāng (’jang sa tham, a Nàxī kingdom in the northwest province of Yúnnán) Tibetan Kangyur (the Translated Words of the Buddha), which took about thirteen years to complete.²²⁶ Initially, it was believed to have been envisioned by the Lìjiāng chieftain (Pīnyīn: *tǔsī*) Mu Wang (r.1580–1596) in 1582, who shared his wish with the Ninth Karmapa (1556–1603). When he was in his early forties, the Ninth Karmapa received extensive offerings and an invitation to visit Lìjiāng, but he was unable to go. His attendant Karma Lhüdrupa (lhun grub pa) and Chökyi Wangchuk were appointed as his representatives. At that time, the acting chief Mu Zeng (1587–1647, r.1598–1624) accepted a request to support the printing project. Thus, under the patronage of Mu Wang’s grandson Mu Zeng²²⁷—deemed a pious man, proficient in grammar and poetry—the project was initiated in 1608 or 1609. While Chökyi Wangchuk was at the White Lake in Tsari (tsa ri mtsho dkar), the leader of the Mu’s clan sent a party of representatives with an official letter, requesting to borrow an original and error-free manuscript of a Kangyur in order to have a copy prepared, and further beseeched Chökyi Wangchuk to help with the editing.

²²⁶ There are few discrepancies and possibly even errors in relation to the start (1608/9) and completion (1614/21/3) dates of the project. The most widely accepted date coincides with the record of the Ming Dynasty, the woodcarving of the canon commenced in the 36th year (Earth-Monkey, 1608) of the Ming Wànlì Emperor’s reign (1572–1620) and completed in the first year (Iron-Bird, 1621) of Tianqi Emperor’s reign (1620–27). Some sources stated that, the canon printing was completed in Lìjiāng either when Chökyi Wangchuk turned thirty-one (Wood-Tiger, 1614) or one year before the Tenth Karmapa turned eleven (b.1604) (“An Account of”; Dungkar 2002; Tsewang Lhamo 107). Nourse alludes the start and end date with 1609–1614 (33–34), while Shastri and Russell asserted that it “was complete in less than two years” and Tsishak Lama Ngönga (rtsi shag bla ma mngon dga’) composed the catalog in 1621 rather than Chökyi Wangchuk (17, 20).

²²⁷ Mu Zeng is referred as Lìjiāng *tǔsī* (headman), the chieftain of the Mu’s clan, while in Tibetan texts, he is mostly referred to as a king: Jang Satham Gyalpo (’jang sa dam rgyal po) or Karma Mipham Tséwang Sönam Raptan (karma mi pham tshe dbang bsod nams rab brtan).

As requested, Chökyi Wangchuk delivered a complete set of the peerless Tsalpa Kangyur (tshal pa bka' gyur)²²⁸ edition to Lijiāng. Having received several invitations to visit Lijiāng, he traveled there via Kham (Tsewang Lhamo 98–99; Lamminger 59; Fuquan 95–101; Nourse 33; Tomlin 2020).²²⁹ Based on the Tsalpa and Yongle edition (1410) of the Kangyur, Chökyi Wangchuk proofread, edited, and oversaw the Lijiāng Canon Printing Project, which consists of 109 volumes including narrative catalogs.²³⁰ Shastri and Russell's *Notes on the Lithang Edition of the Tibetan BKa'-Gyur* reported that Chökyi Wangchuk edited mainly parts of the tantric section which then were marked as “proofread by Karma” (kar mas *zhus*), yet “he was unable to correct [all volumes] personally due to his own lack of time, [and so they were] checked by his disciples [rab 'byams smra ba, thang chen pa, rgyal mtshan ring mo] and others” (Shastri and Russell 18), which indicates that the project was a collective effort.²³¹ Without conducting a close, in-depth, and complete research on the whole canon, it is not possible to conclude how much Chökyi Wangchuk contributed. He consecrated both the printing house and the newly

²²⁸ At the time, the Tsalpa Kangyur manuscript was enshrined within the fortress of Chingwa Taksé ('phying ba stag rtse). It belonged to his predecessor, the Fourth Shamar Chökyi Drakpa (Nourse 33; Lamminger 59, fn. 206).

²²⁹ Chökyi Wangchuk was said to have visited Lijiāng several times between his initial arrival in 1610 and the canon's consecration in 1621 (Debreczeny 2009 121). Nevertheless, Belo's work suggests that Chökyi Wangchuk's trip to Lijiāng was a singular event, during which he also journeyed to Bird Foot Mountain, returned to Lijiāng, and then departed for his home (436–37). Furthermore, the canon project prompted Chökyi Wangchuk to engage in diverse activities such as teaching, temple construction, and student recruitment. Notably, he brought six of Nāxī's disciples to Tibet for education and they later went back to Lijiāng where they finished the construction of Okmin Namling Monastery in 1627 (Debreczeny 2009 119). See also Visit to Lijiāng sec. of ch. 1.

²³⁰ This catalog holds four segments: the first two are in Tibetan, and the latter ones are in traditional Chinese scripts (43ff, 71ff, and 18ff, respectively). According to the colophon, the two catalogs—*The One that Pleases the Subduer* (*thub pa dgyes byed*) and *The Mirror of Jewel* (*rin po che'i me long*)—were composed by Kūnga (kun dga') in Wood-Tiger year and Ngōnga (mngon dga'), respectively (fols. 110–36a, 109–21b). Since Kūnga addressed Chökyi Wangchuk as his abbot, both of could be his direct students. The texts were composed in a mixture of prose and verses form and is thought as crucial documents to research religions across Lijiāng region (Shamar *Li thang bka'* 2b; Dorjé 2007). See Yoshiro Imaeda's *Catalogue du Kanjur Tibetain de l'Édition de 'Jang sa-tham*, vol. 1 & 2, 1982, 1984.

²³¹ Some source claims that the Fifth Situ Chökyi Gyaltsen (chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1586–1657) was one of “the main proof-reader” (“Kangyur”; Dorjé 2007); however, his name was not listed explicitly among the main co-editors. Since the Fifth Situ had been invited by Mu Zeng and accompanied his teacher, he might have played certain roles, such as he consecrated the new canon based on the rituals of Vajravārāhī and Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍalas, respectively (Shastri and Russell 18).

printed canon in 1621. Three years later in 1624, Jang King's representative arrived at Samdruptse (Shigatse) and presented Chökyi Wangchuk the first ever copy of the canon (*dpar phud*), which was offered to the Jokhang Temple. Its last known whereabouts was in the canon temple at the southern wing of the Potala Palace, Lhasa. This copy is touted as “the first copy of the Kangyur printed in Tibet” or indeed “the only other printed edition of the Kangyur produced prior to the late seventeenth century” (Tsewang Lhamo 105–6; Nourse 33; “Kangyur”; Belo 447). For the subsequent Kangyur editions in Tibet, the Lijiāng canon version became a crucial reference source (*phyi mo*), such as the Derge (*sde dge*) and Choné (*co ne*) editions. Curiously, Eimer contends that “[a] graphic peculiarity found in Peking print [revised based on Lijiāng canon] of 1717/20 (folio 11a 8) proves that the Lithang (*li thang*) print served as a source for contamination” (301). In exploring this discrepancy between Lijiāng and Lithang editions, I came to ascertain that sometime before 1698, the Lijiāng block print underwent a relocation to a Geluk monastery in Lithang, Kham, owing to a notable shift in the prevailing power dynamics of the time.²³² Since then, it has become widely known as Lithang edition (*li thang mtshal dpar*), which tactically disassociated it from its origin. The edition is available to this date: it is a crucial witness to Lijiāng's multiculturalism, and it was instrumental in fostering cultural between Yúnnán and Tibet (“Kangyur”; Imaeda 176).²³³

²³²After the death of Goshri Tenzin Chögyal Han (1582–1654)—while his nephew Khadro Losang Tenkyong (*mkha' 'gro blo bzang bstan skyong*) was acting as chieftain of Ba, Li, and Gyal (*'ba' li rgyal*) regions—based on the accusation of revolting against the local regional government in the past, the Tibetan and Mongol troops led by the general Talé Han, were mobilized, and annihilated the King of Beri and annexed territory “from Dartsedo to Lijiāng.” Thereafter, the original Lijiāng wood carved edition was moved to Lithang Monastery either by Khadro Losang Tenkyong (*mkha' 'gro blo bzang bstan skyong*) or by the Fifth Dalai Lama and renamed after it (Tsewang Lhamo 106; Shastri and Russell 19). Since then, it has been revised at least six times (Eimer 299).

²³³ Adarshah, a digital database, has reinstated the name as “Jiang Kangyur” and uploaded it, see also adarshah.org/kangyur/; it has been microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project. A hard copy of the Lithang Kangyur is enshrined in Rigon Thupten Mindröling Monastery (*ri dgon thub bstan smin grol gling*), Orissa, India, to where it was carried in 1959; however, the original block print is believed to have been burned during the Cultural Revolution in 1980 (Shastri and Russell 19–20).

The Two Enigmatic Poems

Chökyi Wangchuk is credited with ten successful mediations, although one of his attempts was marred by controversies, uncertainties, and assumptions, which overshadowed his remarkable contributions. Being a prolific writer, Chökyi Wangchuk composed a diverse range of compositions, including two enigmatic poems that allegedly heightened religious and political tensions during his time. In the broader historical context, various events unfolded before, during, and after the appearance of these two poems.²³⁴ Van der Kuijp (404) and Lamming (132) suggest that these poems may have served as a pretext for initiating a larger military campaign aimed at reshaping the balance of power. Centuries later, this issue continues to be a focal point of discussions about the Sixth Shamarpa, emphasizing the need for contemplation. While the exact chronology of the poems remains elusive, they appear to have been engaged in a dynamic interplay. These poems, along with their corresponding responses, were documented in *Rosary of Jewel*, a biography of Gyalwa Yönten Gyatso (yon tan rgya mtsho, 1589–1617) written by the Fifth Dalai Lama (199–218).²³⁵

In 1602, during the enthronement ceremony of the Fourth Dalai Lama, Yönten Gyatso at

²³⁴ In the mid-17th century, Tibet was in constant political turmoil. Chökyi Wangchuk played a vital role in establishing relative peace. It was not just the robust Kyura family, in which his father and three siblings were influential Drigung Kagyü leaders, as his assets, but also with three other qualities—scholastic fame, high Lama post, and the soft power of religion—made him distinct figure from other contemporaries. The far and deep reach of his religious activities suggest how influential he might have been. In central Tibet, he was regarded as undisputed priest of the Tsang rulers—Karma Phuntsok Namgyal (r.1618–1620) and Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (1620–1642). Further, at least seven Tibetan local lords were in his close contact with him. In the southeast, Lijiāng, the Mu clan revered him as their spiritual savior. In the west Nepal, three kings of Nepal were impressed by his teachings in Sanskrit. In the north, he had good relations with Mongol warlords like Khadan, Thumé Kholoji, and Chechen Deching. Despite being an influential figure and state priest, his advice was not valued when it came to state affairs. For example, although Chökyi Wangchuk's firmly advised the Tsang Desi not to attack the smaller lords, he nevertheless attacked Duke Yarmo Lung (Duke Kurabpa), among others. To release the duke and soften his stance, Chökyi Wangchuk had to warn him: "In that case, I shall leave and not see you anymore" (Shamar R. 119–120). For further detail on the political background, see also Mengle 277–286, Lamming 132–35, and Tashi Tsering 52–54.

²³⁵ Ibid., 233: The colophon does not state the composition date, but it was mainly based on three biographies: a two-page note on his youth, Shukhang Rapjampa Gelek Lhündrup's *dad pa'i go 'byed* (*Opening the Gate of Faith*), and Kharnak Lostawa's *rnam mthar tshig bcad ma* (a biography in verses).

Drepung Monastery ('bras spungs dgon), Chökyi Wangchuk delivered a long poem of auspiciousness (*legs brjod snyan ngag*), which was perceived as an insult. The following two excerpts convey the essence of the poem:

The fundamental of [Buddhist] training is 253 [*bhikṣu* precepts].
Having received it, teachings should be internalized.
If one has not become learned in the domains of knowledge,
Even a supreme noble one would not attain omniscience.
Because such has been said, without the force of intelligence being distracted,
May you make the most supreme effort in the domains of knowledge! (trans. adapted from van der Kuijp 403; Dalai Lama V 199–2001)²³⁶

Considering that Yönten Gyatso was only twelve years old at the time, the selection of an appropriate respondent led to a joint response by two individuals, Gyalchenpa and Shukhang Rapjampa Gelek Lhündrup.²³⁷ However, their collective answer consisted of unrelated statements, which exposed their own shortcomings, as noted by the Fifth Dalai Lama. Their response regarding Yönten Gyatso's eligibility for full ordination stated, "He is yet to turn twenty," while their claim about his mastery of the five sciences asserted, "He had already assimilated them in the past [lives]." The Fifth Dalai Lama further added a remark directed at the responders, stating, "The retinue of Yönten Gyatso can rival their wealth of Vaiśravaṇa, the God of Wealth, whereas in terms of poetic expression, it is like a star shining in the daytime" (Dalai Lama V 202). This suggests that while the retinue may possess considerable material wealth, their intellectual wealth appears to be comparatively limited.

In interpreting the poem, Kharnak Lotsāwa Paljor Gyatso (mkhar nag lo tsa ba dpal 'byor rgya mtsho, 1660–1730) suggested that it "had a positive tone" and conveyed the message that

²³⁶ In this context, Van Schaik has mistaken Chökyi Wangchuk with his Fourth predecessor, who was considered as "probably the most powerful Lama in [Tibet]" (116). An excerpt from the congratulatory poem in Wylie: *nyis brgya lnga bcu rtsa gsum bslab pa'i gzhi/ mnos nas bstan la byi dor bya bar rigs/ rig ba'i gnas la mkhas par ma byas na/ 'phags mchogagis kyang kun mkhyen mi 'thob ces/ gsungs phyir rig stobs g.yeng ba ma 'dring par/ shes bya'i gnas la sbyang stobs mchog tu mdzod/* (Dalai Lama V 199–200).

²³⁷ Gyalchenpa (rgyal chen pa) was the Depa of rtse kha ba and the nephew of the previous Dalai Lama, while Shukhang (bzhu khang rab byams pa dge legs lhun grub) is not specified (Dalai Lama V 202; Shakabpa 308).

the Fourth Dalai Lama should carefully consider the five inner and outer sciences, including sūtra and tantra (qtd. in Shakabpa 31). Similarly, Tibetan historian and statesman Tsepön Wangchuk Déden Shakabpa (rtsis dpon dbang phyug bde ldan zhwa sgab pa, 1907–1989) suggested that the two responders had “their own secret purposes” and their reply was unrelated to the positive message from Shamarpa (291, 308). However, Lamminger argued that the line was “phrased in an instructive and imperative tone,” possibly indicating “an intentional provocation” or a somewhat condescending attitude of Chökyi Wangchuk towards Yönten Gyatso (133). For instance, the last line of the congratulatory message stated: “Yönten Gyatso should adhere to this swan-like melodious poem” (Dalai Lama V 202).

In response to the incident, Chökyi Wangchuk’s secretary, Jamgyang, wrote another critical poem (the full text of which is now inaccessible) in which he spoke “negatively about the lack of good qualities” among the attendants at Ganden Phodrang (Dalai Lama V 217; Shakabpa 312).²³⁸ Following this event,²³⁹ Chökyi Wangchuk personally offered a scarf (*kha tak*) to the statue of Śākyamuṇi Buddha, which was a dowry of Princess Wénchéng Gōngzhǔ in 641, at the Jowo Temple in Lhasa. The scarf had the following verses inscribed on it:

In the city of the three, Drak, Tik, and Zhak,
 There are sharp horns amidst the gathering of horned beasts,
 Who live in the steppes among wild animals, the [Lord Chöying].
 Why are they competing over whose horns are sharper?
 Jowo, you know this cannot be successful.
 For the ear, there is an earring,
 [So small] it is not worth measuring with the span of half a finger.
 If something changes such that at some point, even Viṣṇu²⁴⁰

²³⁸ The system of government instituted by the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642 was known as Gaden Phodrang.

²³⁹ There seems to be no exact date when this had happened: it could have been either “shortly after” or after “a long time” (Lamminger 134; Shakabpa 312). According to the placement of this information found in Belo’s biography, the second poem might have been composed when Chökyi Wangchuk was between ages of nineteen and twenty-one (424). Given that Yönten Gyatso was approximately twelve years old when the heated exchanges of letters happened, his involvement may have been limited.

²⁴⁰ Viṣṇu, the universe’s sustainer in the Rg Veda (1.154.1–6), symbolizes immense reach as he strides thrice across the world. This highlights the Kagyü school’s superiority over the Geluk school (Maher, fn. v, 313).

Will not be able to embrace the difference, what will you do? (trans. by Maher 312)²⁴¹

It is undeniable that Chökyi Wangchuk composed the message on the scarf. However, there is no concrete evidence regarding its intended recipient. According to Shakabpa, the text of the poem is “enigmatic and subject to multiple interpretations” (Shakabpa 312). This highlights the subjective nature of interpretation, as the author is only responsible for what they wrote and not for how others interpret it. Nonetheless, a caretaker of the Jokhang delivered the scarf to Drépuṅ Monastery, where we are told:

Many extremely wise people sifted through the poem. It was thought that the three, *drak*, *tik*, and *zhak*, were supposed to signify Sera, Drepung, and Ganden monasteries. The Geluk School was thought to be likened to a yak, while the Karma School was likened to a lion. Even though the difference in the relative influence[intention] of the Karma School and the Geluk School was at that time so small that there was no purpose in measuring it even with one’s fingers, if it increased in the future, it would increase until not even the (wide reach) god Viṣṇu would be able to embrace it. In brief, the attendants read too much into what was written on the greeting scarf. Even though it was not known whether it related to the Gelukpas or not, many conjectures were formulated (Dalai Lama V 217, trans. by Mahar).²⁴²

The civil disorder of 1614 was alleged to have been caused by this vague poem.²⁴³ The Fifth Dalai Lama would later on allege that “it had voiced words of discord”²⁴⁴ (Belo 424; Lamminger 134; Shakabpa 312). Two centuries later, Rakra Ngawang Tenpé Gyaltzen (rag ra ngag dbang bstan pa’i rgyal mtshan, b.1822), a scholar of Drepung Gomang College, coupled the two poems as a cause and effect: “A vile poem (*ngan rtsom*) was presented in front of Jowo due to a minor

²⁴¹ The poem is quoted in the biography of Fourth Dalai Lama: *brag tig zhag gsum gyi grong khyer na// kho rwa gan tshogs pa’i ru rnon tsho//rje chos dbyings ri dwags thang bzhugs la// rwa rno rtul ’gran pa ci rang yin// de mi ’byung jo bo khyed rang shes// rna ba rna yi a long de//sor phyed kyis ’jal rin mi gda’ yang//nam zhig khyab ’jug gi ’doms pas kyang// mi ’khyud pa zhig byung na cug rang byed//* (qtd. in Dalai Lama V 217).

²⁴² For details, cp. Shakabpa’s *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet* (309–316).

²⁴³ It was deemed that this exchange of poems was so powerful that it translated into a military campaign.

Mongolian cavalry troops assaulted some followers of Chökyi Wangchuk around 1605. As a counteroffensive, Karma Tenkyong Wangpo—the Tsang King—invaded Lhasa and chased away the Mongolian soldiers who had escorted Yönten Gyatso to Tibet in 1614 (Dalai Lama V 216; Lamminger 132; van der Kuijp 404; Shakabpa 312).

²⁴⁴ In another notable observation, “[Shamar] is distinguished by the Fifth Dalai Lama as being one of the two evil figures intriguing against Arslan” Khan. However, Schwieger alluded that “the Dalai Lama—at that point in time—did not differentiate between the trülku and his manager or that he was not aware of the Sixth Shamarpa’s death in 1630” (Schwieger 76).

misunderstanding made by a Gomang Monastery's preceptor Shukhangpa, [Yönten Gyatso's] secretary, and other in their response to the congratulatory poem of the Sixth Shamar" (Rakra 267). For this entire complex issue, Belo labeled the poem on a scarf as "prophecy" (*lung bstan*) and added, "According to the Fifth Dalai Lama, it was a contentious message (*gyod tshig*) of Shamarpa" (Belo 424). However, Belo does not elaborate on to whom it was intended or what it meant. Van der Kuijp suggests that the poem should be read based on its tenor, related events, and the wider historical context, especially the rivalry between the Kagyü and Geluk schools (van der Kuijp 404).²⁴⁵ In either case, the claims seem to be mere speculation without further evidence or the author's own point of view in that he was reluctant to "give birth to the children of quarrelsome speech" (Shakabpa 316). Thus, the rhetorical poems remain ambiguous and debatable today. Whether it was the poems or some other surrounding factors, the relationship between Yönten Gyatso and Chökyi Wangchuk was eclipsed by their attendants, who played a vital role in preventing Yönten Gyatso's meeting with Chöjé Trechungpa at Ralung and Shamarpa at Gongkar.²⁴⁶ Their meeting was considered high-stakes.²⁴⁷ If they could have met, the mounting tension between the two leaders, schools, and rulers could have been settled to

²⁴⁵ While reading the poem, one should also bear in mind that around twenty-five years earlier, the younger brother of Chökyi Wangchuk, Könchok Rinchen Nampar Gyalwa (1590–1654), had been considered a possible and the only Tibetan candidate for the reincarnation of the Third Dalai Lama (bsod nams rgya mtsho, 1543–1588). However, the late Dalai Lama's treasurer (*phyag mdzod*), Sengé (seng ge) endorsed the great-grandson of Altan Khan of the Tüme Mongols as his teacher's successor, which "might well have caused a certain animosity in Chökyi Wangchuk towards the Mongolian candidate" (Lamminger 133; van der Kuijp 404).

²⁴⁶ Chöjé Trechungpa, a student of Chökyi Wangchuk, attempted to meet and "reconcile with the Dalai Lama, and once again, he blames short-sighted Ganden Phodrang officials" (Shakabpa 291, 310). The disruption of this crucial meeting did not end here. Despite Yönten Gyatso's wish of meeting Chökyi Wangchuk, his attendants persuaded him that "even now, since the Lord Zhamarwa is acting duplicitously, the situation is as it was before [when there was a such conflict between the Gelukpas and the Zhamarwa.] Even if we send a message, he won't listen. Thus, if we go to Yarlok, there would be no way for the meeting to take place" (qtd. in Shakabpa 310).

²⁴⁷ The importance of this meeting was indicated in Kharnak Lotsāwa's remark: "Thereafter, the Dalai Lama was invited in turn to Gongkar. Miwang and his son had a discussion saying, if he had been able to meet with the Garwang incarnation, they would have discussed the welfare of the Tibetan people. The altruistic attitude that wishes for the benefit of others was completely obstructed by the group of sinners" (qtd. in Dalai Lama V 216; Shakabpa 311).

some extent, yet it never happened. And twelve years after the death of Chökyi Wangchuk, a troop lead by Güshri Khan (1582–1655), the chief of the Khoshut Mongols, toppled the reign of Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (kar ma bstan skyong dbang po, r. 1620–1624), and the Fifth Dalai Lama came into power in 1642 and Chöying Dorjé forced to flee to Lijiāng in 1645 (Mengele 181–82). Perhaps this serves as an explanation for the prevailing scholarly discourse surrounding the incident of the poem, which predominantly involves Geluk scholars, while Kagyü proponents have notably refrained from active participation. This observation prompts speculation regarding the underlying causes, whether stemming from a genuine lack of interest on the part of Kagyü scholars or a prudent consideration of potential political repercussions that could ensue from such engagement.²⁴⁸

Four Debatable Points

Meeting the Chinese Emperor

Modern sources suggest that Chökyi Wangchuk visited China and possibly mentored the Chinese Emperor (Gruber 299), indicating a connection to the Ming Emperor. Notably, biographies of the Sixth Shamarpa by Yeshe Dronma (33) and Karl Brunnhölzl's (344) report that "He visited China, at the invitation of the emperor." Since he visited Mu Kingdom and Bird Foot Mountain, which were deemed to fall under the umbrella of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), it is highly likely that the reference pertains to these two regions. Considering that the mention of the supposed meeting occurred in the context of the printing of the Lijiāng canon, it is plausible to surmise that the Nàxī chieftain Mu Zeng (1587–1647, r.1598–1624) might have been misidentified as the Ming Wànlì Emperor (r.1572–1620). Furthermore, while the head of the Mu family was often addressed as king ('jang sa tham rgyal po) or chieftain (Pīnyīn: *tǔsī*), who

²⁴⁸ While my primary focus is on Chökyi Wangchuk's life, it is crucial to incorporate key aspects of his work that are closely linked to his life. Disregarding these aspects would lead to an incomplete and superficial depiction.

appears to have acknowledged the authority of the Ming and Qing Dynasty rulers (Belo 429; Fuquan 95). There is no record of him being addressed as an emperor. Hence, there is no evidence to support the notion that either of the Ming Emperors had any involvement in the printing of the Lìjiāng canon or that Chökyi Wangchuk ever met with a Chinese emperor.²⁴⁹

Travel Pass/Guide

From time to time, Chökyi Wangchuk would proffer a document called “*lam yig*” to foreign voyagers that could have various interpretations based on the context—i.e., a travel permit or a guidebook. Certainly, he has wielded considerable religious influence both within and beyond Tibet and has been engaged in numerous mediations. Yet did he possess a special mandate from the Tsang Desi to issue official documents? As per James Gentry’s account, it was common for lamas to be dispatched as missionaries or emissaries to foreign lands with the aim of forging alliances and acquiring military aid in their conflicts with opposing Tibetan factions. A compelling illustration of this practice is:

Nearly every page of this figure’s biography describes his diplomatic travels to the neighboring kingdoms of Mongolia (sog yul), Hor, Yúnnán (’jang), and Nepal in service to the Tsangpa Desi rulers. The biography also describes the Sixth Shamar as a kind of immigration minister, responsible for providing foreign nationals—mostly Indian and Nepali pilgrims—with official papers authorizing travel (*lam yig*) in Tibet (52–53).

Lamminger leans toward Gentry’s view: “A yogi visited [Chökyi Wangchuk], he got him the necessary “travel documents” (*lam yig*)” and argued that his trip to Nepal entailed a diplomatic mission of the Tsang King, Karma Tenkyong Wangpo (99, 144–45). To fully analyze these interpretations, we must consider Belo’s work, which documents two consecutive incidents.

While Chökyi Wangchuk was at Samdruptse, a yogī from Kāśīpura arrived and he gave him a *lam yig*... Around fifty *saṃnyāsīs* and yogīs from India, including Jhaṃghama, came forth, and he gave them gifts, *lam yig*, etc. (Belo 446, trans. mine)

²⁴⁹ The titles or terms king (*rgyal po*) and emperor (*gong ma*) have distinct meanings and connotations.

The passage is susceptible to different interpretation, as there is no indication of what type of letter it was. If the letters were indeed travel documents, it is most likely that during the establishment of the Gaden Phodrang rule (dga' ldan pho brang, r.1642–1959), the “*lam yig*” served as an official document granting authority to an officer to levy taxes on horses, pack animals, and individuals (Lobsang Monlam “*lam yig*, N. (2)”). It is plausible that this taxation system existed before the Gaden Phodrang rule was instituted. However, the coherence of the above argument is challenged by the fact that Chökyi Wangchuk was accompanied by the Tsang ruler when he met with fifty *saṃnyāsis*, and the pilgrims had already entered the regions. This raises the question of the rationale behind the issuance of a travel permit. One possible interpretation is that the letter served as an informal communication intended to facilitate a smooth journey or reception at various holy sites. Despite the ambiguity, there are two reasons supporting the notion that the passage refers to a travel guide. First, during a meeting with Paṇḍita Keṣogiri in Kathmandu, Chökyi Wangchuk provided him with a conversational note (*zin bris*) referred to as *lam yig*, which was clearly not a permit. This appears to be the only instance where he provided a permit/guidebook to a Nepali pilgrim. Second, Chökyi Wangchuk titled two of his works²⁵⁰ as *lam yig* or travelogues, rather than using other precise terms such as *gnas yig* or *gnas bshad*, which would indicate a text that guides, instructs, and describes the history of sacred sites. Therefore, the question at hand is not whether Chökyi Wangchuk possessed the authority to issue an official permit, but rather whether he assumed a political position, considering the typically apolitical nature and nonpartisan disposition presented in the biographical works. The works of the Tenth Karmapa and Belo provide several instances demonstrating that Chökyi Wangchuk was not interested in political involvement, despite

²⁵⁰ The two works referred to as *lam yig* are: the *Travelogue to Nepal* and *The Travelogue to Bird's Leg Mountain* (Belo 457, 442).

participating in multiple mediation dialogues. The available sources suggest that “in his view, kingdoms (i.e., political states) were places of [*samsāra*]” (Shamar Rinpoche 37), which are mundane and profane. His proclivity was to avoid contact with politicians, except in instances when he was required to serve as an intermediary, officiate ceremonial rites, or bestow blessings. For example, despite being invited to visit Tsang Palace, he exhibited reluctance to comply, relenting only after his monastic retinue persuaded him that meeting the king was crucial to maintain patronage (136–37). Although Chökyi Wangchuk might have had some authority in granting travel permits to pilgrims, the evidence is not sufficient to establish him as an immigration minister or someone responsible for aiding foreign nationals. The descriptions of his visits to neighboring regions suggests that they had a primarily religious nature, and no concrete evidence confirms that his mediation attempts were orchestrated by any political power or partisan intentions: rather, they illustrate a common Buddhist approach to peace, non-violence, and social responsibility.

Sanskrit Knowledge

The Sanskrit knowledge of Chökyi Wangchuk was regarded as unparalleled during his time. However, little is known about the specifics of how, when, and from whom he acquired this knowledge. According to the Fifth Dalai Lama, it is mentioned that “Gongra Ngagi Wangpo (gong ra ngag gi dbang po) was the *rig gnas* teacher of the Sixth incarnation of Shamar” (209). While “*rig gnas*” primarily denotes a “field of knowledge/study” (Rangjung), it can also encompass language studies in this context.²⁵¹ Douglas reports that “under the excellent Lama Karma Tinlaypa, he studied Sanskrit and quickly became proficient in it” and “by the age of sixteen he had fully mastered Sanskrit and had a reputation as a fine scholar” (147). Karma

²⁵¹ Gongra Ngagi Wangpo was extremely learned in poetry and his nephew, Gongra Lostawa Shenphen Dorjé, was a student of Chökyi Wangchuk (Dalai Lama V 209).

Trinlépa is also mentioned as one of his main teachers, alongside the Ninth Karmapa (Brunnhölzl 344). However, the sources of these quotes are not cited, leaving uncertainty regarding the identity of Trinlépa.²⁵² Considering the available information, it is possible that all three individuals contributed to teaching Chökyi Wangchuk grammar, Sanskrit, and other subjects at different times.

Belo first discusses Sanskrit knowledge when Chökyi Wangchuk reaches the age of thirty-six and encountered a single-handed *brāhmaṇa paṇḍita* (435). Others report that he had achieved complete mastery of Sanskrit by the age of sixteen (Dronma 31; Douglas and White).²⁵³ That said, Belo and other scholars tend to pay more attention to the masters of tantric lineages rather than sūtra tutors. Possibly, the source of his Sanskrit knowledge was considered to be a trivial subject on the path of liberation.

Was Chökyi Wangchuk truly learned in Sanskrit knowledge? When the Fifth Dalai Lama faced difficulties to “understand the grammatical units [*sūtras*], such paradigms of the roots [*dhātu-lakṣaṇāḥ*] and verb roots [*dhātu*],” he quoted an audacious remark of Jampal, Depa Shangkharwa (sde pa zhang khar ba): “When the great lamas, such as the Zhamar Trulku, say they know Sanskrit, it is this much!” (qtd. in Karmay 135). This raises fundamental questions about his Sanskrit competence as he was deemed as having “very little knowledge” (Karmay 115). It is unknown on what basis Shangkharwa substantiated his claim. Looking at the four angles: First, while Chökyi Wangchuk was in Nepal, he had an extensive discussion with a *mahāpaṇḍita* in Sanskrit language, in which his grammatical comprehension was reflected:

²⁵² Trinlépa may have been a student of the Ninth Karmapa, Palkhangwa Karma Trinlé (dpal khang ba karma phrin las gnyis pa) (Belo 302), who was the second incarnation of the great Kagyü scholar Karma Trinlépa (karma phrin las pa; 1456–1539).

²⁵³ Douglas and White could have based their statement on one of sixteen life-stories of Karmapas or other sources, but I could not trace their statements back to any primary source. According to Belo, Chökyi Wangchuk mastered several fields, but does not specifically mention Sanskrit.

[Chökyi Wangchuk] discussed a wide range of topics, such as Sanskrit grammar and epistemology (*sgra tshad*)²⁵⁴ with a *mahāpaṇḍita*, the royal guru of the [Kantipur] King. The paṇḍita was flabbergasted [with his knowledge] ... The Brāhmaṇa paṇḍita asked him in Sanskrit about the land of Tibet and its monarch. The lord responded in Sanskrit concerning how the [Three] Forefather Dharma Kings²⁵⁵ invited the paṇḍitas and how Tibet was embraced by the protection of Avalokiteśvara—the king was filled with rapture. (Belo 453, trans. mine)

Moreover, Chökyi Wangchuk had converted Sathāsiva, a *saṃnyāsi* from Vārāṇasī, to Buddhism within a single year. The fact that Sathāsiva was proficient in the three principal grammar treatises (*sgra ka tsan*) implies that his teacher was also learned (446).²⁵⁶ Second, in the late 1620s, Chökyi Wangchuk trained the Tenth Karmapa in spoken Sanskrit. Four Indian *ācāryas* (Subhi, Bahirāgī, Sanyeshī, and Jaghama) witnessed “their native tongue spoken from the lips of Karmapa” and were impressed (Shamar R. 209). Furthermore, Chökyi Wangchuk conferred teachings on *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra Tantras* in Sanskrit to a Nepalese Buddhist paṇḍita called Vāsudeva and his son Maṇiratna, who were filled with faith (Belo 455; Lamming 261).

Third, the most concrete evidence would be Chökyi Wangchuk’s six Sanskrit works:

1. The Avadāna of Bodhisattva Kṛikī and Kṛiśi
2. Verses of Advice to a Brāhmaṇa Paṇḍita (*sarvajāti*)
3. A letter of Cintarūpa: *Rosary of the Precious One* (*rin po che’s bgrang phreng*)
4. Verses concerning bondage and liberation by Paṇḍita Keṣogri (Belo 435–54)
5. The previous life account of Bodhisattva Kṛiśi and some scriptures (*śāstra*)²⁵⁷
6. *Bodhisattvāvadānatāyāhpuṣpanāmaviharatīśma*

All of these are accessible, excepting the first work, and the last three works are available in Sanskrit–Tibetan transliteration (see “Meetings with Indian Scholars” in chapter 1). The above-mentioned assertions are based on the works of the Tenth Karmapa and Belo. Fourth, there was a

²⁵⁴ This abbreviated term corresponds to the science of words and logic (Skt. *śabdavidyā* and *pramāṇāvidyā*).

²⁵⁵ The Three Great Dharma Kings of Tibet (chos rgyal mes dbon rnam gsum): Songtsen Gampo (srong btsan sgam po, r. 617–650 CE), Trisong Detsen (khri srong sde bstan, r. circa 742–98) and Tri Ralpachen (khri ral pa can, r. 815–38), who were deemed as 33rd, 38th, and 41st kings of Tibet, respectively.

²⁵⁶ Three principal grammar texts: *Kālāpa*, *Cāndrapa*, and *Sarasvatī*, which were composed by Kumara Shadanana, Candragomin, and Sarasvatī, respectively.

²⁵⁷ An *avadāna* which was narrated by Chökyi Wangchuk based on the oral account of Dāmodhara Grijā, an eastern paṇḍita from the Gaudha land: *dom byang chub sems dpa’ kri shi’i rtogs pa brjod pa’i zin bris* (47–58).

personal account of Tāranātha, which validates the above points firsthand. Shortly after the death of the Ninth Karmapa (1603 CE), Jetsün Kūnga Nyīngpo (kun dga' snying po, 1575–1634), better known as Tāranātha, an influential scholar of the Jonang and Shangpa Kagyū School, visited Chökyi Wangchuk together with his disciples and granted him initiation into the practice of Vajravārāhī. He discussed the Jonang doctrine with the Sixth Shamarpa and analyzed Chökyi Wangchuk's verse translation of Paṇḍita Keṣogri's work around 1607 (Templeman 19; Lamminger 49). The extant text is entitled *Dispelling the Shadow of Doubts*. In it, Tāranātha pointed out a series of mistranslations. Given the expertise of Sanskrit and Indian non-Buddhist doctrines found therein, he firmly denies that it was Chökyi Wangchuk's work (255–92). However, since the verses were recorded in Chökyi Wangchuk's *Travelogue to Nepal*, Tāranātha's claim warrants further study. It is certain that these two masters were familiar with each other's Sanskrit works, as Chökyi Wangchuk recounted, “Although Jonang Jetsün [Tāranātha] had done some analysis concerning the question of paṇḍita, the Sanskrit language agrees with the principal grammar texts (*sgra gzhung*)” (Belo 455). In addition, a series of textual and conversational exchanges in Sanskrit language with many Indian and Nepali paṇḍitas, yogīs, brāhmaṇas, and kings, have been presented in chapter 1. Given the evidence, the Sanskrit command of Chökyi Wangchuk appears beyond any doubt. Perhaps Depa Shangkarwa made a baseless comment either out of sarcasm or unaware of these facts.

The Paṇḍita of North

In many recent short biographies, Chökyi Wangchuk has been repeatedly referred to as the “Paṇḍita of the North, the Omniscient Shamarpa in whom Manjushri delights.” He is considered one of the most prominent paṇḍitas of his time. The testimony of Nyangtön vividly depicts this dynamic, stating, “These days in Tibet, there is a lama who is unequalled by all the great lamas. [I] wish to bow down at the lotus feet of the omniscient Shamar, whose eyes are vast

in the fields of knowledge, having mastered the five sciences such as sūtra and tantra, conventional sciences, and more” (Dalai Lama V 204). Furthermore, the Fifth Dalai Lama explicitly endorses this claim, describing Chökyi Wangchuk as “the Omnificent Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk, whose Dharmic knowledge and worldly understanding are incomparable, while his intellect surpasses even the mental realm of the revered forefathers Brahmā and Viṣṇu” (199–200). However, it remains uncertain how he received such a great title. Two sources stated, “By the age of seventeen he had already memorized fifty volumes of the Sūtras and the Tantras, and he had developed great skills in the art of debate. Thus, he became known as “the Pandita of the North, the Omniscient Shamarpa in whom the Great Manjushri Delights” (“A Short History” 35; Tenpel 3). It is also said that “after having confronted 13 of the most learned Bönpo priests in debate, defeating them, and converting them to Buddhism,” he earned the title (Patel 2017). In either case, it was credited to his debating expertise in five sciences (Skt. *pañcavidyāsthāna*) rather than the combination of his Sanskrit or overall knowledge.

Belo alluded that Chökyi Wangchuk obtained a title of *paṇḍita* after proving himself on several occasions; however, there is no mention of “of the North.” It seems the earliest scholar who addressed him with this title was his student Karma Chakmé: “My root guru is the Paṇḍita of North” (*rtsa ba'i bla ma byang phyogs paṇḍita*).²⁵⁸ Later, in Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thayé’s *Treasury of Knowledge*, the same point was reiterated while asserting the author’s view: “the Dharmic Appearance, the Mañjughoṣa, the Paṇḍita of North, the Sixth Crown Holder, the Splendor of Vajrā Speech...” (358–59).²⁵⁹ In general, a limited number of Tibetan scholars were referred to with the Indian scholarly title “paṇḍita,” signifying mastery of the five sciences, as

²⁵⁸ This verse is quoted in *Mountain Dharma: A Pith Instruction for Mountain Retreatant* (*ri chos mtshams kyi zhal gdams*). See also “Scholars of His Time” section of chapter 3 for the complete verse.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.: Jamgön’s statement in Wylie: *gsung gi rdo rje 'od mtshan cod pan 'chang ba drug pa byang phyogs kyi paṇḍita paN+Di ta 'jam dbyangs chos kyi snang bas...*

exemplified by figures like Sakya Paṇḍita or Situ Paṇchen. It is possible that only a few individuals were occasionally designated as the “Paṇḍita of the North.” This title carries connotations related to Buddhist history and could potentially encompass regions such as Tibet, India, and Mongolia.²⁶⁰ Given the honor, praises, and devotion Chökyi Wangchuk received from these respective areas on various occasions, it could be argued that this title was used as an honorary designation for him.²⁶¹ However, it remains ambiguous as there is no explicit endorsement of this title by non-Kagyü scholars or other sources.

Conclusion

Chapter 3 thoroughly examines Chökyi Wangchuk’s life, considering testimonies from his students, interpretations by later scholars, and his historical significance. Questions about the scope of his contributions to the Lijiāng Kangyur printing warrant further study. His proficiency in Sanskrit is acknowledged, but limited texts document his scholarly title. Despite limited primary sources, scholars emphasize his political power and influence given his two mysterious poems and meeting with lords. Speculations on political motivations lack thorough scrutiny of evidence, possibly casting doubt on his successful mediation accomplishments. Chökyi Wangchuk’s doctrine emphasizes Dharma engagement and conflict resolution through mediation. Varied perspectives exist among scholars, with some portraying him as detached from worldly struggles, while others adopt a more neutral tone.

²⁶⁰ The Buddha prophesied, “In future, my teaching will flourish from the North to North” (*ma ’ongs pa na nga’i bstan pa byang nas byang du dar bar ’gyur ro*). According to Tibetan oral legend, Buddhism spread from North India to Tibet and then to Mongolia, which are located to the north, as noted by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama (2021, para 3).

²⁶¹ Other than Chakmé, the title was used by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who addressed the Ninth Dopa Chöjé Gewé Wangpo (*mdo pa chos rje dge ba’i dbang po*) as the “Paṇḍita of North” (Riwang 351).

Conclusion

Challenges in Portraying Chökyi Wangchuk's Life and Legacy

This conclusion begins with an exploration of the challenges and complexities associated with comprehending an individual's life and achievements through the medium of life writing, with a specific focus on Chökyi Wangchuk. It examines the conceptual interconnection of the three chapters, each of which offers distinct viewpoints on Chökyi Wangchuk's life, while also addressing the merits, limitations, biases, and historical obstacles involved in reconstructing his life, which occurred 393 years after the subject's demise.

The three chapters of this thesis provide a comprehensive understanding of Chökyi Wangchuk by employing thematic analysis rather than a linear approach. The chapters complement one another by delving into various aspects of his life. First, Belo's perspective offers an uncensored voice from the Karma Kagyü School. Despite its prominent sources, this text has remained largely ignored or obscured for centuries. My analysis helps fill in gaps in understanding Belo's approach. Finally, alternative views on Chökyi Wangchuk's life are examined to ensure a thorough examination. Continuing the analysis, it becomes apparent that the various versions depicting Chökyi Wangchuk's life reveal as much about the authors' personal interests as they do about the Sixth Shamarpa himself. Throughout the history of life writing, presenting an individual's life and work has proven challenging due to the inherent biases of authors. Despite Chökyi Wangchuk being an influential and historical figure, his life has received limited scholarly attention. This scarcity of engagement can primarily be attributed to the instability within the school that emerged after a political power shift in 1642. Scholars who have explored Chökyi Wangchuk's life can be categorized into three distinct groups.

Belo's presentation emerges as the most comprehensive, breathing life into the subject

through a wealth of detailed information while filtering out mundane details. This approach has both strengths and weaknesses. It excels in providing a substantial historical account and resonates with spiritually oriented readers. It is particularly intended to inspire Kagyü followers, as indicated by the text's title, content, and endorsements by Kagyü scholars. How the followers view namthar may be encapsulated by these classical verses, which invoke their guru: "To the namthar of the root-guru, wherein disbelief is never allowed to arise even for an instant, through an ardent devotion that perceives every action of the guru as inherently positive, may the blessings of the guru infuse and illuminate my mind" (qtd. in Shengyi 368/15b, trans. mine).²⁶² In other words, Belo's presentation has been influenced by his predecessors who emphasize the importance of abstaining from worldly activities, resulting in a lack of critical examination. However, while deliberately avoiding the politically controversial aspects of the subject's life, Belo finds himself grappling with the temptation to delve into Chökyi Wangchuk's relationships with influential figures from Tibet, Lijiang, Mongolia, and Nepal, as well as his contributions to mediations. This ambivalent approach is evident in the biography, creating a somewhat limited account that sometimes neglects significant historical dilemmas, such as the interpretation of enigmatic poems and political unrest, which neither subsequent scholars nor Kagyü scholars have endeavored to elucidate or resolve.

The direct disciples of Chökyi Wangchuk are even more bound by devotion than Belo, resulting in candid, faithful, and praiseful accounts, as seen in the case of the Tenth Karmapa and Karma Chakmé. In contrast, subsequent Geluk scholars adopted a more critical and selective approach. The writing style of direct disciple sometimes includes fictional-like aspects of the subject, possibly influenced by their deep reverence for their teacher, which adds another layer of

²⁶² Ibid.: *dpal ldan bla ma'i rnam par thar pa la/ skad cig tsam yang log lta mi skye zhing / ci mdzad legs par mthong ba'i mos gus kyis/ bla ma'i byin rlabs sems la 'jug par shog.*

interpretation. Conversely, later presentations may suffer from a biased perspective, offering only a one-sided view. Within the realm of modern scholarly work, it is observable that scholars struggle to overcome either of these two limitations. They exhibit a particular interest in three aspects of Chökyi Wangchuk's life: the Lijiāng canon project, his political influence, and his relationship with the Tenth Karmapa. The era of political instability, coupled with the abundance of textual sources pertaining to the Tenth Karmapa, contributes to contemporary scholars' heightened focus on these aspects. Their works suggest that modern authors are less interested in spiritual subjects, as they often prefer to delve into controversial aspects of Chökyi Wangchuk's life. This could be partly driven by two reasons: (a) the mindset and curiosities of contemporary readers influencing the writers, and (b) the limited perception of the subject and author as products of their own time sometimes creates an anachronistic fallacy.

Overall, the three chapters of this thesis provide a collective and holistic understanding of Chökyi Wangchuk's life by stringing it into one thread. While acknowledging that each author has their own agenda, it recognizes that textual analysis is often the only viable method for reconstructing an individual's life and studying their contributions, accomplishments, and legacy, despite its limitations in fully grasping the complexities of history.

Concise Summary

On the whole, the thesis endeavors to elucidate three central inquiries: (1) Unraveling the persona and pivotal role undertaken by the Sixth Shamarpa Chökyi Wangchuk within the milieu of early 17th-century Tibet; (2) Discerning the intricate interplay of sources, stylistic choices, and thematic content as employed by the hagiographer Belo in delineating the life of this venerable scholar; and (3) Scrutinizing the divergent portrayals of Chökyi Wangchuk's life as orchestrated by scholars across successive epochs—ranging from the contemporaneous to the subsequent and

the modern. With this approach, the key research questions are answered as follows:

In chapter 1, Chökyi Wangchuk's life is presented thematically rather than in a strictly chronological order as this makes his life more readable. Belo's perspective biography depicts Chökyi Wangchuk as an exceptional prodigy, possessing exceptional acumen in the domains of debate, philosophy, and language. His exceptional memory, fostered by the tutelage of his esteemed mentors—including the Ninth Karmapa, the Fourth Gyalstap, and Namgyal Drakpa—allowed him to absorb an extensive wealth of knowledge. As a devout monk, he delighted in *gaṇacakra* feasts, pilgrimage, spiritual dance, and composing hymns and spiritual songs following periods of meditation. His intellectual renown extended well beyond Tibet, convincing scholars from the Four Great Schools, including Bön and those of India, of his brilliance. His achievements included translating six Sanskrit works into Tibetan, composing over thirty original compositions, and producing a cohort of over seventy-nine notable students. He also constructed six monastic institutions and five pieces of art, while selflessly donating most of the offerings he received. The mystical facet of his life was characterized by pure visions of deities, leaving imprints of feet and hands, prophesying future events, and recognizing reincarnations, as well as interacting with otherworldly entities. This impressive array of accomplishments was all attained during a remarkably short lifespan of only forty-one years.

Chapter 2 delved into multifaceted aspects concerning Belo's biography of Chökyi Wangchuk, including sources, structure, and content. Despite having had access to multiple sources, Belo opted to use merely three, out of which the *Travelogue to Nepal* is the only one that remains available today. The authorship of the first two sources is evident, while the context suggests that the third source, *A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels*, could be an autobiography of Chökyi Wangchuk. My efforts were directed towards comprehending the content of the sources

that Belo utilized, while also seeking to understand his reasons for discarding the other available sources. The inclusion of Chökyi Wangchuk's biography in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon* series, possibly at the behest of his teacher Situ Pañchen, prompted Belo to adopt a narrative approach closely mirroring his teacher's style. This approach featured a chronological, truncated, and condensed structure reminiscent of diary notes, yet skillfully interwoven both prose and verse to convey the outer, inner, and secretive aspects of the subject's life. While some areas of the biography receive more attention than others, its overall structure is balanced.

Belo's primary objective was to inspire his readers rather than provide a strictly structured retelling of Chökyi Wangchuk's life history. The text contains much dharmic language, replete with honorific expressions and an optimistic tone that complements the factual accounts presented. The narration of the text was done in the third-person point of view, with a preference towards honorific titles over personal pronouns. While there are instances of repetitive words or phrases that may impede the flow of narration, transition words were generally used smoothly. However, there are a few areas where uncertainty regarding the year of events occurred. The text contained several chronological inconsistencies, as well as grammar and spelling errors, which were analyzed within the context in order to better understand the author's intended message. The biography of Chökyi Wangchuk presents several gaps, including a lack of detail about his family, the events of his first four or five years of life, and his personal struggles, failures, and challenges.

I have endeavored to bridge these gaps by delving into six critical aspects, and the findings include: (a) Chökyi Wangchuk had limited engagement with his father and elder brother compared to his younger siblings; (b) his customary title, Gyalwé Wangpo, was consistently used, and was occasionally used for the Ninth and Tenth Karmapas as well; (c) his oeuvre

comprises over forty-one works, with twenty four currently accessible, suggesting that some works may have been omitted or not documented; (d) seventy nine students were featured in *The Rosary of the Crystal Moon*, but the total number of known disciples exceeds eighty-four; (e) his funeral ritual was considered to follow the testament of the First and Fifth Shamarpas, despite indications of potentially having different death rituals.

Chapter 3 portrayed how prominent contemporaries, subsequent, and modern scholars depicted Chökyi Wangchuk's life. As for Chökyi Wangchuk's contemporaries, two of his students' accounts are particularly noteworthy. First, the Tenth Karmapa's *The Bountiful Cow* provides a highly vivid, comprehensive, and extensive account of Chökyi Wangchuk's life, from his birth to his demise, which can be succinctly summarized in six points. He regards Chökyi Wangchuk as a highly accomplished Bodhisattva, and their deep spiritual connection is evident throughout the biography. Second, Karma Chakmé's works offer an exceptional portrayal of their unique relationship between him and his teacher, highlighting a range of diverse range of attributes possessed by his guru, such as his exceptional character, perspective, enlightenment, and embodiment. Additionally, the two works by the subsequent scholar, the Fifth Dalai Lama, introduced several novel perspectives that had not been previously cited in other works. Whereas in the modern landscape, three researchers of Chökyi Wangchuk's life and work stand out. First, Lamminger's study is the most comprehensive research to date, which chronologically narrates Chökyi Wangchuk's life by using a wide range of sources, followed by a detailed analysis of his *Travelogue to Nepal*. However, her hypotheses sometimes run counter to the stated intentions within the text and to cultural context, such as describing his visit to Nepal as a diplomatic task. Shamar Rinpoche and Irmgard Mengele, while shedding light on the life and teachings of Chökyi Wangchuk, grapple with the intricate task of categorizing the text as either an

autobiographical work authored by the Tenth Karmapa himself or a biographical account of his mentor, the Sixth Shamarpa. Notwithstanding this scholarly challenge, their writings present a diverse array of perspectives for analysis, ultimately enhancing our discernment of the nuances within Chökyi Wangchuk's character.

Finally, the three thematic analyses give a better impression of Chökyi Wangchuk's contributions and how they have been treated by subsequent scholars. First, his role in the Lijiāng canon project was crucial in determining the accuracy and integrity of the texts and it has had far-reaching implications for the study and interpretation of Buddhist texts. Second, the meaning of two enigmatic poems by Chökyi Wangchuk remains debatable as the possible interpretations rely on the discretion of interpreters, causing unnecessary tension between schools and lords. Third, there are several points of debate surrounding the life of Chökyi Wangchuk which have arisen in recent works, to which I respond: (a) the purported meeting between him and the Chinese emperor lacks factual evidence; (b) his issuance of notes is believed to be limited to travel guide notes rather than official travel documents; (c) doubts about his expertise in Sanskrit are unfounded, given the ample evidence to the contrary; and, (d) while he was undoubtedly a renowned *paṇḍita*, it is unclear if he was indeed widely honored with the title "The Paṇḍita of the North."

Contribution, Limitations, Direction, and Reflection

This research, involving analysis and translation, will enhance our comprehension of the namthar genre in general and its intricate stylistic nuances, particularly as exemplified by the Golden Rosary. Highlighting the legacy of the Sixth Shamarpa may not just illuminate his meaningful life but could also stimulate interest in his five predecessors, eight successors, and their works. Thereupon, the neglected history of the Kagyü masters will reemerge, if not inspire!

My critical analysis will hopefully encourage readers to take a more circumspect approach to much of the literature currently available on the history of Chökyi Wangchuk, the Kagyü lineage, and Tibetan history in general. My aspiration is that this research will foster a greater understanding of history by presenting novel perspectives on the social and cultural exchanges, political dynamics, and religious impacts that occurred in Tibet, Mongolia, Lijiang, and Nepal during the same time when, in another part of the world, Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) was revolutionizing humanity’s vision with inventing the telescope.

As this study takes a biographical and historical approach to Chökyi Wangchuk’s life, detailed analysis of certain aspects of his literary, ritual, and other works are beyond the scope of this research. Notably, a comprehensive inventory of empowerments, transmissions, and instructions has not been included. The most challenging aspect of developing this thesis has been grappling with the dispersion and scarcity of translated primary resources, in addition to the limited availability of secondary sources. Access to potentially lost primary sources of Belo’s works and the collected works of the Shamarpa lineage would greatly support and enhance the study, but their unavailability limits the comprehensiveness of this analysis. Furthermore, despite the Sixth Shamarpa’s extensive activity across various regions, only a scant handful of sources have discussed him, notably those in Newari and Chinese languages; those sources can be traced back to Belo. Through a meticulous examination of carefully chosen Tibetan sources and secondary literature, some of these gaps have been mitigated.

As for future directions, there are three potential avenues that could offer fresh perspectives on the ever-evolving discovery of compositions and their impact. Given that new manuscripts related to Chökyi Wangchuk continue to be unearthed, additional investigation might be necessary to shed light on his life and work. Once Chökyi Wangchuk’s complete corpus

has been made available, this work may serve as a catalyst for further studies concerning his more than thirty prominent works, which include travelogues, yogic songs, the subjects of logics, rituals, philosophy, and tantra. The most pressing and challenging aspect of all might well be the study of his artworks and unique philosophical views and approaches.

As a personal reflection, Chökyi Wangchuk's multifaceted character has provided me with a profound opportunity to explore life writing, learn about an important historical and religious figure, and become inspired to conduct further research. Through Chökyi Wangchuk's forty-six-year lifespan, he touched lives, advocated for peaceful dialogue and the resolution of conflict, promoted compassionate teachings, and composed profound songs, poems, and philosophical works. Studying his life has revealed the immense potential of dedicated individuals. It has transformed my perspective, exceeded expectations, and exposed intricacies in the life of a remarkable figure. The profound influence of the Sixth Shamarpa, with timeless teachings inspiring generations and guiding humanity towards a future of peace, spiritual growth, and enlightenment, serves as a powerful reminder of our collective potential. Chökyi Wangchuk's suggestion in *A Pronouncement of Realization: A Song on View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition* holds inherent value beyond personal goals, resonating deeply:

When you engage in the cause unmistaken way,
 There is no doubt that the fruition will come forth.
 If you entertain hope and fear, that's just a cause for tiring yourself out—
 Don't consider the fruition, consider the cause! (trans. Brunnhölzl 356).

Appendices

Appendix A. Seventy-Nine Disciples of Chökyi Wangchuk (Belo 457–58)²⁶³

Table 1. Fourteen Principal Disciples, the Incarnations of True Transmission

Names in Wylie	Associate Title/Incarnation/Year
karma pa chos dbyings (mchog gi) rdo rje	The 10 th Karmapa (1604–1674)
dpal ldan grags pa mchog dbyangs	The 5 th Goshri Gyalstap (1618–1658)
chos kyi rgyal mtshan	The 5 th Situpa (1586–1657)
karma mi pham (’phrin las) rnam rgyal	The (2 nd) incarnation of Gampo Trülku
karma grags pa rnam rgyal	The 2 nd Riwoché Jedrung (1591–1642) ²⁶⁴
rgod tshang sku skye karma grub mchog	The 4 th incarnation of the Rechung Puk Line (b. 16 th c.)
kha rig sprul sku karma bstan srung (’phrin las rnam rgyal)	The incarnation of Khenchen Rinchen Sherap (b. 16 th c.) ²⁶⁵
kun dga’ rnam rgyal	The incarnation of Tserlungpa (b. 16 th c.) ²⁶⁶
gar dbang karma bstan skyong (blo gros nyi ma)	(The 3 rd incarnation of Surmang Garwang, b. 1643?)
karma bstan ’dzin dar rgyas	The incarnation of Trechung
bstan ’dzin nor bu	The 3 rd incarnation of Yölmowa (1589–1644) ²⁶⁷
karma ’jig rten dbang phyug	The 3 rd incarnation of Dhitsa (b. 17 th c.) ²⁶⁸
’chi med ngag dbang	The incarnation of Bodong Chimé (Öser)
dkon mchog bstan ’dzin	Surmang Monastery, etc.

Table 2. Sixteen, High Ranked Upholders of the Vinaya, Disciples

Names in Wylie	Associate Title/Year
byang bdag po bla ma sku mched	Lama and disciple, tertön of the Jangter tradition ²⁶⁹
karma bkra shis	The descendent of Tselhagang (rtse lha sang)
dkon mchog rin chen	The First Drigung Chetsang (1590–1654)
rig ’dzin chos kyi grags pa	The First Drigung Chungtsang (1595–1659)

²⁶³ N.B.: (1) In this list of students, I have included dates of birth and relevant information when available, while leaving out indications where they are not accessible. However, it is reasonable to assume that the majority of these individuals lived during the late 16th and 17th centuries. (2) At the end of the list, “etc.” is written to indicate that there were more students. (3) The Goshri title appears numerous times in this list, yet four spelling variations are observed: *go shri*, *go shrī*, *go ’u shri*, and *go shir*, which probably derived from Pinyin *guóshī* (lit. state teacher). (4) Furthermore, Wylie is chosen over phonetics in these appendices to save space.

²⁶⁴ Drakpa Namgyal is also listed among the disciples of higher rank who followed the Vinaya vows.

²⁶⁵ At the age of ten, Kharek received the five precepts *upāsaka* vows (*yongs rdzogs dge bsnyen*) from Chökyi (Belo 1972 340–43).

²⁶⁶ Given the name and date, Tserlungpa might have been the same person as the fourth incarnation of Surmang Trungpa Künga Namgyal (zur mang drung pa kun dga’ rnam rgyal, 1567–1629), from whom Chökyi Wangchuk received the transmission of the Surmang Oral Lineage (*zur mang snyan brgyud*) (Belo 440, 449).

²⁶⁷ He received the *upāsaka* vows and named “karma thub bstan snying po nam par rgyal ba’i sde” from the Sixth Shamarpa—see Yölmopa: treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Tenzin-Norbu/P1690. Accessed 15 Feb. 2023.

²⁶⁸ Chökyi Wangchuk recognized the incarnation of Dhitsa around 1618, who lived for forty-four years (Belo 440).

²⁶⁹ Probably this refers to these two treasure revealers: Chögyal Wangpö Dé (chos rgyal dbang po’i sde) and his disciple Jangdak Rikzin Ngakgi Wangpo (byang bdag rig ’dzin ngag gi dbang po, 1580–1632), the third incarnation of tertön Rikzin Gödem (rig ’dzin rgod lden).

karma brtson 'grus pa	The descendent of Phakdru
(rgya ra?) shes rab phun tshogs	— ²⁷⁰
rkyen dbon karma blo ldan (rdo rje)	Lama of Kyenwön
grags pa rnam rgyal (mtsho skyes rdo rje)	Chöjé of Riwoché (see principal disciple list)
karma sgrub brgyud bstan 'dzin	Trungpa of Pungri
mnga' ris lha btsun karma rnam rgyal	A descendent of Nuprar Chögyal (1471–1515)
rin spungs chos mdzad mched gnyis	Two brothers of Rinpung Chödzé ²⁷¹
karma tshogs gnyis dpal grub	Tsangpa (shang gnam gling pa?)
dkon mchog rgya mtsho	Pelchungwa, chos dzong
karma chos rgyal	Goshri, etc.

Table 3. Eighteen Learned Disciples

Names in Wylie	Associate Title/Monastery/Place
slob dpon smra seng (mra ba'i seng+ge)	Löpon (of Nyinjé Ling Monastery?)
karma thub bstan	Abbot of Lekshé Ling
ba le rab 'byams pa (karma) mkhyen brtse	The 11 th scholar-abbot of Yangpachen Monastery ²⁷²
dwags gling pa don gnyis lhun grub	Dhaklingpa, Dhaktö Monastery
gangs (Gong) ra lo chen karma dgra bcom pa	The great translator of Gangra ²⁷³
gnas nang (sgrub chung) karma don grub	Nenang Monastery ²⁷⁴
rtsi shag bla ma mngon dga'	Lama of Tsishak Monastery ²⁷⁵
lo tsa wa (rab) brtan pa	Dhakpo Raptan Lingpa, the translator
bram ze Paṇḍita Damoda	A Brahman scholar, South India
Paṇḍita Madhu	A scholar, India
(chos rgyal) pho brang ba karma 'jigs med	The 12 th scholar-abbot of Yangpachen Monastery
e pa dpal grub ²⁷⁶	Épa of É village, Chumsum, Lhokha
g.yam bzang mkhan po	An abbot of Yasang Kagyü Monastery
(skyes chen dam pa) Karma mi pham (mgon po)	A great saint
dwags po mchod sprin (pa)	Dhakpo (monastery/region/ descendants)
mi nyag pa bkra shis dar rgyas	Minyakpa (clan in Kham)
'tsho byed sman mo che ba	The elder Menmo, a physician
chu shul ba karma mtshan legs	Chushülwa (of Chushul Monastery, Lhasa?) ²⁷⁷
nyin gling karma sa skyong, etc.	Nyinling Monastery

²⁷⁰ This is one of the few names in the list of disciples lacking a title. Given the name and date, he might have been Drupchen Sherap Phuntsok (grub chen shes rab phun tshogs, the First incarnation of Gyara, 1566–1632).

²⁷¹ Chökyi Wangchuk conferred *upāsaka* precepts to the Rinpung brothers and named them Karma Chödrak Palsang (chos grags dpal bzang, elder) and Karma Chökyi Nyima (chos kyi nyi ma, younger) (Belo 443).

²⁷² Chökyi Wangchuk appointed him as the eleventh abbot of Yangpachen Monastery in ca.1625 (Belo 447).

²⁷³ Chökyi Wangchuk conferred *śrāmaṇera* and *bhikṣu* ordination and teachings to Gongra Lochen Shenphen Dorjé (gong ra lo chen gzhan phan rdo rje, 1594–1654). Karma Drachompa might have been his ordination name. See “gong ra lo chen gzhan phan rdo rje,” *bdud 'joms chos 'byung*, si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1996, pp. 392–94.

²⁷⁴ Nenang Monastery was founded by the First Shamar Drakpa Sengé (1283–1349).

²⁷⁵ Tsishak Monastery was founded by Mu Zeng to house the Lijiāng Canon (Debreczeny 2009, 119).

²⁷⁶ He might be the Epa, who was recognized as the secretary (e pa drung yig pa) (Situ Pañchen 628).

²⁷⁷ He could be the same person as Jamyang Karma Tsenlek, who composed *Raincloud of the Golden Age* (*rdzogs ldan gsar pa'i char sprin*), a biography of Chökyi Wangchuk.

Table 4. Seventeen Scholar-Yogin Disciples

Names in Wylie	Associate Title/Place/Year
gnas mdo karma chags med (Rāgāśya)	The First Karma Chakmé (1613–1678)
drung yig blo gros nor ldan	A secretary of Chökyi Wangchuk (b. late 16–17 th c.)
zhig chen karma lhun grub	Shikchen Cave of Surmang
bya btang bstan pa rnam rgyal	A Lojong lineage master (b. 17 th c.) ²⁷⁸
za phu ba yid bzhin dbang rgyal	Lama of Zaphu (shangs za phu lung)
drung pa dad grol	Trungpa ²⁷⁹
ka bzhi bya btang	—of Kampo
kaM po bam steng bla ma	Lama of Kampo Bateng
sog po byang chub	Jangchup of Mongolia
(zur ri) drung pa bde mchog	Trungpa of Zuri Monastery (zur ri grwa tshangs)
cog grwa ba karma gsang ba	Chokdrawa of Chok Monastery ²⁸⁰
byen (’byin) le chos ’phel	—of Jenlé
ne (ne’u) ring pa rnam rgyal tshangs pa	Neringpa of Nering Monastery
rgya gar lho phyogs pa shi ba shaM ka ra	Śivaśaṃkara, South India ²⁸¹
rdza ra ba rin chen dpal ’byor	Zarava of Zara Monastery, Namling Dzong
rgya (ston) bya (bral) rtogs ldan dad ’phel	Jadral of Gyatön Monastery
chu dbar ba bdud rtsi dang gzhan phan, etc.	Two Chubarwas, from Chubar Monastery

Table 5. Fourteen Sponsors and/or General Disciples

Names in Wylie	Associate Title/Year
karma mi pham tshe dbang rab brtan	The King of Lijiāng (sa tham, Mu Zeng, 1587–1647)
karma bstan skyong dbang po	Desi of Tsang (1605–1642)
rgya ston (chos rje) go shrī pa karma bstan ’dzin	Goshri, Gyatön Monastery, Kham
gangs dkar ba mi dbang khu dbon	Lord of Gangkar, including his uncle and nephew
’grang bu gu shri	Gushri of Drangbu Monastery
chos mdzad chos bkra shis	Chödze ²⁸²
snar thang sde pa don ’grub	Depa of Narthang

²⁷⁸ Jatang was the Thirtieth Oral Instruction lineage master of the Seven Points of Mind Training that derived from Gyalsé Thokmé (rgyal sras thogs med, 1295–1369) See Terdak Lingpa Gyurmé Dorjé (gter bdag gling pa ’gyur med rdo rje), pp. 28–9. BDRC: MW22096.

²⁷⁹ The Trungpa title appears multiple times in Chökyi Wangchuk’s biography. It seems to include in two categories, namely a monk from the descendent of a high noble (*drung pa gdung brgyud pa*), i.e., Pungri (spungs ri) Trungpa, and the incarnation of Trungpa i.e., Trungpa Rinpoche or Tserlung (tsher lung) Trungpa. However, not all their backgrounds are specified, e.g., there are no details mentioned concerning Trungpa Dedröl (dad grol), Trungpa Dechok (bde mchog), and Trungpa Lekshé (legs bshad) (Belo 438, 457–58). Possibly, some of these incarnations are linked to a few trülku lineages originating from Surmang Dütsi Thil (zur mang bdud rtsi mthil), a Karma Kagyü monastery established by the First Surmang Trungpa in 1423 in Kham.

²⁸⁰ In a short biography of the Second incarnation of Chokdra (ngag dbang snyan grags dpal bzang, 1618–1680), it is stated that he was enthroned by Gyalwang Drukpa Mipham Wangpo (rgyal dbang drug pa mi pham dbang po and further received several empowerments from him (according to the Monlam Dictionary). Given the name, date, and context, the Sixth Gyalwang possibly refers to Sixth Shamarpa, who might have named Karma Sangwa like the First Chokdra was named Karma Sungwa (srung ba) by the Eighth Karmapa.

²⁸¹ Śivaśaṃkara, who came from South India, spent approximately five years with Chökyi Wangchuk (Belo 442).

²⁸² Chödze is a “title of a semi-ordained religious practitioner from a noble family” (“*chos mdzad*,” Dan Martin’s Tibetan Vocabulary, 2003, dictionary.christian-steinert.de/).

tshangs sar kwan ting go shrī	Kenting Goshri of Tsangsar
yar stod pa karma mi pham bsod nams rab brtan	Lord of Yartö
rgyal ri ba karma chos rgyal	—of Gyalri
nang chen go shrī	The preceptor of Nangchen (Lord Karma Rapten) ²⁸³
Siddhinarasimha	The King of Yerang (Kantipur, Nepal, 1620–1661)
rin chen rgyal mtshan	The Depa of Riwoché
thu med tha'i ji karma tshe ring	Tumé Téji, Mongolia

Appendix B. Collected Works of Chökyi Wangchuk

Table 1. List of Compositions as Reported by Belo²⁸⁴

Year	Titles/Subjects	Translations	Belo
1600	<i>bka' chen bzhi dang dbu ma dang lnga yi thal phreng</i>	Rosary of Arguments on the Four Great Teachings and Madhyamaka ²⁸⁵	422
1600	<i>'chams yig</i>	A [Sacred] Dance Manual (h)	422
1601	<i>(rje yab sras gnyis kyi) 'khrung rabs rnam thar</i>	* <i>The Past Lives Account (of the Lord and his spiritual son)</i> ²⁸⁶	423
1601	<i>sdom pa thag drwa ma'i shes byed</i>	<i>Cognizing the Web of Eminent Vows</i>	423
1603	<i>'dul TI ka</i>	A commentary on Vinaya	424
1603	<i>rje dgu pa'i rnam thar thugs brtsams</i>	Biography of the Ninth Karmapa (h)	424
ca.1603	<i>phyag bzhi pa'i sgrub skor</i>	<i>The Sadhana Cycles of the Four-armed</i>	430
1604	<i>tshogs chos mu tig phreng ba'i 'grel ba</i>	A Commentary on the Pearl Garland of Group Teachings	430
1604–6	<i>tshad ma'i spyi don 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa</i> ²⁸⁷	* <i>Manjushri's Laughter: An Overview of Validity</i>	425
1608	<i>dpag bsam 'khri shing gi me tog</i>	* <i>The Flower of the Wish-fulfilling Tree</i>	428
1609	<i>chos drug bdud rtsa'i snying khu</i>	* <i>The Six Yogas of Nāropa: Essence of Drop</i> (h)	428
1609	<i>zhing skyong bstod pa</i>	<i>A Hymn of Praise to Kṣetrapāla</i>	429
ca.1609	<i>ldebs bris bkod yig</i>	(Two) murals' writings	429
1609	<i>dbus ma'i spyi don</i>	The General Meaning of Madhyamaka	429
ca.1609	<i>bla ma'i sgrub thabs</i>	<i>A Sādhana of the Guru</i>	430
ca.1609	<i>bde dgyes kyi sgrub thabs</i>	<i>A Sādhana of Chakrasaṃvara and Hevajra</i>	430
1605?	<i>gzhi gsum cho ga</i>	The Three Basic Rituals (h)	432

²⁸³ Nangchen Goshri invited Chökyi Wangchuk and exhibited an ivory seal of the First Karmapa, which was brought by thirteen giant people (Belo 439).

²⁸⁴ N.B.: Symbolic representation: (*) indicates that the texts are available, and (h) indicates “*thugs brtsam mdzad*,” which possibly suggests that the author formulated the views and then composed the text accordingly.

²⁸⁵ Based on the line: *bka' chen bzhi dang dbu ma dang lnga yi thal phreng sogs thugs brtsam mdzad*, it appears that Chökyi Wangchuk authored a critical text related to the Perfection of Wisdom (*phar phyin*), Valid Reasoning (*tshad ma*), Monastic Discipline (*'dul ba*), Treasury of Knowledge (*mdzod*), and the Middle Way View (*dbus ma*). According to his approach, these “five major basic texts” (*gzhung chen lnga*) serve as a rosary of logical arguments (*thal phreng*) for refuting non-Buddhist mistakes, establishing the Buddhist system, and addressing objections with respect to its own system.

²⁸⁶ The title differs in the original manuscript: *zhwa mar chos kyi dbang phyug gi 'khrungs rab rnam thar*.

²⁸⁷ He started to compose it before 1607 at Dechen and Zadam (Lamminger 50). This text contains four extensive chapters, and it is available.

1611?	<i>bstan pa rgya mtsho</i>	<i>*The Ocean of Teachings</i>	432
1618	<i>bstan bcos 'chi med bdud rtsi</i>	<i>A Treatise: The Nectar of Immortality</i>	432
1618	<i>spyi lan ring mo</i>	<i>A Long General Answer</i>	432
ca.1619	<i>bla ma mchod pa</i>	<i>A Ritual of Guru Worship</i>	442
ca.1620	<i>ri bo bya rkang gi lam yig</i>	<i>A Travelogue to Bird's Leg Mountain</i>	442
ca.1622	<i>zhwa dmar pa chos kyi dbang phyug ni mdzad pa'i bde smon</i>	<i>*An Aspirational Prayer by Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk</i>	444
ca.1622	<i>rmang lam bka' sam la zhu lan phul</i>	A response to Manglam Kasam	445
1625	<i>rgod phrug sangs rgyas skyabs kyi rtogs 'bul lan</i>	A response to Götruk Sangyé Kyap's offering of his realization	447
1625	<i>dge bshes 'gas mdzod kyi mchod brjod skabs kyi dogs gcod kyi dri lan</i>	An answer to Géshé Gazö's doubts regarding a eulogy	447
1629	<i>gso sbyong tshigs bcad gsum</i>	Fasting practice in three verses	454
1629	<i>gso sbyong gi tshigs bcad</i>	A verse on fasting practice	455
1629	<i>gsol 'debs rang bzhin lhun rdzogs</i>	<i>A Spontaneously Completed Supplication Prayer</i>	456
1629	<i>bal yul du bgrod pa'i lam yig</i>	<i>*A Travelogue to Nepal</i>	457
?	<i>rnam thar nor bu'i phreng ba</i>	<i>A Hagiography: Rosary of Jewels</i>	457

Table 2. Spontaneous Spiritual Songs Reported by Belo²⁸⁸

<i>gsung mgur</i>	Spiritual Songs	Place	Belo
<i>nga mdangs sum nyams kyi snang ba la</i>	I, to the appearance of meditative experience of three radiances.	(dben gnas) tha ba kha (bde chen steng), dbus	423
<i>rgyal ba sras dang bcas pa'i sogs gsung mgur mdzad</i>	The Victorious Ones, their sons, etc.	pe har (dbus including Central–Southern Tibet)	425
<i>rje skyabs gnas rnams la gsung mgur mdzad</i>	To the lords of refuge, etc.	mchims phur	426
<i>na mo gu ru re ltos dran mchog gi chos rje sogs gsung mgur mdzad</i>	Homage to the Guru, the Dharma Lord of the sublime, to recall and trust, etc.	khra 'brug dang shel brga, sne gdong rtse	427
<i>dus skyo shas kyi mgur mdzad</i>	A spiritual song of disillusionment with the world	skyer zhol mo che, tsa ri	427
<i>tshogs 'khor dang gsung mgur mdzad</i>	Offered a <i>gaṇacakra</i> and sang	dan ma phug	429
<i>gnas khyad du phags pa'i tsA ri tra sogs gsung mgur mdzad</i>	Tsari Tra, the exalted place of pilgrimage, etc.	mchod rten bkra shis 'od 'bar, tsa ri	429
<i>nga mdangs gsum nyal ba'i rmi lam la sogs mgur mdzad</i>	I, in the dream of last night, etc.	'o yug gos sngon (lha khang)	429
<i>rje dus gsum chags thogs med par mkhyen sogs gsung mgur zhig gnan</i>	The Lord of the three times knows limitlessly, etc.	karma lta steng	430
<i>gnas ra sa 'phrul snang bya ba der zhes sog</i>	At sacred Rasa Trülñang, etc.	lha sa po Ta la	
<i>gser kha drug mdo skyid pa'i rdzong sogs gsung mgur gnan</i>	Serkha Drukdo, the land of happiness, etc.	gser kha drug rdo, Khams, Eastern Tibet	431

²⁸⁸ This section only includes spiritual songs (*mgur*); praises (*stod pa*) are excluded. Most songs are inaccessible. It is noteworthy that Chökyi Wangchuk composed over twenty-four songs, but Belo presented only five.

<i>chu chen gyi mgo bo gangs la thug sogs kyi mgur bzhengs</i>	Where does the source of the great river lie, etc.	lha mo phug	342
<i>dpal karma kaM tshang rin po che sogs kyi mgur bzhengs</i>	The glorious and precious Karma Karintsang, etc.	rma chu'i 'gram	432
<i>bde stong gi ye shes bzhad pa'i mgur bzhengs</i>	Blossoming the wisdom of bliss and emptiness.	dwa'u del mdar, hor, Inner Mongolia	432
<i>rmang lam du bud med gzhon nu ma zhig gis dzA ti'i me tog dang gur gum gyi phur ma phul ba rmis pas gsung mgur mdzad</i>	Having dreamt of a young girl who offered him <i>jāti</i> flowers (<i>Jasminum grandiflorum</i>) and sachet of saffron, he sang a spiritual song.	dwa'u del mdar	432
<i>nga skye sa dbu ru stod du skyes sogs thugs dbyung gi mgur mdzad</i>	A song of mental reinstatement: I was born in Ü Rutok, etc.	dwa'u del mdar	432–33
<i>bde chen gyi rten 'brel thugs chud nas sogs kyi mgur bzhengs</i>	An auspicious connection with Śambara is assimilated, etc.	a chen thang	433
<i>lta sgom spyod pa'i mgur mdzad</i>	*A Song on View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition	kaM po stag lpags thang	434
<i>gnas dbon lhun grub kyis brgya 'bul bstabs/ gsung mgur zhig mdzad</i>	Composing a spiritual song	stag lpags thang	434
<i>e ma gtam snyan dang mi snyan bstod smad la sogs mgur mdzad</i>	Alas, a pleasant/unpleasant speech, praise/blame, etc.	gda' sngo mdo	434
<i>ne tso 'i khyu chen lding bas rkyen byas te khyod mkha' la lding ba'i ne tso khyod sogs mgur mdzad</i>	Due to the gliding flock of parrots, he sang a spiritual song: “You, one who hovers in the sky, you, the parrot,” etc.	gda' sngo mdo	434
<i>lta ba'i skor mgur sarga lnga pa brtsam</i>	The fifth chapter, a song on view	'phags yul gong, kaM po gnas nang, khams	436
<i>zhing mkha' khyab 'byam klas mu mtha' med sogs thugs brtsam mdzad</i>	The [buddha-]field are all-pervasive, infinite, and endless, etc. The boundless pure land is pervading and extending vastly, etc., by heart	'phags yul gong, kaM po gnas nang	436
<i>yum pha rol phyin ma'i mkha' dbyings sogs gsung mgur gnang</i>	The sky-expense of mother perfection, etc.	ri bo bya rkang, Yúnnán	437
<i>kaM po gnas nang du phebs mar me mdzad kyi drung du gsung mgur gnang</i>	A spiritual song sang in front of the Dīpaṃkara (statue).	kaM po gnas nang, khams	438?
<i>tshogs 'khor dang mgur mdzad</i>	Gaṇachakra, spiritual song, and composing a spiritual song	shor lung dang mi g.yel phug	438
<i>gsung mgur gnang</i>	A spiritual song was sung.	dus mkhyen sgrub phug bya bzang brag, dbus	447
<i>e ma ho yongs 'dzin mi pham chos kyi dbang phyug nyid sogs/ sku tshe de yi 'dul bya re zhig rdzogs nas sku phyi ma'i rten 'byung gi gsung mgur mdzad</i>	Having fulfilled [the wishes of] the disciples of this life, he sang for auspicious meeting circumstances in the next life: “Emaho, Mipham Chökyi Wangchuk, the tutor,” etc.	steng, chu dbar, gtsang	452
<i>do ha dang dbu ma bar do gsum gcig gyi mgur mdzad</i>	Dohā, Mādhyamaka, and <i>antarābhava</i> are of one single nature	Kantipur, Nepal	455
<i>rdo rje gling du phebs gsung mgur gnang</i>	A spiritual song was sung.	rdo rje gling, yol mo gangs ra	456

Table 3. Accessible Writings, Major Works

Title	Translation/Composition Year	Publication Information
<i>bal yul du bgrod pa'i lam yig nor bu spel ma'i 'phreng ba</i>	<i>A Garland of Jewel, A Travelogue to Nepal</i> (ca. 1630)	Nepalese German Manuscript Cataloguing Project, NGMPP Reel no. L387/3; Lamminger 322, 48 fols.
<i>bcom ldan 'das mgon po mi 'khrugs pa'i sgo nas las kyi sgrib pa rnam par sbyong ba'i cho ga mngon par dga' ba'i zhing gi rgyan</i>	<i>Ornaments of Abhirati that Fully Purifies the Karmic Obscuration</i> , a ritual based on Bhagavān Nātha Akṣobhya (1599)	Karma Lekshey Ling Institute, 2011, fols. 1–42. www.dharmadownload.net .
<i>byang chub sems dpa'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'khri shing gi me tog</i>	<i>The Flower of Vine, A Bodhisattva's Avadāna</i> (1608)	<i>ston pa thub pa'i dbang po'i 'khrungs rabs skor gyi dpe cha phyogs bsds</i> , vol. 11, pp. 455–690 (236 fols). BDRC: MW3CN22341_BBEC42
<i>dom byang chub sems dpa' kri shi'i rtogs pa brjod pa'i zin bris (ga)</i>	<i>Bodhisattva Bear, Narrative of Kriśi</i> , (note 3) (trans. in 1628?)	<i>bya dang ri dwags kyi rtogs brjod</i> (the oral account of Dāmodhara Grija), vol. 1, pp.47–67. BDRC: MW23796_E6376B.
<i>'jang bka' 'gyur kyi dkar chag dang par byang</i>	Catalog and colophon of the Lijiāng Canon (1621)	(Li)jiāng (Lithang) Kangyur, 1621. Adarshah: adarshah.org/kangyur/ or BDRC: W1CZ881.
<i>kaM po gangs kyi ra ba'i gnas kyi lo rgyus</i>	<i>History of the Sacred Kampo Mountain Range</i>	Holy Sites of Kham, vol. II, Pilgrimage Guides Kham (A handwritten manuscript of spang phug dgon). mandala.shanti.virginia.edu/places/13735/text-node/38256/nojs .
<i>mngon pa mdzod kyi spyi don dbyig gnyen bzhed pa</i>	<i>Vasubandhu's Laughter: An Overview of Abhidharma</i> (1607–1610)	Vajra Vidya Institute Library, 2007, pp. 27–464.
<i>rgyal ba thams cad mkhyen pa gar dbang drug pas mdzad pas jo mo bkra shis tshe ring ma'i mchod gtor gyi rim pa dngos grub kun stsol</i>	<i>Stages of Ritual Offerings to Jomo Tashi Tseringma, who bestows all Siddhis</i> by Gyalwa Thamché Khyenpa Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk	<i>The Successive Waves of Faith</i> , a catalog of collected works by Palden Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk (<i>dpal ldan gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug gi zhal snag nas bstsal ba'i bka' 'bum rnam kyi dkar chag dad pa'i rlabs phreng</i>), Paltsek Publications, unpublished.
<i>rje zhwa dmar drug pa chos kyi dbang phyug gis mdzad pa'i sdom pa nyer lnga pa bzhugs so</i>	<i>Twenty-five Instructions</i> , (advice on three levels of vows) composed by Lord Chökyi Wangchuk, the Sixth Shamar	karma pa 03 rang byung rdo rje, et al. <i>a yi drin lan bshags mdo dang sdom pa nyer lnga pa blang dor bzhi bcu zhe gnyis bcas</i> . pp.5–8. BDRC: IE3JT13377.
<i>rtogs brjod lta sgom spyod 'bras kyi glu</i>	<i>A Pronouncement of Realization: A Song on View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruition</i>	<i>Straight from the Heart</i> . Translated by Karl Brunnhölzl. Shambhala Publications, 2014, pp. 343–382.
<i>sman bla'i cho ga bsds pa rje zhwa dmar pa chos kyi dbang phyug gis mdzad pa'i phyag len zhal</i>	<i>A Brief Ritual of the Medicine Buddha</i> , a manuscript of ritualistic procedures that the Lord Shamarpa Chökyi Wangchuk orally instructed	<i>karma chags med kyi gsung 'bum</i> . Vol. 31, Si khron zhing chen mi rigs zhib 'jug su'o bod kyi rig gnas zhib 'jug khang, 1999, pp. 343–356. BDRC: MW22933_07A335.

<i>shes zin bris</i>		
<i>thun mong bsdus pa'i rtsa tshig (blo gsal dga' bskyed)</i>	<i>Compendium of All Teachings, root-verses composed by the Sixth Shamar</i>	<i>rigs lam nor bu'i bang mdzod kyi sgo brgya 'byed pa'i 'phrul gyi ldi mig.</i> Bk. 14, Rigpe Dorje Institute, 2017. dharmacloud.tsadra.org/book/ཐུན་མོང་བསྟན་འཛིན་པའི་རྩིས་2/ Vajra Vidya Library, 2012, pp. 1–15. ²⁸⁹
<i>tshad ma'i spyi don 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa</i>	<i>Manjushri's Laughter: An Overview of Validity (1618–1619)</i>	Altruism Publications, 2017, pp. 1–272. dharmaebooks.org/tseme-chidon/ .
<i>yid bzhin gyi nor bu rin po che'i 'byung gnas bstan pa rgya mtsho</i>	<i>The Ocean of Teachings, the sources of precious wish-fulfilling gems (1611?)</i>	zhwa dmar 06 chos kyi dbang phyug, shar phyogs rma chu, 42 fols. BDRC: MW8LS18273.
<i>zab mo nA ro'i chos drug gi nyams len thun chos bdud rtsi'i nying khu</i>	<i>The Quintessence of Nectar: Instructions for the Practice of the Six Dharmas of Nāropa (1609)</i>	Shamar Drukpa Chökyi Wangchuk and Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorjé. <i>nAro'i chos drug gi zin khrid gces btus</i> (A Selection of Essential Instructions on <i>The Six Dharmas of Nāropa</i>) Vol. 1. Rigpe Dorjé Institute, 2012. Translated by Peter Alan Roberts. Wisdom Publications, 2011, pp. 333–372.
<i>zhwa mar chos kyi dbang phyug gi 'khrungs rab rnam thar</i>	<i>The Past Lives Account of Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk</i>	<i>dpal ldan gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug gi zhal snag nas bstsal ba'i bka' 'bum rnam kyi dkar chag dad pa'i rlabs phreng, phyi ra 75</i> , Drepung Monastery (Incomplete manuscript, 135 fols with both sides).

Table 4. Accessible Collection, Minor Works²⁹⁰

Title	Translation/Composition Year	Publication Information
<i>jo bo gze rgyal sogs yul lha'i bsang bsdus</i>	<i>A Brief Smoke Offering of Jowo Shégyal and Other Local Deities</i>	<i>gter chos rtsa gsum gling pa</i> , vol. 2, <i>bka' get sri zhu e warṃ dpe skrun khang</i> , 2002–2014, (2.5 v.), pp.269–270. BDRC: MW4CZ1042_B60063.
<i>jo bo'i snyan dar gyi kha yig</i>	Message on Jowo's Scarf (1602)	tA la'i bla ma 05 ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho. “'jig rten dbang phyug thams cad mkhyen pa yon tan rgya mtsho'i rnam par thar pa nor bu'i phreng ba.” <i>gsung 'bum ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho</i> , First ed., vol. 11, <i>Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang</i> , 2009, pp 1992–201, 217. BDRC: MW1PD107937_6AF7BC.
<i>legs bya'i zhu shog</i>	Congratulatory Message (1601)	
<i>'pho ba'i zin bris</i>	<i>Note on Consciousness Transference (1599)</i>	<i>dpal spungs chos spyod</i> , early 20th cent., pp. 21b–22a. BDRC: MW3CN641.
<i>sbas yul gnas bdag spyi</i>	<i>General Petition-offering for</i>	<i>byang gter phur pa'i 'phrin las rgyas pa dang chos</i>

²⁸⁹ Commentaries are available with slight differences in title and content: (1) *The Treasury of Reasoning: An Essential Compendium of All Teachings (bsdus sbyor gyi snying po kun 'dus rigs pa'i mdzod)* Commentary by Sempa Dorje. Diwakar Publications, 2015. (2) *The Radiant Smile of Jamyang Shepa (thun mong bsdus pa'i rnam bshad 'jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i 'dzum zer)*. Commentary by the 17th Karmapa, Kagyü Güñchö Textbook Preparation Committee. 2016.

²⁹⁰ The compilation does not encompass the entirety of short or scattered compositions cited in diverse texts, such as Chökyi Wangchuk's long-life prayer dedicated to the Tenth Karmapa (Mengele 41).

<i>mchod bzhugs</i>	<i>the Land Deity of the Hidden Land</i> (1629) ²⁹¹	<i>srung bskang gso'i skor</i> . Lama Dawa and Sherap Gyaltzen, 1983, pp.204–205(3 verses). BDRC: MW22113.
<i>thub bstan nyin byed gling par zhwa dmar drug pas bslab don</i>	<i>An Advice of the Sixth Shamarpa to Thupten Nyinje Lingpa</i>	<i>dpal ldan gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug gi zhal snag nas bstsal ba'i bka' 'bum rnams kyi dkar chag dad pa'i rlabs phreng</i> , Paltsek Publications, unpublished catalog.
<i>zhwa dmar pa chos kyi dbang phyug gi bde smon</i>	<i>Aspiration towards Sukhāvātī</i>	Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2016. lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/shamar-chokyi-wangchuk/sukhavati-aspiration .

Appendix C. Travel Site of Chökyi Wangchuk and His Lineage

Table 1. Travels across Tibet and Its Neighboring Regions with Frequency of the Visit²⁹²

West (mnga' ri)	South (gtsang)	Central (dbus)	East (khams)
mnam gling, shang (3)	'o yug	gnam mtsho (3)	khyung po
rin spungs (3)	sne'u gdong	yangs pa chen (14)	ri bo che (4)
pa nam (4)	zangs ri	mtshur phu (20)	zur mang (2)
thob rgyal (2)	sna dkar rtse (4)	'bri gung/mthil (9)	tsha ba sgang
bsam 'grub rtse (4)	gong dkar	lha sa (5)	kaM po gnas nang (3)
rgyal mkhar rtse (2)	lhun po rtse (2)	gsang phu	khri shor rgyal mo
snar thang (2)	lho brag	snye thang	rma chu (2)
sa skya (2)	ngam ring	za dam (12)	dar rtse mdo
ding ri gla 'khor	jo mo gangs (Mt. Everest)	mal gro gangs dkar (2)	'bo gangs dkar
gangs dkar (Mt. Kailash) (5)	tsa ri	bsam yas (3)	rgyal thang (2)
sog yul (Mongolia)	bal yul (Nepal)	bsam yas (3)	'jang (Lijiang, Yunnan)
ja ('ja') thang	Godāvarī	mchims phu (2)	ba le mtsho
gser kha mdo (rdol)	chu dbar (2)	yar stod (4)	sba shes pho brang (2)
cha gar bu lag	la phyi lung	mtsho dkar (3)	'dob spang phug
dwa'u del mdar	ye rang	zhwa lha khang (2)	chu na ko Ta
(hor ser) a chen thang	shing kun (4)	mtsho dkar	mgo sbas kyi pho brang sba shes pho brang
shel khog rdo zam	bya rung kha shor (2)	rtsa ri	gsang sngags lha khang
shel khog g.yer thang	yol mo gangs ra	bde chen (5)	ri bo bya rkang

²⁹¹ I could not locate the specific text, but it remains an intriguing possibility that this prayer and the song composed by Chökyi Wangchuk in Dorjé Ling, Yölmo Gangra, as quoted in Nyangtön's biography (Dalai Lama V "nyang ston khra" 208), could indeed be one and the same. *Petition-offering for the Land Deity of the Hidden Land of Yölmo Gangra* (zhwa dmar drug pa chos kyi dbang phyug gis mdzad pa sbas yul yol mo gangs ra'i gnas srung gsol mchod), see also yol mo'i gzhi bdag mo at www.khabdha.org/?p=95914 and <https://hyolmoheritage.com/heritage/>. Accessed 6 Mar. 2022.

²⁹² These lists of locations could serve as the primary sites he explored, offering a general overview, yet this compilation does not encompass the entirety of his visited places. The geographical division and the number of his visit are approximate. I omitted numbering places he visited once.

Table 2. The Shamarpa Lineage

Incarnations	Names in Roman	Name in Wylie	Date ²⁹³
First	Tokden Khédru Drakpa Sengé	rtogs ldan mkhas grub grags pa seng ge	1283–1349
Second	Khachö Wangpo	mkha' spyod dbang po	1350–1405
Third	Chöpal Yeshé	chos dpal ye shes	1406–1452
Fourth	Chödrak Yeshé / Chenngawa Chökyi Drakpa	chos grags ye shes / spyan snga ba chos kyi grags pa	1453–1524
Fifth	Köncho Yenlak / Könchok Bang	dkon mchog yan lag / dkon mchog 'bangs	1526–1583
Sixth	Garwang Chökyi Wangchuk	gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug	1584–1630
Seventh	Palden Yeshé Nyingpo	dpal ldan ye shes snying po	1631–1694
Eighth	Palchen Chökyi Döndrup	dpal chen chos kyi don grub	1695–1732
Nineth	Könchok Gewé Jungne / Chökyi Nyima	dkon mchog dge ba'i 'byung gnas / chos kyi nyi ma	1733–1741
Tenth	Mipham Chödrup Gyatso	mi pham chos grub rgya mtsho	1742–1792
Eleventh	Jewön Chöwang Rinpoché ²⁹⁴	rje dbon chos dbang rin po che	ca.1795–1878
Twelfth	Thuksé Jamyang ²⁹⁵	thugs sras 'jam dbyangs	1895–1947
Thirteenth	Trinlé Künkhyap	phrin las kun khyab	ca. 1948/9–1950
Fourteenth	Mipham Chökyi Lodrö	mi pham chos kyi blo gros	1952–2014 ²⁹⁶

²⁹³ The average lifespan of Shamarpa incarnations was about 60 years, with the Fourth Shamarpa living the longest at seventy-one years, while the Ninth and Thirteenth Shamarpa had the shortest lifespans: eight years, and eighteen months, respectively.

²⁹⁴ The Shamarpa lineage has had eleven throne holders despite the existence of fourteen incarnations, as the eleventh to thirteenth incarnations were secretly recognized and not officially enthroned due to a political ban on the incarnation. The eleventh incarnation was recognized by the Fourteenth Karmapa, Situ, and Drigung Kyapgön jointly (“THE KARMAPA CONTROVERSY” 19). Throughout history, the Shamarpas and Karmapas have recognized each other. Specifically, the Second, Third, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Shamarpas recognized the Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Seventh Karmapas, respectively. These individuals were Deshin Shekpa (1384–1415), Thongwa Dönden (1416–1453), Wangchuk Dorjé (1556–1603), Chöying Dorjé (1604–1674), Yeshé Dorjé (1676–1702), Jangchup Dorjé (1703–1732), and Trinle Thaye Dorje (1983–). See also Curren’s *Buddha’s Not Smiling: Uncovering Corruption at the Heart of Tibetan Buddhism Today*, 2008, 275.

²⁹⁵ There are several discrepancies in dates, names, and identification. For example, Douglas and White identified Jamyang as the Eleventh Shamarpa, and the Fourteenth was identified as the Thirteenth Shamarpa who accompanied Karmapa on a pilgrimage throughout India in 1970 (102, 121).

²⁹⁶ While composing this thesis, I have not come across any official reports about the formal recognition of the Fourteenth Shamarpa’s reincarnation, who is expected to take on the role of the Fifteenth Shamarpa.

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