



**Extract from Pg 208 of The Fourteen Dalai Lamas: A Sacred Legacy of Reincarnation
by Glenn H. Mullin**

Another controversy surrounding the Great Fifth concerns the details of the death of Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen, a famous Gelugpa lama of the period. He was one of the most prominent lamas of his day, and in fact in some circles was held in even higher regard than was the Great Fifth, for the Fifth at the time was still in his youth.



His Holiness the Great Fifth Dalai Lama

One day Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen was mysteriously murdered. His followers claimed that the culprits were followers of the Fifth Dalai Lama, although there was **no suggestion that the Great Fifth was personally even aware of the plan.**

The theory was that the Great Fifth was being eclipsed by the towering stature of Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen, and thus would greatly benefit from the death. As long as Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen was alive the Fifth Dalai Lama would be number two in the Gelugpa School; his death allowed the Great Fifth to rise to the position of number one.

Whether or not the followers of the Great Fifth were involved in Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen's murder was **never proved, but the rumours persisted.**

The tale, already somewhat bizarre, now takes an even more exotic twist. It is said that the soul of the murdered monk wandered in the hereafter for some time as a disturbed spirit, creating havoc for the people of Lhasa. Eventually the Great Fifth contracted a group of Nyingmapa shamans to exorcise and pacify it, but they failed. He then contracted a group of Gelugpa shaman monks.

As a result of the rituals of this second group the spirit of Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen was eventually pacified and **transformed into the Dharma Protector Dorje Shugden.**

This spirit was later adopted as a guardian angel by numerous Gelugpa monks who disapproved of the Fifth Dalai Lama's manner of combining the Gelugpa and Nyingmapa doctrines.

Although the Great Fifth tried to discourage the practice of worshipping this deity, it caught on with many monasteries. The practice continued over the generations to follow, and eventually became one of the most popular Protector Deity practices within the Gelugpa School. In particular, during the late 1800s, when four Dalai Lamas died young, it became an all-pervasive monthly practice within almost all provincial Gelugpa monasteries,





and was especially popular with Gelugpa aristocratic families.

The controversy surrounding the murder of Tulku Drakpa Gyaltsen and the deity that emerged from his disturbed spirit has shadowed the Dalai Lama office until the present day. By the time the Tibetans came into exile in 1959, worshipping Dorje Shugden was still a common monthly practice of most Gelugpas.

In recent decades the present Dalai Lama has attempted to discourage the practice, but with little success. It is as strong today as ever, if not stronger; for with the Dalai Lama discouraging it in India, the Chinese are fully promoting it in Tibet.

Tibet watchers will be aware of this bizarre controversy, as it has even found its way onto the pages of *Times* and *Newsweek*, and has dozens of web pages dedicated to it.

