

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF

# Chögyam Trungpa



*Volume Nine*

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TRUE COMMAND  
GLIMPSES OF REALIZATION  
THE SHAMBHALA WARRIOR SLOGANS  
THE TEACUP AND THE SKULLCUP  
SMILE AT FEAR  
THE MISHAP LINEAGE  
SELECTED WRITINGS



*Chögyam Trungpa at Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada, 1980.*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY LIZA MATTHEWS.

THE COLLECTED WORKS OF CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

## VOLUME ONE

*Born in Tibet • Meditation in Action • Mudra • Selected Writings*

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VOLUME NINE

*True Command*  
*Glimpses of Realization*  
*The Shambhala Warrior Slogans*  
*The Teacup and the Skullcup*  
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SHAMBHALA • Boulder • 2017

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## INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME NINE

IT IS EARLY JUNE on Tatamagouche Mountain, as I sit here writing this introduction to volume nine of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*. Purple and white lilacs and honeysuckle are in bloom in the front yard of Trident Mountain House, the place I have been coming to compile and edit the writings of Chögyam Trungpa for many years now. The house is just across the road from the land where the Dorje Kasung, known also as the “Vajra Command Protectors” (literally) or the Vajra Guards—the security and service organization established by Chögyam Trungpa in the mid-1970s—have been holding their summer encampment, the Magyal Pomra Encampment, for more than two decades.

About twenty-five years ago, my husband, James Gimian, was heading up the search for a land center for the Dorje Kasung in Nova Scotia. We would tear around the Nova Scotia countryside in an old Nissan sedan looking for suitable sites, with me often in the backseat entertaining our toddler, Jenny, with food, toys, and games. I referred to myself as the “cosmic vending machine,” a moniker that other parents may understand, especially as regards the challenges of car trips with young children.

After a number of people working on this project had made scouting trips to different parts of the province, we had zeroed in on the region around Tatamagouche as a likely area to find land. On one particular day, Jim and I were driving up and down dirt roads outside of town, and as our daughter got fussier and fussier, we got more and more irritated with one another, until we finally decided to stop somewhere for a little while, to have a break from the car. We pulled into the parking lot of the Willow Church, on Willow Church Road. We got out and walked around the empty field behind the church. Everyone relaxed. We looked at the view and felt the fresh air, and Jim said: “You know,

this would work. This could be the place!” Then, we got back into the car and tore off down the road again. About a year later, the parcel of land that adjoins the Willow Church went up for sale, and the Kasung bought it. (A year or two after that, another nearby parcel was purchased, now the site of the Dorje Denma Ling practice center.) So now I sit across the road from where we first stopped that chaotic afternoon, composing my thoughts about Chögyam Trungpa and his extraordinary and prodigious teachings and equally extraordinary legacy.

Included in this volume are five books published between 2003 and 2009, a set of cards that present the Shambhala warrior slogans, and eighteen articles and interviews, all from 1983 or earlier. The first eight volumes of *The Collected Works* were organized thematically, but we made the decision to go more or less in chronological order from here on out. So the books in volumes nine and ten are presented in the order in which they were published. The selected writings that follow the books in volume nine are all from before Chögyam Trungpa’s death in 1987 and are roughly presented chronologically.

The first book that appears in volume nine is entitled *True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung: Volume One: The Town Talks*. It is based on talks given by Chögyam Trungpa to the members of the Dorje Kasung between 1975 and 1983. (It does not include talks at the Magyal Pomra Encampments, which someday will form the contents of the second volume of *True Command*.) In addition to Chögyam Trungpa’s addresses at various Kasung events, the volume includes remarks by others on these occasions, as well as descriptions of ceremonies that often formed the backdrop for his remarks. There is a lot of specialized language, or lingo—depending on your point of view—that was developed by Trungpa Rinpoche and those around him as he laid out the teachings and the path of warriorship central to the identity and conduct of the Vajra Guards.

You might, with some justification, feel that the book is aimed at “insiders,” people already committed to the general Shambhala path or the specific path of Kasungship that Trungpa Rinpoche presented. It all may appear a bit abstruse and bewildering, and possibly a little weird. But you also might feel that you are being given an opportunity, through the inclusion of all these details, to actually experience how Chögyam Trungpa developed a mandala, or a world, for people. He did so many times and in many contexts. Much of his methodology for “world-building” is hinted at in other places in his teachings, but here, in *True Command*, the process is more apparent and more thoroughly laid out. The engaged reader can track the changes and the slow evolvement of the forms in

this area of his teaching.

The development of the Dorje Kasung is just one of many areas in which Trungpa Rinpoche trained his students to create something out of nothing, as he sometimes called this approach. It's as though you start with an empty field, you put up your tents and establish your perimeter, and your program unfolds within the space as a complete and fully formed world. At the end, you roll up the tents and return the ground to its original, pristine state. This is literally what takes place at the Magyal Pomra Encampments, and it is also the way metaphorically in which Chögyam Trungpa trained his students to create different forms and structures for the teachings.

For example, beginning in 1973, he conducted a three-month seminary each year for his advanced students. For the first ten years, these programs were held in large hotels that were closed for the winter. Then, at last, permanent facilities were developed to hold the seminaries at the Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, now the Shambhala Mountain Center in Colorado. But in those early times, Rinpoche's students would take over a hotel and transform it into a practice environment. The students would do all the cooking, housekeeping, and most of the maintenance, while also pursuing a full program of meditation practice and study. There are many other examples of creating these physical mandalas. In the introduction to volume seven, I discussed some of this in relationship to dharma art installations.

In another book in volume nine, *The Mishap Lineage: Transforming Confusion into Wisdom*, Chögyam Trungpa talks about the origin of this approach in Tibet, where great encampments or tent cities were set up by Buddhist teachers and their followers as they traveled around the country presenting the teachings. He refers to this approach as "tent culture."

Chögyam Trungpa was a pioneer and a key figure in bringing many new elements of the Practicing Lineage of Buddhism to North America. He left Tibet with just a few bundles of his belongings carried by horses and on people's backs, and he reached India with just a fraction of what he'd had when he'd left. Yet he understood how to plant the seeds of wisdom he carried within himself so that they would grow into a full flowering of the Buddhist teachings in the West. He did this not just by talking about the teachings, but by paying attention to every detail of how things were done. Sharing this approach with his students, he trained them so that they too would be able to create a mandala of the teachings for others.

Thus, after his death in 1987, his students carried on, establishing many new centers for both the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings, within the organizations he had founded but also in other centers that sprang up later. Perhaps that is why I felt compelled to open this introduction with the description of the physical location where I'm working, for the land I am next to is the site for one of these large mandalas of teaching to unfold, and it has been an excellent training ground for both Chögyam Trungpa's early students and for new students who never met the man in person.

For more about the context of the material presented in *True Command*, I would recommend the introduction to the book by James Gimian, who, as a member of the Dorje Kasung, worked closely with Chögyam Trungpa on the development of this line of teachings. In general, the books that appear in volumes nine and ten of *The Collected Works* have a substantial introduction or afterword, which provides more of the context and historical background to the books than earlier publications did. As well, in this case, in the introduction to volume eight of *The Collected Works*, the role of the Dorje Kasung—more about their origins and development, as well as the meaning of the teachings given to them—is discussed.

The second offering in volume nine, *Glimpses of Realization: The Three Bodies of Enlightenment*, was the fifth volume edited by Judith L. Lief in the “Glimpses” series published by Vajradhatu Publications. The series began with *Glimpses of Abhidharma*, the only “Glimpses” volume published during Chögyam Trungpa's life. It is found in volume two of *The Collected Works*. *Glimpses of Mahayana*, *Glimpses of Shunyata*, and *Glimpses of Space* also were previously included in *The Collected Works*. This final volume in the series was published in 2003, too late to make it into the original eight.

In 2015, Shambhala Publications repackaged four of the “Glimpses” works, newly titled *Glimpses of the Profound: Four Short Works*. In her introduction to this edition, Judy Lief succinctly describes the content of *Glimpses of Realization*: “Once again it is about space and manifestation, this time in terms of what are called the three bodies of enlightenment: dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya....There is a descent, as he [Trungpa Rinpoche] describes it, from the space of dharmakaya to the energy of sambhogakaya to the bodily manifestation of nirmanakaya. He brings this all together by pointing out how the potential for awakening is everywhere and that it manifests in every aspect of our lives” (p. xiii).

Additional introductory remarks on the whole series, and especially Lief's comments on the importance of meditation practice, are recommended. *Glimpses of Realization* has a kind of sparkling, uplifted feeling to it. The humor and the poetry of Trungpa Rinpoche's approach truly come across here. Some of the material is bewildering and confounding; parts of it are immediate and inspiring. It's definitely worth the ride and the read.

Next in volume nine is *The Shambhala Warrior Slogans: Fifty-Three Principles for Living Life with Fearlessness and Gentleness*. This material was originally published in 2004 in a boxed set that included fifty-three slogan cards, each containing a Shambhala warrior slogan with commentary on the reverse side. There was a foldout stand for the cards, a small booklet with guidance for contemplating and applying the slogans, and a paperback edition of *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* included in the box. The majority of the slogans are drawn from *The Sacred Path*, and the progression of the slogans loosely follows the progression of the book. A core of twelve slogans was composed by Chögyam Trungpa to be used as study material by students in the Shambhala Training program, a program presenting meditation practice and the Shambhala teachings to a secular audience. He also created fourteen additional slogans for the Kalapa Assembly, an advanced Shambhala program, in 1981.

Some of the slogans seem obvious: "#53: Cheer Up." Some require quite a bit of explanation or information to understand them: "#43: Apply the seven principles of richness." Some are poetic, but the meaning is not immediately apparent: "#3: Goodness dawns like the sun." Some are quite funny: "#41: Do not wear shoes as a hat!" (My exclamation mark.) Working with these slogans can provide another way to access a personal connection to the Shambhala teachings which were so important to Chögyam Trungpa in his later years.

Chögyam Trungpa originally instituted a Buddhist slogan practice with his students in connection with the presentation of the mahayana *lojong* teachings, a potent form of mind training. He had received this training himself as a young student in Tibet, and he first introduced it to his own students in the West at the Vajradhatu Seminary in 1975. For more on this, see the introduction to volume two of *The Collected Works*, as well as Judith Lief's introduction to *Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness*, also found in volume two.

Many students love these lojong slogans and the use of the slogan cards as a form of contemplative practice. A number of Buddhist teachers in the West have written about and taught these slogans and this approach, including Dzigar



Köngrul Rinpoche, Traleg Kyabgon Rinpoche, and Pema Chödrön, who is largely responsible for them becoming mainstream in American Buddhism.

The twelve slogans to be used in the Shambhala Training program had been composed in the late 1970s. A few years after his death, a number of people were wondering if a larger group of Shambhala warrior slogans could be developed. I don't precisely remember how we got from the slogans Rinpoche had composed for Shambhala Training to the idea of creating more of them. In any case, I was invited to undertake this project for Shambhala Publications. In considering what might be appropriate and useful for students, I thought about how the lojong slogans are used both as individual points of instruction and wakefulness and also as a way to learn a body of the mahayana teachings on exchanging oneself for others. So I turned to the *Shambhala* book itself (as *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* is often referred to) and began to compile the complete set of fifty-three slogans, as another way of transmitting the core teachings in the book. During this process, I became aware of the slogans written for the Kalapa Assembly in 1981, and I included as many of those in the set as I could. I tried wherever possible to use Chögyam Trungpa's own words, although I had to insert a few of my own in places. I sent the draft of the slogan cards and commentary to a number of senior teachers in the Shambhala Training program for review and, incorporating their feedback, proceeded with the project.

The Shambhala warrior slogan cards are currently out of print, and Shambhala Publications is looking at ways to adapt them or freshen them up for a contemporary audience. I hope we'll find the way to do this, since the use of Shambhala slogans was something that Trungpa Rinpoche instituted, and slogan practice is such a good way to embed teachings as reminders in one's life.

The next book in volume nine is *The Teacup and the Skullcup: Where Zen and Tantra Meet*, edited by Judith Lief and Tensho David Schneider. A new edition was published in 2015 by Shambhala Publications; the original, published by Vajradhatu Publications, appeared in 2007. David Schneider's excellent introduction describes Chögyam Trungpa's encounters and connections with many Zen teachers in America. Two seminars on Zen and tantra form the core of this volume. The well-known Ox-Herding Pictures, with Trungpa Rinpoche's unique commentary, are also included in the book, along with a short remembrance of Suzuki Roshi, offered by Chögyam Trungpa after Roshi's death.

Trungpa Rinpoche shows tremendous appreciation for the Zen tradition as well as demonstrating his insight into Zen and how it differs as well as agrees with the tantric approach in which he was trained. In describing the commonalities between Zen and tantra, he looks to the practice rather than to philosophy: “In discussing Zen and tantra, we should first understand what seems to be their common ground and affinity: the practice of meditation.” The discussion of *prajna*, or discriminating insight, in this volume is particularly incisive, and the metaphoric and artistic aspects of Zen are more embodied than just discussed. The description of monkey mind and how to trap and tame it is vivid and quite funny, in fact. There is philosophical depth and subtlety in these talks, as well as spontaneous poetry and discussion of art and beauty.

In America, for better or worse, we are bringing together different Buddhist traditions to produce new sparks of insight and fresh wisdom. *The Teacup and the Skullcup* highlights each tradition distinctly, yet each benefits from being viewed from the perspective of the other. Chögyam Trungpa genuinely appreciated and loved the tradition of Zen. He deeply admired Suzuki Roshi and formed friendships with many other Zen teachers in the United States. Even before he came to North America, he was intrigued by Japanese art and culture. Japanese haiku caught his attention in India; in England, he studied ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arranging, and began doing calligraphies with brush and ink while he was there as well. His enthusiasm for and knowledge of Zen, and his appreciation for the traditional arts of Japan, helped to build a bridge in North America between these two great Buddhist traditions.

Next in volume nine, we come to *Smile at Fear: Awakening the True Heart of Bravery*, which I compiled and edited. The book was published in 2009, and it has become one of Chögyam Trungpa’s most popular books since *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* was published in 1984. All of Chögyam Trungpa’s titles do well, and with very few exceptions they all remain in print. (This is in part a testament to the commitment of Shambhala Publications to the books they publish.) But *Smile at Fear* struck a particular chord.

The first slogan of the Shambhala warrior slogans, discussed above, is “Don’t be afraid of who you are.” A foundational teaching of the whole Shambhala path, it could be described as almost the mantra for the *Smile at Fear* teachings. Given what has transpired in the world in the last fifteen plus years, both working with fear and uncovering our innate bravery are truly useful, core spiritual teachings. It’s somewhat amazing that Chögyam Trungpa’s teachings on these topics seem so timely, since they are from the 1970s and early 1980s.

He was way ahead of his time, and to a large extent he still is. Where else can you find a spiritual teacher who so directly engages the sources of fear, how to work with real enemies in one's life, and how to transcend fear by discovering and employing one's inner bravery and confidence? This is not to say that no one else is talking about these topics, but he was doing so in such a direct, powerful way, one that still hits home and pulls no punches, acknowledging just how difficult life is, while encouraging us to rely on a deep well of human strength without aggression.

In [chapter 9](#), “[Overcoming Doubt](#),” he writes:

How are we going to respond to real opposition when it arises in the world? As a warrior, how are you going to relate with that? You don't need party-line logic or a package-deal response. They don't really help. In my experience of how students usually relate with conflict, I find that they tend to freeze up when someone is very critical of them. They become noncommunicative, which doesn't help the situation. As warriors, we shouldn't be uptight and uncommunicative. We find it easy to manifest basic goodness when somebody agrees with us. Even if they're half agreeing with you, you can talk to them and have a great time. But if someone is edgy and negative, then you freeze, become defensive, and begin to attack them back. That's the wrong end of the stick. You don't kill an enemy before they become the enemy. You only slash the enemy when they become a one hundred percent good enemy and present a real one hundred percent challenge. If you're attracted to someone who is interested in making love with you, you make love with them. But you don't rape them. This is the same idea.

When a warrior has to kill his enemy, he has a very soft heart. He looks his enemy right in the face. The grip on your sword is quite strong and tough, and then with a tender heart, you cut your enemy into two pieces. At that point, slashing your enemy is equivalent to making love to them. That very strong, powerful stroke is also sympathetic. That fearless stroke is frightening, don't you think? We don't want to face that possibility.

How much more direct could you be? These core remarks on working with the big fears, the *really* big fears, are surrounded by foundational teachings on meditation, nonviolence, and overcoming one's egotism. Thus, the quote above appears in [chapter 9](#), not [chapter 1](#). At the time that Chögyam Trungpa gave

these teachings, his students were somewhat shaken by them. I don't think anyone hearing them then could see what was coming in the way that he did. Perhaps because he had been through the destruction of the monastic way of life in Tibet and had left the country on foot with a price on his head, he was more realistic about what can happen.

We tend to think that spiritual teachers offer us an alternative to life's difficulties, a way to step outside of them into a more peaceful realm. Chögyam Trungpa invites us to go *into* our difficulties, into our fears, and by going deeper to find the source of courage. It's like finding cool, sweet water deep in the earth: you have to dig for it.

The popularity of *Smile at Fear* can in part be attributed to the direct wisdom and the strategic teachings that it offers on working with obstacles. It also is certainly due to Pema Chödrön's adopting the book as the basis for her teachings on working with fear. In 2009 and 2010, she taught two seminars using this material and both entitled *Smile at Fear*, one at Omega Institute in Massachusetts and one in Richmond, California. The audience at Omega was about five hundred people. In California, the program had three thousand live participants and thousands more via live streaming. Ani Pema invited me to offer the meditation instruction at these programs; as a result, I was engaged firsthand and also witnessed Pema's magic and her unbelievable kindness to students, including many in a great deal of pain.

In thinking about Pema's influence and how she has helped to bring so many people to this material, I was led to ponder the future for Chögyam Trungpa's books and his teachings. When the teacher dies, there's a huge transition. The personal magnetism or, as Rinpoche would have said, the authentic presence of the teacher now rests in the teachings themselves. Transmission to new generations relies on people with a connection to the teachings continuing to present and embody them, along with the practice that brings the teachings alive.

Pema Chödrön has been a great example of this. Many other students of the Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, are presenting his books and teachings to new students. Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Chögyam Trungpa's eldest son, transmits his father's teachings, and they are incorporated throughout Shambhala International, especially those related to the Shambhala teachings. Many other senior students are establishing organizations and presenting programs that rely on the Vidyadhara's teachings. These include Reggie Ray and the work of the Dharma Ocean Foundation; the *Chronicles of Chögyam Trungpa*

Rinpoche and Ocean, their online dharma community; Judith Lief and the Profound Treasury Retreats; the Rime Society in Boulder, Colorado; and the Westchester Buddhist Center in Westchester, New York; as well as groups in Boston, Halifax, and elsewhere. There are many other individuals working with small groups of students, presenting Rinpoche's teachings online as well as in person. The ability for Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings to be transmitted to new generations of students is really the test of the durability of the teachings as a practicing lineage.

That brings us to the last book included in volume nine, *The Mishap Lineage: Transforming Confusion into Wisdom*. As the editor of this slim volume, I took a similar approach to that used for the books in the "Glimpses" series, in that it is a more lightly edited presentation. The main part of the book consists of a seminar on the Trungpa lineage, with discussion kept in the original question-and-answer format. In addition to these seven talks, a talk on the Trungpa lineage from the 1974 Vajradhatu Seminary is included here. The lectures are bookended by two chants, one to all the lineage holders of his lineage and the other to Chögyam Trungpa himself.

This book gives a semihistorical account of the origins of Chögyam Trungpa's lineage, *semihistorical* because he seems less than deeply concerned about the accuracy of many historical details. When he gave the seminar in 1975, he probably did not have access to written accounts that might have shaped the narrative, as they were inaccessible, hidden away at his monastery in Tibet. Relying on memory, some details he recounted at the time do not match up entirely with the accounts of other teachers from his monastery, as told later to Rinpoche's students. In any case, he was much more concerned with communicating the import of the lives of the teachers in his lineage. As always when he taught, he brought the whole discussion back to the importance of the sitting practice of meditation, emphasizing that his lineage is within the Practicing Lineage of Buddhism.

He also indirectly ties the development of the lineage in Tibet into how he was developing his *sangha* in America. Take this passage on planning for both the present and the future of the teachings:

One concern seemed to be future problems, how the teachings might deteriorate or be diluted or misguided in the future. In order to save us from such problems, how could his particular presentation be made more lively and be more powerfully presented? As far as Trung Mase was concerned,

his approach to presenting the dharma was taking care of both situations at once: the present situation and the future. He emphasized that people should respect their personal practice, the sitting practice of meditation, and the training that they were going through.

One could substitute “Trungpa” for “Trung Mase” here and have a good description of how Chögyam Trungpa worked with the early development of a path for his students. There are many other examples of this in *The Mishap Lineage*, and I have found it a fruitful and fascinating resource for looking not just at the ancestors in the lineage, but also at his activity in the West, how he worked organically with situations, and what he was trying to accomplish. For more about the content of this book and the meaning of the phrase “Mishap Lineage,” which Chögyam Trungpa coined, the afterword to the book itself is recommended.

We turn now to the selected writings that form the remainder of volume nine. All of these are early writings that preceded Rinpoche’s death in 1987. I’ve been keeping a file called “Material for Volume Nine” for more than ten years now, and it’s continued to grow. It surprised me to find so much early material that was prepared for publication yet somehow had not found its way into the first eight volumes of *The Collected Works*. A few of these articles were known to me but were inadvertently omitted from the earlier volumes. Most of them, however, were discovered after the first volumes were published. All this material was edited for publication, but not all of it has appeared before in print. I made the decision to include articles in volume nine that were not previously published because they are of value to students of Buddhism, yet it’s unlikely that there will be another context in which to publish them.

The first article, “Guru Nanak in Tibet,” is one of the earliest known writings of Rinpoche’s in the West. It originally appeared in the *Indian Express* on March 6, 1966. The author was given as “Tarungpa Tülku.” This short piece on the founder of the Sikh religion, Guru Nanak, and the connections of Sikhism with Tibetan Buddhism came to my attention when it was published on the Internet, on various sites. The article was also reprinted in the journal *The Punjab: Past and Present* in a special issue on “Sources on Life and Teachings of Guru Nanak Past and Present.” This journal was first published in 1970 and ceased publication in 2009. We have not been able to confirm the year of the special issue in which Chögyam Trungpa’s article appeared. The article is also discussed in Bhuchung K. Tsering’s article “When Guru Nanak Visited Tibet,” in the

*Tibetan Review*, December 2006. Trungpa Rinpoche writes about his great admiration both for Guru Nanak and for the Sikh religion as a whole, and suggests that he'd like to translate the *Guru Granth Sahib*, an important Sikh text, into Tibetan. This is a unique piece, surprising and delightful. It shows us another facet of Rinpoche's ecumenicism—one that few may have previously known about.

The next article, "The Positive Aspect of Suffering," appeared in an undated issue of the newsletter of the Kagyu Samye Ling Monastery and Tibetan Center, which found its way into the Shambhala Archives. It was almost certainly published before 1970, while Trungpa Rinpoche was still in England. It's a remarkable article about how to work with both physical and mental pain. At one point, he mentions how confidence and a fundamental change in one's relationship to pain may arise from an experience like an accident, a severe illness, or possibly a war. He had gone through all of these things—so it obliquely may be referencing his own experiences in life. As well, the article seems to be anticipating Rinpoche's incisive definition of spiritual materialism, when he writes:

Spirituality does not exist on another level, or on a "higher plane," quite different from ordinary life, as is generally assumed....So religious or spiritual practice is not of this nature. It is not trying to be something more than you are, or something better than you are, for that matter. What is known as relative truth, or the truth that exists right here, now, in our everyday life—that truth has to be accepted as the general ground, and it is also the absolute truth.

From here, we come to a very short piece on the eight auspicious symbols, which in Buddhism represent the offerings made by the gods to Shakyamuni Buddha when he attained enlightenment. They also appear frequently in Indian and Chinese religion and culture. There is no date on the manuscript, but several things point to this being from pre-1970. First is the typewriter script, which is the same as that used on other quite early articles. Second, these symbols appear as illustrations in *Born in Tibet*, so my best guess is that this is material from his time in England.

"The Common Heart," which appears next, is an article prepared for the Centre Monchanin in Montreal, dated December 4, 1970. The Centre Monchanin was an intercultural center founded by Jacques Langlais in 1963. It was

dedicated to spreading greater understanding of cultural pluralism, intercultural relations, and social change. It closed in 2012. Photos from the archives of the center show a multicultural group, with some photos of programs that highlighted Tibetan Buddhism. Trungpa Rinpoche is not shown in any of the photographs I found, but it makes sense that he would have connected with people there.

The common heart, it turns out, is the heart of meditation, the genuine commonality of meditative experience and nondual simplicity that can be found in many religions. At this point, Trungpa Rinpoche was already using the phrase “spiritual materialism,” which shows how quickly this came into his vocabulary in North America. There are also echoes of language in *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* as demonstrated in this article, when Rinpoche writes:

Spiritual interest is coming out more strongly in people now because of the character of this century: the river of materialism has overrun its banks. Not only are there endless gadgets and machines, but there is pervasive spiritual materialism under which the great traditions have become just so much milk in the marketplace. The twentieth century is the age of ego.

The next article, entitled “Gardening,” is a commentary on Milarepa’s “Song of the Staff,” as it appears in the Garma C. C. Chang edition of *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*. There is no date attached to the manuscript. It’s clearly an early piece, and the typewriter script and some handwritten notations indicate that it was prepared for publication in the early 1970s.

Gardening is an analogy here for accepting the basic ground, where the birth and death of consciousness take place, the ground of creation and destruction. The practitioner’s inquisitive mind is the gardener, trying to find a way to relate to this ground. We often have the misconception that, in order to make progress, we have to introduce foreign elements into our minds. But the analogy here is one of organic spiritual farming, an approach that works with what is there. The discovery of buddha nature is the outcome.

The next article, “The Knot of Eternity,” is a brief explanation of the meaning of this symbol. Chögyam Trungpa relates it to “action that is never-ending,” especially in relationship to forming a spiritual organization. He says that a spiritual scene “must rest on the flowing strength of nonpossessiveness.” The knot of eternity is the central logo used by Tail of the Tiger, now Karmê Chöling, the first center established by Chögyam Trungpa in the United States,



and this explanation appeared at one time on a sheet of letterhead for Tail of the Tiger. It's not known for what purpose this explanation was written.

“Meditation and the Practice of Dathün” is the next piece in volume nine. It is a short, very early treatment of the practice of *dathün*, a monthlong meditation retreat that Chögyam Trungpa highly recommended to his students as part of their path. The introduction to volume two of *The Collected Works* goes into detail on the importance of meditation and the history of Trungpa Rinpoche introducing this as the main practice in the Buddhist community. In the article in volume nine, he talks about both the practical details of how a dathün is put together, as well as emphasizing the benefits of meditation, with gems like this:

Anyone who is seriously interested in practicing buddhadharma should commit themselves into a framework of discipline. In order to discipline the mind, it is essential to devote part of one's life to the practice of meditation.

Next we have “Two Film Concepts,” for a film on “The Battle of Ego” and another on “The Tibetan Book of the Dead.” This short envisioning of two films—neither of which was ever made—is probably from the early 1970s, when Rinpoche was involved in filming material for a movie on Milarepa. His article in volume seven of *The Collected Works*, “Visual Dharma: Film Workshop on the Tibetan Buddhist View of Aesthetics and Filmmaking,” introduces us to his ideas about making a film without a traditional narrative structure, one based on using natural elements to portray psychological states. For example, he describes how the film might treat Milarepa's longing for his teacher Marpa and the sense of desolation:

Visually we might work with desert, something completely open, and find one human footprint or maybe the footprint of an animal, a horse, and maybe horseshit. There could be a snowstorm and at the same time sand is blowing. The cameramen as well as the director should develop an absolute relationship with sand and storm, not just try to entertain (Volume Seven, p. 639).

The introduction to volume seven, in the section on film, beginning on page xlii, gives much more information on the history of Trungpa Rinpoche's involvement with filmmaking, including interviews with several filmmakers he worked closely with.

Here in volume nine, the two fragmentary treatments of possible films also show a unique approach to their subject matter. “The Battle of Ego” is described as using the physical analogy of the structure of the atom as the basis for the film. The treatment for “The Tibetan Book of the Dead” proposes to use visual and audio means to show the gross elements of our experience dissolving into subtler experience. These two projects would have been highly experimental and unique. Unfortunately, they remained in the realm of concept only!

Next in volume nine is Chögyam Trungpa’s foreword to Taizan Maezumi Roshi’s *The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment*. Rinpoche describes his foreword as marking a “joining of the clarity of Zen tradition with the vividness of Tibetan tradition.” It was written in 1977, during Trungpa Rinpoche’s yearlong retreat. Rinpoche met Maezumi Roshi in 1976, at a ceremony installing Eido Shimano Roshi as the abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo Kongo-ji, a monastery in upstate New York. Rinpoche invited Maezumi Roshi to teach at the Naropa Institute the next summer and to serve as a lineage holder of the buddhadharma at Naropa, while Rinpoche was absent on retreat. At the end of the foreword, he praises Roshi and his work in the West, but in the main, this is an essay on the gradual and the sudden path to enlightenment, the meaning and the conduct of meditation in the Zen tradition, the longing to discover buddha nature, and how meditation gives birth to prajna, or discriminating insight. It shows both Rinpoche’s affection for Zen and his insight into the tradition.

The foreword to the German edition of *Glimpses of Abhidharma* is the next offering in this volume. Here, Chögyam Trungpa points to the value of the *abhidharma* teachings and their connection to one’s personal journey: “If students do not indulge in judgment but instead simply learn what the structure of their minds is, they might experience some relief and develop a certain sense of connection with the journey toward spiritual clarity.” The foreword was written in 1978. When I was gathering material earlier this year for this volume of *The Collected Works*, I found Rinpoche’s notes and first draft of his foreword, but I didn’t have the final version. An inquiry to his senior German students via the Internet turned up the German edition of the book, complete with the final foreword. At that point, I asked Sherab Chödzin Kohn, a fine editor of Chögyam Trungpa’s works and also a translator of German to English, to take the original notes and the final German version to produce an English version. That is what appears here in volume nine. In the foreword, Rinpoche comments on how the teachings of the Practice Lineage have been flourishing in North America and are now coming to Europe. In the case of his foreword, it arose in America, was

translated and published in Germany, and now makes its way back into the English language.

This is followed by the preface to the Japanese edition of *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, written in 1980. Here, Rinpoche takes a personal view, giving the history of the teachings of his lineage coming from Asia to America and now back to Asia, and also commenting on the history of *Cutting Through* itself, and its publication in many Western languages. He is clearly pleased that the book is appearing in Japanese and also mentions his own interest in Japanese disciplines such as flower arranging, tea, archery, and calligraphy. There are additional discussions of Trungpa Rinpoche's interest in Japanese aesthetics and the arts earlier in this introduction, as well as in the introduction to volume seven of *The Collected Works*. He was greatly influenced by Japanese aesthetics and disciplines, and his whole approach to Buddhism in the West was very much affected by this connection.

It's lovely to have these two introductory pieces from foreign editions of Chögyam Trungpa's work. His books have been translated into more than twenty-five languages. I have a list from 2011, the last time I gathered this information, of almost two hundred foreign editions that have been published. Right now, I am working with Shambhala Publications on reviewing translations of Trungpa Rinpoche's books into German, French, Polish, and Chinese. Acting on behalf of Rinpoche's literary estate, I help to find readers to review and comment on every translation that comes out. This man, whose books are so prolific in English, has also had an enormous effect on Buddhism around the world. Often, the early foreign editions of his books in a country help to launch the growth of meditation programs and centers there.

"Contradiction within Contradiction Makes Sense," the next article, is quite a departure from what precedes it. It is a previously unpublished essay on politics, focusing on the relationships between the United States, Russia, and China in the late 1970s. It's not known exactly when this was written or for what purpose, but various references to Teng Hsiao-p'ing, Jimmy Carter, and Leonid Brezhnev place this piece in late 1978 or early 1979. Chögyam Trungpa goes back to the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century in Europe as the source of the "awakening of individualism." He talks about how, at that time, "religion was condemned and belief in true authority was questioned." This, he says, resulted in our producing such men as Engels, Marx, and George Washington, and then he distinguishes George Washington from the others for his spiritual convictions being the source of his beliefs. He briefly discusses how the early twentieth-

century Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen borrowed from American ideas, wishing to become a “self-styled George Washington.” From here, he takes us through the ideas of Ho Chi Minh, “observing how the wisdom of the latest modern systems could be used to create a brand new world ruled by the people, organized by the people, and manufactured by the people.” This leads into the discussion of Teng Hsiao-p’ing’s visit to the United States in 1979 and how the Chinese were seeking cooperation on the economic front while avoiding discussion of military and political policies that divided the two countries. He writes:

When the administrations of China and the United States confer,...they are trying to avoid conflicts of military strategy; this area China is not interested in discussing with the United States. The two governments of the United States and People’s Republic are interested in talking about cultural and economic exchange—in short, China would like to discuss the USA’s food and clothing, but she would like to keep her switchblade knife to herself, in her pocket.

The whole discussion is surprisingly relevant to what is going on in the US politics of 2017, as regards questions of free trade and the relationship with China, as well as Bernie Sanders’s talk of a revolution to transform America from the ground up.

An interest in political currents and historical context was characteristic of Chögyam Trungpa. He relished this sort of discussion, often in late-night talks with his students. It rarely made its way directly into his published writings, although it certainly was part of the background that led to his development of the Shambhala side of his teachings and to his articulation of a belief in “enlightened society,” in *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* and elsewhere.

In the early 1980s, in several of his late-night discussions with students, he foresaw the collapse of the Soviet Union, at a time when pretty much no one else saw it coming, relating it to what you could tell about the Soviet mentality from the design of their tanks.<sup>1</sup> He then went on to describe how the United States would experience very difficult times, although much later than the Soviet Union, saying that while the United States was heavily engaged around the world in military conflicts, it would neglect things at home that would come to be the source of tremendous difficulties. As often happened when he got into potentially prophetic territory, no one took notes that evening. (It was my job,

and I just didn't do it for some reason.) People were half asleep when in the wee hours of the morning he started describing how a threat, and he may have said an attack, would come from the East, which seemed unlikely. Then, after 9/11, I remembered these remarks and thought, "Hmm, how interesting."

As regards Trungpa Rinpoche's political acumen, I don't ever remember him reading the newspaper or watching TV news. A news briefing was not included in his daily schedule. He certainly had students who followed world events closely, at his behest, and probably gave him private briefings. Nonetheless, his knowledge of world events sometimes seemed surprising and unrelated to normal methods of consuming the news. A number of students who spent considerable time as staff in his office or his home have commented on this. I offer it without presuming that there is some extraordinary explanation.

Trungpa Rinpoche made significant plans and decisions based on his reading, so to speak, of news and world events. For example, late in his life, he established his international headquarters in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, a move that many students thought and still think was a mistake or a failed experiment. He said that it would be a good location for his community, especially in the future as world events unfolded. In general, when Rinpoche came out with what we thought were outrageous or naive ideas and comments, such as his view on the demise of the Soviet Union, we looked askance or wrote them off. He encouraged critical thought, and he hated "yes men," so skepticism was often a welcome exercise of critical intelligence. But personally, I've experienced over the recent decades that a lot of what looked like a misreading or naiveté on his part was actually a nuanced and far-seeing view. Reading "Contradiction within Contradiction Makes Sense," I find that I'm again appreciating his insight, not just into the Western mentality but also into the details of our policies and politics. Rick Fields, a senior student of Chögyam Trungpa's, talked about him as the master of the delayed punch line. I think a few of those are still waiting to be delivered.

The next article in volume nine is "Proclaiming the Lion's Roar." It was originally dictated to this editor in the early 1980s, when Trungpa Rinpoche was asked to contribute an introduction to a new periodical, which was to be named "The Lion's Roar." One of his close, early students in England, Michael Hookham—now Rigdzin Shikpo—was starting this publication and asked Rinpoche for this contribution. The magazine never took shape, and the essay went unpublished for several decades. In 2015, the *Shambhala Sun* magazine, founded by Chögyam Trungpa as the *Vajradhatu Sun* in the 1970s, changed its

name to *Lion's Roar*. So the essay appeared in the inaugural issue of the *Lion's Roar* magazine. Like so many of Chögyam Trungpa's other forewords and introductions to books, it is a succinct essay on the topic, a pithy statement of dharma, rather than an endorsement. Here, Rinpoche gives us a three-*yana* view of the Lion's Roar, under this overall umbrella statement: "The Lion's Roar is the proclamation of nonexistence that cuts through the *kleshas* and allows us to experience the vajra, or indestructible, quality of wakefulness." He points to the Buddha's proclamation of the Four Noble Truths as the Lion's Roar of the hinayana, while the proclamation of emptiness, or *shunyata*, is the Lion's Roar of mahayana. The Lion's Roar in the vajrayana is described as "resounding thunder," and Rinpoche links it to the transmutation of the *kleshas*, or conflicting emotions, into *amrita*, or blessed liquor or nectar. He says that the Lion's Roar is twofold: it represents both the Buddha's presentation of the teachings and the students' own practice and presentation of dharma.

"Dharma Art/Discovering Elegance: Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements by Chögyam Trungpa Mukpo" is the first page of a catalog created for a dharma art installation in 1982 at the Emmanuel Gallery at the University of Colorado Denver.<sup>2</sup> This was the last major exhibition/installation of this type done by Trungpa Rinpoche. These installations involved the creation of a series of spaces representing different contemplative and meditative qualities, as well as evoking the qualities of warriorship and an enlightened household. The spaces described in the catalog are the Garden, the Study, the Tenno Room, the Buddha Room, the Warrior Room, and the Drum.

The first Discovering Elegance exhibit was in Los Angeles in 1980 at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, which is featured in the film *Discovering Elegance*.<sup>3</sup> Rinpoche created flower arrangements for these exhibits, and in the introduction to volume seven of *The Collected Works*, Ludwig Turzanski, who worked closely with Rinpoche on these projects, tells us that originally Rinpoche had several shows exhibiting his flower arrangements and that this grew into the larger project of creating the rooms in which the arrangements were created.

"Dharma Art/Discovering Elegance" is included here, in volume nine, even though it is not signed by Chögyam Trungpa.<sup>4</sup> However, the ideas and the way in which they are articulated could only have come from Rinpoche himself, or at least they were heavily influenced by his input. My guess is that he either dictated this material or gave notes for it. His language and his view are clearly represented here in statements such as: "This exhibition is a vivid expression of

dharma art, demonstrated in a series of rooms or areas, each with an appropriate arrangement of flowers. The arrangement of the rooms manifests the quality of awakened mind that transcends cultural division.”

Unfortunately, we do not have any other catalogs prepared for Rinpoche’s various art exhibits. It seemed important to include the material here, not only because it illuminates this exhibit for us, but also because it articulates his view of an enlightened household, or one’s relationship to personal space. The descriptions can also be seen as a window into how he viewed and organized his home, his office, and other spaces that he inhabited. For example, the description of the spaces in the exhibits begins with this statement about the Garden: “We start in the *GARDEN*, the place of birth, the ground of our journey. Here, through the natural play of intelligence and inquisitiveness, we choose our way of entering the world.”

The introduction to volume seven of *The Collected Works* contains much more on the whole area of dharma art and goes into detail into the exhibits that Rinpoche created. That introduction and Rinpoche’s own writings on dharma art are recommended for those who would like to delve more deeply into this area.

The next article in volume nine is entitled “Meeting the Guru.” It was edited for publication by Thelma Hapgood. It is taken from a lecture given in one of two seminars that Chögyam Trungpa taught on his root teacher, Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen. These are marvelous seminars and would make a wonderful little book. For now, we have these few excerpts to inspire us.

Thelma Hapgood became Ani Migme Chödrön, one of the first nuns at Gampo Abbey.<sup>5</sup> The monastery was established by Chögyam Trungpa in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Venerable Thrangu Rinpoche agreed to be the abbot at Chögyam Trungpa’s request, and Ani Pema Chödrön is the principal teacher there. The abbey published the magazine of the International Kagyu Sangha Association, called the *Profound Path of Peace*, and this essay was prepared for publication in issue number 6, to be published in 1988. For reasons unknown, this article remained unpublished. The magazine ceased publication, probably sometime in the 1990s. The last issue I could locate was from 1997.

This essay recounts Chögyam Trungpa’s first meeting with Jamgön Kongtrül and the meditation instruction he received from his teacher. It also includes Rinpoche’s reminiscences about later meetings and some of his training with Kongtrül Rinpoche. His description of what it was like to approach Jamgön Kongtrül’s residences reminded me very much of what it was like to visit

Trungpa Rinpoche, at least for a student like myself, someone with a connection to him as their root teacher. He wrote:

When one was approaching his [Jamgön Kongtrül's] residence, one felt some kind of radiation, and when one came closer, the atmosphere became more and more dense, so that when one opened the door into his rooms, there was a feeling of uncertainty, fear, but at the same time, a feeling in the bottom of one's heart somewhat of being tickled: pain and pleasure together, sweet and sour at once. Meeting with other teachers did not really tickle the heart. Being with him brought a strong sense of energy and reality, an experience that was by no means a dream, but very much alive.

This is a deeply touching piece, a vignette that captures Rinpoche's devotion for his teacher and shows him as a young and vulnerable student. As such, it is inspiring in showing us that everyone, even a great teacher, must go through a rigorous training process and that, in our spiritual pursuits, we are all joined in our humanness. The final paragraph, a summation of his relationship with his teacher, is both a deeply personal view and one that is shared by those who were his students:

In the relationship with my guru, it became very obvious that the world is extraordinarily clear and precise, not purely speculative, but having soft edges, a real world that happens. And a lineage holder—a complete, thorough, one hundred percent lineage holder—manifests a world of a particular nature, which becomes very evident. Within that world there is a general sense of sanity, where one's neurosis is workable.

The selected writings in volume nine end with two interviews. The first was conducted by Kesang Getza Tashi in 1979 and has been divided into two parts; the second was conducted by Catherine Ingram in 1983. Kesang Getza Tashi was born in Sadham, Tibet, and his family was from Gyalthang, in Kham, Tibet. His family, the "House of Getza," was one of the ruling families of that area of Tibet. He came to the United States to study at Dartmouth College, expecting to study Western disciplines, but he ended up studying Tibetan philosophy with a Tibetan *geshe* in Wisconsin. He later became a close friend to Trungpa Rinpoche's Buddhist community in Boulder, Colorado, and elsewhere. The interview he conducted was for a book of interviews with great Tibetan teachers, which was never published. Reading this long and very in-depth discussion, I



found it most interesting and unique that both the interviewer and the interviewee were Tibetans, both born in the Tibetan homeland, yet the interview was conducted entirely in English. There is a particular flavor to the interview that I think was the result of this being one Tibetan speaking to another. Rinpoche goes into subjects and discussions here that I've never heard him comment on before, and in ways that are quite fresh and unexpected.

The first part of the interview, "The Early Years: Life and Training in Tibet," focuses mainly on Rinpoche's upbringing in Tibet, his studies, his relationship with both Jamgön Kongtrül and Khenpo Gangshar, and his thoughts on monasticism in the West. There are echoes of themes touched on in "Meeting the Guru," which precedes the interview, and the two complement one another nicely.

He also talks at some length about how he is training his students in the West and the problems and the promises that present themselves. In describing the importance of the practice of meditation, for example, he says:

Therefore, the sitting practice of meditation is the only way to bring them [students in the West] to the point that they don't have too many metaphysical reference points. Sometimes, it's quite hard to work with the students here because they have tremendous expectations, or they come with their own preconceptions and try to fit the buddhadharma into their particular style of thinking.

On the other hand, he is critical of the corruption in Tibetan monasteries and sees promise in the potential for Western lay students to avoid these problems:

Practitioners in the West have much less sense of security, because they are not living in a monastery. They have to deal with their own economy, their own family situations, and also with their own practice situations. So there is very little rest for them, in this case. It's unlike in the monastery where you have tremendous facilities built for you, and you can just be there very easily. Here, I think people are constantly being challenged, much more so. That probably is the saving grace.

In part two, "Yogis and Pandits: The Future of Buddhism in the West," Trungpa Rinpoche talks in more depth about the training of his students in North America and how he sees the sangha developing. He is quite forthcoming about

how he has worked with his students. For example, in describing how he began, he says:

At the beginning, the teaching has to be very, very simple and straightforward, such as the straightforward sitting practice of meditation. It is very simple. You might introduce just a few metaphysical points, such as the understanding of ego, the understanding of the mind and thought patterns and how emotions work. Those kinds of simple explanations are similar to how a doctor will explain to his or her patient why the patient is ill. It should be just simple and straightforward things.

He also distinguishes between training students in the style of pandits or of yogis. Pandit style is emphasizing the intellectual side of the teachings, while yogi style is emphasizing the practice. Of his reasons for employing both, he says here:

As for my style of teaching Americans, they have already done enough research work and scientific studies. This tendency might lead them to use meditation purely for speculation and for accumulating more reference points, or for going back to Western styles of analysis, such as Freud, Jung, and so forth. So, we decided to use the yogic style or approach, which is just simply doing it! However, when the students have practiced quite a lot of shamatha, then they might do some meditation using the pandit approach. So both traditions are employed.

At the end of the interview, Kesang Getza Tashi invites Rinpoche to comment on the challenges for the Tibetan community. His advice is that “the main thing for the Tibetan people, as I see it, is for each Tibetan to have a sense of pride and appreciation of their being Tibetan.” Certainly, in this interview he shows his pride in his own Tibetanness and in the Tibetan people, while also taking tremendous pride in his Western students.

“Buddhism in America: An Interview with Catherine Ingram” is the final piece in volume nine of *The Collected Works*.<sup>6</sup> Ingram’s interview with Chögyam Trungpa is quite different in tone and context from Kesang Getza Tashi’s. She approaches Trungpa Rinpoche as a Western Buddhist who has a long history of involvement with Buddhism in the West. She has more than a casual interest in Tibetan Buddhism and in Trungpa Rinpoche as one of its chief

proponents, but she is not from his community, so she also has some distance from the subject matter and the subject of the interview. This allows for a fascinating combination of intimacy and detachment in the questions and answers. She asks very Western questions, of the sort that Rinpoche loved. For example, she asks him about the proper role of passion in one's practice. He gives her a marvelous and generous answer:

At the beginning, one has to train oneself in how to relate to passion and also train oneself in how to be soft toward oneself, which is a mahayana principle. This is important because passion, we could say, is somewhat soft. But at the same time, it has an element of aggression, because you *want* something so much. So one has to tone down the grasping or aggressive aspect of it...When there is no grasping in the wanting, then passion is like a rainbow in the sky. It comes and goes.

The connection that Trungpa Rinpoche establishes with Ingram is evident in the interview. Like Kesang Getza Tashi, she was working on a book of interviews with spiritual teachers, but it was never published. It's fortunate that this interview was preserved and is finally seeing the light of day. It contains many jewels and evokes Chögyam Trungpa's presence at a time when he was very engaged with the Shambhala teachings, about to publish his classic *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*.

Altogether, volume nine is an extremely diverse group of teachings. It includes both early and later talks, ranging from an article published in 1966 in India to books published in the new millennium. The subject matter ranges from Zen to dharma art, from Shambhala politics to vajrayana buddhadharma. Chögyam Trungpa, now gone for so many years, continues to provoke and surprise us with both the breadth and the depth of his interests and his teachings. And remarkably, there is still much more to come!

CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN

*July 6, 2016*

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1. Personal recollection of the editor.

2. The location of the exhibit is based on the "Selected Chronology" of Chögyam Trungpa's activity as an artist in *The Art of Calligraphy: Joining Heaven and Earth*. There's a handwritten note on the catalog itself

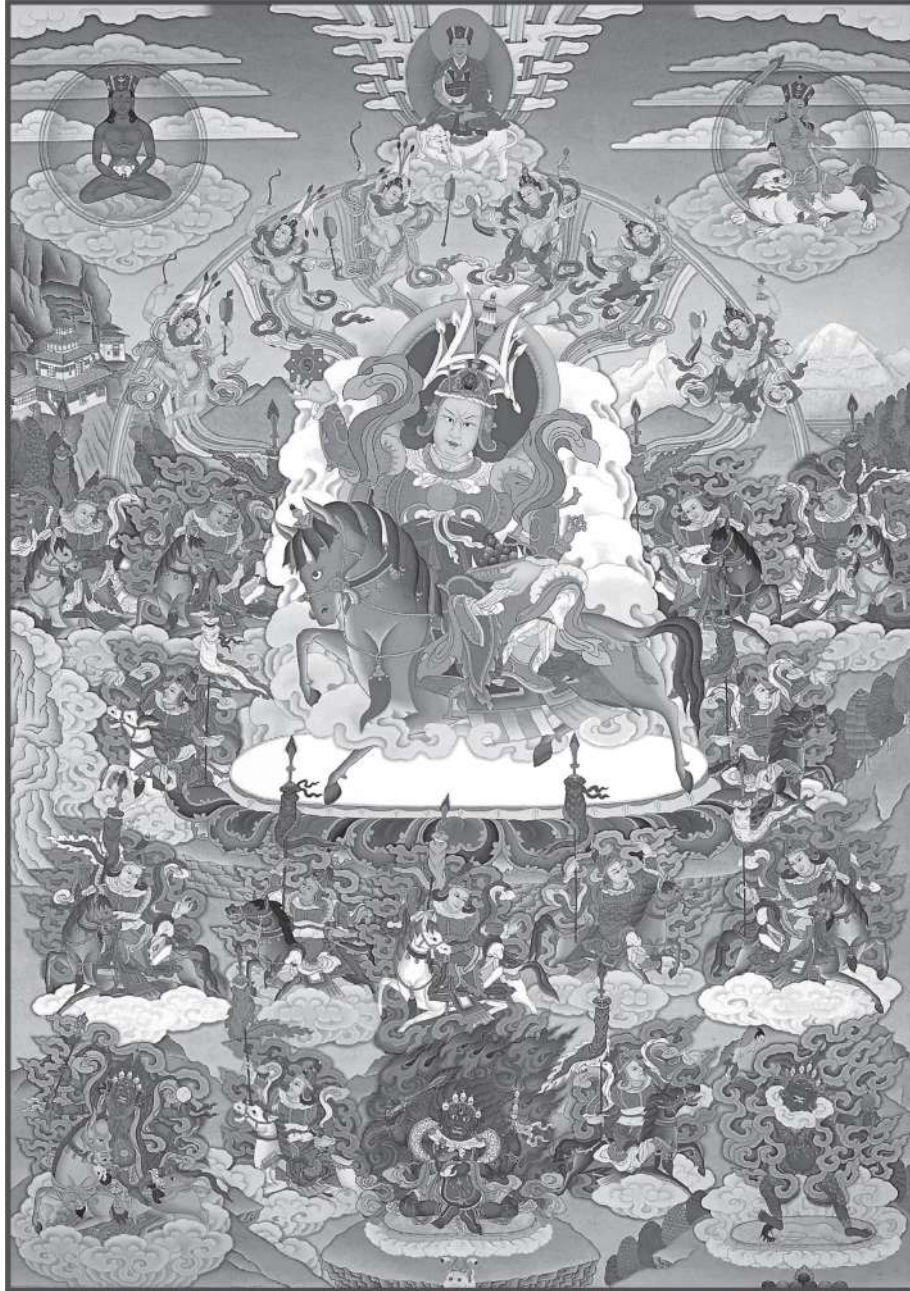
that says “Boulder Center for Visual Arts,” but there’s no other indication that the exhibit took place there.

3. This film, originally shot in 16 mm, was released in VHS and then became unavailable. It has recently been digitized. Kalapa Media plans to make it available in the near future: [www.kalapamedia.org](http://www.kalapamedia.org).

4. In the subtitle, Chögyam Trungpa’s name is given as “Chögyam Trungpa Mukpo.” Mukpo was the surname he was born with. He liked to use this in connection with his artistic ventures and sometimes when he wrote poetry or, in one case, a novel.

5. Thelma Hapgood transcribed hundreds of talks by Chögyam Trungpa in the 1970s and 1980s. She created beautifully handwritten transcripts, which are preserved in the Shambhala Archives. She also was a capable editor, as demonstrated in this article. She passed away in 2016 after her ninety-second birthday, having recently moved from Gampo Abbey to Karma Changchub Ling, a new monastery established by His Holiness the seventeenth Gyalwa Karmapa in Nova Scotia.

6. Catherine Ingram is the author of *In the Footsteps of Gandhi* (Parallax Press) and *Passionate Presence* (Diamond Books) and a novel, *A Crack in Everything* (Diamond Books). Since 1992, she has led dharma dialogues and silent retreats throughout the United States, Europe, and Australia. Formerly a journalist, she specialized in issues of consciousness and activism. She is also the founder of Living Dharma, an educational foundation dedicated to principles of dharma in both silence and action. She is a cofounder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, Massachusetts (1976).



The Dorje Dradül Thangka, depicting the Makkyi Rabjam as Gesar of Ling and the Rigden King.  
PAINTING BY NOEDUP RONGAE.

# TRUE COMMAND

*The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung Volume One: The  
Town Talks*

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA MAKKYI RABJAM, DORJE DRADÜL OF  
MUKPO

*Edited by* CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN

## GUARD SONG



True command is the Great Eastern Sun Confidence beyond  
hesitation Just command is the warrior's sword Genuine and  
merciful

Powerful command is the vajra storm Be a warrior without anger  
Awake command is a piercing arrow Not afraid to be a fool  
We protect the gentle vajra kingdom With a strong invisible  
heavy hand Victory to the Dorje Dradül Victory to the true  
command

## *Foreword*

**T**HE PRINCIPLES OF WARRIORSHIP have existed within our lineages for a long time. In taking this inspiration from the past and bringing it into the present, our Dorje Kasung have been one of the most integral elements in the development of the Shambhala Buddhist community. We are the protectors of dharma, the guardians of truth and of those who expound it.

For me, the Kasung practice has been an invaluable way to train in the practice of meditation. It condenses time and allows us to reap the benefits of each moment. No matter how we feel at that moment, it gives us the opportunity to actually look beyond appearances and see something deeper. It allows us to use our body, speech, and mind as a vehicle for helping others and at the same time to progress along the path.

The teachings in this book show us where we came from. At the same time they give us direct instruction about how to conduct ourselves as Kasung and allow us to connect with the mind of the Dorje Dradül. I hope that this book will further inspire the practice of Dorje Kasungship in the Shambhala Buddhist world, for it is the Kasung who paved the way for dignity and enlightenment to occur.

SAKYONG MIPHAM JAMPAL TRINLEY DRADÜL  
*October 10, 2002*



## *Foreword*

**I** ONCE HAD A DISCUSSION with the Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo regarding the pursuit of happiness. I was unhappy about some situation in my life and asked his advice. His answer was: “We are not interested in happiness. We are interested in sanity.”

It is a necessity for the discipline of the Dorje Kasung to be based on the acknowledgment of reality. This is the opposite approach to rejecting life because we can't handle unpleasant situations or situations don't fit into the way we think things ought to be. We should take pride in our ability to embrace even the most difficult aspects of life. That is the fundamental ground for creating a sane society, and that is true warriorship. Acknowledging and embracing reality can become the inspiration for the vast vision that we as Buddhists need, both as individuals and in order to create a sane society. In working beyond the small, individual issues, we need that ground of reality in order to work with the larger society. When we begin to deal with a larger situation of sanity, inevitably we will also magnetize a lot of klesha activity. Knowing that things become heightened in that way, the Makkyi created the Dorje Kasung to manifest as the container principle, to help us work with the issues that we will face both now and in the future.

The Shambhala military has a different emphasis than what we think of as the conventional military. As Dorje Kasung we recognize that discipline starts by purifying ourselves. Individuals need purification and a proper way to work with themselves. That is why the Kasung training provides such a tight, disciplined situation. The neurosis of the greater society can only be met with sanity if individuals have already processed themselves in a way that is based on overcoming ego. Then we can work with situations, from the smallest details and

difficulties up to global situations.

I am very happy that this book, the first volume of *True Command*, is being published. By reading these teachings, one can once again be reaffirmed in the vastness of the Makkyi's world. From the perspective of enlightened mind, whatever is needed will arise. In all the areas of life that he touched, the Makkyi had that same brilliance: whatever was needed would arise. That is just one manifestation of his enlightened mind that you will find in the pages of this book. These teachings never become out of date. They are always applicable to how the human mind works.

THE TÖNSUNG WANGMO DIANA J. MUKPO  
*Providence, Rhode Island*  
*November 5, 2001*

## *Introduction*

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE was unique among Buddhist teachers who came to the West. One of the first Asian-born teachers to present the dharma in English, he used a vocabulary including slang and idioms that spoke directly to the experience of thousands of students and that formed the basis for the language that would be used to present the Buddhist teachings for decades to come. He was able to transmit the essence of the traditional teachings in language, forms, and institutions that made them intimately accessible to a contemporary audience. Trungpa Rinpoche is well-known for fashioning many new forms of practice in this process. None of these was more effective, provocative, and controversial than the teachings of the Dorje Kasung, the Vajra Guard. And none was more profound.

In the 1970s, an era of intense spiritual seeking often characterized by an emphasis on love and light, Trungpa Rinpoche produced a cadre of uniformed guards who performed their duty in public, complete with salutes and a command hierarchy. During this time, the notion of working with conflict directly as part of a spiritual discipline was shocking to most people. Aggression was a force to be cooled out, ignored, or perhaps employed by those still attached to political activism. But Trungpa Rinpoche didn't shy away from working directly with one of the greatest challenges of our age: human aggression and, by extension, violence and war. With the creation of the Dorje Kasung, he provided a practice, a discipline, and a path for working with some of the most difficult stuff of being human.

We are pleased to present here the teachings of the Dorje Kasung given by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, published under his Dorje Kasung title, the Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo. This is the first time these teachings

have been compiled and published in book form. This publication has several purposes: first, to be a study guide for those who are practicing members of the Dorje Kasung; second, to provide all of the members of the Shambhala community with a firsthand knowledge of this significant part of the Dorje Dradül's teachings, which have deeply affected their own practice. Finally, we are pleased to make this volume available to all other interested readers. Whether they are drawn to this discipline or put off by it, through this book, their judgment can be informed by direct experience of the Dorje Kasung teachings. For all audiences, *True Command* presents an excellent example of how Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche's unique application of the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings is profoundly helpful in addressing the fundamental societal and cultural challenges of our time.

*True Command: Volume One: The Town Talks* includes every major address that the Dorje Dradül gave to the Dorje Kasung in an urban setting.<sup>1</sup> It is in these "town" talks that the basic framework and evolution of the Dorje Kasung practice are revealed. Though not an official history, this book contains material from all the historic occasions and events that form the heart of the Dorje Kasung teachings. It is not meant to be the complete teachings of the Dorje Kasung, but we felt it would be helpful to include supporting materials that fill in parts of the story and give it practical meaning. It is not possible to codify these teachings, but this is the most complete presentation you will be able to find.

As you read these talks, it will become clear that what is presented here arises from the same sources as all of the Dorje Dradül's teachings. Familiar themes from the teachings of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism as well as themes from the Shambhala tradition provide the foundation of the Dorje Kasung path. In a number of instances, if you are familiar with the Dorje Dradül's teachings and the history of the Shambhala community, you might recognize that the Dorje Dradül introduced concepts and practices to the Dorje Kasung before introducing them throughout the larger community. At the same time, you will encounter teachings and themes that are unique to the Dorje Kasung and not presented elsewhere.

One of the special features of this volume is that it gives even casual readers an insider's view. You are invited to take a front-row seat, alongside those who began this practice years ago, to hear the Dorje Dradül share with the clan in his own words the wisdom of this discipline. You will hear both the philosophy and

the “raw and rugged, bone and marrow” language that characterized this transmission. One goal of this book is to transmit the feeling of being a Dorje Kasung, so we include descriptions of the activities and environments that surround the talks to convey the texture of the event.

The purpose of this introduction is, for the most part, to provide a framework for readers new to this material by describing the path and practice of the Dorje Kasung. Much of the introduction will seem elementary if you are now a Dorje Kasung or if you were one in the past. Members of the Shambhala community who have never been active in the Dorje Kasung will find, one hopes, a more detailed articulation of what they have observed and heard about. A most valuable and significant part of the heritage we received from the Dorje Dradül would be lost if we weren’t able to share this discipline with all people for whom this practice may have some interest, including those outside the Shambhala community. I hope that this introduction will provide something helpful to all. In any case, we welcome the reader to take part in the unfolding of the world of the Dorje Kasung in the pages of *True Command*.

## **EARLIEST DAYS**

The development of the Dorje Kasung followed a pattern similar to the way the Dorje Dradül created many parts of the Vajradhatu/Shambhala world. The Dorje Kasung began when he presented a vision and an inspiration that made his students’ world bigger, both more inviting and more demanding. At the same time, he left many of the details of the path of the Dorje Kasung to be determined as the discipline evolved, and he encouraged his students to contribute to this development as their practice and understanding deepened. Thus, while the Dorje Kasung path appears at once to be full-blown, its growth was a step-by-step process that included significant input from many of his students.

As the Dorje Dradül tells us, the Dorje Kasung arose around the time of the first visit of His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa to North America in the fall of 1974. Up to that time a few of the Dorje Dradül’s students had been providing a daily, informal attendant duty for him as he carried on his business in Boulder, including driving him between his home and the office and sitting in a chair outside his office while he conducted interviews with students. There were just a handful of students involved, without much in the way of specific direction or definition, performing what most saw as a low-key, quasi-bodyguard

function.

As the visit of His Holiness Karmapa neared, the Dorje Dradül's work was becoming more widely known. His provocative style and emphasis on cutting through spiritual materialism challenged people's ideas about how a spiritual teacher should behave. There were incidents in which misguided or even mentally unbalanced individuals issued threats to his safety and the safety of the community. In view of the much higher public profile created by His Holiness's well-publicized national tour, the Dorje Dradül enlisted a few people to accompany His Holiness as he carried on his activities and another small group to attend to his own personal safety.

After His Holiness departed North America, more people became involved in the practice of "guarding." It was clear that something of value was emerging, a format that provided an opportunity for the Dorje Dradül to have close personal contact with his students and that also offered a further practice discipline for them.

The Vajradhatu Seminary in 1975 was a notable deepening phase in the development of the Vajra Guard, which now numbered around thirty people. The Dorje Dradül instigated peashooter contests, and it would not be unusual for even a newer student to find that a private interview quickly turned into a face-to-face peashooter duel with him, an early example of how he challenged his students' habitual concepts of the meaning of "guru" and "weapon." He choreographed snowball and water fights that served to build an identity for and strong bonds within the Vajra Guard. This behavior also provoked situations that challenged the conventional thinking of guards and participants alike. This phase culminated with the official "birth" of the Vajra Guard in January 1976 on which occasion the Dorje Dradül conducted the first ever oath for the leaders and members of this group. This oath ceremony is the first of the eighteen talks in this volume.

## **DEFINITIONS**

A consistent feature throughout the Dorje Dradül's presentation of the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings was what he referred to as "combing our hair," by which he meant the importance of beginning any study by retracing one's steps over the most basic ground of the topic at hand. We will emulate that approach here by beginning with the most basic definitions of Dorje Kasung. While this may seem elementary for those who have long practiced this discipline, it is

always helpful and necessary here for those who are coming to these teachings for the first time. This also will establish the foundation for all that will follow.

*Dorje* is the Tibetan word meaning “adamantine,” “diamondlike,” or “indestructible.” *Kasung* is made up of two syllables: *ka* and *sung*. *Ka* is the first letter in the Tibetan alphabet and has the meaning of “sacred word,” as in the oral transmission of the teachings from teacher to student. It is the *ka* in *Kagyü*, the Tibetan Buddhist school of which the Dorje Dradül was a lineage holder. *Kagyü* itself means “the lineage of the sacred word.” *Ka* has the sense of command, as in the exhortation to be awake, and thus takes on the meaning of the dharma or what is true altogether. *Sung* means “protector.” So the overall meaning of Dorje Kasung is “the indestructible protector of the dharma.”

The notion of protection here is a very familiar one. Most basically, it is the act of guardianship, keeping something safe from harm. In daily life this manifests in a wide range of ordinary ways, from public security within a society, to the locks on the doors of a car or house, and to shelter and clothing. Beyond these basic examples, the quality of guardianship is also found in the experience of sacred spaces, such as places of religious worship or pristine natural beauty, environments that serve to nurture and protect our sense of well-being and a healthy state of mind.

The basic view of protection that gives rise to the need for the Dorje Kasung was first articulated in the “Letter to the Vajra Guards” presented by the Dorje Dradül in November 1975. While the practice evolved a great deal over the years, this seminal document still provides the underlying logic for the existence of the Dorje Kasung. The logic contained in this letter can be most simply stated as follows:

- genuine dharma proclaims the truth of the nonexistence of ego;
- this presents a threat to ego and may provoke an aggressive, neurotic response;
- therefore, there is a need for protection.

The most basic insight, or “noble truth,” discovered by the Buddha was that the suffering of human beings derives from the false belief in the existence of a separate, solid entity, or ego. Human suffering is heightened by the constant activity of clinging to and sustaining ego in the face of the reality of change and dissolution. Genuine dharma is any teaching that puts forth the shocking truth

that such a solid entity does not in fact exist. While this may make sense philosophically, when this message is presented directly and intimately to a person whose loyalties lie with maintaining the existence of his or her separate sense of self, it can be experienced as an attack that must be warded off. An act to ward off such a threat to ego can be aggressive and harmful to oneself and others. Therefore, protection is required.

While our habitual ways of thinking about threat and protection lead us to think of this threat as coming from the “outside,” there is a psychological and inner spiritual level at which this dynamic takes place and this logic applies. That is, the same logic applies to an individual practitioner working with his or her own mind. This point is more fully articulated in the later talks in this volume where the Dorje Dradül directs the Dorje Kasung to “stand guard outside the body, speech, and mind” of each other and of their fellow practitioners.

Central to understanding the logic of the “Letter to the Vajra Guards” is the Dorje Dradül’s presentation of the notion of protection. He was not talking about how to achieve a solidified state, free from risk, able to ward off change. Rather, protection is nurturing the existence of a protective atmosphere within which this threat to ego could inspire the realization of non-ego. The genuine dharma is a shocking truth to ego in even the most experienced practitioner; meditation practice helps one embrace this change rather than attempt either to ward it off or, worse yet, lash out at whoever is presenting this truth.

Protection in this sense is like the classical definition of contemplation. Both are providing an open space for something to emerge and be seen. Genuine dharma, such as the teachings of the Buddha, is an indestructible truth and in itself does not need protection. One can realize the truth of non-ego at any moment and under any conditions. However, the opportunity for genuine dharma to take root and grow in a society, a community, or the mind of an individual practitioner depends upon practical conditions, such as place, time, and accommodating circumstances. The purpose of the Dorje Kasung is to foster this opportunity, by providing protection from outer obstacles, such as attack, and inner obstacles, such as laziness and confusion.

## THE IMAGE

The teachings of the Dorje Kasung contain evocative images that deepen and clarify the message. Primary among those is the image of the *vajra* (Sanskrit), or *dorje* (Tibetan), a ritual scepter in vajrayana Buddhism. The vajra is a power



object, made of iron mixed with other metals or sometimes meteoric iron. It has a solid, spherical center and two sets of five (or sometime nine) curved spokes radiating out in opposite directions. In mythology the vajra is an always-victorious, indestructible weapon, which can be dispatched to destroy the enemy. It always returns to its user's hand and must not be used frivolously.



*The dorje, a ritual scepter and symbol of indestructibility in vajrayana Buddhism.*

While the lore of the vajra is rich with weaponlike imagery, it is the simple shape of the vajra that provides the metaphor of the threefold duty of the Dorje Kasung. Upon approaching a vajra, first one encounters the points of the curved spokes, which by their mere appearance encourage one to be awake and move carefully in the world. It is not that these spokes are directed against any threat or person in particular, but rather that the force of one's movement could impale one on them. This has the effect of waking one up right on the spot, much like stubbing one's toe on the raised sill of a doorway when rushing through without taking notice. This is analogous to the duty of the Dorje Kasung to repel that which needs to be repelled. When one approaches mindfully, one moves through the spaces between the points of the curved spokes, allowing access to the center. This symbolizes the Dorje Kasung's duty to accommodate that which

needs to be accommodated, which takes the form of welcome and support. Finally, one may reach the center of the vajra, representing the core of its indestructibility. At this level, the Dorje Kasung can contain and communicate the indestructibility of the teachings and inspire this state of mind in all who enter.

Thus, in the image of the vajra we find a description of the functions of protection for which this Dorje Kasung discipline trains one. Protection is the full partnership between presenting obstacles and providing accommodation. These functions surround the core of an indestructible and basic truth that cannot be manipulated: the truth of egolessness on an immediate and personal level.

## **METAPHORS OF ACTION**

Most of the talks in this volume occurred in the month of February. In part this was because the Dorje Dradül's birthday was in February, and we used this as an opportunity to have an annual Dorje Kasung celebration. We scheduled meetings of the Rusung—the Dorje Kasung leaders from centers across the country—to coincide with the celebrations, providing a major gathering of the clan for these occasions. The birthday celebrations and Rusung Conferences provoked major addresses by the Dorje Dradül, producing themes that became keynotes for how we viewed our duties from that time on.

The Dorje Dradül's 1979 talk to the Rusung in the living room of the Kalapa Court was unsurpassed as an example of such an occasion. Six very uncomfortable Rusung awkwardly reported to the Dorje Dradül on their activities during the previous year. This was one of the first Rusung Conferences, and there were no precedents or guidelines for how to give such a report. Everyone was trying so hard to be good, each Rusung wanting to outdo the previous one in recounting the number of services that his or her squad had provided. Neither their awkwardness, exaggeration, nor failure to understand fully what the Dorje Dradül was asking was a problem. Their presentation inspired one of the most important talks the Dorje Dradül ever gave about the Dorje Kasung, which appears here as "This Is Your Duty."

Embedded in the middle of this talk are three metaphors that are jewellike inspirations for how an ordinary practitioner can protect the dharma as a Dorje Kasung: wind, horizon, and container. Like so many of the pith teachings from the Dorje Dradül, these weren't instructions in relation to specific duties but rather metaphors that grew in meaning as one's practice of the Dorje Kasung

discipline deepened. These metaphors shape the mind rather than dictate behavior. They are presented as an antidote to the Dorje Kasung's habit of speeding around trying to accomplish things. They teach how to create a space where the genuine dharma can be presented and heard without obstacle.

The wind metaphor relates the actions of the Dorje Kasung to a traditional Buddhist analogy of wakefulness, as symbolized by the sun, which is always shining. However, the clouds, symbolizing confusion, can obstruct the view of the sun and give rise to doubt in our minds about its very existence. The duty of the Dorje Kasung is to be the wind, which clears the sky of clouds, so that the rays of the sun can be felt by all. This is best done by simple gestures that remove obstacles without leaving a residue or producing further confusion.

The horizon represents a basic orientation and reference point; it provides a boundary between the focal point and its surroundings. Horizon is like an effective framing treatment for a photograph or painting that allows deeper appreciation of the art within it. As the Dorje Dradül tells us, even the sun, seen without a horizon or some fundamental reference point for the observer, can appear disconnected, floating in space. In terms of the teaching environment, a proper horizon helps practitioners orient themselves and open further to the teachings presented. The way the Dorje Kasung set up and organize an event can quickly orient practitioners who enter the space, cutting down on unnecessary confusion.

The container metaphor was originally described as a lamp, a vessel holding oil with a wick in the center. The teacher in this case is the wick, providing light on the path and being inspired to do so by the students who are the oil. But if there is no container to hold the oil, no Dorje Kasung to provide boundaries and reference points, the oil disperses and the wick quickly fizzles out.

In fact, the container principle is widely used to describe the overall function of the Dorje Kasung. The container presents form and structure. It organizes the ground of any situation while allowing the content of that situation to manifest in various ways. Imagine the difference in the flow of a river, first as it dashes through a narrow gorge, then later as it meanders across an open plain. Like the earth in this example, any container is the ground for what takes place within it, providing both accommodation and boundary.

In the teaching environment, the container often provides the initial orientation, preparing the mind of the student before contact and interaction with the teacher takes place. This results in the student having respect for the

atmosphere in which the teachings are being given, so they approach with more care. For example, imagine the effect of walking into a fifteenth-century cathedral, as contrasted to walking into a modern fast-food restaurant. In the case of the cathedral, the container engenders the feeling that something precious is happening, which opens the student's mind more to the teaching. In the vajrayana tradition, the container tunes the student into the sacredness of all that is taking place, inspiring devotion to the teacher, which invokes a further experience of wakefulness.

The container principle is closely connected to the mandala principle in the vajrayana Buddhist tradition. The Tibetan word for mandala, *kyilkhor*, literally means "center and fringe," and the mandala principle is sometimes described by the Dorje Dradül as "orderly chaos." This describes how a situation is most basically organized. Traditional depictions of mandalas often have a central figure representing the awakened mind in the center. The space around the central figure is defined by walls separating the inner space from the fringe. The walls, one in each of the four cardinal directions, have a gateway for entering the inner space. Here, like the image of the vajra discussed before, the Dorje Kasung form the walls as well as the gates through which the student enters.

A common misunderstanding of the container principle arises when only the boundary function is emphasized and when those boundaries are seen to exist solely to keep out the undesirable things, including confusion or chaos. However, the purpose of meditation practice is not to ward off the world, but to open to it. Therefore, the relationship of boundary to opening, of wall to gateway, is critical. Together they create a pattern that allows for energy to flow from the inside to the outside and back in again. Such a container can create a powerful, open ground where confusion can be clarified—not by control but by an appreciation of what is. This may appear to be chaos from a limited point of view but could be experienced in fact as a potent pattern of reality. When the container principle is properly understood and applied, many elements in a situation are unified into one, things hang together, and a natural hierarchy emerges.

A powerful container reverberates the message emanating from the center. However, in any situation, the container principle must be scrutinized for what it includes and what it excludes, for how it can both pacify the ground and leave it open. While the proper container provides accommodation, that doesn't necessarily mean comfort. An effective container can function like a pressure cooker, which employs a harsh environment to produce a gentle, processed

outcome.

## ROOTS OF THE PRACTICE

According to the Dorje Dradül, the origins of the Dorje Kasung date back to the time of the enlightenment of the historical Buddha. As the lore goes, during his meditation practice just before the attainment of enlightenment, the Buddha was attacked by *maras*, or obstacles to realization. These negative forces unsuccessfully attempted to prevent the Buddha's enlightenment, first distracting him by taking the form of beautiful women performing seductive dances, then manifesting as armies shooting arrows and throwing spears at him. These attacks symbolize the seductions that arise on the path of awareness for any practitioner, the distractions that always accompany insight. The responsibility of the Dorje Kasung is to protect themselves and all practitioners from giving in to such distractions. In this regard, following the example of the Buddha, one's own wakefulness is the ultimate protection against being swayed by the seductions of passion or aggression.

The way in which the practice of the Dorje Kasung discipline brings greater mindfulness and awareness follows the path of the three *yanas*. This threefold view of the path serves as the basis for all the Buddhist teachings presented by the Dorje Dradül. The three *yanas*, or vehicles, are the *hinayana*, working with one's own suffering and applying individual discipline; the *mahayana*, seeing the emptiness of oneself and all phenomena, and putting the well-being of others before one's own; and the *vajrayana*, recognizing indestructible wakefulness and working directly with the basic energies that make up the world. In the Dorje Dradül's presentation, the three *yanas* are not purely a sequential process of development, but three disciplines that are also practiced simultaneously.

From the *hinayana* perspective, the Dorje Kasung practices begin with oneself, emphasizing personal discipline and decorum of one's body and speech, as well as developing mindfulness that comes from meditation practice. Becoming a protector first to oneself emphasizes that the work always begins at home, with one's own confusion. The Dorje Kasung discipline tames oneself while one employs it as a skillful means for working with others.

The simple act of serving and putting others before oneself is a highlight of the Dorje Kasung practice; it is also the heart of the *mahayana* path. Working for the benefit of others eases the self-centered grip of ego by removing oneself as the central reference point of all activity. It is very difficult for a Dorje Kasung

to be thinking about “me” and what “I” can get out of the situation when his or her duty involves creating an environment that will benefit others, which often requires missing the dharma talk or central event. A powerful feature of the Dorje Kasung practice is how performing service to others while on the lonely fringes of the mandala can be as powerful a dharmic learning experience as sitting in the front row of a talk by one’s teacher.

The vajrayana path may be characterized broadly as working directly with the naked energy of a situation. A Dorje Kasung may encounter conflict in the process of creating the boundaries and gateways of the protective environment. Conflict could arise when an agitated person, overwhelmed by their own suffering, focuses their frustration upon the Dorje Kasung on duty as the most immediate, tangible symbol of an obstacle to the relief that he or she seeks. Being engaged by or engaging others while on duty, even in the most benign situation, may give rise to the Kasung’s own habitual response of aggression, passion, or ignorance in dealing with the world. In performing their duty, the Dorje Kasung’s discipline of awareness and gentleness is challenged on the spot, with no handy reference points to rely on. Many aspects of the Dorje Kasung discipline take one’s practice beyond the predictable, safe rhythms of the formal meditation hall.

The Dorje Dradül also associated the members of the Dorje Kasung with the image of the traditional lineage protectors, the *mahakalas*. In vajrayana symbolism, the mahakalas are the wrathful protectors of the teachings. Manifesting as the enlightened form of the wrathful energies of our own minds, the mahakalas wake up the practitioner and bring his or her awareness back from confused thoughts to an open ground. This reminder may manifest as a sudden start or jolt, almost like a fright that heightens one’s sharp sensory awareness of the immediate environment. A simple example is when a person, in the midst of an emotionally charged discussion with a colleague, rushes out of the room and slams the door on his or her own finger. This shocking event that brings the person back to the present moment is the act of a mahakala. The Dorje Kasung, in identifying with mahakalas, are invited by the Dorje Dradül to perform the duties of these guardian deities and to provide an energy to encourage further wakefulness in practitioners.

The way the Dorje Dradül worked with the Dorje Kasung was consistent with how he taught throughout his life: with directness, intimacy, and trust. He

established a deep sense of comradeship with his students, and this comradeship deepened as he worked alongside them, often around the clock for days on end, in creating many of the organizations that made up the Shambhala community. As a teacher, guide, and friend, his every gesture expressed confidence in his students' innate intelligence. "You can do it" was the familiar refrain. Nowhere was this feeling more fully expressed than with the Dorje Kasung.

Many of the activities inspired by the Dorje Dradül shared the important feature of providing an opportunity for service to others as the ground of putting the teachings into action. The Dorje Dradül designed many forms to allow practitioners to work directly with ego and its various games of ambition, power, and control. The Dorje Kasung, however, is the most provocative in that it places students in the forefront of working with aggression, and, as shown in this volume, it presents a framework for applying the teachings of gentleness as an antidote to anger and aggression. It deepens the conviction that there is no separation between one's meditation practice and daily life.

Indeed, Dorje Kasung discipline is a profound form of meditation in action. The duties of the Dorje Kasung are not so much about efficiency or getting a particular job done, but about how the insights of meditation practice can be deepened through practical application. In addition to bringing one's passion, aggression, and ignorance into full awareness on the meditation cushion, a member of the Dorje Kasung is putting the teachings he or she has studied into action in intensified, real-world settings. This intermixing of formal practice with meditation in action both energizes formal meditation practice and increases the feeling that everyday life is a sacred practice ground.

Service to others as the vehicle for meditation in action and for transmitting the dharma altogether had long been woven into the Dorje Dradül's personal history and lineage. The Dorje Dradül was the eleventh Trungpa, the eleventh in an unbroken line of reincarnate teachers going back to the fourteenth century in Tibet. (See *Born in Tibet* for more background.) *Trungpa* literally translates as "one who is close by," and means "attendant." When somebody serves their teacher closely in the role of attendant, ideally they begin to get a glimpse of the workings of the teacher's mind as it is manifested in the course of practice and everyday situations. This then begins to shape how the student sees his or her own mind and the world. Thus, in this tradition, one of the best ways to develop one's practice is to be in the guru's service.

On a number of occasions, the Dorje Dradül told a funny story about how the

Trungpa tülku lineage began. The first Trungpa, who lived in the fourteenth century, was one of the eleven main disciples of a teacher named Trung Mase. Eight of these eleven students were very learned and shared most of the study and practice responsibilities within the community. They became known as the “eight realized ones” and went on to fulfill important roles in the development of the lineage. Three of Trung Mase’s students, who also practiced and studied with great exertion, were primarily responsible for the domestic chores: sweeping, cleaning, and whatever other simple tasks needed to be done. They were referred to as the “three idiots.” The first Trungpa, who became the holder of this lineage, was one of the three idiots.

The talks in *True Command* reveal the way in which the eleventh Trungpa, the Dorje Dradül, shared his mind intimately with the members of the Dorje Kasung, whether they were senior practitioners or newer students. This direct, intimate communication was even more present in the ordinary moments when on Dorje Kasung duty with him. In small exchanges on mundane topics, such as how to open a car door, how to answer a telephone, or how to fold a map, the Dorje Dradül’s comments would transmit the way wakefulness could be brought to every moment. The Dorje Dradül’s attention to detail and hands-on involvement continually breathed new life into every form he employed. In taking the time to explain the meaning of these forms to his students, the Dorje Dradül also conveyed how a form could capture and transmit nowness, awakened mind, rather than merely representing something dead from the past. When a student could understand this process and see the nowness in a form, he or she was then prepared to respond to future challenges by connecting to the nowness of the present moment. This would enable students to develop new forms in the future with the same power to transmit genuine dharma as well as to constantly energize the inherited ones.

The Dorje Dradül encouraged the Dorje Kasung to use their own intelligence to deal with what was occurring on duty rather than purely referring back to procedures or guidelines established in the past. This was part of a broader approach within all his teaching, where he placed the highest emphasis on realizing one’s basic sanity as opposed to relying on a past behavior or format. Therefore, the orientation of Dorje Kasung practice was more focused on “how to be” rather than on “what to do.” The Dorje Dradül’s emphasis on basic sanity rather than rote performance of duty is a great gift and saving grace for the Dorje Kasung; it ensures the connection between Dorje Kasung practice and formal meditation practice, because they are rooted in the same foundation of



wakefulness. Working with wakefulness encourages the Dorje Kasung on duty to see the creative options that arise within the bigger space rather than to follow the narrow default of “just following orders.” This also provides one of the greatest challenges of the discipline. Without the experience of the nowness being continually refreshed, Dorje Kasung practice becomes a behavior pattern that mimics the past, a hollow shell rather than a practice, like a group of historical reenactors following the outer actions without the benefit of knowing the inner meaning.

In extreme cases, without a living experience of the forms, the Dorje Kasung could become not only a discipline stuck in the past but potentially a very dangerous one, where the forms are wielded as powerful weapons without the practitioner understanding how they work or what effect they might have. This would confirm what has so far been an inaccurate projection: the fears of those who view the Dorje Kasung as an expression of the militaristic component of an authoritarian style of leadership. The Dorje Dradül encouraged mindfulness of this potential danger, which is in itself a great protection for the Dorje Kasung discipline.

In addition, the Dorje Dradül constantly reminded everyone about the dangers of spiritual materialism, ego’s uncanny ability to reinterpret any experience to fortify itself. So while close friendship was a feature of his teaching relationship with his students, he warned about the danger of such friendships degenerating into “cronyism.” The Dorje Dradül used this term to describe the mutual conspiracy so often present in relationships, where people tacitly agree to overlook each other’s self-deception. In a spiritual relationship cronyism can foster a subtle enhancement of ego under the guise of the practice of genuine dharma. The telltale sign of cronyism is when practitioners do not face the painful truths about themselves and are therefore able to maintain the fiction of ego and the territory they cling to. In all the personal, intimate contact with members of the Dorje Kasung, the Dorje Dradül never compromised his proclamation of the truth of egolessness, even when it made students uncomfortable. His commitment to the indestructible nature of basic sanity strengthened the Dorje Kasung’s conviction that neither their meditation practice nor the Dorje Kasung discipline was to be bartered for personal comfort or ego gratification.

More so than with any of the other opportunities to serve, with the Dorje Kasung the Dorje Dradül encouraged interested students to go beyond a superficial or casual involvement. For many it became their way to relate to the

teachings altogether, a home within the broader home of the dharma. The Dorje Dradül emphasized that the Dorje Kasung practice could become “where you belong,” and that if one approached the discipline in that way, it would spark one’s intelligence or wakefulness when facing difficult situations. Regarding the Kasung experience as “part of your upbringing, part of your heart’s blood” turns this attitude into the way one relates to the world altogether. The Dorje Dradül described this integration of life and practice in the Dorje Kasung discipline as the same as monastic discipline in the tradition of his Buddhist lineage.

While teaching students one by one, the Dorje Dradül was also in the process of building a world designed to transmit the traditional dharma teachings of Tibetan Buddhism through the new, contemporary forms of Buddhism in America. He invited the Dorje Kasung to be his “agents” in this historic work. This often made Kasung practice a tremendous challenge for the individual practitioner. Working as his agent meant that action taken by an individual member of the Dorje Kasung affected how students felt about the Dorje Dradül himself. This was a daunting position to be in. For the Dorje Kasung, smaller-minded personal desires had to be put aside, as duty brought greater responsibility rather than personal advantage.

The Dorje Dradül’s goal in building the Dorje Kasung wasn’t primarily to create an efficient organization but rather to nurture the development of a clan or community with its own distinct culture. He put tremendous energy into strengthening the bonds within the Dorje Kasung, creating a fabric of community much stronger than might normally be possible in an organization. The Dorje Dradül used this culture as the means of transmitting the dharma. The devices he created—the slogans, the “Guard Song,” chants, mottos, pins, the pageantry, and many other forms—were all given life by his personal involvement. They formed a whole system of transmitting meaning, reverberating and strengthening the message to those who took part.

The symbolism of the Dorje Kasung serves to communicate the heart of the genuine dharma, which forms the foundation of this practice. To begin with, the colorfulness and vividness of the imagery communicate the brilliance of the phenomenal world, which has the power to continually wake one up to the basic goodness of human life. The symbolism also expresses coded messages about enlightened mind. For example, the trident that appears on pins, flags, and cap badges symbolizes in the Buddhist tradition the weapon used to pierce the three poisons of passion, aggression, and ignorance, the three basic means that ego uses to maintain itself. The Dorje Kasung motto “Victory over War” serves as a

constant reminder that true victory only arises from fundamental nonaggression. The eight-pointed design motif employed on the Dorje Kasung duty pins is fashioned after the iron wheel. In the mythology of the Kingdom of Shambhala, the iron wheel is the scepter the king of Shambhala uses to subdue the confusion and suffering rampant in the age of materialism. The Dorje Dradül chose symbols and slogans with great care and with special attention to how they work together to communicate a unified, consistent message.



*One of the pins of the Dorje Kasung, showing the eight-pointed iron wheel motif.*

The Dorje Dradül's use of various forms to transmit dharma was effective because he simultaneously emphasized the emptiness of the forms along with their power. The experience of emptiness, or shunyata, is described as when there is no "I" as actor, no action, and no "other" to be acted upon. Understanding this view ensures that the Dorje Kasung don't place too great an emphasis on the forms of their discipline and mistakenly substitute those forms for the wisdom that one experiences from the practice. The experience of emptiness makes it very difficult to take oneself too seriously. Perhaps this is also why humor plays such a prominent part in Dorje Kasung practice, providing the ability to laugh at oneself even in the midst of the most seemingly serious effort. It is this view of one's actions as ultimately empty that allows the Dorje Kasung practice to become genuine meditation in action. Performing good works without the understanding of emptiness, no matter how admirable one's deeds, only serves to fortify ego fixation.

No matter what material he was presenting, the Dorje Dradül always imbued his teaching with a strong vajrayana perspective, as the vajrayana was the basis of his training and education. The vajrayana perspective sees intensified life and practice experiences as the means to foster insight in the student. This path

emphasizes the full flowering of ego's neurotic patterns and then cutting them at their root, rather than covering them over, leaving them submerged, or working around them. For example, an experienced gardener knows that if you cut a weed at the ground level, it will quickly grow back. To ensure that it doesn't return, you must pull it out by its roots. The vajrayana perspective sees working with ego in much the same way. Ego is very clever at masking its neurotic manifestations. So a practice discipline using life situations to intensify ego's grasping is a powerful skillful means to expose and work with such deep patterns of neurotic clinging.

However, for even the most mature practitioner, intensifying one's practice brings confusion and questions to the forefront, as well as insight. To be effective at transforming confusion into wisdom, the vajrayana approach requires a qualified teacher who is familiar with the stages along the path, who knows the pitfalls that arise, and who has both the appetite and skill to support or intervene as necessary.

The Dorje Kasung discipline is very much within the vajrayana tradition. As a form of meditation in action, it works on the front lines, so to speak, intensifying one's experience of conflict and aggression. As the Dorje Dradül describes in many places in *True Command*, the container of Dorje Kasung practice goes a long way to help the student process what arises in his or her practice experience. However, no matter how strong or powerful the Dorje Kasung forms or discipline, the more extreme experiences require the guidance of a teacher who is willing to be in the trenches, someone who understands the subtle ways of ego's deception and who is able to cut through ego-clinging very directly when necessary.

## **MILITARY METHODS**

### *Introduction*

One of the most controversial aspects of the Dorje Kasung is the adoption of conventional military forms—including uniforms, saluting, and chain of command—as an integral part of its practice. The use of these forms evokes extreme reactions in people, scaring away or antagonizing some while at the same time attracting others. Here, clearly, we are dealing with some of the most powerful energies of our time, and indeed of any time throughout human history.

In its most basic role, the military principle is the application of force. For a human society it focuses strength and power to maintain the integrity of the state, the whole. We rely on the military as one important means to maintain sovereignty and civil society. For many people, the military is a necessary though unpleasant part of human society. For those who have experienced it as an agent of governmental control, the military is no more than an expression of the state's aggression. However, military force is not in itself necessarily negative or evil. Indeed, there are many instances throughout history when the application of military force is considered a critical intervention resulting in a significant reduction of violence and aggression in the world.

In a broader sense, the military principle is the application of force to hold firm the boundary in any situation. We touched on the importance of boundaries in our discussion of the container principle above. Boundaries exist at all levels of life, from cell walls to the skin covering our bodies to acceptable patterns of behavior in society. Once we acknowledge the importance of boundary, which maintains the integrity of the whole, then protection of that boundary becomes a natural and necessary function. We understand this on a simple human level when we build shelter to live amid unaccommodating elements or cradle a newborn child in our arms. Boundary and protection apply from the level of human society to the level of working with our own minds, from how nations deal with external threat to how an individual meditator might work with the invasion of neurotic thoughts in the midst of formal practice.

But how does this lead to the use of military forms in the Dorje Kasung, a discipline that arises from the Shambhala and Buddhist lineages that advocate the practice of nonaggression? In the Shambhala teachings, the connection between the military or warrior traditions and personal discipline is what the Dorje Dradül presents in these talks as *drala* principle. *Drala* is a Tibetan word that translates as "above or beyond war." It is the manifestation of strength or bravery that transcends aggression. In iconography, the dralas are war gods and depicted in military uniforms, wielding weapons. They manifest the energy and strength focused by military forms but without the aggression so often associated with these forms.

The Dorje Kasung discipline incorporates this principle. According to the Dorje Dradül, the Dorje Kasung have a special relationship with drala energy. The use of military forms is one means to provoke and invite the drala energy. For the individual practitioner, connecting to drala leads to the possibility of developing brilliance, gallantry, and fearlessness.

Most intriguing of the numerous references the Dorje Dradül makes to the connections between the Dorje Kasung practice and traditions within the Buddhist lineage as a whole is his equating the Dorje Kasung's use of military forms with the rich monastic tradition in Tibetan Buddhism. Both emphasize structure, uniformity, and simplicity. Both create an environment where all activities, thoughts, emotions, turmoil—whatever arises—occur within a set boundary. Fully entering into either total practice environment intensifies ordinary life experiences and provokes spiritual insight.

To fully appreciate the connection between Buddhist practice and the use of military forms in the Dorje Kasung, we need to review briefly once again the vajrayana teaching style that the Dorje Dradül employed in working with his students and with the Dorje Kasung practice in particular. In general, the vajrayana approach includes every aspect of human experience as part of the path of meditation. Nothing is rejected, not even the most difficult stuff. In fact, this approach views profound insight as arising from the full engagement with confusion, a process symbolized by how the beautiful lotus flower emerges from roots sunk deep in the muddy pond. Wisdom can be found within the most intense human neurosis and chaos. This requires being open to and working deeply with these difficult energies through the vehicle of one's practice, transforming the energy of confusion into the experience of non-ego.

For hundreds of years advanced students in the vajrayana tradition have used specific meditation practices as skillful ways to work directly with the most challenging parts of human life. The Dorje Dradül's use of the military forms in the Dorje Kasung could be viewed as a modern application of this ancient tradition. This approach engages the potency of the military forms and works directly with the fear and confusion that arise. The discipline is designed to tame the root sources of this confusion in oneself first, thereby providing a powerful stepping stone to work with the related societal challenges. By incorporating the wisdom of these forms into the Dorje Kasung practice, their strength and potency are brought into the service of non-ego rather than used to further perpetuate ego. A brief overview of some of the military forms that have been integrated into the Dorje Kasung discipline will provide some helpful examples of how this could work.

### *Uniforms*

The military uniform allows those who fight in wars to distinguish themselves

from their enemy on the battlefield as well as from the civilian population. Uniforms arose in response to a very practical problem; soldiers who could not easily recognize each other often killed their own friends in battle. Over time, the use of uniforms became much more widespread and today plays a part in all walks of life: the military, the church, hospitals, schools, restaurants, sports, and many other aspects of civilian life. Every day we can experience our awareness of the environment changing when we encounter people in uniform.

Whatever the wearer is striving for—power, virtue, courage, authority, cleanliness—the uniform and every aspect of its symbolism intimately connect the wearer to a specific community with a common purpose. The uniform expresses the values of that community and extends its authority. The use of uniforms in the school setting, for example, has been adopted as a positive and creative way to reduce discipline problems, increase school safety, and give students a sense of pride and belonging. To greater or lesser degrees, depending upon the setting and conditions, uniforms focus the power of the community. The individual wearing the uniform experiences this power as personal strength, ranging from connectedness and authority to gallantry and courage. The uniform also projects the community's image and power into the environment. This can have the effect of shaping the environment so thoroughly that further action is unnecessary.

In the Dorje Kasung discipline the uniform first serves as a reminder of one's duty, the commitment to serve others. It encourages a high level of personal decorum, mindfulness of one's body, and holding oneself upright with good posture. In turn, this affects how the uniform wearer relates to his or her own mind, fostering simplicity and directness, and cutting through discursiveness. This produces the experience of synchronizing the body and mind and engenders a gentle but strong wakeful energy that radiates out.

In general, the effectiveness of military forms as part of a meditative discipline depends upon the purpose the community seeks to achieve and on how the practitioner works with the experiences that arise from using them. In terms of the uniform, the critical question is: what is the common purpose that the uniform wearer is being connected to? If that purpose is to further solidify individual ego or territory and ward off change, then use of the uniform does not further genuine spiritual practice and could be harmful. In the discipline of the Dorje Kasung, the uniform can help the practitioner to develop the courage to be open to even the most difficult aspects of the world and to create an open ground to experience non-ego. In these talks, the Dorje Dradül presents the uniform not

as the hard shell of armor for the Dorje Kasung but rather as “an expression of our naked mind showing through.”

### *Chain of Command*

The chain of command is crucial to the successful functioning of the military and is one of its defining characteristics. It allows broad and rapid communication of the command and ensures that the command will be followed. A strong chain of command is necessary for effective action and troop safety in warlike conditions—conditions of conflict or intense chaos—where everyone must be relied upon to do what is expected of them. The chain of command has to be maintained, or the military will fall apart.

In general, the chain of command is a brilliant way of mobilizing large numbers of people. It enables a group to undertake a coordinated effort and to focus its power. It also has been adopted as an organizing principle by a wide variety of nonmilitary organizations, particularly those whose work involves dealing with extreme conditions, such as disaster relief. Once the basic format of the chain of command is adopted and established within a group, it allows the individuals within that group to relax and have confidence in their roles. It simplifies and creates efficiency; everyone doing their part makes a more effective group effort.

The chain of command functions as a hierarchy. Although the root meaning of the word *hierarchy* is “sacred order,” in modern times people often experience hierarchy as a vertical structure that has power concentrated at the top, with rigid rules and structures arbitrarily imposed. Individuals within such a hierarchy are constantly striving to free themselves from oppression from above or to climb up the ladder to attain greater authority over those below. In a bureaucratic setting, the hierarchical structure can often foster dullness and stupidity when individuals substitute the authority of the hierarchy for their own intelligence. However, again, it is not so much that hierarchy itself is a problem. In fact, we rely on a well-functioning hierarchy in many areas of both the natural and human worlds. Even something as basic as the cycle of the four seasons is an example of a hierarchy, where the order and progression of the seasons is critical to human survival. Wherever we find a well-functioning hierarchy, we find intelligence and mutual respect distributed equally throughout all levels of that hierarchy. A chain of command can be an expression of such an enlightened hierarchy.

A chain of command is only as strong as the trust people put into their



hierarchy at every moment. When people are genuinely included in establishing and applying the rules and structures for their group, this trust manifests as loyalty. Confusion and harm arise when loyalty is misunderstood or misapplied and used to demand that people submerge their intelligence and follow along regardless of their questions. In such situations, loyalty is forced upon people either by overt threat or subtle pressure. In a healthy hierarchy everyone's intelligence is respected, and people are encouraged to bring their doubts and uncertainties along onto the path. The Dorje Dradül always encouraged people to respect their doubt and negativity as the seed of intelligence. For the Dorje Kasung in particular, he encouraged practitioners to use their own intelligence rather than follow directions without question. One Dorje Kasung motto he presented, which arose during an early Magyal Pomra Encampment, captures this sentiment: "If you maintain a sense of humor and a distrust of the rules laid down around you, there will be success."

This view of loyalty connects the Dorje Kasung discipline to the practice of meditation. In the Buddhist tradition, meditation practice is the path of openness and inquiry, looking directly at the contents of one's mind and life. It requires an open ground within which any question can arise, including the most deeply troubling ones. A skillful teacher encourages the student to allow these questions to arise. A genuine loyalty emerges from this process. If loyalty is to be demanded, that demand can only come as the end result of, and be built upon, this process where everyone's basic intelligence is included and mutually respected.

As a practical manifestation of this view, the Dorje Dradül insisted on a phase between issuing a command and the execution of that command within the Dorje Kasung. He called this the "yogurt" phase. This is the formative time for a practitioner to consider the truth and accuracy of the command he or she receives, to test it personally, to integrate it and thereby make it genuinely one's own, or not. Including the yogurt phase in the command process communicates respect for the student's intelligence, builds genuine loyalty, and allows the possibility that the chain of command can flourish as a natural hierarchy.

### *Weapons*

Traditionally, a weapon is an instrument of any kind used in warfare or in combat to overcome an enemy. In the conventional world, in the context of the type of security function performed by the Dorje Kasung, a weapon would

usually mean a baton, handgun, or rifle. These kinds of weapons represent a tremendous concentration of power, as well as its potential misuse, and therefore evoke very extreme reactions. Perhaps uniforms and a strong chain of command are acceptable in an organization such as the Dorje Kasung, but how could weapons be part of a practice that is based on nonaggression?

Although weapons were neither a regular feature of the Dorje Kasung practice nor used on duty, the Dorje Kasung discipline fosters a healthy respect for their potency. The general notion presented by the Dorje Dradül is that, if one understands how a weapon works and experiences both its power and its danger, then one will not be paralyzed by fear and projection should weapons ever appear in an incident or time of crisis.

The Dorje Dradül spoke extensively about the weapon principle in its most fundamental sense. He taught that a weapon is any form that gathers and focuses power, and that can forcefully alter the environment. In this sense, a weapon can be any power object that focuses energy and changes the ground of the situation. The brush that an artist uses to create a beautiful calligraphy can be a weapon because it is the means by which the artist transmits a sense of nowness to the viewer.

In the Dorje Kasung discipline a weapon is any device used for creating a sense of sacred space, such as a lapel pin, a flag, a pen, or the faculty of speech. The Dorje Dradül proclaimed that gentleness was the greatest weapon and that it was the Dorje Kasung's duty to "shoot" people's deception. By shooting deception, he meant that by acting with accuracy and directness the Dorje Kasung could create a simplified world capable of overcoming the deviousness that seduces a person away from genuine practice. The Dorje Dradül fashioned the Dorje Kasung discipline as the means to take energy most generally associated with destruction and aggression and redirect that energy into the service of waking people up. The Dorje Dradül worked most intimately with the weapon principle at the Magyal Pomra Encampments, and these teachings will appear in greater detail in volume two of *True Command*.

In general, the use of military forms in a meditative practice, such as the Dorje Kasung, evokes strong energies that are challenging to work with. While this approach holds out the promise of transforming aggression into gentleness, at the same time it heightens the potential for error and danger. The misuse of military forms could turn the Dorje Kasung discipline into a behavior pattern gone awry, which would undermine genuine practice and be dangerous for the Dorje

Kasung practitioners, as well as for the community they seek to serve. However, for the Dorje Dradül, the courage to work directly with these energies provided a greater ground for practice and learning than the seemingly safe ground of avoidance and ignorance.

People looking at the Dorje Kasung from outside the discipline are often wary, fearful of the danger that arises from working with military forms directly. This wariness is an expression of intelligence. Dorje Kasung practice is potentially dangerous, which is part of its power. People imagine that they'll find in the Dorje Kasung the kind of blood and guts that come from the savagery of war and aggression. In fact, *True Command* reveals that the Dorje Kasung discipline is indeed about blood and guts, but the kind that come from the intimate sharing that takes place within a clan, from hard work and exertion, and from fully experiencing the strength and the vulnerability of being human.

## A SHIFT

Whenever I read through *True Command*, I feel fortunate to have been in attendance when these talks were given and these meetings occurred. I also often am shocked when I can't recall ever having heard before what I am reading, even though I was there. Whether one was present at the time or not, here in *True Command* we can all hear these talks for the first time, now so long after they were first given. I am grateful for the opportunity.

*True Command* is filled with the Dorje Dradül's frankness and humor, and with his affection for the Dorje Kasung discipline and for the people who committed their energy to practicing it. As a member of the Dorje Kasung, I felt that working with him through this discipline confirmed my intelligence on the one hand and mercilessly laid bare my neurosis on the other. Both experiences seemed to take place simultaneously, and often with great humor.

One of my earliest experiences on duty as a Dorje Kasung captures this feeling. On this particular evening in 1976 the Dorje Dradül went out to dinner with a prominent Tibetan Buddhist teacher who also had been teaching Western students in North America for a number of years. As the only person on duty, I drove the two teachers to a favorite restaurant and settled them at a table by the window overlooking the city. At the end of dinner, the Dorje Dradül called me over to say that they had decided to go out for some entertainment and asked me to find options for them to consider. I reminded him that one of his students was playing music in a local club and suggested that they might like to go there. In

an all-too-familiar gesture, the Dorje Dradül scrunched up his face as if gnashing his teeth, both smiling and shaking his head no simultaneously. “We’re looking for something raunchy,” he added.

Since I didn’t know what would qualify as “raunchy,” I went to the bartender and asked if he could recommend such a place for me to take two distinguished gentlemen. He told me about a place called the House of Ecstasy located in a world-famous tourist area close by. I returned to the table and dutifully reported this suggestion to the Dorje Dradül. He smiled and nodded and replied, “That’s it. Let’s go.”

We arrived minutes later at the House of Ecstasy, right in front of a sign marked “No Stopping.” I parked the car there anyway, driving partially up onto the sidewalk as if to signify the greater importance of our mission should a police car come by. I informed the Dorje Dradül that I would go in first to make sure that our destination was appropriate and safe. I locked the car doors and went in, dressed in the blue blazer and gray slacks of the Dorje Kasung uniform. I scanned the reception area, projecting as much of an air of worldliness as I could, and looked for someone in authority. Soon I was greeted by the hostess, and I proceeded to explain to her that I was representing two gentlemen in a car parked out front who might be interested in coming in. All the while I was trying to determine, both by what I saw and what she said, exactly what we would be getting ourselves into. Though my questions must have seemed quite strange to her, she was kind and patient and assured me that we had found the right place.

This incident took place very early on in the development of the Dorje Kasung discipline. I had little Dorje Kasung training or experience to guide me, and I wasn’t sure exactly what my duties were. All evening I had been asking myself: what are the boundaries here? I’d maintained a respectful distance from the Dorje Dradül and his guest, never presuming to be a part of their conversation. I had been continually striving to maintain my mindfulness-awareness discipline while on duty, without a great deal of success.

I returned to the locked car, settled into the driver’s seat, and turned around to report. Speaking directly to the Dorje Dradül, I said, “I think, sir, this is the kind of place you are looking for.” He looked at his guest with a wry smile and said, “Shall we?” The other teacher, who was fluent in English, spoke to the Dorje Dradül in Tibetan. The Dorje Dradül looked at me and translated: “He wants to know if you’re sure this is really the place we’re looking for.” I replied that, as far as I understood, it fit the requirements. Once again, the other teacher spoke to

the Dorje Dradül in Tibetan, this time more rapidly. Again, the Dorje Dradül reported to me: “He’s worried that it might not be safe.” Feeling that my judgment was being called into question, I replied that I was quite sure that this place was perfectly safe, located as it was so centrally in the heart of the tourist area. For a third time, the other teacher spoke to the Dorje Dradül in Tibetan, this time with even more energy. The Dorje Dradül looked right at me. “He doesn’t want to go in,” he said. Sensing that I was supposed to be drawn into a conversation I had originally thought was private, I asked the obvious next question, which I felt I was being led to ask. “Why doesn’t he want to go in?” I asked, tentatively. At this point, the other teacher spoke very excitedly in Tibetan while the Dorje Dradül kept his focus on me. When he finished speaking, the Dorje Dradül said to me: “He says he’s worried that the two most important Tibetan lamas in America might get arrested.”

This entire time I was feeling increasingly uncomfortable with being part of the discussion, fearing at every step that the formal distance I was supposed to keep while on duty was being compromised. I wanted to ask the question that had been in my mind since the conversation in the car began, but it seemed so inappropriate. I thought that a young, new student like me shouldn’t be privy to the conversations of two important spiritual teachers, especially when one of them clearly intended the conversation to be private. But, at the same time, the invitation from the Dorje Dradül was unmistakable. So I asked: “Why are you telling me everything he is saying to you in Tibetan?” I’ll never forget the look on the Dorje Dradül’s face and the tone of his voice as he drove his message home to a space much vaster than my inquiring mind: “The point is,” he said, “I trust my students.”

It was clear in that moment that this evening wasn’t about “raunchy” entertainment. The House of Ecstasy had served its purpose even though the Dorje Dradül never got out of the car and perhaps never intended to. I experienced a shocking expression of his trust in me—in all his students—that has stayed with me since. I also witnessed the clear message he delivered to a fellow Tibetan teacher: that for the genuine dharma to be transmitted in the West, the teachers presenting the dharma had to have the same openness and trust in their students that their own teachers in Tibet had shown them. Early the next morning, this teacher showed up at the Dorje Dradül’s hotel room with gifts and invited the Dorje Dradül to join him on retreat in Mexico the following year.

The Dorje Dradül’s trust in his students was at the core of his entire approach to teaching the dharma. He expressed his trust as an unshakeable conviction in

the basic goodness and buddha nature of everyone he came into contact with. This nurtured a genuine confidence in the hearts of all of his students. The Dorje Dradül felt that such trust needed to be the basis of the relationship between teacher and student and that it was necessary for genuine communication about the dharma to take place. The Dorje Dradül warned that without such trust it would be hard for students to overcome spiritual materialism, and this would lead to external confirmation of ego rather than genuine spiritual insight.

As an element of the Dorje Kasung discipline in particular, the Dorje Dradül's trust transformed the routine functions of the Dorje Kasung into a potent path of practice and realization. As in the story of my own early Dorje Kasung experiences, this trust often meant that the Dorje Dradül was willing to take chances with relatively unprocessed students in new and unfamiliar situations. As we know, taking chances increases the possibility of an uncertain outcome and of failure. But the trust expressed by the Dorje Dradül itself provided a powerful container of protection that allowed failure to be an opportunity for profound insight into the truth of non-ego. This was the tradition of the mishap lineage, one of the epithets of the Dorje Dradül's Karma Kagyü lineage. It was transmitted as the skillful means of the Dorje Kasung discipline.

The Dorje Kasung practice is both a vast and narrow path. It is narrow in the sense that it is a rigorous practice that requires focused exertion and dedication. It is vast in the sense that the possible applications of this discipline to one's practice are inexhaustible. There are parts of the original vision presented by the Dorje Dradül in these talks that have yet to be realized. This could in part be due to the particular time in history in which we live and to the limited understanding of those of us who were present at the time. Fortunately that means that there is still much in these talks for future generations of Dorje Kasung to bring out and develop. The Dorje Dradül's life work is a fearless proclamation of the truth of non-ego. Nowhere is that warrior's cry more powerful than in the teachings of the Dorje Kasung. His untiring efforts were fueled by his dedication to work for the benefit of sentient beings and were never clouded by confusion or concern for his personal well-being. Readers will no doubt hear in *True Command* his clear invitation to join with him to present genuine dharma in the world, and thereby to deepen one's own meditation practice. This Dorje Kasung discipline is one powerful way of doing so. May the exertion, discipline, and realization of those who practice the Dorje Kasung path bring benefit to all sentient beings.

JAMES M. GIMIAN

*Kasung Dapön Kyi Khyap (ret.)*  
*Trident Mountain House*  
*May 2003*

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1. This volume does not include the talks he gave at the Magyal Pomra Encampment, the main intensive training sessions for Dorje Kasung held in an outdoor camp setting at the Rocky Mountain Dharma Center. Those talks will be published in the future as volume 2 of *True Command*.



*Chögyam Trungpa, the Makkyi Rabjam, in Cape Breton, circa 1981.*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY WILL RYAN.



## *Letter to the Vajra Guards*

**I**T HAS BEEN IMPORTANT FOR ME to observe and work with the situation concerning security. This is not a casual project like playing cowboys and Indians. It is essential to take the proper attitude.

### **Genuine endeavors are more vulnerable than charlatanism**

A charlatan's job is, to begin with, to protect himself and his ego. While he is always conning people, he must be careful not to make enemies so that he won't be exposed to any threats. He must preserve his facade, or his falsity will be seen through. He is buying people in order to win their support, and he only enters a situation when it seems to be to his advantage.

In our case, I am not concerned with winning people over, so I am not afraid of insulting people's ego trips and cutting through them. My interest is not in selling the dharma. There is no fear in telling the truth, to attempt to secure my own personal position.

Some people are open to this and become friends and practitioners like yourselves. Other people are horribly insulted and threatened. Some of these people run away to preserve their hypocrisy, but some are haunted by the inevitable truth. Perhaps they freak out and try to strike out in defense of their belief in egotism. Another possibility arises from those who are disillusioned by other teachers and spiritual scenes, who develop a general vendetta toward spirituality.

Both of these dangerous situations have already manifested, through threatening phone calls, letters, and visits. For example, last summer a person who had become disillusioned and angered by Guru Maharaji suddenly appeared

at Karma Dzong to check out our organization. In his green backpack he carried a number of hand grenades. Fortunately, someone was able to cool him out and persuade him to leave. At the time, I was unaware of this event. I was in my office, down the hall, giving interviews.

As our work goes further, this type of situation is more likely to occur. More than one hundred thousand copies of my books have been sold, and with the inauguration of the Naropa Institute and other projects, our activities have become more widely publicized. The unreasonable and fearless style of these writings and the presentation of Buddhism will no doubt make a few nasty enemies, while they have much positive impact on the majority of the audience.

### **You can be a great help**

In order to save my life, I could become a charlatan. I could become soft and ingratiating, encouraging people's ego trips. But by doing so, I would be contributing to the pollution of the world and would be desecrating the tradition of the practicing lineage. If that were the only alternative, I still would have no choice.

I have been developing the security guard group in order to intelligently work with this situation and share my confidence with you. As practitioners as well as guards, you have the proper vision to deal with any obstacles. It is not just a matter of ceremony. It is an expression of dedication rather than confirmation. We must be aware of what we're doing and do it properly.

### ***The Eight Slogans of the Dorje Kasung***

1. Have confidence to go beyond hesitation.
2. Alert before you daydream.
3. Mindful of all details, be resourceful in performing your duties.
4. Fearless beyond idiot compassion.
5. Be a warrior without anger.
6. Not afraid to be a fool.
7. An invisible heavy hand.
8. Be precise without creating a scene.

VAJRACHARYA THE VENERABLE  
*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*

*November 6, 1975*

# *Fuse and Gunpowder*

## THE EXPLOSION OF BASIC SANITY

### *Vajra Guard Oath Ceremony*

*Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • January 15, 1976*

V AJRACHARYA THE VENERABLE Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:<sup>2</sup> Welcome, Vajra Guards and fellow officers. Tonight, the senior commanding officers, the *dapön* and the two *rupöns* of this particular organization that we call the Vajra Guard, are going to take their oath of office.<sup>3</sup> The oath they will take is in accordance with the warrior and Buddhist traditions that developed in Tibet and in accordance with the traditions that exist in the vajrayana discipline. The *dapöns* and *rupöns* are leaders in our organization. *Dapön* is a Tibetan word that literally means “arrow chief.” *Da* means “arrow,” and *pön* means “chief.” The position of *dapön* is roughly equivalent to a general in a conventional army. *Ru* means “cadre” or “section,” and *pön* again means “chief.” So the *rupöns* are the second in command, so to speak.

You might wonder why we are doing this at all. Why do we need such a thing as the Vajra Guard at all? We are living in such a nice place here in Boulder, Colorado. It’s such a quiet and simple place. We are not in the hustles and bustles of New York City, where crime exists all over the place, but we have settled down in this very humble place called Boulder, Colorado. Who’s going to murder us? Who’s going to kill us? Who’s going to create problems? True. On the other hand, Vajradhatu has developed into *the* most powerful propagator of buddhadharma on the American continent. Whether we would like to believe that or not, it is taking place. We have a very powerful role to play.

That applies to both you and me at the same time. You could say I am like the instigator or the fuse, and you are the gunpowder, who will actually make *Pheeyoo!* That big explosion is up to you people. If we don't have enough gunpowder, and there is just purely a fuse, when it's lit, it will just go *psst*. Nothing will happen. That's like the situation in a banana republic.

We are not imagining that we are bigger than we are. In fact, as far as the present situation is concerned, we are getting quite big, but we think we are still small. That could become problematic. A lot of messages are getting across to people on the American continent. I have written a book, as you know, called *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. This is the first time in this country that a book has been assembled, edited, and published that actually tells you about all the potential problems of spirituality and the misgivings that we should have. Basically, it is our role to correct these problems, to overcome all kinds of hysterical approaches to the spiritual world and to make them into true spirituality.

Our audience—or the readers of our work, our literature—has extraordinarily mixed feelings about what we are doing. Originally, 75 percent of the audience were cynical bystanders, and 25 percent were true believers, so to speak. My personal life has influenced that situation because of my behavior, my particular lifestyle. Many people are frustrated, threatened, and made very angry by my outrageousness in presenting buddhadharma on such a raw and rugged level. You might be interested to know that we haven't raised enough funds, because a lot of rich people got turned off. We are not love-and-lighties. We are not dignified Oriental sneakies. We speak raw and rugged, blood and marrow language. And we behave that way, too. I am sure that's the reason why we are having difficulty with fund-raising these days. But I don't regret that we have actually managed to sort out unnecessary complications and potential spiritual materialism completely, fully, thoroughly.

We have developed friends and enemies. A lot of the 75 percent of the people who originally didn't commit to what we are doing were somewhat cynically interested, but nevertheless they didn't make any commitment. They just sat and watched. A large portion of them decided to sit and watch, expecting that we would fall down, fall to pieces, and fall apart. Others had some faint hopes that we might pull our trip together, so to speak. That wait-and-see situation continued for a long time. However, our students became diligent practitioners. Out of their discipline, they began to develop roles within the community. We emphasized the importance of the cynical attitude toward spiritual materialism

and the importance of studying basic Buddhism and practicing *shamatha-vipashyana* meditation. Now, the 75 percent of people who stood back and watched have begun to have second thoughts about the whole thing. Now, slowly, not particularly speedily, money is beginning to come along. Those people who have had a skeptical attitude toward us have begun to, if not to give us gifts—which is still quite a rare situation—at least to lend us money with a very small percentage of interest.

People begin to see that I mean business; we mean business. We are actually establishing ourselves. No matter how crazy we might be rumored to be, still we are beginning to plant our seeds in this particular ground, in the American soil. Something extraordinarily powerful and important is taking place. People throughout the North American continent, as well as some of the overseas people, have begun to pay attention to what we are doing. They realize that somebody who immigrated to this country only five years ago has achieved a lot. That is the kind of compliment I get from all these little Buddhist colleagues. My fellow Tibetans tell me, “You did a good job. After only five years, you’ve done a good job. You got a good business going!” [*Laughter.*]

On the other hand, I come across a lot of people—well-known poets, seeming gurus, and writers whom we met in the course of establishing the Naropa Institute and Vajradhatu—famous people who are threatened by what we are doing. Their particular business or their *bhakti* trips do not have any effect on me personally. I see through them constantly, completely. They resent that, they feel bad, and consequently they become threatened. Then they create their little outposts, and people suffer a lot from that.

Being in the spiritual business is very tricky, much trickier even than being president of the United States of America. People get pissed off at our style: that we don’t present a clean-cut reference point. We eat meat, we drink alcoholic beverages, we are not celibate, yet we still proclaim spirituality with very strong language, with authority. We don’t dance with the sunrise. We don’t worship the earth or the oak tree. That is very difficult for some people to accept. A lot of people within our own community have hangovers from the love-and-lighty approach to spirituality. As well, there are other people who are frustrated. Reading a book like *Meditation in Action*, it sounds magnificent. Reading *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* is fantastic, but when somebody actually comes here to see what we are doing, everybody is puffing cigarettes right and left, and parties are taking place every other night all over the community. Situations of that nature, interestingly enough, are very frustrating for a lot of

people. It's not so much that they think that we should reform and adopt their beliefs, but they feel threatened. Since their understanding of what spirituality should be is purely in terms of behavior or format rather than in terms of sanity, whenever we talk about basic sanity, they are threatened. That has nothing to do with the drinking, nothing to do with the smoking. Basic sanity in itself is just a terrible subject for them. Some people get very pissed off at that term. Basic sanity is threatening to a lot of people.

Other people are threatened by having a formal setup of ritual or basic ceremony. At Karmê Chöling, several people left because we had chanting at the beginning of the day and chanting at the end of the day.

Well, we are making a lot of enemies, but at the same time we are making lots of friends. I don't want to paint an unnecessarily black picture at all. We have saved millions of people, from some point of view. We have certainly helped lots of people. And we have made a few enemies, but they are very potent enemies, nevertheless. In terms of our conquest of the realm of spiritual materialists, those who are soft, easily convinced, and gullible have been conquered already, and now the people holding the frontier are the hardcore people who resent our fame, dignity, power, and sacredness.

I don't think their particular challenge or attack is going to be as cheap as somebody throwing a pie in Guru Maharaji's face. We are not going to face that cheap level of humor, but we might experience much more sophisticated humor, which might lead into all kinds of interesting situations.

Ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard, I would like you to understand what we are doing here. It is very simple. We do not particularly want to make the Vajra Guard into a big scene, aping colonial dictatorship or for that matter reigniting the Third Reich. That's not the idea. But we would like to preserve our own dignity and our own sense of appreciation. For once and forever more, I would like to let you know that, as far as I am concerned, fear of death is no problem for me, actually no problem. Dying is okay with me, right now if you like, any time. The fear of leaving people behind and leaving unfinished business is my problem, actually.

In order to execute our vision and have a real, proper situation taking place, your help is very important. The way the psychology works is that, when there is a general atmosphere of, say, depression, although you may also be caught in that smog of complete negativity, at the same time through your vision and connection to being a Vajra Guard, you can actually join with the inspiration of

my particular humor, my personal sense of celebration. When you join together with me, we can build up our strength together. Although there may be some technical problems, in terms of how to manifest such strength, still I feel that this approach of the Vajra Guard need not be confused any longer with creating some kind of uptight police state or fascist state. At the same time, we *are* trying to create situations in which you actually can take part in the strength and power of the Vajra Master so that, basically speaking, we can share that particular world together.

I have gone through every one of your names on the list, and together with the dapöns and the rupöns, we have assigned certain duties to each of you, such as being the overnight guard or being the guard in the hallway or whatever postings you have. You are all trusted. Your duty is to protect the spokesman of the dharma, and your duty is to create a sense of openness and friendship with those who are aggressive—nevertheless with no idiot compassion. Occasionally, heavy-handedness is necessary, as the slogan goes.

I have composed eight lines, which are mottos, so to speak, or slogans for the Vajra Guard.<sup>4</sup> You should all memorize them and remember them. We are going to assign numbers to them so that it will be easy to refer to them by number. You should know that these particular slogans are completely related with the practices of pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying—the four karmas—which are an old tantric tradition, technique, and approach that has been borrowed for this particular purpose. Your role is to sustain the vajra world and not join in or go along with the negativities and depressions of the North American world or within our own spiritual world. Your role is to wake and unify and open up and work together.

I would like to introduce the taking of the vow by the dapön and the two rupöns. [*Addressing them:*] You will all read your particular vow, and then you will drink what is known as the water of oath. There's nothing special in that water, except that we put in a little sprinkle of saffron. But that water is blessed, and it's been influenced by the forces of *dharmapalas* and mahakalas, and if in the future you violate what you read here tonight, that water is going to turn into molten iron, liquid metal, which will destroy you. If you go along with this oath and if you have a sense of inspiration, this water will turn into the elixir of life. You will be constantly drunk and inspired, excessively and very wisely at the same time.



*[Rings gong several times. The dapön and rupöns read their oaths.<sup>5</sup> Then other members of the Vajra Guard file up to receive and sign membership cards.]*

*Vajracharya:* Everyone has been given a copy of a protector chant, a chant invoking the dharmapala Vetali, which we are going to chant together this evening. I would like you to feel that, as members of the Vajra Guard, you are identified with the protectors of the teachings. While we chant, our shrine master is going to make offerings to Vetali on the shrine. I would like you to feel personally that you are guided by this particular principle. This principle of Vetali is a family protector from the Kagyü tradition. In our community we have a particular household, yogic, or family approach. Vetali was the protector of Marpa's household, and she has provided a lot of inspiration to our household yogic discipline, as well as protecting the teachings and being nasty to those who are not working sanely with what's happening in their lives and households. So at this point we would like to celebrate the principle that she represents. Our chanting this together makes it more of a celebration.



*The mahakali Vetali.*  
LINE DRAWING BY GREG SMITH.

Finally, we are chanting this to confirm that the dapön, the rupöns, and all of the Vajra Guards are committed to protecting the practice of the dharma. It is particularly your role to identify with the mahakalas and mahakalis. In other words, we are saying that you are in league with them from this time onward, whenever you perform sanity. It's your duty to connect with sanity. And in connecting with that practice, all your protection activities are related with these mahakalis.

*[All chant Vetali liturgy very slowly. During the chanting, the Vajracharya rings the gong several times.]*

*Vajracharya:* Thank you, ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard. I look forward to working with you. We have shared some kind of humor, which is very interesting, but the important point is to be awake in your duty. That means that you should practice a lot, guard a lot, and be precise a lot. Thank you. Welcome to the Vajra Master's world.

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2. For an explanation of the various titles used for Chögyam Trungpa in this book, see the [glossary](#).
  3. Gerry Haase was given the oath as the dorje dapön; Norman Hirsch and Dennis Southward were given the oath as rupöns.
  4. See [here](#).
  5. For a copy of the oath, see the appendices, [here](#).

## ***No Defeat in the Great Eastern Sun***

*Birthday Celebration for the Vajracharya Red Lion Inn • Boulder,  
Colorado • February 23, 1977*

*The Vajra Guards' celebration of the Vajracharya's birthday in 1977 was a banquet held at the Red Lion Inn on the eve of the Vajracharya's departure for a yearlong retreat in Charlemont, Massachusetts. The dorje dapön, Gerry Haase, gave remarks on the Vajra Guards' experience during the second visit to North America of His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa. Norman Hirsch, rupön of the White Division, also made short remarks, followed by a toast to the Vajracharya by Dennis Southward, rupön of the Red Division, and the presentation by Kasung Thomas Ryken of the gift of a large mountain horsehair calligraphy brush to be delivered to the Vajracharya's retreat. The Kasung general David I. Rome then gave his remarks:*

*Kasung General David I. Rome: Dorje Kusung, <sup>6</sup> I salute you. It's been somewhat overwhelming for me personally to have been appointed recently to the position of Dorje Kasung, while at the same time trying to fulfill my responsibilities as the private secretary and more recently the executive secretary to Rinpoche. One of the aspects of Rinpoche's retreat that I look forward to is being able to devote much more time and energy to the situation of the Vajra Guard. I think we have a tremendous amount to do. We definitely should get together very soon and talk about that. But what I would rather do this evening in Rinpoche's presence is to try to share with you some of the qualities, the atmosphere, and the inspiration that I've had the unspeakable privilege of partaking in, by virtue of working closely with Rinpoche.*

*Tonight I'd like to speak of four qualities that have been growing on me for*

many years. Yet I didn't know what they were, didn't have the words for them, until they were presented and described to me by Rinpoche, by the Sakyong. Those four qualities are represented in the banners that we see hanging all around us in this room: tiger, lion, *garuda*, dragon. They're known as the four dignities of Shambhala.<sup>7</sup>

We should be clear at this point about what we mean by Shambhala. Shambhala is the complete society of the Great Eastern Sun, of the rising sun of confidence, capacity, and basic fundamental human dignity. That of course arises from the state of wakefulness, which is aroused through the three yanas of the buddhadharma. At the same time, the meaning of Shambhala is that we can extend that vision, that confidence, to every aspect of our own lives, and we can inspire it in whomever we may be dealing with: our parents, our lawyers, our bankers, our garbage men, our children, our babysitters, our cup of tea, our banquet. Every gesture that we perform can be molded around this sequence of four dignities, which are represented by the tiger, lion, *garuda*, and dragon.

The tiger represents the starting point, which always is some seed of openness. Otherwise, none of us would be here tonight. There is some kind of meekness at the beginning, some kind of soft spot, so that we actually realize that we have to extend ourselves. Without that, there's no buddhadharma, there's no Shambhala, there are no Vajra Guards. We're not robots; we're human beings. Every situation we confront starts with openness, which is in fact *meek*, the meekness of the tiger.

But we can't stop there. Meekness has to mature into some kind of intelligent course of activity, some kind of focused energy in our situation. This quality is represented by the lion and is known as perkiness, *perky*-ness. Your soft spot leads you to be inspired toward some objective, some possibility, and around that possibility gathers a fund of energy, inquisitiveness, and stimulation, which is perkiness. It's a sense of zeal, a sense of excitement about actually doing what needs to be done.

Then the question comes up, what in fact does need to be done? Is there a rulebook? Is there a game plan? Is there a catechism or a dogma? I think we all know from our three-yana studies that there is no such thing. The only possibility is actually being there on the spot and discovering the energy and the activity that are called for, within the situation itself. Because that goes beyond any possibility of fixed rules or schemes, it is known as outrageousness, which is the quality represented by the *garuda*. It is *outrageous* because what you do in

the situation arises completely from the depth and immediacy of your contact with that situation. So you could be outrageous. You go beyond any schemes or manipulations.

Because all of these three processes are taking place—openness at the beginning, perky energy as you extend yourself, outrageousness in execution—the final result is that your whole existence, your complete presence in any situation, becomes dragonlike, which is to say, *inscrutable*. We could all be inscrutable Orientals. To be Orientals, all we need is to be in the Orient, which, if I may bring my classical background to bear, means nothing more than rising. The Orient is the place where the sun arises. When we are inspired again and again and again by the sense of rising, going forward to each situation, to constant challenge without aggression, then we are true Orientals of the Great Eastern Sun, true citizens of the Kingdom of Shambhala, true Kusung.

I think these four qualities, which we now have names for and therefore can present in a somewhat theoretical fashion, are in fact what we've been learning from Rinpoche for many years. He has shown us that quality of gentleness combined with daring, of trying to maintain our mindfulness and our precision while discovering again and again that the only way to do that is to break out over and over again. The activity of a vajra master or of an emperor of Shambhala is a self-existing challenge to any neurosis, clinging, or aggression that exist. This makes it perfectly obvious why we are Vajra Guards, why we are practitioners, why we have our discipline, and in turn why we have our vajra master and our leader.

When we had a gathering of the Vajra Guard last night, I tried to talk about the presence of the absence of the teacher, so I won't repeat myself. I think that quality is clear—particularly clear to us as Vajra Guards. None of us are robots, none of us are stiffs, none of us are bouncers. I think we know what we're doing. I think we know where we're going. We know that being Vajra Guards is completely part of our fundamental discipline and that it is a tremendous opportunity for furthering our practice. That is another reverse birthday gift to us from Rinpoche, the profound and brilliant Sakyong, in our wretchedness as well as in our confidence.

I think it's tremendously important to acknowledge the teacher as well as the transmission and to acknowledge that we ourselves have received that transmission. Particularly tonight, I also would like to acknowledge the fashion in which that wisdom and that power have been transmitted to Ösel Tendzin.

All of us have grown up a lot; all of us still need to grow up further. That cannot be done without the only father; it can also not be done without the only son, who is also without second. And during this year particularly we need to direct our open eyes toward the Vajra Regent and to open our palms to him and to receive the further transmission, which does not decrease but in fact increases by virtue of passing through the future lineage holder.

We have a great project before us, which is not purely being good boys and good girls, logging our hours of sitting and completing our prostrations, although we have to do that. Beyond that we should actually have the complete confidence that we are creating an enlightened society. Let's do that together! Let's do that with a tremendous sense of our dignity as Vajra Guards. At the same time we should have a tremendous sense of sharing that world with the entire Buddhist sangha and even beyond that with the larger society, which is particularly the role of the guards.

Let me close simply by pointing to what I can never completely express, which is the sense of explosive gratitude for the unique juncture and right occasion of being able to serve so brilliant a vajra master and king. Rinpoche, I salute you and request you to speak to us briefly, if you would.

*Vajracharya the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*<sup>8</sup>: Vajra Regent, Madame Pybus, Dorje Kasung and Dorje Kusung, dapön, rupöns, we've been working very closely together. One of the interesting points is that the Dorje Kusung have been the forerunners of our activities. The Dorje Kusung have been the first people to carry the message of dignity. The Dorje Kusung have been the people who demonstrate the awesome environment to those who don't understand. The Dorje Kusung have also been involved with our household. So you have a lot of responsibilities and a lot of privileges. Every one of you is in fact part of our household: part of how your vajra master the Sakyong is leading his life or the Sakyong Wangmo Lady Diana is leading her life, and how we operate to propagate the dharma as well as the Great Eastern Sun vision.

The way you have served me and also my regent is very good, but I wouldn't say it's quite magnificent yet. You have tried too much sometimes, but at the same time, if you didn't try too hard, you might lose your sense of Great Eastern Sun vision. We are here, not to set up a Buddhist mafia, but we are here to set up a Buddhist kingdom. The mafia people would sneak behind someone's back, trying to con him into giving them money and power. In our case, we are setting

up a kingdom, so everything is out front and very direct, extremely direct.

So far the service that you have rendered to me and to my regent has been very good, but at the same time, with my temporary departure, hopefully you will not relax too much. The reason why the Vajra Guards, Dorje Kusung, have developed some sense of discipline at all is because every one of you has tremendous respect for me and tremendous exertion in your practice. Those two situations are the only key for you to become better Dorje Kusung.

In my absence, I leave behind two very prominent people, with whom you can work, practice, and discuss things together. They are the Kasung General and the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin. Also, I would like to request you to take care of the family as well, the Sakyong Wangmo and Madame Pybus. I leave everything in your hands. I think you can do a good job with this, judging by what you have done so far. But don't relax in this particular situation. Please let us go further, much further than we have gone—which is not a criticism, but it is inspiration. Your inspiration and individual affection for me are beyond measure. I do acknowledge that and thank you very much. Let us go further in the vision of meek, the vision of perky, the vision of outrageousness, and the vision of inscrutability.

Serve my regent in my absence, please. You have a lot of responsibilities. I'm leaving it purely up to you. I wouldn't be gone forever. I will be taking a short break, to find out how you do in my absence. Thank you for the large brush. That's a wonderful gift. Thank you for what you have done. I will reserve another thank you for when I return. Give me a good welcome when I return. In the meantime, perform your duties. Every one of you without exception is on the right track, in the right state of mind, right state of sanity, and right state of Great Eastern Sun vision, without exception. I take pride in all of you.

*Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin:* Ladies and gentlemen of the Dorje Kusung, please sit up and repeat after me this chant of Shambhala:

*All chant:* KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYEL LO TAK SENG KHYUNG DRUK DI YAR KYE!

*Vajra Regent:* Thank you.

*[Following a toast to the Kasung General made by Kusung John Perks, the Vajracharya asks for the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony to be played. The Vajra Regent can be heard singing "Dahdahdah daah" (the opening notes)]*

*in the background. After about five minutes, the symphony finally comes on over the speakers. However, it is not the opening but a later part of the symphony.]*

*Vajra Regent:* Come on, Vajradhatu Recordings. They can do it. They can't do it? [*The music continues.*]

*Kasung General:* Go back to the beginning. [*The music keeps going, much louder.*]

*Kusung Hudson Shotwell:* We can't go back. They don't have the machine to go back.

*Vajra Regent:* Can't they get *dahdahdah daah*?

*Kusung Shotwell:* They can't get *dahdahdah daah*.

*Kasung General:* Dorje Kusung, let's do it. I'll give you the note. *Dah:* all right. Ready, go.

*All:* *Dahdahdah daah. Dahdahdah daah.*

*Various:* Hurrah! Yeah, hear, hear. [*Sound of glasses clinking.*]

*Madame Elizabeth Pybus:* I see you don't recognize the word *defeat*. [*Laughter.*]

*Vajracharya:* We never do that.

*Vajra Regent:* Exactly right.

*Madame Pybus:* It's not in the Tibetan dictionary. [*Laughter.*]

*Vajracharya:* Great eastern sun! You would never give up. That's it!

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6. At this time, the members of the Vajra Guard were known as the Dorje Kusung, and David Rome was known as the Dorje Kasung, or Kasung General.

7. From the perspective of 2001, the date when this material was edited for inclusion in this volume, this talk on the four dignities of Shambhala contains material well-known to those who have practiced the warrior disciplines of Shambhala Training or read the author's books on this topic. However, in 1977 these



categories and this way of thinking were not at all well-known, since most of the Vajracharya's students had not yet received any Shambhala transmissions. Only one of the texts of Shambhala, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*, had been received, and at this point in time, it had only been shared with fifty or sixty people. Shambhala Training itself did not exist, and the first Kalapa Assembly would not take place for a year and a half.

8. Already, at this early juncture, Chögyam Trungpa was recognized as the Sakyong by a small group of close students who included the members of the Vajra Guard attending this event. However, in general he was not yet addressed by this title.

## ***Double Agents***

### AGENTS OF INTELLIGENCE AND AGENTS OF SHAMBHALA VISION

*Dorje Kasung Command Conference Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado •  
February 23, 1978*

*Beginning in 1978, members of the Dorje Kasung leadership, both from within Boulder, Colorado, as well as from centers throughout North America, would gather once a year to practice and discuss Kasungship together. These meetings were generally scheduled to coincide with the Vajra Guards' celebration of the Dorje Dradül's birthday. The Rusung, or guard captains, from the major Dharmadhatus usually attended these conferences and would generally have a meeting with the Makkyi Rabjam in which they could report on the situations in their centers, ask questions, and discuss problems with him. The Makkyi often used these occasions to make a policy address to the assembled leadership group. Beginning in 1979, this annual conference was referred to as the Rusung Conference.*

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* It is important for you to realize that your role as a Vajra Guard is in fact quite an integral part of our community. The Vajra Guard is not something that we decided to patch on to the existing situation. Chronologically speaking, or historically, the Vajra Guard came about after the first visit of His Holiness the Karmapa in 1974. We have maintained the form that was developed at that time. However, as you yourselves know, acting as a Vajra Guard includes many functions. Basically, it is the idea of providing a general sense of security and doing so with intelligence and gentleness—and also with heavy-handedness.

In our community, we have certain difficulties. Mainly, the community

members keep up with their discipline, but occasionally we are faced with the neurosis of various people, on either a large or small scale. A lot of those problems arise from a misguided sense of loyalty. Occasionally, members of the sangha feel that they are outgrowing their situation in the community, or they feel that what they bought into it at the beginning is changing. So they don't want to pay for it later on. That kind of resentment and negativity does happen, which causes chaos and disorder.

Your role as Vajra Guards is not to instate a police state, but rather to act as my agents. You could almost say that you are intelligence agents. Your role is to maintain our community, including all our Dharmadhatus, or regional communities, in fine shape. In the various geographic regions, you have a role to play in working along with the executive committees that make the policies. If questionable situations occur, you can always have direct access to me or to the Kasung General or the Kasung Dapön, the leadership of the Dorje Kasung. We would like to hear about any problematic situations, so that things can be rectified.

Having such alertness and confidence will also be good for your own personal practice. It will upgrade your own attitude toward yourself, and it will upgrade your sitting practice of meditation, as well as the sense of commitment to the vajra sangha at large. So being a guard is a very powerful teaching instrument, for yourselves. That's very important to understand, and it will be very helpful to you at the same time.

The main point I want to express is that I have a personal connection with the guards. Keep that in your mind. When I visit your centers, we will work closely in particular areas. On the whole, we are trying to implement further discipline and dignity in the community, and the guards will have a lot to do with that. We are trying to inspire what is known as Shambhala vision and the development of warriorship. There can be practitioners, and then there can be warriors. The need for warriorship arises from an understanding of the general vajrayana sanity and from the desire to experience and feel that personally. There is a constant, ongoing openness, which we call the Great Eastern Sun. Such unfolding brilliance constantly takes place, and you should be associating yourselves very closely with that, as well as sharing that with the rest of the community. From this point of view, we could say that the Vajra Guards are the agents of Shambhala vision, whereas the rest of the community and particularly the ambassadors are representatives or agents of Vajradhatu.

We have a lot to do together in the future. We can't even write out a schedule for our work because it would be too long, too dense. But the basic point, in any case, is for all of you to take pride in the personal comradeship between me and all of you. A lot of you have worked with me already, and I appreciate that. I appreciate every one of you individually. We have to keep that link together.

I think that's it, more or less. Have I forgotten anything? Well, in closing, a Vajra Guard is student, servant, and close friend rolled into one. That seems to be the definition of the guards at this point, and let us keep it that way. We will have much more to do as we go along.

*Kasung General David I. Rome:* Sir, do you have anything to say to the captains of the Vajra Guards in various regions about how they should relate with the executive committees in their region?

*Dorje Dradül:* The captains should have access to the executive committees. That doesn't mean that we are making a one hundred percent policy that the captains should take part in all executive committee meetings. But they shouldn't lose track of what's happening in those meetings, whether it's in terms of big or small decisions. Whatever happens, you each need to have some way of knowing what's happening in the meetings, whether by attending them or else by getting information by other means.

It's very important that the members of the executive committee don't feel that the captain of the Vajra Guard is barging in on their territory. At the same time, they should understand, and there should be some communication made to all the executive committees, that the role of the captain of the Vajra Guard is *somewhat* that of an intelligence agent. At this point, you should have an invisible *light* hand, somewhat, but an intelligent one. That way we won't create any antagonism with anybody. As long as you have the information and some feeling of what's happening, that's basically what we need. I think it can be done very simply.

Also, if you have a good relationship and connection with the ambassador or emissary in your region, then you can be both types of agents we talked about already. You are my intelligence agents, and you are the agents of Shambhala vision. That will help a lot, and it will put everything into perspective.

## ***Shooting Deception, Naked Mind***

*Birthday Celebration for the Dorje Dradül Highland School<sup>9</sup> • Boulder,  
Colorado • February 24, 1978*

*This celebration of the Dorje Dradül's birthday by the members of the Dorje Kasung set the tone and created the pattern for a series of birthday parties held each year between 1978 and 1983. The first three years these celebrations were held during the dön days, the last days of the Shambhala year when obstacles are particularly prevalent and potent.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome:*<sup>10</sup> Welcome, ladies and gentlemen of the Dorje Kasung and distinguished guests. Tonight we, the Dorje Kasung, the Vajra Guard, celebrate the birthday of the Dorje Dradül, the Vajracharya the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. This is our occasion to acknowledge his leadership, and at the same time, it is his occasion to review our performance, to induct new Kasung at different levels of command, and to acknowledge the outstanding performance of different individuals among the Kasung. We would like to begin with an oath-taking ceremony in three stages. The first is an oath for Shotwell Kadö, and the second is an oath for the Rusung, who are the regional guard captains. At this time, I would request the Dorje Dradül to open this particular ceremony.

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Sometimes it is very easy to join a group, and sometimes it is extremely hard. In our case, it is both. Joining the Dorje Kasung involves some harsh qualities, as well as it being much easier, in some sense, than joining other kinds of groups. Here, the ceremony of taking an oath means opening your heart, having a sense of guts, and manifesting a quality of strength in your existence. The truth that we know, the truth that we've been taught, has

been found to be true. We can live according to that truth, dignity, and power. We follow the sane and enlightened approach to how to lead our lives, how to organize our world properly, fully. The Vajra Guard is an example of that. Your loyalty, genuineness, and chicness are all reflected in your actual performance as Vajra Guards—a role that you perform in every sense in body, speech, and mind.

Tonight we are instituting a tradition of oath taking on the occasion of the celebration of my birthday. This is the first time the Dorje Kasung have celebrated my birthday in this way, but it will be continued as a tradition. Therefore, I'm very pleased that these ladies and gentlemen are taking their oaths here tonight, and I would like to invite them to do so at this time.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap [following the oath-taking ceremony for Shotwell Kadö and the Rusung]:* At this point, we have the swearing in of the Black Division. Because of the duties of the Black Division—their sense of greater commitment and their personal connection with the Dorje Dradül, the Vajracharya, with his family, and with the Kalapa Court—the Black Division operates in a different manner than the Red Division and the White Division. For that reason, beginning tonight, service in the Black Division will be of one year's duration, and at the end of each year, on this particular night when we celebrate the Dorje Dradül's birthday, the Black Division will be disbanded, as it is now, for those few minutes from the beginning of the ceremony up to this point. Then it will be reconstituted.

This year several of the Black guards have graduated to higher positions, at the level of *kadö* and *rupön*. There are a few who, by virtue of their continuing commitment, will be reappointed as Black guards. However, by and large, each year we will be selecting new individuals to make up the thirteen places in the Black guards. We should understand that those who have served as Black guards and who now return to their divisions, Red or White, are by no means considered to have been demoted. On the contrary, their membership in the Black guards remains an outstanding part of their record. At the same time, they remain eligible to serve another year's term in the Black guards at some time in the future. At this point, without further delay, I would like the Kasung dapön, under whose direct command the Black Division comes, to ask the new members of the Black Division to step forward and take their oath.

*[The Kasung Dapön calls the Black Division members forward to read their*

*oath and to receive a pin from the Dorje Dradül. The Dorje Dradül congratulates each one as they approach him, whispering, “Good.”]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* This concludes the oath ceremonies and puts our ranks in order for the coming year. We are now the fully empowered and duly sworn force of the Dorje Kasung. That being the case, we will take a break at this point to receive some refreshment, and then we’ll return for the more celebratory part of the evening.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap [following the break]:* I would like to ask the Dorje Gyaltsap, the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin, to address us. The connection we have as Vajra Guards to a sense of military tradition is clear. We have no embarrassment in identifying with the kind of discipline, energy, and courage that have been embodied in sane military traditions. We could say that the Vajra Regent is the highest civilian in our particular society. Conventionally, the civilians and the military view each other with tremendous paranoia and mistrust. The civilians feel that the military are bloodthirsty warmongers. The military, on the other hand, feel that the civilians are sissies and crowd pleasers with no starch. [*Laughter.*] In our case, being Buddhists, being nontheists, we should understand that no such distinctions exist. Everything we do is the expression of the same one mind, which is embodied in the Vajracharya, or the Dorje Dradül, the Vajra Warrior, as we refer to him. And looking at it in that way, we should understand that the Dorje Gyaltsap, among all the students of the Vajracharya, has the greatest understanding of that one mind and therefore also has the greatest understanding of what we as Dorje Kasung are, of what our role is. His particular style of working as a civilian with us, of training us, testing us, refining us, hammering us out like fine gold, is unsurpassed. It is therefore a tremendous pleasure to request the Dorje Gyaltsap to speak to us at this time.

*The Dorje Gyaltsap, the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin [reading from a prepared speech]:* I would like to address you tonight concerning the relationship between the Dorje Kasung and the vision of the Shambhala kingdom. A body such as the Vajra Guard is unique in the world’s history and unheard of in the culture of the setting sun. The reason for this is very simple: in the minds of the people of the confused, neurotic world—what we call the setting-sun world—guarding is associated with aggression, and power is associated with paranoia. Thus, in the history of societies and cultures of the setting-sun world, we find the use of guards or the military to be haphazard and dangerous, lacking in dignity and

discipline.

There have been, however, occasions in history when such a profound understanding flourished that deviousness and trickery and crude bullheadedness were overcome by genuine gallantry and heroism on the part of the military. It is during these periods, such as the reigns of several Chinese and Japanese emperors and of the great Buddhist king Ashoka of India, that members of the military class could rightly be called warriors. These warriors lived with the same conviction as those descended from the glorious Kingdom of Shambhala, exalted and renowned in Tibetan history.

Whenever the qualities of a warrior appear in the world, those qualities are identical with what we call Shambhala vision. In understanding the relationship between the Dorje Kasung and Shambhala vision, we see that the Kingdom of Shambhala can be related to on three levels: First, purely as mythology, where we see Shambhala as a mythical kingdom where harmony was not a dream but the actual nature of the entire citizenry. Second, we can see the Kingdom of Shambhala as a philosophical ideal to which we can attribute the noblest notions of humankind. And third, and most important to us, we can relate to it as practical and available, which means that its vision exists right now.

The vision of the Shambhala kingdom is based on the relationship between the citizens and their leader. The leaders or kings of Shambhala are called the Rigdens, the originators and guardians of real warriorship. The citizens, recognizing this, sought to perfect themselves in the discipline of the warrior as taught and exemplified by their leader. We could say that, in any culture and in any history, when the leader of that society or culture does not embody the qualities of the warrior, then his relationship to the citizens is without trust, causing such calamities as famine, disease, and war to occur. And when the citizens do not recognize the qualities of warriorship in the leader, nor strive to emulate those qualities, then disaster prevails.

So the first aspect of Shambhala vision that is applicable to us is to recognize the brilliance of the leader and his perfection as the first warrior of our world. By recognizing those qualities as embodied, actually real, we can bring our highest ideal and our desire to achieve that ideal into a workable relationship. Because of the existence of the genuine warrior, we are no longer bound by the heavy quality of earth, that is, by our struggle for perfection, nor are we floating off in the mental fantasies of heaven in our idealized conceptions. Rather, we see that the two are brought together sanely in a living being.



The second aspect of the vision of the Shambhala world as it applies to us is identifying with the qualities of the warrior as being like the rays of the sun, which illuminate the darkness of the confused and ignorant world. These qualities of the warrior have been described to us as Meek, Perky, Outrageous and Inscrutable. In this regard, we could study how the slogans of the Dorje Kasung relate to these four qualities. The first two slogans, representing *Meek*, are: “Have confidence to go beyond hesitation” and “Alert before you daydream.” The first slogan means having confidence in the basic nonaggression of our selves. In the second slogan, alert means that, since we are in contact with this basic state of nonaggression, there is no reason to fantasize an enemy.

*Perky* relates to these slogans: “Mindful of all details, be resourceful in performing your duty” and “Fearless beyond idiot compassion.” Because we recognize our basic nature as nonaggressive, there are no confused thoughts about who we are and what we are, which obstruct action. Action becomes idiot compassion when there are sloppiness and laziness due to confusion. Energy that is fearless comes about when confidence in our own dignity is understood.

*Outrageous* relates to the slogans “Be a warrior without anger” and “Not afraid to be a fool.” Having awakened supreme confidence in our basic sanity and also the willingness to act, we have conviction that our action is without subconscious gossip. Therefore, anger that is foolishness does not apply. Also foolishness that is a genuine action is not a mistake.

Last, *Inscrutable* relates to the slogans: “An invisible heavy hand” and “Be precise without creating a scene.” These slogans simply mean that, having accomplished the discipline we have spoken of, our presence can transform situations without conceit and without strategy based on ego or personal gain. We exist as warriors in the fullest sense. Having identified these qualities of the warrior in the leader and having been taught the discipline to achieve the perfection of the warrior, it is possible for us to completely embody in ourselves the Shambhala principles.

Dorje Kasung become guardians rather than guards of the impeccable warrior tradition, unimaginable to confused minds, but illuminated by the compassion of the Rigdens. So as Vajra Guards, we can aspire to be keepers of a tradition that is perhaps rare and subtle but, on the other hand, essential. We can become keepers, and more than that, we can proclaim the innate dignity of enlightened society. We have the means to do so. Thoroughly trained in the discipline of meditation practice, committing our minds and hearts to the Buddhist path, to the

refuge and bodhisattva vows, we certainly have the means to do so.

Dear members of the Dorje Kasung, I would like to proclaim the truth. I would like to acknowledge before the entire world the existence of the genuine warrior embodied in the Vajracharya who is here with us. Our Vajracharya, who is known by his family name as the glorious Dorje Dradül of Mukpo, has manifested as the Great Eastern Sun and as the inheritor of the Shambhala tradition. He has shown us the way of the warrior. Let us salute him. [*All stand and salute.*]

*[The Kasung Kyi Khyap leads members of the Dorje Kasung in the warrior's cry: KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYE LO TAK SENG KHYUNG DRUK DI YAR KYE. Then, after thanking the Dorje Gyaltsap for his remarks, the Kasung Kyi Khyap continues.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* At this point, on behalf of the Dorje Dradül, I would like to initiate the granting of certain awards to individual Kasung who have served in an outstanding manner during the past year. Here also we must appreciate the sanity that can exist not only in military tradition but in ceremonial tradition. In our world, the point of making any award is not to build up the ego of the individual, but rather to present some kind of colorful monument of the non-ego that has been expressed by that individual and which could serve as further inspiration to others. So in that particular spirit, I would like to ask the Kusung dapön to call forward the different individuals to receive these awards.

*[Following the presentation of the awards, Don Winchell Kadö presents the gift of a Mauser, a German handgun, to the Dorje Dradül.]*

*Winchell Kadö:* On behalf of the Dorje Kasung, to the one who is profound, brilliant, just, powerful, all-victorious, the glorious Dorje Dradül of Mukpo, the Vajra Warrior, I present this gesture of our appreciation and devotion.

*[As the gift is being presented to the Dorje Dradül, the opening of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony is played quite loudly. The Dorje Dradül can be heard laughing.]*

*Dorje Dradül:* Thank you very much. This particular gift is associated with an

interesting personal history. When I was in my own country—the other one—I had a similar weapon, which I enjoyed and played with. It was a symbol to me of my manhood and a symbol of strength.

As you may know, this particular instrument can be taken apart without using screwdrivers. All the pieces slide into one another and click together as one good machine. I used to take the gun apart, every piece of it. My friends at the monastery and my tutors and my general secretaries used to get freaked out. They would say, “This is such an expensive machine. Suppose you can’t put all the pieces back together? Then what are we going to do?” I said, “Don’t worry.” Since we didn’t have the appropriate oil for the revolver, we used to use sheep’s marrow to oil the pieces, so that we could put them back together. Each time I took the machine apart, I managed to put it back together. It worked fine; in fact, it worked better after I took it apart.

Receiving this gift from you is something of my childhood coming back. It is something of a man’s ambition coming back at the same time, as far as I’m concerned. I thank you very much for the gift. It’s wonderful and very thoughtful of you. I suppose I should pretend I didn’t know what it would be. *[Laughter.]*

The concepts of confidence and reality and the concept of human dignity and the sanity of Buddhism are all bound together with all of us and what we are trying to do here tonight. Obviously the Vajra Guards would have nothing to guard if we didn’t have Buddhism, the buddhadharma. And if you don’t have the buddhadharma, you don’t have the Vajra Master either. What we are trying to do here is to secure, organize, and create a sane society together, an enlightened society, and a real world, a proper world.

The role of the Vajra Guards is to shoot people’s deception. That involves a lot of undertakings. When we talk about shooting *[laughs]*, we are not talking about using this particular machine that you gave me. We are talking about how to actually provide accommodation for a simple world, one which is quickly becoming complicated. The world we are talking about here is a very simple world. Every one of you is my student; every one of you has practiced, sat, and taken vows of all kinds. You have begun to understand the notion of lineage, the notion of heritage—the notion of everything we’re trying to do. We are no longer, not anymore, not at all devious people. We have no other cause at all in our whole life except to inspire the Shambhala world and the world of buddhadharma. That’s all we have and all we are aspiring toward.

So we are working on very simple situations. We are not particularly interested in political or economic situations or in dealing with the neurosis of the setting-sun vision. We are not particularly interested in conquering setting-sun people unless they come across our path, unless they happen across us geographically, emotionally, economically. Then we conquer them, because they happen to be in the way. They're not doing anything terrible, but we conquer them because our inspiration is so sharp and so eager. We cannot help ourselves. We cannot resist radiating out, laser beaming out, so we do it. That's pretty much an open secret. The people who are here have experienced the external truth, the internal truth, and the secret truth as Vajra Guards. All of you know some kind of real truth. I watch you: the way you open my car door. I watch you: how you salute me. I watch you: what kind of tie you wear, what kind of topcoat you wear, what kind of suit you wear, what kind of hairstyles you have. I *extremely* pay tremendous attention, very personally, to all of you. That includes ladies as well as gentlemen, of course, needless to say. All of you are my personal companions.

Literally, completely literally, I sometimes think, "Suppose we hadn't introduced the system of the Vajra Guards into Vajradhatu. At this point, what would happen to the organization? What would happen to me personally, in my life?" It would have been very cowardly of me not to do it. I'm glad I introduced the Vajra Guard into our organization.

The Vajra Guard is very personal to me. All of you are very personal to me and very much connected with my family. In some sense, we could say that all of you are Kusung, meaning that you are all part of my extended family at the Kalapa Court, which includes my regent and his wife, Lady Rich, as well as, of course, my own wife, Her Highness Diana Mukpo. I feel somewhat naked tonight because she's not here. But still, I'm naked anyway! I wish she were here to witness this. She would love it.

I feel extremely good that I have dressed up in a military costume this evening so that I can share my nakedness with you. This costume is part of my skin and my nakedness. It is the expression of my mind, in some sense. Of course, we have copied various designs for our costumes, from other military traditions, as well as for the design of our medals, sashes, and all the elements of our uniforms. But at the same time, they are part of the Shambhala vision. Although we have copied other people's point of view or approach, nevertheless we have actually put our own mind and blood and heart—and money—into this. So the uniforms actually become an expression of our naked mind showing through. I

feel extremely good that you can actually see this taking place.

Those who follow the setting-sun vision might be very embarrassed by such nakedness. They think of wearing a uniform as wearing suits of armor one on top of the other. Even the Queen of England has almost ceased to wear her decorations. Every year she wears them less and less. Soon, she's going to wear a plastic crown. The problem is that, although she conducts her world beautifully and she's a good lady and a wonderful person, she has no students in Great Britain. She's a good lady, but she has to depend for the expression of her existence purely on a behavior pattern. She has no chance to tell the truth to any one of the British citizens at all. The citizen who is closest to her is the prime minister, who distrusts her enormously because he or she is trying to safeguard his or her power and vote and all the rest of it. Well, that's that.

We don't have that kind of problem. We are uniquely ourselves, shall we say, in our own unique situation, which is very cheerful, fantastic, and humorous. At the same time, our situation has its own essence, and it presents a threat to those who don't believe in what we're doing. In the past few fortnights, several people have been frightened by our glory and our confidence. They thought that possibly the whole situation could be used as reinforcement for their ego. When that didn't work out, some people dropped out, and some people are about to drop out.

As far as we are concerned, you and I, as far as the Vajra Guard as well as myself and my wife and the regent and the Kasung General are concerned, as far as all the administration is concerned and all the practitioners are concerned, we are no longer going to give up anything, not even an inch. For instance, we are not going to remove that little plaque at the back of the Dorje Dzong building, our headquarters in Boulder, right next to the parking lot, which says: "Unlawful cars will be towed." We're going to keep it that way, and if anybody parks there, we're going to have them towed! [*Laughter.*] We are actually going to do the whole thing, right through, absolutely, no problem.

I don't see any particular problems. And I don't see any problems with you people, either. We are going to do it, through and through, the whole thing, until we are actually able to bring about our brilliant glittering Great Eastern Sun vision.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Kasung General, David I. Rome, for performing his duty impeccably and for in fact conquering his depression, which is one of the greatest victories we have achieved. As the

Kasung Kyi Khyap, he has performed beautifully, and because of that you have a good leader, a fine leader. You couldn't find anyone better than that.

Also I would like to thank the Kusung dapön, Major John Perks, who went on a year's retreat with me last year. Every day when we worked together, we had dealings with our other retreat mates or with our dogs or with our guests, whatever. The Kusung General's performance was impeccable. He was always very cheerful, extremely gallant in his own way, and extraordinarily wakeful in keeping up with the Shambhala vision. His neck and shoulders are very Perky. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for how he has actually performed.

The recently appointed Kasung dapön, James Gimian, has performed beautifully. I had a phone call from the previous Kasung dapön wishing me a happy birthday on behalf of the Vajra Guard. I thought that was very sweet of him, very nice.

Beyond that, we have experienced that the present Kasung dapön has performed so beautifully, not only in the role of his dapönship alone at all, but in the whole evolution of his own understanding of the Shambhala kingdom and the world of vajrayana practice. Lately, he finds that he can actually afford to smile. He has become extremely cheerful and heavy-handed and a military person, which I very much appreciate. I'm afraid I regard that as my project, my product. Nevertheless, my product has proved to be a good one.

On the whole, as far as philosophy is concerned, that is covered by what the Vajra Regent has already expressed in his glorious talk. One thing that I wanted to mention, however, goes back to the "Letter to the Vajra Guards" that I wrote a long time ago, and which a lot of you have already read. One of the key points is that, in terms of spirituality, there are two different kinds of worlds. There are charlatan people who are extremely careful and constantly trying to recruit students. We, on the other hand, don't do that. I'm afraid the organization suffers economically from that, but I think that spiritually our sense of sanity deserves it and doesn't suffer at all.

My approach to dealing with people who are on trips is that I don't encourage them at all to practice—spiritually, meditatively, dharmically—at all. So we might make lots of friends and lots of enemies at the same time. Those enemies may not necessarily be sharpshooters in an audience hall or in a public talk. They're not particularly gangsters of that type, but they have their own particular style. The idea is for the Vajra Guard to have some awareness of that, so that you

can protect us from neurosis of that kind—either physical or psychological. At this point, as far as relations with the public are concerned, we could quite safely say that the Vajra Guards provide 60 percent psychological protection from those kinds of people and the rest of the percentage would be physical protection. Hopefully, at some point or even at this point, the Vajra Guard can be trained to work with people’s psychological warfare.

The responsibility for providing that training rests heavily, of course, on the Kasung General. But at the same time, as far as each of you is concerned, you can think in terms of protecting the ethereal world, the psychological world, and about how to act to that effect as Vajra Guards, apart from the daily duties you might be requested or ordered to perform. I think we’ve covered everything we need to talk about tonight, or this year, so to speak. Maybe next year we can have a much more glorious celebration. It’s very interesting that we decided to hold my birthday celebration here in the Highland School, which a group of community members has just bought. Our being here tonight is kind of an inspection of the property and finally taking possession of the property, which is good and it’s what is needed. I have nothing further to say except insofar as every one of you has performed beautifully. Let us keep our sense of genuine connection, leadership, and comradeship together. So far it has been a good experience.

I would like to add one more remark. In my absence during my retreat last year, Vajradhatu suffered a lot, but the Vajra Guard never suffered at all. That is partly the Kasung Kyi Khyap’s doing, and I think it is also partially, quite largely, your doing as well. I take pride in that. Thank you so much.

*Kasung Dapön James Gimian:* Ladies and gentlemen, please rise. I would like to raise a toast to the one true warrior who embodies for each of us the essence of warriorship—confidence, dignity, energy, and awake—and who embodies the four dignities of the Kingdom of Shambhala: Meek, Perky, Outrageous, and Inscrutable. To the warrior who rules this world and all other worlds possible with a slight smile or seemingly casual gesture. I raise a toast to the Sakyong Dorje Dradül.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* To the Dorje Dradül.

*All:* Hear, hear.

*Kusung Dapön John Perks:* Ladies and gentlemen, please don't sit down. But maybe you, sir [*addressing the Vajra Regent*], would like to sit down. It's my extreme pleasure to propose this toast. Actually there's a myth. They say, on the Congo River, that our children will play music out of our thigh bones and drink sake out of our skulls. And that seems to be rather a good idea, I think. [*Laughs; laughter.*] The gentleman, and I do mean gentle man, that I'm about to propose this toast to will be responsible for a lot of these things. So I'm very pleased to raise this toast. Actually, perhaps we could have three cheers, and it wouldn't blow the roof off. I propose three cheers to His Excellency the Vajra Regent. Hip hip...

*All:* Hooray! Hip hip hooray! Hip hip hooray!

*Norman Hirsch, Rupön:* Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to propose a toast to the Kasung General, David I. Rome, who in Rinpoche's absence during his retreat last year has guided and inspired us. His magnificent inscrutability, somewhat but not entirely embodied in his chess game, has communicated the essence of guard mind for all of us. At this point, I would like to propose a toast. Hear, hear!

*Dorje Dradül:* We should sing something—perhaps “For He's a Jolly Good Fellow.”

*All:* [*singing*]

For he's a jolly good fellow...

Which nobody can deny!

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* In the ancient and noble tradition of the game of chess [*laughter*], we have what is known as a gambit. A gambit is a situation, fundamentally, in which you take an unexpected chance. As far as your opponent is concerned, it is an unexpected chance. At the same time, as far as you are concerned, it also presents a certain risk.

Throughout the history of this particular game, there have been many fantastic and impressive gambits. Nevertheless, no one ever thought of an unconditional gambit, a vajra gambit! But we have thought of that. We have been presented with such a possibility, unconditional risk, which might be a momentous occurrence or it might be the next little step. In either case, it is a gambit, which



we have taken and which we take further tonight. We can only take this gambit because such a possibility has been presented to us by unconditional mind, which is the unconditional mind of the dharma. At the same time, it is a mind that we could express in the conditional world through the vision and the lineage of the Kingdom of Shambhala.

I believe that we have come to the end of our particular schedule for this evening. In fact, we've gone beyond the end. In that spirit of unconditional gambit, I would like to congratulate all those who took their oaths tonight, those who received awards, as well as all the rest of us. This particular occasion in this particular building embodies a sense of taking possession of something. The Dorje Dradül said that we were taking possession of this building. But perhaps we could go further and say that we are taking possession of our own human heritage and our own warrior heritage. Let it be so, and let it continue to be so.

Sir, we are your soldiers. Please make use of us in your mighty gambit!

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9. This abandoned school building on the corner of 9th and Arapahoe in Boulder was purchased by a group of Buddhist businessmen who intended to make it into an office building. It was later sold and is now the site of the Highland Club. The Dorje Kasung birthday party took place in the rather weathered building before any renovations had been done.

10. During his talk, the Dorje Dradül refers to David I. Rome, then known as the Kasung General, as the Kasung Kyi Khyap. From this time on, Rome was known by this title within the Dorje Kasung. Also see “[Regarding New Directives on the Structure of the Guards](#)” in the appendices, [here](#).

## ***Provoking Drala on the Hot Line***

*Address to the Dorje Kasung Kalapa Assembly • Snowmass, Colorado •  
November 5, 1978*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome:* Good evening, Kasung, which automatically includes Kusung. We have no particular agenda for this meeting, but an agenda doesn't exactly seem to be the point. Rather, this meeting is marking what is taking place here at the first Kalapa Assembly, and it also represents the Dorje Dradül's willingness to mark that with us.

By and large, our experience here speaks for itself, has spoken for itself, and most important, it will continue to do so. I think we have an opportunity to go much further in our experience of the Kingdom of Shambhala and how it actually works. As the military, we take pride in being the vanguard of Shambhala vision. Even without knowing it, we have been that in the past. We developed a sense of loyalty before that was a famous word. Then we held the first Magyal Pomra Encampment last summer, which was definitely soaked in Shambhala vision, Shambhala mind.

Nevertheless, that was just doing our thing. Our thing is meaningless if it doesn't become the inspiration for the manifestation of the complete Shambhala society. That is what we have experienced here, or at least the seed has been planted here, definitely. The positive role of the military in providing electricity and providing an invisible heavy hand in the kingdom has been evident here. At the same time, the room to expand further has also been evident.

The Dorje Dradül pointed out that there has been a certain amount of sloppiness in our conduct here at assembly. This was not completely overcome—for reasons that I don't think were the fault of the guards. It may have been partially my fault. In any case, it shows that we have further room to expand, in order to perform our service of sparking the discipline, tidiness, and inspiration of the kingdom.

This calls for further commitment, further daring, and further bravery. As we know, if that's done properly, it brings further power to us. We don't have to crank up the whole situation, but if we crank up our basic commitment, bravery, and guts, then tremendous power is available to us. With that remark, if I may, sir, I would like to ask you to address us.

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* All right. On the whole, the Kalapa Assembly has provided us with further guidelines as to the basic role of the Kasung. You have seen how to perform in that role within the Kingdom of Shambhala. One of the interesting points is that the existence of Kasungship and Kusungship here has actually marked and highlighted the concept of court and the concept of government. Therefore, we should take pride in our existence as Kasung and Kusung as pioneers for the whole discipline, format, formality, and protocol of the kingdom itself. This has been extremely helpful. Without the Vajra Guards, there would not be any of the format or the atmosphere that we managed to create.

The role of the Dorje Kasung in providing the proper atmosphere started as far back as 1974 during His Holiness Karmapa's first visit to North America. From then on, the Kasung picked up on the whole process of creating the proper environment. As far as the Kasung are concerned, there is need for pride in our existence. Needless to say, we are not playing cowboys and Indians here. We mean business.

I appreciate your head and shoulders. Furthermore, all of you here have committed yourselves to the Kasung situation, and I would like to request all of you to remain as Kasung. Whether you are involved in a business or whether you move away from Boulder to somewhere else, nevertheless, on the whole, I would like to ask you to remain indefinitely in your role as Dorje Kasung. Being a Kasung is a great opportunity, very special. Each of you has proven yourself individually. You have discipline, you have practiced, and we have put lots of energy and effort into all of you so that you can raise yourselves up and perform accordingly. Such an education is unique. So I hope you can stick with it and remain with this discipline indefinitely.

Your role is to work with the neurosis of people who might interrupt the Great Eastern Sun vision or present obstacles to others on the path. Your role is to protect from those obstacles, or not necessarily to protect but to promote a counterreaction, which could be physical or philosophical. The Shambhala style might be attacked by someone, and the attacker might inspire chain reactions in

other attackers and create chaos. In the project of creating a Shambhala kingdom, your role is to be well equipped to protect and to retaliate in the appropriate way, which is related to the eight mottos, or guard slogans, that we have.

A twofold situation is needed with the guards. One, if you don't have a chance to absorb the materials that have been presented here, I would suggest that you get together with the group of Kasung and Kusung who attended Kalapa Assembly and have study sessions to try to understand the intellectual aspect of what was presented here. When we get back to Boulder, it will be very important to have these study sessions so that we can sharpen our role and so that the goal of our existence as Kasung can be crystallized. It's very important to have a Kasung-oriented attitude in studying the Shambhala vision.

Two, there is the physical aspect of your presence and your work as military. It is very important for you to connect with the dralas, which have particular meaning for the military. In the iconographical representations, the dralas are dressed as soldiers in medieval costumes, wearing suits of armor, carrying weapons, and riding horses. The drala concept should sink into your state of being. When you wear your uniform or your guard pin, that actually provokes the outer drala. The outer drala situation is created by the military. If you are a good Kasung, you have special access to the dralas, much more so than basic civilians do. That is important for you to realize.

It is important to have a bold sense of warriorship, which comes from experiencing yourselves as military in the Kasung and Kusung situations. You should appreciate that this special assignment, or this special situation that you are in, is very much connected with drala. The Kasung are given a special blessing so that they can provoke drala on the hot line. With that kind of appreciation and arrogance, we can continue our work. I have been working with you people very closely. Obviously, as we discussed, there are some loose ends that need tying up. One is the interruptions created by civilians trying to use us as worker bees, wanting us to do everything: drive, pack, carry heavy things for them, and so on. The other loose end is the individual confusion that one feels.

All of you should feel that you want to do things to the best of your ability. But if you become too keen on the whole thing, you begin obeying commands from all over the place, and then you lose your individuality. So you need to stand up for your own situation. The interesting thing about being a Kasung is that, while on the one hand it is not quite on the level of a busboy, on the other

hand—in order to accommodate or provide efficiency in the administration—the agents of that efficiency are the Kasung altogether. So there is quite a fine line there.

We don't want to create resentment or any situation like that, but we have to maintain our dignity. I think we have to jump into the situation where we can be effective. This implies that each one of you should have a sense of intelligence and a sense of loyalty at the same time, as well as accommodation and gentleness.

In order to go further, we have a lot more studying to do. Maybe the Kasung from the first and the second sessions of the assembly<sup>11</sup> can get together to have some study sessions on how to present yourselves properly as military. That requires further work.

*Kasung Richard Peisinger:* Dorje Dradül, sir, in terms of the worker bee quality, it seems that situations come up where physical effort is needed. When there is hesitation, the guards step forward and do it. Should we not be so quick? Are we supporting bad habits by stepping in?

*Dorje Dradül:* That's a key point. [*Turns to the Kasung Kyi Khyap.*] What would you say?

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* The basic attitude of being ready to jump in and do what needs to be done is very important. If you start holding back according to some idea of not degrading the military, that could get to be a bit suspicious. I think the point is more to establish our place so that it begins to be understood by people. Then, sometimes, we might have to provide some resistance.

*Dorje Dradül:* The resistance has to be refined, actually. There are some problems that arise from that. I think that the military should stretch itself further. The military should make a relationship with other service organizations in our sangha, such as the Padma Committee and the Karmasangha,<sup>12</sup> so that our sense of duty can be shared with them. In that way, we could have much more scope. Then the military could come into the situation when their participation was crucial, not holding back. We should provide service as our duty rather than acting like clerks. It's very delicate, but I think you can afford to have some dignity.

When you've engaged with a situation already, if you bounce back and begin

to bark like a Pekinese, that makes people sour on you. We don't want to do that. I think it depends on the scope, how much manpower we have. The Karmasangha, the people in the general community working in volunteer situations, and the guards should get together somehow. For example, if something needs to be mailed at the post office, it could be carried there, not by the Kasung, but by some other volunteer. But if we have to relate with visiting dignitaries, then the military people would come along.

I think the point is not so much to purely obey orders from above but that you should have your own intelligence, so that there is political vision. Vajradhatu has foreign relations with people whom you have to treat well, attend, and serve. Within our organization, there are people such as the board of directors, ambassadors, and emissaries who we have to work with and serve. We are ready to do so, but still we maintain a sense of dignity.

*Kasung Dapön James M. Gimian:* Sir, could you say something more about the problems that arise from resistance? There seems to be a fine line between on the one hand having dignity and pride in our existence and understanding that our responsibility means not being a worker bee or a clerk—which is not appropriate—and on the other hand the problem with too much resistance, which needs to be refined. Could you say something more about that fine line and how it could be refined when we need to make a statement?

*Dorje Dradül:* I tell you what. We have to prove ourselves, to show that there are such human beings known as the Kasung who are actually efficient, smooth, and good. Any task that is given to us will be completely accomplished. With that kind of credential, people can't abuse us. If they push any further, then we provide a certain resistance, because the request for service is based on frivolity. We can put the whole thing back on them. I think the main point is that, when a job is given to us, we take it over completely. We do it completely, officially, ideally. That kind of luxury is not provided for everybody, but only in certain particular situations. Otherwise, we would be cleaning up everybody's garbage and doing all sorts of things that we don't particularly want to do.

*Kasung Dapön:* You're saying that, by fulfilling our responsibility completely, a sense of dignity comes along, which can't be abused?

*Dorje Dradül:* Yes, the service is so good that it becomes deluxe service, which people can't just abuse off the cuff.

*Kasung Dapön:* Well, it has been my experience, to some extent, that some people in this community start with the assumption that guardship doesn't inherently have much dignity, so that any old task that comes along can be given to the Kasung. So is that the attitude that can be transformed?

*Dorje Dradül:* Yes. Also, the Kasung should relate with volunteers in the Karmasangha and with the Padma Committee. The idea is that the military will develop a connection with any kind of fringe manpower that is needed. These groups can be included in what we're doing as well. That would tie the whole thing together. At a certain point, I would particularly like to see the Karmasangha, the volunteers, have a much closer link to the military. With that kind of a link, the civilian-military boundary could be broken down.

At the same time, if we work through the channels of hierarchy all the time, it breaks down or slows down our efficiency altogether. Everyone should carry things out based on their own intelligence. At the same time, we don't just take chances and give guesswork orders. Some relationship with the hierarchy still takes place, so that the hierarchy will have some idea what's going on down below. However, when you are confronting the enemy and deciding whether you should shoot them or capture them, you have no chance to call up to your general and ask what you should do, because you could get killed yourself. You have to make a quick decision on the spot, based on the vision that exists on the spot. That is the basic notion of how to be a soldier. So the military situation is very interesting and quite different from the civilian one.

*Kasung Dapön:* Because the challenge is so immediate?

*Dorje Dradül:* Yes, all the time.

*Kasung Gary Weiner:* Sir, I was wondering if you would comment on whether the guards have been functioning all right as far as formality is concerned or whether we have been too formal?

*Dorje Dradül:* You shouldn't let anyone get away with informality because they couldn't be bothered with formality. If somebody expresses informality because the situation requires it, then the guards can accommodate that, not on the ground of frivolity but because it has been required by the situation. However, nothing can go wrong if you are formal all the time. The Kasung particularly

experience this, because they are involved in the household situation. Kusung should never give in to informality at all, any time. They should always maintain formality. There will be humor, of course. We are not setting-sun people. We are not stiff. We have our own humor and sanity, but we shouldn't be giving in to informality. I would be very hurt if we did that.

*Norman Hirsch, Rupön:* Dorje Dradül, sir, would you say that applies as well in situations outside of the community? Not that we should pose as guards in the business world but that this identity carries over?

*Dorje Dradül:* I think that's traditionally what happens in the military. Someone who was a colonel in the military and then retired and was running a supermarket would still carry his militariness with him, in some sense. I think that business can be accomplished much better that way. People will respect that you have your own tidiness. It would be great.

*Hirsch Rupön:* So we shouldn't be timid about doing that.

*Dorje Dradül:* There's no reason to be. The only reason that you become timid about that is the fear that other people may not like you because you're so stiff. They might accuse you of being stiff, but that's okay. That should be regarded as a compliment.

When you are formal, people pay much more attention to you, and they feel that you have some substance in your existence rather than it being purely a happy-go-lucky situation. According to the sociological situation happening in this country, lots of people have gone through their casualness, and now they would like to find a way out of it. Little by little, step-by-step, they are relating back to formality, much more so. People were on big spiritual trips, big hippie trips. They developed some trust in that, but then the spiritual and hippie trips became untrustworthy, degenerating into carefree and even criminal situations. People have begun to come full circle. So we are the vanguard; we came on this in a very timely manner.

*Hudson Shotwell Kadö:* Sir, I have a question about the mahakala principle. At the encampment, you mentioned that we were beginning to become some form of mahakala principle. I was wondering if that is related to drala? When we are embodying guardship, are we essentially embodying the mahakala principle?



*Dorje Dradül:* There are two situations here, the Buddhist and the Shambhala ones. According to Buddhism, guardship is related to the mahakala principle. It is the protection of the teachings, which the trident represents. Then we have the drala principle, which in some sense is the Shambhala version of the mahakala. You have learned at this assembly about the ultimate drala; that is the same as mahakala. That is why you are called Kasung. *Ka* is command of the Shambhala situation or command of the vajra. And *sung* means “protection.” As Kasung we actually can provide all of that.

*Shotwell Kadö:* Is mahakala polite or savage?

*Dorje Dradül:* Very savage. In some sense drala is more polite, a sort of warrior gentleman or shogun principle, but he still has his guts.

*Kasung Dapön:* Sir, could you say something about the special connection that the military has with the drala principle? Is this just developed by virtue of connecting with the military tradition that Shotwell was talking about, or does it develop from some particular practice?

*Dorje Dradül:* The military is closely linked with the notion of protection, which means cutting through any neurosis that comes up within the community, as well as outside of the community—foreign invasion. The military also has a much closer link with the Sakyong. Therefore, the Sakyong’s gallantry and fearlessness are very closely shared with the Kasung, and therefore their existence is much closer to the Sakyong’s. In other words, the military is always sitting on the fringe of the Sakyong’s world and takes part in the Sakyong’s relationship with the dralas, much more so than the civilians. Also, the military relates more closely with weapons, uniforms, pins, and buttons, which are particular magical situations that attract the dralas much more so.

*Kasung Dapön:* So the way to develop that greater connection is to get much more completely into the military tradition?

*Dorje Dradül:* Yes, militariness. What else can you do? [*Laughs.*]

*Kasung Dapön:* Can we do group Ashe practice when we have guard classes?

*Dorje Dradül:* You can do the whole thing: Ashe practice, raising windhorse,

discussion, drill (if you can find a place to do that), and so on. Marching has a much more special effect on us than just a regular setting-sun soldier doing their thingy. Each time we take a step, we are provoking drala, in every left turn. We are provoking drala principle at that gut level altogether.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap*: Maybe we should conclude here.

*Dorje Dradül*: I would like to say one more thing. I appreciate working with you people a lot. Let's work together more!

*[The Dorje Kasung present the loyalty salute and then all sing the "Guard Song."]*

*Dorje Dradül*: Great! We have lots to do when we get back to Boulder. When you get together with the Kasung who haven't been to the Kalapa Assembly, I would suggest that those of you who were here should act as discussion group leaders. Special precedence should be given to the guards who have been here so that they act as the group leaders. If necessary, we can break the rest of the Kasung into small groups of guards, and all of you can take them on as students, similar to what we do with meditation instructors and advisors. When you work with your guard students, you should study together what we do as Kasung, obviously. We have our own thing, and it would help a lot to say such things much more straightforwardly. We have veins, we have muscles, and we have all sorts of systems. It would be very good to work on that. Thank you.

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11. The first Kalapa Assembly consisted of two two-week sessions, so the entire assembly lasted for one month.

12. Two volunteer organizations within Vajradhatu at this time. The Padma Committee was established to provide generosity and hospitality to people within the community. The committee organized events, such as receptions for new members of the community. The Karmasangha was established to provide volunteer help for various projects within the community. For further information, see Carolyn Rose Gimian and Melvin McLeod, eds., *The Best of the Vajradhatu Sun: Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and the Vajradhatu Community 1978–1987* (Halifax: Shambhala Sun, 2001). Chögyam Trungpa's address to the Padma Committee appears on the cover of volume 1, number 6 (August/September 1979), and excerpts from a talk to the Karmasangha appear in volume 1, number 1 (October/November 1978).

## ***Children of Buddhism***

*Birthday Celebration for the Sawang (Ösel Mukpo Chinese Restaurant •  
Denver, Colorado • January 20, 1979*

*This celebration, organized by the Dorje Kasung, was held at a Chinese restaurant in Denver, a half-hour to forty-five-minute drive for most of those attending. The day of the event, there was a huge snowfall, making it difficult to drive. However, more than two hundred people came to the banquet, in spite of the snow.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome: Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. On behalf of the Dorje Kasung, I would like to very warmly welcome all of you who have been kind and enthusiastic enough to join us this evening. The simple purpose of our gathering this evening is to raise a portion of the tuition for the education of the Dorje Dradül's eldest son, (Ösel Mukpo. (Ösel, as many of you know, is in his first year at the Fountain Valley School in Colorado Springs and is, I might add, working very hard there and progressing extremely well.*

*At the same time, this evening's gathering brings together many themes in our life as the Vajradhatu sangha. The event has been organized and is hosted by the Dorje Kasung in order to fulfill their commitment to (Ösel Mukpo's education. Therefore, I think this gathering also says something about who the Dorje Kasung are. Those of you who have followed the national and local press recently have been treated to interesting descriptions of what the Dorje Kasung, among others, are not and should not be.<sup>13</sup> [Laughter.] We are no more muscular and dogged than the general run of humanity, and I hope somewhat less so. [Laughter.] We are not given to ugliness and violence but to nonaggression and to human dignity. We are not mindless robots but intelligent and committed seekers who know the value and the place of genuine devotion. It is this*

devotion that we seek to express in supporting the son of the man who gives our lives honesty, strength, and radiance.

At the same time, we recognize in the son the continuation of the father's qualities and thus our own link to future generations. We are not gathered here purely to hold a glamorous birthday party for a young man who turned seventeen this week. For dear and good as he is, one hesitates to honor the young overmuch. But we are honoring him in the process of his education, and therefore in a larger sense we honor the continuity of our own work and our culture.

The importance of enlightened culture in the complete fulfillment of the dharma is expressed in our world by Shambhala vision. So, we may say that the Shambhala sense of how to be together in a gentle and dignified way is our actual purpose tonight. In keeping with this aim, we will be reciting a brief dedication of our meal to the Rigden Father, who, as the emperor of Shambhala, represents the continuity of enlightened culture through history. Some of you are not yet familiar with this liturgy, but please join in the sense of it, which is dedicating the food as a sacred meal that nourishes sanity and warriorship and destroys cowardice and confusion. After the meal there will be a round of toasts followed by a short reading of Oriental and Western poetry.

Again, welcome to this banquet. Please relax with confidence, eat with enjoyment, and let us share our mutual presence here with celebration. Thank you.

*[All chant the opening meal chant.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap* [following dinner]: Ladies and gentlemen, at this point we have finished our seven courses, and we should do our concluding chant, after which you are welcome to smoke. Then, we will be continuing with the various parts of the program that we have.

*[All chant the closing meal chant.]*

*Kasung Dapön James Gimian*: Ladies and gentlemen, would you please rise for a toast. On this very cheerful occasion of the birthday of the son, it is my great honor to propose a toast to the father. Let us pledge our devotion to the

Dharmaraja. Long may he live.

*All:* Hear, hear.

*Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin:* Ladies and gentlemen, I would like at this point to propose a toast by reading a poem that I wrote this evening. It's called "Hatched." [*He reads:*]

From a galaxy of confused stars,  
From a thick gray night of endless bickering, From a hopeless meeting of  
exploding minds, The brilliant son arises.

The birth of a child is full of expectation, Survival and pain,  
Great hope and delight,  
On the soft earth of our world  
A footprint appears,  
Accompanied by laughter and gentle smiles.  
Within a moment  
We are accompanied by a smiling child, who has no fear.

Great things have been done.  
Great things are yet to be done.  
Not the world's things,  
Not the confused world's things,  
Not histories written by thin-lipped historians, Not songs of disenchanting  
singers,  
Not poems of self-seeking poets,  
Not battles of self-possessed generals,  
Not compromises of calculating politicians, Not incantations of puffed-up  
saints.

Great things have been done.  
Great things are yet to be done.

The child of illusion is the earth's child.  
Great child of sanity is the earth's product.  
Great child of endless patience

Great child of endless patience,  
Great child of sweet and sour longing,  
Great child of brilliant sunshine,  
Great child of confusion's deception,  
Of highways and mountains,  
Of great ships on great oceans,  
Of long journeys,  
Of dense forests,  
Of crowded cities,  
Of bleached countrysides,  
Of stormy sea coasts,  
Of thousands and millions and trillions of beings, Of hope, of fulfillment,  
Of real and earnest intention.  
Great child of the simple truth  
Is hatched on a white cloud of awakened mind, Without vitamins and  
yogurt,  
Without prodding and endless reminders,  
Without analysis and tactical maneuver,  
A child becomes man,  
Becomes great human being.  
In our time,  
In our moment,  
We have cause to celebrate the birthday.  
We have cause to rejoice and not hold back.  
  
Great things have been done.  
Great things are yet to be done.  
  
To the Sawang Ösel Mukpo.

*All:* To the Sawang.

*Kusung Dapön John Perks:* My lord, ladies and gentlemen, actually I think it's rather auspicious that we are here in a Chinese restaurant. As you know, in our

lineage, the Chinese hold a very special place. [*Laughter.*] If it were not for them, you-know-who would not be here tonight. [*Laughter; applause.*] So, they hold a very special spot, so to speak. Perhaps in our future mythology they will take over the department of transportation. [*Laughter.*]

I thought that I should tell a Sawang story. When I first came to work at the court at 7th and Aurora,<sup>14</sup> I came in contact with Ösel Mukpo, and we occasionally shot toothpick arrows into the ceiling on Sunday afternoons. The thing that impressed most, I think, was when we went on a trip to the desert together, and we had a small war there. We were throwing mud pies at each other, and the Sawang got hit full in the face. What impressed me most about him at that time was that his reaction was one of taking the whole thing in terms of fun. The whole thing was a game to him, and there was no anger or no retribution [*sic*] or anything like that. Certainly in adults gentleness is a rare thing. In someone so young, it must be rarer still. But he is indeed, as we say, a chip off the old block.

It is my extreme pleasure tonight to ask you to rise for a toast on his behalf. I give this toast in the name of the Dorje Kasung, and of course I include the Dorje Kusung in that, as well as the members of the house staff of the Kalapa Court. We all love him dearly. To the Sawang.

*All:* The Sawang.

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Ladies and gentlemen, I'm so glad you all are able to gather here and celebrate with us. It is very sweet of you, very kind and considerate of you. Obviously, we are trying to create a situation where confusion can be liberated and the practice of meditation can be promoted. That is our goal and aim altogether. As you know, there are all kinds of resentments coming from the confused world, which seems to be quite humorous. In fact, such people should have known about us several years ago.

However, when the world begins to recognize us as a sore point or a big firework of sanity, there is no regret. The only way is to continue further, with no compromise, none whatsoever, at all. We know that. We will never sit less, practice less, or, for that matter, drink less. [*Laughter.*] We will go on, like caring for a field that constantly has to be ploughed. We plough the land; we plough the sky. We work with the sun and the moon together, including the galaxy of stars. We will go on all the time. We continuously go on, fearlessly, without any resentment, without any aggression or any sense of regret, none

whatsoever.

I am glad that you are here tonight to take part in one portion of that particular vision. Celebrating the birthday of my son, my oldest son, may be a small portion, or it could be a big portion. I am glad that you are here to work and join together with this celebration, which is fantastic and good. It is time to celebrate constantly.

I have been raising several sons, as you know. There is the dharma heir, and there is the blood heir. I have been very busy raising both of them. It's quite a full-time job. I've been working quite hard, with delight, of course. Tonight is the occasion to celebrate my blood heir. My son Ösel Rangdrol has grown beyond the child level, much more so, and he's working quite hard and practicing quite a lot. As you know, he recently took the refuge vow, which denotes making a full commitment to the Buddhist lineage, fully and thoroughly. He's been sitting quite diligently and studying quite diligently at school.

I don't think my son could be raised this way if I were living with him in the middle of a confused city, in the middle of Grand Central Station in New York City or in the middle of the Boston airport. My son was able to be raised and develop this way because of what you have done for us—that is to say, for myself, my son, and my whole family, including my wife. You, the sangha of my students, have provided a tremendous environment, one which is fantastically beautiful and very inspiring.

Obviously, each one of us goes through ups and downs. Occasional neuroses and occasional sparks of sanity go up and down. Nevertheless, you have actually, totally created this world for myself and my son, my sons or son, sss. What you have done is tremendously appreciated. Without this environment, I could not have raised my family properly. For that matter, I myself cannot live properly without a dharmic and disciplined environment. Some of the environment has been created by the Kasung and Kusung, who have worked very hard. Part of the situation has come forth because of the rest of the sangha members, who have been diligent, good, and extraordinarily loyal, faithful, and cheerful—in spite of blah, blah, blah. To that effect, I would like to raise a toast. I regard everybody here as my children. I've seen all of you just as you came out of the womb, metaphorically speaking. You wanted me to change your diapers, which I have done. Then you wanted to suckle milk, which I've provided. Now you want to walk and run around, which I let you do. Then I want you to sit and practice, which you have done as well.



So I would like to raise a toast to the children of Buddhism. Let us rejoice together. Children of Buddhism!

*All:* Children of Buddhism.

*Sawang Ösel Rangdrol Mukpo:* Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to make a toast to my father, the Vajracharya, who sets the guidelines in my life, which I try to follow, and he's always supportive of what I do. To the Vajracharya.

*All:* To the Vajracharya.

*Sawang:* Also, I would like to make a toast to the Kasung, sss<sup>15</sup> [*laughter*], who I appreciate for arranging this gathering. The Kasung have always been very special to me. We have worked together and practiced together in the past, and I think we will practice together more in the future. To the Kasung, sss. [*Laughter.*]

*All:* To the Kasung.

*Sawang:* Finally, I would like to make a toast to all of you, the members of the sangha. I appreciate your coming here to my birthday celebration. Your practice and your connection have inspired me a lot. Thank you. To the sangha.

*All:* To the sangha.

*Sawang:* Good night.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Ladies and gentlemen, as the Vajracharya said, it has been extremely kind of all of you to come here tonight. As a modest form of retribution<sup>16</sup> [*laughter*], we would like at this time to offer a few poems from the classical Oriental tradition as well as the Western tradition. To avoid it becoming a tribulation, we shall try to keep it brief. At this time I would like to introduce Dr. Jeremy Hayward as our first reader.

*Dr. Jeremy Hayward:* Ladies and gentlemen, it's a great delight to have the privilege of reading here in honor of the Sawang. These few poems from the Chinese tradition are offered to him, in celebration of his birthday.

*[Four Chinese poems are read by Dr. Hayward. Then Mrs. Elizabeth Southward is introduced and reads several sonnets of Shakespeare. She says, "In honor of the Sawang, a few words from the Bard." Then the Kasung Kyi Khyap reads three poems by Yeats, dedicating the first to Lady Diana Mukpo, ending with "Lapis Lazuli." Then the Kasung Kyi Khyap introduces and proceeds to read a poem composed on January 1, 1979 by the Dorje Dradül.]*

MEMORIAL IN VERSE

This year of building the kingdom:

Dealing with the four seasons,

Studying how millet grows,

And how the birds form their eggs;

Interested in how Tampax were made,

And how furniture can be gold leafed;

Studying the construction of my palace—

How the whitewash of the plain wood can be dignified, How we could  
develop terry cloth on our floor, How my dapöns can shoot accurately,

How my financiers can rush themselves into neurosis, How the cabinet  
session can arrive at pragmatic decisions.

Oh, I have watched the sky grow old

And the trees become younger as the seasons changed.

I have experienced the crisp air of December and January becoming a  
landmark of my life As twenty gray hairs grow on my head.

I have witnessed that I have grown older and old As I grasp the scepters and  
handle the rice heaps, Performing ceremonies.

I have thought I have also grown younger every day, Taking showers,  
looking myself in the mirror— Perky and willing, I see myself:

That my lips don't quiver, my jaws are strong, My gaze is accurate.

When I think of this year,

The most memorable occasion is the explosion of love affair, Which was no  
joke.

It is true. I think of that every day,

When I take my Aldactone and my reserpine for my good health, As  
prescribed by the physicians.

I think of my love affair as I wipe my bottom, sitting on the toilet— One appreciates that yellow dye sitting on white paper As it flushes down in the efficient American plumbing system.

One of this year's highlights is also that I failed and accomplished a lot: The failure is mine, the accomplishment is to my Regent.

Sometimes I think of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, or the Yellow River; I could have shed many tears.

And I think of the glaciers of Mount Everest; I could become solid, steady, and stern.

I have developed the face of a frozen glacier.

So, my life comes and goes,

In the same way that swallows sway back and forth in the air.

They may catch flies or they may not.

I have developed jurisdiction and fair constitution of the Kingdom of Shambhala, I have told the truth of the Great Eastern Sun vision from my moldy lips.

I have experienced certainty within uncertainty, For one realizes the traffic of ants does not have traffic lights And it is hard to give them speeding tickets.

My journey grows and shrinks as the Vajracharya and the Sakyong, The first of the Kingdom of Shambhala.

However, the wicked will tremble and the awakened will rejoice.

I have fought, ambushed, attacked, nursed, abused, cultivated, fed, nourished, hospitalized my world With its worldees.

Now I have grown very young and very old.

I appreciate the sun and moon, snow and rain, clouds and deep blue sky; I appreciate the ruggedness and the beauty of the universe, Which is sometimes cruel, developing sharp thorns of cactus, And sometimes produces chrysanthemums of fantastic scent.

Blood or ink: both I take as yellow and purple color.

*[All sing the Shambhala anthem.]*

*Dorje Dradül: Thank you. Good night!*

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13. Around this time, an article entitled “Spiritual Obedience,” critical of Chögyam Trungpa, the Vajra Guards, and the Buddhist community, appeared in *Harper’s Magazine*. Similar articles also appeared in the *Boulder Daily Camera* and other newspapers. It is to this publicity that the Kasung Kyi Khyap refers. For reactions from members of the community to the *Harper’s* article, see Gimian and McLeod, eds., *The Best of the Vajradhatu* Sun 1, no. 4 (April/May 1979).

14. The first Kalapa Court was established during the summer of 1976 in Boulder, Colorado, at 7th and Aurora, in a house that was rented for the Dorje Dradül for several months while the home he was purchasing on Mapleton Hill was being remodeled.

15. The Sawang is joking about the Dorje Dradül’s comments on “sons and son, sss.”

16. The Kasung Kyi Khyap is repeating John Perks’s pronunciation of *retribution* as “retribu-ation” in his toast.

## ***This Is Your Duty***

BE WIND, CONTAINER, HORIZON

*Address to the Rusung Conference Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado •  
February 25, 1979*

*The Dorje Dradül's talk came after a long question-and-answer period where Rusung from around North America reported on the Kasung activities in their Dharmadhatus. The Dorje Dradül's talk was also prefaced by remarks by Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome.*

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* As guards, or members of the Dorje Kasung, we have a responsibility that is not based on acting as janitors or housekeepers for the shrine hall alone. As Vajra Guards we shouldn't think of ourselves as convenient busboys, who pick people up from the airport and do our duty at a servant level. In your presentations earlier today, you talked about your great responsibilities and diligence in serving the community, which is fine and fantastic. We have to provide that kind of service to anything inspired by the practice or inspired by the students and the teachers in the community.

The problem, though, is that there still seems to be some sense of apology on your part. You seem to be saying, "Look at us. We are doing our thing, and we are actually becoming useful and helpful to the organization!" Your duty is much greater than that. Your duty is to uplift and to expand the vision of the atmosphere that is created in a proper teaching situation.

When there are Dorje Kasung present, some people may feel paranoid and accuse us of being a fascist group, as has already happened. The real role of the Dorje Kasung is to provide tremendous accommodation and hospitality and to create the atmosphere for the teachings to be presented. If we don't have the Kasung, we can't teach dharma properly because there's no atmosphere created.

So we're not talking about the Dorje Kasung being henchmen. It's not the idea of a mafioso who demands either your brains or your signature. We're not talking in those terms. We are saying, quite simply, that when someone presents the buddhadharma, the Vajra Guards, the Kasung, are there to create a sympathetic and contained atmosphere. Your responsibility is much more than cleaning up somebody's mess, disposing of their cigarette butts. And your duty seems to be much greater than you expected!

Obviously, your role is also to work closely with the emissaries and the ambassadors of the Dharmadhatus, maintaining *their* sanity so that their approach does not become diluted or extraordinarily outrageous. We have collected stories and case histories of problems of that nature. However, it is not necessarily the Vajra Guards' duty to clean up somebody else's vomit. Your role is maintaining the strength and dignity in a situation, making sure that, when buddhadharma is presented, it is presented in a proper atmosphere, a clear atmosphere.

What you've all said in your reports is very pragmatic, but I feel that what you've said is also very small. To put it simply, you've said that you do your duty, you have been taking care of various situations, and you've been good boys. In some sense, that's all right, but you have to become much more than good boys. We talk about the warrior principle and how to create a whole atmosphere and environment in which the teachings can be presented. If we have responsible people like the Dorje Kasung, we can actually project the whole vision.

I don't want to criticize anyone at this point. Our conference is only halfway through, but I hope that it can become much more than just people reporting on how they've been so good in shining somebody's shoes, how they've been such nice and reasonable people. We need something more than that! Your duty is not particularly shining somebody's shoes.

This is your duty: if there are lots of clouds in front of the sun, your duty is to create wind so that the clouds can be removed and the clear sun can shine. That's the duty of the Vajra Guards, the Dorje Kasung and Kusung.

There is some feeling that you've come to the middle court, as we call this place, almost pleading that you are not guilty. Gentlemen, you don't have to do that. Beyond that, your job is to clear up the whole atmosphere. You've heard about what happened at the Magyal Pomra Encampment, and you've heard other stories about the activities of the Dorje Kasung in Boulder. You've been

working with the other members of the military here. It turns out that the job of doing the laundry is not the Dorje Kasung's only responsibility. Then you also have to press your clothes and put them on. Your responsibility is something more, something greater.

Obviously, in the local Dharmadhatus, the understanding of your role may be limited. However, you must know that a few months ago the Kasung Kyi Khyap wrote a letter to the Dharmadhatus, which I hope you have read,<sup>17</sup> in which he said that the job of the Dorje Kasung is not to provide high-class service in the Dharmadhatus, like a maid's job in a hotel. Your job is not so much to clean up somebody's mess, but your job is to make sure that we can extend further, so that we can have completely expansive vision, based on being warriors of Shambhala.

We've gotten feedback on some of the problems in Dharmadhatus with meditation instructors and how certain *nyinthüns* have been conducted. We keep on hearing this gossip, so to speak, about how people have sometimes been quite sloppy in taking care of the shrine room. Sometimes they light the candles and incense before the rest of the participants come into the hall. Mind you, I am not particularly blaming the Dorje Kasung, but there is a general sense that, for people to keep some basic format or ceremony, the basic atmosphere has to be maintained fully and thoroughly.

You didn't come here having spent so much money on your airfare purely to check in and make sure that your loyalty as a Dorje Kasung is still intact. You came here to witness the actual vision of how to do it, how to perform your duty fully, thoroughly, properly. As you are aware, many members of the various Dharmadhatu communities still haven't refined themselves, so to speak, or caught on to the discipline and ceremony that's been introduced. But they could be inspired by your role, your particular existence.

The ambassador at the Dharmadhatu could be said to be the central reference point, like having a wick in your candle. The Dorje Kasung are regarded as the candleholder. You have to take responsibility, and it may still be an unfinished job. Now, you may think to yourself that, when you go home, you can fix things up properly, but that's not the way things are handled in our Vajradhatu world. We handle ourselves first. So we, ourselves, as Dorje Kasung, must have impeccable discipline in ourselves, and then we will be able to extend that vision thoroughly and properly.

Last but not least, please don't be shy about being part of the military and

maintaining discipline for the rest of the community. It is very important. Don't apologize. Your appointment as Dorje Kasung is what you are, what you have. Obviously, if you have lots of manpower, lots of Kasung at your Dharmadhatu, that's fine and good, but the main point is not the quantity. The quality is absolutely important. Please don't forget to raise your head and shoulders to become a good military person. Obviously, we are not going to wage war or organize a war against anybody at all. We're not going to attack or kill anybody. We're not talking about that kind of military. But we are simply talking about being *the* military, which has structure, discipline, fearlessness, and good head and shoulders.

In my past experience, when I've visited certain Dharmadhatus where the military leaders don't have good head and shoulders, I can't instruct the students properly because the students don't have any reference point for creating the atmosphere that I would like to teach in. I find myself just a wick with the flame burning without a container. In certain other places where I've visited, where there is a good, strong military situation, I can contain myself in it thoroughly and teach properly. That is not because everybody runs around being a busybody, driving me around and providing lots of valets and cooks and all the rest of it. It's simply that the particular presence of your militariness helps me to teach a lot, to teach further. Then I feel very comfortable. Mind you, the need for this atmosphere is not based purely on my comfort, but rather that the dharma can be taught properly and fully with this kind of structure. Otherwise, the whole teaching situation becomes like a giant wick with its flame burning, but there's no lamp to hold the oil, and I find myself stupid, wasted.

The military acts as a pure vessel. What is contained in that vessel are the students. What is inside the vessel, in its center, is the wick, the teacher. Then I can teach, and, for that matter, the regent can teach, and any visitors who come to Dharmadhatus as guest speakers can also make their presentations properly. Therefore, your role is not so much to be running around, creating an efficient organization, renting the best sound system, providing a good microphone and good speakers, and creating good pamphlets. If there is no military, this type of military that we're talking about, a military such as yourselves, then we have no impact. We have nothing real happening.

There is a further analogy for the role of the Dorje Kasung. When we look at the sun shining in the sky, the sun is always framed by a horizon of some kind. There's a horizon, there are mountains, and you have your own eyelids as a boundary when you look at the sun. Therefore you can see the sun clearly,



properly. Otherwise, you couldn't see the sun. You would just be lost in outer space, floating around. Therefore, you are not just servants. You are not purely providing service alone. You are part of the tone of the teaching that I will present in your Dharmadhatu, your center. You play a very, very, very important role in the presentation of the dharma. That is true in Boulder, and that's what happens anywhere when you are present.

Please don't apologize that you exist as Dorje Kasung. In the earlier presentations I noticed that some people's view of this conference is simply to use it to validate themselves. That's why they are here. As far as I am concerned, the point is not to hang out, buddy-buddy, being "military," and thinking and talking to each other about how useful and how fantastic you are. "We *are* useful, aren't we?" If that were the point, then the conference would be bullshit. You don't have to perpetuate each other's existence and the validity of who you are. Some of you may think, "What have I done, joining this crazy thing?" But then, you tell yourself, "Let's suppress *that* thought. Let's tell ourselves that what we're doing is right. We'll just forget the embarrassment and hang out together. Boulder has its military, so why don't we? Let's perpetuate our neurosis. Let's perpetuate the validity of existing as Vajra Guards."

Ladies and gentlemen of the Dorje Kasung, let us *not* do that at all. We should be so much stronger than that. We can *quite safely say* that, from now until the vajra kingdom is completely realized, I will teach as long as there is a military around me. That is to say, you will provide the walls or the containers within which I can be contained, or for that matter within which the Vajra Regent can be contained as well.

You might say, "How about people like Milarepa, freestyle teachers who never had Vajra Guards around them? How did they teach?" To your surprise, they also taught with some kind of wall or atmosphere around them. The teaching atmosphere was a natural wall that had been built around them already, and the students could be contained within that. According to history and according to personal experience, there were always people who would make sure that, when the dharma was spoken, nobody could come in and interrupt at all.

When the dharma is presented, there is always a gatekeeper to ward people off or invite them in, bring them in. That has always been the tradition. So what we are doing is not a modern version of anything at all. What we are doing is actualizing that tradition. In this free democratic society, whenever there has

been a big rally where a free gift of the dharma is presented, people feel that they can come and go. People think that this fantastic freedom is the greatest gift. That automatically becomes a problem, because the sacredness of the teachings cannot be preserved properly because of that fuzzy edge. With that fuzzy boundary, people will just come and go. They just lie down in the dirt, eat chocolate ice cream, drop occasional LSD or smoke dope, and listen to the glorious teachings. That has happened in the past, as you know, within certain quarters of American spiritualism, which we call spiritual materialism.

One can't imagine that happening during Milarepa's time, when he taught the dharma! People came in properly. They were invited in, and there was a ring of protection around them all the time. Then the dharma could be presented properly. If someone wanted to come in, they had to prostrate and then sit at the fringe of the protection ring. If they didn't want to hear the teachings, if they weren't listening, they were asked to leave. That's very traditional, absolutely traditional.

What we are doing is not fascistic at all. Dharma demands that we take proper responsibility. There has to be proper respect and a real proper place provided where the dharma can be taught. Wherever the dharma is taught is the golden ground. If somebody doesn't want to join in, they should be put out, completely out. If they're not interested, they have no reason to listen to the dharma. If they're bored, too bad for them, absolutely too bad. If they become bored further, further, and further, then they might be let back in. Then they can come into the dharma circle, prostrate, and join in, sitting properly with good posture. As you realize, receiving the dharma is quite different from watching a drive-in movie. You don't lie on a blanket on top of your car, eating popcorn. You don't listen to the dharma that way at all. When you listen to the dharma, you listen properly. And if you're going to practice the dharma, you practice properly. It is your job to inspire that attitude.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is your entire job. So I'm glad that you're picking people up from the airport and that you're being very nice to Vajradhatu representatives who come along into your territory. It's good, obviously, that you're providing nice, sociable, and kind hospitality—provided that those people teach the dharma properly. However, even if somebody is sent by me personally to your Dharmadhatu, if they teach the dharma badly, it is the Vajra Guards' duty—together with your ambassador—to ask them to leave. We want to keep the whole situation pure and clean and as traditional and old-fashioned as possible. We can do that, and we should do that. That is your responsibility.

The Vajra Guard was not established because Vajradhatu or the Dharmadhatus couldn't handle situations efficiently, and therefore we managed to recruit a group of able people to help us out. That was not the idea of the Dorje Kasung at all. Not at all. If that were the idea, it would be bullshit, and it would be embarrassing. The reason we have a military at all is because we want to keep the dharma so pure and so good. So your duty is to take care of the dharmic situation fully and properly. Shambhala vision will come along with that as well.

I think I've said enough. The most important thing is to take pride in yourselves as the military. Please take pride in protecting the dharma. Your role goes along with the role of the Four-Armed Mahakala, Vajrasadhu, Vetali, Ekajati, and whatever other protectors we might have. Each Dharmadhatu and each part of the organization has its own protectors. Just go along and work with those principles. We do certain chants to the protectors, and you should study and follow those examples. Those are your role models for how to fulfill your duties fully and properly.

None of you were invited here or recruited at the beginning as efficiency aides alone. You have a greater duty. As long as I teach the dharma myself and as long as my future heir might go on teaching, your role is to protect the teachings. In order to do that, obviously you have to provide service as you are doing at this point. But you are not convenient efficiency people alone.

On the other hand, when you begin to relax in the situation, you might think to yourself, "I don't have to provide the efficiency side at all. I just protect the dharma!" That doesn't quite work either. Efficiency overcomes people's sloppiness and laziness. You have to attack everything together. Your role as good military is to make everything fully and properly on the dot. I'm sure the mahakalas would never miss an inch or a fraction of a second. Whenever something is sloppy, the mahakalas come along and fix it up, or else they give you big trouble. That is your role as well. So please take pride in what you're doing.

I appreciate what you have done and what you might do. It encourages me a lot. The military here in Boulder has a very, very personal relationship with me, always. And the delegates who are here at this conference will as well. We will work closely together, very closely together. Whether I am in your town or I'm not, we will work closely together. Please report any perversion that is taking place. That's your first duty, to relate anything of that nature to the Kasung Kyi

Khyap. He is assigned to work on that situation. If anybody is perverting the dharma or is the slightest off in the dharmic situation, particularly if the leaders are off, we should know about it right away. Your report has to be a pure report without any bias of any kind. Just tell us what is happening. That is your role. That is your duty.

This conference is half over, but there is more to come and more responsibilities for you to take on. Please take further responsibility. Your voice will be trusted, just as you trust yourself. Thank you.

*Rusung:* Sir, this afternoon, some of us were speaking about the martial arts and whether some training in the martial arts would be useful for those of us in the Dharmadhatu.

*Dorje Dradül:* I think that's very important. Regard it as both physical and psychological training in how to hold yourself together and how to relate with the world outside. This is very important until all of you become full-fledged tantric practitioners. Then you will begin to do *pranayama* practice and exercises of all kinds. Until then, practicing martial arts would be good; in fact, I think it would be excellent. There is no problem in tuning your mind into the militariness of them at all. As you know, when we talk about the military here, we are not talking about killing another human being. We are talking about how to energize yourself and how to expand that energy so that any neurosis can be subjugated.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome:* With your permission, sir, we'd like to introduce one further stage in our practice. At the Magyal Pomra Encampment last summer, where we were making our first attempt to actually relate with what the positive military tradition is, we introduced the use of the overhand salute, which is the traditional military salute. We now use that salute in Boulder on occasions such as these. At this time, I'd like to introduce it to the delegates here as well.

I believe it's more or less based on the British version of the salute, which is done with an open hand. Perhaps I could demonstrate the whole thing. Standing at attention, the salute coming up is fairly crisp, but not overly so, and it simply drops, like this.

Kasung, Kusung, please rise. We could do one for practice. Perhaps Shotwell Kadö could give the command.

*Dorje Dradül:* He could come up here. [*Hudson Shotwell Kadö, comes to the front.*]

*Shotwell Kadö:* Dorje Kasung, present arms. Order arms.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* We have a further salute, based on our traditional Vajra Guard salute: hand over the heart. But it has also been brought into a more military context. It's now known as the loyalty salute, and it has three stages.

*Shotwell Kadö:* The first command is “Loyalty,” which is followed after a space of one, two, by bringing the hand over the heart. So “Loyalty,” one, two, hand to heart. “And give,” is the second part of the command, which is followed by a bow. And the last part of the command is, “A-wake.” You rise, and the hand comes down by your side where it started in another one, two movement.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* So it's at attention, and the command is “Loyalty. And give. Wake up.”

*Dorje Dradül:* A-wake!

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Excuse me. A-wake.

*Shotwell Kadö:* Dorje Kasung: Loyalty. And give. A-wake. Present arms!

*Dorje Dradül:* Okay, we should sing the “Guard Song.”

*[All sing the “Guard Song.” Then all sing the Shambhala anthem.]*

*Shotwell Kadö:* Present arms. Loyalty. And give. A-wake!

*Dorje Dradül [whispering]:* Thank you very much. I appreciate you very much. Thank you very much. [*Whispering more softly:*] I love you all. Thank you.

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17. See “The Vajra Guards: A Letter from the Kasung Kyi Khyap” in the appendices, [here](#).

# **Vijaya**

## THE VICTORIOUS ONE

*Birthday Celebration for the Dorje Dradül Dorje Dzung • Boulder,  
Colorado • February 25, 1979*

*Like other Dorje Kasung celebrations of the birthday of the Dorje Dradül, the 1979 celebration included awards, toasts, and a great many opportunities for the Dorje Dradül to speak to the members of the Dorje Kasung about whatever was on his mind. The evening opened with all present chanting the Kagyü lineage chant, followed by the presentation of the Color Party.*

*Hudson Shotwell Kadö, acting as sergeant [addressing the Color Party]:  
Kasung, halt! Present arms! Order arms! Loyalty. And give. A-wake!*

*All [chanting]: KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYEL LO TAK SENG KHYUNG DRUK DI YAR KYE!*

*Shotwell Kadö [again addressing the Color Party]: One step to the rear. Halt.  
Present arms! Order arms! Right about face. Forward march....Kasung, halt.  
Dismissed.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome: Dorje Dradül, Vajra Regent, Lady Rich,  
Sawang, Lady Rome, loppön, directors, distinguished guests and past Kasung,  
Dorje Kasung, Kasung, and Kusung: Good evening. Welcome. The hour is  
seemingly late. Do we care about that?*

*All: No, sir.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Good. We shouldn't care too much. As we know, we have been overtaken by the vision of Shambhala this weekend, specifically the military vision of Shambhala. We have been overtaken by that, and therefore we should appreciate having extra time tonight to come up to that vision. In fact, we have a long way to go. I feel personally proud and privileged to have been overtaken in such a way, and to the best of my ability, I will extend that overtaking to all of you. We feel further pride that we can have this special celebration of the birthday of the Dorje Dradül this evening, which confirms the connection we have with him. It confirms the fact that he has actually trusted us to be the container, to be the reflection, which contains and reflects his proclamation of the teachings of the truth.

At this point, I would like to open our program this evening, which has two sections: tactics and strategy. Normally strategy comes before tactics, but in this case we have tactics before strategy. Our tactics consist of a series of oath-taking ceremonies and awards. So I would like to begin that process at this time with the oath for the Dorje Rusung, the Kasung captains in the Dharmadhatus. Traditionally, we have been very cautious in the confirmation of the Rusung, the local captains, because they have a heavy responsibility and they are far removed from the capital. So we want them to have an ample training and testing period to see that they can fulfill their responsibilities properly. In fact this year, we have only one Rusung who will be taking the oath. At this time, I would like to ask the Dorje Rusung from Los Angeles, Dan Barrett, to step forward and take his oath.

*[Rusung Dan Barrett reads the oath.]*

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* I acknowledge you as worthy, and I appreciate what you have done. I put my complete trust in you to continue in this post.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* The next step is one of the marks of the changing year, which is the reconstitution of the Black Division of the Dorje Kasung. The Black Division are thirteen Kasung and Kusung who, by their excellence and devotion in the past, are chosen to serve for this coming year as an honor guard with a special connection to the Dorje Dradül. Our tradition, established last year, is to change the Black Guard each year. The basic approach is to wipe the Black Guard out completely and to start over. A few outstanding Black Guards from

the previous year are reappointed, but in general we ask the members of the Black Division to go back to their old ranks—or in some cases new ranks—and resume their duties there. It is understood that there is no prejudice in asking you to go back. You have served well, and there is tremendous appreciation for that. Possibly in the future you might rejoin the ranks of the Black Division.



*Color Party presenting the flags at the 1983 birthday celebration for the Makkyi Rabjam in Boulder, Colorado.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA ROTH.

So at this time, I would like to ask the Black Division of the Year of the Earth Horse to rise. On behalf of the Dorje Dradül and the entire Dorje Kasung, I would like to thank you ladies and gentlemen for being Black Guards in the past year and to dismiss you at this time.

Without further ado, I would like to request the Kasung Dapön, who is the commanding officer of the Black Guards, to reconstitute the Black Guards for the Year of the Earth Sheep.

*[Kasung Dapön James Gimian reads the new appointments to the Black Guard.]*



*The Black Guards take their oath, and each comes forward to receive a pin from the Dorje Dradül. They present the loyalty salute to the Dorje Dradül and are dismissed.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Each year we present a series of awards to Kasung of different ranks, recognizing their outstanding service during the previous year. The first award presented is the Genuine Spirit Color, which is given to those Kasung and Kusung whose service has been outstanding in their first year of service. Then, there is the Medal of Genuine Spirit, which is presented to Kasung and Kusung who have shown outstanding dedication beyond their first year of service. Then, there is the Medal of Confidence, which goes to the member of the Black Guard from the past year who has been most distinguished in their service. Beyond that, there are higher awards: the Medal of Gesar and the Order of Gesar. These will be presented at this point.

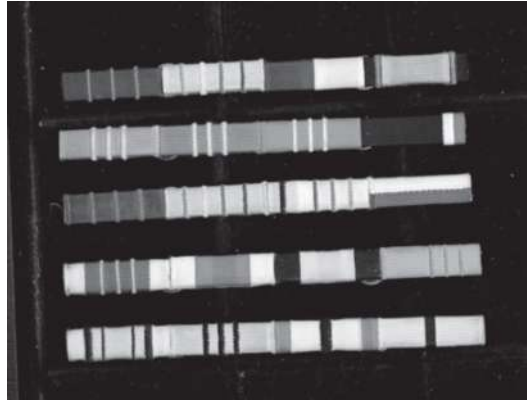
*Dorje Dradül [following the presentation of the awards]:* I am very pleased that, with these awards, we are able to acknowledge some members of our military, the Vajra Guards, Kusung and Kasung, and that we are able to bring them into what is called the vision of the Great Eastern Sun. The concept is to bring people into a world that they haven't experienced before. What we are doing here is obviously trying to follow some traditional pattern. Our system of awards is based on putting together patterns that come from Great Britain and Vajrayana vision. Needless to say, this is not a joke. It involves a sense of genuine solidness.

## **THE GENUINE SPIRIT COLOR**

The idea is that those who receive the Genuine Spirit Color will actually be able to perceive and to realize that you have to be awake all the time.

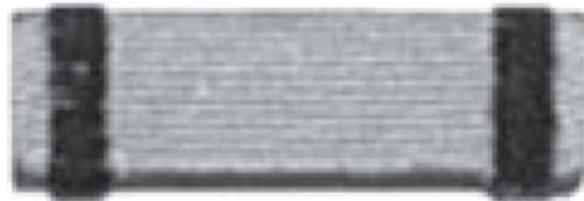
You also have to be fearless, at the same time. The Genuine Spirit Color is a white or red ribbon with a black band. The black band is on the right. The color of the ribbon changes according to the particular division that you belong to, the Red Division or the White Division. The black band represents the idea of fearlessness and the notion that you are not looking for any potential entertainment to distract your attention. Your work and practice are purely to protect the dharma, and you are not distracted. The larger area of color, which might be either red or white, is connected with the sense of wakefulness. That is

why this medal is called *genuine* spirit. It is *real* spirit. We are not going to borrow somebody else's color or somebody else's concept or idea, but we are going to stick with our own confidence, our own spirit, our own sense of how to protect the dharma.



*The Makkyi Rabjam's ribbons, including those discussed here.*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY MARVIN MOORE.

## THE MEDAL OF GENUINE SPIRIT

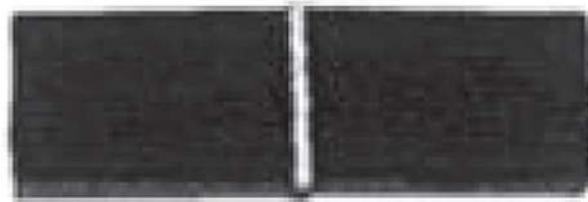


Next is the Medal of Genuine Spirit. It is the same as the Genuine Spirit Color, with the addition of a second band of black on the right. Conventionally, anybody who is in military service, such as General Patton, has received a lot of medals. I have a medal myself [the Order of the Trident], as you can see. My regent also has one [the Order of the Great Eastern Sun]. The idea of a medal here is not so much the concept of a tag. The idea is that, when you commit yourself to protecting the world of sanity, you automatically get some kind of flash, some kind of dot, in your state of mind. That flash, that dot, can never be rejected as being purely fantasy. We ourselves get it; we ourselves realize that we do actually experience who we are, where we are, where we belong. We all belong to a certain particular world, to the world of sanity. Beyond that, this medal represents genuine spirit with some sense of flash. It is experiencing who

you are, what you are, as well as your carefulness and your ability to experience the details of your life.

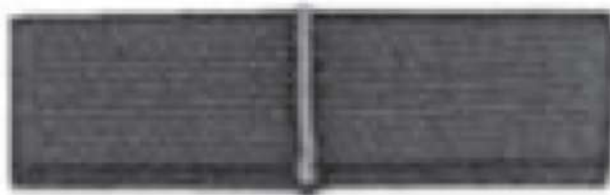
Ideally, the Dorje Kasung and Shambhala awards denote that you can also uplift your individual domestic, marital, economic, or cosmic life. All of you who have received these awards are worthy of them. You have demonstrated your worthiness when I work with you in various situations. When you drive me or in whatever situations we encounter, whatever services you perform, you have received some sense of flash, some sense of fundamental basic mudra, if you would like to call it that.

### **THE MEDAL OF CONFIDENCE**



Number three is the Medal of Confidence. This is a very good one. It is a black ribbon with a thin yellow stripe in the middle. When you begin to realize the potentiality and possibilities of fearlessness, you are not particularly afraid of any threats. A sense of fearlessness exists. Moreover, the basic fearlessness is the fearlessness of your own state of mind. You are worthy, and you do work with yourself. Some people have physical, psychological, or domestic problems. However, the Medal of Confidence is the idea that you won't give up at all, please. When you look the Great Eastern Sun straight in the eye, sometimes it blinds you, and you only see a black disc. At the same time, beyond that, you are constantly awake, all the time. You have the striking rays of brilliance taking place in your life. I want you to live up to that. Thank you.

### **THE MEDAL OF GESAR OF LING**



Then we have the Medal of Gesar of Ling. The ribbon has a blue background with a red stripe in the middle. Red represents both blood and oath, your personal connection and your gut-level communication with the Great Eastern Sun cause and, for that matter, with the propagation of the three-yana principle. Guardship is part of that cause, protecting that and going along with it. It is gut level, very personal, flesh and bones.

The blue surrounding the stripe is connected with the idea of metal, or iron. The concept of metal in this case is not so much connected with weapons, such as swords or guns or anything like that. In this case, metal is the idea of indestructibility and the concept of celestial iron, meteoric iron—mixed together with your red blood.

According to the Tibetan or the Shambhala myth, when you question your warriorship, you go into the high mountains. Sometimes you think you can be defeated; you think that you might not be able to carry out what you want to, your campaign. Then, you go into the mountains and you sit and raise your sense of dignity; you raise your sense of heart and strength. If you do that, according to the tradition and the myths of our ancestors, sometimes a tremendous thunderbolt will land on you. Celestial metal lands on you because of your heart. This is similar to the idea of the dragon and the idea of power that we talk about in terms of inscrutability. With that kind of power you can actually conquer the electric blueness of the dragon, and you can mix your heart's blood together with it. That is the warrior principle here.

## **THE ORDER OF GESAR OF LING**



The Order of Gesar of Ling is much heavier even than that! Gesar was a traditional, or mythological, Tibetan warrior king particularly associated with East Tibet, where I myself come from. The color of the ribbon is blue, and it has three stripes of red, which is much redder than the first stripe on the Medal of Gesar. The three red stripes are also connected with the kind of gut-level heart's blood that we talked about already, but at the same time, there is some notion of

gallantry. These three stripes represent aspects of warriorship. It is the same as the principles of the Japanese samurai tradition, which are also connected with the Order of Gesar. Obviously, it's a gut-level situation. One stripe is connected with your weapon. You can actually use your weapon either to magnetize a sense of strength and power or else to defeat the enemy.

The second stripe is connected with the horse that you ride on. The idea of the horse is very important. In this case, you ride on your sense of fearlessness. Usually when there is any kind of doubt, you are riding on a pig, a very fat pig. The idea of riding on a horse is that, whenever there is any doubt, you ride on wind, a storm of tremendous energy. Once you ride on that kind of horse, your sense of fear and cowardice never happened at all. So you ride on your horse carrying your weapon.

Then, the third stripe represents your connection with bravery: unflinching, you never look behind, but you keep on going, which is the concept of Great Eastern Sun vision. The blue background of the Order of Gesar represents not having to resort to finding local supplies all the time. That is to say, if you want to project your sense of fearlessness, you can ride that wind. You don't have to borrow money from your creditors; you don't have to borrow clothes from your relatives; you don't have to consult your friends. You just go and conquer the universe.

That is the meaning of all the awards that were presented this evening. I'm sorry to be so brief, but we don't seem to have much time tonight, and I'm sure that a lot of you are dozing off at this point. However, I thought we must talk about the purpose of what we are doing. We have to have some understanding, or realization, that we share lots of heritage, background, and wisdom. We share that together. You as members of the Vajra Guard particularly share that with me, and I'm glad that we are able to share this.

I would like to make an announcement, which I forgot to mention to the Kasung Kyi Khyap. It's not a really big announcement, so please don't be paranoid. In the past we have talked about the Black Guard. We adopted the name "Black Guard" for this group of thirteen guards, but actually I would prefer to call it the Raven Guard. The reason for this change is again connected with our Buddhist tradition, heritage, and practice. The raven is connected with the mahakala concept, which in the vajrayana tradition is the idea of being colorless. Whenever there is neurosis, it is black, from a psychological point of view. Disguise and neurosis do not want to have any highlights at all. I would

like to call this group of guards the Raven Guard because the raven is associated with...the Four-Armed Mahakala, which is one of the protectors of my personal life and of the Surmang monastery.<sup>18</sup>

The interesting thing here is that we are expanding on the notion of the garuda principle. However, sometimes when the garuda flies in the air, it's too sensational. You might say, "Look! There's a garuda flying with his gaudy arms and legs and all the rest of it." But when the raven flies, he is without any particular shade to him, except darkness. That is the symbol of an invisible heavy hand. So I would like to adopt that particular title, the Raven Guard, which seems to be quite simple. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

I would like to congratulate the outgoing group of the Raven Division and thank you for your performance in this past year. I appreciate it very much. At the same time, I would like to welcome the new Raven Guard and invite you to take part in our Vajradhatu/Shambhala vision. That's it! Thank you very much.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Thank you, sir. This brings us to the end of our tactical maneuvers. At this point we'd like to call a brief bivouac and have some refreshment, food, and drink. Then we will resume for the strategic portion of our evening. So please relax and refresh yourselves, and we'll reconvene shortly.

*Dorje Dradül:* I suppose everybody knows that smoking is not permissible in the shrine room. Thank you.

*[Handel's Water Music<sup>19</sup> is played during the break.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* We're about to resume the second portion of our evening. In view of the hour and the long break, which should make no difference, nevertheless, I'd like to make a reminder about mindful drinking for the Kasung assembled here. Last year we got a little bit crazy, actually, toward the end of the celebration.<sup>20</sup> I don't expect that to happen this year whatsoever. So you should drink as much as you can drink with complete mindfulness and awareness. If you drink more than that, you will be arrested and removed. Please consider that.

At this time, I would like to request the Dorje Gyaltzap, the Vajra Regent, to address the Dorje Kasung on this occasion.

*Shotwell Kadö:* Dorje Kasung, attention! Present arms!

*[The Vajra Regent clears his throat.]*

Dorje Dradül *[whispers]*: I'd like to say a few words. *[Speaking into the microphone:]* My profound apologies in not keeping to the schedule. However, I would like to introduce the Vajra Regent, who does not need any introduction at all, none whatsoever. But in light of the Dorje Kasung and Kusung being gathered together here, a few remarks might be good. I just wondered, have we discussed the role of the Vajra Regent in the Kasung ITS [Intensive Training Session] we're having this weekend? Have we? We haven't? Okay. Well, obviously we didn't have much time to discuss things, but I think that the Vajra Regent is a very important person to discuss.

This gentleman, who is sitting on my right, is a real person, just in case you would like to fantasize. His role is very powerful, extraordinarily powerful, in our community. Particularly at the level of the guard situation, his role is extremely powerful. Sometimes people misunderstand him, thinking that he is not a military man. But intrinsically speaking, he is military at heart, military in his head and shoulders.

Sometimes, in the Vajradhatu administration we discuss the Vajra Regent putting on a uniform and how that might freak out the whole community because he is such a provocative person. In the case of the so-called Vajracharya—myself—he has put on uniforms. He wears bush jackets and occasionally wears medals and so forth. We may regard this particular person, the Vajracharya, as worthy of being praised, and we accept that all sorts of manifestations can happen with him, and we try to adjust to those possibilities.

However, this Vajra Regent is actually more military and more real. The military ordinarily refers to those who organize warfare. We are not talking in those terms, obviously. The Vajra Guard should know that our purpose altogether is to promote basic gentleness and that a sense of heavy hand is connected with patience. We talk about that all the time. This mysterious Vajra Regent has all sorts of facets that you haven't discovered yet. Also, quite interestingly, his wife, known as Lady Rich, also has all sorts of facets. Her gentleness has a tremendous quality of power and strength. On the whole, what I am saying is that their image can fit into the level of the Vajra Guard completely, thoroughly, fully, quite rightly so. Both of them were raised by myself.

The Sawang, this young gentleman sitting to my left, is also very interested and enthusiastic in recognizing people's gallantry and their dignity. He is

interested in how one should proceed in protecting the dharma. Apart from going to several kung fu movies, he is at heart born as a true Mukpo, gentle as well. So, ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard, at this point we are surrounded by these types of warriors.

Also, sitting in this row to my right, we have gentlemen who are called members of the board of directors, who seem very passive and harmless. They are headed up by the loppön of the three yanas.<sup>21</sup> Behind them there are other harmless-looking gentle civilian people sitting around. What I am trying to get at here is not that our whole world has to become completely militarized. The cheap, ordinary concept is that, whenever somebody feels a sense of strength and power, they automatically turn it into neurosis and aggression. However, our approach to power comes out of tremendous gentleness. The gentlemen sitting here are also military people. They are truly warriors. The reason they are warriors is not that they have gone to Timbuktu where they fought and won a war and not that they went to Vietnam and won the war there. They have fought their own styles of warfare. We have worked together constantly, all the time. These gentlemen are known as the ministers of the Shambhala court, as well as being known as the directors of the Vajradhatu and Nālandā organizations.<sup>22</sup> They are wearing little red badges, the Order of Garuda, in case you haven't noticed, which denote that they are warriors and what particular kind of warriors they are. Their warriorship has never given up. They are constantly willing to be warriors.

The Vajra Regent, Lady Rich, and I are also wearing medals.<sup>23</sup> All of these medals, which are part of our outfits, are not regarded as a joke, at all. What we are doing in the presence of you, the Vajra Guard, is demonstrating that we are not afraid to proclaim the three-yana principles of vajrayana at all. You are all part of that.

A lot of the Vajra Guards here will be going to the Vajradhatu Seminary this year or have already gone to seminary. The point is for you to realize that we can actually establish an immense and powerful kingdom. This is not based on the example of the People's Republic of China invading Cambodia and in turn producing problems. What we are talking about is that we have to conquer our own minds, and we have to establish our own self-existing situation. There is more news to come beyond that.

Fearlessly speaking, I am so pleased at this point to introduce all these so-called civilians to you. I understand that the Kasung Kyi Khyap hasn't talked



about this yet. I'm not quite sure why. Maybe he felt that was not his particular area or territory, but it certainly seems to be my territory and my area to discuss the whole government. Sometimes the idea of having a government is embarrassing, but from the point of view of enlightened society, I am not embarrassed to refer to our setup as a government. What we are governing might be the question.

We are trying to organize ourselves so that we can work together. What we are governing is everybody within our sangha. We have a solid community of at least two thousand people, with some fringe people interested in taking part in our work. Several hundred thousand people have purchased our literature,<sup>24</sup> reading and trying to study it, trying to speculate on the yes and no possibilities. The point seems to be for you to understand the Vajra Guards as the basic body of wakeful people who will relate with this government, particularly with the head of our government, who at this point is this gentleman here, the Vajra Regent.

A long time ago we called him Narayana; later on we tried to change that, and we decided to call him O. T.<sup>25</sup> Now he is properly acknowledged by everybody as the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin. Those who have studied with him, received an audience with him, talked with him, or heard his public addresses have experienced a sense of their neurosis being uplifted and overcome. This gentleman has tremendous power, and he is—as I mentioned already—a military person. He's not quite a general yet, but he is some kind of a field marshal. He has presented the buddhadharma with an ordinary approach and a sophisticated approach, occasionally with a street-fighter approach as well.

So, ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard, we are not turning the regent into another person or creating another organization particularly. But we are presenting you with another field marshal. Vajra Regent, sir, can you say something to us?

*Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin:* Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard. I feel somewhat at a loss for words after having such an introduction, and I feel somewhat more like a corps commander than a field marshal. I'm sure Major Perks would appreciate that. A corps commander is somewhat equivalent to what the Dorje Dradül has called a street fighter. Is that not true?

*Kusung Dapön John Perks:* Yes, sir.

*Vajra Regent:* I feel a tremendous connection with all of you, because each and every one of us have worked together. At the same time, I feel at this point a desire to talk to you on behalf of the so-called civilian government, represented by the penguins on my right.<sup>26</sup> [*Laughter.*] They're not as stuffed as you think they are. These gentlemen have worked six, seven, and eight years now to make Vajradhatu what it is. Under the direction of the Dorje Dradül, they've worked very hard. So when the Dorje Dradül says they are also military people, it's in the sense of having good discipline and not giving up.

I have written a speech to present tonight, which I did last year as well. That was actually the first speech I ever wrote and read. This is the second one—oh, Mr. Root says I wrote three.<sup>27</sup> So this is the second one written to the Vajra Guard, which is a special one to me. It seems slightly, oh, begging the point for a corps commander or a street fighter or a field marshal, but I don't think I should give up on this, since it actually says what I mean. [*He reads:*]

Ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard, I would like to say a few words on this occasion of the celebration of the Vajracharya's birthday. During the past year, the Vajra Guard has matured and stabilized itself under the direction of the Vajracharya and the Kasung Kyi Khyap. This stabilizing has had a definite effect on the Vajradhatu community throughout the country. I can say this from personal experience, having visited all of the Dharmadhatus represented here. As you well know, we have drawn a considerable amount of criticism from within our community and from the outside concerning the existence of the guard. At this point, there is no need for me to present the purpose for your existence as guards. That has been accomplished quite thoroughly during your ITS and especially...*[Gap while tape is turned over]* The point I would like to make tonight may be a repeat of what you have heard, but still it is worthwhile to remind ourselves.

Since the existence of the Vajra Guards is based on the practice of sitting meditation and meditation in action, there should be no guilt or confusion about being a guard. This is because guilt and confusion are the result of aggression, and our practice is based on nonaggression. However, it does take tremendous exertion and patience to be in your position, and it takes the bodhisattva's approach of not requiring or expecting any kind of reward for one's action. In fact, your action does not even require thanks.

As the military we are unconventional, in the sense that we do not regard our position as a profession. We are not particularly desirous of climbing up through

the ranks to attain our generalship or our pension or our four stars. If our discipline is based on meditative awareness, then we are content to perform whatever actions are required of us, because those actions are our actual practice.

However, we must be sensitive to criticism at the same time, because that criticism—whether from within the sangha or from outside—can act as an alarm or rather as a reminder that we must be aware of what we are doing at all times. If we panic in the face of criticism, then obviously we undermine our discipline and create obstacles, not only for ourselves but also for the entire sangha. So far, you have been doing extremely well at not panicking. Hopefully, this is based on steadfastness and evenmindedness. If you are simply playing dumb, then that will create much more confusion in the Vajradhatu community as a whole.

We should recognize that in the future we will come under heavy fire from the samsaric world. (That's a military term, heavy fire.) Unfortunately, they confuse our existence with the history of the military as agents of aggression and war. We should not fall prey to that type of negativity. On the other hand, we should be educated and articulate enough to explain who we are without losing or compromising our integrity. As the Vajracharya has said, your existence makes it possible for the dharma to be taught properly, for students to experience the Buddhist path without unnecessary interruptions or complications.

Even though you don't require it, I would like to express my thanks for your practice and your work in the past year, and my encouragement for you to do even more in the future. On behalf of the board of directors of Vajradhatu, I would like to thank you for the support you have given the administration in carrying out the policies and directives of the Vajracharya. And finally, I would like to join you in expressing our devotion to the Vajracharya on his birthday and wishing him a very cheerful birthday indeed. That's my speech. Beyond that, let me say that your education and your practice have come together this time here in Boulder. The civilian administration, the government, is happy to work together with you. There is no other point. We work together because basically, as the Vajracharya said, we have some sort of military skin. [*Laughs.*] Sometimes it looks like these gentlemen and myself have a slightly puffed approach, a sort of administrative puffiness. But let me assure you that the basic skin is complete dedication and complete devotion to what we all are accomplishing: the discipline of sanity in the world. So thank you very much for listening to me.

And again I thank the Vajracharya, the Dorje Dradül, for having a birthday,

for being born, and for teaching the dharma to all of us. Thank you so much.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* On behalf of the Kasung and Kusung, I would like to thank the Vajra Regent for his address. When we talked about the military this weekend, by implication we also talked about the civilians and particularly about the regent. We talked about the Kasung being a container for the teachings. There can be no container if there's no holder of the teachings, and the Vajra Regent is that. He is our lineage holder, and his warriorship has been obvious and has been the constant inspiration and acid test of our warriorship as Dorje Kasung. On that basis, I would like to thank him very sincerely.

At the same time, we appreciate the presence of the government officials who are here witnessing what we are doing, have witnessed it in the past, and will do so in the future—without them, our work also makes no sense whatsoever. So, thank you, sir, gentlemen, and ladies. At this point, we are ready to have a round of toasts, and I would like to request that to commence.

*Dapön Perks:* My lord, Sawang, my lord corps commander, Kasung Kyi Khyap, Lady Rich, ladies and gentlemen, and ladies and gentlemen of the Dorje Kusung and Dorje Kasung, I am actually intending at the end of this little talk to make the loyal toast. However, I would like to make a few remarks. What I want to say is rather personal, actually. In my position that's rather unusual. But I want to say a few things about the Dorje Dradül.

I've been in his service, as many of us have, for a number of years. There's something very interesting about the whole thing, which especially applies, I think, to guards. You may find yourself on duty in the middle of the night, and you're falling asleep and wanting to get out of something or other and concerned with your own little things going on. The Vajracharya, you know, often has kind of an upward sweep in the middle of the night. If you don't let yourself get dragged along with the whole thing as in a cavalry charge, then you're bound to get stampeded and end up in the mud somewhere.

The whole idea is to join in and celebrate with his celebration of what is happening. It just requires a little slip, a little turn, to get going. If you find yourself in that position of falling asleep, as I have many a time and as we all have many a time, if you can just [*snaps fingers*] turn it around, your enjoyment and celebration of the natural upliftedness will be immense. We should all join in that.

There's one other thing I wanted to talk about. I just happened to run across a

speech by a friend of mine. The Vajracharya has often said these same things. The book is called *The Unrelenting Struggle*, and it's by Winston Churchill. He was under some very heavy criticism when he wrote this particular speech, from a gentleman by the name of Adolf Hitler. This is actually what the Vajracharya says all the time. He says it to me and to the regent and the Kasung Kyi Khyap and others. I just happened to run across this and thought you might be interested. This speech was given to the boys of the Harrow School on October the twenty-ninth in 1941. I shall just read a little bit of it, because I don't want to bore you too much.

Speaking of Rudyard Kipling, Winston Churchill said, "Meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same." And he went on to say,

You cannot tell from appearances how things will go. Sometimes, imagination makes things out far worse than they are. Yet without imagination, not much can be done. Those people who are imaginative see many dangers that perhaps exist, certainly many more than will happen. But then they must also pray to be given the extra courage to carry [out] this far-reaching imagination. But for everyone, surely what we have gone through in this period—I am addressing myself to the school—surely from this period of ten months, this is the lesson: never give in. Never give in, never, never, never, in nothing great or small, large or petty. Never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never yield to force, never yield to apparent overwhelming might of the enemy.<sup>28</sup>

I hope you can catch that spirit. That spirit is the one that the Dorje Dradül is constantly giving out. It's interesting that, when I dress him in his uniform, he is more gentle than when I dress him in his business suit. Maybe it has something to do with dealing with ministers; I'm not sure. [*Laughs, laughter.*] If I stick him with the pin on his bars when I put them on, he says, "That's all right."

Along with that gentleness is the sense of never giving in. So, I would ask you now to rise and join me in a toast to our most honored lord, the Dorje Dradül.

*All:* The Dorje Dradül.

*Kasung Dapön James Gimian:* Dorje Dradül, Vajra Regent, Sawang, Kasung Kyi Khyap, Lady Rich, guests, Dorje Kasung, which of course includes Kasung: Sitting down on my *zafu* before making this toast, I had some notion of the perils

that exist at the end of the year. You might know what I mean if you realize that my particular assignment this evening is to toast the Vajra Regent. It is a challenge, coming after the Dorje Dradül's introduction of the Vajra Regent, the address by the Vajra Regent, and the toast by my colleague Dapön Perks! [*Laughter.*] Still, I can find something to say.

In our Dorje Kasung ITS this weekend, in talking about militariness, there's one element that we have stressed a great deal, which is accuracy. The symbol of that accuracy is the sword, or more generally the weapon. But specifically the symbol is the sword and the edge of the sword, which is extremely sharp and cuts both in and out. In terms of our relationship with the gentleman who it's my great honor to toast, the Vajra Regent, that symbol has tremendous meaning for us. It is our great fortune to provide service for the Vajra Regent twenty-four hours a day. Whether it's late nights at the court, Vajrayogini feasts,<sup>29</sup> or long marches on patches of green in the midst of snow doesn't matter. Within each one of those situations, there is a possibility of connecting with the energy of awake presented by our lineage, right on the spot. In his relationship to us, he's constantly presenting that reference point. "Did we lock the door of the car?" "Did we hit the curb as we turned left?" "Did we lock the keys in the car?" Perhaps those comments seem to be just picking up on little things that we've done wrong, but it's much, much more than that. No one in our community or in our lineage better represents the sense of accuracy, of being on the mark. I would like you to join me in a toast of our appreciation. To the Vajra Regent.

*All:* To the Vajra Regent.

*Dorje Dradül:* I have never talked in public standing, except in military situations. I'm beginning to realize that it is good to talk when you are sitting down. When you stand, you are tongue-tied. [*Laughter.*] However, I would like to raise a triple toast at this point, three toasts at once. This is connected, first, with my life. Second, it is connected to how we try to defeat all the dōns of this weekend, since we are gathered together here in the dōn days at the end of this year. Finally, we are toasting our victorious conquering of the dōns. I've been working on some literature in my office downstairs, and I finished writing a letter to that effect.<sup>30</sup>

I am glad you are here to celebrate this. It is a very simple toast in some sense. My natural yearning is toward the military. That militariness is not inspired by the example of a soldier who gets shot somewhere between Vietnam and China.

But the militariness that we are celebrating here is based on a term that is used to describe the Buddha as the Victorious One. Vijaya, the Victorious One, is connected with this notion of militariness.

We always fight to maintain our ego, we always fight not to practice, and we also fight to try to take a little time off so that we don't have to get into the administration or do our guard duty or whatever it is. If we can cheat just a little inch in our lives, we will always do that. Ladies and gentlemen, that's not a secret or a surprise to anyone at all. That's understood by everyone. I know that. We all do that. Taking a little time for ourselves is what is known as not having Great Eastern Sun vision. Please forgive me. I'm not scolding anybody at all. I'm just saying that it's always possible to do that. We would like to just relax without turning the page to read the next sentence to see what the dharma says, what the sutra says, and what the transcript says. We always try to take time off, all along, all the time. It is an interesting problem that we have all along, and it is not particularly new, as I have mentioned already.

I experienced this myself when I was studying with my tutor at my own monastery. So such things happen all the time. We think that we can cheat, without anybody knowing; we can take time off without guarding, without practicing, without studying. Situations of that nature happen all the time, as we know.

An incident occurred out of the blue, you could say. The notion came to me of bringing up a child without deception, without any one of those deceptions.<sup>31</sup> I decided to send this particular child to private school. He had to work and relate with his schooling situation, and he worked very hard. Quite possibly, he did some things—if not one hundred thousand times like the *tantrikas*—two thousand times, shall we say. He worked very hard, and the reason why he worked so hard and felt so good about his learning and became so inquisitive about the learning situation is because he began to experience the possibilities of Shambhala vision. As a gentleman of a young age, he's still afraid that he might be too short; however, he feels that he has to live up to it. He has to lead a nation and a people and work with his students. He has to work and practice a lot. That situation has become very interesting and encouraging to me, that in the midst of Coca-Cola, peanut butter, and all the rest of this world, I could actually raise my child, the Sawang, as a decent person, a good, disciplined person. Please don't regard this as purely building up our family cult at all. In fact, there are more family cults to come! [*Laughter.*]

The other son I have, the Vajra Regent, has an Italian background. I am sure that I've said this many times; nevertheless, in the process of working with one's life situation, one has to actually relate and deal very precisely, very dharmically, with subconscious gossip. This other gentleman son has suffered from that subconscious gossip. Please don't panic, though. He doesn't have all that demonic subconscious gossip, but he does have subconscious gossip of all kinds....

*[There is a gap in the tape at this point. Following the conclusion of the Dorje Dradül's toast, which included the Kasung Kyi Khyap and was dedicated to "Two sons and one sword" (the Sawang and Vajra Regent, and the Kasung Kyi Khyap, respectively), the Dorje Dradül was presented with a greatcoat as a birthday gift from the Dorje Kasung. This was a full-length overcoat with a red wool lining. The tape picks up during his remarks to the Dorje Kasung after receiving this gift.]*

*Dorje Dradül:* Without boring you, the story continues. Gesar of Ling found a suit of armor. The outside was gray and the inside lining was red. He was so excited. He came into the house, and he said to his mother, "Now I'm going to be a warrior. I'm going to wear this and go off and fight." Finally, his mother got very tired of him being so outrageous and exploring everything, so she said, "Go away. Wear your suit of armor with the gray outside and the red inside. Run away. Just get away from me."

So Gesar ran away, and he began to explore the world. At that point, Gesar began to become an adult, a much more grown-up person. He met his distant uncle, who was an archer, and Gesar asked him to teach him archery. His uncle's name was Denma, and he was one of the members of the Mukpo family.

Denma told him, "You can't just study archery to kill little beasts. You have to practice meditation." Denma provided Gesar with a zafu-like seat. Gesar started to take off his suit of armor, his clothes. Denma said to him, "Don't do that. You have to wear your warrior clothes and learn how to shoot an arrow while you meditate." Gesar sat on the cushion and concentrated. He was told to concentrate on his arrow and pulling his bow, without shooting anything. That was the beginning of Gesar of Ling's training, how he was raised as a practitioner. He didn't have to shoot anybody, but he had to wear his warrior's uniform and practice archery in that way, without shooting anybody.



To cut a long story further short, through his concentration practice of doing archery, Gesar began to realize that he could also destroy and defeat further obstacles or enemies. The enemy of the east is those barbarians who constantly propagate having a relationship with relatives, who seduce you into not practicing the dharma. They say, “Okay, if you don’t practice the dharma, we will provide you with a good house.” We could translate this into modern terms. Your relatives say, “I can provide you with a color television, fast cars, and a good apartment.”

As he was exploring, Gesar also began to realize that he could overcome the merchants, the enemy of the south. Their notion is that, if you can sell anything to anybody, then you don’t have to attain any insight or dignity at all. From just purely buying and selling, you get a good deal. Is that familiar?

Gesar also came across the enemy of the west, which is connected with entertainment, any sort of entertainment that one can imagine: Las Vegas, a sauna bath, automatic blah blah blah—anything you can think of. Finally, Gesar came across the enemy of the north, efficiency. He began to realize that, if he walked into any area of their territory, he would be able to get anything he wanted with a snap of his fingers. [*The Dorje Dradül snaps his fingers.*] With a snap of his fingers, he could get all sorts of entertainment. That’s the story of Gesar.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I think that the purpose of tonight’s birthday party has been to reinstate our existence as Vajra Guard. The purpose has also been to recognize the gentlemen who are known as ministers or directors in our organization. They have been working with our economy so hard, together with other people in the organization, to ensure that our world does not become poverty stricken. I would like the Vajra Guard and these gentlemen to acknowledge each other. Our purpose is one purpose, only one purpose. There is nothing else. There is another zero purpose beyond that one purpose, which is to practice together.

Thank you for your kindness and for my coat! [*Laughter.*] It is a very sweet gift, and I regard it as a suit of armor to ward off the evils of the end of the year, although at this point it has ended already. [*Laughter.*] Thank you very much.

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18. The raven-headed one is one of the retinue of the Four-Armed Mahakala. Part of this discussion is missing due to a short gap on the tape, but the Dorje Dradül can be heard saying “Four-Armed Mahakala”

when the tape comes back on.

19. This musical suite was one of the Dorje Dradül's favorite pieces of music, and he frequently suggested that it be played at public events. It was particularly associated with the Shambhala teachings, since the Dorje Dradül listened to this piece of music the evening that he received the Stroke of Ashe in preparation for receiving the terma text *The Golden Sun of the Great East*. See *The Werma Manual* published by Vajradhatu Publications, 2000.

20. That celebration appears here as [chapter 4, "Shooting Deception/Naked Mind."](#)

21. Dorje Loppön Lodrö Dorje.

22. In 1979, the members of the board of directors of Vajradhatu and Nalanda—in addition to the Vajracharya, the Vajra Regent, the Kasung Kyi Khyap, and the dorje loppön—were Jeremy Hayward, Kenneth Green, John Roper, Karl Springer, Ronald Stubbert, Charles Lief, and Samuel Bercholz.

23. The medals worn by the Dorje Dradül and the Vajra Regent were mentioned in the Dorje Dradül's earlier remarks about awards. Lady Rich was wearing the Order of the Dragon.

24. The Dorje Dradül is referring here to sales of his own best-selling books.

25. O. T. was an abbreviation for (Ösel Tendzin).

26. The directors were dressed in tuxedos—thus the reference to penguins.

27. Mr. Michael Root, chief of staff for the Office of the Vajra Regent, also attended the birthday celebration.

28. From Winston Churchill, *The Unrelenting Struggle* (London: Cassell, 1942), used by permission.

29. "Vajrayogini feast" is a reference to a practice session in which one invokes the tantric deity Vajrayogini. One part of the practice includes a ritual feast.

30. To date, a search of the Dorje Dradül's correspondence and poetry has not turned up any relevant documents dated around this time.

31. This talk occurred just two days before the empowerment of the Sawang as the Ashe Prince, the Dorje Dradül's Shambhala heir.

# ***The Greatest Weapon We Have Is Gentleness***

*Meeting with the Dorje Kasung  
Boulder, Colorado • July 11, 1979*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome:* Good evening, Dorje Kasung and Kusung. Tonight we are joined by the Dorje Dradül and the Sawang Ösel Mukpo.

We spoke earlier about guardship developing its own mandala, its own sense of structure and specialization, and the practical implications of that. At this point, that idea is no longer just theory, but it has to become practice. That means that the relationship with the center of the mandala also has to be made practical. That may be the most important function of the Magyal Pomra Encampment, which was first held last summer at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center. The encampment is an opportunity to work very directly and personally with the Dorje Dradül on the guard situation. So in some sense our gathering tonight is an advertisement for that program.

Everything we've talked about, from the level of the vision of the Dorje Kasung down to the level of detail, derives from our leadership. This is not just a case of knowing the facts of who the leadership is, but it is based on our connection, our link to that leadership. We can always work further on that. The Vajra Guards, as the Vajracharya has said before, are in effect an extension of his own family situation, and in some sense we are an extension of his body, his arms and legs. We can have that kind of relationship to him only if we are able to connect in a sane manner.

We have a particularly close connection with the family of the Vajracharya, his physical family, which is the Vajracharya himself and Lady Mukpo and their children. The Sawang,<sup>32</sup> who is with us this evening, is getting slightly beyond child level at this point. Over the last couple of years, he has developed a special connection with the Dorje Kasung. I think we have to acknowledge him for more than that, however. It's not just that we have a special connection with him. We

should understand his role in the family, which is, as the eldest son, the inheritor of the family lineage of Mukpo. In that sense, his existence represents the future existence of everything we're doing, in terms of creating enlightened society and Shambhala society. We need to respect him in that role and at the same time be very generous in helping him to cultivate those possibilities.

At this point, I shouldn't say too much more. I would request the Dorje Dradül to speak to us.

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Welcome, ladies and gentlemen of the Kasung and the Kusung. Apart from the festive meetings that we've had together, I think this is the first time we have actually had a business meeting together as a group. It feels very good.

As you know, the function, or role, of you ladies and gentlemen has become a very important part of our world. At the same time, the role of the guards has also become a target of criticism. The logic and the importance of having such a group as the Dorje Kasung have become apparent, particularly as we begin to launch the further presentation of the fullest expression of Buddhism in this country, in North America altogether, and in the rest of the Western hemisphere. People will be threatened by the presentation of such an uncompromising approach to Buddhism.

Because of that threat, some people feel that they have to attack us in any way they can.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of the Vajra Guards is to ward off such attacks and also to create the basic atmosphere for the presentation of Buddhism.

To present the teachings, we must have a basic understanding of the atmosphere in which the teachings are being given. Obviously, needless to say, we have created an atmosphere where people learn to sit up straight and listen to the teachings and practice properly. During the first presentation of Buddhism at the Naropa Institute in the summer of 1974, there was an absence of Vajra Guards, both Kasung and Kusung. During the talks, some people lay flat on the floor in their bathing suits with their feet pointed at the speaker. Some of them were falling asleep, some people rolled around on the floor, and sometimes people even snored.

Since then, we have created a structure at large to help with that situation, and the presence of the Kasung is particularly helpful. We didn't actually come up with whips and sticks to get people to sit up, but a general atmosphere has been created. There is formality and basic structure, and the basic format of head and

shoulders has been created. Since then, students may stretch their legs, but they never lie down and never snore.

This year when I was teaching at Naropa, at my first talk one person right in front of me lay down with his feet facing me. He wasn't quite sure whether he should be doing that or not. I said, "Get up." "You mean me?" he said. "Yes, you," I answered.

The interesting thing is that we are not threatening people to get them to behave themselves, as though it were a Victorian schooling situation. We *imply* that the dharma is very sacred and the teachings are very precious to us. What we have to say and what we have to listen to are very important for everybody. You, ladies and gentlemen, have provided the preciousness, that basic ground. When the basic format has been created, sometimes people may have no idea what's going on, but at the same time, they begin to tune in and realize that something worthwhile is taking place. They begin to tune into the sacredness of the whole thing. So the vajra world very much depends on the presence of the Vajra Guard—just in case you had no idea! At this point, I think it is futile to repeat anything like this, because you know it already. But in case you need confirmation, this is it.

Our approach is very gentle, absolutely gentle, with good head and shoulders and good presence. This is very confusing for people because, in ordinary situations, when we talk about the concept of a bodyguard, it means kill or cure, with bulging muscles. Our approach is that the ladies and gentlemen of the Vajra Guard are very impressive and good in their standing, literally speaking. When they open their mouths, when they connect with people, they manifest very gently and beautifully. That's a very interesting kind of weapon, if we could call gentleness a weapon at all. It's a communication system.

Lately, there have been accusations and publicity about various things that have happened within the Vajradhatu setup and with myself personally. Everybody should be aware of those things. At this point, all of you should almost consider yourselves to be like personnel dealing with a foreign power when you are relating with any of the students. By that I mean that, when you are guarding or even if you're not guarding, in terms of the way you behave and how you conduct yourselves, it is very important to have some awareness that there is a political situation involved. Ordinarily, when we talk about a political situation, it means there is some hypocrisy involved. When somebody's running for the presidency, that means there's a "political situation." But for us political

situations are not like that. A situation is political simply because you are representing me, and you are representing the vajra world. So you have tremendous responsibility at that point. If you make one false move, it will reflect on the whole vajra world.

On the other hand, if you think about that or dwell on it excessively, you might become very nervous and jumpy. So, as a compromise, remember the general sense of trust that is placed in you when you are accepted as Kasung and Kusung. Take pride in that, and take pride in your own understanding of the basic principles of guarding that we have developed. At this point, I think everybody is familiar with the basic format of the guards and with the eight slogans.

In our approach to the rest of the world, the greatest weapon we have is gentleness. When a person comes to us with doubt and aggression, we, in turn, project out our gentleness. If someone can't relate with the gentleness completely, then they begin to realize that behind the gentleness there is also confidence. That is to say, every Kasung has their own confidence in what they stand for, who they are. Therefore, they don't doubt their own existence, and gentleness becomes an even stronger message. Therefore, you can project that way to others.

I think, so far so good. We have been working in this direction, and we have achieved a kind of military that is almost unheard of, historically speaking. We may be the first people who have achieved a military without aggression, with gentleness used as a weapon. Mahatma Gandhi tried something like this in his own style, with hunger strikes and all sorts of things like that, but it only worked for dealing with the British. What we are trying to work toward is conquering the setting-sun world overall, which would be slightly more difficult and quite different than what he did. Unless Mahatma Gandhi returns and takes Shambhala Training, he might have difficulty dealing with the whole rest of the world in this way.

Therefore, because of the nature of our training, in order for us to understand who we are and what we are as Kasung and Kusung, it is very important for us to have intensive practice together. That particular practice is the Magyal Pomra Encampment. Last year was the first time we tried this, and it worked very well. The only problem we faced was not having enough personnel to take part in it. Each person had to do several duties at once, almost to the point that there were too many chiefs and not enough Indians.

We hope that this year there could be a very large, sizeable participation in the encampment training. I will be personally conducting the encampment, along with my staff, which consists of the Kasung Kyi Khyap, the Kasung Dapön, and the Kusung Dapön, who hopefully can visit us even though he is expecting the birth of his son or daughter at that time.

In that atmosphere of one hundred percent discipline we can study more and practice more, which is quite hard work. At the same time, it is very revealing for all of us when we take part in the discipline of encampment. Last year, from that particular discipline, we learned how to shed neurosis and unshed sanity. The general discipline pervades our lifestyle there: the way we sleep, the way we get up, the way we dress, the way we conduct ourselves. Going through such thorough training is almost like a crash course in monastic discipline for the Kasung and Kusung. It seemed to work. Those students who had the chance to practice the discipline there learned quite a lot.

A few weeks ago, a Japanese *gagaku* court music teacher was visiting us. A lot of Naropa students worked with him. They had a crash course in how to dance [*bugaku*] and how to play the musical instruments [*gagaku*]. Because of the general sense of discipline and their practice of meditation, our students were able to perform *gagaku* and *bugaku* at the regent's birthday celebration quite perfectly. That was a matter of only a few days' training.

With your general background, I think that those of you who have never been to the encampment before will benefit by going. You have had some training already in working with the guarding situation, but I think you have more to discover: why a certain style applies and why you need to incorporate a military principle in your own style, which is different from ordinary stiffness and aggression.

So the particular training that you receive at encampment is very valuable. It is actually the Kasung and Kusung equivalent of the Vajradhatu Seminary. For those who have never been to seminary, attending encampment will be a starting point for you to connect with the seminary students' basic training. For those of you who have already been to seminary, the encampment will be a further way of opening your mind and body so that you can understand how to be actual Kasung and Kusung, fully and properly.

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32. The Sawang was seventeen years old in 1979.

33. See the footnote on [here](#) in chapter 6, “Children of Buddhism.”



# *Continuous Service*

## WORKING WITH THE MANDALA AND THE ECHO CHAMBER

*Address to the Rusung Conference*

*The Kalapa Court • Boulder, Colorado • February 14, 1980*

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Good evening and welcome to the Kalapa Court. The question tonight is how we can continuously work on the basic practice of Kasungship and further our participation both in terms of the Vajradhatu sangha and with Shambhala vision at large. The important point is our connection to people in our Dharmadhatu communities. That means connecting with members' personal involvement in the community, for one; connecting with their personal doubt, for two; and connecting with their positive influence—and their negative influence—in the community, for three.

In the past, we have had difficulties keeping ideal track, so to speak, of people. Some people who had problems didn't have anyone to talk to. Largely because of the morale in their communities, they didn't have anyone to discuss their problems with. There has been too much emphasis on trying to understand oneself, yet forgetting to try to understand others further. People with difficulties have been excluded and shied away from. Often, such people made an effort to understand things further and to come back, but nobody beckoned them or even tried to feel them out.

So then people often have decided to drop out altogether. At that point, they develop resentment of the practice, saying it is too vigorous for them or that prostrations hurt their knees and backs or whatever little things they may come up with. It could be anything. They might say that the hierarchy is too much for them. People come up with afterthoughts of all kinds, various lists of things to project negativity toward what we are doing. So your role is to provide a coaching situation within your sphere in your Dharmadhatu.

Also, we have to safeguard people from unnecessary attacks of dōns. First, people make themselves weak, and then they invite dōns. Then the dōns come along and attack them; then people feel confirmed because the dōns have attacked them. Then they blame us, saying that we sent the dōns to them, which is not the case.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome [whispering to the Dorje Dradül]:* Excuse me, sir. I don't know if all of these people know what dōns are.

*Dorje Dradül:* Dōns? Is there anybody here who doesn't know about dōns? [Chuckles.] Everybody seems to know about them. First come, first served! [Laughter, the Dorje Dradül continues to laugh.]

Your role is to be the guardian deity in human form. Therefore, it is a very important role. According to the iconography, in the mandala setup there are various guardian deities at different levels, and their duty is to set the boundary, or the wall. That wall has four gates: the east gate, west gate, south gate, and north gate. People are free to enter into the mandala from any direction, but before they come in, they should be processed or purified, cleansed of their dōns. Then, when they come in, their visit will be worthwhile, and they won't waste time entering into the mandala. They also won't pervert entering into the mandala. Moreover, they will gain a lot by coming into the mandala. So that cleansing process is provided for their welfare or benefit.

Such a mandala setup happens all the time, not just purely when we have public functions, such as a community talk or a public talk. It happens whenever there is sitting practice taking place, whenever any function takes place in the community. So your role in the mandala is always there, to relate with people and how they enter into the mandala. This means making sure that they are communicated with, they're beckoned or they're acknowledged, and their negativity is cleansed.

We're not talking them into something, using salesmanship. But we are helping them respond to the environment that we have set up, being sure that they are fresh and clean and worthy of entering into such a world at all. That requires working constantly with people and with yourselves, as well as with your subordinates and colleagues, other guards. People should work somewhat hard; it is a continuous situation.

As the Rusung, you might feel that your role is obsolete when there are no big

happenings in your center. You have your title and your name, and you just hang out. That isn't the real situation at all. Each person has to enter their own mandalas, on their own merit. Everybody has their own individual mandala situations, how they can enter their own buddha nature.

Obviously, people have to do a lot of things for themselves. We can't do everything for them. We can't prostrate for them or sit on a zafu for them. They have to do those things by themselves. On the other hand, you could be very helpful. Your role as Kusung and Kasung generally is to be a kind of spiritual friend, or spiritual bodyguard, for individuals.

You can help the community members take positive pride in themselves. They will feel better about themselves if they feel acknowledged and understood. If any obstacles arise, we have to shave them off of people. We will come with our razor knife and shave the obstacle for them. So our setup is also a barbershop, from that point of view. We shave them outside, at the entrance to the gate. We do it right there; they don't have to go into another little hall to get a shave. And if they're dirty, we give them a bath or a shower before they enter into the mandala. We do the whole thing. The person in the middle of the mandala is also trying to do that as well. So if we can synchronize our work together, we have a complete mandala.

As you advance in your practice of the *sadhanas* of various deities, you will find out more about how the mandala setup works. It's unique and very literal, in some sense. We haven't actually invented anything new at all; it's an old tradition manifested on this new level, which is magnificent and very real.

Then, apart from working with the students, you have the other areas of your responsibility. Some people outside of our community have heard about the existence of a mandala somewhere in North America, and they've heard that it is an unusual and strong setup. They exaggerate the logic, and then they try to attack our mandala. They say that it is an evil nest, because they can't comprehend it and they can't get in. They can't even approach it; they can't even face in the direction of the mandala. In reality, people are freaking out over the existence of the vajra world.

It's like the utterance of mantra. When you say HUM, it echoes HUM HUM HUM HUM HUM throughout the mandala, all the way to the periphery. Then, when somebody hears that HUM HUM-ing, they are terrified. It's the same idea as a Tibetan children's story in which a little animal heard a plop, and then he told the other small animals that he heard a plop. They all decided to run away from

it. Finally, they found a lion, who asked them what this was all about. They told him that somebody heard a plop, so the lion began to trace their steps back to where the plop came from. The animal that heard the plop directed the lion to a lake. The lion looked in the water and saw himself reflected. He thought that his reflection must be the enemy, so he dove in and drowned.

That's the basic idea of the echo chamber. People are working against themselves, basically speaking. On the other hand, we can't just relax and forget about such incidents. We have to pay attention to the chain of paranoia that happens. To that effect, our existence is a very interesting one. We have to relate fully with those paranoid people, talk to them, and regard them as just an ordinary worm or parrot, an ordinary echo. We gently take care of the worm and put it in the greenery outside on the lawn. We simply relate to such situations in a very humane and ordinary way.

That is an interesting challenge. You are not purely trying to please the community alone. You have a greater public relations situation, which is to attend to people, work with people and relate with them. The system that we have experimented with and developed throughout history, throughout our Buddhist heritage and our Shambhala heritage, is fearlessness and gentleness, with humor. Aggression is usually humorless. It is like someone having a stomach cramp: they have a distorted face. If we can relate with those individuals with our humor, then we don't experience that cramp. Then they can see that we are not in that aggressive situation at all.

Then the person has a chance to have second thoughts, and on the second thought—if not, then on the third thought—the person might do a double take, which makes another fourth moment or even a sixth moment. We have to be willing to wait and let them have their second thought, their third thought, and then they might try to smile. We have to enter into that state of mind when the person is trying to smile. Then we can afford to tell them to relax, that everything's all right, there's nothing to worry about. You are seeing this strange world, but it is not as strange as you think. It's a real world.

That kind of public relations situation is somewhat complicated and very special. But I see that all of you here are obviously great practitioners, to a certain extent, and you have some understanding of basic vajrayana teachings altogether, to various degrees, and you can take pride in yourselves. You can handle such situations. Moreover, you are empowered by us to take such a position and hold such a seat. You have the authority as well as the appreciation

of the lineage.

Just out of interest, we threw an *I Ching* today for a different purpose, but we came up with this answer, which might be applicable tonight.

*Lady Diana Mukpo [reads from the I Ching]:*

The Arousing, Shock, Thunder.

The hexagram *Chen* represents the eldest son, who seizes rule with energy and power. A yang line develops below two yin lines and presses upward forcibly. This movement is so violent that it arouses terror. It is symbolized by thunder, which bursts forth from the earth and by its shock causes fear and trembling.

The Judgement.

SHOCK brings success.

Shock comes—oh, oh!

Laughing words—ha, ha!

The shock terrifies for a hundred miles,

And he does not let fall the sacrificial spoon and chalice.

The shock that comes from the manifestation of God within the depths of the earth makes man afraid, but this fear of God is good, for joy and merriment can follow upon it.

When a man has learned within his heart what fear and trembling mean, he is safeguarded against any terror produced by outside influences. Let the thunder roll and spread terror a hundred miles around: he remains so composed and reverent in spirit that the sacrificial rite is not interrupted. This is the spirit that must animate leaders and rulers of men—a profound inner seriousness from which all outer terrors glance off harmlessly.

The Image

Thunder repeated: the image of shock.

Thus in fear and trembling

The superior man sets his life in order

And examines himself.

The shock of continuing thunder brings fear and trembling. The superior man is always filled with reverence at the manifestation of God; he sets his life in order and searches his heart, lest it harbour any secret opposition to the will of God. Thus reverence is the foundation of true culture.<sup>34</sup>

*Dorje Dradül:* Thank you. This evening, we also planned to have short reports from the sitting soldiers here. So we could begin with Karmê Chöling.

*[The Dorje Dradül then received reports from the Rusung at Karmê Chöling (Todd Creamer), Boston (Grant MacLean), Vancouver (Francis Fuller), Washington, DC (Paul Halpern), Chicago (Elliot Schaeffer), New York (Brad Upton), Rocky Mountain Dharma Center (Michael McClellan), and finally Boulder (Kasung Dapön James Gimian). The reports made by the Rusung were specific to their locations and to the time and therefore are not repeated here. However, during and following each report, the Dorje Dradül made remarks of general interest, which follow. In a few cases, where remarks about a location or situation are relevant, they are identified as relating to a specific locale.]*

*Dorje Dradül:* I think that relating to local politics in your various locations is quite simple. We can play ignorant and be simple. We don't have to become too nosy or play delicate games. As Buddhists, we are purely a pragmatic group. We do things when we need to do them, and we step out of situations when there is a problem of politicking. I think that applies everywhere, to all of you. If we have a relationship with the local police department, we have to play somewhat ignorant, be simple-minded in some way. We are only concerned with this particular issue or that issue. We are not politicking with anybody, particularly. Just make it simple that way. That's the best and most trustworthy thing to do, rather than trying to outsmart anybody at their game.

Be helpful to everybody. Take part in your local problems. In Barnet, Vermont, where Karmê Chöling is located, you're very exposed, as opposed to being in New York City where nobody thinks about the Dharmadhatu. In Barnet, we are a big issue. So if we can be helpful and save somebody's life, we should do that, and keep it simple and ordinary. If we behave as if we are simple-minded, that's very helpful.

You should also work with the Dharmadhatu community members. That applies to all of you. Your role is to check the basic morale of the community

members and try to be helpful. Obviously, you work on that with the local Dharmadhatu ambassador at the same time. It's easier at Karmê Chöling because you have a captive audience, in some sense. The situation in Boston is diffused, and New York or Los Angeles has a very large situation.

In any of the cities, we have a lot of work to do. Your job is not simply standing outside the door of the Dharmadhatu. You have to stand outside everybody's door, the door to their own mind and body and speech, which is a big project. You have the authority to throw out an occasional word of wisdom. You can always throw out a word of wisdom according to the guard slogans. They are always applicable and helpful. They are not particularly designed to be an offensive system of slogans. They apply to situations of cultivation or defensive situations. They are slogans of cultivation.

In Vancouver, we have the problem of people in the Dharmadhatu relating to the organization as Crown property—which they react against. That is a problem that arises from fundamental liberalism and people being shy of hierarchy. I suppose that some American problems originally were inherited from that mentality, as well. I think there's no fundamental problem. It's a question of making the presence of the Kasung well-known and extending yourselves, not in an official capacity all the time, necessarily, but just as human beings.

As Kasung, you should get together with one another and also get together and work with other people. As we discussed already, working with the organization does not just mean relating with the organization of the Dharmadhatu alone. All the Dharmadhatu members have their own organization—of their own existence. They have mind, body, and speech, and they have their own little cell system, so you have to penetrate that as well.

We would like to know if people in your communities have any problems so that we will know how we can work with them. We will check with the meditation instructors, the advisors, the ambassadors, directors, or whatever you have in your Dharmadhatus. But we also will check with you to get Kasung information so that we have a basic understanding of people's lifestyle. Knowing their situation and how we can work with them is very helpful.

So, as we discussed, your role as Kasung is to take care of the community members, who each have their own world. Then you should go beyond that, to the relationship with the outside world. If your Dharmadhatu is working with other outside groups, on a sort of worldwide level, that is the responsibility of the ambassador. But when that has been established already, your role is to be

sure that it happens properly. If there needs to be any modifications or corrections or editing work, let us know so that we can work together.

The main point is to keep the community strong. Your individual guardsmanship is guarding everybody in the community, all the members there. Pay attention to them. Your presence shouldn't make them feel like being watched by a policeman particularly, but you should just know how things are going for them and how they are doing things. If someone needs a further push, we can send one of our personnel to help the person, whether that person needs extra help on a physical or a morale or a concentration level. I think that the Kusung and the Kasung could provide a lot of help there. At that point, you become the Kusung to the membership altogether. You are their household friends. That would be very helpful.

If there is a problem with the discipline in your executive committee meetings, for example, I think it's your role to solve that problem as well. You can suggest that they meet properly, rather than just sitting around the fire or something like that. You know, it's the basic Salvation Army concept. [*Laughs.*] It's like trying to make the drunken more respectable so that they don't make a big scene. The Salvation Army comes in and does that. [*Laughter.*]

In some of the Dharmadhatus, you might need to recruit more Kasung. That would be good, as long as they know the role of the Kasung so that it's not a paper tiger. In some Dharmadhatus, the Kasung become useful when a big event takes place, but otherwise they don't exist. Instead of that approach, you should work with the membership altogether.

Chicago is in a unique situation. It is still somewhat unattached. It becomes attached during my visits or the visits of the regent or His Holiness. But some kind of taming is still necessary. It's somewhat the geographical situation. Chicago is not as speedy as New York nor as love-and-lighty as California. Chicago has fallen somewhere in the middle crack. We are trying to rectify that, sure, no doubt about it. It can be workable. At the same time, we need a strong Kasung presence there, very much. We don't seem to have any mafiosos there. They seem to have died out in Chicago.

As far as Rocky Mountain Dharma Center goes, I think it would be good to have a Kasung presence there. When people apply to move up there, we can assign them to certain particular roles. A student can come to RMDC as a Kasung or as a cook, or whatever assignment we give him or her to fulfill. The situation is somewhat different than Karmê Chöling. RMDC has a less captive



audience, because the living situation is so different.<sup>35</sup> But the approach is more united with the land. There's no particular problem at all. Obviously, RMDC is already the seat of Kasung activities like the Magyal Pomra Encampment, so having Kasung there would be fine. That would also help us to have more spies during encampment! [*Laughs.*]

Basically, you should all know that we would like to recruit people for encampment who are very vigorous, very military, and who will stay and work with us indefinitely. They should come and join us and have a long-term commitment and an interest in doing maneuvers and things like that. We don't usually do maneuvers at our headquarters in Vajradhatu or in the Dharmadhatus, but some feeling toward that training is very important.

In New York, you may think that you have a long way to go, but you're very fast, so I think that you can handle it. The main point, altogether, is that the Kasung's role is continuous. That is the message at this point. Work with the membership; keep track of what they do. Just walk into their life, not necessarily bluntly but with some gentleness. We are there to help them, and that approach can actually be very helpful. Once that happens, the whole thing is joined together, all together.

In Boulder, we have to work further on this approach. Our people will understand this. It's not so much that we need to push people around, but we need to develop our general vision further. We can't relax here by any means at all. On the whole, we're trying to ensure that we don't become a Mexican army.

The command group in Boulder has been working very hard, but at the same time, we have to have more vision. When I myself or the regent visits a Dharmadhatu, the Kasung there work hard during our visits. But since we are here all together in Boulder and this is our seat, the Kasung constantly are working hard. You have a flip here in Boulder, and no wonder. Those of you from the Dharmadhatus: imagine having us on your property all the time! You would have to work hard and have shifts and everything constantly.

On the other hand, the flip side in Boulder is taking the whole thing for granted, whereas others take their Kasungship as their special effort. I think we have to build a bridge between those two situations so that wherever we go, we have an even-tempered situation. Then the guards in Chicago or New York don't just work hard on the spot, but continual effort exists. Then, when we have something like Her Highness Lady Diana's visit to New York, we don't jazz up anything, but we are even tempered.

When the military is taking care of everything, that is a complete achievement. Even if we have to fight a war on three fronts, we fight very evenly on all three fronts. We are not pushed or pulled. We just fight, in any case. [*Laughs.*] So that's good.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Sir, regarding this issue of the Kasung taking responsibility for the general morale of our communities, I feel that in a way it's more difficult in Boulder. Maybe that's just my being jealous of the Dharmadhatus. I'm wondering how the Kasung here in Boulder, apart from fulfilling their shifts and their duties, can actually have an influence on the general morale and create an uplifted situation.

*Dorje Dradül:* Well, it's not happening here yet, for the very fact that we haven't told them yet that this is part of their role. We can do that. I think once people know how they should be handling themselves, they will pick up on it right away. We might have some Three-Yana Department<sup>36</sup> problems. We already have meditation instructors and advisors. Then the Kasung come along and want to do their thing. But I think the Kasung role doesn't have to be that formal; they are just watchdogs, and their role is to check out situations. People can be told that. I think a lot of our Kasung would feel very good about that. They will begin to feel that they are actually taking part in shaping the vajra world. It's just a question of letting them know. We can say that the Dharmadhatus are doing this already. [*Laughs*]

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* That's exactly what I was thinking. At this point, the Dharmadhatus might be ahead of us.

*Dorje Dradül:* I think they are in some ways, which is good, at this point. I think we should let people know about that.

*Kusung Dapön John Perks* [*entering the meeting from the kitchen*]: Dinner is served, sir.

*Dorje Dradül:* All right. That's great.

[*People are led into dinner. British military music begins to play in the background.*]

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34. From *The I Ching: or Book of Changes*, Richard Wilhelm, trans., Cary F. Bayne, English trans., Bollingen Series XIX (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 197–98, used by arrangement with the publisher.

35. The Dorje Dradül is referring to staff housing at RMDC being dispersed, with people living in small cabins all over the land. At Karmê Chöling, from the earliest days, most of the staff lived together in the main building.

36. The Three-Yana Department of Vajradhatu was responsible for overseeing the practice and study of members of the Buddhist sangha, both in Boulder and in the international community. This department also supervised meditation instructors throughout the mandala.

## *No Privacy*

*Birthday Celebration for the Dorje Dradül  
Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • February 15, 1980*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome:* Dorje Dradül, Your Highness Lady Diana, Sawang Ösel Mukpo, with your permission, I would like to welcome everyone to this celebration by the Dorje Kasung and Kusung of the auspicious birthday of our teacher and commander, the Dorje Dradül, the Vajracharya, the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. On behalf of all of the Dorje Kasung and Dorje Kusung, I would like to welcome Mrs. Pybus, Lady Rich, Mrs. Rome, the Loppön, the directors of Vajradhatu and Nālandā, of Karma Dzong, and of Naropa, and also to provide a warm welcome to several new contingents that are joining us for the first time this year: the command group wives (it is good to have you here), the Nālandā Translation Committee group, our compatriots from the Magyal Pomra Encampment (I trust I can call you that), and last but not least, the members of our newly formed naval brigade, the Purnachandra Division, under the command of Kusung Dapön Perks. Welcome to all of you.

We take pride in celebrating this particular event on what is supposed to be the most dangerous day of the year. It is the second to the last day before the new year, Shambhala Day. It is a time at the end of each year when all kinds of potential attacks gather. It is our pride and our duty to come together on this evening and to raise up our confidence and our windhorse, to celebrate and radiate. For the Kasung and the Kusung, the year that has passed since the last time that we were together in this room to celebrate the birthday of the Dorje Dradül has been one of considerable development and also, I think, of considerable obstacles. In Boulder, the Kasung as well as Kusung have learned how to relax further in their roles. At times, they have had a tendency to over-relax in those roles, to treat themselves, in a sense, as old hat.

We are just completing our Rusung Conference, which is our annual

conference with the captains of the Dharmadhatu guard groups. This year we have been most impressed with the Rusung's vigor, genuineness, and freshness of energy, in a way that has provided a contrast to our own situation here in Boulder. The Dorje Dradül, in addressing the Rusung last night, said that the Rusung, the Dharmadhatu captains, may be ahead of the Boulder guards in some way at this point.

Without burdening our festivities too much, I would like to say that we do need both to renew our commitment and to understand how to relax properly, but not too much. To do that is not just a question of tidily maintaining what we already know how to do. Actually, constantly, we need to find ways to go further in our understanding and the expression of our roles as the military. The command group has been trying to confront some of the administrative difficulties that we've had. But beyond those steps that can be taken by the administration, it is up to each individual Kasung and Kusung to find their own conviction, their own sense of responsibility, and to carry that out. This evening I would like to call upon every one of you here to do that.

When the Dorje Dradül addressed the Rusung last night, he spoke about the role that the guards have, not just in maintaining but in extending and uplifting the morale of our sangha altogether. He said that people can enter the mandala of the dharma through any of its four gates. The role of the Dorje Kasung and Kusung is first of all to see that practitioners don't needlessly waste time in entering, on the one hand, and on the other hand to see that they do not enter in a perverted manner. This is a great mission, a great charter for us. It means more than simply minding our post, sticking to our schedules. This is our twenty-four-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year duty. I believe that we can fulfill that role, that we should, and we must.

At this point, without further delay, I would like to open our celebration and to request all of you to relax and celebrate. Thank you very much. Welcome.

We begin our ceremony with the annual oath-taking of the Dharmadhatu guard captains. Traditionally we are not hasty to allow our Rusung to take this oath. I believe we've been careful this year, as always, in scrutinizing our candidates. At the same time, I am happy to announce we have a larger group than we have had in the past. So I would like to ask the following gentlemen to stand forward: Mr. Halpern, Rusung from Washington, DC; Mr. MacLean, Rusung from Boston; Mr. Fuller, Rusung from Vancouver; Mr. Schaeffer, Rusung from Chicago; and Mr. Creamer, Rusung from Karmê Chöling.

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo [addressing the Rusung]:* This particular oath is an oath of trust. It expresses your sense of connection with basic fearlessness and your willingness to take care of security in your Dharmadhatu. It also expresses your inspiration. If anyone is losing their fearlessness, as we discussed last night, you will take charge of that situation. I feel good, personally, and honored that, by taking this oath, you are taking our friendship further. So this oath signifies your further commitment and friendship with the lineage. It also signifies your commitment to the idea of protection, your commitment to safeguarding and also cultivating our students, making sure that they don't stray or feel unloved or uncultivated in situations within the Dharmadhatu community. As we discussed last night, you have many ideas about how to accomplish this, so we are just confirming or reaffirming that situation. Thank you.

*[The Rusung take their oath.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Congratulations, gentlemen. Thank you. You may retire. At this point we have the annual reconstitution of the Raven Division.

*[The Kasung Kyi Khyap dismisses the Raven Division from the previous year and announces the members of the newly reconstituted Raven Division, who step forward.]*

*Dorje Dradül [addressing the new members of the Raven Division]:* I've watched all of you perform, and on that basis you are being included in the Raven Division. You could be helpful with administrative or organizational situations. All of you possess dharmic and Shambhala techniques and teachings, no doubt. I've spent quite a lot of time with all of you. I've watched you and appreciated you personally, every one of you. I hope that in the coming year this particular division can be more active and more real, in some sense. The number of guards in the Raven Division, thirteen, is traditional, representing the messengers of the mahakalas. The mahakala, or protector of the teachings, has thirteen raven-type messengers connected with protecting the teachings, particularly the *mahamudra* teachings of the Kagyü tradition. You, in your earthly form, are representing that protection of the teaching and the promotion of Shambhala vision altogether. So I have a lot of trust in you and affection for all of you, and I hope that you can accommodate and cherish that. Thank you.

*[The members of the Raven Division take their oath. Following this, awards are presented. Then, following a break, the program continues.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* The Vajra Regent is unable to be with us tonight. As you may know, he just underwent minor surgery and is recuperating. In his place, I would like to invite the Loppön of Three Yana Studies, Lodrö Dorje, to address us.

*Dorje Loppön Lodrö Dorje:* Dorje Dradül, Your Highness Lady Diana, Sawang Ösel Mukpo, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to say a few words this evening appreciating the role of the Dorje Kasung in propagating and extending our vision and in our work of creating an enlightened society. Fundamentally speaking, our interest altogether is to propagate awakened mind. To that end, the Dorje Dradül has provided and created a mandala, a world in which we have various means, or *upayas*, and containers to express our work. We have an administrative container, which is known as Vajradhatu/Nālandā. We have an economic container, which consists of the livelihood of our sangha members. We have a conceptual container, which is the teachings that we study. Finally, we have a protection container, which is the Dorje Kasung.

When we speak of a container for enlightened society, we are not speaking of a physical container like a can. Here the container is something that provides atmosphere. In particular, the Kasung provide an enormous atmosphere of hospitality and proper form. They provide the atmosphere to quell potential neurotic disturbances. They provide the atmosphere of decorum that is not confused and not subject to confusion. Finally, they provide the atmosphere of military discipline, which has a very special meaning for us as citizens in the Shambhala lineage. We do not regard the military as a way to terrorize the population or impose martial law. All of us, civilians and military alike, by now understand that the military expresses the natural chivalry and natural gallantry of the warrior, as well as some kind of delight mixed with slight paranoia—because confusion is not acceptable. If the Dorje Kasung protect, contain, and maintain the boundary, we could ask what it is that the Dorje Kasung *bound*, so to speak. We could say that they bound the world of Vajradhatu. They bound the world in which the teachings can be presented properly by the Dorje Dradül and by his regent. They bound the world in which we as practitioners and many other people can experience any aspect of our lives as part of the path.

In the center of the world bounded by the Dorje Kasung is, spiritually, the mind of the Vajra Master. Physically, there are the body and environment of the Kalapa Court and the family of the Vajra Master. Surrounding that are the practitioners, and on the fringe there are various fringe issues that the Dorje Kasung in particular deal with. Psychologically, on the fringe we have situations of doubt, hesitation, or resentment among those who are about to be overcome by neurosis. The physical fringe is maintained when the Dorje Kasung provide a corridor for the Dalai Lama to pass through the New York airport. The physical fringe is also maintained when we drive the Dorje Dradül in the car without losing the car keys. Or it may be expressed by making a good flower arrangement.

In our world, we understand that the physical mandala and the psychological mandala are one. Physical expression, or the physical environment, can become psychological when there is an environment that shapes the perceiver. For instance, we walk into this room, and something happens to our mind. Or we have tea at the Kalapa Court, and something happens to our minds. Or we see the Dorje Kasung in their uniforms or we ourselves wear a uniform, and something happens to our mind. On the other hand, the psychological mandala can become the physical mandala when we express ourselves, when we manifest. For instance, when we smile, mind becomes body.

We are very fortunate that, although he did not need to do so, the Dorje Dradül decided to share his world with people. He decided to share the enlightened world, not with tenth-stage bodhisattvas or at least first *bhumi* bodhisattvas, but to share it with all kinds of ordinary people like ourselves. He decided to create a direct and obvious manifestation of the awakened world, one in which we can participate and in which we can be. The Dorje Kasung in particular play an important part in presenting that very evident, perky, orderly, and sane world. Therefore, I would like, on behalf of the civilian members of our world, to salute the Dorje Kasung, their leader the Kasung Kyi Khyap, and our mutual commander in chief, the Dorje Dradül. Thank you.

*[Following the loppön's remarks, Kusung Dapön John Perks presents a gift to the Dorje Dradül on behalf of the Dorje Kasung. Unfortunately, part of the recording is missing, and we don't know what the gift was. A gift is also presented to Her Highness Lady Diana Mukpo.]*



*Kasung Dapön James Gimian:* Dorje Dradül, Your Highness, Sawang, guests, Dorje Kasung, Kasung and Kusung, the end of the year is time to take stock. Looking around during the earlier part of the program, I spent a moment taking stock, seeing how fantastic this particular group looks. By “this particular group,” I mean everyone in the room this evening. Then I thought about how this group got to be here. How did such a group come to be able to sit with such head and shoulders, with such vajra-like posture?

Though we may have come from varied backgrounds, I realized there was one common thread that was the root cause of our being here this evening. That thread is that, at a certain point in our lives, we underwent massive surgery. We had a new heart transplanted in place of our old heart, and we had a total blood transfusion. Such a thing medically is really very difficult, or so the doctors advise. In our case, there is one particular person who has the capacity to actually transplant his own heart and his own heart’s blood into each of us.

Dorje Dradül, sir, on the occasion of your birthday, on behalf of your military, I would like to offer our hearts, which are in fact your heart, and our blood, which also came from you, as well as our unending loyalty. Dorje Kasung, please join me in a toast. Let us pledge our unending loyalty to the Dorje Dradül.

*Hudson Shotwell Rupön:* Dorje Dradül, Your Highness, Sawang, I have the privilege of hopefully not burning the toast in making this presentation to someone who is more and more here for us, in terms of our discipline. I am speaking of Her Highness Lady Diana. It is true that this evening we all do look fantastic, like a jewel with its foil. The foil is discipline with gentleness. Lady Diana is the embodiment of that discipline and gentleness. Whether you know it or not, as Kasung we have an extraordinary connection with that. It has been said that gentleness is the best whip. Lady Diana combines the qualities of gentleness and whip in an extraordinarily inscrutable way that all of us can relate with, because that is the precise way that we can execute our duty as Kasung effectively. So from the heart, I’d like to propose a toast to this lady, simultaneously inviting her to the encampment next year. Please come stay with us. To Lady Diana.

*[A toast to the Sawang is offered, after which the Sawang and Lady Diana toast the Dorje Kasung and Kusung. Finally Mr. John Roper offers a toast on behalf of the government.]*

*Dorje Dradül:* Thank you, everybody. I know that you have put a lot of effort into preparing everything this evening. In fact, I have put a lot of effort into it, too, to make sure that it would happen. It came out to be a very good and quite delightful evening—so far. I am so delighted by this wonderful event tonight. I appreciate it very much, and I further appreciate that all of you have been very decent and good and workable. Each year that we have a celebration such as this, the participants become more workable, and we can present further elegant situations—which is wonderful. I am very encouraged. The only problem is that things are running slightly late. We were hoping that, at least at the Kasung level, we could operate things on time, but that is yet to be seen.

The existence of the Kasung situation is by no means an accident. It is very deliberate. On the other hand, it is a complete accident. We did not particularly plan things this way. The Kasung arose according to the Buddhist vision of providing service to a teacher and to the dharma altogether. So, with that combination of deliberateness and pure accident, we have a double binding, a double-edged sword.

How you function, your individual participation as Dorje Kasung, is extraordinarily remarkable, wonderful. I have said this before. I watch the way you drive my car; I watch how you pour sake into my glass; I watch all of you performing your duties throughout the whole day. I never have a day without a Kasung or a Kusung with me. The whole extent of my life is shared with you. You are part of my life.

The Kasung and Kusung know what color underpants I wear. You always know that. I have no privacy in that sense, and I take delight in that. I do not want to have any privacy particularly at all. I want to share my world, right from the point when I arise from my bed and take my next in-breath or out-breath, from when you begin knocking at my door and come into my bedroom. From that point until I lie down and fall asleep in the evening, you share my life. In the role of Kasung or Kusung, you have no restrictions on sharing my life at all. I regard it as a tremendous accomplishment, in some sense, that we can develop enlightened society and that the person who is leading that enlightened society does not have any privacy at all. Everybody knows the brand of toothpick or toothpowder, brush or toilet tissue I use. You know the way I comb my hair and take a shower. Everything is yours.

I do not particularly wish to have great privacy, at all. I couldn't care less. I appreciate sharing my being with you altogether. Some people say that if they

pay enough attention to the way I work with my toiletry, taking a shower and everything, they could understand the principles of level five of Shambhala Training. [*Laughter.*] Some people say that. Maybe it is possible from my being with you. In some sense, it is more your being with me. I feel that I have stretched myself out, revealed myself utterly without any reservations. There is no such thing as the private life of the Vajracharya or the Dorje Dradül—none whatsoever.

A lot of you still have a private life. How we can bring that into our world is an interesting question. You can do so by serving, guarding, and doing all sorts of things. We will take it step-by-step. Nonetheless, I appreciate your being here as part of our whole world. I do not particularly have any privacy. Sharing my whole life with you is a remarkable thing. No statesmen have ever done that. They always have a little pocket where they can snuggle in, get into their particular cocoon and brew their neurosis. In my case, because of the training I received from my teacher, I feel good and relaxed, utterly relaxed without privacy.

Working with everybody here is wonderful and magnificent. The concept of a guarding situation occurred altogether because we have nothing to hide. We have never committed any particular sins, even according to the protestant ethic. We are very straight. We get up, we wash, we go to work, we come back, and we eat our meal. We do our business in that way, that very simple and ordinary manner. I appreciate the Kusung and the Kasung, and I'm so glad that I am able to share my life with all of you in that way.

One of the best delights is that you have never given me any possibilities of having privacy. I have been offered no privacy since we met together. From the first thought up to a hundred thoughts, what I do in my life is very clear. You have seen my mind, my speech, and my body. I am so pleased, and I am so grateful to all of you. My life is completely yours. In your own independent lives, you might have recourse here and there to privacy. You might want to change your underpants in the telephone booth, and things like that. But as far as I am concerned, I don't ever have a chance to walk into a telephone booth at all. My life is public and open, and I appreciate enormously that my life is dedicated completely to everybody's welfare. I would like to raise a toast, if you have anything left in your glass. Thanks to the Rigden Fathers and to my lineage for no privacy. No privacy.

*Dorje Kasung:* No privacy.

## ***The Kalapa Court***

BEING AT HOME IS ALSO DISCIPLINE

*Meeting with Kusung of Lady Diana Mukpo*

*The Kalapa Court • Boulder, Colorado • November 2, 1980*

*Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Good afternoon. The purpose of this meeting is to make your situation quite firm and definite, in terms of serving Her Highness Lady Diana and relating with the Kalapa Court at large. Most of you have already been working with her for some time. If I may reiterate, the purpose for that is twofold. One is to create a disciplined situation at the court and to create some general inspiration for the community at large, communicating that the Shambhala approach to living and leading life is a disciplined one. The emphasis is not purely on comfort alone. It's a question of having a disciplined situation where laziness can be overcome, and one's sharpness and precise attention to details can be manifested.

The second point is that our house, our home, is open to the community at large. Through her connection with you, Her Highness will have the chance to express herself, to show her own discipline and her appreciation for the community at large. This demonstrates that there is no gap, no elitism in the community. With Lady Diana having been away pursuing her dressage training for quite a while over the past few years, some people have become quite used to her absence. Now that she is settling here, we need to demonstrate to people that her presence is both necessary and worthwhile in order to provide a home for both of us and in order to work for the benefit of others. So that is an important point. As far as we are concerned, even when we are at home, we don't take time off at all. We are constantly working. From the moment when we wake up to when we go to sleep, there is always a working basis, working with others, being involved in working with you people, working with the community at large, and

working with ourselves. We don't regard this place as a place to flop or relax. As far as we are concerned, being at home is also discipline for us. We appreciate that very much, and we don't particularly look forward to lying in the dirt and having a great time. We appreciate and we have become accustomed to disciplining ourselves. We both work on different areas of discipline, and as far as we are concerned, I think we are comparable to each other.

The traditional concept of a palace or court, from a fairy-tale point of view, is that everything is heavenly; everything is sweet, wonderful, and rich. There are always beautiful things on display, sweet music is always heard, there are nice, sweet things to eat, and in this comfortable environment the kings and queens indulge themselves. The real evidence of the past and the present is that court situations are not like that. Even if there was such a situation, it was short-lived. When the ruling people, kings or queens, begin to indulge in their pleasure, the result is quite obvious. They begin to neglect their subjects, the rulers feel stupid and uninspired, and many of them get very bored.

We are trying to create a different kind of court situation altogether, which is very important. To make that possible, your participation is wonderful, and your help is needed very much. It is a question of helping each other: us helping you and you helping us. So it's teamwork, in that way.

The purpose of the court is to manifest and realize the notion of enlightened society. Obviously there will be a lot of challenges for you. You need a good attention span, good memory, a good eye for details, and coordination of mind and body together. These qualities are not foreign to you, since you are Buddhist practitioners. We emphasize mindfulness in situations, and awareness follows naturally in what we are doing.

Your service at the court is not particularly regarded as just a job or a conventional duty, but it is a big process of working with yourselves. I think one of the important points is that you should feel joyful and relaxed, but at the same time awake. Seemingly, those are dichotomies, but nonetheless, if you look into it, I don't think there is any problem in being relaxed and awake at the same time.

We have established enough formality at this point so that we can relax a little bit. In the beginning stages of creating a situation, if you start with relaxation right away, you lose the sense of sacredness and formality. At this point, as soon as you enter this household, there is a sense of togetherness and tidiness that will help you to be awake. At the same time, you should enjoy yourselves and have a

good time. If you don't have a good time, your span of attention might be shortened, and you might spill things and forget things. It is quite straightforward. We know the whole purpose of what we are doing, more or less.

One other point is the importance of sharing information. It is very helpful to share with each other, so that you don't have to learn everything by trial and error. Meeting with each other would be good. It doesn't have to be a large-scale meeting. You can simply share information and discoveries, new ways of doing things. Also, if you feel anything is not right, that should be voiced as well so that we can function and manifest ourselves without any deception. You should always let us know your observations: what you feel about the direction the court is going and how we should be working together. We are completely open to that. Okay. Thank you very much. We would very much like to work with you.

The main point is that you should regard being at the court as a journey rather than feeling that you are stuck with your job. There is a constantly changing situation. If things go wrong one day, as far as we are concerned, we are not going to give up on you. We are very keen to work with you. We have been working in North America for ten years now, and we've finally achieved something. We would like to continue that way. So at this point regard yourselves as a permanent part of the family. I would like to welcome you as part of our family. Thank you very much.

# *Monasticism*

## BASIC TRAINING IS OUR HOME

*Shambhala Day Address to the Dorje Kasung  
Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • February 5, 1981*

*Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* The discipline, exertion, and perkiness that have been manifested by the Dorje Kasung in the last year have been remarkable. We would like to continue that, no doubt, and at the same time, we would like to extend ourselves further. I am sure there is more to learn and more to do. The main point is understanding that we're not talking purely about efficiency or operating on a business level alone. The Dorje Kasung are learning and developing a feeling that their duty, their function within the mandala, is where they belong. It is their home. Their basic training is their home.

When I say "home," I mean that this is where you belong. You don't just check in and check out as if you were working in a factory. You should feel a sense of making yourself at home in your duty. If you feel that way about all your jobs and your duties, then whatever intelligence or wakefulness is needed will come very naturally to you. Otherwise, things might become superficial.

We have already established a certain formality, so this might be the time for us to feel a natural sense of informality, which doesn't mean that you become sloppy. Informality in this sense is that you feel that you belong to the military. You have your orders; you have your particular duties. When you perform those, they are not regarded as rigid actions or rigid practices that you have to do. Rather, they are part of your life, just like brushing your teeth and combing your hair—if you have any. It is taking your training to heart, in other words.

If practice is not regarded as your own genuine practice connected with your own upbringing, you are bound to fail, because there is superficiality involved. When you begin to regard the whole Kasung experience as part of your

upbringing, part of your heart's blood, part of your general demeanor altogether, then your Kasung discipline will be the same as monastic discipline. Monasticism and the military can be the same experience, particularly in this type of military we are trying to create, which is known as the Dorje Kasung. The tradition of the Kasung, the protector of the command, is the same as the monastic tradition. You should be honored to be a part of this, and I am tremendously honored that you are with us.

I would like to express my gratitude to the older students, the older Kasung, for what you have done so far. Your performance has been beautiful, magnificent. I have no complaints at all, absolutely not. The new Kasung have to learn more, and I would like to invite you all to go further. In the name of the lineage and in the name of the Rigden Father and our heritage, I would like to invite all of you to join us more and further in our world. Thank you very much.



## ***Genuineness***

*Birthday Celebration for the Makkyi Rabjam  
Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • May 2, 1981*

*This was the first year (1981) that the Dorje Kasung birthday party was held after the Vajradhatu Seminary, not during the dön days at the end of the previous year. Unlike the recordings of other Dorje Kasung birthday parties, the 1981 recording is extremely short, and it appears that the program itself was as well. No introductory remarks were recorded, nor is there an audio recording of the administration of oaths or the awards ceremony. The recording begins with the presentation of the gift to the Makkyi Rabjam. To put this year into further context, in 1981 the Makkyi Rabjam had a serious stomach ailment that lasted for a number of months. His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa was suffering from stomach cancer, from which he died at the end of the calendar year. Unlike the celebratory feeling in the room in other years, the tone of this event was quite subdued.*

*Don Winchell Kadö:* At this time, on behalf of the Dorje Kasung, I have the privilege of announcing our gift to the Makkyi Rabjam and the Tönsung Wangmo Lady Diana Mukpo. Sir, the Dorje Kasung and our guests here today will contribute toward the completion of the garden at the Kalapa Court. Please accept this gift with our wishes that you will find the garden a place to relax and further regain your strength and health so that you can continue to guide us in the path of the Great Eastern Sun.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin:* Please stand and join me in this toast. On behalf of the entire sangha, I would like to express appreciation and gratitude to all of you who received awards and appointments today. We

appreciate your activity, your dedication, and your devotion to the vision of the Makkyi Rabjam. We also appreciate your excellent service to the rest of us and, above all, your accomplishment in performing your duty. The fact that you have done well is obvious. The tasks that you were appointed to have been completed, and we appreciate it very much. Therefore, because of your activity, the dharma is progressing and flourishing.

Overall, I also would like to express the sangha's appreciation for the Dorje Kasung in general, for fulfilling the wishes of the Makkyi Rabjam and making our situation one of tremendous growth and development for each of us and for sentient beings altogether.

Please join me in this toast. To all of you who have done so well, our appreciation and gratitude.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome: To the Dorje Kasung.*

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap: The Dorje Kasung.*

*All: Dorje Kasung.*

*[A toast to Mrs. Elizabeth Pybus on the occasion of her birthday was then presented by Kasung Landon Mallery.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* I would like to express my sincere and genuine thanks to the Dorje Kasung for providing this situation today, as well as for performing your duties throughout the year. It seems that our work, my work and your work, has been shared together in many ways.

My main concern is for the future of the buddhadharma, how it is going to take effect and how it is going to be maintained and continue without distortion. In order to secure that situation for the future, we have to correct the present situation as well. To accomplish that, the members of the Dorje Kasung must be willing to enter into situations as wakeful people, people who create the environment where the dharma can be taught properly, at its best. In those good surroundings, students can hear the teachings properly, and they can practice properly.

Moreover, our role is to maintain a sense of genuineness by being true to ourselves. We are not kidding anybody. Basically, we are trying to maintain and

continue the dharma as true as is possible, as best as is possible. By acting genuinely, the Dorje Kasung's role can be great. When there are problems among the members of the sangha, such as doubt, impatience, and hesitation, those things often come from being unable to be genuine. So the role of the Dorje Kasung is to correct the environment or the individuals and to bring them back to the genuine path.

It has been many years now since we established the Dorje Kasung. We certainly have progressed tremendously, and we will continue to progress further. As I always say, there are no limits to how high our standards can be. Limitations on our standards do not apply. Our standards are infinite.

With that in mind, please keep going, and let us continue to work together. Personally, I appreciate working with all of you very much. I enjoy each one of you. I enjoy your comradeship, your friendship, your service—and everything. So let us continue. Please try to make sure that we can continue so that we can cheer up the rest of the world—including our own world. It could be quite a big responsibility, quite a solemn one. On the other hand, it could be quite easy. The challenge is there for us, so let's see what we can do. And thank you once more, very, very much.

## ***Simplicity and the Chain of Command***

*Shambhala Day Address to the Dorje Kasung*  
*Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • February 24, 1982*

*Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Happy Shambhala Day. It is good to see you here, in good form—I think. It is necessary for us to take care of ourselves. Taking care of others will come along with that. It is just like *oryoki* practice. If we look after ourselves, then we feel fit, our spirits are good, and we are not in a state of turmoil, whining or weeping. So one of the first and most important points is to have good head and shoulders and a sense of being fully here. We have to shine. All of that is part of the upaya, or skillful means, of being a Dorje Kasung.

Then, there is how we conduct our duties and our activities, which is the prajna part. When your superior officers give you your duties, both you and they should have a sense of duty, a sense of egolessness, and a feeling of covering all the boundaries. You are the people who watch the boundaries as well as the middle of the mandala, at the same time. So you must have a proper and full perspective, whether your particular job is as a Kusung, Kasung, Purnachandra, or whatever arm of the Dorje Kasung you serve in.

The general style of the Dorje Kasung has been adopted from the traditional Shambhala system, which is in some sense synonymous with practicing Buddhist virtues. So you have to maintain your heart and your spirits, because we are not kidding. We are not pretending at all. We are doing the real thing.

Even if only three people are performing their duty together, it is a community effort. Even if you are by yourself, it is a community effort. So your individual effort is also part of the community effort. So far, your performance has been excellent without exception, and we expect it to continue to be that way. We are also trying to train the recipients of your efforts, the people you are dealing with, such as the people in the administration, various leaders in our communities and

so on, so that they will feel a sense of relationship with you. Then, there can be constant two-way communication.

You should feel cheerful. You're not in a Nazi camp. We are what is known as the Dorje Kasung, the protectors of the command. That particular command has been passed down through generations upon generations. It is the Buddhist teachings, to begin with, and it is Shambhala vision. So our duty is to try to carry out those commands and manifest them at their best.

Please try to simplify communications and cut through unnecessary bureaucracy as much as possible. The military should be the kind of organization where the attendants don't repeat a message four times. For example, someone might tell me that I have an appointment at five o'clock. Soon, somebody else comes along and says, "You have an appointment at five o'clock." Then, another person gives a phone call and says, "You have an appointment at five o'clock." Finally, someone brings a postcard that has just been received, which says, "You have an appointment at five o'clock."

We should try to cut down on such unnecessary chaos in the bureaucratic setup. That is your role. Our hierarchy is designed to cut out unnecessary manpower and to cut through unnecessary confusion and too many phone calls, which cost a lot of money. Somebody has to pay for them.

Use your intelligence. If you are in charge of the hour from three to four o'clock, then you have to have three o'clock right in the palm of your hand from the beginning. You have it right in your hand, from three until three thirty, from half past three until quarter to four, from five to four until finally four o'clock. It is in your hand. You have to use it as a weapon, or just like your oryoki setup.

You set up your oryoki bowls right in front of you. There is the buddha bowl, the soup bowl, and the vegetable bowl, and all of them are placed in front of you. You say your chants, you eat properly, and finally you clean your bowls, wash them up, and then tie them together into a good bundle. Our approach as Dorje Kasung should be just like that. That's very important.

On the whole, I think we are advancing quite a lot. One problem could be occasional loss of heart of some kind, because of the tediousness of being on duty all the time, being called upon all the time. But we just have to accept that. We have to go beyond the sense of burden with our sense of humor and our sense of duty, loyalty, and liking ourselves, to begin with. You are not just sitting in a chair next to the telephone or waiting in a car being bored. The reason you get bored is because there's a problem with liking yourself. Have a

sense of being. You have a lot of practices to do. You can find a way to cheer yourself up and keep yourself constantly educated.

I'm glad that the cadets are joining us today. It's great fun to have you, although we don't advertise to young people like the US Army does. The cadets could learn a lot from the other people here who are experienced. You are entering into a world that is not aggressive, not killing anybody, not harming anybody. We are trying to help people. You should think of that as your motto. The key point is that we are trying to help others.

That's why we have early education for people like yourselves. Watch the example of your elders, so to speak. You can see how they conduct themselves. You also have a perfect right to criticize them, so watch out for them at the same time. You are not being put in a school where you are not allowed to open your mouth. You are being exposed to a lot, and you are on a very exciting journey. We are here to improve the world, which basically consists of people and their interactions with each other. There are millions of people in this country, millions of people in Africa, millions of people in the Orient. We are trying to improve the world's standard. We are trying to contribute something to the world, which is known as enlightened society. Enlightened society is nonaggressive, but at the same time it contains exertion and patience. So your sense of duty and self-respect will go with you for a long time.

As for the other part of the troops here, so to speak, you should be aware that you are educating these cadets. You will be looked at and emulated, so there should be no misunderstandings of any kind.

On the whole, everything boils down to all of us being gentle and skillful and not introducing unnecessary chaos. Try to simplify things. That is your job. Civilians also have a hierarchy, but their system of hierarchy is slightly different from ours. Our system of hierarchy in the Dorje Kasung is the chain of command. It brings a sense of dignity and also not wasting time, not creating any unnecessary chaos at all. In fact, it should reduce the chaos. That's where you come in: reduce chaos, reduce double messages, reduce triple messages, and reduce any unnecessary expenditures. In order to get something done, you can go out and do it yourself. In that way, your existence as human beings who are known as Dorje Kasung will be very helpful. You can do it, I'm sure. You have done it already, and I've seen you in action, all of you without exception.

Here again is a wonderful year to further our vision and further our practice. We are not quite fully and completely accomplished, which will take a long,

long time. But we are here to continue our dignity, free from manipulation, hypocrisy, and any kind of chaos. That is largely speaking. In the small sense, we should be careful. It's like shaving your beard with a knife. You have to be careful. The blade must go down rather than across, or you will cut yourself. So it is necessary to go through things methodically and to respect the chain of command.

If you feel the situation is not quite right, or if you see something in the leader's point of view that is not quite right, you are asked to step out and just present your case to your leader, your superior. Just remind them. As far as the superiors are concerned, they are supposed to take heed of what you have to say. Therefore, comradeship in the group situation can take place.

So, we have survived. More than survived, we have conquered a lot. We have more to conquer as we go on. On behalf of the establishment, Vajradhatu; on behalf of the vision of enlightenment, the Kingdom of Shambhala of the future; and on behalf of myself, my wife, and my family, I would like to thank you, and also I would like to express a wish for a cheerful and happy Shambhala year, starting with Shambhala Day. Thank you very much.

## ***Deception Cannot Buy a Friend***

*Birthday Celebration for the Makkyi Rabjam*  
*Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • June 4, 1982*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap David I. Rome:* Makkyi Rabjam, sir, with your permission, Tönsung Kyi Khyap, Tönsung Wangmo, Sawang, I would like to warmly welcome everyone this evening to this celebration offering for the birth and life of our Makkyi Rabjam. Last year when we had this celebration, the Makkyi Rabjam had just been through a period of illness, and in fact, this was the first event at which he appeared following that period of illness. In the year since then, although there have been occasional touches of illness, the health of the Makkyi Rabjam has been much better, and for that we're extremely grateful. Above all, whatever we do here, the only purpose of this occasion is to prolong his life and to express our desire and our pleading that he remain in good health and remain with us for a very long time. So we do request that, sir.

*[The presentation of awards followed.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap:* Her Highness the Tönsung Wangmo Lady Diana Mukpo has asked us to excuse her because of the lateness of the hour. I apologize for that, ma'am. We would request you to remain just long enough so that we can express our loyalty to you, especially as you are about to leave us for Nova Scotia.<sup>37</sup> Then, we would also request you to make some remarks.

*Norman Hirsch Rupön:* Your Highness the Tönsung Wangmo, as Dorje Kasung, we appreciate you greatly. You've been a great example of warriorship for us: the way you ride, your dignity on horseback, your lack of hesitation, the way you command, your pioneering spirit. You've taught us more than is sometimes obvious and much more than we may realize at times, because our connection



goes beneath the surface. When we think of your leaving Boulder and going to Nova Scotia to establish the community there, we are stirred by the sense of adventure that you give us. We thank you very much for that. We wish you the best of fortune, excellent health, and long life. We pledge our loyalty to you.

*Tönsung Wangmo Diana J. Mukpo:* Thank you very much. I'd like to take this opportunity to wish the Makkyi Rabjam a happy birthday. It's his third birthday party this year! [*Laughs.*] I hope that he continues in the good health that is returning to him so quickly at this point and that his health continues to strengthen. I think that we can all do our best to help him by offering our loyalty, exertion, and devotion to him. We should continue to carry out what's been done over the past years so that we can carry out his vision. Happy Birthday.

*Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* It's very interesting to talk to one's wife on a microphone [*laughter*], but that is due to the circumstances of this particular ceremony, this particular festivity. I would like to offer enormous thanks and appreciation to Her Highness Lady Diana. You have cheered me up many times. In the past, I have gone through all kinds of depressing occasions and dungeons and an unspeakably unliberated world, pure and simple, a world that was not purified at all.<sup>38</sup> We went through that together, with you leading the way ahead of me. I appreciate that very much. You are an extremely brave lady, I must say.

Such an extremely kind lady and an extremely resourceful lady as well, she managed to get us to this goddamned place called America! [*Laughter.*] Now we are going on, going further to Nova Scotia. At this point, she feels she can do it, and she's leading me. Usually any pioneering job is done by a man. This time, the pioneering job is being done by a woman, and I have no doubt at all that she'll do the very best job. I await her extraordinary pioneership. Her goodness and bravery will lead us and help us to promote enlightenment in that particular society, that particular world that we are moving up to.

On the whole, I would like to thank you very much for bearing our children, and thank you very much for being a pioneer. Thank you very much for having endless intelligence and endless fortitude. Thank you, my lady, thank you. Without you, I could not have come to America. Because of you, we did, and we did all this. So look at what we have done! [*Laughter.*] Now we will keep on going. Thank you. Thank you very much, young lady. [*His voice cracking with emotion:*] Thank you. Thank you so much.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap: Dorje Kasung, please rise. [The Tönsung Wangmo rises to depart from the shrine room.]*

*Tönsung Wangmo [giving the Makkyi Rabjam a kiss and whispering to him]: Thank you.*

*Makkyi Rabjam [returning the kiss and whispering to the Tönsung Wangmo]: It's true.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap: To Her Highness, the Tönsung Wangmo, let us present our loyalty.*

*Dorje Kasung: Loyalty, and give. A-wake! Thank you very much, ma'am, and have a good journey.*

*Hudson Shotwell Rupön [as the Tönsung Wangmo is preparing to depart]: Present arms. Order arms.*

*[As one of the many presentations made during the evening, Dennis Southward Rupön announces appointments within Kalapa Gesar, the arm of the Gesar Division in Boulder. As he announces new orders for the Boulder Rusung, the Makkyi Rabjam interjects.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam [speaking to the Rusung]: May I ask what levels of Shambhala Training you have done? You can say level one, two, three, four, five.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap: How many are Kalapa Assembly graduates? Almost all of you. All right, then of the remaining Rusung, what level have you completed? Level F? Okay. [Others can be heard saying "level A" and other levels.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam: It is highly important for you to get into the Kalapa education program<sup>39</sup> altogether. That's very important. Thank you very much. I'm glad you're here, and I'm glad we're able to appoint you to responsible jobs in this situation, which is good. But it is very necessary for you to study the Shambhala levels of Kalapa experiences. Thank you.*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap: With your permission, sir, we'd like to proceed with one other item of business, which is quite a delightful one. This is a somewhat*

historic occasion, acknowledging the growth within our sangha of our teenage group. We are acknowledging their entry into our mandala, particularly our Dorje Kasung mandala, through the vehicle of the Cadet Corps, which has been established under the Purnachandra Division. This is a project that I myself have been very excited about. I would like to request Lieutenant Klarreich, the commander, or supervisor, of the Purnachandra Cadet Corps, to step forward to present a brief report on the progress of the corps to the Makkyi Rabjam and the rest of us. He will then conduct the induction oath for the members of the Cadet Corps.

*Kasung Michael Klarreich:* The Cadet Corps began formally in January of this year with a basic training program, which provided education in three of the branches of the Dorje Kasung: the Kasung, Kusung, and Purnachandra Divisions. At the end of the course there was an intensive training session for the children. Basically, the two purposes of the Cadet Corps have been, first, to provide the teenagers here with a way into the sangha, an orderly way to learn about the sangha, and, second, to learn about themselves and how to organize and use their energies effectively. I must say that in progressing from infancy to youth they have certainly done a marvelous job.

There will be an article on the cadets in this issue of the *Vajradhatu Sun*. They were active during Khyentse Rinpoche's visit as apprentice guards, and that kind of activity will continue. Many of them, I expect, will be at the upcoming Dorje Kasung encampment. I hope that many of our Dorje Kasung here will have an opportunity to work with them and serve as guides and mentors, to help them learn more about the world into which they're entering.

I think I might address some remarks to the cadets themselves: If you look around the room, these are the people who have been assisting the Makkyi Rabjam and who are willing to assist you in learning. Then you might look at each other and see who in the time to come will be serving in that role for future teachers.

*[The cadets are called forward and line up in front of the Makkyi Rabjam. He asks them to line up closer to him.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Welcome, boys and girls. I wish there was something like the cadets when I was growing up in Tibet! *[Laughter.]* Your involvement is very

beautiful and very necessary. It is beautiful because it is your unique experience that nobody will experience again, and it is necessary because otherwise you people might not have a sense of cadetship of any kind. So I am glad that you have joined the cadet hardcore at this point. You are the beginners, the first cadets, and there will be more of you.

I want you to do two things. One thing is to smile; the other thing is to be very disciplined. Being very disciplined with a smile at the same time: that actually is cadetship in a nutshell. I would like you to turn around and bow to the shrine behind you right now. Okay. Bend down with your hands folded together. Okay. Then, turn around to face me and salute. How about the loyalty salute? Okay. Thank you. Thank you very much.

*Cadets [reading the cadet oath together]:* Calling upon the warrior lineage of Shambhala and the enlightened lineage of buddhadharma to guide me and inspire me, in the presence of the Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo, I [each inserts name], as a member of the Purnachandra Cadet Corps of the Dorje Kasung, pledge to train myself in the tiger, lion, garuda, dragon way of the warriors of the Great Eastern Sun. I pledge to cultivate my own sanity and cheerfulness and to refrain from causing harm to myself or others. I pledge to exert my energy in order to help others and to work selflessly for the benefit of all people. I pledge to grow up in accordance with the vision of the Makkyi Rabjam for the sake of creating enlightened society and to respect the command of the Makkyi Rabjam and the guidance of my leaders within the Dorje Kasung and the Purnachandra Cadet Corps.

Radiating confidence, peaceful  
Illuminating the way of discipline  
Eternal ruler of the three worlds  
May the Great Eastern Sun be victorious.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Let's sing the anthem, very simply. Let's do it!

*[The cadets sing the Shambhala anthem.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's great! *[Audience claps loudly.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap*: The main birthday gift this year from all of the Dorje Kasung is a portable field chair for the Makkyi Rabjam's use at the Magyal Pomra Encampment. It was designed by the Makkyi Rabjam and has yet to be constructed. The encampment is only one month away, and at this time, I would like to call on Mr. Anderson, the coordinator of this year's MPE, to make a brief presentation of the gift.

*Kasung Kyi Khyap [following the gift presentation]*: Those of you who have been to the Magyal Pomra Encampment know who the Tönsung Kyi Khyap is. At this time, it is my great delight to request the Tönsung Kyi Khyap to raise a toast.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin*: Makkyi Rabjam, sir, with your permission, ladies and gentlemen, Dorje Kasung, it is again my great privilege and honor to propose this particular toast. As I've said in past years and will continue to say, your service and your dedication to the Makkyi Rabjam, his family, to myself and my family, and to the buddhadharma in general have been exceptional, and we greatly appreciate it. I think the main point is that you understand what you're doing. This is my observation, that you understand what you're doing. I have also seen that you do it properly. I've also seen that when you're finished, you don't leave a mess, and we all appreciate it very much. Your fellow Kasung and Kusung in all the divisions throughout the country are performing in the very same way. I have the opportunity to witness that when I travel around the country, as well as in Europe and in Canada. Everybody is living up to their oath, their commitment, and their dedication to the Makkyi Rabjam and to the vision of buddhadharma and the Shambhala world all together. I can't thank you enough, and I can't compliment you enough. But I can say, again, that you do as you've been instructed, and you do it quite well. As I said before, you don't leave a mess, which is a wonderful sign in this world where, as we have seen, these days everybody is leaving quite a mess. Your service has been impeccable and your commitment extraordinary. I would like to raise this toast to you, ladies and gentlemen of the Dorje Kasung of all divisions, in grateful appreciation for your continued devotion and loyalty. To all of you, we offer this grateful toast.

*Makkyi Rabjam*: Devotion and loyalty!

*Kasung Kyi Khyap*: Makkyi Rabjam, sir, that completes our program this

evening. On behalf of all of the Dorje Kasung and guests gathered here, I sincerely request you to address some further remarks to us.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Thank you very much. As a child, when I was first born, I used to play in a little river, a little brook. I was fascinated by fishes, and I was also fascinated by the force of the water, wondering where the river comes from altogether. I used to look up at the sun, thinking that it might be the source of that force. Until I was introduced fully into Buddhism, I was educated to believe that in order to conquer the universe you have to conquer the sun and mountain brooks. The greenness of the grasses has to be conquered. When I was actually trained in Buddhism, I felt that there is no need for any of that conquering. Give up conquering altogether. Just let go. There was a moment of relief, realizing that you don't have to look for anything to conquer. Later on, though, after you've finished studying and practicing Buddhism properly, thoroughly, then you find that there *is* a need for conquering. One has to conquer.

Also there is a need to establish an enclosure where the Buddha and the dharma can be kept together properly. That's what we call a "shrine" in this English language. So we have a shrine with a sword. For instance, the moon could be beautiful. But at the same time it has to have a crescent edge to protect itself. Does somebody have a little sword here? Nobody came out tonight with their scabbard? [*The Makkyi Rabjam opens and closes his fan several times.*] All right, this could be a sword, although it's a fan. [*Snaps fan shut. Then there is a gap.*] Wow! [*Laughter.*] [*Snaps fan again, several times.*]

I am so glad we had such a good celebration tonight. It is wonderful, heartbreaking. As far as the children, or the cadets, are concerned, they should know that we have nothing to regret. As far as the basic practitioners of the buddhadharma are concerned, when we celebrate my military anniversary, my military birthday, I feel that your kindness, gracefulness, and gentleness supersede any tendency to fight or slaughter each other. This military celebration has turned out to be one of the best, one of the good ones. We can actually kill our own deception. That's the only way: Kill deception. Kill deception. That makes man and woman pure, good, thorough, and articulate.

Thanks very much. I would like to thank you all for having organized such military discipline, which otherwise was never thought of. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your birthday present also. I will enjoy it very much, and I appreciate it and you a lot. Let me give a gift back to you. This particular gift is not regarded as a one-pointed attack on anybody, but it might

be, nonetheless. Okay? Here is my gift:

Deception cannot buy a friend.

Pretend joyful cannot please anyone.

Self-snug defense cannot offend enemy.

I am not sure whether I am quite accurate there in what I said. Can someone repeat it back to me? That's right, yes, offend enemy. That's going on right here tonight. [*Laughs.*] It's going on right here. Nonetheless, we should close our meeting together at this point.

*[All do closing chants and sing the "Guard Song" and the Shambhala anthem. The Makkyi Rabjam asks the Dorje Kasung to sing the "Guard Song" again, which they do, slowly and somewhat dirge-like. Then he requests a third rendition, faster. Then he requests everyone to sing "Hail, Hail, Hail." After the first time through, the Makkyi Rabjam asks that all sing "Hail, Hail, Hail" again. Then he asks everyone to sing the anthem again.<sup>40</sup>]*

*Shotwell Rupön: Dorje Kasung, loyalty! [All stand with hands on heart while a trumpet plays the Shambhala anthem.] And give. A-wake! [The Makkyi Rabjam snaps his fan forcefully.]*

*Kasung Kyi Khyap: Dorje Kasung vajra command protectors can spill their hearts and sustain their grace. Because of leadership which is all-pervasive, which appears out of heaven and descends into the heart, it is possible to surrender completely as a warrior. It is possible to be a surrendered soldier and thereby achieve a complete conquest. This is true because of the blessings of the father guru, the Makkyi Rabjam. All hail to him.*

*Makkyi Rabjam: I feel that I'm being respected; therefore, I feel so lowly, as if fleas had saddles. This sense of the military doesn't have to be particularly feared; we don't have to feel threatened by it. Whenever there is a notion of love and kindness, your K rations will never dry up. Whenever there is a sense of purity, your ration will never dry up. It's very important for us to realize that there is tremendous strength and power, as well as gentleness, in awareness and mindfulness. Please keep that in your mind. That's what we've been singing about. That's what we've been talking about. That's what we've been believing*

throughout our whole journey. Thank you very much.

Simple kindness goes a long way. Simple dedication goes a long way. However, your idea of learning something doesn't go a long way at all unless you unlearn—unless you unlearn here, right here. That's it!

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37. Lady Diana Mukpo was about to move to a farm near Windsor, Nova Scotia, where she resided for several years.

38. The Makkyi Rabjam is referring to the difficult situation in England that precipitated his move to North America.

39. The Makkyi Rabjam is referring to the education program connected with attending the Kalapa Assembly.

40. All of these songs can be heard on *Dragon's Thunder: Songs of Chögyam Trungpa, Dorje Dradül of Mukpo*, published by Kalapa Recordings, 2000. The liner notes include the lyrics and information on the history of each song.



## ***What Are We Guarding?***

*Birthday Celebration for the Makkyi Rabjam  
Dorje Dzong • Boulder, Colorado • June 17, 1983*

*Military music from the album Trooping the Color: The Queen of England's Birthday Parade is heard briefly. Then a lone trumpeter plays "The Minstrel Boy" as the Dorje Kasung are called to attention. During the presentation of the colors, the trumpeter plays the Shambhala anthem while the Color Party salutes. After the Color Party is dismissed, opening chants are led by the Dorje Loppön Lodrö Dorje: first the lineage chant, followed by the "Supplication to the Rigden Father." Following the chants, all present sing the Shambhala anthem. The Makkyi Rabjam can be heard singing in the background.*

*Kasung Dapön James Gimian: Makkyi Rabjam, Sawang, Vajra Regent, honored guests, and ladies and gentlemen of the five divisions of the Dorje Kasung,<sup>41</sup> it is a great pleasure for me to welcome all of you here this evening to the celebration of the birth of the Makkyi Rabjam. Some might wonder why we are holding this event in June, nearly four months after the calendar date of the Makkyi's birthday. For us it is a very simple logic: this evening we're not so much celebrating a date as we are celebrating altogether the entrance into this world of an impeccable example of enlightened warriorship.*

*We have a brief and hopefully festive presentation this evening. To not delay any further, sir, we, as your Dorje Kasung, take great pleasure in presenting this simple program as an expression of our devotion and our loyalty to you. We take great pride in being apprentice warriors under your leadership. To begin our simple presentation this evening, I would like to request Shotwell Rupön to come forward...[The Dapön pauses and laughs when he sees the Makkyi*

*Rabjam's interest in making some remarks at this point.] Or be prepared to come forward...*

*Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* Thank you very much to the Dorje Kasung. We are not acting; this is not a banana republic. We are actualizing the warrior tradition so that it can be continued. Your being here and being able to continue such activities as this birthday celebration are the mark of warriorship. I have received the enthronement of warriorship three times, first in Tibet, early on. The last enthronement took place here, in this room, last year. I received a Western-style suit of armor, a suit of warriorship from Khyentse Rinpoche.<sup>42</sup> That ceremony was also continuing the tradition of the warrior lineage.

Obviously, you must know that continuing to practice and promote warriorship does not mean continuing warfare. In order to subjugate confusion and continue the tradition of the warrior lineage, we have to continue to protect the dharma. So you have to continue as Kasung. *Ka* means “command,” command in the sense of tradition and faith and a sense of worshipping the lineage, the tradition and the practice of the lineage altogether. *Sung* means “protection,” or protecting that particular endeavor, that particular connection and commitment to the lineage. Protection also means that one has to stop being an egomaniac; one must learn to destroy ego’s endeavor to conquer the whole world.

Then we have another term, which is *kusung*. *Ku* means “body” or “existence.” In this case, body represents the teachings, so *ku* means realizing or connecting with that which represents the embodiment of dharma, or the teaching. *Sung* again means “protection,” protecting or guarding against any possibilities of destroying that which represents the dharma, the command, the teaching altogether.

So, we are here together [*snaps fan closed*] in order to propagate and promote the teachings and the command. There might be occasional panic, occasional frivolity, but that situation can be worked with. Whenever there is panic, it is like the full moon is under the attack of a cloud. Just blow; just bring about a storm so that the cloud can be overcome.

I think one of the main points is panic. When you panic, use that panic. Can you think of any way to use it? Use that panic as what? I implore you, say something. [*A Kasung in the audience calls out something inaudible.*] I beg your pardon?

*Kasung: Lungta.*

*Makkyi Rabjam: How many people know about lungta? When panic happens, you rise up. You don't shrink, like a dead corpse. Look at the shrine. [The Makkyi Rabjam is seated across the room from the Buddhist shrine, facing it.] It is always alive, including the pictures and photographs that exist on this shrine. You don't die. Except of course there is a photograph of one person on the shrine who is not dead. Can you tell who is not dead?<sup>43</sup> [The Makkyi Rabjam is referring to the photograph of himself. Laughter.]*

Can we dismantle the shrine box? Is that possible?<sup>44</sup>

*[Long pause. The Tönsung Kyi Khyap, the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin, can be heard faintly in the background, calling for Kasung to help take apart the shrine box. The Kasung Dapön can be heard asking the Makkyi Rabjam if he wants the things from the shrine to be shown to people around the room.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam: I am sorry to be so long-winded, but for your understanding it is necessary.*

By the way, where's my chair? The black chair, where is it? Yes? *[Laughter. This chair is the chair on which the Makkyi Rabjam is sitting. The Kasung Dapön can be heard whispering, "Sir, I think it's here somewhere."]* Yes? Can we get it? *[Laughter. The Kasung Dapön is heard whispering, "We could, sir, except there's a very important person sitting on it right now. We wouldn't want to disturb him unless..."]* Yes. *[Dapön: "It's this one here."]* Yes! Let's put this chair over there. *[Dapön: "We'll have to move it..."]* The tape is turned off, presumably while things are being moved. *The tape resumes.]* Is there light? Light? Maybe we better put the chair here, actually. *[More moving.]* That's better.



*The Makkyi Rabjam describing his teaching chair during his 1983 birthday celebration in Boulder, Colorado.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA ROTH.

This chair was designed, conceived, and built in Karmê Chöling in Vermont. It has a four-legged system, it's made of black lacquer, and also it has brass ornamentation on it. It is originally based on a camp chair, and it's similar to a traditional chair that was used by the Japanese to sit on while shooting a bow and arrow. Later on, this kind of chair became a seat from which you could actually give a sermon on Buddhism to people. The back of the chair, which I designed, comes to a point, as you can see, which is a symbol of warriorship. In short, you might say this chair is a modified version of a director's chair, but at the same time it is so magnificent and exaggerated—if I may use that word. It has its seat, and it has a sense of breath, breathing out, which is connected with the emblem located in the middle of the chair back.

The particular emblem I chose to use is my own family emblem, if I may say so. You might think it is a rather selfish choice, but this emblem speaks of the different types of warriorship. One part is white, which is the emblem of the snow lion. Next to that is the orange emblem, which represents the tiger. Above that is the red emblem, which represents the garuda, which is the symbol of

eating passion, lust. The blue symbol in the corner is the symbol of inscrutability. Now, when we talk about inscrutability, we are not talking about deviousness, but we are talking in terms of harmony and a natural way of relating with each other, which is represented by the dragon.

We could review what the four symbols are connected with. The orange tiger represents Meek, Meek in the sense of kindness and humbleness. The white snow lion is the symbol of Perky, almost like a rabbit—but not quite. Then the red garuda is Outrageous. One is not willing to give in, but one is willing to be Outrageous. Finally, the blue dragon is connected with the idea of being Inscrutable altogether.

I think I've said too much. If you have any questions, you are welcome.

*Douglas Anderson Kadö:* Sir, the colors on the chair and the colors on the flags are reversed. Is that accidental, or does the chair represent king's view? I'm referring to the two flags that are posted behind you, as opposed to the four symbols on the chair. The colors are switched.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* I think that's an artistic problem. [*Laughter.*]

*Anderson Kadö:* Thank you, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* You are welcome to ask millions of questions if you like. Gentleman there.

*Kasung:* Sir, I believe you said that you received the empowerment of warriorship three times, and I understood you said earlier—

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Who said that?

*Kasung:* I thought I understood you to say something to the effect that you had received the empowerment of warriorship three times, first in Tibet, you said, and then in a Western situation through Khyentse Rinpoche. I was wondering what the other, the third time, was.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* I am glad you asked that question. I gave the Shambhala teachings to Khyentse Rinpoche. I didn't receive them from him. He asked me for them.<sup>45</sup> The tradition is that you receive the Shambhala teachings as though they were heart, eyes, and tongue, and then you hold on to them. Do you

understand?

*Kasung*: I think so, sir. Thank you.

*Makkyi Rabjam*: Gentleman there.

*Kasung Brad Upton*: Sir, you spoke of panic before. Is there any particular chronological relationship between panic and the four dignities, from our point of view—obviously not from the Sakyong's point of view per se, but from our point of view?

*Makkyi Rabjam*: Each one of them are panics. Meek, Perky, Outrageous, Inscrutable: all of them are panics, and they are fear. Fear brings fearlessness, always. Unless you have fear, you don't experience fearlessness. Before you eat food, you get hungry.

*Kasung Upton*: Thank you, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam*: Yes? Oh, sir! [*Laughter.*]

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin*: Sir, I have a question in terms of experiencing fear and realizing that fear and fearlessness go together in experience. It seems that sometimes fear does not automatically indicate fearlessness. In terms of your teaching, it does. When you teach us, you say that if you experience fear, then you can understand the contrast. Because of experiencing fear, you understand what it means to be fearless. But in the setting-sun world, the everyday world, fear is not contrasted to fearlessness. So my question has two parts: first, relating to fear for ourselves and, second, for the others.

For ourselves, if we do not experience the contrast, what is the best technique? In other words, what if, when we experience fear, we don't see the opposite side? Second, if in the outside world people do not understand fear and fearlessness as they complement each other and therefore do not see them as the spark of awakening to warriorship, then how do we teach them to do that?

*Makkyi Rabjam*: Um-hmm.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: First, if we ourselves experience fear and do not see the

fearlessness in that, what is the best technique? My point is to understand this so that it does not become abstract but rather practical.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* You choke me. [*Laughter.*]

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* [*Laughs.*] In the colloquial, sir, we say, “You crack me up,” and that might be literal as well. [*Laughs, laughter.*] But in any case...

*Makkyi Rabjam:* What do you mean by...

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Well, you talked about panic earlier, sir, which is associated with fear...

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* In my experience, panic is basically abstract. It's not immediately associated with an event or situation. It might be the result of an event, but, in terms of one's own mind, panic is abstract.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Panic shouldn't be abstract.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* So it should be based on something.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Panic should be true panic.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Which means true fear.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* True fear.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Well, there are psychological fears, and there are physical fears.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Anything.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Anything that is feared directly by oneself, do you mean?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's right.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Directly by oneself?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Directly by one's...

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* For instance, let's say you get sick, not just an ordinary cold, but let's say you get a disease that is considered by conventional thinking to make you really sick.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Um-hmm.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Now, when you feel that fear in your body, is that real fear or psychological fear?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* It should be petrified.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Petrified?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Petrified. Sense of petrified.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* The fear itself?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* You mean it's so solid that it becomes a thing?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* You know what petrified means.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Yes, it's like a substance that over time becomes like a rock.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's right. That's right.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Petrified means it becomes like a rock.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's right.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* It becomes like a solid...

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Saint Peter...

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Yes. [*Laughter.*] That's how he built a church. [*Laughs.*]



*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's right. That's right.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* So, fear...

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Fear had to be built on a church.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Petrified.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Petrified.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* So in terms of the specific instruction, sir, unless we are petrified, we can't build this particular...

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Church.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Yes.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's right.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* There's a second part to the question.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That means religion as well.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Yes, I understand.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* The second part is that, if that petrifying takes place in oneself, it may not automatically extend to others. What is the impetus for it to extend to others?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Mushiness. The sense of mushiness.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Petrified...Excuse me, sir. You have petrified, which is the opposite of mushy. It's petrified.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Precisely.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* I see.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Precisely.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* All right. [*Laughs.*]

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Precisely.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* All right, so then it goes—

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Being mushy and petrified put together.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Put together, same time. Thank you.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Thank you. I am honored you asked me such a question.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* I am certainly honored that you answered, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* I think we should continue with our program, at this point. [*He pauses and then says:*] I might say, however, if I may...[*laughter*]...if I may say, with your permission, we are trying to build a military that is not based on fear and attack and destroying others at all. Instead, we are trying to build an atmosphere where the military situation can accommodate itself, by itself. The railings you see in this shrine room were built by military personnel, and the pictures that we have here were hung by military personnel, and the ceiling with its many squares was built by military personnel. The whole environment that we have created here was utterly, thoroughly built by military personnel. That doesn't mean to say that the military carries machine guns and Uzis. Do you know about Uzis? Lots of people know about Uzis. M16s? We could say that the sun is built by the military, the moon is built by the military, and the clouds around the sun and moon are built by the military. We are very proud, extraordinarily proud, that this military is able to build the world rather than destroy the world.

*Kusung Michael Scott:* Sir, with your permission, at this point we'll commence with the presentation of military awards. These awards are bestowed each year by the Makkyi Rabjam on members of the Dorje Kasung who have exhibited outstanding discipline—

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Maybe it would be good to say what *Makkyi Rabjam* means. *Makkyi Rabjam* is obviously a Tibetan word. *Mak* means “military,” *kyi* means

“general,” and *rabjam* means “universal.” How would you put them together? Can you put them together?

*Kusung Scott:* The Universal Military General, sir?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Um-hmm.

*Kusung Scott:* So these awards are bestowed each year by the Universal Military General to members of the Dorje Kasung—

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Speak nicely.

*[Kusung Scott proceeds with the awards presentation. While Mr. Scott reads the list of those receiving awards, Japanese koto music is played in the background.]*

*Kusung Dapön Martin Janowitz:* *[He reads the following message from the Kasung Kyi Khyap:]* “From the solitude of our bivouac on the banks of the Hudson, Lady Rome and I salute the Makkyi Rabjam and all of the Dorje Kasung. We miss you keenly, and our fondest thoughts are with you on this auspicious evening. Eternal victory in the true command. The Kasung Kyi Khyap.”



*Kasung officers in front of the shrine at the Makkyi Rabjam's 1983 birthday celebration in Boulder, Colorado.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA ROTH.

*[The Kasung Dapön reads various appointments within the Gesar Division. Then Dennis Southward Rupön announces the appointment of the Rusung for the coming year. He addresses the Makkyi Rabjam.]*

*Dennis Southward Rupön:* Sir, these are the Rusung for the coming year.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That's good. We should teach them how to sing the anthem probably. Do we have the sheet with the words on it?

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Sir, we all know the anthem.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* However, could we have the sheet? One copy? One copy? Someone's getting it. I'm going to read it for you. This should be regarded as an example for everybody of how to pronounce your anthem. It is not that you've been doing badly, but you could do better, and that applies to everybody here. I

am not undermining you, or for that matter, I am not regarding you as incapable in the English language, which we all speak. Is there anybody here who doesn't speak English? Nobody. All right. Then, I will read it to you now. [*He reads the Shambhala anthem in elocution style:*] "Anthem. In heaven the turquoise dragon thunders....Rejoice the Great Eastern Sun arises."

So, that demonstrates the concept and idea of the anthem itself. We might hide ourselves in the melodic, linguistic possibilities, but we should learn to speak the anthem of Shambhala properly.

I'm sorry. I am not scolding you, but I am making a point. We have to speak properly, learn the language properly, not hiding behind the melody alone. So shall we read this together? Ready? This is almost like a schoolmistress approach. My apologies. Can you speak the anthem? The anthem—say it. Just say it. Just say, "The anthem."

*Rusung:* The anthem. [*Laughter.*]

*[The Makkyi Rabjam proceeds to give an elocution lesson to the Rusung, having them repeat each line of the anthem after him, sometimes several times before he is satisfied. Following the conclusion of the lesson, he continues.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* It's rather painful, isn't it? [*Laughter.*] Does anybody have a good voice?

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* To sing?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes, sing Oooooooooo, ooooooo. High pitch, oooooo. Stand up, ooooooo. Anybody who sings in a high pitch, stand up. [*Laughter.*] Ooooo, oooooooooooooooooo, oooooooooooooooooo, oooooooooooooooooo, ooooooo, oooooooooooooooooo.

*[While the Makkyi Rabjam continues singing Oooooooooo, the Tönsung Kyi Khyap is saying, "Who here has a soprano voice? Anybody?" Then the Tönsung Kyi Khyap whispers to the Makkyi: "Do you want the high-pitched voice with you or with them?"]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* With me.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Soprano? Is anybody else a soprano? Nobody here? It's a military crowd, right? [*Laughter.*]

*Kasung Woman:* [*She comes to the stage to sing with the Makkyi Rabjam. She whispers to him:*] It's very high, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam* [*whispering*]: You think it's too high? [*He lowers his pitch almost an octave.*] Ooo.

*[He sings at a somewhat lower pitch. The Makkyi Rabjam then sings the Shambhala anthem with the young woman, in a very high range, slowly, almost mournfully. There is applause when they conclude the singing. During the applause, the Makkyi can be heard saying to his singing partner, "I'm getting better!" to which she replies, "Yes, totally."]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Thank you. Now let's sing all together, everybody, yes. Mmmmm. [*Everyone sings the Shambhala anthem with the Makkyi Rabjam.*]

*Dennis Southward Rupön:* Sir, with your permission, may I dismiss the Rusung? [*The Rusung are dismissed to their squads.*]

*Kusung Dapön:* Now, will Kusung Turzanski please step forward for the toast and gift presentation.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Now... [*said with an exaggerated nasal pronunciation.*]

*Kusung Dapön:* Now, now. [*Spoken less nasally.*]

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Now, did you say? [*Still exaggerating the nasal pronunciation of the word.*]

*Kusung Dapön:* I hope not, sir. [*Laughter.*]

*Kusung Basia Turzanski:* Sir, on behalf of the Dorje Kasung I would like to express our profoundest thanks to you for accepting us into your service. You are the one who has taught us and shown us that there is no other reference point apart from joy. We offer you our unceasing loyalty and devotion.

As part of this celebration of your birth, we wish to present you with a gift.

The gift, sir, is a set of special field and astrology binoculars. [*The Kusung Dapön points out that it should be “astronomy,” to laughter.*] Which are very high powered and have an excellent capacity for viewing in semidark and nighttime.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Wow!

*Kusung Turzanski:* If we thought we could hide in any secret corners, sir, those illusions are dashed at this point.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That’s great! [*Laughter and applause.*] That’s great.

*Kusung Turzanski:* To the man with the greatest vision!

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Thank you very much. I’ve always wanted a pair of these, since I was thirteen. Almost as much as I wanted a—what do you call those—German...German...rifles...no, Mausers. Of course, that’s it, yes. Binoculars like these were my second wish. Thank you very much. They also represent the idea of sight, or insight, shall we say. Thank you. How did you know that I wanted these?

*Kasung:* Good insight. [*Laughter.*]

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Mmm.

*James Stinson Kadö:* Sir, ladies and gentlemen, even though the Tönsung Wangmo is not with us, we look forward to sharing in her exertion and her dedication to discipline in establishing Shambhala vision in Nova Scotia. The gift we have for her tonight will be presented to her when she returns in July.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* What would it be?

*Stinson Kadö:* It’s a cash gift, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That’s good for her. [*Laughter.*] Good for me, too! [*Laughter.*]

*Dorje Loppön:* With your permission, sir, on behalf of the civilian administrators and administration, I would like to offer a salute to all of the divisions of Dorje Kasung. [*The Loppön makes a toast to the Dorje Kasung.*]

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Ladies and gentlemen of the Dorje Kasung, I have a confession to make. Earlier on I spoke to Dapön Gimian, and he relieved me of the burden of making a toast. But since I can't help myself and since I can't help talking about what I experience as a real thing with all of you, I would like to say this:

In the future, as our world becomes more evident to us, as our action becomes more evident, it will fall on you as Dorje Kasung to do a lot of the work. I was saying earlier to the Sawang how traditionally the military builds bridges, highways, canals, and whatnot in service of the people of their country. Then I thought in terms of how the Dorje Kasung in the past have done so much in the service of the sangha. Not only do we appreciate that, but also we expect a lot from you in the future. We seem to be reaching the point where your responsibility as Dorje Kasung, whatever division you are in, will be to actually facilitate the vision of Shambhala and the buddhadharma in this world. So you might be asked to build bridges, houses, and staircases—and more shrine rooms like this. You did this in the past. Your participation and, more than that, your responsibility for doing that is in place in the hierarchical situation. I think everybody understands that at this point.

Today, sir, I saw the doors downstairs in Dorje Dzong being painted, the carpets being cleaned, and the place being spruced up because of this event. [Laughter.] Thank you. [*The Tönsung Kyi Khyap is making a pun on the fact that Dorje Dzong is located on Spruce Street. He thanks people for laughing at his pun. More laughter.*] I thought there was some kind of power in the Dorje Kasung that made that happen, the power that exists in the people who build bridges and build all the systems that other people can walk on and use. I would like to thank you all for such inspiration. Thank you from the board of directors and all of us in Vajradhatu and Dharmadhatu. Your inspiration and your action have been exemplary and fantastic. Please continue. Thank you.

*Kusung Dapön:* The Makkyi Rabjam has just asked me to say something to the assembly about his uniform. It is rather obvious that his uniform is a very strong projection of the regal uniform of the warrior general leader. [See photo on [here](#).] It has various aspects, none of which is random, starting with the peaked cap, with its trident badge and three jewels crest, which represents the heaven principle. On the shoulders of the uniform are the epaulets, which the Makkyi has referred to as the landing place for the energy from above, or the dralas. There are various bars on his chest. Excuse me, sir? [*Confers with Makkyi*



*Rabjam. Then continues:]* When Khyentse Rinpoche was here last year, as the Makkyi mentioned earlier, he performed a warrior enthronement, at which time he presented the Makkyi with a uniform, each aspect of which represented some quality of the warrior king. The bars the Makkyi is wearing on his uniform tonight were blessed and presented to the Makkyi as part of this enthronement. They represent the various military and civilian awards that have been developed in our society to recognize people's contributions. There are also a number of medallions worn by the Makkyi Rabjam. Tonight he is wearing two of them, one of which is called the Ashe Medallion, or the Order of Ashe, and the other, which is called the Tiger Lion Garuda Dragon Medallion, or the Order of Shambhala. Thank you.



*The Makkyi Rabjam at his 1983 birthday celebration in Boulder, Colorado.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREA ROTH.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Lights down. [The lights are turned down so that a flashlight can be shone on the Surmang relics from the shrine, which the Makkyi Rabjam earlier asked the Kasung to take out of the shrine box.] Can everybody see?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Don't be shy. Where is the hooked knife? This hooked knife belonged to Naropa. I was able to bring it out of Tibet with me. It came into the possession of the Trungpas because the eighth Trungpa was a great disciple of Karmapa, so the Karmapa decided to give this hooked knife to the eighth Trungpa.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Sir, do you mind if people ask questions?



*Hooked knife.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARVIN MOORE.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Please. The hooked knife is Vajrayogini's scepter, and this one was supposed to belong to Naropa.

*Kasung:* What is the power of the hooked knife?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* What is its...power? As much as Naropa had. That is its power. [*Light is shone on the next object.*] I can't see what's next, exactly.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* That looks like a *rupa*.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes, that is a rupa of Padmasambhava, which was carved by one of his direct disciples, and it has been handed down for generations. The statue is supposed to change with the waxing and waning of the moon from red to white. It is made out of soapstone. It was carved by one of the twenty-five disciples of Padmasambhava, someone named Ngungma, who was one of the chief disciples. It's supposed to be a facsimile carved very much in the likeness of Padmasambhava, and it's supposed to contain relics of Padmasambhava inside it.



Left: *Statue of Padmasambhava.* Right: *Statue of Milarepa.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN SHAFTEL.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* Sir, if you come into contact with this particular rupa, what is the quality of liberation or practice that is enhanced by seeing it?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* It brings what is called the power of Hayagriva. Why don't you explain a little bit about Hayagriva?

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* We have mainly been studying the teachings of the New Translation school of the Kagyü lineage. The Nyingma school has what is called

the Old Translation school, which was transmitted by Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and others. In the Old Translation school, in addition to and beyond the *anuttarayogayanatantra*, there are three other vehicles called *mahayoga*, *anu*, and...

*Makkyi Rabjam: Ati.*

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap: Ati.* This particular image of Padmasambhava is connected with Hayagriva, which is one of the eight aspects of the *mahayogayana* of the Nyingma tantra. Hayagriva is one of the *yidams*. Do you understand what a yidam is? *Yid* means “mind,” and *dam* means *samaya*, or “sacred commitment,” so the yidam is the connection between your mind and the samaya of your mind—in other words, the guru—represented in various forms. This particular yidam, Hayagriva, has a horse’s head. When this horse neighs, incredulous beings like us suddenly become uplifted by hearing it. So Hayagriva is somewhat a jokester and somewhat a powerful person, a powerful yidam.

*Makkyi Rabjam: The neigh is supposed to wake you up.*

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap: It wakes you up. That’s the idea.*

*Makkyi Rabjam: From sleep.*

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap: The horse’s neigh is supposed to wake you up. Hayagriva has a horse’s head, and when he neighs, you wake up from sleep. Then we have this one. This is the statue of Milarepa.*

*Makkyi Rabjam: That statue of Milarepa belonged to Gampopa. It’s very simple.*

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap: You can’t say anything more! There it is [laughs]. This rupa looks like...Chakrasamvara. Is this Chakrasamvara, sir?*

*Makkyi Rabjam: That rupa of Chakrasamvara belonged to Naropa.*

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap: Chakrasamvara was one of the principal yidams of Marpa and is the principal yidam of the Kagyü lineage, coming down through the Karmapas. In terms of our practice, it represents the skillful means of the bodhisattva and the consort of the passionate Vajrayogini. This yidam is yet to come, in terms of our practice, but it is the main yidam of the Karmapas.<sup>46</sup> Next*

we have a *phurba*. Is this *the* phurba?

*Makkyi Rabjam*: It was made by Padmasambhava.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: Is this the original phurba, the one you had when we were on retreat?

*Makkyi Rabjam*: That's right, yes.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: This phurba cannot be detected when you go through the airport security. [*Laughter.*] It's true, isn't it, sir?

*Makkyi Rabjam*: That's true, yes.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: The Makkyi Rabjam has gone through airport clearance with this phurba in his belt, and nothing was detected. [*Laughter.*] That's not just a joke, you know. Then, on the bottom shelf we have a *chöten*.<sup>47</sup>

*Makkyi Rabjam*: That contains relics of my teacher, Jamgön Kongtrül.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: And finally there is a reliquary, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam*: That contains many relics, including the relics of Buddha. These are all possessions of the Trungpa lineage. So that's what you are guarding.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: Thank you, sir. That makes it quite clear. That's true for the Dorje Kasung and for all of us. Oh, we have one more, sir. It looks like a skullcup of some kind.

*Makkyi Rabjam*: I don't remember what that is.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap*: It appears to be a painting on a skullcup or a shell of...

*Makkyi Rabjam*: Oh! That's right, yes. That's the skull of Naropa—the skull of Naropa.

*Kasung*: Sir, under the crystal ball is a book. Is that a special text?

Mr. Larry Mermelstein [answering at the request of the Makkyi Rabjam]: The texts on the shrine are the *ngöndro* texts that we practice, a praise to Karmapa and “The Guru Yoga of the Four Sessions,” which we practiced for the first time at the funeral that was held here for His Holiness Karmapa.

Tönsung Kyi Khyap: Any other questions?

Kasung: There is a painting of Vajradhara on the shrine. Does Vajradhara have more of a relationship with Kagyü lineage or with the Nyingma as well?



Left: Statue of Chakrasamvara. Right: Padmasambhava's phurba.  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN SHAFTEL.

Makkyi Rabjam: You mean the central figure on the shrine *thangka*? It's the basic tantric buddha principle.

Kasung: Our lineage chants begin with Vajradhara.

Makkyi Rabjam: That's right.

*Kasung:* Would the Nyingmas have a Vajradhara figure as well?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes, yes. They call it Samantabhadra.

*Kasung:* What is the carved gold calligraphy on top of the curtain over the shrine?



Left: Chöten containing body relics of Jamgön Kongtrül. Right: A fragment of Naropa's skull, with the painting of a vajrayana deity displayed inside.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANN SHAFTEL.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* That is the EVAM calligraphy. *E* is the outside circle. *Vam* is inside the circle with an *m* on the top, which signifies joining the masculine and feminine principles of consciousness together. Are you a tantrika?

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* I don't think she is yet.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* In that case, we could explain the bars on my uniform to you much easier, actually.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* The what?

*Kusung:* The bars on his uniform.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* I see. All right then. We should have some lights.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Maybe we could use the flashlight.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* All right, forget the lights.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* I wish we had David Rome here.

*Tönsung Kyi Khyap:* David Rome unfortunately is in New York City.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Maybe Larry can do it.

*[Larry Mermelstein can be heard whispering to the Makkyi Rabjam that he doesn't think he knows too many of the bars. The Tönsung Kyi Khyap suggests that Kusung Dapön Janowitz can explain them.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes, Martin can do it.

*Kusung Dapön:* Sir, these are the bars that you're wearing: Beginning on the top row, closest to your heart, the first bar with the white background and the black stripe is called the Order of Ashe. It is the highest recognition, the highest order, within Shambhala society. The next one—

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Ashe means "primordial blade," so it cuts anything. All right.

*Kusung Dapön:* The second one with a yellow background and three black stripes is called the Order of the Trident First Class. This is the very same trident that we see represented on the banner on the far wall. It is the highest military decoration that we have at this point.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* The three blades of the trident represent cutting passion, aggression, and ignorance.

*Kusung Dapön:* Next is a purple bar, side-by-side with a yellow bar, which represents the Mukpo family colors. The fourth has a gray background—



*Makkyi Rabjam:* Do you know what *Mukpo* means? Does anybody know about *Mukpo*? *Mukpo*? Does anybody know me? [*Laughter.*]

*Kusung Dapön:* Shall I continue, sir?

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Yes.

*[Tape change. Gap in tape.]*

*Kusung Dapön:* The gray bar with black and red stripes on either end is what is called the iron wheel. The iron wheel is identified with the twenty-fifth Rigden of the great warrior kings of Shambhala and is a high military award. It represents that the reemergence of Shambhala society is possible.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Um-hmm.

*Kusung Dapön:* On the second row...*[Mr. Janowitz continues with the description of the Makkyi Rabjam's bars. The Makkyi Rabjam dozes off. When Mr. Janowitz concludes the description of the bars, there is hearty applause.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* I think probably it's time to go. I fell asleep.

*[Closing chants are led by the Dorje Loppön: First, the "Longevity Supplication for the Vajracharya," followed by the Shambhala homage. All sing the "Guard Song" and the Shambhala anthem. Then the assembly gives the warrior's cry: KI KI SO SO..., which is followed by the loyalty salute. The melody of the Shambhala anthem as rendered on the album Trooping the Color, as well as other music from that album, is played.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Thank you very much, everybody.

*Dorje Kasung:* Thank you, sir.

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41. The five divisions were the Gesar, Kusung, Purnachandra, Saraha, and Windhorse Divisions.

42. In 1982, His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche conducted the *sakyong abhisheka* for the Makkyi Rabjam and Lady Diana. As part of the ceremony, His Holiness blessed the Makkyi Rabjam's white wool

formal military uniform, hereafter known as the “abhisheka uniform,” his hat, his medals, and even his shoes. Khyentse Rinpoche also blessed a *chuba* and various medals for Lady Diana. The Makkyi Rabjam and Lady Diana then donned these outfits, signifying putting on the armor of warriorship. An excerpt from this ceremony is included in *Thus I Have Heard: Nine Films on the Life and Teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*.

43. On the shrine, there were photographs of His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, the Vidyadhara’s root guru Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, and the Makkyi Rabjam himself.

44. On the main Buddhist shrine, there was a custom-made box to hold the Surmang relics, a group of precious objects—small statues and ritual implements—that the Makkyi Rabjam carried by hand out of Tibet when he escaped in 1959. They are described in greater detail later in the chapter, along with photographs, which appear [here](#).

45. The Makkyi Rabjam gave the Shambhala texts and transmissions to Khyentse Rinpoche during His Holiness’s second visit to North America in 1982. It was during this visit that His Holiness conducted the sakyong abhisheka for the Makkyi Rabjam.

46. The first Chakrasamvara abhisheka was not conferred by the Makkyi Rabjam until 1986.

47. A small reliquary in the shape of a stupa.

## ***Welcome to the Mukpo Family***

*Meeting with Officers of the Dorje Kasung*

*The Kalapa Court • Boulder, Colorado • December 19, 1983*

*Makkyi Rabjam Dorje Dradül of Mukpo:* I think we have to talk some business. In my household—with all of the Kasung and Kusung, the Photrang Kadö, and what we ironically call the “Three Musketeers”—we have practically collected a whole army, or contingent, of people with whom I’ve worked personally. I love them all. We share a sense of humor, and we’ve shared other things. A lot of connections have taken place. A lot of you have performed a tremendous duty and have shown tremendous loyalty. Every one of you became part of our household, the Kalapa Court, both men and women.

You have helped tremendously, and I have tried to help you as much as I can: domestically, economically, cheering you up. The court situation has to be maintained during my absence,<sup>48</sup> by helping and serving the regent and Lady Rich. Hopefully, they won’t feel too claustrophobic. Obviously, they will receive tremendous service, appreciation, dedication, loyalty, and all the rest of it.

My absence is only for one year, and that year will go by very fast, since there are only four seasons. I would like to request everybody to take part in the court service. Some of the time, the regent will be away, and my concern is that Lady Rich should be treated properly, not like a second-class citizen. In any case, I will be in touch, and I will keep my long-distant eyes on how things are going. Last but not least, I have especially enjoyed your service during the last year. Only the Rigdens know how much!<sup>49</sup> You have been dedicated, loving, conscientious, and well trained in the Shambhala style. Sometimes I’ve thought I should stay here the rest of my life, but we have other plans.<sup>50</sup> [*Laughter.*] The master of the household and the lady steward<sup>51</sup> too have performed beautifully. So, no complaints. So, shall we have a duet?

*[Several renditions of the Shambhala anthem follow.]*

*Makkyi Rabjam:* Before we end, as for your duty and your activities, I feel that there is progress and genuineness. In my retreat I will miss all of you. Our world is not just my doing: it is the dralas'. It is our spirit, our gallantry, which create this. So, please don't lose it, and expand. Please don't let my working with you diminish; keep it, and you will have it the rest of your life. You will be proud of yourselves.

I adore you, all of you, and I am proud of you. We will shed our tears together. We will climb a mountain together. We will go to prison together. We will raise our lungta together and our head and shoulders together. This is not fake. It is something that we inherited, and I am so pleased that I can transmit this to you. You should feel worthy of it: the blackness of Ashe, which means Mukpo color. I am so proud that you have become part of the Mukpo family. Thank you for what you have done. I will expect more from you in the future.

*All:* Thank you, sir.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* We are blood brothers and sisters. Welcome to the Mukpo family.

*All:* KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYEL LO TAK SENG KHYUNG DRUK DI YAR KYE.

*Makkyi Rabjam:* I am speechless. Good morning.

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48. The Makkyi Rabjam was soon to depart for a year's retreat in Nova Scotia.

49. Said like "Heaven knows!"

50. The Makkyi Rabjam is probably referring here to his long-term plan to move his personal residence and the headquarters of Vajradhatu to Nova Scotia.

51. At this time, these positions were held by Walter Fordham Rupön and Jeanne Riordan.

# *Appendices*

## *Vetali*

Vetali, Vetali, life, life! The *devi* with one face and four arms, riding on a donkey with a white blaze, approaches and accepts the offering.

BHYO

Protector and friend of the yogin,  
Guardian of the Practice Lineage,  
You enjoy drinking the blood of ego, Your sword cleaves the heads from  
the destroyers of the teachings.  
Holding the mirror that reflects the three worlds, Brandishing the phurba,  
you fulfill all actions.  
You ride on a donkey with a white blaze.  
As day dawns, you guard the meditator.  
As night falls, you cut the aortas of the perverters of the teachings.  
You send out a million emanations.  
As our mother, sister, and maid,  
Please look after us of the lineage of Marpa the Translator.  
Accept this amrita, blood, and *torma* as token of samaya.  
Fulfill the actions of the four karmas.

*This was written by Chökyi Gyatso, the eleventh Trungpa. Translated by the Nālandā Translation Committee.*

## ***Dorje Kasung Oath***

*[As administered on January 15, 1976 to the Dorje Dapön of the Vajra Guards.]*

The three jewels, the gurus of the lineage, *herukas*, *dakinis*, dharmapalas, and *lokapalas*, guide me, inspire me. In your presence and in the presence of the Vajracharya the Venerable Karma Nagwang Chökyi Gyamtso, Künga Sangpo, the eleventh Trungpa, I [Gerald Haase as Dorje Dapön, chief of the Vajra Guards] pledge myself in keeping with the articles of incorporation of Vajradhatu to defend the dharma against perversion, to protect the precious person of the Vajra Master, to ward off any persons who may endanger his well-being, interests, or property, those of the directors of Vajradhatu, or of Vajradhatu generally, and to serve when called upon to act as an agent of expulsion from the Vajradhatu community, its affiliates or subject organizations, or its property.

I vow to act with discretion and to respect the confidentiality of all affairs of Vajradhatu entrusted to me or that may incidentally come to my attention during the performance of my duties. I further vow not to exercise the power inherent in my position for personal advantage. I promise to follow the directives, policies, and guidelines established by the Board of Directors of Vajradhatu. I pledge not to misrepresent or distort the teachings of Buddhism, not to encourage factions or divisions that misinterpret the teachings and promote spiritual materialism, and not to enter into league with enemies of the dharma. In taking this vow I understand that any violation of these commitments may lead to my removal, not only from my position, but from the sphere of Vajradhatu.

As Dorje Dapön of the Vajra Guards and as a Vajra Guard myself, I pledge to observe, to the best of my ability, the eight reminders:

1. Have confidence to go beyond hesitation.
2. Alert before you daydream.

3. Mindful of all details, be resourceful in performing your duty.
4. Fearless beyond idiot compassion.
5. Be a warrior without anger.
6. Not afraid to be a fool.
7. An invisible heavy hand.
8. Be precise without creating a scene.



# *The Vajra Guards*

A LETTER FROM THE KASUNG KYI KHYAP

*As printed in the Vajradhatu Sun, volume 1, number 1 (October/November 1978)*

**T**HE DORJE KASUNG (Vajra Guard) was established by the Vajracharya during the first visit of His Holiness Karmapa in 1974. Since that time, its role and significance have greatly expanded, and it is important that these be properly understood by our general membership. This is true not only in Boulder but in Dharmadhatus and dharma study groups, where a major growth in the Kasungship is underway.

A recent milestone in the evolution of the Kasung was the Magyal Pomra Encampment, which took place at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center during the Vajracharya's ITS there in August [1978]. The forty-four Kasung who made up the encampment attended the Vajracharya's talks on "Warriorship in the Three Yanas" each evening; apart from this, they followed an entirely separate schedule of practice and study, focusing on group discipline and precision and the tradition of warriorship as it relates to their roles as guards.

*Dorje Kasung* means "Vajra Command Protector(s)." *Ka* is the same as in *Kagyü*, which means "word" or "command lineage." So the command that is to be protected by the Dorje Kasung is the lineage itself, the teachings of the lineage, and the vajra sangha, which follows and fulfills these teachings. In performing this function, the Dorje Kasung may be said to fill three roles:

1. Presenting obstacles. It is the responsibility of the Dorje Kasung to protect the persons and property of the Vajracharya and the Vajra Regent and their families, as well as those of the Vajradhatu community generally. In a literal sense, they should serve as obstacles to any

physical threat.

Because the teachings are true and powerful, they present a constant challenge to ego. Particularly in the vajrayana style of directness and outrageousness, occasional eruptions of neurotic aggression may be expected. However, the role of presenting obstacles is much more often manifested on the psychological level than on the physical level, through absorbing or deflating aggressive neurosis before it has an opportunity to become full-blown.

2. Accommodating. Because the Dorje Kasung present obstacles to neurosis, they also can and must accommodate sanity. It is the role of the guards to create and maintain a space in which the teachings can be proclaimed fully and properly. This includes facilitating and encouraging individuals' access to the teachings. Guards must relate strongly with the bodhisattva mentality of serving others, both at the level of social service and of inspiring further trust in the teachings.
3. Indestructible. As guards become accomplished in their practice, their very presence in a situation should invisibly convey the vajra (indestructible) qualities of space and the teachings. This comes about through the cultivation of a dignified and gentle confidence joined with a keen understanding of mandala principle.

The criteria for becoming a Vajra Guard are those of the three yanas: individual meditation practice, generosity toward others, and devotion to the Vajra Master and his world. Although guards are called upon to give of their time, energy, and money, this is not viewed as doing anyone a favor, but as a privilege and a further opportunity for growing up. In addition to performing their regular duties, the Dorje Kasung hold periodic seminars on buddhadharma and Shambhala society, as well as training programs specifically related to their responsibilities. While involving themselves fully in the sangha at large, the Dorje Kasung also take pride in their unique esprit de corps.

I hope that this brief description will stimulate a better understanding of the role of the Dorje Kasung in all of our membership and that it will inspire some of you to join your energy with that of the Kasung. It has been delightful for me personally to see the Vajra Guards grow from a clumsy infancy into a healthy and eager youth, and I look forward to working with many more of our members as they take this opportunity of serving the Vajracharya and progressing on the

path.

DAVID I. ROME  
*Kasung Kyi Khyap*

## ***Regarding New Directives on the Structure of the Guards***

*August 12, 1977*

*From the Sakyong Dorje Dradül*

*To David I. Rome, General Command Protector ODS<sup>52</sup>*

Regarding New Directives on the Structure of the Guards

**W**ITH THE ENCLOSED CHART I would like to present new ideas on the structure of the guards. The time and situation are changing, particularly now that the dapön has been given permission to resign.<sup>53</sup>

In the past we had Kusung, who were purely bodyguards. The guards now have growing duties and responsibilities, rather than acting only as bodyguards. Therefore, I thought that the Kusung could now become Kasung, which means, as you know, “command protectors.” The Kasung would then form a kind of military corps, with you as the supreme head of the corps. You will be known as the Kasung Kyi Khyap. *Kyi* means “overall” or “general,” and *Khyap* means “expanding” or “ruling over.” Thus, your title translates as the “General Command Protector.”

Under the General Command Protector there would be two leaders. One is the Kusung Dapön who is in charge of the court guard system. This would be John Perks; his title would be major. The second is the Kasung Dapön, who would also be a major. He would be in charge of the rest of the guards. For this position, James Gimian is the most suitable, because of his loyalty, reasonability, and intelligence. There would also be a Kasung Rupön of the Red Division, which would be Dennis Southward, if you think he is suitable. We can retain Norm Hirsch as the Kasung Rupön of the White Division.

At this time no separate corps of Kusung will be established. The Kusung will

be drawn from the Kasung; that is, Kasung will serve as Kusung when they are on duty in the court. Major Perks will have complete control over the Kusung when they are acting as court guards.

It would be best to let the present dapön resign properly before announcing any changes in the guard system or informing the new dapön of his appointment. Hopefully, an appropriate farewell function could be held for the resigning dapön. A week or so later, the new Kasung Dapön should be appointed.

I hope you will review this with the Vajra Regent for his approval.

YOURS IN THE GREAT EASTERN SUN,  
*The Sakyong Dorje Dradül*

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52. Order of the Dragon of Shambhala.

53. In 1977, the Dorje Dapön Gerry Haase had requested and received permission to resign. At this time, there was only one dapön, which is in part what this letter addresses.

## ***The Dorje Dradül Thangka***

*Displaying the warrior manifestation of the Dorje Dradül of Mukpo, the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. (See frontispiece [here](#).)*

THE DORJE DRADÜL THANGKA is a painting done in the traditional style of Tibetan scroll paintings. It depicts the Dorje Dradül in the likeness of Gesar of Ling and the Rigden, the king of Shambhala, clad in warrior armor and headdress, riding a blue horse. In his right hand, he brandishes the iron wheel, and in his left he holds a tray of jewels. Surrounding him are thirteen dralas on horseback, wearing armor. Below him, in the center is the Four-Armed Mahakala, a principal protector of the Surmang monasteries. The protector Vetali, the consort of the Four-Armed Mahakala, is to his right. The protector Ekajati is to his left. A rainbow rests in the sky above, in which dance three *dakas* and three *dakinis*. At the top of the thangka sit three of the Karmapas visualized in *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*. To the left is Mikyö Dorje; in the center is Tüsum Khyenpa, and to the right is Rangjung Dorje. In the background to the right is the cave at Taktsang, where the Vidyadhara discovered *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*. To the left is Mount Kailasa, home of the palace of Kalapa, the capital of the Kingdom of Shambhala.

His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, one of the great modern-day saints of the Nyingma lineage and a principal teacher and advisor of both the Vidyadhara and Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, first conceived of the thangka in 1987 at the request of one of the Dorje Dradül's close students, a senior officer in the Dorje Kasung, whose inspiration was to provide an image portraying the warrior manifestation of the Dorje Dradül for the Dorje Kasung. Khyenste Rinpoche sent a letter to the thangka painter Noedup Rongae describing the details he envisioned in the thangka. After looking at an initial sketch of the thangka, Rinpoche made only one change, replacing Dorje Pernakchen with the Four-

Armed Mahakala, who is closely connected with the Surmang monasteries and a special protector for the Dorje Dradül. When Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche was shown the sketch, he suggested that the thirteen dralas be included rather than the six that had originally been drawn and that Taktsang and Mount Kailasa be included as landscape features.

Noedup Rongae, the artist, has painted numerous thangkas that have been reproduced and used by the Shambhala community. This thangka is among the most monumental projects that he has ever undertaken. Including the thirteen dralas made it necessary to create an oversized thangka, thirty-six inches by forty-eight inches. Because the thangka was so large, it was difficult to paint in the traditional fashion, whereby the canvas is stretched on a frame. Instead, the artist invented a special apparatus from a barrel and bicycle wheels, enabling him to rotate the thangka to reach all of its areas. As Mr. Rongae has told us, in Tibet it has been said that if you don't stop painting a thangka at a certain point, the project will go on forever with detail following detail. At a certain point, he feared that the Dorje Dradül thangka might be just such a project. At long last, five years after its inception, the thangka was completed in 1992. It was then reproduced as a high-quality archival print in two sizes and made available at Shambhala centers founded by the Vidyadhara. The print is displayed in many of these centers. A smaller print is available to individuals. The original thangka is at Dorje Denma Ling, the contemplative practice center of the Shambhala community located near Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia. The frontispiece that appears in *True Command* is produced from a scan taken directly from the original painting.

## *Editor's Afterword and Acknowledgments*

SPRING HAS COME ONCE AGAIN to Tatamagouche Mountain. It is just a little more than sixteen years since the *parinirvana*, the death, of the Makkyi Rabjam, the Venerable Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. For me, as well as for hundreds of his students, not a day goes by that I do not think of him. Occasionally, if I am very lucky, I see him in my dreams or I feel his breath on my face in the mist. Today, I find myself once again working in semiretreat in a little house just a stone's throw from the Dorje Kasung land and the grounds of the Magyal Pomra Encampment in Nova Scotia. Here, over the last three years, I have often come to work on the editing of his teachings to the Dorje Kasung. This will be the last time, at least for volume one of *True Command*. When I come here to work, I feel as though the Makkyi is close by, sometimes in the room with me. So it is not a hardship to be here alone.

This project was the inspiration of my husband, Kasung Dapön Kyi Khyap James M. Gimian (ret.). More than fifteen years ago, Dapön Gimian had the idea of producing a small volume presenting about ten lectures given by the Dorje Dradül to the members of the Dorje Kasung. Dapön Gimian gathered copies of the tapes and transcripts, listened to the recordings, corrected the transcripts, and organized the material. It was only then that I took on the job of editing the book. I fell in love with the material almost immediately. After a short while working together, Dapön Gimian and I both concluded that the project should be expanded to include more of the Dorje Dradül's lectures. As the project grew, we realized that there should be two volumes, with the first volume composed entirely of "Town Talks," as we dubbed the events that took place in an urban environment rather than at the Magyal Pomra Encampments. Rather late in the editorial process, we uncovered a "lost" talk, which had never been transcribed and was not listed on any inventories of the Dorje Kasung material. It jumped



out at us, as though demanding to be included in volume one.

When this project was first conceived, it was referred to as the “Foundation Talks of the Makkyi Rabjam.” As the project expanded, it became evident that a new title was needed. The final title for the book arose as a spontaneous insight; in retrospect it seems that it was the obvious choice. “True Command” is the opening phrase of the “Guard Song,” composed by the Makkyi Rabjam in 1978 and sung at every Dorje Kasung gathering since. What better title for a book of the Makkyi’s own teachings to the Kasung, the essence of true command?

One of the challenges in editing this material was that names and titles within the Dorje Kasung mandala changed over the course of the years. In the beginning, there was the Vajra Guard. For a period of time, the Vajra Guards were known as the Dorje Kusung, and the title Dorje Kasung was given to David I. Rome as a loose translation of Kasung General. In 1977, the guards became the Dorje Kasung, Mr. Rome became the Kasung Kyi Khyap, and the Dorje Kusung became the name of the newly formed Kusung Division, which initially referred to guards serving at the Kalapa Court.

Chögyam Trungpa himself began as the Vajracharya in these talks. He was then referred to as the Sakyong. Then, he was addressed within the military mandala as Dorje Dradül of Mukpo. He became the Makkyi Rabjam and finally was also referred to as the Vidyadhara. The Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin became the Tönsung Kyi Khyap. Lady Diana Mukpo became Her Highness and then the Tönsung Wangmo.

Many posts were filled by different people at different times during the period covered by these talks. Initially, there was only one dapön, Gerry Haase, and he was known as the Dorje Dapön. Beginning in mid-1977, with the retirement of Mr. Haase, James Gimian was appointed as the Kasung Dapön, and John Perks was appointed as the Kusung Dapön. In the later years, following Mr. Perks’s retirement, Martin Janowitz became the Kusung Dapön. In 1984, Mr. Gimian and Mr. Janowitz both became Dapön Kyi Khyaps. In many places in *True Command*, we see the phenomenon of people being promoted up the ranks as the years progressed. For example, early on, we have Hudson Shotwell making a toast as Sergeant Shotwell; later he asks a question as Shotwell Kadö. Now he is known as Dapön A. At times people moved sideways in the hierarchy; at times people left the organization.

In some sense, none of this makes any difference, especially to current generations for whom almost all of these people seem to inhabit a distant past.

However, letting the record reflect these changes and complexities allows us to see more clearly the details of how the Makkyi's world—and the world of the Dorje Kasung that he created—was an organic, changing structure, not something static and reified. As well, we found that many of the people who participated with the Makkyi Rabjam in the events chronicled in *True Command* were important characters in the drama that unfolded. To have left them out of the action would be missing a big chunk of the story.

Nevertheless, although we included a great deal of detail, we had to choose a cutoff point for including the names, titles, and remarks of those who participated in various events. It was not possible to name everyone who received an award, made a toast, presented a gift, or took an oath. Although from some point of view everything that transpired at events was of interest, the editors had to balance that interest with the attention span of the readers and also try to gauge whether readers would lose the thrust of the Makkyi's remarks if too much surrounding material was included. This was always a delicate balancing act, and readers will have to gauge how successful it has been.

The Kasung birthdays for the Makkyi Rabjam, in particular, had a quality of pageant or theater—where all the formalities created an atmosphere or environment that was itself instructive, providing an important component of the Dorje Kasung training. At first, we expected to downplay those ceremonial aspects and to focus almost entirely on the talks given by the Makkyi. However, as the editing process evolved, the editors became drawn into the pageant and began to see more clearly how the supporting events created a space in which the Makkyi's talks were the centerpiece or crowning touch. Taking this view, we could see how the students' actions helped to create the sympathetic atmosphere for the teacher to proclaim his wisdom. We were reminded of some of the sutras of the Buddha, where sometimes the Awakened One inspires the students to give the teachings; sometimes, he proclaims them himself.

Thus, in the pages of this book one gets to see not only the Makkyi Rabjam at the top of his form, but many of his students at the top of theirs. The Makkyi Rabjam had the ability to draw forth from those he worked with the very best they had to offer—sometimes better than they had to offer. He gave them a glimpse of just how glorious they could be. Then, he left it up to all of us to work out how to actually become those great human beings we keep buried inside us most of the time. He created a space of absolute sanity in which we all danced. The allure of practice, now that he is gone, is that this is where that space can be found, nurtured, and stabilized.

There are many people who contributed to this book. The Makkyi Rabjam's addresses to the Dorje Kasung are available to us due to the fierce dedication of the individuals who made the tape recordings. Thanks to them all. Transcripts of this material were prepared by many members of the Dorje Kasung, who volunteered their time and efforts. Particular thanks in this regard to Alma Carpenter for her many hours transcribing and correcting tapes. Her efforts kept this project alive in the early years of this undertaking. Kasung Dapön Barry Boyce has taken an interest in the editing, publication, and distribution of this work. His suggestions have been very helpful at various stages. A number of Dorje Kasung and friends read the manuscript and offered helpful suggestions, including Melvin McLeod, Fabrice Midal, and Kidder Smith. David I. Rome, the Kasung Kyi Khyap (ret.), also read the manuscript. Thanks to all of them. We are grateful to all those who answered our questions about events depicted in these talks, most notably Gerry Haase, Landon Mallery, and Ron Stubbert. Paul Halpern Rupön copyedited the final manuscript. John Sell proofread and indexed the book. It was a pleasure for this editor to work with them. Liza Matthews provided her usual gold standard in designing *True Command*, and Andrew Glencross exerted a Kasung-like energy in his technical assistance in realizing the design.

We would like to thank Martha Bonzi for her generous support of this project. As she has done so many times over the past twenty years, she appeared when there was a need and simply said, "How can I help?" Thanks also to the Denma Translation Group, Jim Stinson Rupön, and Bernie Flynn Rupön, for their generous support.

We also offer our thanks to Ann Shaftel for permission to reproduce her photos of the Surmang relics, to Andrea Roth for permission to use her photographs of the 1983 Dorje Kasung birthday party for the Makkyi Rabjam, and to the Nālandā Translation Committee and Diana J. Mukpo for permission to reproduce the chant to Vetali. We also thank the Shambhala Archives for access to their collections and for their ongoing efforts to preserve the teachings of the Dorje Dradül.

We would like to thank Mrs. Lila Rich for permission to include remarks and poetry by the Tönsung Kyi Khyap, the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin. Thanks also to Mrs. Donna Holm, who reviewed the Vajra Regent's contributions to this volume and made incisive comments on a number of points.

Mrs. Diana J. Mukpo, the Tönsung Wangmo, immediately recognized the

importance of this project and kindly gave her enthusiastic support and her permission to publish the Makkyi Rabjam's talks to the Dorje Kasung. We are grateful to both her and to the current Makkyi Rabjam, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, for contributing forewords to volume one of *True Command*.

The motto of Vajradhatu, the motto on which the Makkyi Rabjam Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche staked his life force, is "The ultimate truth is fearless." In *True Command* one can read the real truth about the Dorje Kasung, the protectors of the indestructible and sacred truth of dharma. This book cannot help but dispel much of the misunderstanding about the discipline of Kasungship, for these are some of the most penetrating and genuine teachings on the path of warriorship that one could ever encounter.

Spring has come once again to Tatamagouche Mountain, as it inevitably seems to do. As I sit here writing, I realize that soon not just the Makkyi but all of us who knew him will have passed on. Still, with the publication of this small book, some of our joys and sorrows, as well as his, will be preserved for future generations. I am personally grateful to have had the opportunity to work with this material. This book is but a small offering, both to thank the Makkyi Rabjam for his unceasing efforts and to share his efforts with those to come. In his honor and in theirs, let us raise the warrior's cry:

KI KI SO SO ASHE LHA GYEL LO  
TAK SENG KYUNG DRUK DI YAR KYE

Rejoice!

In true command the Great Eastern Sun arises.

DORJE YUTRI CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN  
*Trident Mountain House*  
*Tatamagouche Mountain, Nova Scotia*  
*May 16, 2003*



*On duty with His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa.*  
COURTESY GERRY HAASE.

# GLIMPSES OF REALIZATION

*The Three Bodies of Enlightenment*

*Edited by* JUDITH L. LIEF

## ONE

### *Why We Are Here at All*

THE TOPIC OF THIS BOOK, the three bodies of enlightenment, is somewhat out of the ordinary. Without a background in Buddhist study and practice, it may be difficult for you to follow. However, I am going to try to present the feeling of it rather than the whole thing. As you read, I want you to be open and awake. You have to use your antennae rather than purely your brain. In that way, we could make our journey together.

The three bodies of enlightenment are three types of atmosphere, which are involved with ordinary everyday life as well as with enlightened mind. The first body, to start from the beginning, so to speak, is background or origin. It is why we are here, not why we are here in this particular hall or why we are studying Buddhism, but why we are here *at all*. Why are we here on this earth? Why is there earth at all? Why is there sun, and why is there moon? Why all of this? The first body seems to be our basis, or starting point. We start from outer space, to begin with. Then we slowly get into inner space and earth.

We have metaphysical, conventional, mythological ideas about why we are here—but those theories could be regarded as a load of bullshit. They don't actually say anything at all, but are based on rereading old books and reducing ourselves into bookworms. There is a problem with space—literally—physically and psychologically. The psychological aspect is the tail end of the question, and the physical aspect is the forerunner. *Why* do we have a problem with our space? *Is* there any problem with space, for that matter? There may be, or there may not be. Things are not going too well in my life, or things are going fabulously in my life—whatever.

Three expressions from traditional Buddhist texts summarize this whole area: unborn, unceasing, unoriginated. Such a summary isn't particularly helpful, but it at least gives us some landmarks. Of those three terms—unborn, unceasing, and unoriginated—the first is unborn. What are we going to do with that?

Basically speaking, we are not born; we don't exist. That's the truth. It is a very courageous truth, a truth spoken or expressed because we are not afraid to tell the truth. It is the utmost truth. If you are afraid of telling the truth, what you say becomes bent truth, or a lie—but when you relate with the actual truth, although it may not be convenient or an ideally good message for the listener, you still speak the truth. From that point of view, we are unborn; we don't exist.

If we are unborn, if we never give birth to ourselves, how is it possible that we are here? We might say, “Literally, I was born from my mother, and psychologically speaking, I seem to have preconceptions of things. Ideas are born in my head or my heart, and I'm executing those ideas in my life.” But *who* said that? That is the point. Who is actually talking about those things? Who is questioning that whole idea? Who is asking the questions? The questioner, of course. But who is the questioner? *What* is the questioner, rather than *who* is the questioner.

If you look back and back and back, after and after and after, it is like overlapping onion skins—you approach outer space, and you find that nobody actually said anything at all. It was just a little burp. Somebody burped, which was misunderstood as language. Then, after that, someone said, “I beg your pardon?” And somebody said, “Oh, of course, I'm sorry. I burped.” That cosmic burp, or cosmic fart, was an accident—a complete accident, unintentional—and that is what's called the origin of karma. Everything started on an accidental level. Everything is an accident.

When we get to that level, we are looking into enormous space. We are discussing and thinking about enormous space. That particular enormous space—that inconceivable, enormous space—is the basis of the original unbornness. We could ask a subtle question about the unbornness of space: “How is it possible for space to exist eternally, if space doesn't give birth to itself constantly? Otherwise, space would be dead.” That's true. If space didn't give birth eternally, space wouldn't exist. The reason space exists constantly but still maintains its unborn nature is that space *never* gives birth! That non-giving-birth seems to be giving birth to a larger extent than giving birth in the literal sense of having a father and a mother and cutting the umbilical cord. So birth does exist in the realm of space in the sense that space constantly gives birth by itself. An analysis of space is that it has both masculine and feminine principles, both together. Fathers and mothers are one in space; therefore, nobody gets pregnant—or everybody gets pregnant. Nobody gives birth; therefore, everybody gives birth simultaneously. Mother and father are in the process of making love all the



time.

We have a unique process at this point: immense space, which exists eternally or noneternally, does not give birth and at the same time does give birth, immense birth. That is why it is called unborn. Unborn is the safest way to describe it. If you have to use a term, it is much better to say unborn than eternally born. If you say eternally born, there is a tendency to think that somebody is being nursed. We think that we are going through the process of bringing up a child from infancy to the level of teenager and young adult up to the level of old age and death. We think that we have a process to go through. However, with this particular notion of space, we have no process to go through. Unborn is already birth. Therefore, no infancy or teenagehood or youthfulness or middle age or old age or death exists. They don't exist because nothing happened! That seems to be the basic point. That all took place at a nonexistence level. This is very hard to understand if you look at it from the perspective of trying to understand. Obviously, when we try to give birth, instead of being unborn, something begins to be born. But now what we are trying to get to and to understand—or not understand—is the *unbornness* of the whole thing.

There is a pattern taking place, in any case; and that pattern is workable, understandable, and realizable. However, in talking about that, we always reduce everything to a very domestic level. Not only do we reduce everything to the household domestic level, but we reduce everything to the bedroom level, saying, “If I did this, would that happen to me? If that took place, on the other hand, what would happen then?” and so forth. But in this case, the whole thing is beyond the domestic level, absolutely beyond the domestic level. Because of that, we can discuss it, and we can question it. There's a lot of room for freedom, enormous room for freedom. It's not as if we are not allowed to talk about anything, or if we ask anything, we are dumb. Instead, *because* we are dumb, therefore, we are intelligent. There is a new opening of freedom, a level of freedom that we have never known in our life. That is why the whole process is very outrageous and quite incomprehensible, quite rightly so. Nevertheless it is understandable. It is feel-able; you can feel it.

On that basis, we do not discuss what section of that process belongs to samsara and what section belongs to nirvana. We do not even use those terms. The whole idea is that it does not belong to, for, or against. When we talk about nirvana and samsara, we take sides. We think of nirvana as our friend. We would like to associate with our friend, nirvana, and have enlightenment as our goal and aim. On the other side is samsara. Samsara means being imprisoned;

samsara is confusion and pain. We do not want to relate with samsara or be a victim of that deadly area. That way of thinking has become the problem. Our conversations and our understanding of all this have been diverted to the level of what should be and what shouldn't be, rather than what is and what isn't. So we don't realize that, in fact, we are helpless. We don't realize that we cannot challenge this gigantic cosmic course that's taking place. We can't even sign our names to be in favor of it or against it. The whole thing is helpless.

We can reduce ourselves into a grain of sand, but, at the same time, we are part of outer space as a whole, cosmic space. So we need to have a certain amount of open-mindedness, rather than always asking, "What does this mean to me at this point in my meditation practice? What does this mean to me in terms of my salvation? I have a problem with my husband; I have a problem with my wife. Is this particular argument, this idea or concept, going to save me from that problem?" We are not talking in those terms, at this point—we are talking *big!* We are actually tapping into an area that we have never touched, never looked at. Because we are so confused, we do not bother to look, apart from maybe the occasional glimpse. We think, "Who cares? This is not my cup of tea, my kettle of fish." We think that we were too poor, that it is too painful. We don't want to look at those areas that exist on a greater scale.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is about time for us to look! It is time to think bigger and open our minds to the possibility that nonduality does exist. You may not be philosophers or great meditators, but there is the possibility that greater areas could be opened to you if you bothered to look, if you bothered to open your minds. We are not talking about Tibetan Buddhism or Indian Buddhism at this point, or any other ism, but about how we could associate ourselves with a larger-scale world. To do so, we are using that mind in which we are not involved with isms of any sort.

A larger world exists, but we have never looked at it. We are too concerned with our microscopes or our magnifying glasses. We try to make things large by using magnifying glasses, but we have never looked at outer space with our naked eyes. If we looked into it, we could find it, but we don't have to use our binoculars and telescopes: we don't need them; they are false pretenses. We don't need any means to do this; we could just simply *look at it*, whatever it is, and enjoy it. An immensely larger version of thinking and of celebration is taking place. That seems to be the very important point.

*Student:* When you make a statement that something exists and at the same

time it doesn't exist, does that mean that the entire question of what you're talking about just doesn't arise?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* You got it! It's the prequestion level. It is unconditional. Unfortunately, we don't have a term for that level. The closest is *state of being*, but that automatically implies existence, which is conditional. Unconditional being doesn't even rise to the level of question or the level of finding out.

*Student:* Does unconditional being have qualities or characteristics?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Unconditional being does not have qualities, but, somehow, it has nonexistent qualities. However, saying that it has nonexistent qualities is entirely different from saying it does not have any qualities or that it is blank. Do you see the difference in saying no quality as opposed to nonexistent quality?

S: It's very easy for nonexistence to become just another thing—in my head, anyway.

*CTR:* That may be necessary, to begin with. We have to have something to work on. From that point of view, we are not being particularly dogmatic.

*Student:* I really find it difficult to know how to use this material. If it's beyond experience, we can't say, "How can I have this understanding or this experience?" That would be beside the point.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's right. That *is* beside the point, in fact.

S: But to go off and forget about it would also be beside the point.

*CTR:* You got it. That's right. In discussing this larger scale of thinking, novices at the beginning level might have difficulty understanding. In fact, they might find the whole thing extraordinarily claustrophobic. That's possible, because there's no room to move about—and there wasn't ever *meant* to be room to move about *at all!*

*Student:* It seems that everything you're talking about—or not talking about—is pointing toward the play of energy. When you talk about space and unbornness and a nonexistent quality, it seems that you're talking about a dance, or the play of energy.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's a bit of a tricky question, if I might say so. You are trying to get something out of that space, some kind of energy. But

we haven't gotten to that level yet; we are still talking about space, rather than energy. At this point, as far as *this* level is concerned, we are not concerned with the idea of energy *at all!* We are simply concerned with understanding how the paradox can exist out of nowhere. We are not talking about energy.

Energy is very easy for people to understand, and if there is negative energy and positive energy, that is very graphic. But that is not quite what we mean here. In fact, that is the source of a big misunderstanding in mystical Hinduism, which has the idea of Brahman being all-pervasive, and in Christianity and Judaism, for that matter, which talk about the all-pervasiveness of God. In talking about all-pervasiveness, automatically the concept arises that if God is all-pervasive, there must be energy. The concept is that there should be the energy to be all-pervasive, rather than that nonexistent energy could *still* be all-pervasive. That possibility has never been looked at. So those cultures fail, from this point of view, and Buddhism wins. Rather than saying, "It's okay. If you find everything is nonexistent energy, that's fine," they have two levels: divinity and outer space. That seems to be the difference.

*Student:* Is there an openness to the *possibility* of energy, before talking about energy itself?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* We are not talking about energy! It's just openness. Of course, some logic is involved. If it's openness, at the same time, that equally means utter claustrophobia. Space is not particularly good or bad. Claustrophobia is not regarded as negative; nor is openness regarded as positive—they are equal. There is a parallel between the two; in other words, both are the same. Whenever you see light, in a dark or light form, it is the same—you are still seeing something.

*S:* Is there awareness at this point, or is that too dualistic?

*CTR:* Yes and no equally. Awareness is a very big topic, actually. When there is awareness, that automatically means categorizing and pinpointing something in particular or something in general—and that blows the whole thing. It begins to make everything extraordinarily chaotic and messed up. However, if there isn't awareness, then nothing is comprehensible or perceptible at all. You don't have anything to work on; you're just loose, in the realm of stupidity. So what we are talking about is *between the two*—not actually between the two, but it's *both at the same time*. It is intense awareness that sees all the details immaculately—simultaneously, this awareness does not exist, because of its so-aware quality. Because of its utterly awake quality, awareness is superfluous.

We are still talking about parallels at this point. It is possible to perceive this; actually, it is very simple.

*Student:* When you speak about the nonexistent quality, could a synonym be either *nonapparent* or *nonprojected*? Do those terms have something in common?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I wouldn't say so. Those terms are very tricky. *Nonexistence* is better. *Nonexistence* is a very simple term, which actually speaks of life and death. The other terms are somewhat manipulative business-deal terms: this happens; therefore, that doesn't happen, which means everything happens at the same time. All things happen because things don't take place; therefore, they do take place at the same time. When you become bankrupt, you become rich, because you have become bankrupt. If you have a case history of becoming bankrupt, that means that you have big projects in your mind, so you still carry out that richness. Although your business failed, that is an incidental problem; it is not particularly a big deal. You had a bank account, and it got corrupted.

*Student:* Rinpoche, a term came to my mind, *unmoving awareness*, which is something that happens in zazen meditation—a state of unmoving awareness.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's saying the same thing, I think, in that it is unconditional. When you begin to move, that is the same as conmanship, you are trying to con somebody. If awareness doesn't move, you don't con. Usually, in our ordinary behavior, movements are regarded as restless or as attempts to attract attention.

*Student:* Does the openness occur at the point we are willing to accept chaos into our lives?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* We are not talking about the *path*, at this point, or when openness *occurs*. Openness is there *already*, all the time! We are talking about what actually is there, rather than when something occurs as an *experience*. We are talking about the backbone of the whole thing. So the occurrence of opening, the moment when it happens, doesn't exist at this point. We are talking about outer space rather than inner space.

S: I guess I'm getting hung up in trying to relate it to myself.

*CTR:* That has become the problem. You try to relate with this as if you have a little lunch box and you can take it and eat it in the corner.

*Student:* I don't see the difference between taking this big view and the power of positive thinking. The basic message seems to be that it is okay to think big—and somebody had to tell you it's okay.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think that the power of positive thinking, conventionally, is trying to think everything is going to be okay, that there's nothing to worry about. But that is not enough, so the ordinary power of positive thinking is also thinking that somebody is going to help you or to save you from this problem. You think the divine is going to descend on you and save you; therefore, you have nothing to worry about. Humanistic, Buddhist, nontheistic positive thinking is completely different. It is unknown. People have not been taught to look at things in that way. Generally, positive thinking is regarded as a cure, or medicine, rather than as a self-existing process. In the case of nontheistic positive thinking, however, nontheistic positive thinking is nondogmatic and not giving. In a sense, it is very mean, because you don't give a shit about anything; you just accept it as it is. You just let go and bulge out into outer space.

*S:* Is this space alive and existent in itself, or does it depend on the existence of paradox? Or should one give up any kind of effort or logic?

*CTR:* It is existent by itself. It doesn't depend on anything; therefore, it depends on everything—not helplessly.

*Student:* In addition to unborn, you mentioned two other terms, unceasing and unoriginated. I was wondering whether there was any difference between those three terms, any kind of distinction, or whether they are synonymous.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think they are the same: unborn, unceasing, and unoriginated. I was reading Longchen Rabjam's writings on this topic, and when I opened the book, the appropriate teaching came through. He said that the idea of openness and unbornness is a product of fearlessness. There is no fear to see. For instance, supposing you are an astronaut, and you are allowed to jump out of your rocket ship. There's fear, a sense of death, and a sense of enormous alienation, because you can't go back to your particular earth, where you came from. That is quite different from parachuting from airplanes, because airplanes are within the atmosphere or compass of this earth. However, if you are suspended in outer space, there is fantastic fear, transcendental fear that you have never known before. You do not want to die out in the open in that way.

If you jump out of an airplane, on this particular earth, you feel better—at least you are going downhill. You feel great, because compared with that, if you

jump out of your rocket ship in outer space, you have nothing to hang on to, and nobody's going to receive you. Your body is not going to splash onto *anything*; it's just going to be recycling all the time, dragging through the whole of phenomena. That's the kind of situation we are talking about here. This particular teaching comes from the ati teachings of the tantric tradition. The ati tradition has an absolutely accurate concept of the outer-space journey from a meditative point of view. It's extremely accurate, as if the ati teachers had themselves been astronauts.

*Student:* Rinpoche, is this any different from saying that if I die, awareness still goes on?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It is more than that: we are talking about the death of experience in *this* life, rather than what happens if we jump out of the Empire State Building. It's saying the same thing—it's just a much larger version of that whole thing.

*Student:* It seems that what you are saying should give all of us extreme courage to try anything. Is there any limitation on that?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* We are not talking about *trying*. That is a sign of cowardliness. Trying has a sense of desperation. Instead you have confidence in everything and try nothing. That seems to be the point. If you try everything, you begin to become a junkie—spiritually, physically, or whatever it may be. We are not talking about that level; we are talking about a larger version of thinking and opening.

*S:* How can you say that trying is nonexistent? Don't you have to try in order to see the trying?

*CTR:* When you begin to try properly, you find that you don't exist—you're simply trying. Your exertion is working very hard, but you don't actually exist. Your exertion begins to take you over. It's like an airplane flying by itself or a train running by itself.

*S:* Is it like tension that's just there, or trying that's just there?

*CTR:* It's something like that, but I think you have to experience it—you can't just talk in terms of hypothetical possibilities.

*Student:* You started out by speaking about why are we here, and then you went on to discuss the unborn. I didn't quite get the connection.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: Somehow, we find why we are *not* here. We *are* here, obviously, but we are *not* here. Nobody's here. This particular hall is vacant, nonexistent; therefore, there's a big crowd. Does that help?



## TWO

### *Cosmic Disaster*

**E**XTENDED VISION MEANS that we have to step out completely from any concern and take an immense leap to a living experience of the perceptions of mind. That particular leap tends to be somewhat exaggerated or extreme because we do not allow any space or concepts to linger between perceiver and perception. Things become extraordinarily bigger in scale so that we begin to lose track of who is actually perceiving and who is not perceiving at all—and that could be said to be the epitome of perception in the fundamental sense.

From that type of perception arises the notion of extreme extension—you are extended completely, extended extremely, extended as far as you can go. That is to say, if you have numeral figures, your figures begin to extend extremely until finally zero after zero after zero doesn't make any sense—and that whole experience begins to come back to square one, where you started. It comes back to the number one, or to zero, and that begins to dissolve along with the rest of the figures.

The whole thing, whether you put particular figures on it or not, becomes complete zero. There is a kind of recoiling process, as that infinite quality begins to come back. In fact, as that extension is closest to the infinite, it becomes number one or zero—and one or zero becomes infinite. So you begin to lose track. At the same time, you begin to gain a sense of perspective in which *you* do not exist, the *perceiver* does not exist—purely those phantoms of infiniteness exist.

In other words, nothing is lost. The infinite becomes your aspect of intelligence. You are only infinite; therefore, you have intelligence that can function and expand immensely. You can actually work with that infinite quality. Once your mind has expanded in such an outburst without any booster—that is to say, the reference point of “me here” or “I'm here”—starting with the number zero or one, that whole process becomes very fast, extremely fast. We

have used this analogy before, and I would like to repeat it again: you run so fast, round and round and round, that finally the fastest way to run is to stay still. You run so fast that you begin to see your own back, and you begin to become still. At that point, the whole thing begins to become infinite. When you hold still, you supersede any kind of speed at all. You become the ultimate and utmost winner of that particular race.

From that point of view, being back to square one is one version of infinity. You are not back to square one in the sense of dragging yourself back or thinking that you have solved all your problems; and you are not back to square one in the sense that you went on and on and on, and finally you find yourself doing the same thing all over again. That's not the kind of square one we are talking about here. In this case, back to square one is the infiniteness of immense immeasurable space and expansion that you experience. Therefore, it is absolutely absurd to try to search further—and the only way *not* to search further is to *be*, to *stay*, to stand or sit still. That is the basic point.

However, we have a problem with that experience. We have the problem of retracing, or tracking back, what happens in our experience. By tracking back, we try to make some kind of *security* out of holding still. (I hope this makes sense for you, I sincerely hope.) We go through constant speed and constant stillness, constant death and constant birth. We go through all those processes simultaneously, at once, constantly. Each time we do this, a click takes place—and we expand into the infinite level. Some kind of click takes place, some kind of flash. That is quite unnecessary, as a matter of fact; nevertheless, it does happen.

It always happens that way, fortunately or unfortunately, and that is known as *dharmakaya*—unfortunately, actually. We do not need to have such principles, but they begin to arise—unnecessarily. Dharmakaya is called *dharmakaya*, because it is the embodiment of all norms, all laws, all forms, all experiences, all dharmas. All existence is embodied in this particular *kaya*, which literally means “body.” Kaya, or body, is not just the physical body; it is any tangible situation or tangible state, such as, for instance, the psychological body. So dharmakaya is a basic norm that exists unconditionally.

That basic state, dharmakaya, *does* exist because it does *not* exist. It is unnecessary, simply a matter of getting a new haircut. That particular experience is known as the beginning of the case history of the enlightenment principle. Earlier, when we talked about the infinite quality of the totality, the notion of

enlightenment was superfluous. But somehow, some naughty child dropped a pebble in this particular pond, and it began to create ripples. Therefore, we have the existence of dharmakaya in the form of a bubble. From this point of view, the notion of enlightenment is not ultimate liberation, final salvation, final transcendence, or emancipation. Instead, enlightenment is the realization of back to square one. It is understanding infiniteness, realizing that infinity creates a spark, somewhere along.

Such infinite simplicity is a tricky point. It is possible for the infinite simplicity of this click or flash to be extraordinarily simple or immensely complicated. It is possible that it is immensely complicated to figure out who actually pulled the trigger. Who did that? And who perceived the whole thing, and how and where? When you pulled the trigger, what kind of gunpowder did you use? What kind of bullet? What kind of gun did you use? Who had the motivation to pull the trigger at all? All those little details begin to become very complicated—and that is what is called the dharma. The simplicity cannot contain itself. It has to be explained by verbalizations of some kind—and the process of explaining and verbalizing the whole thing turns out to be absolutely complicated. In turn, there are what are known as the eighty thousand dharmas. Those dharmas are absolutely unnecessary. However, because of their unnecessaryness, they tend to become absolutely important.

Dharma is manifesting the truth. If we want to speak the truth, we have to *demonstrate* the truth. We have the truth; the truth is very simple—but truth can be attacked from all directions. Somebody may say, “If you’re telling the truth, then this happens, but I find that does not quite correlate with what you have said. So how do you answer that question?” Then you have to answer back, saying, “Well, that is the case; nevertheless, this is what we are trying to explain.” Then somebody else comes in from another corner of the universe, saying, “That’s okay, but on the other hand, something else pops up. How do you explain that?” So there are points of view or interpretations of truth based on confusion.

The truth is one, one dharma. The eighty thousand expressions of dharma exist because there are eighty thousand confusions, rather than because there are eighty thousand dharmas, particularly. Each confusion can be worked with, explained verbally, and demonstrated in its appropriate way. Consequently there happen to be eighty thousand dharmas. As I have said already, that is unnecessary. It shouldn’t happen that way; it wasn’t meant to. There was no particular plan *at all*, none whatsoever! However, things turned out to be that

way, unfortunately.

We cannot apologize to anybody. It's just a cosmic disaster, and that cosmic disaster is called the dharmakaya. Basically, dharmakaya is a cosmic disaster. Dharma is truth, kaya is form. Truth is like water. If you speak truth, in order to taste the water, you have to put it in a container, you have to drink it, and you have to swallow it. However, as soon as that free water is consumed through our mouth into our throat, we find that unconditional water becomes conditional. Consequently it is turned into piss. That's true!

According to the mahamudra slogan, dharmakaya is "the indivisibility of samsara and nirvana." That does not mean that to be good guys or good girls, we need to say that we are all one. It does not mean that we are all on the level of sisterhood or brotherhood. That is a statement of resentment, in a sense. In fact, the euphemistic phrase used in the Buddhist scriptures—"the indivisibility of samsara and nirvana"—is not true. What it is meant to say is "the *unnecessariness* of samsara and nirvana," rather than "the *indivisibility* of samsara and nirvana." So *indivisibility* is a euphemism for *unnecessariness*.

That notion of indivisibility seems to be the seed of the love-and-light approach. In fact, that's where the problem started, right at the beginning. Everyone is looking for union. Everybody is looking for uniting you and me together, so we could have domestic or cosmic union. Everybody's looking for pleasure and recommending worldwide peace. Everybody's tired of the pain and warfare, the neurosis and complaints, the millions of mosquitoes, the thousands of fleas, and all kinds of things that bother our lives. We are so tired of the whole thing. We are looking for uniting something together so that we don't have to fight, so we don't have to kill these mosquitoes or fleas or irritating friends, but instead make final friendship with somebody completely and properly. We would like to proclaim ourselves and make ourselves feel better. We would like to be great heroes. We would like to take the heroic approach that finally we are open-minded people. We do not accept any of the bullshit of separatism. Instead, we could be united; we could be happy. We could be one good, universal, cosmic family. In fact, that has been the problem, always. It is a problem rather than a promise or any kind of sanity.

The problem actually goes much deeper than that. Once you have made immense, beautiful unification and unitedness, you can fly the friendly skies where everything is completely hospitable, but you are not particularly hospitalized. Everything's fantastic! Fantastic service takes place all the time. At

that level, that sense of unification and bringing things together as a happy family has created spiritual materialism. This is its long-term history. Its early history is that it is the *embryo* of spiritual materialism, as a matter of fact. We have that seed in our mind right at the beginning, before we begin to make sure that everything is going to work out. So everything begins to be a trick of some kind; and that trick functions in our life to provide all kinds of promises, kicks, and euphoric meditative states. That trick was begun right at the beginning, as early as that.

So the notion of the indivisibility of samsara and nirvana is not so much the indivisibility or *union* of samsara and nirvana—it is more the *unnecessariness* of it. That is an extraordinarily intelligent way of viewing the whole thing—as completely matter-of-fact, absolutely matter-of-fact. Things just happened that way. Therefore, as it *is* that way, let it *be* that way. The eighty thousand separations of dharma are taught to people who do not understand that dharma is unnecessary. So, on one hand, prescribing particular ways to behave has become unnecessary. It *will* be necessary, on the other hand, if you begin to see the unnecessariness of it. If you see the unnecessariness, then it becomes necessary. That is a little twist—which has to be taken with a large dosage of leap—otherwise, the whole thing doesn't make any sense; it becomes pure riddles, and you can't live in a world of riddles. Although the Zen practitioners might say there's something to it; nonetheless, we find it difficult, sitting on our yellow and red zafus.

The unnecessariness of the whole thing tends to bring us the necessity of everything, at the same time. The concept of kaya is not needed; however, it happens to exist. In fact, the dharmakaya concept is somewhat of a nuisance. It actually provides a division between the enlightened and the unenlightened, the enlightened level as opposed to the unenlightened level. But maybe having another side of the coin, as opposed to this side of the coin, makes things more extraordinarily celebratory. We could celebrate, and we could develop a sense of humor! I do not mean humor in terms of making fun of somebody else, as in, “Ha-ha, your neighbor's garden is so funny, and yours is so straight.” Instead, because you have a neighbor at all, it's very funny. It's ironical.

*Student:* Earlier you talked about the burp that was mistaken for speech, and you said it was all an accident; and now you are talking about the pebble dropped into the pool as dharmakaya. Are those two the same thing?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The point of the burp is simply that we have to

experience a larger version of the phenomenal world, which is bigger and tougher than we think, with lots of room all over the place. The burp is the pre-dharmakaya level, which is technically known as *vajradhatu*. The pebble in the pool is the sense of freedom, that you can do that. It comes out of that larger version of thinking.

*Student:* The idea of unnecessary is annoying, for some reason, in that it seems to be pointing at something else besides what's happening, something richer. You seem to be using some external criterion in relation to which you can say that something else is unnecessary.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I don't see that there's any problem. Why not? Because there is a problem, therefore, things are as they are. When we say "unnecessary," we are not *complaining*, particularly.

*S:* I was actually thinking of the Yogachara one-mind teaching. From that point of view, all phenomena are irrelevant, arbitrary—just accidental expressions of the one mind.

*CTR:* From this point of view, which may be entirely different, the notion of one mind isn't needed at all. Even that expression is unnecessary. Things are happening quite smoothly all the time, in their own way, so imposing rules and regulations seems to be out of the question. However, now something has actually taken place. That something takes place out of the atmosphere—or the spirit, rather—of wasting time. So the point we come to is that maybe it is necessary to waste time.

*S:* Is that the big dose of leap you were talking about before?

*CTR:* Yes. That leap is also redundant, in some sense—but maybe you have to take another leap. Maybe it is redundant to waste time, but somehow that makes everybody happy. That is the diplomatic approach. Everybody has something to do, including the scholars.

*Student:* If wasting time is redundant, where does practice come in?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Practice comes along with that, obviously, sitting and doing nothing. Maybe that goes against the protestant ethic; nevertheless, it frees from protestant neurosis.

*Student:* When you spoke about speed, you connected it very much with expansiveness and a sort of explosion. You talked about losing track, that the speed becomes so fast that you are standing still, so there's no ground for

distinction of speed or not speed. In the past, when I've heard that analogy, it usually referred to your confusion speeding so fast that you think you are standing still. In that sense, it is just an intensification of your confusion. Here there doesn't seem to be any idea like that at all.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think it is saying the same thing. We are talking about the unnecessaryness of a boundary between samsara and nirvana at this point. So whether we say that your neurosis is so fast that it stays still, or your wisdom goes so fast that it stands still, we are saying the same thing.

S: I was doing a more hinayana interpretation of the idea of speed, which is that your mind is reeling. But that doesn't seem to apply here.

*CTR:* Let me make the whole thing absolutely clear—let us not regard the word *speed* as a pejorative term. Speed is a descriptive and neutral term. We do not regard New York as having a problem with speed, particularly. In fact, a certain form of speed may be necessary; it's an expression of pragmatism.

S: You seem to be using the term *speed* positively, as part of the expansion.

*CTR:* Yes. I think we are changing gears at this point.

*Student:* How don't you waste time? What is time?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Again, when we talk about wasting time, we are not talking pejoratively. It is not that if you waste time, you have screwed up or you are terrible. We are not using judgmental language. Instead, when we talk about wasting time, it is absolutely neutral. We are saying that a particular time does not have any goal or immediate results, so conventionally speaking, it could be said to be a waste of time. But we are not particularly looking at that situation in a pejorative or prejudiced way.

*Student:* What produces the flash from the space or the click? Is it some sort of tension building up between the space folding in on itself?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think it's a question of seeing one's own back. You are running around so fast, and you're not getting anything out of it, except yourself. That's very simple, nothing particularly mystical about that! However, that particular experience is called enlightenment.

S: It sounds like it could be the click of something snapping in your neck while you're trying to see your back.

*CTR:* I don't think so. It's very, very ordinary. It is not particularly biting your own tail; however, it is seeing your own back. It's an anthropomorphic analogy.

S: Is that moment also an expression of transcendental fear? I mean, are the wasting of time and the speeding expressions of fear that gets to the point at which it is so intense that it transcends?

CTR: Not necessarily, because as I have said already, wasting time is not taken as being naughty or needing punishment. Wasting time is regarded as somewhat necessary. It's like having to take a pee in your toilet: you're wasting your pee, but you have to do it, anyway. Obviously, you're wasting your pee; you're flushing it down to the sewage system—but doing that is not regarded as bad. We have to understand that wasting time is not a pejorative, negative, prejudiced term.

*Student:* You said that practice is inseparable from wasting time, but practice also seems to increase one's own fear.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That goes on all the time. At this point, the pain and pleasure that derive from practice are regarded as absolutely equal. It is not as if getting some pleasurable experience is a sign of one's development and feeling painful experiences is regarded as a regression. That approach does not apply anymore. Everything is on equal terms. Pain and pleasure are the south and north poles of one world.

*Student:* It seems like this flash, this stopping, could happen at any time, and it could happen again and again.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Infinitely, yes, all the time. It's not like a fisherman waiting for a fish to catch. If you take that attitude, the whole thing is very poverty-stricken. Nevertheless, it happens all the time.

S: But once that flash happens, it doesn't imply that everything is okay. I mean, the flash happens—and then it's not happening.

CTR: Not happening is okay too. That in itself is one of them—because of its unnecessary quality, or indivisible quality.

S: So there would be no notion of clinging to the flash?

CTR: If you cling to it, that breeds more samsara, which is a necessary part of the whole thing; however, *that* necessary is pejorative.

*Student:* Rinpoche, are you talking about egolessness in terms of not differentiating between this and that?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It is unnecessary to discuss egolessness,



actually. The notion of egolessness is very heavy-handed, and it makes people extremely guilty. You feel that you're being a bad girl or boy, and now you should do something about it. You feel that there's a better version, egolessness, and that if you give up your thingy, you'll be a freer and a better person. However, we are looking at things from an entirely different viewpoint, which comes from a different space-time perspective. If you constantly approach things from this level, the notion of egolessness doesn't apply. That question does not apply anymore.

*Student:* You talked about this perspective being intuitive rather than experiential. Does that intuitiveness develop through your sitting practice? Because I don't feel very intuitive.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think that is saying the same thing. In other words, sitting practice is that, rather than intuitiveness being something that would develop *through* sitting practice. From this point of view, sitting practice is not regarded as a process of cultivating something, or as a technique, or means, to develop something else. Instead, sitting practice is in itself the goal. The goal and the path are one. Therefore, sitting practice is no longer regarded as training. The sitting practice of meditation has become just simply that in itself, acting out what is there already.

*Student:* Rinpoche, in describing the experience of running faster and faster, are you saying that you are running so fast on one side of the coin that it flips, or are you saying that the coin is flipping so fast that you can see both sides of the coin at once?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It is the second, that you can see both sides of the coin at once, not the first.

*Student:* The click that you described as dharmakaya, as enlightenment—is that an experience or only a description?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It is both; they are the same thing. However, I wouldn't use the term *experience*, actually. *Experience* would be the wrong term to use, because when we talk about experience, that automatically has a confirmational quality. We experience something, we register that, and finally we make it a part of our life—and then we remember that. In contrast, that click is unconditional panic. That panic doesn't register in your mind, although it is an actual experience in your life. But you experience it without making a case

history out of the whole thing.

S: Then why did you begin by describing the quality of *expansiveness*, or going so fast that you are standing still, and then say that there's a completely accidental click, which is dharmakaya. Why isn't the state of expansiveness dharmakaya? Is it because the contrast is needed?

CTR: It is, in some sense, obviously. Nevertheless, that contrast comes with a great volume of infiniteness. When you experience a greater and greater volume of infiniteness, eventually you get so much that you can't handle the gigantic volume anymore. You have to burst your particular balloon. So you burst your balloon—and then you stand still. That is an expression of everything getting out of control and the infiniteness beginning to take over the whole thing. Do you see?

S: Is that only a momentary click?

CTR: It is a click in the sense of beyond control, rather than a click like a flash bulb flashing on your face. It is a moment of having to give in to something. One has to give in to something. From that point of view there is a click, a stillness. It is as if somebody in back of you suddenly surprised you—you don't actually stop still, but you tend to click.

*Student*: What is the relation of vajradhatu and dharmakaya? Earlier you talked about vajradhatu as the experience of basic positivity, the big picture. Now you are talking about a perspective in which you see the basic condition—or the basic lack of condition. Is the first level vajradhatu and this level dharmakaya? Are they different moments of enlightenment?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: I think we could say that the form—or the intelligence, if we could use such a word—exists out of its own speed. When you find vajradhatu speeding immensely, you find dharmakaya. As a matter of fact, the scriptures say that vajradhatu is like milk and dharmakaya is like churning butter out of that milk. Because the milk has been worked up, finally some kind of solidity takes place. So from that point of view, you could say there are two levels: vajradhatu and dharmakaya. Nevertheless, butter *is* milk, in some sense. In dharmakaya, there is still that basic space. It is continuous. Basic space happens continuously.

*Student*: Is there a difference between *dhatu* as seed and *dhatu* as space? What is the relationship of those two concepts?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's an interesting point. *Dhatu*, which literally means "seed," also means space. That is, *dhatu*, or seed, is an analogy for space—outer space, the space in the room, the space in a cup. Space has its fringe and center, at once, constantly. There are seeds everywhere, which create space, center, and fringe simultaneously. It is a constantly overlapping process. Overlapping the fringe, or boundary, is another center; and that boundary overlaps another center, which overlaps another boundary, which becomes a center, as well. So center and fringe are saying the same thing. In other words, there is no center and no fringe anymore—it's equally space. The whole thing is like a gigantic pancake. Everything is in the center as well as on the fringe.

*Student:* As you talked about the dharmakaya experience, Rinpoche, I kept relating it to my own experiences with acid, in which the ego reaches a state of panic. There's a tunneling experience and a back-and-forth between complete awe and panic. I have often thought that LSD experience must be the dharmakaya. I'm trying to relate all this to what some of us may have experienced—or maybe I'm looking for a confirmation of that experience.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I don't think it's the same, because that kind of drug experience happens purely by artificial means. Because it is based on hallucinogenic drugs, it is known as a shadow experience. There is intense excitement and extensive depression, and that also tends to bring an immense sense of spaciousness and highness. However, what we are talking about here is free from physiological conditions. It is a purely psychological experience. In fact, we can't even pinpoint it as a psychological experience—it is a sense of totality. This experience is on another dimension. We have never tapped this particular area; nevertheless, we are dwelling in it. We are surviving in it, yet this particular experience is unconditional. It is called unconditional because you can't pinpoint it. If you try to pinpoint it, it's so loose; at the same time, if you try to experience it, it is so vivid.

*Student:* You have often differentiated between experience and achievement. When one experiences this sense of enlightenment, or dharmakaya, is it an achievement that will stay with one, or is it an ephemeral experience that will just become another thing in one's past?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It is unconditional experience, which does not need to be recorded, but takes place constantly—unnecessarily.

*Student:* When you leap, how do you step down again?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Once you have leaped, you are already on the ground, so you don't have to step down from the leap. The leap is from the space to the ground. You actually begin to sink into the mud or the sand of the ground. There's no platform built for you. It's a big plop!

*Student:* In talking about seeing things as they are, without dualism, you mentioned that the dualism is unnecessary. Then you said that when you see the unnecessary, it becomes necessary. I was confused about that point. Could you explain that a little further?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I'm glad you got confused. Because of that we have something to work on together. That seems to be the basic point.

*Student:* A few moments ago you explained the origin of dharmakaya as basic space speeding so fast that it solidifies. That doesn't seem to make any sense. How could basic space speed or not speed?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* In order to survive in space, you've got to do something about it. It has to be very efficient and organized. So one corner of space gets crammed into the other corner of space. One corner begins to get the message of the other corner, so panoramic efficiency takes place.

*S:* Why dharmakaya?

*CTR:* Because for the first time, some kind of division between this and that—in a very embryonic sense—took place.

*S:* Is dharmakaya developed from *that* level, or is it just a reflection from *our* level?

*CTR:* Dharmakaya developed from *that* level!

*S:* You seem to be saying that it's necessary.

*CTR:* Unnecessarily necessary.

*S:* You keep referring to *necessary* and *unnecessary*, and I don't understand them. Necessary and unnecessary in terms of what?

*CTR:* It is unnecessary to raise the question at all; however, because it is there, because that question *does* exist, it had to become necessary. In other words, the question in itself is hollow, transparent; however, in order to express the transparency of the question, one has to ask the question. You see?

*S:* No.

*CTR*: For instance, in order to celebrate a coronation, you have to have the empty chair of the king to begin with. It is necessary in some sense, but in another sense, it is obsolete.

## THREE

### *Self-Existing Grin*

THE NEXT SET OF PATTERNS is that of unceasing energy. Conventionally, if we have energy, we try to manipulate it and work it into particular work projects and purposes. We feel that we have to create further projects and processes in order to maintain our existence. But in this case, the question of energy could be looked at in an entirely different way. That is, if energy is unceasing, there's no need for manipulation. We can't—and we don't have to—sort out anything. It is needless to sort anything out or to look out for anything at all.

The basic ground, the dharmakaya principle, exists as a fundamental necessary measure. Since that has taken place and developed already, it seems that the next process, the *sambhogakaya* process, is not to question that but to proceed along. The word *sambhoga* means “enjoying pleasure,” or literally, “interested in pleasure.” It has a slant toward opportunism, and it also has a hint of indulgence, as far as the terminology goes. Beyond that, the whole thing is natural and simple, just dealing with energy. It is simply energy—energy that need not be sought, energy that need not be worked with, but energy to *be* with, basically. There are a lot of ideas and a lot of insights and perceptions as to how can we do things without completely speeding along and trying to get something across from a pragmatic point of view. The point is that there is lots of room, a lot of space.

There's immense intensity in dealing with the world of existence—so what is the point of trying to intensify this world further? One of the attributes of *sambhogakaya* is play. Basically, play has the qualities of mischievousness and humor. However, in this context, a sense of humor does not mean cracking jokes or trying to be funny out of embarrassment. Humor is not another mask or facade we put on, and it does not mean turning everything into a big joke. Particularly when there are shortcomings or irritations—with oneself or with whatever comes up—we turn everything into a big joke. If a person is brave

enough, quite possibly he says, “This joke is on you, not on me.” But that’s quite far out, in the sense that he is going too far.

In contrast, the sense of humor associated with the sambhogakaya principle is light. It is light as opposed to heavy. Such humor also has an uplifting quality, although that particular phrase has been overused. Nevertheless, in this case we are using “uplifting quality” in the proper sense, as a quality of lightheartedness. When we say “uplifting quality,” we do not mean being relieved that everything is getting better or feeling that things are finally becoming humorous enough that they don’t bother us. We are using upliftedness in the sense of lightheartedness. It is a quality of lightheartedness beyond ego’s heavyhearted level, rather than lightheartedness in the conventional sense of ultimate frivolity.

To review: The question of dharmakaya’s existence is that it need not exist at all at the beginning. It’s too bad, too good, whatever. Then, after that, a fantastic upsurge of humor comes along. That humor arises not in the nasty sense of making fun of everybody else or making fun of oneself, but as a self-existing grin. That self-existing grin takes place all the time—throughout our sleep time, when we sit on the toilet seat, when we are confronted with challenges. Throughout everything that goes on in our life, we have that self-existing grin. That grin takes place all the time.

I am not saying this to cheer you up or to make you into more productive good guys and stronger people. The British might have said, while they were going through the Second World War, “Everybody should keep a stiff upper lip.” But we are not talking about that kind of humor, particularly, that sort of heavy-handed ha-ha. Such humor can only develop when you are in national chaos or personal chaos. For instance, I hear that at this point in the economic crisis, such humor is coming up. It is not that we finally become human beings because we are imprisoned within our human condition facing warfare and depressions of all kinds; therefore, we should stick together and cheer each other up. We are talking about an entirely different kind of humor. Sambhogakaya humor is not the result of depression, and it is not as if you are pressed between two lead plates and someone is trying to make an impression out of you. We are not talking about a depressed situation or being pressed between two objects.

The closest description I can think of for this kind of humor is some kind of light in the atmosphere. The point is not that the flying-saucer people are going to save us; nor are the *mahatmas* from the Theosophical world going to save us; nor is Jesus Christ going to save us—nor the Buddha, for that matter. Such

lightness is not involved with any savior mentality. Usually whenever we talk about light and grace and upliftedness, we approach it from the level of poverty. Although we have been such bad people and the world is in such poverty—we think something good will come down and dawn on us; we think something is going to save us immensely and let us rejoice. But that style of rejoicing is extraordinarily depressing. We are substituting pleasure for pain—that seems to be the only result of such an approach.

There is nothing wrong with the traditions of Christianity and Judaism, but people's attitudes to such great traditions have cheapened them. That is the biggest problem. In talking about lightheartedness and light-and-love, everything is based on somebody who is going to save you. If you smile, everything's going to be okay in the name of Shiva or Krishna. That's absurd! We are still looking for a transcendental nipple or baby bottle. That approach has been a constant problem all along, throughout our lives. In contrast, when we talk about cheering up—or the ultimate, if we may say so, love-and-light approach—it is well founded in reality. It is a realistic approach, which is that you are *already* rich. Since you have immense richness in you already, you don't have to ask for somebody's pardon or somebody's loan. Organizationally we do, but spiritually we don't have to.

The notion of feast, or celebration, is very difficult to understand. Should we just try to cheer ourselves up, because there is a lot of richness taking place around us? Not quite. That's still a poverty approach; there's no individual personal dignity involved. Whenever there's personal and individual dignity, *asking* seems to be unnecessary—you just take advantage of that richness. That is what's known as vajra pride. Poverty mentality means experiencing the lack of something or other, then trying to get it from somewhere else. But we don't have to experience that lack—we could actually experience a sense of richness.

Approaching our whole experience as if somebody will save us from bouncing our check is very sad. It needn't be that way at all. It is so obvious that doesn't have to happen. Where that mind came from, I don't know. It's ludicrous! The closest guess I can make is that some fundamental theistic inclination begins to tell us that we should feel little and the other should feel bigger, great, glorious. That's just a rough guess. This isn't an attack on the theistic disciplines, particularly. Maybe it is the human condition that human beings like to worship somebody, out of their poverty, including hungry, ego-centered emperors and kings.



Rulers of the world have that same problem: they feel that they are cheap and that they haven't fulfilled their wishes and their kingdom to the level that they should. In contrast, the sense of humor depends on a humanistic attitude. In talking about a humanistic attitude, we do not mean humanistic psychologists or pragmatists. Instead we are talking simply of the ape level. Having a humanistic attitude means accepting our ape qualities—being willing to grunt and not trying to be too genteel. I suppose that our desire for union with God is that we want to be better persons, we have higher ideals. Such rubbish! We would like to be Him or Her, that great fantasy that evolved. We want to boycott our apeship.

All of these perspectives of mind, all of this material, provides an enormous bank of potential humor—not humor in the sense of looking down upon something, but humor in terms of what *is*, basically speaking. We begin to feel that the sense of humor is what *is*, what actually is, fundamentally speaking. The sense of humor is not cracking jokes; it is not trying to cheer ourselves up; and it is not having connections with somebody higher or greater than us. The sense of humor is what is.

By being back to square one constantly, we find lightheartedness in the ultimate sense. Such humor is not the regular, ordinary level of humor, as we usually understand it. In this case, the concept of humor is a sense of celebration. That celebration cannot happen unless we are willing to give up the territories that evolve around us. Territory means that you would like to have things *your* way. You think what you are doing is great, but at the same time, there is a faint doubt. Maybe you are not doing everything wholeheartedly and properly. Maybe you cannot make it up to the prescribed level. You can't be a good meditator, a good sitter, all the time. You can't constantly keep up your humor all the time. You have your weak moments. Your weak moments show. Of course! Why not? That's part of the celebration! Otherwise, there's nothing to celebrate. If you don't have your weak points, what's left? Just blank white, without even a dot of ink, on the sheet of your life.

You can celebrate because all kinds of things are involved with your life; therefore, it is a source of celebration. There is contrast—this and that, that and this—and things can't be sorted out properly and put into proper perspective. So let it be that way! That seems to be the source of celebration, in fact! What we are discussing comes out of no logic, by the way. There's no logic at all for that particular perspective. Definitely there's no logic for that. In studying this, maybe the Sanskrit or Tibetan linguistics student might find it very hard to accept, in terms of scholarship. However, it is the flat and hard truth.

Talking about flat truth is like talking about flat water. If your particular glass of drinking water does not have a fizzy quality, it's just flat water. When we talk about hard truth, we are talking about vajra. You accept that you are going to bump into this big blade of crystal-clear vajra, this diamond sword. If you push too hard, it is going to cut you into pieces. There is the sense of humor for you! It's not very pleasurable and it is not particularly entertaining—but I'm afraid it is all-pervasive. That hardcore vajra diamond blade is very powerful. It's like swallowing babies that have lots of spines—porcupines! Baby porcupines! Swallowing baby porcupines! That is the sense of humor. You could laugh at that, if you like, but that is very meaningful.

Why would anybody want to swallow a baby porcupine, anyway? The point is that there is a sense of delightfulness in the whole thing, although it is very demanding. It is extremely demanding, actually; but you might find even *that* is extraordinarily delightful, for the very fact that you are not completely wrapped up in the situation. When you finally think of that demand, you find that it is usually quite spacious at the same time, because with such a demanding situation, there's room to have fistfights with the world. You can fight, and you can argue. You can put things into proper perspective, rather than feeling that you have sunk into the situation, that you have no choice, and finally, you are completely bound to that particular situation, which is very hellish.

The question seems to be very clear. When you hear about having a playful attitude but at the same time being extraordinarily solid, you think you would never make the mistake of swallowing a baby porcupine down your throat—so why do you? The question that comes up again and again and again is why we are doing all this, obviously. Why *should* we do all this? The answer to that, roughly speaking, is that there is *no reason* why we should do this! That is the answer—because there is no reason. If you ask why we should do this, there is absolutely no reason, absolutely not!

The principle behind this approach is that we are not presenting dogma of any kind at all. We are not looking for ways to convert you to our truth. We are not saying, “If you get involved with us, you are going to have a good color television, you are going to have wall-to-wall carpet, you're going to lead a happy life, you're going to be meeting very interesting people throughout the world, and you're going to have a gold Cadillac.” We are not talking in those terms at all! Because of this lack of glamour and lack of promises, a lot of people might find this approach absolutely depressing, extremely depressing.

Usually, telling the truth is very depressing. If you mix the truth with a bit of lying, if you add a bit of salt and pepper by lying, you find it more delicious—but somehow our lineage doesn't allow it to happen that way. Nor is this particular spokesman, a holder of the lineage, particularly inspired to do things that way. So things are black and white, straight and square—and *because* of that, there is a lot of humor. That straightforwardness and bluntness is very cute.

On the whole, we are not discussing what you *could* be or what you *should* be but what you are. People have never heard that type of truth before. There's always a tinge of salesmanship involved with telling the truth: "That is what you are, of course—but we can help you!" On this particular earth, there are a lot of such spiritual trips.

The consecutive trips we find or dream up could fill the whole universe—and each one of those trips begins by telling us, "That may be what you are, but you shouldn't worry about that. *We* have the remedy for you." In each of those spiritual trips we are told, "No matter how terrible you are, you could be okay; we could save you. It is terrible, absolutely terrible. Nevertheless, we know that, and we are going to save you. You should take our medicine and pay us more money. You should come to us and join us; then we will have something to say about that whole thing. If you take refuge in us and if you trust us, then we can save you." Somehow, however, in approaching all this from the angle of and according to the ongoing intelligence that exists through the blessings of the lineage, we cannot say that. Instead, we say, "You are *not* going to be saved. You have your problems—that's fine; everybody knows that. Let it be that way. If you could improvise something along with that, maybe that would be good—but at the same time, one has to stay with one's own problems." That is the only demand we can make at this point. It is not particularly a money-making venture, but more a lightening of the air, so to speak.

There's a need to develop a sense of humor. That sense of humor seems to be the point of the sambhogakaya level. The preliminary approach to the sambhogakaya is celebration and indulgence. The sambhogakaya is the level of pleasuring constantly. It is the level of celebrating one's life, which comes with a sense of humor. Humor is the constant flow or thread that runs through one's life. Without that you cannot celebrate. If there's no humor, you cannot celebrate, and the party begins to become a drag, as we know.

*Student:* The sense of humor of the sambhogakaya level seems to develop out of an extreme hardheadedness, extreme vajra-headedness, extreme

nonindulgence. Is that right?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Yes.

S: Such humor comes about not because something is funny, but because there seems to be no choice. There seems to be nothing else but this humor.

*CTR:* That's right. You have choiceless humor.

*Student:* I don't understand why, at the vajradhatu level, space, in order to survive, must do something. You said that one corner of space wondered what the other corner of space was doing. I don't understand why space would wonder at all. What prods the space or makes the space move at all?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's quite a serious question. Why should things happen that way—or any way at all? We do not know; we have no idea about that. That's why we need a path, or journey: we have to figure it out by ourselves. If all the riddles had been solved at the beginning, we would have nothing to work with. The whole journey would have been made already, so there would be no point in saying anything at all. In that case, we might as well go to Disneyland. We might as well go to sensory deprivation programs or get into a tank and take LSD. There is no point.

That *why* seems to be the path. We can't solve these problems on the spot. At the beginning level, the approach is to tell us all this is possible. We have been told that there are possibilities of this nature, and we might be involved in very intriguing situations—but let us find out. That seems to be the basic approach. The journey is what is important.

Every talk does not have to be a confirmation. If listening to your student or to your teacher had to be a confirmation, it would be extraordinarily boring. If the speaker were telling you the complete truth all the time, probably it wouldn't make any sense. That is why the truth is not told all at once. To do so would be a completely big flop. Instead one tells just a fraction of the truth—one-quarter of the truth, one-hundredth of the truth—which allows people to seek *further* truth and take the journey. In any case, even if we tried to tell the whole truth, since it is known as self-secret, you probably couldn't understand anything at all. You have to make the journey, in fact. That seems to be the point.

*Student:* On the mahayana level, it seems that compassion is always moving the Buddha toward talking to you, toward even bothering. That doesn't seem to be the same.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think that's saying the same thing: compassion is being willing to let you get into it. We don't look down upon you as being a bastard, particularly.

*Student:* I'm trying to follow your development from dharmakaya to sambhogakaya. What I understand is that the dharmakaya question of unnecessary wasting time is developed further, in the sambhogakaya, to the point at which it's drowning you. You're actually drowning in the wasting time. You're caught up in it emotionally. It's like sentimental music that should be too corny for you to be involved in, but you begin to cry anyhow, although you shouldn't. The fact is that you *are* drowned, and there's no right way of swimming. It is like drowning and being lost in sentimentality—and that's the way it is. I suppose that's where the sense of humor comes in. Does that sound like an accurate picture?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That sounds perfect, sir. Let's share that world together!

*Student:* Could we say that the sambhogakaya produces the sense of humor about this mess that is our life?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* We could say sambhogakaya *is* the sense of humor. That sense of humor is the cause of the world of art and of all kinds of expressions. If we don't have sambhogakaya, we don't have any communication. Because of sambhogakaya, we can shape things into forms; we can try painting different colors.

*S:* Should this sense of humor develop naturally? I really have problems with it, because I take things too seriously. I don't see the humor in things.

*CTR:* When you begin to realize you are taking things seriously, then that is it.

*S:* But it's so painful—how can you laugh at it?

*CTR:* Whenever there is pain, work with that. It's not a question of cracking jokes, making things light, or making things funny. Instead, a general perspective of choiceless humor always comes along with that pain. Usually we are so involved with general principles, ideas, and achievements that we do not pay attention to the details of what is happening in our life. We want to eat our apple, but we don't regard the core. We don't ask how the core feels about the whole thing; we just eat the apple and throw the core in the garbage. But that could be a very humorous situation. We do a lot of things without consideration.

We drink our cup of tea, not considering the cup and the plate and what's left behind—the tea leaves and everything.

Things are done in such a blind way all the time, and the sense of humor doesn't work—but that doesn't necessarily mean you are *incapable* of humor. If you pay more attention, there is more humor. So when you walk out onto the street, if you pay more attention to the passersby, your own steps, and your state of mind at the time, you find there is a lot of room for everything. Everything you find is so dharmic, every gesture—including large scale, small scale, medium-small scale, and small-small scale domestic details. You find there is lots of room, immense room for everything—and once you begin to see that, you also begin to be able to appreciate puns.

*Student:* Does vajra pride or confidence have any ground, and what is that ground?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Vajra pride doesn't seem to have any realm. You are not bound to any particular world; you do not have to relate with any particular world. People of vajra pride do not pay income tax to the realm of the buddhas or the realm of human beings or the realm of hell beings. Vajra pride is free. But in order to develop vajra pride, you have to supersede karma so that you don't have karmic debts.

*S:* Is there a sense of richness?

*CTR:* I think so, yes, naturally. Needless to say.

*S:* Does the sense of humor enable you not to be so trapped by your neurotic behavior, or would you just as likely continue speeding along on the same neurotic path?

*CTR:* I should be very careful and clear here. Humor is not the saving grace that is going to help you all over the place. Absolutely not! You have things you have to work out yourself, so there's no room for that kind of magic—but the sense of humor *does* bring perspective to the whole thing. The sense of humor could be a troubleshooter and a consultant. You don't go looking for anybody else; instead you could develop your own sense of humor, your own troubleshooter. That saves a lot of energy and money.

*S:* Pride seems to be more a problem than a promise. How is the regular kind of pride we seem to indulge in related to vajra pride, and how is that related to dharmadhatu?

*CTR:* That's a big question. Vajra pride has nothing to do with the arrogance

of ordinary pride. Although it's called by the same name, that's just for convenience's sake. As for ordinary pride, you know as much as I do. Basic pride has inquisitiveness, or intelligence, in that you are looking for alternatives in order to win your particular position. That type of pride hurts immensely. It is very painful because if you do not compete properly and you fail, your whole trip is going to go down the drain. So in ordinary pride, that kind of pain takes place as well. On the whole, such pride is antihumor. In fact, when there is pride, there is no humor—that relationship is very direct.

When humor takes place, when you are able to see things lightly—not airy-fairy lightly, but lightly in the sense of realistically—things are not as bad as all that. When you begin to see that, you begin to see through the pride. Pride is usually an experience of complete desperation. You are so desperate. You feel so poor and hungry and penniless. Although you might be a millionaire, nevertheless, there is the attitude that you should fight for the universe to give you justice because “I'm so poor.” So, on the whole, I think that such pride is actually aggression and antihumor.

S: How is all that related to vajradhatu being pre-dharmakaya or super-dharmakaya? And is dharmadhatu synonymous with those terms, or does it have something to do with the sambhogakaya?

CTR: The space of vajradhatu is unbiased space that is willing to accommodate the pre-dharmakaya level as well as the dharmakaya level. Vajradhatu is willing to accommodate everything. That's why it is known as indestructibility, because it has no bias toward anything. It has no bias for either samsara or nirvana or for pre-samsara or pre-nirvana. So the whole thing is completely covered, a diamond field.

Dharmadhatu seems to be related with the sambhogakaya process. Dharmadhatu is somewhat connected with the experiential mind world, although this particular term has been used by all kinds of people expressing philosophical metaphors of all kinds. In a secondary way, dharmadhatu may be involved with the world of pleasure, that is to say, the world of sambhogakaya. As an extension of that, the dharmadhatu could involve the *nirmanakaya* and all the worlds that exist beyond that.

*Student:* How does dharmakaya relate to the mahayana concept of shunyata, or emptiness? Does it come out of emptiness?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Shunyata is mahayanist jargon, and we are not

even touching that, because we are so snobbish at this point. Shunyata is simply a perspective in which students begin to feel a sense of nonexistence and a sense of everything being full at the same time. There are lots of *little* humors involved with shunyata, but since we are talking about a larger world, greater business, so to speak, discussing shunyata does not seem to be particularly worthwhile. Shunyata is a lesser form of vajradhatu, of much less extent.

*Student:* You said that *sambhogakaya* means “pleasure body,” yet it seems that the *sambhogakaya* sense of humor is not particularly enjoyable, but rather, an appreciation of feeling needle points.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* You are right. It is pleasure in a larger sense. Usual pleasure, conditional pleasure, requires a lot of conditions to maintain that pleasure. It requires security. But this pleasure does not need any kind of security at all; therefore, it is free pleasure. In the ultimate sense, pleasure does not have any conditions. That’s why this particular pleasure principle is connected with freedom or enlightenment. Enlightenment also means freedom. You are finally let loose, liberated, free.

*Student:* We are sometimes told to really and fully get into the sense of hopelessness and pain of samsara, to pay particular attention to that. Where in that is there room for a sense of humor?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That is the sense of humor! When you begin to feel a sense of helplessness, you find yourself humorous, because there’s nothing that you can do to get around it. Earlier we talked about the British sense of humor, the stiff upper lip they kept up during wartime. That kind of humor differs from this, in that this is an *ongoing* condition. It is constant: when you feel helpless, you don’t feel hopeless, but you feel humorous. Because you feel humorous, you begin to develop confidence. Then, as you develop more confidence, you begin to develop fearlessness. So you go along in that way. Without humor, there is no way to conduct the whole path, no way to join the two opposite situations together. That seems to be the basic point.

S: Is it the awareness of the situation that makes the difference?

*CTR:* Not only awareness, but awareness with humor. If you’re just aware, you might dig your own grave; whereas if you are aware with some kind of irony, or humor, then you are not quite digging your own grave. There’s lots of room for everything. It is fascinating, inquisitive.

S: So we could celebrate our confusion?



*CTR*: I wouldn't exactly promise that, but something *does* happen. Let's put it vaguely: something takes place. It doesn't solve all our problems, but actually, there is a Star of David shining on the horizon.

To begin to understand the material in this seminar, it is important to practice sitting meditation. Meditation practice is extremely important so that we do not pollute the world by our intellectualization of the dharma. It is very important that we begin to kill the unnecessary pollution of intellectualizing the teachings. We can begin to feel what is meant by all this by sitting properly, following the example of Lord Buddha.

## FOUR

### *Lightheartedness*

AT THIS POINT, we have descended from the space of the dharmakaya level to the energy of sambhogakaya. In the transmitting process from the dharmakaya down to the sambhogakaya, the first impulse of the sambhogakaya principle seems to be a sense of humor and energy. Energy and humor begin to develop and materialize as basic common sense. In this case, basic common sense does not simply mean being rational or pragmatic or mechanical, like a computer's mind. Instead, it is the basic sense of perspective that keeps us alive. The sambhogakaya perspective is that there is a kind of centralization or energizer. There's a sense of fountain, sun and moon, and torch. From that, a lot of luminosity or light can shine through.

Luminosity is the sense of celebration that comes with the sense of humor. Humor and celebration are indivisible at this point: celebration *means* sense of humor. Celebration means a sense of delightfulness, an uplifting quality. We could use all sorts of jargon, but fundamentally speaking, celebration is a sense of *earth*, actually celebrating the earth, and a sense of earth and space making love together. Humor comes from space, or sky, and earth is the celebration. When the earth begins to celebrate, space begins to make love to the earth—that's the meeting point of earth and space. They begin to mate together in a very solid and definite and humorous and delightful way. There's nothing particularly funny about that, in terms of jokes. Everything seems to be very straightforward and simple. Earth blossoms, and sky begins to pay attention to it. Sky begins to shine all kinds of light over the earth and accommodate it with its space to grow flowers or trees, to maintain rocks, waterfalls, skyscrapers, and highways—whatever we have on this earth.

We don't have to be particularly romantic about it. We're not just talking about *nature*; we're talking about *reality*. In terms of *reality*, earth produces pollution, and sky or space begins to make love to it. Space begins to get into the

solidity of the whole thing—so the hardcore earth begins to make love to the light-handed space. The meeting of the two takes place constantly. Such humor and delightfulness is not dependent on good or bad—that particular philosophical outfit. The whole thing is purely a phenomenological process; it is about things as they are, in the very basic and subtle sense.

The question arises, “What are we doing with all this? What is the purpose?” This is like asking, “What is the purpose of life?” or “How’s life?” for that matter. It is the same question. And the answer is that there is not very much purpose—life operates on its own accord. Life is operating purely for its own sake, every moment, in every individual situation. That may be the purpose of life, so far as the present situation is concerned. However, even that is questionable.

The purpose of life does not exist—or it exists eternally—and the relationship between those two is how a moment of life begins to click with itself constantly. If it doesn’t click, then you have no purpose in life; you are a bastard. However, if you begin to feel that the purpose of life is to click with itself, and some kind of spark takes place, then the purpose of life is fulfilled. It doesn’t go further than that. There is nothing very profound, deep, metaphysical, or philosophical about it; and no enlightenment questions are involved. Let’s take that very heavy lighthearted approach! In that way, the purpose of life is to exist. It is to keep the pot from boiling over. We keep watch that the pot doesn’t boil over, keep everything under control and regular. That may be terribly depressing, but that’s what we do.

What’s the big deal about it? What is this all about? Well, there’s nothing. There’s nothing! If anybody tries to make meaning out of life, there is nothing. People try to say that you are leading a life and that your life is a profound life, that it means a great deal, an infinite number of things. People say, “Let me explain to you how your life works and what is the meaning of your life.” Everybody likes to interpret. They love to tell you about the line on your palm, how it goes this way a little bit up, this way a little bit down, and therefore this means something to you. Or they say that you have this particular star connected with your life, and this is a little bit off; this is a little bit in; therefore, your life’s meaning is *immense*! The way you behave, the way you speak, the way you yawn, the way you sit—this is the purpose of life. It means something to you.

We are constantly discussing futuristic plans. We are talking about our *futures* all the time—we are not at *all* talking about our present state. We are not

discussing this present state at all, so we have no humor. Watching our palm, we are concerned; we grin; we make faces: “I wish I had this line a little bit off from that line; then I would be exactly what I wanted.” Hard luck! Too bad! You were never made up that way, obviously. That’s the answer. The theists would say, “Trust God. He made you.” A nontheist would say, “Who cares?” In any case, however, it seems that we are involved with the present situation, very much so. The present situation involves us with the sense of humor, and that sense of humor tends to bring all kinds of lightheartedness—not in the pejorative sense, but in the very personal, pragmatic sense. Lightheartedness means taking things gently, rather than aggressively. That brings all kinds of possibilities, all kinds of situations and locations. With that in mind, we can begin to relate with the various types of lightheartedness that exist.

Lightheartedness is traditionally known as luminosity, which is the intrinsic quality of the sambhogakaya level. The sambhogakaya is the level of enjoyment, the level of celebration; and celebration is equal to the sense of humor. In the sambhogakaya we have a kind of basic wisdom, which is made up of five wisdoms brought together—and lightheartedness seems to be the preparation for that wisdom. The five wisdoms are traditionally known as the five buddha families. These five buddha families are five expressions that exist in our system, our state of being. Those expressions are our innate nature in the present moment, the *immediate* moment. Rather than having the *potential*—if the line on your palm says so, you’re going to be rich, or you’re going to marry a dark, handsome man in three years’ time—in this case, it is very *immediate*. It is apropos in the *present*. It is your personal situation, which takes place *on the spot!*

A lot of us have a fear of that. Often we have a *lot* of fear, *immense* fear, of that. We don’t want to relate with the present moment, because we haven’t had any opportunities to practice or prepare for all this. We don’t want to have a sudden gush of wind that demands our attention and sucks us in or blows us out. I think that approach is what is known as bullshit—and actually, that is happening all the time.

Depending on your composure, or your level of deception, you manage to block all sorts of things out. For instance, you may have had a big blow-up, but when you come to the next room and deal with your colleagues, you say that everything’s okay; everything’s fine: “Nothing’s wrong, and what can I do for you, sir?” Somehow, we have been trained that way, to keep two faces. We may feel highly disturbed, absolutely disturbed, but we don’t want to show that sort

of thing. That is the moral, ethical setup of the theistic traditions.

The reason the theistic traditions bring that approach is that our own personal relationship to God is extremely depressing. We know that we are not adequate to match up with God, not adequate to get near to him. On the one hand, we can shift gears by saying that God is magnificent, powerful, fantastic, and extraordinary. We can think about those qualities. On the other hand, a meeting of the two never takes place, although there is electricity. That electricity is explosive and, at the same time, destructive. Sometimes such explosiveness could be taken advantage of; it could be creative. But one never knows the face of God—it's a mystery to us.

Since we have no understanding of the face of God at all, making friends with God means that we are constantly taking a chance. If you are a good friend of his, he might decide to blow you off, or he might decide to take you in. That kind of uncertainty is constant in the Judeo-Christian tradition. There's a long-lasting tradition of such a love/hate relationship to God. It goes on all the time. Sometimes people don't want to reflect that hatred to God. They don't want to blame him, so instead, they blame the world. However, the world is his extension, his creation, so if you blame the world, you are blaming God—and then you might feel some powerful reaction from God.

That approach has become a very serious problem. It leads to a lack of humor, basically speaking. Spiritual traditions are supposed to develop a sense of humor, not fear—particularly if you are an accomplished person. But that tradition provides mostly fear, rather than humor. Maybe that has something to do with the individuals who look into it rather than the actual doctrine. We are not debating or discussing the basic theology of any particular tradition. Instead we are talking about our approach to our world, whether it is the world of gods, the world of pleasure, or the world of pain. So we are talking at a very personal level, at this point, an extremely personal level.

In preparation for discussing the five types of buddha families, <sup>1</sup> to begin with, we have open space, general open space, completely open space. That open space is full of all kinds of personal experiences. Those experiences could be said to be dualistic ones; nevertheless, that's not particularly a consideration here. Open space is concerned with vibrating energy, with very powerful solidity, and with the electricity that goes between the two. Open space can provide an immense wind between the two; open space can provide immense waves of water between the two. That is what we are concerned with. We are

concerned with all of those elements and all of those forces of energy.

There is energy above, which is watching and glaring at us; there is energy below, which is completely yielding, opening, and at the same time, somewhat threatening and solid. Between the two are created all kinds of sparks. So energy in immense measure is taking place. Those energies seem to be very valuable and valid. At the same time, they are what they are. They function all the time. We might hope they don't function, but they still do function constantly. Sometimes we attempt to reverse the process and change the universe forward-backward. However, if we are tempted to do so, we find that the only thing we can do is write about the theoretical possibility of that—we are unable actually to do so properly since we are not lords of the universe and we haven't evolved ourselves into that type of cosmic power. That has become a problem, an immense problem. But there is an immense sense of freedom at the same time, in that we finally give up trying to remold the universe and its structure. Instead we find ourselves giving in, opening, and letting go. We just remain as corpses lying in a charnel ground waiting for the vultures to eat us up.

*Student:* In my experience, fear seems to be a direct reflex of that energy, as the energy arises and knocks you about. Is there nothing we can do about that fear, no specific way to deal with it?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The point is that we have not quite made a connection with the larger scale of the world. We usually feel that if we kill our enemy, that will be the end of discomfort. We think that if we do something to him, then he or she will go away, and we'll feel comfortable, since we have gotten rid of our little enemy. However, things do not happen that way. Everything happens on an absolutely larger scale.

Once we begin to feel the logistics of the whole thing, we might feel ourselves completely belittled, just a grain of sand stuck in the midst of a gigantic world. So the first fear is the fear of being little, that we are not powerful enough, like the analogy of the mouse and the elephant. The second fear is the fear of fear itself, which begins to become problematic. As for dealing with the fear, developing ways to deal with it means we are not actually getting into the fear properly. Instead, we think we could outsmart fear—and that's not possible. We can't deal with it at all, so before we do anything, we have to *give up* that we can deal with it. That may be the first way of dealing with fear.

*Student:* Isn't it possible to be in the charnel ground and have the vultures

come down and devour me, only not completely devour me, because I get up and walk away? It seems that I do that all the time: I get partially devoured; then I run. How do you keep yourself in that charnel ground to the end?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Keep sitting, I suppose.

*Student:* How do you keep sitting to the end?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's what we do: we sit dathüns; we sit nyinthüns; we keep sitting. Sooner or later these vultures begin to come along, when they are hungry. They may not come to you when they are not hungry, but sooner or later, when they are hungry, they want to eat you up, and they *will* come—from all over the place.

*Student:* Do you think that all the deceit, stupidity, and lack of direct, complete, total enlightenment that takes place among humanity is due to the teachings of the theistic tradition?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I wouldn't say that, particularly. What do you have in mind, sir?

S: Then why do you keep suggesting that?

*CTR:* I think it has to do with family structure. That is, in any nontheistic approach to spiritual discipline, you have to give up your home life to begin with. You have to go to a desert or to a monastery, a nunnery, or an abbey. You have to go to all kinds of places. That suggests giving up home, giving up parental figures. That is the first step of the nontheistic approach.

*Student:* You say that we are not debating the basic doctrines of the theistic tradition. However, theism isn't so stupid as to be just relating to a father figure. Certainly it's gone beyond that. Theism is much more sophisticated than that. Even *babies* have gone beyond that!

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I quite agree with you. I think that all of our sophistication may have become a problem.

S: I mean, people are two-faced all over the world, even if they're Confucian!

*CTR:* Whatever you say.

*Student:* When you describe these difficult subjects, you do so in terms of analogies and metaphors. Do you mean for us to relate to those literally? And in terms of the things we experience in our meditation—are those experiences

glimpses of what you are describing?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's very difficult to say. When you hear all this, at some point you have to take things very literally. When we talk about thirst, you have to hear it in relationship with your ordinary thirst, being in the desert. When we talk about the burning heat of passion—or anger for that matter—you have to take it very personally. Things become very vivid to us through these means; and if there's enough humor, things become spacious as well as vivid. That is the point we have been making—the spaciousness in the humor or the celebration. We are not talking about your being on the battlefield but about leading your life.

*Student:* Could you say more about what the five buddha families have to do with all this?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* They have to do with personality and how we relate with our basic ground. We relate with our aggression, we relate with our passion, and we relate with our all-space—or our spacelessness—all over the place. If we begin to relate with those processes in terms of the five buddha families, they become different colors that can manifest in midair, like a rainbow. So we are talking about rain and clouds and showers and sunlight and space. Once we talk about those, then we can talk about their manifestations very easily, which brings us to the five buddha family principle.

*S:* Is it helpful to relate to a particular family that we identify with, or is it better to be aware of all five?

*CTR:* Working with the five buddha families becomes more like an astrological chart-making process if you begin to look at it as personal identification. The five buddha family setup is not personal identification but a general perspective. For instance, in order to drink a cup of tea, you have to have cold water and hot water and fire and tea leaves; otherwise, you can't make a cup of tea. The five buddha family setup constitutes everything within our realm of experience. In our experience there are highlights, lowlights, and energies. Everything is involved with the five buddha family setup, so I don't think it's all that specific or all that personal. However, on the whole, that combination might become personal.

*Student:* Let's go back to the vultures. I have a feeling that sometimes it is rather stupid to let the vultures devour you. Is this purely defensiveness? Is there another way of reacting to the vultures besides letting them devour you, or is it



always wise to let them devour you?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: Interestingly, when you begin to see the vultures, you may think you have a feeling, but actually you don't have a feeling—you are petrified. You are completely spaced out, and you don't have any feeling. Intellectually and personally, everything's completely frozen. I'm sure that people who are involved with an emergency situation, such as a car crash or jumping or falling from a high building, don't have feeling. In a situation like that, you are suddenly stuck with a challenge, which you can't manipulate at all. Your intellectualization begins to wear out, and your sense of openness becomes frozen, so the whole area becomes a solid block. You are stuck in the midst of an ice block. That seems to be the case even if that catastrophic situation happens on a small scale or only for a few seconds. You are still a block of ice in the midst of a block of ice. That experience takes place constantly, and it is not particularly a problem. One doesn't have to get rid of that experience or cultivate that experience—it just happens. It is not particularly a mistake—or even intentional, for that matter—it's just something that generally happens, something that takes place.

S: Isn't getting caught up in your thoughts also very vivid?

*CTR*: It is the same thing.

S: Is it because you still think you *have* something that the paranoia or fear comes in? If you've got nothing, you've got nothing to lose; therefore, the paranoia is overcome.

*CTR*: I think so. Yes.

S: That's why you should be eaten completely.

*CTR*: Yes.

S: Then they won't come back for any more!

*CTR*: Completely! Absolutely!

S: About the corpse lying there—how does that relate with the sense of not feeling guilty about having something to rip out?

*CTR*: That depends on your attitude. We are talking about a regular corpse.

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1. *Vajra, ratna, karma, padma, buddha*: for discussion of the five buddha families, see [chapter 5](#).

## FIVE

### *Loose and Awake*

THE SENSE OF HUMOR provides enormous background and perspective—not only for practitioners, but on the level of cosmic plan, so to speak. The five wisdom energies can only be worked with through basic lightness, combining a light touch and wholeheartedness. In our lives, when things become too serious, too well-meaning, we find that we don't have any room to do anything at all; there is no creativity. We might be working very hard in our particular job, and we might be devoting constant attention to facts and figures; however, there is something lacking. We might blame that lack on our colleagues, our employees, our boss, our environment, or our particular social setup. However, in doing so, we only find that we are becoming gigantic banks of complaints rather than actually achieving anything, properly speaking. Such is life. That is always the problem. So how is life?

With an understanding of basic principles and realizing our shortcomings or longcomings, we begin to click to humor. We see that things are not actually as rigid and tight as we expected. Instead, they begin to become passive, workable, and playful, which is precisely the meaning of sambhogakaya—that playful and pleasurable aspect. We could extend that vocabulary by saying, “transcendental indulgence.” Of course, at the sambhogakaya level, that playful or indulgent aspect takes place in terms of transcending both pain and pleasure simultaneously.

When that general sambhogakaya quality of playfulness and pleasure begins to take place, we find that there is a sense of room. Everything is not limited to our own inadequacy, but the whole process becomes workable. It is like being on top of a mountain: we have the perspective of the surrounding hills and lesser mountains, and we could watch the distant clouds and the mist rising. We have a sense of complete joy and complete freedom. At this level, the question of indulgence is not one of becoming more and more decadent and aggressive,

more completely involved in the passion, blood, and dirt of neurosis. Instead, indulgence is the sense of utmost celebration. There is lightheartedness because the things that happen in our life do not mean very much. They do not mean all that much, and at the same time, they mean a great deal. Because of that, a lot more fun and a lot more inquisitiveness takes place in our life. With this perspective, every pine needle—how each pine needle behaves when it is swayed by wind—is an exquisite vision.

Sometimes we are too involved with the aesthetics of the world. For instance, if we are watching the moon and the clouds running across it, we would like to associate more with the clouds than with the moon—so we find that the moon is moving rather than that we are moving or the clouds are moving. However, that whole process becomes very powerful and refreshing. It is refreshing in the sense that this is the very first time we have experienced a love affair. Although we might have been involved in a love affair for a long time, or maybe we are in a love affair all the time, each time it is refreshing—and permanent, in some sense. That's the illusion.

That process of delight should make one's heart light and one's breath gentle, one's neck loose and one's jaw relaxed. Things don't become one hassle on top of another hassle all the time, and we no longer hold a constant grudge against our life and the unworkability of whatever it may be. Instead, it becomes a natural process. In fact, there is no point in holding a grudge against anything at all! Not only is there no point, it is needless! There's no *need* for *anything*! There's no point in shedding tears unnecessarily for our particular situation. Instead, the process becomes very loose, but at the same time, extraordinarily responsible, because we are so awake.

Looseness and awakesness tend to make an ideal person, and that ideal person is known as a sambhogakaya person. *Sambhoga* means “enjoyment” and *kaya* means “body,” “person,” or “individual.” A sambhogakaya person is an individual who possesses all kinds of attributes, immeasurable facets. He or she has a sense of depth and a sense of width, a sense of heaviness and a sense of lightness, a sense of extreme weight and a sense of floating, a sense of being utterly dull and a sense of being utterly, extraordinarily colorful. Those facets and combinations can take place all the time, once there is the basic establishment of what it is all about altogether. There is no problem at all. In fact, we don't have to associate ourselves with one particular aspect alone—we can encompass *all* of those facets at once.

The various types of sambhogakaya persons are described in five different ways, known as the five buddha families: vajra, *ratna*, *padma*, karma, and buddha. The vajra family is connected with the notion of immeasurable intellect. The intellect of the vajra family cuts through any other intellect with a sense of joy and relaxation. It has the sense of clear seeing. By clearly seeing all principles, all metaphysical systems can be seen through and cut through. On the one hand, all metaphysical principles could be regarded as unnecessary; on the other hand, all metaphysical systems could be regarded as worthwhile. Nevertheless, that cutting quality constantly takes place. The vajra approach is very cool, like a crisp, wintry morning, and not particularly friendly. The only friendliness that exists is a celebration and feast of the mind. In the vajra family, a feast of prajna takes place constantly.

The ratna family has a sense of immense richness, a richness that can continue forever. It is the richness of earth and its fermentation to the level of shit—or diarrhea, for that matter. That fermentation or shit can be accommodated as magnificent incense, as fragrant incense that can serve the buddhas of the ten directions. Ratna is extremely potent. It is not particularly cutting. Ratna is the elemental process of consuming. Ratna consumption is like fire, which slowly touches, contacts, and consumes, and finally, begins to make something out of something else. It's like the process of fermentation. When something is fermented, that process does not allow any room, none whatsoever. Ratna consumes the whole area and absolutely covers the entire ground. Along with that, there is also a sense of delightfulness. Ratna is not particularly unfriendly. There is a sense of awake. It is as if the active chemical ingredients, which are very awake and intelligent, know exactly what to do with the whole process.

Padma is a question of magnetizing. At this level, earth and sky meet and begin to make love. Through that proclamation of love, all other lovers are inspired and made to be horny, so to speak. The trees and flowers, rocks and vampires—anything that exists in the world—are made horny, so they are inspired to make love. In talking about making love, we are not particularly discussing sex, although sex is usually the first thing that comes into our mind. The padma process is more than that. It is beyond that level, although it may include that level as well, of course. Padma is the meeting point. Padma is magnetization that is improvised constantly and thoroughly.

In the padma family, perkiness, or intelligence, takes place as well. There is a sense of perspective, so when there is a meeting, you do not become completely intoxicated and blinded by it. You are not completely wrapped up in your

particular copulation process, metaphorically speaking. Likewise, the sky and earth do not get frustrated by their instant copulation—which takes place for years and years, thousands of millions of years. Sky and earth have been copulating all the time; nevertheless, both the sky and the earth have their momentum: time to create summer, time to create autumn, time to create winter, and time to create spring. So their copulation doesn't become just simple possessiveness. It is not like being bound, or an imprisonment—instead, it is a delightful dance. In that dance, no bureaucracy is involved, and there is no calculation. When the time for snowfall happens, it takes place. Both earth and sky agree upon that; nobody is overpowering either of them. When it is time to rain, time to create a hailstorm, or time to produce crops or greenery, it happens. The whole process becomes extremely natural and workable—a dance takes place.

In the case of the padma family, the word *copulation* refers to pragmatic situations, rather than to sexual intercourse alone. For instance, you could talk about the copulation of the contents of a building, like those of us sitting here, and the building itself. This copulation works in such a way that there's no complaint on the part of the building that too many people are sitting on the floor, and the floor doesn't drop down. That process slowly begins to work its way through our system altogether and throughout the universe. An immense magnetizing process of accommodating one another is taking place constantly.

We have to be quite clear that padma is not purely bounded by the level of sex, or seduction. It is not a salesman's mentality, and it is not like walking into a whorehouse, where you feel the vibration of sexuality the minute you walk into the doorway. Padma is slightly more open-minded than that. In fact, the other would be imprisonment. It would be a painful process and a disgrace, in some sense. Padma is very clear and open: whenever a dance needs to take place, that magnetizing process takes birth. From the point of view of earth and sky, up and below, east and west, south and north, that dance takes place simultaneously. That magnetizing is constantly active. In the padma family there is a constant panoramic magnetizing process. That seems to be the basic point.

The karma family is one of constant activity. Activity, here, does not mean that somebody is constantly speeding along, having to achieve his or her particular job or idea. The karma principle is not about being an utter busybody and making enemies all along. The definition of the karma principle is that it offers fulfillment because all activities are *already* fulfilled. What one has to do is to instigate that particular message to the rest of the world. So in the case of

the karma family, activity is there already; a process is already happening; whereas, in the other approach of speeding along, that process is not yet happening. You might find it difficult to relate with that, so you try to shout. You are trying to run a project, so you pull everybody out of their bed in their pajamas in the middle of the morning and make them work. That seems to be the wrong approach. It is not at all karma family activity. It is just some kind of hellish trip.

In the case of the karma family, plans have already happened. Political understandings have already taken place. There are reasonable situations taking place constantly, so the only way to act is to acknowledge that and to look into it and what's happening around it intelligently and very simply. By doing that, the process becomes very natural—and every project initiated in this way actually *does* get fulfilled. Such projects become absolutely successful projects because your project, your plan of work, and your vigor are not based on the idea that you have to initiate the whole thing, you have to think cleverly, or you have to go against the grain of the sand. Things actually do exist already, so you do not have to be particularly smart in order to initiate something. You can only be up to that if you are awake enough to see what's already happening. When the gun is loaded, you don't have to be a busybody about guns; the only thing you have to do is pull the trigger. That seems to be the general idea of the karma wisdom of accomplished action, or karma activity. The gun is already loaded—all one has to do is aim it and pull the trigger.

The sense of humor pervades the entire five buddha family process; otherwise, we are in trouble. Within that sense of humor, or basic intelligence, the buddha family energy is the process of being solid and noncommittal, which tends to bring immense dignity. It brings immense magnetizing, immense pacifying, immense destroying, and immense enriching, as well. And once again, as far as buddha energy is concerned, let me remind you that it is a natural process.

In the case of the buddha family, you don't say anything, and you don't act out anything at all. Instead, by *being* so, by *being as it is*, you begin to create some kind of infiltration. Instead of being completely verbal, in the buddha family the gesture begins to become the message. That seems to be the basic process. Things can develop or not develop, but whatever happens, you are not moved. In fact, you are not swayed by incoming messages of any kind. You have immense dignity. The buddha family attitude is that things have already been fulfilled—they are immensely fulfilled already, from that point of view.

In describing the five buddha families, I have come across a lot of people asking why there are only five. There is no particular logic as to why there should be five or six or ten thousand millions. The buddha families are part of your mind. Similarly, we could ask why there are five primary colors or five directions. There are five buddha families because all potential human energies are included in those five principles. But that does not necessarily mean that those five families are the only energies that exist. All kinds of things can be included in what we are as human beings. There are also borderline situations, in which two families or three families are mixed together, which might be considered another family. But if we look thoroughly, fully, and clearly, we find that there are only five main principles or potentialities taking place. Research and study on the five buddha families has been done within the twenty-five hundred years of the existence of Buddha's teaching; and we have a lot of trust in those people's research work, practice, and understanding. Our point of view is that we can't question that—not because it is the complete truth of the Bible, but because it is the complete truth in terms of practice experience.

The five buddha family process has provided immense friendly guidance to a lot of us. It has been one of the main ways to subjugate immense aggression and uptightness. Such aggression is taking place all the time. Usually, we are pissed off at our world. We have lots of complaints when things don't fulfill their function in our life—our husband is not being properly husbandly, our wife is not performing her duties, our brothers and sisters are not properly behaving, our friends are not helping us, and our guru's not being kind to us. We have lots of complaints, all kinds! We could begin by being pissed off at little sand flies brushing our cheek, and from that level, we could interpret our complaints to the infinite level: "It was the fault of my father that that sand fly sat on my cheek and ate me up. It was the fault of my guru. My guru led me to this miserable life."

Although all kinds of problems and all kinds of angry situations take place immensely, all the time, that doesn't mean that you are a special case, at all. There are no special cases, none whatsoever! You are part of the world. Everybody is part of the rest of the gray world, absolutely. Nobody is a special case. Nobody has some special potentiality for attaining enlightenment, any more than anybody else. Nobody has the particular potentiality of being a reject. We all are made out of these five types, these five different buddha family processes. That's why we need to understand that every situation is always workable.

You don't have to change your personality, your sambhogakaya manifestation. You don't have to try to make an angry person into a peaceful one, and speedy people do not have to become slower. That approach seems to be based on the Christian ethics of reforming or final conversion. In this case, we are not asking for a change or shift; instead, you maintain your existence. You try to evaluate your existence, your level of experience, personally and properly. That seems to be the basic point. The question doesn't arise of: "I'm out of samsara; I'm into nirvana." If you think in those terms, you need more sitting practice. You have to think more. Your approach is premature and too primitive. You are still approaching things at the preparatory school level. You have to relate to yourself at the level of humor in the sambhogakaya process—much more so. Once that space and sense of delightfulness is taking place, there is no problem—none whatsoever—in tuning yourself into those five buddha family principles.

Again, I would like to mention that it is not particularly that you have to belong to one particular buddha family, as in an astrology chart. You have the potentials of all five buddha families. However, they work together in such a way that you might have different buddha family expressions or manifest more in one way than another way. On the whole, looking from the neurotic angle, all those processes might be regarded as hang-ups. But they are not hang-ups; they are promises—or maybe *potentialities* is a better word.

To summarize: If there is a sense of rejoicing and being willing to work with yourself, rather than purely wanting to change the situation, then I think you are ready to have a glimpse of the sambhogakaya principle. Otherwise, you are still going through immense blockages. It is not that you don't possess potentiality, but your potentiality has been blocked—by *you* personally. You won't let yourself give you a good time anymore. The idea is to experience all of these buddha families as a celebration of life. The whole message of the sambhogakaya principle is that sense of celebration. The sambhogakaya principle brings a sense of celebration and a sense of magnificent pride. If you feel you are inadequate to that, then something must be screwed up, fundamentally and basically. You should go back to the hinayana level, if that happens. But you still have a chance!

*Student:* I was wondering, presuming that you're talking on a psychological level and also on a larger level of cosmic description, what the "body" quality of the kayas is. Why are they described as "bodies"?



*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Basically, body is a reference point to what's happening. If there's no body, there's no reference point.

S: Is the body, in that sense, a container?

*CTR:* Yes, you could say that. It is a receiver, a container, an editor.

S: There seems to be a relationship between the first four buddha families and the four karmas, and the buddha family seems to combine them.

*CTR:* I think so, yes. That's how it should be, in fact. Although the vajra family is related with the vajra neurosis of anger or aggression, it is also related with the opposite, the karma of pacifying.

*Student:* In what way is the buddha family energy destructive as well as pacifying?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Basically, it is destructive from the point of view of ego. Ego suicide tends to happen constantly. If you indulge your particular character, if you nurse that and you become a superstar—finally you commit suicide in a hotel bedroom, or you become a great fighter and you are killed on the spot. That's just a general, primitive analogy, but the fundamental idea is that you are building a gigantic kingdom of egohood, and in doing so, you are using your potentialities as crutches. You may have vajra intellect abilities or karma fulfillment abilities; but you try to use those in your own way, rather than share with anybody else. You don't want to give to anybody. You would like to preserve your territory. You don't even want to give in to any of your colleagues or to share your space. You would like to hold on to your particular world and your particular territory.

*Student:* I have found it useful to work with the buddha families as a way to give me more perspective. For example, in looking at or describing a situation, I find myself feeling that's the way it is, and I relate to the particular buddha family style or quality that characterizes my description. But then I realize that that's only one way of describing it, that I can think about it in other ways, such as in a padma way, a vajra way, or a buddha way. Do you think that's a useful way to work with the buddha families? I find that it allows me to give the situation some space. Instead of feeling that my way of describing it is *it*, I am able to see other points of view. Do you think that's an appropriate way to use the energies?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I wouldn't make a big deal out of it, because

things exist in their own way, anyway. Whatever you do, others are going to do it in their own particular style. So, at this point, using the five types of approach is arbitrary. You're going to approach things that way, anyway. It seems to be a very natural process, not a big deal. The whole thing needs to have some humor or scope. It is like behaving like a Gentile or a Jew. Either is okay, whichever way you behave, but there might be some problems coming along with that style. If you don't have humor around what you are, you're going to be involved with troubles and fights.

S: This sense of delightfulness transcends birth, pain, and death, but at the same time it never loses touch with these, right? It never gets wrapped up in its own quality of enjoyment or humor, but it stays on the ground, in touch with the pain.

CTR: Why not? Pain is the most valuable learning lesson we have. Without pain we would not be here, for that matter, to discuss anything. On one hand, there are millions of people waiting to come here too, because their pain is so intense. On the other hand, people run away from here because it's too painful—or they are just about to; they're thinking about it.

*Student:* Suppose you suddenly feel a loss or change of identity in which you play a role that seems appropriate, but there's nothing cozy about it and nothing familiar about it, and you don't exactly know who you are—can your buddha family style change in midstream?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* You're not expected to change.

S: No, but it seems to happen.

CTR: If that comes up, let it go that way. I mean, we can't just say, "This is right. I'm not going to change. You can't impose a new role on me. I am a Virgo, and I'm going to remain a Virgo because my birthday says so." It's quite different than that. There is a process, which takes place simply and constantly. Let that process be so, whatever it is. Good or bad doesn't matter.

*Student:* You emphasized that the five buddha families are especially connected with the immediate present. I was trying to understand whether it's a matter of trying to avoid thinking of them as past and future or whether we could in each situation, from moment to moment, try to discover within ourselves all of the buddha families or some combination.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The point is that whatever is taking place on the

spot is the particular principle that you have to work with. If something comes up, you have that particular style, and you have your own particular style of dealing with the whole thing. So you develop your tactics and mentalities. That takes place on the spot, definitely. You could also take humor in that and pride.

*Student:* Why are you talking about the buddha families in connection with the sambhogakaya? Are they especially connected with that body, or kaya?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Very much so, yes. They are particularly connected with the level of somebody.

S: Is that a pun?

*CTR:* Somebody, or sambhogakaya—as opposed to dharmakaya, which is nobody, and nirmanakaya, which is everybody. Policy making, how you handle yourself, takes place in the sambhogakaya. Sambhogakaya is the policy-making process. When you are already *there*, at the level of nirmanakaya, you have already made your policy as to how to handle your life. It's already happening. The nirmanakaya is different in that the only requirement then is awareness. At the level of sambhogakaya, you are just making acquaintance with your policy making. It's like landing on the ground: before you land on the ground, you have to choose which ground to land on. That is when your five types of buddha energy begin to take place.

S: Is the descent from the dharmakaya level down all part of the cosmic disaster?

*CTR:* Everything!

S: So all the kayas, starting from the pre-dharmakaya level, are just increasingly more of a disaster?

*CTR:* I think so. The whole thing began with the dharmakaya. The dharmakaya is the first disaster, which initiates the rest of it. It is not particularly necessary. Nevertheless it happened, and we have to go along with it.

*Student:* You said that you experience joy at the sambhogakaya level in working with yourself and a sense of celebration. You said that if you can't do that, at least there's the hinayana level left. I guess that must be the nirmanakaya level, where the Buddha is actually here in a physical body. This sounds quite bleak to me. Previously, it didn't seem like such a disaster, that the Buddha was in a human body.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* We are not just talking about having a body, but

about having such a dualistic *idea* of the whole thing. We have to have black and white, good and bad—the samsara and nirvana syndrome. That we have to discuss this at all is unfortunate. It's terrible! However, since we are in this boat already, we might as well go along. There is no choice. That's why the dharma is so full—and we have the best of it!

S: Then am I to understand that primarily what we have is just an increasing awareness of the process? And that awareness can go on and on and on, without any particular change, just awareness itself making movements?

CTR: Sure. So what?

S: There is a famous psychologist who has a theory that the cosmic disaster was the seeding of this planet by DNA, and now it's time for us to build our starship and go back to the center.

CTR: There is no center. Every area is the center. There's no center to go back to. There is no home; home is everywhere.

*Student:* Rinpoche, in terms of the appreciation of detail and the sense of humor, I was wondering if it might be possible to get really trippy about it and get so caught up in trying to pay attention to every detail of everything that you would not be able to do anything. Does that happen, or is there a safeguard?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think you can appreciate details, provided you have some sense of the whole project being based on egolessness, some sense that you are not supposed to have any feedback or anything particularly prescribed. That seems to be okay. However, if you begin to get into trips of all kinds, your attention-to-detail awareness begins to become hollow, purely a game. So I think it depends on how your general attitude has evolved.

## SIX

### *Buddha Is Everywhere*

THE SAMBHOGAKAYA IS TWOFOLD: the sambhogakaya that is experienced and manifests in the form of the five buddha family process and the sambhogakaya that deals equally with the nonstructured mind world, or the world of the five buddha families, and the body world, the world of music, voice, or speech. At this level, the sambhogakaya principle is the initiator of anything that happens in our life—constantly. The sambhogakaya is the *instigator* of everything that takes place in our life, rather than life itself. When something occurs in our life that is subject to panic, the sambhogakaya principle acts as panic. For instance, when there is discontinuity and noncommunication between mind and body, suddenly something pops up, and all at once there is communication. At that point, when the mind and the physical world communicate together, panic begins to take place. The sambhogakaya principle is also how our body and mind relate with words—how mind and body combine together in the physical manifestation of verbalizing, or making noises. At the ape level, it is grunt; at the sophisticated level, it is music; at the mystical level, it is mantra.

The sambhogakaya principle leads to the nirmanakaya principle. It seems that we don't have any choice about that. The sambhogakaya process begins to take place constantly; and from there, we are approaching the nirmanakaya. That is to say, we are approaching the earthly, physical, bodily situation. The nirmanakaya is the physical, bodily state of existence. It is everything we experience in the audiovisual world in the very ordinary sense. The sun rises, the pine trees hiss in the wind, the rock sits, and waters flow—all those processes are manifestations of the sambhogakaya principle. The sambhogakaya is being transmitted into the nirmanakaya as a real life process. Everything we go through in our life is a manifestation of the sambhogakaya principle.

Also included in the nirmanakaya are actual representations of the sambhogakaya principle: actual physical images are made, the actual voice of

dharmas are heard, actual living human teachers exist on this earth. All of those are manifestations of sanity coming down—unnecessarily, from the point of view of dharmakaya, of course. Still, those unnecessary processes become necessary at some point. It's like collecting maple syrup from a tree. The first drip descends into the branch; then the branch begins to collect drips; next the drips begin to fall into the bucket; *finally* you have maple syrup in your bucket.

Finally, at the nirmanakaya level, something's actually taking place. Those long-winded descriptions and ideas, those intangible, unbiased, unconditional ideas and thoughts of enlightenment are finally captured in this particular sieve of the human mind. You can actually see the physical guru, and you can actually prostrate to this physical guru and touch his or her feet. You could worship that particular person, who represents *all* those unconditional processes and *all* of that basic sanity. Immense space, created through the process of enlightened awareness, is finally manifested on earth. That seems to be the basic point.

In regard to the nirmanakaya, there are various types of nirmanakaya. For instance, the Buddha Shakyamuni, Gautama Buddha, was one person. He was born and raised in India, educated in India, and he attained enlightenment by meditating wholeheartedly, and so forth. We also have other examples, other great teachers who are following that particular principle and approach. We have various teachers, masters, gurus of the lineage, who all represent that process. Most of all, we have a sense of earthy touch taking place, a panoramic experience within everyday life. When somebody has heard of the teachings, then that particular person begins to look into every aspect of our life, from the loftiest ideas of philosophy to very manual, basic, ordinary things, such as sitting on a toilet seat. Everything's covered.

The nirmanakaya principle exists in every situation. The nirmanakaya principle exists in a baby's diaper. It exists in our pencils and pad. The nirmanakaya exists at the level of our money. It exists in the flat tire on our motorcar and in the police checking on our speeding. The nirmanakaya principle exists in every situation of our life. So the nirmanakaya principle is related with the ordinary minds of individual students who care to relate with their lives properly. Instead of worshipping some higher principle, in the nirmanakaya, people who are into the dharma properly begin to find a sense of worship, sacredness, gracefulness, and grace in everyday life. That is, the nirmanakaya principle exists in our everyday lives.

As a matter of fact, every activity that takes place in our lives is nirmanakaya

expression. That nirmanakaya expression has two types: the confused version and the enlightened version. The confused version is regarded purely as a hassle, or an expression of neurosis; and the enlightened version is that within all that there is is a sense of sacredness. So having a sculpture or painting of nirmanakaya buddha or being involved with graphic situations and experiences in our everyday life are both regarded as nirmanakaya. If you have a graphic experience, such as a car crash or running a red light—the very directness of whatever is taking place in your life is regarded as nirmanakaya expression. The cosmic approach, the larger metaphysical and enlightened approach that takes place in our life, is included in the nirmanakaya—and the petty little details that exist in our life are included in the nirmanakaya, as well. Expenditure... exposure...encompass...space.

The process of nirmanakaya tends to become very powerful at times, because of its claustrophobic quality or watchfulness. Everywhere we turn, around every corner, there is nirmanakaya. We can't just hang out loose. In other words, everything is a reminder of all kinds of things. But that's not particularly regarded as a phenomenological situation—it is just the basic awareness that the nirmanakaya cannot be avoided. In other words, buddha can't be avoided; buddha is everywhere. Enlightenment possibilities are all over the place. Whether you're going to get married tomorrow, whether you're going to die tomorrow, whatever you might feel, that familiar nirmanakaya awake quality is everywhere, all the time.

Some systematizing of this whole process has developed throughout the history of Buddhism, the twenty-five hundred years of Buddhist reign in this world on this particular planet earth. There is constant pressure that people should sit, meditate, and lead their lives in the Buddhistic way. That is actually adopting just a *fraction* of nirmanakaya activities. The rest of it relies highly on awareness and devotion. In this sense, devotion means being willing to face the possibility that the all-encompassing space of nirmanakaya takes place eternally in our life, whether we want it or we don't want it.

*Student:* Is there any difference between phenomena in general, all phenomena, and the expression in the phenomenal world of the harmonious relationship of the three kayas? Are the three kayas like the footprint of buddha in the phenomenal world?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think everything is a footprint, actually, including the basic spaced-out experience we might feel and the sense that we

are split in our personalities. It is not that we are schizophrenic, but we are split into five types of personalities, five different expressions. We also have the sense of relating with every detail in life, seeking answers, questioning, looking into life as it is. From this point of view, everything is a footprint, anything that goes on, whether we regard it as sublime or ridiculous. Everything we do—breathing, farting, getting mosquito bites, having fantastic ideas about reality, thinking clever thoughts, flushing the toilet—whatever occurs is a footprint. That is why enlightenment is referred to as *en-lighten-ment*, rather than as a big gain of freedom. It is further *luminosity*; it *illuminates* life. Up to this point, we had a very bad lighting system; but now we are getting a better lighting system, so we begin to see every curve of skin, every inch of our world, properly. We might get very irritated by such sharpness and precision, but that seems to be part of the perspective.

S: Does that mean that there's no such thing as a bad poem?

CTR: That's right! If you look at it from that angle, not talking from an editor's attitude, but in terms of cosmic style, bad poems are very cute. In their own way, they are fantastic!

*Student*: You talked about how nirmanakaya always comes up in all these day-to-day experiences. I'm curious as to why you used the term *nirmanakaya*, as opposed to dharmakaya or sambhogakaya?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: Nirmanakaya is the physical situation; sambhogakaya and dharmakaya are the level of mind.

S: Would it be wrong to say that the sambhogakaya produces the nirmanakaya, or that nirmanakaya is the outcome of the sambhogakaya?

CTR: I don't think that the sambhogakaya produces the nirmanakaya. Nirmanakaya is a self-existing situation. Dharmakaya is like the sun; sambhogakaya is like the rays; and nirmanakaya is like the rays hitting the objects on the earth. So it is a self-existing situation.

*Student*: Lama Govinda used the terms *seed*, *subtle*, and *gross* in describing the relationship of the three bodies: dharmakaya as seed, sambhogakaya as subtle, and nirmanakaya as gross. Is that an error on his part?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: I wouldn't say that dharmakaya is a seed, particularly. Dharmakaya is more than a seed—it's all-pervasive. Calling it a seed is a poverty-mentality approach to dharmakaya. Instead of shooting a rocket



into the atmosphere, you shoot a gun, which doesn't have any sense of confirmation or expansion. Secondly, the sambhogakaya is not all that subtle; it is very obvious. For instance, the five buddha family principle is obvious. Finally, the nirmanakaya is not at all gross. It is the most refined form that one could ever think of in the universe! It is seeing things as extremely subtle and as extraordinarily sophisticated as we can ever appreciate. It is the highest of class, if you would like to call it that, the highest form of sophistication. So it's *far* from being gross! Lama Govinda's approach seems to be slightly different, bless his heart.

*Student:* Would you say more about the efforts to systematize nirmanakaya? Is that what Buddhism is all about? That's what occurs to me.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think so, definitely. Ordinarily, we can't say that everything's okay because there's chaos; things don't make any sense. So we have to begin somewhere. We have to learn to think properly, which is meditation; we have to learn to walk, which is also meditation; we have to learn how to behave. Learning to behave in a certain way is a very rough guide to the nirmanakaya, a nirmanakaya *type* of approach. We are actually copying the behavior of Buddha. The way Buddha walked, the way Buddha talked, the way Buddha thought—we are just copying that, very simply. There are no trips involved; there's no philosophy. We just simply take Buddha as the example. We are simply doing that as ordinary people. That is Buddha-ism, I suppose we could call it.

*Student:* You said dharmakaya and sambhogakaya were unnecessary, but you haven't said that about nirmanakaya.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* We've done that already, so we can't even bother to say that it's unnecessary. Nirmanakaya has expanded its own world altogether, so we have a very elaborate samsaric world setup. That has happened already, and we have to go along with it.

*Student:* Is nirmanakaya equivalent to the samsaric world?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It's getting very close. We are sharing the samsaric world finally, rather than having lofty ideas.

*Student:* You said that in going from sambhogakaya to nirmanakaya, you choose your ground. Could you say something about choosing ground?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* In that case, we were talking about choosing ground because you have *no* ground. Usually when we choose ground, we have one ground, and then we choose another ground, which doesn't make any sense in the short run or the long run. I don't think we can speculate too much on that; it would be purely a waste of our time.

*Student:* There's a Zen story in which a Zen master asks his disciple to demonstrate his understanding. The disciple shakes a tree, and the master says, "You understand the function but not the essence." I'd like to know if that is related to the three bodies. Is the dharmakaya the essence and the nirmanakaya and sambhogakaya the function?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Very much so—and I think we are concerned with the function, definitely.

S: Is that sambhogakaya?

*CTR:* That is nirmanakaya. It is how things work rather than why things are there. People constantly ask, "Why?" like a two-year-old child. But somehow, persons begin to learn the lesson of *not* asking why things are as they are, by throwing the question back to themselves. The nirmanakaya level is purely functional, how to survive. Beyond that, we don't have to be concerned too much with the dharmakaya and sambhogakaya; they just come along. They do exist. If you are interested in the why of their existence, the answer is: because they don't exist, that's why they do exist. That is a pragmatic answer rather than a theoretical one.

S: When you said that you use it every day, but you don't pay any attention to it, like being able to move your arm, for instance, I took that to mean the life force. Is that nirmanakaya or sambhogakaya or both?

*CTR:* Well, that's a bit tricky. One has to pay attention to it, but one shouldn't; one needs to, but one shouldn't. But when you are told you shouldn't, you actually pay *more* attention, because you want to find out.

*Student:* The Sixth Patriarch says that samadhi is the body of buddha and that prajna does not exist apart from the three bodies. Would you say something about that?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think that's quite true. I agree with him. Good luck for him, the Great Sixth One!

*Student:* Is the sense of sacredness the same as the sense of celebration?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think they are identical, definitely. That's a good question.

*Student:* I was very moved by what you said about everything being a footprint. It sounds as if, in order to appreciate the real significance of things, you need to see that there is something beyond, encompassing what is apparent. It is sort of like a poem rather than prose—not the content, but the resonance.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Um-hmm. It's a hoofprint.

*Student:* Rinpoche, the kayas are called the three bodies of enlightenment. Are they levels or styles of enlightenment? Because I have the feeling that they are also descriptions of the world.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* They are various functions of enlightenment. It is like having a heart, a brain, a muscular system, and limbs: all of those are operating at the same time. Likewise, all three kayas are operating at the same time. It is like having a motor and a driver and wheels: they function in the same way. It's wrong to look at it in terms of a case history—that one comes first, then the second one comes, and then the third one. The three kayas have been presented that way in many cases, and it is true, in some sense, technically. But in terms of presentation, that approach is a mistake, because people will tend to think that if you get the dharmakaya, you don't need the rest. They will think that you can get rid of the others, the bothersome nirmanakaya and sambhogakaya, and just dwell on dharmakaya. But, somehow, that never happens.

There is an expression, *kusum yerme*, which means “the indivisibility of the three bodies.” That indivisibility seems to be the basic point, particularly advocated by our particular lineage of Kagyü. In the Kagyü tradition, it is always said that the three kayas come simultaneously. In your system, as you operate your life, those three principles happen at once. You are always working with all three of them in that way. I feel that's true, and I think that's a good attitude. Let's stick to our lineage.

*Student:* The dharmakaya was very hard for me to get any understanding of at all, but the nirmanakaya seems *too* simple. It seems too simple to say everything is buddha or the dharma. I've heard that a lot, and I've never quite understood it. It seems like *everything* is nirmanakaya. So is nirmanakaya just a fancy word for the entire world and absolutely everything in it, and that absolutely everything is

an expression of the dharma?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: Yes.

S: I don't understand how absolutely everything can be an expression of the dharma.

CTR: Dharma in this case is some kind of cosmic plan, but it is not the idea of a God as the maker and creator of the universe, particularly. Instead, anything that goes on has a particular makeup or conditions, which is that everything is transparent and nonexistent—and at the same time, existing. It is like the space that accommodates the world. The quality of space exists in earth, water, fire, and all the other elements; it is part of all those ingredients. In order to make things function—in order to have cosmic lubrication, so to speak—things have to have that kind of nonexistent, unconditional quality. Otherwise things can't exist; it is against the law of logic, the law of functioning. So in order for things to exist, therefore, things have to *not* exist. Nonexistence provides lubrication, functional growth, and the atmosphere for things to blossom.

Everything is known as dharma, enlightenment, or the buddha principle, because the buddha principle is free of any conditions, and at the same time, it creates further and greater initiative. I think there has been a problem in the past with theistic traditions that say there is something that exists, something that heavily conquers the whole universe. That theistic principle or belief, called God or the Divine, has complete dictatorial power. It doesn't allow any nonexistence or unconditionality.

The mystics were probably an exception to this view, but since they were very smart people, they may have begun to realize that if they stuck to their theory, it would be suicidal, doctrinally, so they began to cop out. They got into something else, a more humanistic approach. In fact, throughout the history of Christianity, the mystical schools have been banned because they promote nontheism. The mystics subtly produced little bubbles here and there of a nontheistic tradition, and that was not very well accepted. A lot of mystics suffered execution and all kinds of persecution. I think that is a problem, actually. In this case, when we say everything contains dharma, or the buddha principle, we are not saying that something other has been inserted into our world, or the universe—we are talking about unconditional transparency. Because of that unconditional transparency, things can happen. There is constant lubrication, cosmic lubrication.

*Student:* How is buddha nature related to the three bodies? Is it dharmakaya, or is it all three?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* All three, hopefully.

*Student:* I don't want to harp too much on one thing, but would you be willing to say, in terms of what we've been discussing, what makes a good poem?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* What makes a good poem? On the one hand, nothing makes a good poem, actually. What is a poem, anyway? On the other hand, one can make good poems if there is more reliance on the lubrication. When there's no lubrication, everything's just a stack of bricks. Poems become bad poems because there's no sambhogakaya humor anymore. Poems become very steep and trippy. From that point of view, excessive aggressive poems written on the idea of war and excessive peaceful poems written on the idea of peace are equally bad, because there's no humor in them. For that matter, excessive poems written on religion and on inspirations of any kind also do not have any humor. Poems are like bread dough: you have to have flour and water, you have to knead properly, and finally you make good bread out of the whole thing. You bake poetry. I think good poetry is very hard to come by—and so is good baking.

*Student:* You said that if you push too hard, the vajra diamond sword will cut you to pieces. What did you mean by pushing too hard?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* What do you think? Have a guess! First thought is best thought. Take a guess!

*S:* I don't know. I've been thinking about this for a while. Is it trying to get everything at once?

*CTR:* Something like that. I think that might be the case, actually.

*S:* If the sword doesn't get you, then the vultures will?

*CTR:* Not quite. If the sword doesn't get you, your suicide will get you. You're doomed to be destroyed in any case, so it's better to commit hara-kiri. Very heavy.

*S:* In the meantime, you celebrate?

*CTR:* Well said! Good luck, madam.

*Student:* If we were never here in the first place, how come we've had such a good time?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's a corny thing to say. However, we are corny, as we are, and we are here. So what?

*Student:* If you are cut down by the vajra sword, or have the feeling you are being cut, what's the process after that? Do you pick yourself up—pick your parts back up—or do you just stay cut?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Nothing.

*S:* You just stay cut?

*CTR:* Nothing.

*S:* Nothing?

*CTR:* Absolutely nothing.

*S:* It sounds horrible.

*CTR:* Whatever. It's not particularly nice and not particularly bad—it's *nothing*. I think we are getting into tantric koan, at this point.

*S:* Every time we talk about anything, such as what is the footprint of the Buddha, every time we ask questions, we seem to make everything very, very complicated and complex. It all seems much simpler than that.

*CTR:* I sympathize with us. So what's next?

*S:* Nothing.

*CTR:* Yes, I quite agree with you, two hundred percent! That is a problem, I suppose. Otherwise, we wouldn't keep meeting so late. This whole thing is somewhat absurd. We want to *know* rather than to actually *experience*. That's the problem with the speech principle.

*S:* It's very unnecessary, but it's very necessary.

*CTR:* Yes, you said so. That's right

*S:* In wanting to experience rather than wanting to know, I've been noticing the last few days that when I'm very tired, I'm not very aware of the space, and I have a lot of trouble seeing the humor in situations.

*CTR:* That's good! That *is* humor! Just take a *little* leap after that. That's it!

## *Acknowledgments*

**T**HIS BOOK IS BASED on the seminar, “The Three Bodies of Enlightenment,” held at Karma Dzong, Boulder, Colorado, February 28–March 6, 1974. As with other books we have edited based on the oral teachings of the Vidyadhara, Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, we worked with materials carefully preserved in the Shambhala Archives. Thank you to the many people involved in this work: the sound recorders, the videographers, the transcribers, and archivists.

We would also like to thank Gordon Kidd of Kalapa Recordings for providing the tapes, and Ellen Kearney for the index and her careful proofreading. Once again, Molly Nudell has produced an outstanding design, for which we are most appreciative. Cheryl Campbell continues to take care of business so that such projects can move forward. We are grateful for her resourcefulness.

We would like to express our gratitude to Diana J. Mukpo for her permission to publish this material and for her ongoing support of our work. Our thanks also to Carolyn Gimian for her encouragement.

It is due to the dedication and persistence of all these people that we are able to make these teachings available to the wider public.

May the teachings of the Vidyadhara, so profound and to the point, continue to flourish for the benefit of all beings.

JUDITH L. LIEF, EDITOR

# **THE SHAMBHALA WARRIOR SLOGANS**

*Fifty-Three Principles for Living Life with Fearlessness  
and Gentleness*

*Compiled and Edited by*  
CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN



## *Introduction*

*T*HE SHAMBHALA WARRIOR SLOGANS have been created as a companion to *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. These slogans, like the teachings they are drawn from, are designed to inspire you to think in new ways about your life and to help you find ways to be a Shambhala warrior in the world, a warrior without aggression.

Chögyam Trungpa, the author of *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, was a Tibetan meditation master who came to the United States in 1970. He started many meditation centers throughout North America and Europe and also founded Naropa University, a Buddhist-inspired college. He died in 1987, having written more than a dozen books on the path of meditation. He left behind many thousands of students who benefited from his teachings and continue to work with them.

The Tibetan world that Chögyam Trungpa came from was one in which the ideal of enlightened warriorship had existed for many centuries, joined together with the practice of sitting meditation, from the Buddhist tradition. He found that this wisdom was enduring: that it was exactly what people in the West needed in order to cultivate sacredness and awareness in everyday life. He also understood that people would face severe challenges in modern times and that they would need to be brave to overcome fear and anxiety. In fact, the Tibetan word for warrior, *pawo*, means “one who is brave.” The Shambhala teachings are precisely about how to work with fear without becoming either polarized or paralyzed by it. Chögyam Trungpa taught that, within this world as it is, it is possible to live a decent and fulfilling life that will also help others.

In many cultures in Asia, including Tibet, there is a legend about a mythical kingdom called Shambhala. As Chögyam Trungpa says in the book, “According to the legends, this was a place of peace and prosperity, governed by wise and

compassionate rulers. The citizens were equally kind and learned, so that, in general, the kingdom was a model society.”<sup>1</sup> Chögyam Trungpa took the approach that the wisdom of the Kingdom of Shambhala exists in everyone’s heart and that we can all be citizens of Shambhala. We can be warriors of Shambhala, dedicated to bringing gentle wakefulness into our lives and into the world.

Chögyam Trungpa used the symbol of the Great Eastern Sun to describe the vision that illuminates the warrior’s path. The Great Eastern Sun represents the wisdom of Shambhala, which is a sacred outlook based on gentleness and bravery. Chögyam Trungpa contrasts this with the setting-sun world, which is generated by and also promotes confusion, anxiety, and cowardice. He used these dual images to encourage people to go beyond hesitation and fearfulness in order to develop an allegiance to their own innate wakefulness and to encourage them to have confidence in their ability to uplift themselves and improve their own lives.

A number of the warrior slogans included here emphasize connecting through our sense perceptions with the beauty and power of the natural world. For those of us living in urban environments, this connection to nature may seem quite foreign, like a distant dream. Chögyam Trungpa was pointing out that there are many situations in life that are not conditioned by human concepts or created by human effort alone. He was not unaware or unappreciative of life in the city; in fact, he loved cities around the world, from New York to New Delhi. However, he thought that it was worth remembering that there is a sky above us and earth below, as the ground of a larger unconditioned experience of goodness.

It’s worthwhile to note that, according to the legends, although the people of Shambhala held a deep appreciation for timeless wisdom, there was also an important place in their society for technology and its advancement. This balance of sacred and worldly endeavors appealed greatly to Chögyam Trungpa. He thought that the image of the Shambhala kingdom could be an inspiring ideal for people who do not want to reject living in a secular society yet want to incorporate a genuine spiritual aspect to their lives.

The majority of the slogans that appear here are drawn from *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. (There is also some material taken from Trungpa’s *Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala*.) The remainder of the slogans were composed by Chögyam Trungpa to be used in Shambhala Training, a program that he developed as a way to train people in the path and practice of

warriorship. None of these slogans have been available to a general audience until their publication here. Altogether, the fifty-three Shambhala warrior slogans are meant to be used in connection with the book *Shambhala*. If you haven't read it, you might want to start there. The commentary on each slogan is also drawn from *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* and occasionally from *Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala*.

## HOW TO USE THE SLOGANS

There are a number of different ways that you can use these slogans. In general, they are meant to be contemplated one at a time. Contemplation here doesn't just mean thinking about something, although that is part of contemplating. It might be helpful to think of contemplating as a visual exercise: gazing or looking at something from different angles. How many different ways can you see a slogan? One excellent way to contemplate these slogans is within the sitting practice of meditation, which is a discipline highly recommended for the practice of warriorship. In *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, the chapter "Discovering Basic Goodness" provides an introduction to meditation practice.

These slogans present some of the basic principles and wisdom of Shambhala. Some are written as instructions for traveling the path of the warrior. Others are presented as statements of truth or experience. They are meant to provoke you to examine your experience or look at the world in a new light. Often, the slogans present a glimpse rather than a fully developed view. In that regard, they are meant to inspire your own intelligence rather than telling you what to do or how to be. Some of the slogans repeat the same themes, seen from different perspectives or at different stages on the path. They look at human experience from different angles, to help you step outside of preconceptions or confusion.

The slogans are numbered in a sequence that generally follows the progression of themes in the book. You might want to begin working with this material by reading all of the slogans in one sitting, to gain an overview of the sequence. Or you might want to take them one by one, reading only a single slogan a day for fifty-three days, so that each one can surprise you with a new perspective.

Indeed, an excellent way to use these slogans is to work with one slogan a day. You can randomly choose a slogan or start with number one and progress through the entire sequence a day at a time. If you choose a slogan at the

beginning of your day, you may find that the slogans help you work with the challenges that the day presents. Or you might find that a slogan penetrates most deeply at the end of the day. A slogan could be something to sleep on. Or perhaps you set aside a quiet time each afternoon, and that's where your slogan practice works best. Sometimes you will want to live with a slogan for a number of days or even weeks before moving on to the next one. You need to find your own way to work with this material. At different times, different approaches may work better.

At first glance, the slogans are often quite cryptic. After a while, they may seem more ordinary and transparent. To help you work with them, commentary on each slogan is provided. The commentary does not always *explain* the slogan. Often, the commentary is intended to provoke further curiosity. It might inspire you to read further in the book, or it might inspire you to look further into your life. The commentary is not meant to be definitive. You may find that you have a personal interpretation or understanding of a slogan. That personal connection with the material is what these slogans are all about.

As you relate to the slogans, their emphasis on a positive view of life may seem unrealistic, given how many difficulties each person faces in his or her life. Chögyam Trungpa did not dismiss obstacles or treat problems as trivial. He knew that life can be incredibly sad and can present overwhelming challenges. Nevertheless, he believed, almost ruthlessly and certainly without compromise, that human beings have the ability to conquer the problems in life, as well as the innate wisdom to guide themselves through the darkest of times. This, indeed, is what he hoped to awaken and nurture in people through the presentation of the Shambhala path of warriorship.

In your slogan practice, sometimes the most important slogans are those that seem the most difficult to understand or put into practice. Sometimes, the more you contemplate a slogan, the more questions it may raise. At other times, understanding or applying a slogan may seem effortless. Sometimes you choose a slogan, and sometimes it chooses you. After you have worked with these slogans for a while, you may find that something in your life brings a particular slogan to mind. Then you will want to find that slogan, read the commentary, and contemplate why that slogan popped up at that moment in your mind.

I was fortunate to have been introduced to this material by Chögyam Trungpa more than twenty-five years ago. I always find that these teachings are completely fresh, helpful, and surprising. Like clear, cool water, they wake you

up and quench your thirst. May these Shambhala warrior slogans prove useful to beings. May they be an inspiration to those traveling on the sacred path of the warrior.

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1. From Chögyam Trungpa, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2015), 5.

## *Slogans*

1

*Don't be afraid of who you are.*

The key to warriorship and the ultimate definition of bravery is not being afraid of who you are. Examine your experience to see what it contains that is of value in helping yourself and others. Warriorship is the opposite of selfishness. We become selfish when we are afraid of ourselves and afraid of the seeming threats the world presents. We want to build a little nest, a cocoon, to protect ourselves. But we can be much braver than that. Even in the face of great problems, we can be heroic and kind at the same time.

2

*Goodness is the ground of all.*

Fundamental goodness is unconditional. It is there already, just as heaven and earth are already there. Imagine that you are sitting naked on the ground, with your bare bottom touching the earth. You are exposed to heaven above and earth below, sandwiched between heaven and earth. You can't reject your atmosphere, the sun and the moon, sidewalks and skyscrapers, the landscape or the sea. This goodness is that basic, that unconditional. It is not good versus bad. It is not a "for" or "against" view, just as sunlight is not "for" or "against."

3

*Goodness dawns like the sun.*

It is not just an arbitrary idea that the world is good, but we can experience its goodness. The human potential for intelligence and dignity is attuned to experiencing the brilliance of the bright blue sky, the freshness of green fields, and the beauty of the trees and mountains. We have an actual connection to

reality that can wake us up and make us feel basically good. Goodness *can* happen to us. In fact, it is happening already.

4

*Never give up on anyone or anything.*

In the wakeful vision of Shambhala, which we call the vision of the Great Eastern Sun, no human being is ever a lost cause. We don't feel that we have to suppress or put a lid on anyone or anything. We are always willing to give things a chance to flower.

5

*To overcome uncertainty is utterly good.*

Uncertainty here refers to doubting yourself or the existence of basic goodness. When you don't punish or condemn yourself, when you relax and appreciate your body and mind, you begin to contact basic goodness in yourself. So it is extremely important to be willing to open yourself to yourself.

As human beings, we have a working basis within us that allows us to uplift our state of existence and cheer up fully. Because we have a mind and body, we can comprehend this world. Existence is wonderful and precious. We don't know how long we will live. While we have our life, why not make use of it? Before we even make use of it, why don't we appreciate it?

6

*Don't assume the posture of a wilted flower.*

When you slouch, you are trying to hide your heart, protecting it by slumping over. But when you sit upright but relaxed in the posture of meditation, your heart is naked. Your entire being is exposed—to yourself, first of all, but to others as well. Through the practice of sitting still and following your breath as it goes out and dissolves, you are connecting with your heart. By simply letting yourself be, as you are, you develop genuine sympathy toward yourself. When you sit erect, you proclaim to yourself and to the rest of the world that you are going to be a warrior, a fully human being.

7

*Hope and fear cannot alter the seasons.*

The four seasons occur free from anyone's demand or vote. The natural law and order of this world is not "for" or "against" you. Fundamentally, there is nothing in the world that either threatens you or promotes your point of view. There is a natural law and order that allows you to survive, which is basically good. We often take for granted or reject this basic law and order in the universe, but we should think twice. We should appreciate what we have. We should feel that it is wonderful to be in this world.

8

*Awaken the genuine heart of sadness.*

Awakened heart comes from being willing to face your state of mind. The sitting practice of meditation is a means to awaken this within you. When you awaken your heart, to your surprise, you find that it is empty. If you search for awakened heart, if you put your hand through your rib cage and feel for your heart, there is nothing there—except for tenderness. You feel sore and soft, and if you open your eyes to the world, you feel tremendous sadness. It is not the sadness of feeling sorry for yourself or feeling deprived. It is a natural situation of fullness. The genuine heart of sadness comes from this feeling that your nonexistent heart is full. Your experience is so raw, tender, and personal that even if a tiny mosquito lands on you, you feel its touch.

9

*To experience fearlessness, it is necessary to experience fear.*

The essence of cowardice is to not acknowledge the reality of fear. Fear takes many forms. We are afraid of death, we are afraid that we can't handle the demands of our life, and there is abrupt fear, or panic, when new situations occur. Fear is expressed as restlessness: how we move, how we talk, how we chew our nails, how we sometimes put our hands in our pockets uselessly. We have to realize our fear and reconcile ourselves with fear. However, acknowledging fear is not a cause for depression. Because we possess such fear, we can potentially experience fearlessness.

10



*Go beyond fear.*

When you examine your fear, if you look beneath the veneer of your nervousness, you find sadness. Nervousness is cranking up, vibrating all the time. When you slow down, when you relax with your fear, the sadness is calm and gentle. In the Shambhala tradition, discovering fearlessness comes from working with the softness of the human heart.

11

*Synchronize mind and body.*

When you are completely mindful in the present moment, mind and body are synchronized. Here, synchronizing mind and body is connected with developing fearlessness, in the sense of being accurate and direct in relating to the phenomenal world. That fearless vision reflects on you as well: it affects how you see yourself. You begin to realize that you have a perfect right to be in this universe. You have looked and you have seen, and you don't have to apologize for being born on this earth. You can uplift yourself and appreciate your existence as a human being. This discovery is the first glimpse of what is called the Great Eastern Sun, which is the sun of human dignity, the sun of human power.

12

*By the dance of the setting sun, the entire world becomes cowardly.*

The warrior's vision of how to lead a sane and dignified life, which we call the vision of the Great Eastern Sun, is based on celebrating life. It is contrasted to the setting sun, the sun that is going down and dissolving into darkness. Setting-sun vision is based on trying to ward off death. It is based on fear. In the world of the setting sun, we are constantly afraid of ourselves, ashamed of who and what we are.

13

*The food of the setting sun fills everyone with grease and fat.*

In the setting-sun, or degraded, approach, you have a giant vision, beyond

anything you can consume, and you get bloated and end up throwing things away. This could be quite literal. In many countries, thousands of tons of leftovers are discarded every year. When people go to a restaurant, they are often served a giant plate of food, more than they can possibly eat. Great Eastern Sun vision is that the world is very sacred, so you have to constantly serve your world and clean it up. It's not necessary to overindulge. Also, because you appreciate the world, you don't leave a mess in it.

14

*Always return to the primordial ground.*

In this world, there are always possibilities of original purity, because the world is clean to begin with. Dirt never comes first. If you use clean towels, they become dirty, but you can always wash them and return them to their original state. Similarly, our physical and psychological existence is originally clean. We may smear the situation with our conflicting emotions, but fundamentally, our existence is all good, and it is all launderable. This is what we mean by basic goodness: the pure ground that is always there, waiting to be cleaned. We can always reconnect with the primordial ground.

15

*All-victorious, you have nothing to conquer.*

Being all-victorious is not a matter of talking yourself into believing that everything is okay. Rather, if you actually look, if you take your whole being apart and examine it, you find that you are genuine and good as you are. In fact, the whole of existence is well constructed so that there is very little room for mishaps. There are, of course, constant challenges. But for the true warrior, there is no warfare. You are never at war with your world.

16

*The warrior delights in heedfulness.*

Heedfulness here refers to paying attention to what is taking place in your world. Shambhala vision brings natural interest in the world outside. Ordinarily, interest occurs when something extraordinary or threatening occurs, or it may be an escape from boredom. For the warrior, interest happens spontaneously. You feel

that the world is naturally full of interest: the visual world, the emotional world, whatever world you might have. So interest, or heedfulness, manifests as raw delight, delight together with rawness or tenderness.

17

*Let the Great Eastern Sun illuminate the way of discipline.*

When you look at the sun rising in the sky, its rays of light almost seem to provide a pathway for you to walk on. Similarly, the Great Eastern Sun, the sun of human wakefulness, creates an atmosphere in which you can constantly move forward, recharging energy all the time. However, the Great Eastern Sun is not something outside of you but a journey unfolding within. It provides the means to take advantage of your life in the fullest sense. This is the way of discipline for the warrior. By discipline we do not mean something unpleasant or artificial that is imposed from outside. Rather, this discipline is an organic process that expands naturally from your own experience. Then you don't need an architect or a tailor to redesign your world.

18

*When doubt arises, contemplate warriorship.*

Doubt takes many forms. One is fear that you'll hurt yourself by going forward. Another form of doubt is feeling that you've misunderstood your life and that you're constantly making a fundamental mistake. Being without doubt has nothing to do with accepting the validity of a philosophy or concept. Absence of doubt comes from trusting in the heart, trusting yourself. Being without doubt means that you connect with yourself, that you experience mind and body being synchronized together. When mind and body are synchronized, then you have no doubt.

19

*Propagate health as a basic discipline of warriorship.*

The Great Eastern Sun is wakefulness and genuineness reflected in every aspect of your being. This realization brings a feeling of being a truly human being. Physically, psychologically, domestically, spiritually, you feel a gut-level sense of health and wholesomeness in your life, as if you were holding a solid brick of

gold. When you feel healthy and wholesome, then you cannot help projecting that healthiness to others.

20

*Celebrate the feast of faith and joy.*

Faith is based on genuineness, trusting in yourself and your vision. You are not faking anything, and you are not trying to impress anybody. Faith inspires discipline. Here, discipline is not based on punishment or arbitrary rules and authority, but rather on becoming thoroughly gentle and genuine. Discipline guides you in the way of the warrior and shows you how to live in the warrior's world. When the warrior has unwavering discipline, he or she takes joy in the journey and joy in working with others. This joy is like music, which celebrates its own rhythm and melody. The celebration is continuous, in spite of the ups and downs of life.

21

*Daring to let go, the warrior is great in friendliness.*

To overcome selfishness, it is necessary to be daring. We are accustomed to accepting what is bad for us and rejecting what is good. We are attracted to our cocoons, our selfishness, and afraid of stepping beyond ourselves. To overcome hesitation and to commit oneself to others' welfare, the student warrior has to jump. A leap is necessary.

This occurs in the practice of meditation when you step beyond the ups and downs of your thinking process and let yourself go with the breath. Let it dissolve. By letting go, you develop trust in the strength of your being. Then, you also find that you have tremendous willingness to give selflessly to others.

22

*The humble warrior is supreme.*

Once you have made a leap of daring, you might become arrogant. You might say to yourself: "Look, I have jumped! I am so great, so fantastic!" But arrogant warriorship does not work. It does nothing to benefit others. You need to cultivate gentleness so that you remain humble, soft, and open. Allow tenderness

to come into your heart. Renounce putting on a new suit of armor or growing a thick skin. The warrior who has accomplished true renunciation is completely naked and raw, without even skin or tissue. You are able to be, quite fearlessly, what you are.

23

*You cannot possess basic goodness.*

The goal of warriorship is to express basic goodness in its most complete, fresh, and brilliant form. This is possible when you realize that you do not *possess* basic goodness, but you *are* the basic goodness itself.

24

*The warrior's discipline is like the sun.*

The light of the sun shines wherever the sun rises. The sun does not decide to shine on one piece of land and neglect another. Similarly, the warrior's discipline is unwavering and all-pervasive.

25

*Join the arrow of intellect with the bow of skillful means.*

With the sharpness of your intelligence, the arrow of intellect, you can clearly see the setting sun, or any degraded tendencies in yourself or the world. Then, you need to harness your insight with skillful action, which is the bow. When the arrow of intellect is joined with the bow of skillful means, you are never tempted by the seductions of the setting-sun world. Temptation here refers to anything that promotes ego and goes against the vision of egolessness and basic goodness. Together, the principle of the bow and arrow allows you to say no to unguineness, to carelessness, crudeness, or the lack of wakefulness.

26

*Take your seat in the warrior's world.*

The practice of meditation is taking your seat in the warrior's world. Then, throughout your life, meditative awareness shows you how to regain your

balance when you lose it and how to use the messages from the phenomenal world to further your discipline. The practice of meditation also allows you to be completely grounded in reality. Then, if someone asks, “How do I know that you are not overreacting to situations?” you simply reply, “My posture in the saddle, my seat on the earth, speaks for itself.”

27

*The warrior’s awareness is like an echo.*

When the warrior starts to lose track of discipline, by taking time off or indulging in a setting-sun mentality, a state of mind that is degraded and confused, awareness is like an echo that bounces back on you. At first, the echo may be fairly faint, but then it becomes louder and louder. You are constantly reminded that you have to be on the spot.

28

*The ultimate warrior protects the world.*

You are willing to be awake in whatever situation presents itself to you. You feel that you can take command of your life, because you are not on the side of either success or failure. Success and failure are your journey. In this state, the warrior always maintains loyalty to sentient beings who are trapped in the setting-sun world. The warrior’s duty is to generate compassion and warmth for others, with complete absence of laziness. Your discipline and dedication are unwavering.

29

*Don’t confuse letting go with arrogance or indulgence.*

For the warrior, letting go is relaxing within the discipline you have already developed, in order to experience freedom. Letting go is not enjoying yourself at other people’s expense, promoting your ego and laying trips on others. Arrogance of that kind is based on fundamental insecurity, which makes you insensitive rather than soft and gentle. The confused, or setting-sun, version of letting go is to take a drunken vacation or to be wild and sloppy and do outrageous things. For the warrior, rather than getting away from the constraints of ordinary life, letting go is going further into your life. You understand that your life, as it is, contains the means to unconditionally cheer you up.

30

*Don't freeze windhorse into ice.*

You should appreciate yourself, respect yourself, and let go of doubt and embarrassment so that you can proclaim goodness and basic sanity for the benefit of others. The self-existing energy that comes from letting go is called *windhorse* in the Shambhala teachings. Wind is the energy of basic goodness, strong, exuberant, and brilliant. At the same time, basic goodness can be ridden, or employed in your life, which is the principle of the horse. When you contact the energy of windhorse, you can naturally let go of worrying about your own state of mind, and you begin to think of others. If you are unable to let go of your selfishness, you might freeze windhorse into ice.

31

*Take delight in others, and propagate dignity.*

The warrior principles of genuineness, decency, and goodness all lead us to work with others. When this occurs, basic goodness is no longer a theory or a moralistic concept. It is direct and personal experience. Therefore, you can trust in your ability to see the setting-sun, or degraded, world and trust in your ability to help those trapped in it. You are the vanguard to uplift your society—to begin with, your parents and friends. People often say that it's too difficult to work with others, that it's impossible to help them. But that is not true; it has been done, and you can do so as well. Shambhala vision is not purely a philosophy.

32

*Be without deception.*

Being without deception is an extension of telling the truth: it is based on being truthful with yourself. When you have a sense of trusting your own existence, then what you communicate to other people is genuine and trustworthy.

33

*Rest with gentle patience and strength.*

This slogan is connected with realizing unconditional confidence. Here, confidence does not mean having confidence *in* something, but remaining in the state of confidence, free from competition or one-upmanship. This is an unconditional state in which you possess an unwavering state of mind that needs no reference point. There is no room for doubt; even the question of doubt does not occur. This confidence contains gentleness, because the notion of fear does not arise; sturdiness, because in the state of confidence there is ever-present resourcefulness; and joy, because trusting in the heart brings a greater sense of humor.

34

*Appreciate the accomplishments of your ancestors.*

We should not ignore the contributions of the past. The failure to appreciate the resourcefulness of human existence—which we call basic goodness—has become one of the world’s biggest problems. However, we need to find the link between tradition and the present experience of life. *Nowness*, or the magic of the present moment, is what joins the wisdom of the past with the present. When you appreciate a painting, a piece of music, or a work of literature, no matter when it was created, you appreciate it *now*. You experience the same *nowness* in which it was created. It is always *now*.

35

*This very moment is always the occasion.*

The principle of *nowness* is very important to any effort to establish an enlightened society. You may wonder what the best approach is to helping society and how you can know that what you are doing is authentic and good. The only answer is *nowness*. The way to relax, or rest the mind in *nowness*, is through the practice of meditation. In meditation you take an unbiased approach. You let things be as they are, without judgment, and in that way you yourself learn to be.

36

*Let your wisdom as a human being connect with the power of things as they are.*

There is no fundamental separation or duality between you and your world. This



discovery may arise as an extraordinary smell, a fantastic sound, a vivid color, an unusual taste. Any perception can connect you to reality properly and fully. If you are able to relax—relax to a cloud by looking at it, relax to a drop of rain and experience its genuineness—you see the unconditionality of reality, which remains very simply in things as they are. There is some principle of magic in everything, some living quality. Something living, something real is taking place in everything.

37

*Without arrogance, see the brilliance of the universe.*

We can't ignore the phenomenal world. We should always take the opportunity, seize it on the spot. Appreciate the world, which is so vivid and beautiful. Arrogant people are so involved with themselves and competing so much with others that they won't even look.

38

*A warrior never needs to take time off.*

Trying to relax by slouching or indulging in habitual patterns only produces schizophrenia. You are such a nice person at the office, but the minute you come home you turn on the television, argue with your spouse, and send your children to their rooms, telling them you need peace and quiet. Such habitual patterns are dangerous and destructive. They prevent you from seeing the Great Eastern Sun, the experience of human wakefulness. Uplifting your head and shoulders may sometimes give you back pain or a strained neck, but uplifting yourself is necessary. The journey may be demanding, but there is no way of avoiding it.

39

*Always think only of the good of others.*

The point of warriorship is to become a gentle and tamed human being who can make a genuine contribution to this world. The warrior's journey is based on discovering what is intrinsically good about human existence and how to share that basic nature of goodness with others.

40

*Cultivate natural decorum.*

In the warrior's world, a sense of order or hierarchy is based on allowing things to flower. This comes from the discovery of wakefulness, or the Great Eastern Sun, reflected in everything. You see possibilities of order in the world that are not based on struggle and aggression. This understanding of hierarchy manifests on a personal level as natural decorum, or intrinsically knowing how to behave. Because you experience dignity and elegance that do not have to be cultivated or imposed, you see how to be quite naturally in the world.

41

*Do not wear shoes as a hat.*

Some people would like to ignore the most basic societal norms. They say, "So what if I put my shoes on my head?" Yet everybody knows that something is not quite right in doing that. In the same way, if instead of winter, summer followed autumn and spring followed summer, the whole order of cosmic principles would be violated. Crops wouldn't grow, animals wouldn't reproduce, and we would have devastating droughts and floods. When natural order is ignored in society, it is like disrupting the order of the seasons: it weakens society and causes confusion. This does not mean paying lip service to these principles. You begin by appreciating your world, by taking a fresh look at the universe. In that way, you can discover what order or natural decorum really is.

42

*Join survival and celebration.*

There appears to be a conflict between survival and celebration. Survival, taking care of your basic needs, is based on pragmatism, exertion, and often drudgery. Celebration, on the other hand, is often connected with extravagance and doing something beyond your means. For the warrior, ruling your world means that you can live in a dignified and disciplined way, without frivolity, and at the same time enjoy your life.

43

*Apply the seven principles of richness.*

To cultivate harmony in your life or household, view yourself as the ruler of your world. Then, the ruler's first richness is to have a mate, a *king* or *queen*. This represents extending yourself and cultivating decency. Whether you have a partner or live by yourself, you develop decency and reasonability in relationships. The second richness is the *minister*, representing friends who provide counsel or advice. Third is the *general*, representing fearless protection, a companion who will actually take care of you. Then, you need exertion and energy in your life, the richness of the *horse*. Next, the principle of the *elephant* is that you are earthy, steady, not swayed by confusion. The sixth richness is the *wish-granting jewel*, connected with generosity. You are open and hospitable to others. Finally, you hold the *wheel of command*. You take your seat properly in your life so that all these principles work together.

44

*The warrior is not afraid of space.*

The coward lives in constant terror of space: afraid of darkness because he can't see anything, afraid of silence because he can't hear anything. The setting-sun world teaches you to wear a suit of armor to protect yourself. But what are you protecting yourself from? Space. The challenge of warriorship is to step out of the cocoon, to step out into space, by being brave and at the same time gentle.

45

*Cultivate authentic presence.*

Authentic presence is genuineness that radiates both gentleness and brilliance to others. Cultivate inner authentic presence by letting go of selfishness and regarding other people's welfare as more important than your own.

46

*Don't cause the Great Eastern Sun to eclipse.*

Developing meekness is one of the disciplines or dignities of the warrior. Meekness is not feebleness but strength and brilliance that come from resting in a state of simplicity, being uncomplicated and approachable. In that state, simple awareness allows you to refrain from activities that dim the vision of the Great Eastern Sun, the warrior's vision of wakeful sanity. Then your mind is not filled

with ordinary preoccupations. When you are not seduced by trivial situations, there is a natural sense of uplifted mind and vast vision.

47

*Precise and perky, you are never caught in the trap of doubt.*

The fundamental doubt is doubting yourself, which occurs when body and mind are unsynchronized. Continuous discipline joins body and mind and brings unconditional cheerfulness. When discipline becomes a pleasure rather than a demand, you are free from the lower realms, which is living purely for survival. You possess the goodness of the higher realms. This refers to being clear and precise, free from doubt. At this stage, the warrior is always aware and never confused as to what to accept and what to reject.

48

*A good self-existing sword: desire to sharpen it will make it dull.*

When, out of hope and fear, you apply a competitive or comparative logic to your experience, trying to measure how much you have fathomed, how much is left to fathom, or how much someone else has fathomed, you are just dulling your sword, the sharpness of your mind. Instead, have confidence in your awareness, and relax in your ability to connect with a larger vision, the experience of vast mind.

49

*Overcome both hope and fear.*

When you hope for something in your life, if it doesn't happen, you are disappointed or upset. If it does happen, then you become elated and excited. You are constantly riding a roller coaster up and down. With nothing to hope for and nothing to fear, fearlessness is achieved.

50

*Don't spell out the truth.*

When you spell out the truth, it loses its essence and becomes either "my" truth

or “your” truth. By implying the truth, it doesn’t become anyone’s property. When the dragon wants a rainstorm, he causes thunder and lightning. That brings the rain. Truth is generated from its environment; in that way it becomes a powerful reality. From this point of view, studying the imprint of the truth is more important than the truth itself. The truth doesn’t need a handle.

51

*To join heaven and earth, go beyond selfishness.*

To bring together vision and practicality, you need confidence and trust in yourself. Beyond that, you have to be without selfishness. If someone thinks, “Now I have it! Ha-ha!”—that doesn’t work. Joining heaven and earth happens only if you go beyond an egoistic attitude. The master warrior is extremely humble.

52

*Give yourself time to be.*

Give yourself a break. Enjoy the day, your normal existence. We have to learn to be kinder to ourselves, much kinder. Smile a lot, although nobody is watching. Listen to your own brook, echoing yourself. A lot of problems come from self-hatred. Let us let go of that; let us let it go away. Let us *be* as real people. Let us be genuine people.

53

*Cheer up.*

A lot of us feel attacked by our own aggression and by our own misery and pain. However, even in the darkest of the dark age, there is always light. That light comes with a smile, the smile of Shambhala, the smile of fearlessness. That cheerfulness is what we call the Great Eastern Sun. We are capable of smiling beautifully, utterly, extraordinarily. We can always cheer up.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CYNTHIA MCADAMS, COURTESY THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.

# **THE TEACUP AND THE SKULLCUP**

*Where Zen and Tantra Meet*

*Edited by* JUDITH L. LIEF AND DAVID SCHNEIDER

This book is based on two seminars, each titled “Zen and Tantra,” given by Trungpa Rinpoche in 1974. The first four talks took place at Tail of the Tiger Buddhist Retreat Center in Barnet, Vermont, January 1–4, 1974. The final three talks took place in Boston, Massachusetts, February 15–17, 1974.

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## *Introduction*

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY OF 1974, the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche began teaching the first of two seminars on Zen and tantra. He was in the early phase of a North American career that would last seventeen years and would be a potent force in the spiritual constellation of the continent. Beginning very modestly, Trungpa Rinpoche would eventually give hundreds of public and private seminars, comprising thousands of individual teaching talks. The record of his published work—still far from complete—includes scores of books, among them volumes of poetry and calligraphy.<sup>1</sup> Despite his inveterate curiosity, his wide-ranging, multicultural education, and a seemingly boundless range of endeavor,<sup>2</sup> Trungpa Rinpoche focused the bulk of his enormous energy on his students. In his first three years in North America (1970–73) he taught fundamental topics of the Buddhist path and view of mind, always with a strong emphasis on the practice of meditation and on the example of the vajra masters in his lineage. His uncompromising yet charming style attracted many students in these first years, and of these no small portion were from Zen sanghas. The talks in this volume appear, from a thirty-year remove, to signal a turning point for the community. Acknowledging the strength and discipline gained from Zen influence, Trungpa Rinpoche distinguishes the two traditions and points out the path on which he intends to take his students.

If, in these first years, Trungpa Rinpoche emphasized the Tibetan vajrayana, he could scarcely have done otherwise: he'd been thoroughly trained in the system since early childhood and was by nature as well as by training a crazy-wisdom, tantric adept. He literally embodied the vajrayana. In America, he'd given many talks describing tantra. More significantly and more famously, he had in his talks and demeanor created an atmosphere that itself seemed tantric: an atmosphere at once electric and ordinary, mysterious and simple, clarifying and confusing, boring and magnetic.

By the time he gave the seminars in this book, Trungpa Rinpoche had only begun to present the full structure of the nine-yana path. During the three months prior to these talks, he had convened and taught the Vajradhatu Seminary—the first of thirteen such three-month programs—in which he detailed the Buddhist path from beginning to end. His manner of presentation was modern and sometimes shocking, but the path he described and the texts upon which he based his exposition were classical. Also classical, and also shocking to the new seminarians, was his introduction of a higher level of discipline and academic study. He worked in a systematic way, portraying the nine yantras almost as a surveyor or cartographer would, and he expected people to keep up. As for fully entering his students into the vajrayana with transmission and empowerment, he was on the verge of it but had not yet done it.

Trungpa Rinpoche had, on the other hand, made profound commitments to these students, and he was about to accept them formally as tantric disciples. The tradition at this point was to warn people away from such irreversible commitment, to put up obstacles, and at the very least, to make sure they knew what they were getting into. Later in the summer of 1974, he taught explicitly, extensively, and publicly on tantra, in a series of fifteen talks at the first convocation of the Naropa Institute in Boulder.<sup>3</sup> But in the wintry days at the beginning of the year, Trungpa Rinpoche seemed interested first in making distinctions, pointing out to his students (and other assorted listeners) how a tantric path might differ from the style and feeling and emphasis that had grown up in his community so far—a style that he cheerfully admitted owed much to Zen. “I think we are closer to Zen. We may be practicing Zen in the spirit of tantra”: such was how he put it, chuckling, when questioned in the second of these lectures.

This act of distinction, subtle but definite, was carried out with utmost respect for both traditions. That he should feel respect and devotion to his own crazy-wisdom lineage and tradition is normal. That Trungpa Rinpoche should display affectionate, penetrating insight with regard to Zen is remarkable, attributable possibly to a number of close friendships he’d forged with Zen masters in North America. Through these friendships, one can feel his respect for the Zen tradition altogether and how it led to his using certain Zen forms for his public meditation halls and rituals. Possibly one can feel as well why so many Zen students were drawn to Trungpa Rinpoche. For whichever reason they came, these practitioners had a definite effect on the emerging character of his “scene,” and he developed in return a humorous, teasing—sometimes mocking—

approach in dealing with these people. He was not above puncturing a student's arrogance by calling something they'd said or done "very Zen," or of lamenting—as he does in these talks—his American students' misreading of the most functional aspects of Zen form, turning basic routines into aesthetic contests. In 1978, Trungpa Rinpoche criticized Zen students to the great amusement of his audience, remarking that "although they might have excellent posture in the *zendo*, the minute they take off their robes and go off in their apartments, they develop their own little neuroses. They...carry on hanky-panky of all kinds in their apartments—un-Zen hanky-panky!"

His first and most significant encounter with Zen teachers in North America was with Shunryu Suzuki Roshi, founding abbot of the San Francisco Zen Center. Suzuki Roshi; his wife, Suzuki Sensei (mostly known simply as "Okusan"); and Trungpa Rinpoche and his wife, Diana Mukpo, were all introduced in May of 1970 by Rinpoche's publisher, Sam Bercholz. During a visit to Zen Center, an immediate affinity—what everyone who saw it called a "heart connection"—sprang up between the two teachers. Trungpa Rinpoche later confided to his wife that Suzuki Roshi was the first person he'd met in America who reminded him of his root guru in Tibet, Jamgön Kongtrül. He went on to say that in Roshi he'd found his first spiritual friend in the West.

By 1970, Suzuki Roshi had been living and teaching in North America for a dozen years, working intensively with the American students who'd joined his sitting practice and the community that had grown up around him. With the purchase in the late 1960s of Tassajara, a monastery deep in the mountains of Los Padres National Forest, and the publication of Suzuki's first book, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind* in 1970, the Zen Center had begun to grow rapidly. Suzuki Roshi often discussed the challenge of presenting traditional Zen Buddhist dharma in a cultural vacuum, to American students who fit no category that he, a Japanese teacher, was familiar with. He struggled with this, and his struggle gave rise to innovative, powerful teachings and a vigorous community.



*Suzuki Roshi.*

COURTESY THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.

According to biographer David Chadwick, Suzuki Roshi was familiar with Trungpa Rinpoche's work, as Roshi had read *Meditation in Action* and had heard praise from his own students who'd met the young Tibetan. On this first visit,

Trungpa Rinpoche was quite interested in how Suzuki Roshi taught the technique of counting breaths during sitting meditation, and the Tibetan also took careful note of the forms and atmosphere at Zen Center. During his first years in America, Rinpoche had stressed sitting meditation for his students—distinct from other practices or *pujas* in the Tibetan traditions—but had not given a standardized technique. When he finally chose a uniform style of practice for his students, Rinpoche too placed emphasis on breath as the primary object of meditation, but differently from Zen. The instructions for posture also were slightly different—more relaxed—and the method of working with thoughts also varied from the Zen style. The practice was different but as he said “not so different.” He adopted Zen sitting cushions known as *zafus* but had them sewn in red and yellow instead of Zen black; he incorporated the Zen practice of alternating sitting and walking periods throughout a practice block, but instituted a variable, as opposed to predictable, schedule. As he did with many forms he encountered in the West, Trungpa Rinpoche blended aspects that seemed to be working for American students with the traditional Tibetan ways he’d inherited; he created forms that were fresh and that fit.

In their subsequent meetings and in letters, Suzuki Roshi and Trungpa Rinpoche shared ideas for furthering buddhadharma in America, among them exchanging students and teachings, founding a Buddhist university, and creating a dharmically oriented therapeutic community. Trungpa Rinpoche did send several of his senior students for training to Tassajara and, with Suzuki Roshi’s blessing, used experienced Zen Center practitioners to lead extended sittings—daylong (*nyinthün*) and monthlong (*dathün*) retreats—in his burgeoning scene in Vermont and later the Rocky Mountains.

An example of Trungpa Rinpoche’s regard for Suzuki Roshi is that during the first *dathün* in North America, he allowed the rule of silence to be lifted only once each day—for a reading from *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*. But the most striking expression of veneration is that from their first meeting, until his death in 1987, Trungpa Rinpoche had placed on every shrine wall, in every center associated with his work, a picture of Suzuki Roshi. The only other photos above the shrine were of Trungpa Rinpoche, the sixteenth Gyalwa Karmapa, and Trungpa Rinpoche’s closest root teachers; that Suzuki Roshi’s Japanese face looked out from among Tibetan lineage holders was powerful poetry. It was also fitting, for Suzuki Roshi referred to Trungpa Rinpoche as being “like my son.”



*Trungpa Rinpoche with Kobun Chino Otagawa.*  
COURTESY THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.

It is relatively difficult to manipulate shamatha-vipashyana for personal aggrandizement or to make a trip out of *shikantaza*, as Roshi called the purest form of Zen sitting. But both teachers ended up working patiently (if occasionally wrathfully) to keep their students on a goal-less path. The America they found themselves in resembled a spiritual jungle: it was fertile, opulent, and rich; it was also overgrown, chaotic, and full of danger for the seeker. Suzuki Roshi and Trungpa Rinpoche shared between them the disappointments and loneliness they felt in walking through that jungle and in leading others through it.

The next important Zen connection Trungpa Rinpoche made was with the soft-spoken, powerful master Kobun Chino Otagawa. When Rinpoche had asked Suzuki Roshi about calligraphy, Roshi directed him to Kobun, as the young teacher liked to be called, living at that time about an hour's drive south of San Francisco. Their actual meeting turned out to be almost accidental. Trungpa Rinpoche had come to Los Altos to consult with a group of psychologists. Abe Maslow, Anthony Sutich, and others, including Sonja Margulies, editor of the

influential *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, wanted to meet Trungpa Rinpoche because of his startling presentation of psychology as integrated into spiritual life. Margulies happened to be studying Zen under Kobun, and when Rinpoche arrived, she made a point of introducing the two.

“They hit it off immediately,” Margulies recalls. “They were both young men—Asians out of their cultures. Both had married young Western girls—Kobun, a redhead; Trungpa, a blonde—and both had young children. They had a lot in common.” Beyond that, both men had admiring connections to Suzuki Roshi, were poets, would prove themselves master calligraphers, and both had an intuitive ability to speak the dharma to Western students, though in very different styles. On this early visit they did calligraphy together. Kobun had a variety of fine Japanese brushes, including a very large one. Rinpoche had never worked with a brush of such scale—indeed Tibetan syllables are usually written with a stylus—but he delighted in working with this one. Through the years, Trungpa Rinpoche developed a unique style of writing, blending brush calligraphy with the various scripts of formal Tibetan calligraphy.

Kobun, having trained at Eihei-ji Monastery in ceremony and ritual, helped with these aspects of practice at Zen Center when he first came to America. Starting in the middle 1970s, as Trungpa Rinpoche gradually introduced more discipline and form to his community, Kobun performed this same role for Vajradhatu. He taught students the traditional approach to chanting, drumming, ritual procession, and most invasively for the students, Zen-monastery-style eating, with *oryoki* bowls. Kobun introduced *oryoki* practice with care and a certain trepidation, for it is an intimate, inner practice of the Zen tradition. Trungpa Rinpoche prized *oryoki* practice highly, and though it met resistance among his students, he repeatedly did his best to encourage the practice.

Another important stream of teachings flowed into Shambhala-Vajradhatu through connection to Kobun: the practice of the way of the bow, *kyudo*. In the mid-1970s Kobun introduced Trungpa Rinpoche to his own *kyudo* master and family friend, Kanjuro Shibata Sensei, twentieth in a familial succession of bow makers to the throne of Japan. Trungpa Rinpoche invited Shibata Sensei to teach his martial art to the Shambhala sangha and to take up residence in Colorado. Over time, Shibata Sensei acceded to both requests, moving with his wife to Boulder and propagating a form of *kyudo* that he felt cleaved to its spiritual roots. Sensei scorned what he termed “sports *kyudo*”—purely trying to hit the target and win competitions. In Shambhala, Shibata Sensei was able to pass on the profound heart of his tradition. Mrs. Shibata, herself a master of several

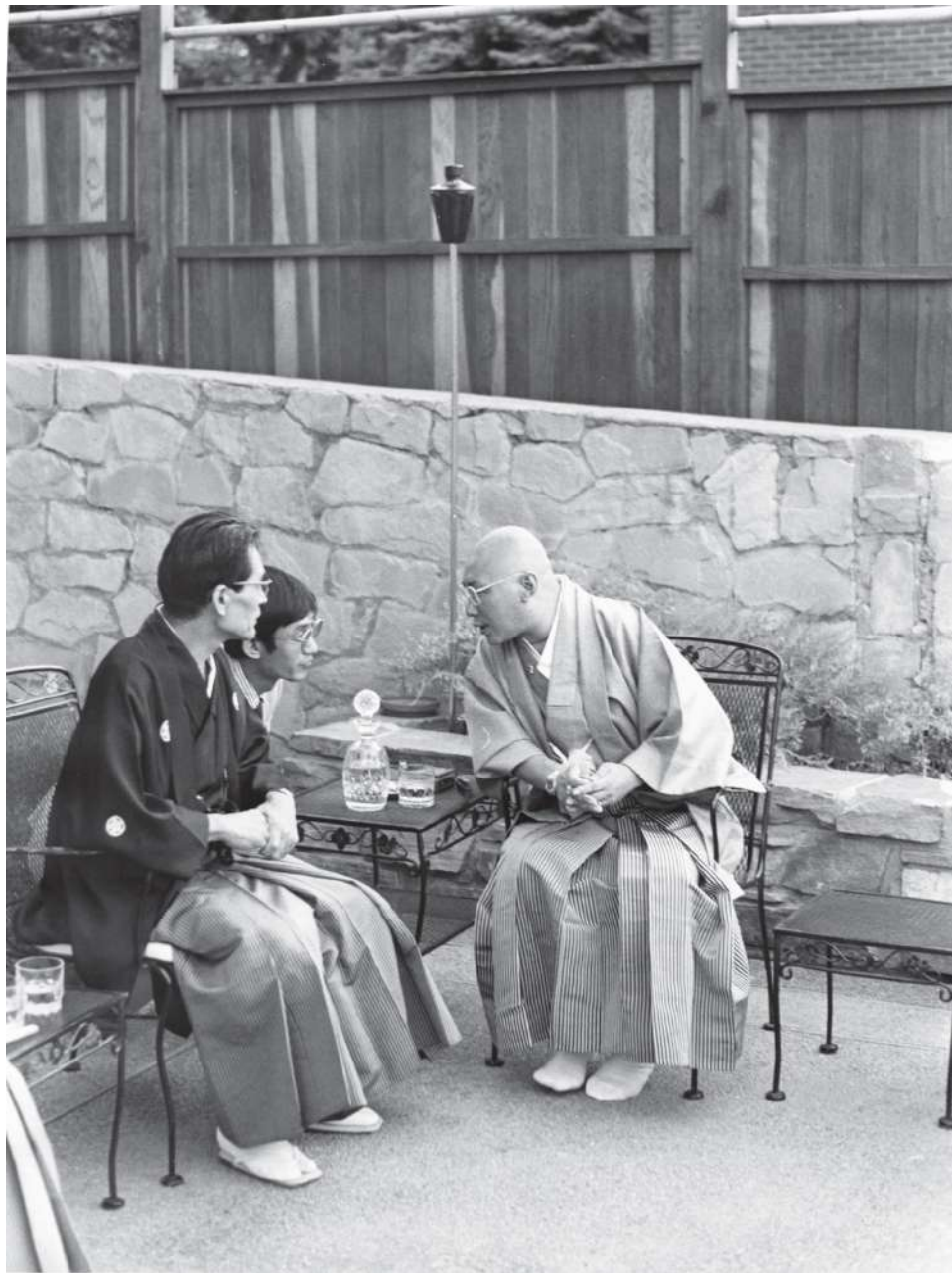
Japanese *do* (ways), introduced students to the profundity of *kado* (the way of flowers) and *chanoyu* (tea ceremony).

When Trungpa Rinpoche created the Naropa Institute in 1974, fulfilling another part of the vision he'd shared with Suzuki Roshi, he asked Kobun to help with the place and to look after it in the future. Kobun visited Naropa every year until his tragic death in the summer of 2002, guiding the school with his own elegant, understated presence and his serious practice. At the time of his death, Kobun held the Wisdom Chair at Naropa, and numerous artworks of his graced the campus.

The friendship between Kobun and Trungpa Rinpoche remained through the years as it had begun—gentle, loving, creative. “It was like family,” observed publisher Sam Bercholz. “There was absolutely no one-upmanship; they connected in a way that was simply like sharing food and drink. Kobun was always just there.” Indeed, early in their friendship, Kobun and Rinpoche pledged to be reborn as brothers throughout their lives.

In 1971, Eido Shimano Roshi hosted a visit from Trungpa Rinpoche. Eido Roshi—known then as Tai-san—was a student of the great Soen Nakagawa Roshi, who'd sent him to the West. Tai-san had been eager to come and had learned very good English; he'd first visited New York in 1963, serving as translator to Hakuun Yasutani Roshi. Eido Roshi was by 1971 a dynamic, macho-tending Zen teacher of the old style: he favored things Japanese and strict. He could on the other hand create an electrifying atmosphere through dramatic use of Zen forms, as well as his intense personal presence. He was also a talented artist.





*Trungpa Rinpoche with Kanjuro Shibata Sensei.*  
COURTESY THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.



*Trungpa Rinpoche with Eido Shimano Roshi.*  
COURTESY THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES.

Eido Roshi and Trungpa Rinpoche met together a number of times in Eido's home in New York, at least once together with Soen Roshi himself. On this occasion, Eido Roshi warned Trungpa Rinpoche—famous for making his students wait hours for a talk—that if he were to come to meet Soen, he would have to be on time. Rinpoche arrived a very correct ten minutes early. The masters all did calligraphy together and were served sake by a devoted student who'd bizarrely kept the bottle against her body for three days. She'd been told that sake tasted best at "human body temperature."

Eido Roshi was in equal measure suspicious of and fascinated by Trungpa Rinpoche. "Who is this guy?" he asked a student who knew them both. What Roshi seemed to want to know was how Trungpa Rinpoche could be an acknowledged lineage master and scholar with a devoted following, and at the same time have habits like smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, and conducting extramarital affairs with his students. Every time Eido Roshi had ventured into these behaviors—and it seems he ventured fairly often—he suffered unpleasant consequences. The student explained that Rinpoche hid neither his drinking nor

his philandering, that deceit and shame played no role in his approach, and that he genuinely seemed to love all his students, not only the female ones with whom the intimacy developed to a point of physical love.

Eido Roshi came to Karmê Chöling after Rinpoche's death in 1987, where Trungpa Rinpoche was to be cremated. Unable to stay for the ceremony because of prior commitments, Roshi meditated with Rinpoche's body, met with his wife and eldest son (the present Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche), and performed private rituals. He also left as a gift a box of priceless incense that was subsequently used at the cremation. Roshi felt so touched at Karmê Chöling that he stayed until the last minute before his flight, soaking up the atmosphere of devotion and of the mindful, cheerful, indefatigable preparation that had been going on for many weeks. As his car finally raced at illegal speeds toward the airport, he proclaimed to his attendant over and over again that he'd at last seen the greatness of Trungpa Rinpoche; he'd seen Rinpoche's greatness in the environment of Karmê Chöling and in the comportment of his students. Roshi announced to his stressed driver that Trungpa Rinpoche was in fact *kami*. This nomination from Shinto tradition would have pleased Trungpa Rinpoche very much, as it refers to a larger-than-human energy usually associated with environments—rivers, valleys, mountains, springs, and so on; such energy could also be found associated with noble clans, nation-states, and genuine spiritual practice, and is in many ways equivalent to the Tibetan term *drala*. Invoking and manifesting *drala* had filled the last ten years of Trungpa Rinpoche's life and teaching.

It was at the 1976 ceremony installing Eido Roshi as abbot of Dai Bosatsu Zendo, a monastery in upstate New York, that Trungpa Rinpoche met Hakuyu Taizan Maezumi Roshi. This complex and important friendship postdates the talks in this book and is thus beyond its scope, but perhaps one story might be included, to show how Trungpa Rinpoche had begun to assume a “caretaking,” advisory role toward the Zen teachers around him.

Dennis Genpo Merzel (now Roshi) acted as Maezumi Roshi's attendant at the Dai Bosatsu ceremony, and in this capacity he scurried around between events, inviting people to come to Maezumi Roshi's room for tea and refreshments. Trungpa Rinpoche accepted the invitation and sat next to Genpo during the palaver. At one point Rinpoche leaned over and quietly asked, “Are you Roshi's attendant?”

Until this time, Genpo had only thought of himself as Maezumi Roshi's student, so he replied, “Sort of.” “Then you should never leave his side!”

Rinpoche told him sharply. Genpo felt this direct address as a wake-up call—for himself personally and for the entire Zen Center of Los Angeles community—on how to attend their teacher.

The fatherly approach Trungpa Rinpoche took toward young Zen teachers went quite a bit further in the case of Jakusho Bill Kwong Roshi. Bill Kwong had been a close and important disciple of Suzuki Roshi's and had, with the help of Zen Center and Richard Baker, gotten an excellent piece of land in the Sonoma Valley on which to establish a Zen practice place after Suzuki Roshi's death. Trungpa Rinpoche visited him often at what came to be called Sonoma Mountain Zen Center; he made sure as well that Kwong was invited to any of his appearances in the San Francisco Bay area and given a good seat in the front row.

But there were demands as well. Kwong was asked to come help with the first dathün in Colorado, and Trungpa Rinpoche heightened the communication between them, not allowing empty forms to suffice. When Kwong replied once in an automatic way to Rinpoche's inquiry, saying he was "fine," Trungpa Rinpoche fixed him with a stare and a vigorous "What!?" that left the young Kwong feeling he'd been "crushed to pieces," with the fragments falling into Trungpa Rinpoche's palm. On another occasion, Trungpa Rinpoche sat rolling a vajra in his hand—a symbolic thunderbolt/weapon/scepter used in tantric practice—and Kwong asked somewhat idly what it was. Trungpa Rinpoche simply handed it to him, as a gift.

That golden vajra sits today on the main altar at Sonoma Mountain, and in the middle of an open grassy hill a few hundred yards away, a portion of Trungpa Rinpoche's bones lie in a beautiful, copper and cedar, Japanese-style reliquary hut. Another hundred yards farther on, down a winding path to a shady grove of oak and laurel, some of Suzuki Roshi's ashes are buried beneath the kind of stupa he preferred—a large, shapely granite boulder. Thus the two teachers are in a kind of characteristic posthumous proximity. Both Kwong Roshi and Kobun observed that while Zen is full of shadow, indirect allusion, hiddenness, mystery, and moonlight, the vajrayana taught by Trungpa Rinpoche radiated with sunlight and brilliant color and clarity and openness.



*Jakusho Kwong Roshi.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIAN SCHMIDT.

In the talks in this book, Trungpa Rinpoche uses exactly this kind of aesthetic contrast to tease out the differences in the two paths. Where Zen aesthetic, based in the Yogachara tradition of mind only, leads to statements of refined simplicity

and elegance, tantra needs no statement at all, opting for the naked bluntness of things as they are. Where Zen leads to a clear, open, lofty mind, tantra points to ordinary mind, the lowest of the low. Trungpa Rinpoche pictured such differences for his hirsute audiences as being comparable to a beautifully dressed noble person (Zen), as opposed to an unemployed, unshaven samurai (tantra), or like the teacup and skullcup of this book's title. That the tantric aesthetic was rougher stemmed not from its lack of sophistication or practice, but rather from the notion that refinement or self-conscious artistic statement were no longer necessary for the tantric yogi.

These varied approaches to art and aesthetic expression, Trungpa Rinpoche says, derive from the philosophical roots underpinning the two traditions. Scholars and surveyors of Buddhism have long been fond of placing Zen in categories, associating it with this or that textual tradition. (The great Edward Conze's "mahayana Buddhism plus Chinese jokes" is not atypical.) When Trungpa Rinpoche places Zen at the highest development of the mahayana, he does so not based on sutra allusion or historical accident alone. He recognizes Zen as an insider, with the sure feeling of one whose entire life had been devoted to learning and (more so) to practicing the paths of Buddhism; he recognizes Zen as one who himself had grown up in a monastery and knew intimately how the training felt and worked on a student; he recognizes Zen as one who had studied devotedly at the feet of his teachers and knew the crucial function of "warm hand to warm hand" lineage transmission in Zen.

In these seminars Trungpa Rinpoche praises Zen as an "extraordinary development of precision"; he calls it fantastic; he points out how with its sharp black-and-white distinctions and exhausting monastic schedule Zen leads to a full realization of prajna (wisdom). Then he goes on to say that tantra was a further step. And yet there is no sense of hierarchy imposed—or at least no clear one. While Zen stands as the fruition of mahayana, Trungpa Rinpoche posits, crazy wisdom reaches the fruition of vajrayana, the third great aspect of the Buddhist path.

It is startling that Trungpa Rinpoche could posit tantra as an evolution of Zen, a step beyond it, while conveying absolutely no sense of belittlement. But that is exactly what he manages in the seminars, through sympathetic insight and admiration. The matter of their relative status for him is not clear-cut in any case. In other talks on Zen, Rinpoche acknowledged that it would definitely be possible for Zen practitioners to attain tantric realization, and he mentions Suzuki Roshi as an example of someone who had done it. He further allowed, in

the commentary on the Zen Ox-Herding Pictures included in this volume, that the latter illustrations portray tantric understanding. He wrote, “The final realization of Zen leads to the wisdom of *maha ati*” (the highest level of tantra). According to Rinpoche’s commentary, this is portrayed in the seventh drawing of the sequence. The eighth, ninth, and tenth pictures—all further steps on the Zen path—show different aspects of tantric enlightenment. Thus on the one hand Zen leads to tantra, but on the other hand, the Zen path, seen through its art, accurately describes tantric fruition—how could this be? Perhaps Zen and tantra are not what one thinks.

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1. He was a vigorous artist as well, mounting several full-scale environmental installations, writing pieces for theater and film, and—despite working mindfully and utterly without hurry—producing an astonishing number of original calligraphies, drawings, photographs, and lithographs.
2. As a teacher and meditation master, he met with and counseled professionals from the fields of psychology, medicine, business, and education, founding in this latter branch a collegial institute for learning in 1974 that developed into the fully accredited Naropa University.
3. Later edited and published as *Journey without Goal*, Prajna Publications, 1981.

## *On Trust in the Heart (Hsin-Hsin Ming)<sup>4</sup>*

*Attributed to Seng-ts'an, the third patriarch of the Dhyana Sect*

*Translated by Arthur Waley*

The Perfect Way is only difficult for those who pick and choose; Do not like, do not dislike; all will then be clear.

Make a hairbreadth difference, and Heaven and Earth are set apart; If you want the truth to stand clear before you, never be for or against.

The struggle between “for” and “against” is the mind’s worst disease; While the deep meaning is misunderstood, it is useless to meditate on Rest.

It [the buddha nature] is blank and featureless as space; it has no “too little” or “too much”; Only because we take and reject does it seem to us not to be so.

Do not chase after Entanglements as though they were real things, Do not try to drive pain away by pretending that it is not real; Pain, if you seek serenity in Oneness, will vanish of its own accord.

Stop all movement in order to get rest, and rest will itself be restless; Linger over either extreme, and Oneness is forever lost.

Those who cannot attain to Oneness in either case will fail: To banish Reality is to sink deeper into the Real;

Allegiance to the Void implies denial of its voidness.

The more you talk about It, the more you think about It, the further from It you go; Stop talking, stop thinking, and there is nothing you will not understand.

Return to the Root and you will find the Meaning;

Pursue the Light, and you will lose its source,

Look inward, and in a flash you will conquer the Apparent and the Void.

For the whirligigs of Apparent and Void all come from mistaken views; There is no need to seek Truth; only stop having views.

— . . . . .



Do not accept either position [assertion and negation], examine it or pursue it; At the least thought of “Is” and “Isn’t” there is chaos and the Mind is lost.

Though the two exist because of the One, do not cling to the One; Only when no thought arises are the Dharmas without blame.

No blame, no Dharmas; no arising, no thought.

The doer vanishes along with the deed,

The deed disappears when the doer is annihilated.

The deed has no function apart from the doer;

The doer has no function apart from the deed.

The ultimate Truth about both Extremes is that they are One Void.

In that One Void the two are not distinguished;

Each contains complete within itself the Ten Thousand Forms.

Only if we boggle over fine and coarse are we tempted to take sides.

In its essence the Great Way is all-embracing;

It is as wrong to call it easy as to call it hard.

Partial views are irresolute and insecure,

Now at a gallop, now lagging in the rear.

Clinging to this or to that beyond measure

The heart trusts to bypaths that lead it astray.

Let things take their own course; know that the Essence will neither go nor stay; Let your nature blend with the Way and wander in it free from care.

Thoughts that are fettered turn from Truth,

Sink into the unwise habit of “not liking.”

“Not liking” brings weariness of spirit; estrangements serve no purpose.

If you want to follow the doctrine of the One, do not rage against the World of the Senses.

Only by accepting the World of the Senses can you share in the True Perception.

Those who know most, do least; folly ties its own bonds.

In the Dharma there are no separate dharmas, only the foolish cleave To their own preferences and attachments.

To use Thought to devise thoughts, what more misguided than this?

TO USE THOUGHT TO DEVISE THOUGHTS, WHAT MORE MISGUIDED THAN THIS:

Ignorance creates Rest and Unrest; Wisdom neither loves nor hates.

All that belongs to the Two Extremes is inference falsely drawn— A  
dream-phantom, a flower in the air. Why strive to grasp it in the hand?

“Is” and “Isn’t,” gain and loss banish once for all:

If the eyes do not close in sleep there can be no evil dreams; If the mind  
makes no distinctions all Dharmas become one.

Let the One with its mystery blot out all memory of complications.

Let the thought of the Dharmas as All-One bring you to the So-in-itself.

Thus their origin is forgotten and nothing is left to make us pit one against  
the other.

Regard motion as though it were stationary, and what becomes of motion?

Treat the stationary as though it moved, and that disposes of the stationary.

Both these having thus been disposed of, what becomes of the One?

At the ultimate point, beyond which you can go no further, You get to  
where there are no rules, no standards,

To where thought can accept Impartiality,

To where effect of action ceases,

Doubt is washed away, belief has no obstacle.

Nothing is left over, nothing remembered;

Space is bright, but self-illuminated; no power of mind is exerted.

Nor indeed could mere thought bring us to such a place.

Nor could sense or feeling comprehend it.

It is the Truly-so, the Transcendent Sphere, where there is neither He nor I.

For swift converse with this sphere use the concept “Not Two”; In the “Not  
Two” are no separate things, yet all things are included.

The wise throughout the Ten Quarters have had access to this Primal Truth;

For it is not a thing with extension in Time or Space;

A moment and an aeon for it are one.

Whether we see it or fail to see it, it is manifest always and everywhere.

The very small is as the very large when boundaries are forgotten; The very  
large is as the very small when its outlines are not seen.

Being is an aspect of Non-being; Non-being is an aspect of Being.

In climes of thought where it is not so the mind does ill to dwell.

The One is none other than the All, the All none other than the One.  
Take your stand on this, and the rest will follow of its own accord; To trust  
in the Heart is the Not Two, the Not Two is to trust in the Heart.  
I have spoken, but in vain; for what can words tell  
Of things that have no yesterday, tomorrow or today?

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4. Trungpa Rinpoche was very fond of this poem and encouraged his students to study it. It was a standard reading during full-day group meditation sessions held in the early seventies called *sesshins*, following the Zen convention, and later referred to as *nyinthüns*, a Tibetan term meaning daylong sitting. In teacup-skullcup fashion, other standard readings included poetry of the great *mahasiddha* Saraha and the writings of the ati masters Petrül Rinpoche and Jigme Lingpa.

*Part One*

THE AWAKENING OF PRAJNA

## *Very Practical Joke*

*In Zen, there is that faint smile—the big joke quality, the morning star quality—taking place all the time, which provides comic relief. There are little glimpses, little crumbs of light-handedness in the midst of the enormous black robes, black zafus, and black heavy-handed environment that goes on in Zen. The way Zen people seek prajna is extraordinarily precise.*

**I**N THIS SEMINAR we are going to examine the different conclusions of Zen and tantra. If we begin to discuss the two approaches, we will be lost. If we take a glimpse at the conclusions, we might have something more concrete. The reason is that all of us are more or less thoroughly involved in, or at least interested in, the practice of meditation.

At this stage in the Buddhist development of America, both Zen and tantra have become extraordinarily seductive. In comparing the two, we are not talking about competition between them or which is best. Instead, we are looking at the landmarks that have developed in the Zen tradition, as well as the landmarks of the tantric tradition. Although we are mainly talking about different landmarks, we still cannot dismiss the gradual, linear process in which the teachings were presented by the Buddha. We cannot dismiss the turning of the dharma wheel of the sutra teachings of the hinayana and mahayana and of the teachings of both lower and higher tantras. We still have to go through that linear approach.

First comes Zen. In the Zen tradition, the basis of life or the basis of discipline is accuracy. We could quite safely say that: it is accuracy. To a certain extent, it is the accuracy of black and white. In the Zen tradition there is no gray; nor is there yellow, red, green, or blue: it is black and white. That is the *paramita* of meditation: *dhyana* practice, Zen practice, or Ch'an. The very nature of black and white brings a student of Zen into a highly disciplined place, without any escape. A practitioner of Zen, or Ch'an, has been cornered by the choicelessness and also cornered by the lack of entertainment. So we could say that Zen is a practitioner's lineage, and a Zen student is a traditional practitioner in the

mahayana school of discipline, the highest one of all.

Another branch of the mahayana school, which developed in Tibet, can be seen in the Geluk tradition. In India, the Nālandā and Vikramashila Universities developed a school of logic in which, instead of doing pure sitting practice, you replace the sitting by the practice of sharpening your intellect. This demands that the basic sophistication of intelligence is raised up to the highest point, as much as one can, to the point of limitlessness. At that point, ordinary logical conclusions and logical debates become meaningless, and one develops higher thinking—the epitome of the highest way of relating with the reasoning mind.

In the Zen tradition, it seems that the whole approach is intuitive. The student's mind is put into situations of practice and into the simplicity of discipline, so that the student does not have a chance to use his or her intellect or logical mind at all. The only use of logical mind such a student could develop is the choice at the beginning to decide to go to such and such a temple and study under such and such a master. That is the student's only intellectual choice; and that choice may be tinged with emotionalism and intuitive feelings toward Buddhism and committing oneself to it. But beyond that, once a student has entered into Zen discipline, there is no place for intellect. It is simple and direct. For example, if you are composing your own verses about the dharma, the master catches you if the slightest intellectualization comes up. Such intellectualization is cut down and swept away along with the dust on the meditation hall floor.

A dichotomy arises at this point, in that Zen logic is constantly engrossed with relative reference points. We could almost say that if a person doesn't have any relative reference to the world, it is impossible for that person to understand Zen.

“If, as it's been said, prajna is neither big nor small, then what?”

“Since it has been said that prajna is neither big nor small, then I don't know.”

“That's it! You don't know.”

Not knowing prajna, you are confronted with the choice of whether you should associate yourself with prajna as large or small. But you have lost your choice because you have no hold on either of them, and you are bewildered. At that point, in the middle of bewilderment, a very refreshing glimpse of a gap begins to appear in your state of mind. You caught something—or you missed it.

Ironically, the Zen tradition is largely based on dichotomies and paradoxes of all kinds, but those paradoxes are more about feeling, rather than purely about logic. It's like ordering a meal in a restaurant. Most people don't think in terms

of the chemical interaction between certain foods or the combinations that would bring health, happiness, and pleasure—they order food according to what they desire. You choose based on what you intuitively desire or need; you lack something, and you want to fulfill it. You may desire a certain particular dish that sounds tasty—but then another dish also sounds tasty, so how do you choose between the two? You don't know. Then somebody gives you a dish. They push it onto your table and say, "Take it and eat it." You are handed this plateful, and you have no idea what it is. That was the choice: a choice was made because of your uncertainty. You were confused by the two simultaneous extremes, and now you have no idea what it is. In the same way as you have no idea what it is, because of bewilderment and confusion—as well as prajna—Zen students are extraordinarily receptive and open.

From that point of view, Zen could be said to be the biggest joke that has ever been played in the spiritual realm. But it is a practical joke, very practical. However, there is a difference between a joke and a trick. One of the problems that we in America have ended up with is that when people try to be "Zennie," they do that by being tricky. A lot of seeming charlatans have managed to escape, to get away with that. Not only do they get away with it themselves, but they impose their egohood onto others. Their trickiness undermines others' openness, and the whole thing feels so extremely awesome and reverent, so solid and solemn. In the name of Zen in this country, a lot of people were misled. We should pray for them—if they still survive.

One of the most important and powerful principles, the utmost essence of Zen, is the principle of prajna. Prajna is a state of mind in which we have complete clarity, complete certainty. Such an experience is very rare, but at the same time very precise and penetrating. It can only occur in our state of mind for, say, once in a hundred moments. The nature of prajna starts with bewilderment. It is as if we were entering a school to study a certain discipline with great, wise, learned people. The first self-conscious awareness we would have is a sense of our own ignorance, how we feel extraordinarily stupid, clumsy, and dumb. At the same time, we begin to get wind of the knowledge; otherwise, we would have no reference point to experience ourselves being dumb.

The first glimpse of prajna is like that. There is a sense of confusion, stupidity, and utter chaos, in that you have no systematic way of organizing your mind or your intelligence. You are all over the place, and you feel that your existence is a big heap of apology. The minute you walk into such a learned circle of great teachers—of art or science or whatever else—your footsteps sound louder and

louder and louder and your shadow becomes thicker and thicker, as if you had a gigantic body. You feel so clumsy entering into such a circle. You begin to smell your own perspiration, and you feel big and clumsy and in the way. Your whole being, trying to communicate with such teachers, is a gigantic attempt to apologize that you exist. Strangely enough, that is the wind of prajna. Knowing one's own stupidity is, indeed, the first glimpse of prajna, very much so.

The interesting point, however, is that we cannot consistently be stupid. Our stupidity is not all that well fortified. There are certain gaps in which we forget that we are stupid, that we are completely bewildered. Those glimpses, those gaps where we have some room—definitely that is prajna. This is demonstrated very beautifully in the Zen tradition of monastic discipline. From morning to evening in Zen training periods, every activity has been planned and taught. In the morning you are dealing with sitting practice; at mealtimes you are dealing with oryoki, how to eat food, how to unfold your napkins. Then there are walking practices and study period, cooking duty and cleaning duty. Even when you are sleeping, you may be sleeping in the temple or in the meditation hall, on duty.

Whatever duty you are assigned, all of them are a challenge and a mockery. They are making a mockery of you, making you feel completely bored and extraordinarily inadequate. The more you become associated with learned people, that much more self-conscious you become. It is extraordinary discipline, and it is an extraordinary, extraordinary joke—but it's not a trick. Such a big joke is being played on you that you find that the environment around you, where you practice, has no room for anything else. Occasionally, you indulge in your confusion. That's the only break you have—indulging in your confusion and bewilderment. Strangely enough, such discipline works, and prajna gradually grows.

In Zen discipline, you can sleep for only four hours a night, and the rest of the time you spend either sitting, working, or doing something. Getting into such definite, real discipline in the fullest sense provides you with enormous boredom and enormous uncertainty. At a certain point, you find that you are so tired and sleepy that the boundary between the day and night begins to dissolve. You are uncertain as to whether you are awake and functioning in the daylight as a normal, ordinary human being, or whether you are dreaming the whole thing. That is prajna all-pervading. When the boundaries begin to become fuzzy, that's where prajna is taking hold of you.



Zen discipline is fantastic and extraordinary. Such an approach is obviously not the dream of one person, or one person's idea; it has been developed throughout generations. The drowsiness and sleepiness and confusion and extreme heavy-handed disciplines you go through bring out the underlying light and clarity within your being. It's not particularly exciting or beautiful at all; it's a big drag: your clumsiness and your laziness and every worst thing you can ever think of is being brought up. A big joke is being played on you; and at the same time, there is constantly room for prajna. One is halfway through prajna and confusion—it's happening constantly.

The only thing that keeps you in such a setup is your romantic notion toward the practice and discipline—your heroic approach to the path. Then there is the secret that only you know, or maybe only you and your teacher know, which is that a very secret and subtle love affair is taking place. You want to go on, and you are getting something out of this. That is prajna, that you are getting something out of this. It is very smart and very businesslike. Halfway through, you wake up in the morning, and you see the morning star. You say, "Ah, it's morning; that's the morning star"; then you fall back to sleep. Seeing the morning star is a glimpse of prajna. But you're still too lazy to write down, "I saw the morning star when I woke up in the morning." You think, "Never mind about that."

The prajna that the Zen people talk about is trying to catch yourself halfway through. It's almost a kind of subtle double take. You are just about to be confused; then you—Ahhhh! [*Trungpa draws in a breath.*] Something happens! Then you go on confusing. But then, something else comes up. There is a little jerk taking place constantly. In an ordinary situation of laziness, if you are in prison or an ordinary concentration camp or something like that, that dynamic doesn't take place, because your attitude is entirely different. You are not seeking enlightenment; you are just trying to get through the time. In this case, being in such an institution may physically seem equal to being in prison or a very skillfully organized torture chamber. Nevertheless, there is that faint smile—the big joke quality, the morning star quality—taking place all the time, which provides comic relief. There are little glimpses, little crumbs of light-handedness in the midst of the enormous black robes, black zafus, and black heavy-handed environment that goes on in Zen.

It's very interesting to see that the way in which Zen people seek prajna is extraordinarily precise. We could say that it is much more accurate than those logicians in Nālandā or Vikramashila. Zen has a more organic, more definite,

more direct way of approaching the underlying glimpse of prajna. In Zen, prajna is only a gap; there is no chance to redefine prajna in any way at all. *Prajna* simply means “transcendental knowledge.” *Pra* is “transcendent,” or “supreme,” *jna* means “knowledge,” so prajna is the wisdom of knowing; it is to know who you are and what you are.

One of the problems with such an approach and experience is that however much you talk about the sameness between samsara and nirvana, between that and this, between prajna and non-prajna, still you are subject to choice. Although you say, “Not here, not there, it’s everywhere,” you are still going from here to there. There is the awareness that you are making a particular journey, and that journey is going to lead you through a certain process. You have no chance to speculate more than that, because you are hassled by your schedule, your practices, and your mindfulness of details, which cuts down unnecessary bullshit, you might call it.

We could say that the Zen approach is a beginner’s point of view—like a Heath Robinson illustration of a pancake machine—of how to produce prajna in an ordinary person who is confused but still inspired. Latching on to that process is based on a combination of a mahayana spirit and hinayana discipline. That seems to be one of the basic points of the Zen tradition of Japan, as much as we know. There also seems to be a faint emphasis on goodness, being good. A notion of being morally pure and kind and precise goes along with it always. Processes such as recycling your food or eating your meal completely and cleaning your plate are very general examples of the mahayanist attitude of not polluting the air of the universe. Bodhisattvas should not become a nuisance to other sentient beings—moreover, you should save them.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* You talked about the prajna all-pervading as the fuzziness between morning and evening, sleeping and waking. Is that broken by wanting to define things? It seems that you immediately want to define it; you want to know it.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think so, yes. There is an enormous attempt to make yourself clear and definable—but even that attempt becomes fuzzy.

*S:* That can get very confusing. You want to be clear-minded about everything you’re doing, and everything becomes fuzzy, and then it keeps going around.

*CTR:* That's why I referred to it as a joke.

*S:* Very funny! How does the bodhisattva go about saving sentient beings?

*CTR:* By having trained himself or herself first. Basically, when you learn how to feel about yourself, you show that to others.

*S:* Would you say something about your emotional dislike for Zen as well as your intellectual dislike?

*CTR:* It seems that the Zen approach does not allow room to be disliked. Of course, we get very complicated in America, since we have a very similar, but entirely opposite, approach toward military discipline. Such discipline seems to do the same thing; nevertheless, this is mahayana, the compassionate path, which is of course entirely different. But Americans could get confused between the two.

In Zen, you are not allowed to be liked or disliked, because you have no chance; you have no room. Your practice and your schedule are constantly being run by others—not “the other” alone, but the others. You have no chance to speculate about anything at all. Disliking only takes place, I suppose, when your sense of humor and awareness—or your appreciation of the big joke—becomes sour. Then you begin to interpret that joke as being tricked. By then, no doubt, your practice is also waning.

*S:* What did you say about the pancake machine?

*CTR:* In English literature, there is a writer called Heath Robinson, who wrote a story about Professor Brainstawn. Professor Brainstawn is constantly inventing machines. He invents a pancake-making machine made out of buggies and brooms and things. There's a candle underneath the pan and a hammer below, and when the pancake is ready, just before, the hammer hits, and the pancake flies up and bounces off. Heath Robinson's notion of making a pancake is comparable to the Zen tradition of producing prajna. It seems to be the same kind of approach. Everything is a homemade machine, but it still works.

*S:* Outside the monastery, does the joke work the same way?

*CTR:* Definitely, yes, very much so, because you get the Zen syndrome anyway. That is, there is a dichotomy, then a back-and-forth, and finally you find nothing. That pattern takes place all the time, whether you are in a monastery or outside. But before you go out, you are supposed to have a really

good shot of the actual practice itself; otherwise, your discipline ceases to exist.

S: Do you think that Zen disconnects itself too much from the organic, that it doesn't acknowledge the process?

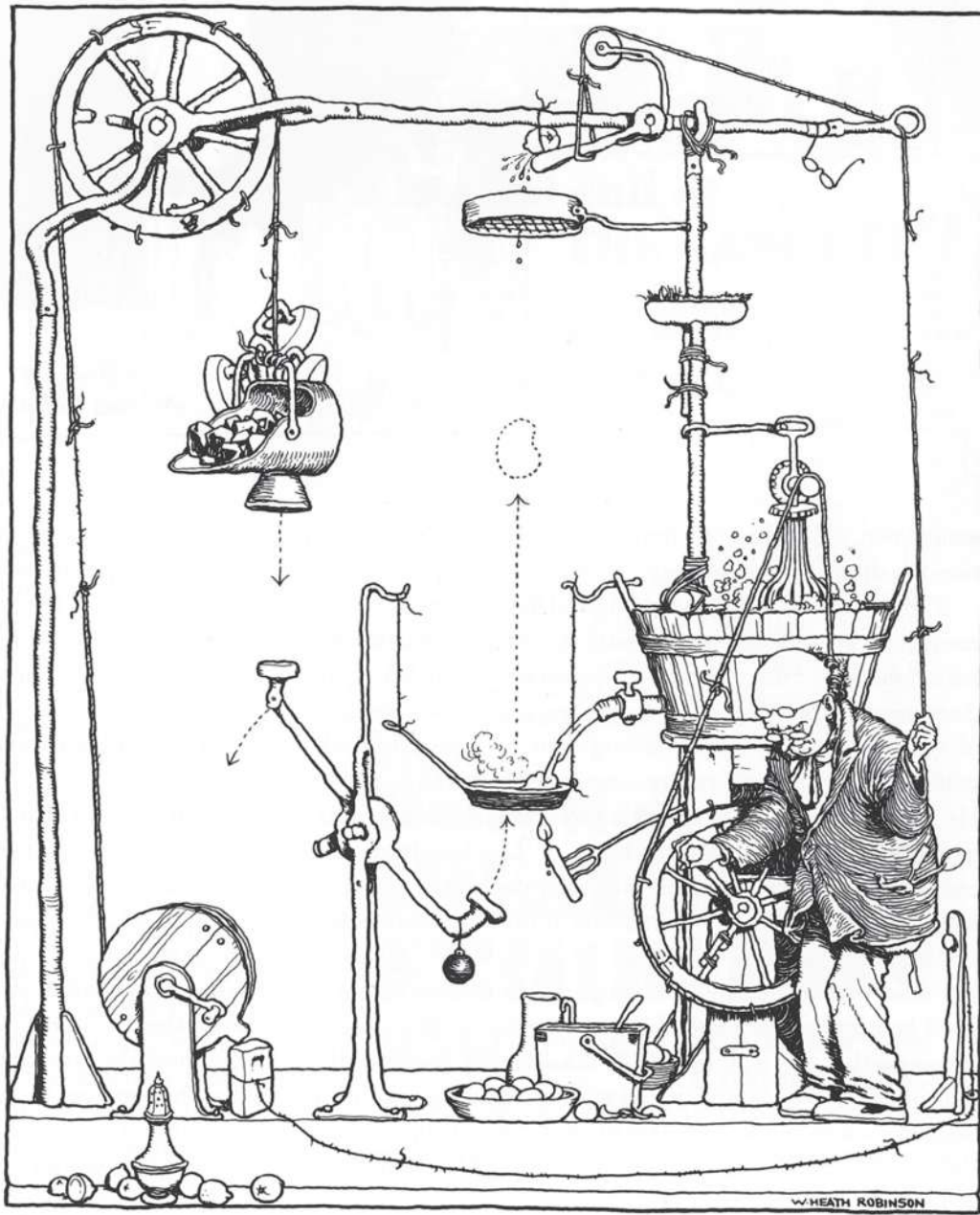
CTR: It simply doesn't acknowledge excuses or explanations: when you are mindless, you are mindless; when you are mindful, you are mindful.

S: Zen doesn't follow the process that one finds in tantra, for instance, the more gradual approach.

CTR: It doesn't. That's true; it doesn't. Also, in Zen monasteries they don't eat brown rice, but white rice.

S: It seems that there's a big difference in terms of discipline, at least at this point, between our communities—Karma Dzong, for example—and what you described as Zen discipline. It's more up to us in ours and seems to be more based on self-discipline. The opportunity for discipline is there, but it's up to us, rather than, as you said, being imposed by others. Why the difference?

CTR: We use real machines, rather than Heath Robinson's contraption, to make pancakes. It seems that the scientific American mentality is more cunning fox or roadrunner than stubborn mule or donkey.



*Heath Robinson illustration.*

S: Part of the seduction of Zen seems to be aimed at yielding something that feels as if it's just the opposite of what you are trying to do when you are practicing Zen practices. I mean, there is a desire to get the black really black and the white pure so that you release some power that feels very full and all-

pervading. I don't see the difference between that desire and the desire that aspires to the full range of colors available through tantra.

*CTR:* That's precisely why I said that particularly in the West the audience is like cunning foxes or roadrunners. Because of that, a lot of American Zen students take pride in practices that seemingly were designed to develop boredom—but instead of getting bored, they develop a lot of romantic notions about the whole thing. Immense attention is paid to accuracy, and subtleties become a work of art, which is a bohemian kind of approach. That seems to be the problem. Zen practices are supposed to provide real boredom. You should be really cornered by them.

*S:* Would you say that you are training your disciples to be one or the other? Foxes or roadrunners?

*CTR:* I don't think so. All Americans are roadrunners, if I may say so.

*S:* They seem to be running on different tracks: one's running a mile and one's running a half mile.

*CTR:* There's no point in changing your character.

*S:* It's definitely changing the discipline.

*CTR:* Yes.

*S:* Doesn't that relate to character at all?

*CTR:* I don't think so; character is character.

*S:* And discipline is discipline.

*CTR:* Yes.

*S:* With reference to what you were saying about prajna, it seems you said that when everything becomes kind of confused and hazy, there is a precision of sight, rather than when you sort of stop and see something clearly. Am I understanding you correctly?

*CTR:* Yes. You can't stop, because once you begin to stop, you have lost it.

*S:* Is stopping trying to gain a reference point?

*CTR:* Yes. But then you have destroyed it. You cannot stop and catch it.

S: So you really can't do anything better, in a sense.

*CTR*: Yes. The only thing to do is to keep up with the routine and the practice.

S: It seems that the pancake machine is a very indirect way of making pancakes. How does that relate to the more direct or precise way?

*CTR*: It is very precise, as far as we can go and as far as the order of the universe goes. There is no other precision; that is the closest we can get. It is enormously precise, compared to some of the other attempts that have been made. That's it. And it works.

S: But wouldn't it be more precise and direct to make pancakes in a frying pan?

*CTR*: Then you would not have to work with the machine, which is full of intelligence. That way would be based on your being too lazy to use your machine: you just want to do it. It would be like killing an animal and eating its stomach out instead of warming it in the fire. It's very gruesome.

S: What I hear you saying is that there's a rather innate fundamental difference in the character of the person from America, as opposed to the person who's from an Eastern country—more than something learned, something fundamental to our nature.

*CTR*: Yes, I think so. It is not purely cultural or genetic or psychological, but it's the accumulation of how somebody inherits somebody else's insanity. It's a kind of plague that went around in America—a different kind of plague than what went around in Japan or Tibet, for that matter, a different kind of sickness. It has nothing to do with culture, particularly, but still, such plagues are contagious.

S: What is a roadrunner? Sorry, I don't know.

*CTR*: You must know what a roadrunner is. The bird—like the Road Runner you see in cartoons—that runs so fast that when it tries to break its momentum or speed, it vibrates.

S: Could you say something more about the jerk that happens between areas or spaces of confusion? "Jerk" in my understanding is clear thought, but it's still a dualistic type of awareness. Then you go back and forth until, you say, you have nothing. Is that what you mean, that the jerk is not particularly what you

are after? I mean, it is what you are after—clear perception—but it is not the ultimate outcome. You don't just expand that.

*CTR:* Well, not quite. The essence or the marrow of that can be expanded. You can expand the essence of it, but not the process. The jerk produces a clear space—you cannot artificially re-create that clear space by providing an artificial jerk. So it's almost as if prajna is the aftereffect of the jerk, not the jerk itself.

*S:* Not the clearness of the jerk?

*CTR:* The jerk itself is not clear; then, usually, you panic.

*S:* Seeing both sides.

*CTR:* Yes. Then you panic; then you can get confused; and then you might find something clear. It has phases. If you could view the jerk process like a slow-motion movie, you could see that first you panic, then you jerk, then you get confused, and then you have a gap of not knowing what to do next. That not knowing what to do next is a crumb of prajna. It is literally a piece of prajna. Then you go on from that, speeding along again.

*S:* Don't you go on from there to the next point: feeling really great to have these experiences?

*CTR:* I don't think so, no, because then you are already acknowledging yourself, and that's quite different from the jerk.

*S:* It eliminates the whole experience.

*CTR:* Yes, it does.

*S:* Is the prajna overlaid by hesitation?

*CTR:* Hesitation is one of the first signs of prajna: panic, jerk, confusion, and hesitation. It is the thinning out of all the heavy-handedness—and then prajna begins to dawn. It is very, very, very, very subtle and minute—almost hardly there—but it is so potent; it happens to be there.

*S:* At that point, or gap, would it help to reflect on the process before slipping along, rather than keep on going?

*CTR:* You can't stop yourself at that point. However, there is obviously a point to acknowledging that and reflecting back. Again, that is not very accurate; it is just sort of finger painting what happened, very crude. Nonetheless,



acknowledging that something did take place is encouragement, which then provides patience and discipline on the future path. The whole thing is a Heath Robinson contraption.

S: I was thinking about those cartoons of the Road Runner. Wile E. Coyote always tries to catch the Road Runner. He shoots bullets at him, and the Road Runner runs faster than the bullets. He tries to blow him up with dynamite and blows himself up instead. He rides jet-propelled bicycles and smashes himself up again. If Americans are roadrunners, how do you ever catch this roadrunner? Or is it absolutely totally invulnerable?

CTR: You don't catch a roadrunner; the roadrunner catches itself. It finds its own fault, in its own speed, which is not fast enough.

S: You mean the bird becomes scared of its own shadow and can't get away?

CTR: I don't know exactly how it goes—

S: When the Road Runner gets away, he goes, "Beep! Beep!" And a mule, when he throws somebody, just kicks his feet up in the air. Are there any qualitative differences between those two?

CTR: I think so, yes. No doubt!

S: Like what, for instance?

CTR: Maybe the mule practices judo.

S: But maybe the roadrunner is a master of *chado* [tea].

CTR: Anything you say.

## ***Precision and Vastness***

*In the tantric tradition, the experience of life is regarded as an endless ocean, a limitless sky—or it is regarded as just one dot, one situation.*

*[Ed. The talk begins with two readings from The Life and Teaching of Nāropa, by Herbert Guenther, read by Robin Kornman.]*

The blind do not see by tarrying  
And the deaf hear not,  
The dumb do not understand the meaning  
And the lame walk not.  
A tree does not grow roots  
And Mahāmudrā is not understood.

The sky-flower, the Dāka riding on the foal  
Of a barren mare, the Oral Transmission,  
Has scattered the hairs of tortoise, the ineffable,  
And with the stick of a hare's horn, the unoriginated,  
Roused Tilopa in the depth of ultimate reality.

Through the mute Tilopa, the ineffable resisting all attempts at  
communication,  
The blind Nāropa became free in seeing Truth which is no seeing.  
On the mountain of the Dharmakāya which is the ultimate, the deaf  
Nāropa,  
The lame Mati [*Marpa*] ran in a radiant light, which neither comes  
nor goes.  
The sun and moon and Yeshe Dorje—  
Their dancing is one-valueness in many.

The conch-shell has proclaimed its fame in all directions,  
It has called out to the strenuous, who are worthy vessels for  
instruction.

The focal points, Cakrasaṃvara—the world  
Is the wheel of the Oral Transmission:  
Turn it, dear child, without attachment.

Tantra is generally referred to as the vehicle that provides instant enlightenment. Its means and its method are the various meditative practices and techniques. Here again, we can only see these techniques and methods, or relate to them, as landmarks. We are discussing tantric experience rather than tricks, such as the notion that merely by applying certain applications, we are going to attain enlightenment. So the highlights and what are related to the highlights provide the most important understanding of tantra. As a typical example, there is a tantric expression: one-taste, or one-value. The notion of one-taste has the sense of being here now and relating with what is there. In other words, being more aware of the landmarks of your life, rather than regarding all things as schooling, purely an educational system you are going through.

We could compare tantra with what we discussed previously about the Zen tradition, that Zen deliberately tries to provide chances to understand prajna, to realize prajna, and to develop the prajna principle within you through the application of certain physical disciplines. The Zen approach of trying to be here now seems to be slightly different from the tantric approach: in the Zen tradition, being here now is still relating with a journey or a process. Keeping to a certain schedule provides a fixed attitude to life—almost to the point of acknowledging yesterday, today, and tomorrow, rather than purely acknowledging today, or being in today. As another example, you clean your house or you clean your kitchen in a Zen way. Obviously, there is a sense of intelligence that tells the cleaner, or student, that it is going to be clean at the end, that you are going to produce an immaculate Zen kitchen. That is already understood. But still, the notion of journey and of perfection provides less sense of one-valueness.

In the tantric tradition, the experience of life is regarded as an endless ocean, a limitless sky—or it is regarded as just one dot, one situation. Therefore, the idea of “not two,” or the *advaita* principle, is an important principle in tantric Buddhism. It is “not two,” but “not two” does not only mean “be one.” If you do not have two, you also do not have one. It is just “no,” rather than even “not.” So

nothing is left behind to provide a source of reference point or a source of meditative indulgence or, for that matter, a source of disappointment, at all. It is one-value—which means no-value.

The epitome of shunyata is only expressed in the vajrayana teachings, we could quite safely say. In the teachings of the hinayana or mahayana schools, we have seen only a partial glimpse of the shunyata principle. The reason this is so is because there is the acquisition of a hammer to break the cup. Breaking the cup—the discovery of shunyata—is no doubt the highest cardinal truth and the highest realization that has ever been known in the realm of buddhadharma. But in order to realize this, one has to acquire a hammer, which has been sold in the form of intellect or in the form of books or in the form of practices. However, the hammer itself begins to be regarded as more valuable than its function of breaking the cup: it has been decorated with sacred symbols and with sutras written all over it. That is what is called the realization of shunyata as “not” rather than “no”: that the hammer has to demonstrate the mortality of the cup by hitting it and breaking it to pieces. Although it seems to be the same, in the tantric tradition, which is the tradition of a warrior without a sword, one does not need a hammer. One does not have to acquire a pair of eyeglasses or a powerful microscope to examine the dharmas. One uses one-value eyes, one-value mind, one-value bare hands to show the mortality of the cup. It is a very brutal approach, I suppose you could say, a very direct approach.

Vajrayana has often been regarded as the yana of means, and people have taken that as literal; but that’s not quite right. In vajrayana terms, the idea of upaya as “means,” or “skillful means,” is entirely different from how means and methods traditionally are described. Here, the method or means is itself vajrayana. They are not a way, even, or a particular style: the method and means are the same as the actual realization itself! In other words, generally there is a feeling, or attitude, that when we talk about method, it refers to the way that one travels from A to B, which is quite different from the tantric approach. Because of perceiving skillful means in that way, as a way to take a journey from A to B, the journey ceases to become the goal.

Of course, we could say that in the mahayana and hinayana traditions there is also the notion of path as goal and goal as path: cutting down ambition, speed, aggression, passion, and so forth. But there is a certain faint attitude in reference toward the path you trod on: it should show a definite footprint after you have left so that you could look back and appreciate how you trod on the path. That creates an inspiring example for your fellow students. It is like going on vacation

and taking snapshots, so we could bring them back home and show them around: we actually did go, and we did enjoy ourselves.

Tantric upaya, or skillful means, has the distinctive characteristic of approaching things very directly, very precisely and thoroughly, without even recording them in our memory bank. Such recording has been the problem. When we record things in our memory bank, we try to remember them again. We dig them out of our treasury or attic, where we store our junk, and we find them currently valuable, useful, and informative. But this usefulness and these skills we apply create what are called “habit-forming thoughts”—and these habitual thoughts tend to create a clouding-over effect to clarity.

In contrast, tantric methods or means do not develop habit patterns at all. Patience and diligence in the tantric tradition mean simply patience and diligence on the spot, rather than trying to train our memory bank and our habitual patterns, as if we were training an animal or toilet training a baby. In fact, a major difference between the mahayana and hinayana teachings and tantra is this: that the principle of the mahamudra experience—seeing clearly and precisely the function and energies of the universe as it is—has nothing to do with memorizing or recapturing anything.

If you have read *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa*, you probably remember the story of the prajna principle of intelligence in the form of an ugly woman who approached Naropa and asked him to admit that he did not know the sense but only the words. Well, he obviously did know the sense behind the words; otherwise, he couldn't know the words. Unless you are magnetic tape or something, as long as you have a brain, you would know the meaning behind the words. But in that story, the sense being referred to is the direct sense. That direct sense does not need and is not dependent upon any causal characteristics that provide memory, on any mental habit, on anything at all! It is the direct sense, the fresh one, the straight one. So it seems that the purpose of tantra is to destroy the habitual memory bank, so you could see precisely and clearly, without any distortion.

The spontaneity that develops from the tantric tradition and the sense of respect for the guru are immediate experience, rather than parental memory or habit-formed memory. Although spontaneity and frivolousness may seem to be quite close, they are entirely different. Frivolousness is a panicked form of spontaneity, in which you look for some immediate occupation in order to save yourself from egohood and the neurotic pains that you experience. In other

words, it is saving face. In order to maintain yourself in a certain way and still survive, you keep on latching on to occupation after occupation and responsibility after responsibility. Although you may not actually have that responsibility, having the title of responsibility creates enormous security. You make yourself available, useful and efficient, compulsive.

The spontaneity of the true nature is based on having a notion of being and a notion of nowness. There's no need for panic. Everything is clear and precise and you are acting upon it, depending on what the situation demands. In doing so, one may take different approaches: sometimes one has to be tough, and sometimes one has to be gentle, but that is dictated by the situation, which is seen very clearly. Again, there is no goal orientation at all, other than what is required at that very moment. Whenever there is goal orientation, there are possibilities that spontaneity could turn into frivolity. Such spontaneity seems to be the style of vajrayana practitioners' approach to life. Sometimes you might think that vajrayana practitioners are extremely accurate and intuitive, and sometimes their style may be dangerous, explosive—potentially explosive.

There seem to be differences in the landmarks of tantra and Zen. Nowness is the landmark in the tantric tradition; in the Zen tradition, basic form or formlessness is the landmark. That does not mean that the fundamental tradition of Zen depends purely on an external shell or color or mask. But still, as much as we might say there's no Buddha, there's no Zen, there's no zazen, there's no gong, and there's no zafu—we are still talking the language of form. That is not regarded as undesirable or desirable, particularly, but that's how it goes, so to speak; that is how it is presented.

In the vajrayana teachings, the question of “Is there something, or isn't there something?” is not particularly the big issue. If there is something, okay, let it be; if there isn't, okay, fine—but it is this. That is why the tantric tradition is regarded as most dangerous of all: those who still have some sense of existence and who are searching could come to vajrayana teachings without first going through the mahayana shunyata principle and the hinayana footing. Vajrayana sounds much closer to the confused mind of egohood, if you haven't gone through the journey. That is why it is regarded as very dangerous.

The tantric tradition is the tradition of sudden enlightenment, the school of sudden enlightenment. But in order to achieve a sudden glimpse of enlightenment, one has to develop in a gradual way, to be able to glimpse it. So we could say that in either Zen or vajrayana—whichever we are talking about—

there is no power that is truly sudden, truly Instamatic and automatic. Instant enlightenment is impossible.

The tantric approach to life is a straightforward view of reality, so straightforward we can't even think of it. At the same time, that view is indestructible; that understanding is imperturbable. For ordinary people, that view is frightening—it has such precision and such conviction, because there is no need for compliments or acknowledgment. That is why the term “crazy wisdom,” *yeshe chölwa*, has been used. Crazy wisdom ceases to look at limitations and is completely penetrating: it does not know curves or bends of this or that, beliefs and ideas, habits. It is like a laser beam. That is why it is called *vajra*, which is an “adamantine, indestructible essence.” In the tantric language, *vajra* pride, *vajra* anger, *vajra* passion—all of those are transcendental and indestructible, in the fully enlightened sense.

In the tantric tradition, the question of poverty and richness has never been raised, because that wasn't the issue. For that matter, there is even less emphasis on saving all sentient beings: it is automatic, so there's no need to talk about it. It is useless to say, “I have a heart; I have a brain; I have a head; I have arms.” If you are in a situation to say “I am,” one presumes you automatically have those things in order to function or to say, “I am.”

So if you have some kind of mahamudra penetration of *vajra* awareness, there is no need to count up the details of your need to be practical. You are not particularly trying to be practical, but you already are. You live a very worldly life in a *vajra* world. That world does not take possession of you, but you become part of the world and all humankind—and all sentient beings are part of you. So the work of the adept of *vajrayana* is compassionate action, in any case.

The practitioner's work is communication, relating with energy and so forth; and that brings the notion of visualizations and mantra practices. Visualizations are not regarded as developing magical powers; nor is visualizing regarded as imagining. But you begin to associate with such basic truth that you automatically have a sense of the visualization you are practicing. The visualization becomes a natural situation rather than something specially imposed on you, as if you were trying to imagine another culture's view of God. Everything has to do with seeing the nature of reality as it is. Mantra, for example, is just the sound or utterance of the universe, which has been developed in a certain formula. But that formula has nothing to do with your repeating the divine and sacred names of God, particularly. The sacredness of

the vajrayana tradition is being there, being true, rather than something other than what you have and what you are.

When we talk about God, we have the general attitude of relating with an extraordinary being or entity. Whether we say God is within us or God is outside of us, still there is a feeling of a very special place for the name of God. We view the existence of God as something other than what there is; its highest attribute is that it is beyond our world. We have no idea how and what and why God functions or conducts his activities. We do not have any idea of how or what he is; therefore, we feel awe and respect. It's beyond our little mind's function to even measure.

In the case of vajrayana, it is entirely different: you are not awe-inspired by the truth, but you are struck by the truth. It is so brilliant, so bright, so obvious, so clear. We are talking about a different kind of sacredness here. In this case, the experiencers can perceive the sacredness or truth: they can see it, and they can function in it. It is no longer a mystery. It is very real. At the same time, it is questionable; nevertheless, it is so.

What has been said about the vajrayana approach to sacredness is that it is the ordinary mind. Because it is so ordinary, it is superordinary; therefore, it is sacred. It is sacred in the sense that it could be perceived: we could see it and get a glimpse of it. That particular wisdom is called [*long pause*] “wisdom born within.” [*Long pause*] It is called coemergent wisdom. Whenever there is energy, there is wisdom: they emerge together. One cannot separate the two at all: they are coemergent.

So the world is the vajra world. From that point of view, the world is the divine world, or the world of God, if you want to call it that. The world contains that; that contains the world. It is the vastness of the vajrayana approach and the bigger style that makes vajrayana unique. It is the precision and the definitive accuracy that makes the Zen tradition prominent. It seems that you need both of those; they both seem to be necessary.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* How is the *skandha* of perception related to memory?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Memory is something more; it goes further back than that, to the beginning of duality. Memory has to do with the volitional activities of karma, right at the beginning, which starts with the *skandha* of



feeling. As the memory bank is created, the karmic volitional action is being created at the same time. Therefore, the skandha of perception is more an outcome of that original manufacturing process.

S: Is there a Tibetan parallel to the Zen tradition that tantric practitioners would go through?

CTR: I think any Buddhist monastic system is generally identical with the approach of the Zen tradition, naturally. The Theravadan monasteries in Thailand or Burma, as well as the mahayana version of monasticism of certain schools of Chinese Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism, have a similar kind of approach. But it doesn't seem that a real hard core of sitting practice has been given importance in the Tibetan tradition. I think that is one of the differences: in the Zen tradition, as we know it in Japan, the entire ceremony is built around sitting practice, and the ritual takes place in the context of sitting practice. In the Tibetan tradition, the sitting practice is an occasional space that happens within the ceremony, because the Tibetan tradition is heavily influenced by vajrayana rituals.

The closest to the Zen tradition in a Tibetan monastery, I suppose, is the Geluk school. There, a lot of emphasis is given to the practice of logic. Logical debate is a way of creating black-and-white sharpness in your mind, which is a branch of Buddhist contemplation. One branch is simply sitting practice; the other branch is intellectual training. So it seems that the Gelukpas got the intellectual training part, the logical debate, and that branch is closest to Zen practice. Both Zen and Tibetan Buddhism inherited the monastic system from Nālandā and Vikramashila and other great Buddhist universities of India. The techniques practiced in the Zen tradition have generally been the beginning Buddhist meditation approach, how one would begin with any Buddhist meditation. Systematic meditation practices would follow that kind of pattern.

S: You said that even though truth can strike you and that you are struck by its precision and clarity—still it's questionable. Can you explain what you mean by questionable? I think I recall reading a definition of truth in which you say that if it's questionable, it's not truth. Can you explain that?

CTR: "Questionable," here, means that you can't take pride in it, that it's still open.

S: How is energy experienced in tantra?

*CTR:* I think largely as emotions and things derived from emotions, and as sense perceptions. The energies of the sense perceptions are seen as part of the working basis. Without them, there is no interaction. There is no nowness, even.

*S:* We perceive energies through the senses. Is that what you mean?

*CTR:* Well, in the Buddhist tradition, the senses include mind, which is a sixth sense.

*S:* And is there a location for the mind?

*CTR:* I don't think so. That search has been tried many times, but no one has ever found it.

*S:* I thought that one of the main focuses of the Kagyü school was the actual meditation practice, rather than the training in the mantra and mandala. Wouldn't that seem to be more comparable to Zen?

*CTR:* Curiously not, actually. Kagyü meditation practices do not stem from mahayana meditation training. Kagyü meditation practice is based purely on vajrayana style. You might follow the same schedule of sitting, such as meditating for twelve hours and things like that; nonetheless, the meditation has a different flavor.

The Zen tradition we have been talking about is that of hinayanists who developed into mahayana and then brought in a Buddhist monastic system that included sitting, or some kind of like training, in relating with prajna. From that point of view, the Gelukpas' approach is much closer to Zen than that of the Kagyüpas—or the Nyingmapas, for that matter.

*S:* In the Geluk tradition, is their training of the logical mind toward the awakening process? Is that something that they focus on?

*CTR:* Not particularly. It is just to train your mind so you can think logically. Their approach to logic is very precise and definite—so that you have sharp insight and respond to logic. That's it. And it is the same with the sitting practice.

*S:* Is that insight, in some ways, an equivalent to prajna?

*CTR:* It is in many ways, but at the beginning it is rather a strain, because you just learn to argue very cunningly. You become a master arguing person. You know how to get around. It's like becoming a lawyer or something: you know

how to tackle the other side and get away with it. But when you get deeper into doctrinal things, you cannot do that, because those doctrines become very tricky, once you play with them. With notions of prajna, and things like that, there is an automatic reactor in them as well as in you—so you get beaten back unless you think clearly on those subjects.

*S:* How does memory function when one is no longer attached to habit—when memory is no longer used as a way to establish oneself?

*CTR:* You see, memory is no longer regarded as an intelligent thing. It is habitual patterns being recorded—and they come back to you as instinct, as animal instinct. It is like a computer: you program certain patterns, and it feeds back that way, depending on how you program it. As an intelligent functional thing, logical thinking is different from memory. It functions by the energies of the moment: the energies are the fuel, and your intelligence is the flame that thrives on it.

Whenever there is an emotional response or an emotional upsurge, that much the insight responds to it. So the whole thing no longer becomes a defeat—it becomes recycling energy into wisdom. That is precisely why the notion of alchemistic practice—metal changing into gold—has been used as an analogy in tantra. In terms of memory, there is no memory, but there is an immediate response. It's like the elements. You can't program fire to burn certain things and not burn other things. Fire just burns, on the spot.

*S:* So the immediate response never comes out of your store consciousness, or out of your past, your history?

*CTR:* Well, you don't have a store consciousness anymore at that point. You are out in the dharmakaya, or whatever you would like to call it, and there is no problem with lack of energy. There is so much energy and so much chaos and confusion all the time, which is enormous. That is why the vajrayana practitioner's function is to work with sentient beings. There is no limit to his food and his response to working with others. He doesn't have to keep his own separate kit, as a ration of the memory bank.

*S:* At Tail of the Tiger, we seem to do quite a bit of sitting. I wonder if you could say something about that, in relation to the fact that it seems to be closer to Zen than tantra.

*CTR:* Yes, I think we are closer to Zen, so far. We may be practicing Zen in

the spirit of tantra.

S: Rinpoche, in tantra, is there a tradition, as in Zen, of archery? Is there the concept of something other than necessarily a religious discipline, such as flower arranging or tea ceremony, that you pursue to the end?

*CTR*: I think we should discuss that next session.

S: I thought that Zen had a tradition of the warrior without a sword. Is that only found in the vajrayana? A lot of people were talking about the sword cutting through the ground of ego. And you talked about the hammer breaking the cup, which only happens when you have gotten far enough out so that nothing strikes at you with your sword. Do they meet at the lower levels?

*CTR*: Well, the tantric approach is completely “no,” rather than “not.” That is the philosophical saying, or slogan: you say “no,” rather than “not.” In tantra, the cup is no, because it is a vajra cup. The cup is indestructible.

S: Then there would be no point in the sword.

*CTR*: In the vajrayanist world, the sword is the same as the cup. It’s all vajra.

S: And in mahayana and hinayana, their swords are cutting off the ground?

*CTR*: Yes, because the cup is mortal—and to demonstrate that, the cup can be broken. That is why the tantric tradition is seemingly very dangerous—because it might be much closer to the eternalism of ordinary, confused belief that things could be solid and definite and immortal. However, one difference is that in tantric tradition you don’t try to prove anything. There is nothing to be proved, particularly.

S: At some point the sword just drops away?

*CTR*: Well, the sword is the cup. The hammer is the cup. You might use your hand as well, just to make it simpler. Your hand is the sword.

S: One thing I’m trying to understand is that at the earlier stages things are mortal and you are cutting through that.

*CTR*: You are cutting through that, yes.

S: And at some point, you cut through, and you realize that everything is indestructible, or the sword breaks the suffering?

*CTR:* Yes. It is the same thing. At the tantric level, it doesn't prove anything: the cup breaks—okay, that's fine. The cup is broken, but it is still the activity of vajra. And the cup is still there: in its absence, it is also very much a cup, a vajra cup, as much as it is. It doesn't say anything very much. So what?

*S:* Do all things contain a glimpse of vajra in them, at whatever level of the path?

*CTR:* That is what tantric practitioners would say: that even at the early level, there is a vajra element. That element at the mahayana level is seen as impermanence and shunyata. Seeing the indestructibility is tantric—a complete tantric practitioners' world.

*S:* Could you say something about the tantric view of imagination?

*CTR:* Imagination is not particularly necessary. Things are already imagined. That is one of the highlights of tantra: things are as they are—in a complete sense, not only in the mahayanist sense.

*S:* I was wondering what you could say about imagination, per se, somewhere below the vajrayana level.

*CTR:* Imagination could be energy of a certain level, but that doesn't mean that imagination is creative, particularly. Generally, when we talk about imagination, we mean being an artist or being able to improvise with whatever is available: being imaginative. But in this case, imagination is just one of the faculties of mind: it is *pranidhana*, a Sanskrit word meaning “imagination,” “vision,” or “aspiration.” *Pranidhana* is one part of the tantric tradition. It is part of the *abhisheka* of tantric practitioners: a person gets a certain vajrayana name, and those names come out of *pranidhana* inspiration, or imagination. So there is a role for imagination.

*S:* Yesterday you talked about the practice of Zen as being a joke, not a trick—a joke in the sense that predictability becomes exhausted, and in that exhaustion, there's a gap and you get a glimpse of prajna. I've been noticing a certain predictability: the lecture is scheduled for a certain time, and you are always at least an hour late. Then I get tired, and perhaps that helps me to open up.

*CTR:* Well, I haven't put it into categories, but I think it is up to you. You're welcome to improvise.

S: Are thoughts basically silent?

CTR: I wouldn't say so, when they're in love.

S: I'd like to return to the discussion of a connection between memory and knowledge. In my experience, if I recognize something to be true, it's as though, "Oh, yes, I've really known that all along, but I just didn't realize it." It is as though I have recollected it. In that sense, it's not exactly memory, but more like a recollection.

CTR: You see, that is the whole point. You cannot develop wisdom unless you cut down the memory. You put a stop to the memory. You may have had a memory that something about this is important—but now you know it, so you do not need that memory anymore. You cut yourself, at that point. At that very point, memory has been cut—and that is real wisdom.

S: You are not depending on memory.

CTR: Yes, yes.

S: But this is something else. Doesn't it mean anything to you when I say that a recognition of something as true seems as though it had been there all along and suddenly it came forward clearly, that it's not new?

CTR: Well, it is not exactly new, but neither is it old.

S: Yes.

CTR: In that case, in fact, the uncertainty, which is part of the memory, is what kept you confused. So you cut the uncertainty, which is a part of the memory, and you make a big jump. And, finally, you are there, out in the open. There's no mystery about it.

S: In tantra, you have often described the relationship of the student to the teacher as being like that of a martial arts student training with a master. I was wondering if you could say more as to what the war is in tantric martial arts training and who the enemy is. Martial arts training seems to imply war of one kind or another. So why is it called martial arts training?

CTR: Martial arts is just martial arts; it doesn't need a war. It is a very interesting sociological question, in that you can develop all kinds of martial arts, and you don't have to have a war, as such. In fact, if there were a war, you could not practice proper martial arts, because the whole nation would be in a

panic, and you would be part of that, as well. Your training would become just functional, and you would become one of the mass productions.

S: Nevertheless, it is called martial art, rather than fine art or any other kind of art.

CTR: Well, sure, why not? It is definitely a military thing.

S: That's what I'm getting at!

CTR: Yes, sure, but that doesn't provide any problems. It really doesn't. Your approach is a typically utilitarian, or functional and pragmatic, Western approach, if I might say so—that you don't build a bridge if nobody's going to walk over it. I mean, what's the point of sitting and meditating if that is not going to do anything good for the society?

S: I don't think I meant that. It's just that all the words that are used in defining various things are so precise.

CTR: Oh, I see. Yes. I'm sorry. The point is that we could definitely use the word *martial* in the sense of its own indestructibility.

S: Its own indestructibility?

CTR: Yes, like the vajra principle we have been talking about. It is not preparing for warfare as such, but its own indestructibility.

S: Learning how to deal with—

CTR: How to be.

S: How to be.

CTR: Not how to defend, but how to be.

S: [Long pause] But *martial* implies—[Uproarious laughter.]

CTR: Have you seen—I'm sure you have seen—the wrathful figures, the wrathful deities, tantra guards? I mean, who are their enemies? Nobody! They are very compassionate ones. They are so compassionate; they are armed to the teeth!

S: This kind of indestructibility doesn't have anything to do with being eternal? With eternity?

CTR: Not at all. Absolutely not.

S: Does this analogy of martial arts also hold with other arts? Would there be a point in painting a fine thangka without ever displaying it or practicing music without playing in public, or things like that?

CTR: I think so, yes. It is self-existing art, definitely—rather than for display or for exercising your territory.

S: So the point isn't at all the display.

CTR: No. If the public happens to come across it, they are welcome to take a look, but it is not specially designed for that. Otherwise, the whole thing becomes very commercial, and you lose your value, basically—then we don't have a chance to have no-value, one-valueness. [*Trungpa Rinpoche has a hearty laugh.*]

S: I still need to clarify what you said about memory. In fact, memory is not needed when one is living in the vajrayana? Is that it? I understand memory as it functions in my world, or in the everyday world: you go to work every day, and you remember how to get to work, because you did it yesterday. You remember the past. Or you're writing a book, and you remember where you are, because you remember what you wrote yesterday. Now, the difference between that and the "now" experience of vajrayana—is it that you are not remembering the path to work because you did it yesterday, but rather the path is living in you now, as a living experience?

CTR: Generally, we do not remember yesterday. We don't really remember or really go back to yesterday, in any case. The past is imprinted in us this present moment, and we only think we are seeing yesterday.

S: But it's right now.

CTR: But it's right now. You might have a memory of your dead father, for instance. That doesn't mean you see him there, but your memory of him is present. In the same way, there is generally no such thing as going back to the past.

In the tantric tradition, the idea of memory is the habits that breed a certain style of continuity of neurosis—which does exist. In fact, you have a very clear, precise insight of how to get to the office and of how to finish your work or your book. That's no problem. Traditionally, it says that without memory the mind is



nine times clearer. I don't know how that statistic came up, but that is the case.

S: It seems that rather than trying to bring something dead back to life, it is already living.

*CTR*: Yes. And at that point, there is no desire for eternity anymore.

S: You said that everything has been imagined. In that case, if you paint a painting, is the thing that keeps it from being a restatement of an existing thing, what you said—the self-existing action? Is it the action of painting itself that keeps it as a direct form, instead of a restatement of something that already exists, which would take it away from directness?

*CTR*: I think that depends on the nature of the work. But, basically, it is something like that.

S: And if it were not done in a tantric way, then it would be more of a Zen-like approach of restating something that already exists?

*CTR*: Something like that, I think. We'll have a chance to talk about that in our next session, I hope. Art is a particularly important point: the difference between Zen and tantra is in art and what has been produced.

S: The difference comes with the directness?

*CTR*: The directness or the reliving of something or other. We should probably stop at this point.

## ***Artists and Unemployed Samurai***

*What a work of art is all about is a sense of delight. Touch here, touch there, delight. It is an appreciation of things as they are and of what one is—which produces an enormous spark.*

IN FURTHER COMPARING Zen and tantra, it seems to be necessary to study the two approaches of gradual understanding and sudden enlightenment. As we discussed already, the only real possibility is gradual development—sudden enlightenment is somewhat based on an occasion within that experience of gradual journey.

One school of thought developed based on the realization of shunyata, emptiness. Predominantly, shunyata means being without ground, without standpoint. On the basis of the shunyata principle, the nonsubstantiality of things as they are, the teachings of impermanence and egolessness of the hinayana discipline developed. However, going beyond the hinayana approach of egolessness, impermanence came to be seen as an actual path, journey, or mechanism to attain realization—immediate realization—as a very tangible, definite experience. That school is called the *Shunyata vada*, or the Madhyamaka tradition.

Madhyamaka means believing in nonsubstantiality and realizing nonsubstantiality as the basic ground of reality. Seeing nonexistence as the ground we could work on, although the whole approach is groundless, provides an enormous standpoint. It provides a platform, if you would like to call it that, to stand on, to step on, to work on. Within that basic approach of nonsubstantiality—the nonexistence of things—from a largely phenomenological level, we could say that things have no origin. Therefore, things do exist. You are not you; therefore, you are. You might find it difficult at this late time of the day to grasp such a subtle point of philosophy. [*Laughter*] Nevertheless, your fuzziness might help you to realize that subtle logic intuitively.

You do not exist because you have no ground; you have no basis; because of

that, you do exist. Shall we simplify? You are subject to death; you are subject to mortality; therefore, you are alive. Your deathness depends on how much you are alive. If you are fully alive, that much is death accentuated, because you are fully alive and radiate exuberant youth or exuberant old age. You function thoroughly; therefore, you exist. Your existence, on the other hand, is based on your nonexistence, because you are just about to decay and die.

The reason a person could be called dead is because he or she was alive the minute before. That is the basic logic of the hinayana approach. The mahayana approach to the real meaning of shunyata is: either alive or dead, you are. That seems to be quite simple to catch, or to understand. Either alive or dead, you are. Your existence is largely based on nonexistence. Your very reference points are worn out because you move so fast in the restlessness of your mind and emotions that your ground wears out. It is like building a castle on an ice lake.

Within that basic phenomenological experience of things not having real substance or basic solidity—as you probably experience right here and now, being tired and things being late—underneath, it is shaky and soft, jellified. Our trying to sit on a chair and listen to this particular talk is like building a castle on the ice: it could tip over any moment. It's not so much that the castle is nonsubstantial, but the whole thing is nonsubstantial. It has an air of impermanence, which is more than impermanence—it is a whole environment of impermanence. Things don't hang tight, but they hang loose. That seems to be the point of shunyata, that things do not have any hold or tightness, but they are all loose. They are so loose that even the joints don't squeak. Oiling doesn't help, because it is already too loose.

With the basis of such openness, such a loose approach, various schools of philosophy developed. One of the first mahayana schools is called the Yogachara school. Popularly it is known as the “believing-in-the-mind,” or the “mind only,” school. The scripture you heard last night, *On Trust in the Heart*, is from a similar school to the believing-in-the-mind school. The believing-in-the-mind school is not so much based on belief, but on trust. It is based on the integrity of consciousness being kept, while meanwhile, those loose joints disconnect themselves in the realm of shunyata.

A moderator and commentator take place to keep track of those loose ends. However, within the realm of reality, things don't connect themselves; they are all subject to confusion, chaos, and impermanence. They are fundamentally without soul, without substantiality.

Yogacharans do not believe in autonomous existence as such, but in soullessness, egolessness, nonexistence. We could examine very carefully this particular approach, or philosophical tradition. Yogachara is the school of Buddhism that produces art and appreciates aesthetic consciousness. It includes archery, flower arrangement, and similar approaches to the world of art. This Yogacharan world of art is basically to pay respect or tribute to the existence of consciousness—which, in turn, appreciates the spaciousness of shunyata, the desolateness of shunyata, and the aloneness of the shunyata experience. Shunyata experience is being spotted very precisely and beautifully. A poet produces poetry out of this; artists produce works of art out of this.

Sky, utterly blue,  
Only white dot has been seen.  
I feel lonely.  
Seagull.

The sky deceived me  
By showing me the horizons.  
I feel guilty and lonely.

Empty apartment.  
Table, teacup.  
Flies buzz.

Exhausted audience, [*laughter*]  
Invigorated speaker. [*Greater laughter.*]  
The ceiling is the only congregation.

Very artistic! You compose poetry or paint pictures. You can't just be. You can't hang loose in the shunyata: you have to be conscious of something or other, to give life to it, even. You have to express its looseness or its desolateness, the real meaning of desolateness, in a work of art. A work of art cannot be perceived if you have no idea what it is all about—and what a work of art is all about is a sense of delight. Touch here, touch there, delight. It is an appreciation of things as they are and of what one is—which produces an enormous spark. Something happens—clicks—and the poet writes poems, the

painter paints pictures, the musician composes music. That is the Yogacharan approach, we could say, which is synonymous with the Zen tradition and the traditions that developed around it.

Flower arrangement, or ikebana, for instance, is a mahayana expression of Buddhism. Sitting alone on a black zafu is no longer bodhisattva activity. Not really. You have to relate with the people, culture, and environment around you. It is all around you. Traditionally, the ikebana schools of Japan developed out of temple arrangements: the monks would walk out in the woods and chop down big pine trees, carry them back, put them in big cauldrons, and place them with old shoes and rocks in disused cauldrons without bottoms. When warriors came and offered their swords and helmets and armor to the temple as signs of their nonviolence, the monks used those as part of the stuffing to hold up the pine tree.

But Zen teachers found that too proud, just to stick a piece of pine tree in the middle of a pot. Arrogant as it is, bringing the pine tree into the house, to an indoor situation, is much more proud. That tree says, “You should not have moved me from that beautiful landscape and put me in your scene here. I will not belong to this particular world.” So they begin to put in another branch, which complements the pine tree, symbolizing earth, and then a branch that bends down, symbolizing man, which stays in the middle of the arrangement. And they put in flowers. So the traditional flower arrangement developed—with the three principles of *shin* (heaven), man, and earth—to make sure that the pine tree is happy where it is, in spite of that all-powerful, gigantic image of Buddha overlooking it. Nevertheless, the flowers are supposed to hang themselves nonchalantly, as flowers, as they are. [*Chuckles.*]

Later on, flower arranging became a domestic thing. In the court houses, drawing rooms, and tea ceremony rooms, people would arrange the flowers in the same way: upright, which justifies the sky and space; then sweeping along the floor, which manifests the earth; and an occupier in the middle, which manifests man. Things developed in that way, going so far as deciding to put in flowers, depicting the law of nature.

Arranging flowers is not so much Zen from the point of view of prajna or shunyata, but more from the paramita level. A flower arrangement is made to make the plant comfortable and to make the people who view the plants and these ikebana arrangements comfortable and happier, so that they don't feel awkward and stiff—as they might feel, on the other hand, if the flower arranger

has definite ideas of arranging flowers and arranges his flowers that way and then admires his own arrangement. Next to that arrangement a person feels terribly bad, because it is a precise portrait of the artist, rigid and awkward. Such an arrangement is not inviting.

Any kind of arrangement can be developed according to this highest point of Yogacharan philosophy. It does not purely apply to ikebana, alone, but to placing things in appropriate places. And there the element of tantra begins to trickle in—from the realization of mahamudra. This element is somewhat unnoticed by the Zen tradition, but it has been seen in that way. Picking a place is similar to what Don Juan talks about as “choosing your spot.” It is about where to be, where you place yourself, as well as how to organize a spot, or where to create the central focus of energy or attention.

Choosing a spot is an interesting point in that you have to be aware of the space in general, which is shunyata’s space: loneliness, looseness. Then one dawn of consciousness begins to arise in the midst of the whole thing, and you place your object, which is slightly off-centered. You move it farther, but that doesn’t seem to be quite right—it is too deliberate. [*Rinpoche arranges things on his side table.*] Then you make it a little bit more off-centered—maybe that’s the case, but that’s not quite so, so something else goes with it. [*Rinpoche gestures at his arrangement, to audience’s laughter.*]

That is arranging things as they are. But a lot of Westerners disagree: they say that if you have to prune the branches for a flower arrangement, it is unkind to the plants. “Shouldn’t you just leave them as they are? They are beautiful as they are.” But from the Yogacharan point of view, they are not: they are sloppy as they are. They should be shaped and trimmed; they should be trained in the bodhisattva way. They should be made more generous, more disciplined, more patient, more meditative, and so forth.

There is so much beauty in the Yogacharan experience of things as they are—enormous! We could talk gallons and gallons of ideas—tons and tons of it! But at the same time, compared with vajrayana teaching, the approach that evolved is somewhat too delicate: very genteel, very delicate. It has the potential for guts, as in chopping down trees, branches, and so forth. That’s good. But, at the same time, by arranging things in a certain way, you might insult your guest, your flower teacher, or your tea master. If you sit in a crooked way, your Zen master might hit you on the back. Gentilities of that nature are obviously dualistic, one way or another.

In the tantric tradition, such arrangements and such appreciation of things also take place, coming from the Yogacharan tradition, the believing-in-the-mind, or mind only, school. But there is something beyond that school, which is what we discussed already as the ordinary mind school, as opposed to the mind only school. This is a revision of the Yogacharan school—the approach we discovered right at the beginning, when the Zen master chopped down a big pine tree, planted it in a big pot, and arranged things around it for the genteel court room or the drawing room of the emperor. The tantric approach is much more direct, deliberate, and gross. It is the fashion of an unemployed samurai. When samurai are employed by a certain tribe, they are clean-shaven; they are well-groomed; they dress well; their knives are sharpened. When samurai are unemployed, they are very gruff and rough. Their knives may be rusty, they are sloppily dressed, and they are slightly grumpy. [*Chuckles.*] That’s the tantric approach!

Tantric practitioners are not employed by either the laymen or the priests. They are as they are. That is why they are called *siddhas*. *Siddha* literally means, in Sanskrit, “he who works with miracles,” or “power over miracles.” But at the same time, the miracles are things as they are—literally—the literalness of things as they are. So vajrayana is very direct, very definite, obvious. It is the notion of the unemployed samurai, or the martial arts teacher who runs out of students. And siddhas are the tigers and lions and leopards that roam about in the jungle, without preying. They do compose poems; they do create works of art; but they are quite different from the Yogacharan tradition of gentility. They provide poetry very directly, very simply:

*I drink fire,*

*I breathe in the earth,*

*I wear clouds,*

*I ride on universe.*

*I am the warrior,*

*I swallow sun and the moon,*

*I wear the stars as my jewelry.*

*I am the conqueror of the universe.* [*Long, big smile at audience.*]

Unemployed samurai: somewhat horrific—and heroic, maybe. But heroism is not particularly the point. Such inspiration comes from nonidealism in a work of

art. Instead of drinking out of a beautifully molded teacup, you drink out of a skullcup. Instead of beating a drum that is beautifully painted, you blow a thighbone trumpet. That is an entirely different approach to poetry, to a work of art. Instead of destroying the ego by poisoning, by the message of shunyata or egolessness, you cut it in half—one big slash.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* Rinpoche, when you were talking about the Yogacharan school, you said that there was trust in some overall consciousness to keep track of the loose ends. Does that sound familiar?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Yes.

*S:* In Madhyamaka, is it just trust?

*CTR:* Madhyamaka is a general school, and Yogachara is a part of that.

*S:* Okay. Then in vajrayana, is it trust in anything, or—

*CTR:* Just trust.

*S:* Does the path to the ordinary mind school go through the mind only school?

*CTR:* The mind only school is the beginning of the vajrayana message being planted in the mahayana, where the Zen tradition belongs. Then there is the development of the ordinary mind school, which is the mahamudra school.

*S:* But it is the same kind of path as the hinayana-mahayana path?

*CTR:* Yes.

*S:* Would the tantric practitioner still see the balance coming from the glass and the pitcher, or is he in a place of abruptness?

*CTR:* He would certainly see that.

*S:* But that niceness no longer happens?

*CTR:* There is no longer any question of making an emphasis on aesthetic appreciation—but just things as they are, seemingly.

*S:* At that level, when you are moving things around, is the assumption that, in



that kind of spatial arrangement, everything has its place, that there is a place for everything in essence?

*CTR:* Always, yes. Always. But that's a tantric message, actually.

*S:* Is that an intuitive thing?

*CTR:* It is entirely an intuitive thing. The only way the teacher can teach you such an arrangement is, if you make mistakes, he just dismantles the whole thing and makes you arrange it again. That is the only teaching method that can be developed—and it was done that same way in the early ikebana schools in the Japanese tradition. The teacher won't tell you anything; he or she just dismantles things.

*S:* So when things hit that point, you pick up the vibration?

*CTR:* The color, texture, solidness, or whatever. Yes. You are supposed to pick it up intuitively.

*S:* And one last question: in the “I am the conqueror of the universe, the heavens, I wear the clouds...,” where is the ego in that? It seems like it's beyond egoless. I mean, I'm confused. “I am all those things, I am an unemployed samurai...” When you say all those things, that doesn't seem to be an ego-oriented statement; and yet in each one, each phrase starts with “I.” It's sort of like breast-feeding the ego, in a way.

*CTR:* We have a problem with the English language—that's all. It is purely a matter of grammar. I often thought of developing a special language that does not need to use the word *I* and articles. That would be much simpler. There would no longer be any suggestion of ego. It is just a linguistic problem. For instance, you say, “He possesses the greatest work,” as opposed to “The greatest work is his.” It turns out to be pidgin English, but it makes more sense, from a non-ego point of view. Maybe in a hundred years' time Buddhists will speak pidgin English, non-ego English.

*S:* In describing the similar approaches of Yogachara and tantra, you explained Yogachara, as I understood it, as a person being involved in a process in which he or she is swinging back and forth between two poles. The practice seems to be that kind of thing: you put yourself into that, submit yourself to it, and then just intensify that.

*CTR:* Yes.

S: In contrast, when you described tantra as the sword's cutting ego, it seemed that there was a major difference there, in that one would have to discover the sword and make some kind of a leap. It is not that you just say, "I'm going to sit here and freak out until my thought process crumbles and I can see through," but something has to be done. Is that a quality of the tantric approach?

*CTR:* I think so, very much, yes. There is a real situation taking place, without any doubt. You are not afraid of anything at all. You are right there all the time. That is why the poetry of the earlier school, Yogachara, is so indirect, but the poetry of tantra is very direct.

S: For the students, it seems that there are tremendous possibilities for paranoia.

*CTR:* That is part of the protection of the tantric tradition, generally. Paranoia or fear should be created, so that tantrikas do not trip on their egos or end up in vajra hell—which is a very direct approach, definitely.

## ***Wild Zen, Crazy Tantra***

*Mantra should be an onomatopoeic sound. The bubbly sound you hear on grandmother's stove, cooking broth, is mantra...Whenever you reflect your mind to that bubbly sound of broth cooking, it immediately brings you back home. That's the mantra principle.*

**O**BVIOUSLY, the practice of meditation is important for both Zen and tantra. Naturally, there are different ways of improvising meditation practice from the point of view of these two forms. Both Zen and tantra may seem to have an unrealistic, impractical quality, in that we are discussing end results, or landmarks—the final stage of development of the two approaches. In discussing Zen as the end result of sutra teaching, and crazy wisdom as the end result of tantra teaching, we are comparing the golden roofs, not the foundations or the buildings. We should be very careful about that particular point. At the same time, there is the question of how to begin.

As far as tantra is concerned, it is a long path. We first have to go through the complete sutra teachings thoroughly and fully—and finally we arrive at the conclusion that the phenomenal world is its own representation, without needing any further spokesperson to tell us anything. Seeing the phenomenal world and experience as they are, we develop conviction and power. Conviction does not necessarily mean pure and absolute reassurance. Conviction, here, is more catching the fever of crazy wisdom: there is a wind of crazy wisdom taking place. One catches the wind, the smell, and one then begins to dance with it, get high on it. The only way to create such a mutual relationship between the tantric teachings and your conviction is by developing the threefold vajra principles: vajra body, vajra speech, and vajra mind.

Vajra body is the phenomenal world seen very clearly, very solidly, in its vajra-like nature and, therefore, transparent. The world is *thaljin*, a Tibetan term that means “penetration.” Penetration does not have the sense that there is an obstacle, and you cut a hole through it; penetration, in this case, means that there is no obstacle at all—even the toughest surfaces are transparent.

In Naropa's songs, the analogies of a rabbit's horn, a tortoise's hair, and flowers blooming in the sky are the expression of penetration—that impossible things are possible. That is the meaning of penetration in the tantric way. It is conviction. Obstacles are unknown to you, rather than that you gain victory over obstacles. Unemployed samurais are still good. They are as well-groomed as the employed ones—in fact, much better—which brings a sense of joy. Penetration through form is not associated with destroying or gaining territory—there is no connotation of victory whatsoever. Penetration has the sense of penetrating the sky, penetrating space. It is another expression of clarity. That is vajra form.

Vajra speech is mantra. *Man* is “mind”; *tra* is “protection,” so *mantra* is “protecting the mind.” What is meant by protection of the mind? What do we mean by mind, and what do we mean by protection? We mean that mind is already vajra in nature. It is without a base, without ground; therefore, it is vajra, indestructible. Mind is indestructible because there is no ground. If there is ground, it ceases to become indestructible. Since there is no ground, therefore, it is imperturbable, indestructible: groundlessness, one-flavor.

Mind usually functions in a certain form—“minding business,” as we say. You get involved in certain relationships and situations and in certain activities—spiritual or domestic or whatever their nature may be—you are minding them. Minding is a form of concern. It concerns you or your relationship to somebody else; and your concern, in turn, concerns the other. Concerns may be large and small, good and bad. Some concern, or minding, is painful in nature: it is largely aroused by discomfort. It may also be that extremely comfortable situations develop, in which case comfort becomes a source of concern, in that we may not be able to hold on to it, evolve ourselves through it, or work with it.

From this point of view, we could quite safely say that mind equals worry, and worry equals pain. Obviously, it is not very pleasant. So minding, or having a mind at all, is cumbersome and somewhat displeasing. But then you might ask, “If I don't have mind, how can I seek pleasure? How can I determine happiness?” The Sanskrit word *manas*, or “mind,” is described in Tibetan texts as being so because it minds projections. It minds. It is the minding business: minding projections, minding reflections. If your finger is hurt, your brain is hurt. It is the same for your heart, your lungs, your head. The pain is predominantly in a certain part of your tentacles, your limbs; nevertheless, it sends a message to central headquarters, which feels threatened, uncomfortable, and calls for another policy to be set up. It is like a highly efficient bureaucracy—one that is so efficient, so utterly efficient, that finally it becomes totally

unworkable. Because of its efficiency, it calls for failure. It is like one man running a large country.

But in this case, in talking about mantra, when we say mind, we are not referring to that painful mind, that worrisome mind. Mind, here, acts as a simple receiver, without complications or machinery behind it. It is simply radar, without a system, clear and precise. Usually, complications follow afterward. We are not at all talking about something other than mind—we are talking about the same mind—but that mind has the simplicity of intelligence at the beginning. Later, it is not appropriate to maintain the simplicity, because the mind needs further reference points, and further reference points bring further mechanisms. You have to employ more and more office workers and technicians to maintain that simplicity, so internally it becomes very complicated. In contrast, here we are talking about what we might call the “first mind,” or, using a similar phrase from the tantric tradition, the “ordinary mind.” That is the mind, *manas*.

*Tra*, “protection,” is not so much that you have to protect the mind. In fact, if you try to protect it in the ordinary sense, you create further complications of it. The mind is already in a protected state if you leave it alone, simple and ordinary, as it is. So the mind is already protected, and protection means acknowledging that protected state. That is mantra. The ordinary mind acknowledges its protection; protection is the acknowledgment of its own existence. In that sense, mantra is similar to the Sanskrit word *dharmata*, or in Tibetan, *chönyi*. *Dharma* is “reality”; *ta* is “itself” or “isness”; so *dharmata* is “dharmaness.” *Dharma* is acknowledged by realizing its isness, or *ta*; therefore, it is *dharmata*, dharmaness. That dharmaness principle is not a philosophical concept; it is experiential. The *dharma* is seen; therefore, there is *dharmata*.

The expression of *dharmata* is the speech principle, or mantra. Speech, here, means that which binds the highly active, or the mind, and the least active, or the body, together. Body, in this case, is just form, a thing. It may be transparent, but it is still existence. We could say that existence [*body*] and the energy of existence [*mind*] are brought together by speech or voice, which is tantric symbolism. When we talk about voice or speech, we are not talking about languages or musical tones, but about two types of entity being expressed by one manifestation, which is voice, speech, or mantra. So mantra becomes one of the most powerful means for bringing mind and body together—one of the most powerful of all.

Mantra is incantation, as has often been said, and mantra could also be

interpreted as “slogan.” In modern India, political slogans are referred to as *mantra* in Hindi. Mantra is a proclamation of something or other. You might ask what you are proclaiming by saying things like OM MANI PADME HUM. MANI means “jewel”; PADME means “lotus”; HUM means “bring about,” or “concentrate”; OM is opening, clearing the air. So what you are saying doesn’t make any sense. OM MANI PADME HUM—so what? Where’s the power coming from? What is it all about? It’s not a sentence. It is different from a prayer. It is quite different from when we say, “For what we are about to receive, may the Lord be truly thankful.” [*Trungpa repeatedly and deliberately enjoyed altering this traditional mealtime prayer.* Ed.] It’s quite different than that! [*Laughs.*]

With mantra, we are not talking to anything, particularly; we are just being there and uttering these highlights, almost telegraphically. MANI, the quality of jewel; PADME, the lotus of compassion—just the highlights are referred to. Mantra is not regarded as something you read to help you get yourself together and formulate a policy. It is quite different from saying, “Be careful.” Mantra is just a statement of things as they are.

Mantra should be an onomatopoeic sound. The bubbly sound you hear on grandmother’s stove, cooking broth, is mantra. It talks about hominess, grandmotheriness, culture, and the past. It reminds you as grandchildren of the smell of the broth, the sound of the broth, the smell of the grandmother, and the feelings of her home—the sense of warmth that’s created when you visit your granny. Whenever you reflect your mind to that bubbly sound of broth cooking, it immediately brings you back home. That’s the mantra principle.

In tantra, mantra is used in a slightly different way: it is used in a more cosmic sense. Like the bubbly broth, what you say does not have to be a sentence that’s put together properly; instead, what you say is a telegraph, an onomatopoeic sound that brings you home, so to speak. In this case, home is the ordinary mind. So you have certain messages, or mantras, that bring you home.

There is a story of a *lotsawa*, or “translator,” who was famous in the New Translation tradition of Tibet. He was trying to translate a tantric text, and he came across three verses in seven syllables that said, “Rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta rakta.” *Rakta* is a Sanskrit word that literally means “blood.” He decided to translate it, “Blood, blood, blood, blood, blood.” Then he thought maybe there was esoteric language involved, maybe *blood* meant “passion.” So he said, “Passion, passion, passion, passion, passion.” But it still didn’t make any sense in the context of the rest of the verse. “Maybe,” he

thought, “it’s something not very pure and clean. Maybe it’s aggression.” And he put, “Aggression, aggression, aggression, aggression, aggression.” It didn’t make any sense. Then he tried alternating them: “Passion, aggression, passion, aggression, blood.” [*Laughter.*] It still didn’t make any sense. Then he looked up an early translator’s translation of that text, that of Vairochana, and he found that Vairochana had translated that passage as, “Passion is blood; it is transcendent blood; therefore, it is passion. Therefore, it is blood, which does not exist at all.” And so forth. According to the story, the translator wept. He was just about to tear up his manuscript, but then he felt so inspired by the wisdom of the early translators. He compared himself to a firefly and said that his teacher was like the morning star and the early translators were like the sun and the moon. The only thing he blamed himself for is that he had poverty mentality in translating—that he didn’t have greater vision.

Mantra is a kind of sign language, but it does make sense. Somehow it makes real sense, whether it is the utterance of HUM, OM, AH, HRIH, or whatever. Mantras have basic qualities within them, but they can only be seen if you are on the ordinary mind level. Mantra is speech therapy, so to speak, speech skillful means. Skillful means by way of speech is the only channel toward crazy wisdom. You are almost there, in terms of crazy wisdom, because things are very precise and direct. You don’t need any interpreter, any modifier or commentator. You see things directly, with no doubt at all; therefore, it is precise and direct.

Coming back to the Zen tradition, the koan principle is the same as mantra in many ways, but it has an entirely different background. It does not come from mahamudra inspiration but from the inspiration of prajna and shunyata experience. Shunyata experience is precise. It doesn’t dwell on any particular reference point or approach to anything at all. It is very clear—and that clarity creates the mind that we have been talking about. Instead of ordinary mind, it is clear mind. It is the mind-only-and-no-other-than-the-mind area, which is not ordinary but transcendental. So it is extraordinary mind. As opposed to tantra, where it is very ordinary mind, in the case of Zen, it’s extraordinary mind. In some sense, that is saying the same thing, but in fact it is slightly different.

When you have extraordinary mind, you go up. There is the notion of higher and greater: you go up, and your vision begins to expand. From the simple practice of black and white of the Zen tradition, you expand your vision a little bit more, beyond purely relating with black and white. You are expanding into greater awareness, greater depth. “Arouse yourself! You are buddha. Not only do

you have buddha nature, but you are buddha itself.” This is a different kind of conviction, of a larger scale—which seems to be different from the not-two, one-flavor, one-taste level. It is greater. But greater in this case has nothing to do with big or small; it is just great, nonesuch. It is great in its own existence, without comparison. It is thinking larger.

The Zen tradition seems to expand its vision at the level people begin to use koans. Like mantra, koans don’t make any sense. Nevertheless, koans are translated into an individual’s national language; whereas mantras have never been translated into a national language of any kind. Mantras are kept purely onomatopoeic. Seemingly they are Sanskrit, but even that is uncertain. Scholars find that the extreme mantras don’t make any sense in Sanskrit. They supposedly are in what is called the language of the dakinis, a kind of Sanskrit version of gibberish. Koans, however, are not at all gibberish. They are very simple words put together, such as “sound of one hand clapping,” “cow’s dung is buddha,” “there is no Zen”—very simple little logical conclusions of that nature.

Maybe I shouldn’t give this game away, but students take great interest in this message: to find out how cow’s dung is buddha.

“Everybody has buddha nature. Therefore, a cow must be buddha, and, therefore, a cow’s dung also could be buddha.” You come to that conclusion, you go back to your master, and you write it down. But if you approach it that way, he’ll be so outraged and upset: “That’s not the point. Go back; think more. Find out more, stupid fool.”

You come back again: “The cow’s dung is buddha because there’s no difference between good and bad. Everything is within the oneness of enlightenment.”

“That’s worse. That’s very cheap. How could you say such a thing? Terrible.”

“I find that cow’s dung is revolting; therefore, my mind must be buddha nature experiencing this revulsion. Therefore, cow’s dung should be buddha.”

“That’s a trick! You’re trying to get away. You are supposed to get something out of this, rather than trying to play smart!” [*Students were laughing uproariously throughout this exchange. Ed.*]

It’s very tricky. With each of those steps you are exposing your deceptions. You have different kinds of facades. You are truly inspired and highly enthusiastic, and you try to keep with the language of the party, or the party line—which doesn’t work. So then you try to be semihonest, but without knowing how far you should go. It doesn’t help. Then, if those things don’t work, you try



to play something tricky, supposedly cute, or cunning. It doesn't do it. In fact, the problem is not so much the play of the language, but that you yourself have not heard the verse properly: "Cow's dung is buddha." You haven't actually listened to it, and you have not heard it properly at all.

"Think about it. Work on it more and more."

This might sound too corny for you but, in fact, an obvious point is that the cow's dung doesn't have to qualify by being buddha, particularly. *Buddha* is another way of saying "is." So you have, "Cow's dung is." You are rather uncomfortable if you come up with such a statement, if you dare to cut down the koan that was given to you, twist around the words, and instead of "buddha," put "is." Nevertheless, that seems to be the best answer we can ever think of—at this stage anyway.

"Never mind about buddha. It is cow's dung." Full stop. You feel slightly foolish that after all this expectation building up, you finally could answer the koan.

"Look what you came out with. It's good."

This is similar to the story of a calligraphy student studying under a master calligrapher. The student did the character about twenty times, and everything was wrong and not quite right. Then the teacher went to the bathroom, and the student did something very quick, because the master wasn't watching him. The master came back and said, "Who did that? That is a masterpiece." This story is involved with giving up ambition. Sometimes satori experience is an enormous letdown—disappointing. But there it is. That is another kind of mantra: there it is. Applying trickery to the seemingly smart, sharp, and highly devoted mind—cutting that down—brings about the wildness of Zen. Wild Zen.

The difference between Zen and tantra is that tantra is crazy and Zen is wild. We could quite safely say that, I think. The wildness of Zen is outrageous, like the story of the master burning a wooden image of Buddha to keep himself warm or the guy living underneath a bridge. There are all kinds of stories of masters who are wild. But wildness in that sense is rather comfortable. You would prefer to have a wild kid—or husband or wife—rather than a crazy kid. It is somewhat in keeping with the bodhisattva's approach of following the great path: on that path you could be wild.

Wildness seems to be slightly different than craziness. Listening to Naropa's or Tilopa's songs, you pick up on the craziness. They are not so much talking a pure language of contradictions in saying "rabbit's horn," "tortoise's hair," all

those contradictions. “The mute speaks, and the deaf listen.” It could be said that these contradictions are the same as Zen phrases. But the way such images are used—why mute, particularly, why deaf?—there is a kind of haunting quality in those phrases. Just reading such verses makes a lot of people angry, in fact. If *The Life and Teaching of Nāropa* had not been translated by Professor Guenther, a lot of people would feel it unfair to even publish such a book. So thanks to Guenther—and to these languages. The Naropa book has become a prominent work of scholarship, one of the best in the literature of tantric Buddhism, apart from the Milarepa songs.

There are possibilities, when you are meeting a crazy person, of not knowing what he is going to do to you. He is seemingly friendly and nice, or he’s seemingly aggressive, but there is uncertainty, a feeling that trickery is involved. You might call it warped mind, but it is the crazy-wisdom nature. In fact, if I may say so, it is we who have warped minds. When somebody is truly straight, we find it completely irritating. I mean, that is the nature of crazy wisdom.

We have a different kind of feeling about the wildness of Zen: it’s outrageous, but it’s fun. It produces lots of new material for scholars to speculate on. Logicians might find interesting points in it. Practitioners might find it exuberating, challenging.

This discussion of Zen and tantra has nothing to do with one technique being superior to the other, necessarily. The wildness of Zen is based on prajna, or the transcendental-knowledge principle; and the crazy wisdom of tantra is based on the mahamudra principle. That seems to make the difference. It is absolutely necessary to go through those two stages: wildness and craziness. One has to go through wildness to begin with; then one ends up in craziness, or crazy wisdom. That seems to be necessary. It seems to be the only way.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* It seems from what you say that prajna is somewhat limited. Could you explain the limitation of prajna as opposed to crazy wisdom?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The limitation of prajna is the sense of faith, trust, and belief. There is enormous faith. In the mahamudra, faith is not particularly the point; being is more important. Being. In prajna there is a hint of how wild you may be, but it is still in keeping with something or other.

S: So there is still an element of tradition or reference point?

CTR: Yes, the element of a norm.

S: What is that norm, in prajna?

CTR: I suppose, itself.

S: Prajna.

CTR: What else? There is nothing. Everything is nothing—except nothingness, which is prajna itself. There has to be some thing: form is empty, and emptiness is form. You have been cut from both sides, but there is still the cutter. There is still the sword, which is prajna.

S: How does crazy wisdom operate?

CTR: It is not in keeping with any landscape. If the crazy-wisdom person is supposed to build a road, a highway, it will be built like the robins would build it. [*Rinpoche gestures in the air.*] It would go through fields and villages and houses and mountains—straight. If prajna built the road, it would be the same as what we have now: in keeping with the landscape, very gracious, maybe with ornaments around it.

S: Is it possible that when one really is crazy, that in the craziness “straight” could be anything, including going around or making curves?

CTR: Straight means cutting: you can’t cut in curves. If you have a sharp blow, you cut the whole thing. In this case, it is the ultimate cutting. It does not depend on anything at all, and it doesn’t come back, because it has no allegiance to the right or the left. It is That.

S: Would you say that prajna is like cutting with scissors—and the other one like stabbing through with a knife? Something like that?

CTR: Yes. Shotgun.

S: Short job? [*Laughter.*] Who aims the gun?

CTR: I suppose the person who is using the gun. [*Laughter.*]

S: Could you explain a bit more about the body as being the energy of existence?

CTR: The body is just the ground to work on. Mind is energy, and body is

existence.

S: It's just solid form, a vehicle?

CTR: Transparent solidness.

S: If one is knowledge and the other is being, why aren't they the same?

CTR: Knowledge is somewhat based on heritage.

S: Well, if you really know something, it means you are it, in a sense.

CTR: You cannot be it, because you still know it. When you know something, it is being put into your mind, and you are being trained. You may be producing a masterpiece, but you still are separate from that knowledge. In contrast, being is obviously there.

S: I have some trouble with the indestructibility of vajrayana. You said it was easy to see vajrayana as eternalism, with its deities, but that it wasn't eternalism. However, I do not see how indestructibility is different from shunyata, from impermanence. Is there any difference? Is vajrayana indestructibility different from the shunyata principle?

CTR: In the shunyata principle, there is a sense of experience. The experience may be indestructible; nonetheless, you are dependent on your energy, your fuel. In the case of the vajra-like quality, or indestructibility, of vajrayana, things are no longer experienced.

When we talk about experience, it means experiencing something other than you. You might have some experience that is one with yourself, one with shunyata. Nevertheless, it is one with shunyata, so it is separate. You could say that the water poured in a cup is indivisible from the cup when the water is in the cup. But if it is indivisible, why do you have to say that there is something to be indivisible from?

In the case of vajra nature, there is no experience. One doesn't have to say "union" or "indivisibility" at all. It is a sense of being. You don't have an energy shortage, so to speak, and you don't require any fuel. You have no dealings with extremes anymore: extremes are also included. It is fearlessness.

S: So Vajrasattva, vajra being, wouldn't necessarily be operating from shunyata?

CTR: No, not at all. He would be operating from an entirely different kettle of

fish.

S: Is it true that we have no way of knowing that our perceptions are accurate?

*CTR:* [Long pause.] Where did you hear that? [Laughter.] That's not true. We do have a way of knowing our perceptions are accurate. To begin with, your pain is accurate: it is your perception, another kind of reality. Then, as you go up into the vajrayana level, each time there is rejection or you are pushed away by something or other, each of those rejections is accurate. The loneliness is accurate. I mean, there is no way of knowing from the beginning level to the end level; but there are reference points, relative references to accuracy happening all the time.

S: You used "not two" in reference to tantra. When I met a Rinzai Zen master, he used a particular method of holding up two different things and saying, "Not two." Would that be the shunyata "not two"?

*CTR:* In the tantric sense, "not two" also means "not one."

S: He did make a oneness.

*CTR:* "Not two" to the extent of whether we should trust in zero, either—even that is questionable. "Not two" is like saying, "Not one hundred," but a much simpler way of putting it.

S: In the Naropa seminar, you mentioned at one point that Naropa dealt with one of his visions by talking to it, and you said that that was like someone talking to Zen, which isn't what you do with Zen. Yet Naropa was talking to Zen. That seems to be different from the use tantra makes of Zen, the way it addresses it, or takes it further. I wonder if you could explain that.

*CTR:* I don't see any issues there, particularly. It seems that tantra takes Zen further, definitely. But any beginner vajrayanist has to go through Zen training, or Zen-like training. Probably it wouldn't be called Zen as such, but you have to go through that level of mistaking wildness for crazy wisdom.

S: I see. Could you say a little more about ordinary mind, as distinct from what Suzuki Roshi calls beginner's mind? I thought I understood you to say that there is a connection between mahamudra experience and ordinary mind.

*CTR:* Well, mahamudra experience is ordinary mind. Another way of presenting ordinary mind is that the ordinary mind is the perceiver, and

mahamudra is the subject you perceive. Ordinary mind is big mind, I suppose, according to Yogacharan philosophy. It is the solid mind, the mind that comprehends everything, like the mahayana approach to sanity.

The ordinary mind is often experienced in the form of enormous letdown. “If this is the experience, then there’s nothing to it.” Then it begins to flower and thrive—because it is so ordinary. It’s like when somebody shows you a trick and you find it very simple; but when you play tricks on others, they find it very fascinating. The simplicity becomes enormously fantastic in the later stages. But at the beginner’s stage, it is an enormous letdown, because you have all kinds of expectations about it. One asks oneself, twice, “Are you kidding me, or is it really the case?” But it happens to be—it is really the case. That is a kind of ordinary mind experience. It is simple and clear. That’s why it is magical and why it is referred to as “magical” in the tantric tradition. It captivates you because of its ordinariness.

S: That only happens when you haven’t fully realized ordinary mind. Wouldn’t—

*CTR:* At the beginning, you don’t know what this is all about, and you expect something. Then it is presented to you, and you have that letdown. Usually, such an experience only takes place in abhisheka ceremonies, during the fourth abhisheka. The ordinary mind is presented to you, and you find it very disappointing.

S: Do you think that it’s important for a person to choose the tantric path or the Zen approach—to make a conscious decision and relate with that?

*CTR:* I think there is no particular point in trying to choose either of those. Just practice. That will lead you into certain states naturally. It is an organic thing.

S: Do you think it’s a hindrance to the principle of nondwelling when you become absorbed in meditation?

*CTR:* Absorption seems to be based on ego, yes. Your whole mind is clouded over in any kind of absorption.

S: What do you do at that point?

*CTR:* It requires meditation in action and working with the emotions, chaos, and depressions—rather than just dwelling on ecstasy. Everybody is bound to

have the raw-and-rugged aspect of life. No matter how smooth one's life may be, there still is an element of that in anyone. That seems to be the saving grace, in fact—the chaos that takes place in one's life.

S: From the viewpoint of Zen, the activity that we have been engaging in the last three days would be either garbage, or it would be aimed at driving a person to practice, to realize the ground of being, and to find the fool in what he is. What I'd like to ask is how in the tantric tradition a person is saved from the substitute activity of talking about shunyata and trying to get definitions, such as prajna, exact. How is a person driven beyond that to practice and realization?

CTR: From the tantric point of view, it is simply a kind of dance that takes place. You could be dancing in the middle of a garbage pile, or you could be dancing in a palace. Everything doesn't make sense—what we discussed—but everything that's been discussed is a good show! [*Laughter.*]

S: Many of the things that you have been discussing were really crystal clear from the experiential viewpoint; but short of that, the mind would be tempted to engage in this kind of quasi-logical discourse, trying to define and really acquire—acquire as a substitute—some knowledge of both tantric practice and Zen, for our comparison. And you seem to be adding so much more on the back—

CTR: Well, that's good. The more you are confused by the stuff you have collected, that much more do you have to sit back and sort it out. That seems to be the general point. In fact, nobody can sort anybody out, really, by talking or even by demonstrating. You are collecting more memories and more ideas. So the only thing to do is to help yourself, in any case. This is supposed to be the best contribution, but it could be fatal.

S: I might just summarize then that Zen and tantra are comparable, in this sense. The activity that one is engaging in here is really a kind of seduction. If you engage in it thoroughly, then you come to a kind of brick wall, which is where you have to get anyhow.

CTR: That's right, yes. Well said! At that conclusion, maybe we should end our seminar.

*Part Two*

THE NET OF DISCIPLINE



## *Trapping the Monkey*

*If we try to rush toward this monkey or to catch it by chasing after it, that exaggerates the monkey's paranoia so that it is impossible to catch. The only way to catch this mind monkey is to camouflage a trap with earth that is seemingly still. Then, hopefully, the monkey will step on that ground and become trapped.*

IN DISCUSSING ZEN AND TANTRA, we should first understand what seems to be their common ground and affinity: the practice of meditation. Zen and tantra can be understood if we understand basic meditation practice and its meanings and applications. Since both Zen and tantra belong to the Buddhist tradition, they both have that process. The Sanskrit word *dhyana*, which is connected with the word *zen* means “concentration,” “stillness of mind,” or “dynamic stillness”; and the Sanskrit word *samadhi* means “absorption,” or “entering further into a wakeful state.” So *dhyana* comes first, and *samadhi* comes later.

According to Buddhist tradition, when we talk about meditation, we are not referring to meditating upon something or entering into a particular state. Fundamentally, meditation is about training the mind without using any technique. Meditation is a process of training, and that training is the goal as well as the path. Such training is very gradual, very slow, but very definite at the same time. There is a sense of simplicity. One cannot just embark immediately on the practice of zen, or *dhyana* practice, but one has to go through the beginning of the beginning, which is called *hinayana* discipline, or the narrow path. This is very important. So *dhyana*, or *zen*, could be divided into three categories: the beginner's level, the intermediate level, and the final level.

At the beginner's level, there is what is called “training your mind.” The mind is like a crazy monkey, which leaps about and never stays in one place. It is completely restless and constantly paranoid about its surroundings. The training, or the meditation practice, is a way to catch this monkey, to begin with. That is the starting point. Traditionally, this training is called *shamatha* in Sanskrit, or *shi-ne* in Tibetan, which means simply “the development of peace.” When we

talk about the development of peace, we are not talking about cultivating a peaceful state, as such, but about simplicity. If we try to rush toward this monkey or to catch it by chasing after it, that exaggerates the monkey's paranoia so that it is impossible to catch. The only way to catch this mind monkey is to camouflage a trap with earth that is seemingly still. Then, hopefully, the monkey will step on that ground and become trapped.

Like the trap, the practice of the development of peace is one of imitating stillness. You are pretending to be still, although the mind is, of course, constantly jumping and restless. Nevertheless, that is the basic starting point, in which you use what you have: your body, speech, and mind. That is, you use the breathing, your eyes, and the movement of your body as a way of camouflaging yourself in the stillness. But that doesn't mean that you have to stop breathing or completely stop moving.

Another form of camouflage is to go along with the rhythm so that the stillness pretends to be movement at the same time. In this form of camouflaging, your mental attitude goes along with the breathing, and you visually go along with whatever is in front of your eyes. There is also in Zen a tradition of *kinhin*, or walking meditation, which is similar to the breathing practice. The only difference is that instead of a subtle sense of attention and wakefulness, in walking practice, the whole process becomes much more definite. The moment your foot comes down is more the point, and the sensation of your feet as they carry you around: touching the ground, lifting, putting weight on them, and so forth. Such practices at the shamatha level may almost seem to be competing with stillness, in that they use movement, but all of them are based on trying to capture this crazy monkey by setting a trap. Therefore, taking on the physical discipline of being still and the discipline of carrying out a certain schedule every day is necessary.

At the beginner's level, most of the emphasis is put on the sitting practice, on working with the breathing and walking. In everyday life, being awake and paying attention, bare attention, to what you are doing also becomes important. The way to do that is not so much by trying to slow down your physical movement or by deliberately trying to speak more softly but by a sense of presence. It is by a glimpse of wakefulness, a sense of bare attention without any purpose or object behind it but just taking a look or a glimpse at oneself. In extending your arm, touching your cup, lifting and drinking, talking and experiencing speech, your own speech and other people listening to you, and in physical movement, you are constantly being there with just bare attention. In

doing so, you just touch on the verge of that particular activity rather than wholeheartedly plunging yourself into heavy awareness practice. You are just touching the highlights—which acts as a kind of teaser, in that awareness is suggested or implied—rather than constantly plunging in really deeply, which provides further discursive problems (thoughts, rebounds, reactions, and all kinds of things). So the idea is to touch just the verge of activities, just pinpoint the verge of activities, which tends to bring a very strange form of slowness or stillness, somehow, that is not deliberate. If you are trying to hold on to awareness very hard, then your activities become rigid rather than slow and peaceful. In this case, the practice is just touching the verge of awareness, which brings a sense of slowness and peacefulness.

We are trying to trap this mad monkey. We have no idea what this monkey is or where it is wandering or even who this monkey is, but at this point it seems to be unnecessary to talk about who or what this monkey is—we are just practicing our entrapment. That seems to be one of the first disciplines of the practice of meditation. It is a very important basic foundation for dhyana practice, or zen practice, if you would like to call it that.

That seems to be the starting point. Before going on, it would be good to concentrate on trying to understand what we have already discussed and also to have a chance to sit and meditate so that we have an idea of what we are discussing.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* How long should the beginner practice daily—short or long periods?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* At the beginner's level it has to be a definite amount of time: traditionally, forty minutes. Hopefully, starting from forty minutes, you could go up to three hours a day—although that doesn't mean three hours in one stretch of sitting, particularly. There may be a certain amount of hesitation that you are unable to do this, which is completely untrue—you can do it! However, you never experienced such a reference point before, so you are afraid of doing it. Therefore, in order to surprise yourself, so to speak, it seems to be good actually to plunge into sitting practice, doing it for a lengthy amount of time, time permitting in your daily lifestyle. There is really no set pattern, but one should do a sizable amount of sitting practice. And of course, if there is more hesitation, then one has to push further; and if there is too much ambition,

then one has to minimize.

S: Do sitting practice and practices like T'ai Chi or other forms of moving meditation have the same effect as walking meditation for a beginner? Would it be just as appropriate to use those forms?

CTR: T'ai Chi and similar practices are more of a dance. In contrast, the physical act of walking meditation is not regarded as a dance; it is purely functional. You don't try to put emphasis on anything except bare attention. So, at the beginning, the whole thing has to be very simple. There's very little emphasis made on aesthetics, particularly, beyond what is there already. Walking is purely functional; otherwise, we're not able to provide the camouflage for the monkey.

S: The watcher principle and bare attention—is that the monkey also?

CTR: We can't know that yet! [*Laughter.*] Probably we should talk about that later. You see, the watcher is different from the notion of bare attention, because the very meaning of bare attention is "just a touch," and the watcher principle is more than a touch—it watches very sincerely. So there is light touch, and there is sincere touch.

S: In the book *The Secret of the Golden Flower*, the author, Tung-pin Lu, talks about following your breathing so that there is almost no sense of breathing. The practice of breathing is almost eliminated. He talks about smelling a delicate flower or something like that. Is that the kind of light touch you are talking about?

CTR: We are not talking about gentle breathing at all, just natural breathing. Breathing could be shallow or rough, depending on the state of the person's body, but the bare attention is a very gentle touch. You are not heavy-handedly being watchful, which breeds further restlessness. You are just teasing, almost, just touching the verge of awareness. That brings a sense of organic process, in which you are not providing any struggle; you are just suggesting. Therefore, mindfulness practice is known as *smriti*, which means "recollection," or a sort of resting consciousness. You are working with the sense of being alive—your mind is functioning, and your body is functioning—rather than struggling to live. That's why in the famous story of the string player who asked Buddha whether he should tame his mind or let it go, Buddha used the analogy of tuning a stringed instrument. He said that if you go to extremes, that doesn't make a

good sound, so it has to be a balanced approach. The sense that you are just barely doing it may seem to be rather dissatisfying at the beginning; but, in fact, in the long run it has more impact than being heavy-handed.

S: Do you see meditating with a mantra and meditating by breathing as serving somewhat the same purpose, or could you talk about the differences between them?

*CTR:* In the Buddhist tradition, working with a mantra is not recommended as the starting point. The simple breathing technique is definitely recommended. It depends on your attitude. In a lot of Hindu traditions, of course, you start with the mantra immediately, as the equivalent of using the breathing. In either case, it is a question of whether the mantra or the breathing is serving as a camouflage or just serving as a further sensation for the monkey, which depends on your attitude. However, at the beginner's level, a mantra is not being used as a magical spell, or mystical power, but purely to interest your mind, like the breathing, so that you could develop a sense of stillness. So it is a different way of using mantra at the beginner's level.

S: Would the implication be true that repeating the names of God, which is supposed to be done by Christians and Muslims, is also not exactly a mantra?

*CTR:* The Jesus Prayer, for instance, is similar because you have the sense of a concept at the beginning, but you are repeating the prayer so often and so many times that at some point the conceptual mind begins to get confused. In that way, because so many repetitions take place, the repetition of the prayer acts as a kind of camouflage. I think those sorts of practices are common to all meditative schools.

S: Is it possible to avoid the watcher by identifying yourself with the out-breath or by becoming absorbed in the out-breath, or is that too heavy-handed an act?

*CTR:* It is not so much a question of absorption as a question of intelligence—the intelligence of experiencing the breath as it is carried out, and then finally letting go when the out-breathing stops. So there is a sense of intelligence rather than any hypnotic quality. Mindfulness implies you are still intelligent, that your intelligence is still functioning. So it has to be a very light touch rather than being completely involved in it. The problem seems to be that if you are completely involved in any technique, that tends to provide all kinds of

restlessness and fundamental chaos. At this point, at the beginning, the purpose is not to bring out chaos—although fundamentally it is. At the beginner's level one has to learn to settle down with oneself. That's the problem at the beginning, so we try to rehabilitate ourselves with our mind.

S: In the process of settling down, in many traditions they talk about very rapturous or pleasant things that happen if you do that, particularly in mantra meditation systems. I wonder what is the relationship between extremely pleasant states that could arise while sitting and the process of the watcher as you are describing it? I mean, what does one do if something really groovy happens while you are doing a mindfulness meditation?

CTR: I don't see any problems, particularly. [*Laughter.*] You see, there shouldn't be any opinions as to what should happen to you. It is an open-ended question. The whole thing is just an experiment, so anything could come and go. There could be a fantastic cinema show. You might hear music and see visions or have distorted sensations in the body, feeling that you have enormous arms, a small body, or a heavy head. You might keep hearing classical music or jazz or pop songs. All kinds of things happen. Sometimes it feels completely nonexistent, and sometimes it feels wretched. But I don't think it really matters very much, particularly since this is not yet entering into samadhi. At the beginner's level, whatever happens, if one tries to prevent it, it somehow becomes a problem. Therefore, letting it come is the best way of avoiding it.

S: What about trying to encourage it?

CTR: That is the same; it is doing the same thing. That is why the technique is very important. Because you have some ongoing mutual earthly things happening with your body, your breathing, and your walking—there is no doubt; it is not a dream but reality.

S: Is there a danger in going into this kind of meditation if there's no invocation and dispelling of demons or spirits that might want to possess you or enter into you or have a negative influence on you? Are there any dangers that you have to do anything to avoid?

CTR: Where would they come from? [*Long pause; laughs.*] The very notion of danger you are working with is another kind of opinion, another idea. So you are working with that very thing. That idea might produce all kinds of further terrifying thoughts: spirits, ghosts, vampires, titans, or what have you. Since you

are working with that particular situation already, the question of whether you can get hurt is like saying, “Could a razor blade cut itself?” But wait and see what happens—this afternoon! [*Laughter.*]

S: Does noise interfere with the effectiveness of meditation, if there’s music or noise on the street?

CTR: I don’t think it matters very much [*snaps fan*], as much as the meditation cushion you are sitting on—which is also not an object. [*Snaps fan.*]

S: What about the irritation that comes from this wild monkey?

CTR: The whole point of trying to trap this wild monkey is that the behavior of the monkey has to be accommodated; otherwise, you can’t catch it.

S: How do you accommodate it?

CTR: By sitting and breathing. [*Pause.*] It’s very simple.

S: You said at the beginning to try to be on the verge of attention. If there’s a tendency to go into experiences and lose yourself in the experiences, does that mean some element of consciously holding back the tendency to rush in, or does it just happen more naturally in daily situations through sitting practice? It would seem that you would get into a very complicated process if you tried to hold yourself back, but if there’s a tendency to go in, how do you find the verge?

CTR: The point is that when we talk about touching the verge, we are by no means talking about being tentative or halfhearted. It is still wholehearted, but you don’t make a big deal out of it. You let the energy arise in your mind, and you let awareness just be there, rather than awareness minding the business of what’s happening. So there is almost complete control by the awareness; but at the same time, the awareness is no longer dogmatic. It is accommodating awareness, just a moderator—a very precise one. In many cases, when you begin to practice and to develop your discipline, you find that awareness actually comes to you: forgetfulness becomes awareness. So forgetfulness is the other side of the coin of awareness. The awareness invites you rather than you trying to get it—which is not particularly a great achievement, but it happens to anyone who practices a certain length of time, particularly if there is a sense of discipline. If a willingness to practice is involved, that also brings a sense of openness to you. That commitment is very important.

S: I don't understand how to identify with the out-breath and why to identify with the out-breath rather than both in-and out-breath.

CTR: This is a particular technique called "mind mixing with space." In this tradition, in-breathing has the notion of confirming one's existence, and out-breathing is an expression of openness. On the out-breath, you have plenty of breath inside your lungs, so you can breathe out. There is a sense of generosity and a sense of not being paranoid or feeling under attack. The out-breath also has a sense of openness, expanding yourself into the atmosphere, into space. It is a gesture of letting go and a very literal attempt to imitate the notion of egolessness. In-breathing is regarded as just a gap. You breathe in anyway, but your attitude is that it is just a gap, and you go along with the out-breathing. That is what is called the "mixing mind and space" technique.

S: Would this not be a development of personality that is essentially called in Western psychology schizoid?

CTR: I suppose so.

S: Thank you. [*Laughter.*]

CTR: You're welcome.

S: Is it better to follow your breath farther out rather than closer in?

CTR: Um-hmm. You see, the breathing is a sort of life force that takes place in space, according to this approach. It has nothing to do with anything inside your body, particularly, at all. That is the tradition of mind mixing with space.



## *Beauty and Absurdity*

*When you attain enlightenment, you never leave your fellow sentient beings; you still work with them constantly. You return to the world, which is the expression of compassion.*

HAVING DISCUSSED THE GROUND—how the basic practice of dhyana, or the tradition of Zen, could be developed—the next stage seems to be the question of how concentration produces appreciation. At this stage, you are actually trapping the crazy monkey. So it is a twofold process. First, you develop a sense of accuracy in relating with your thoughts and your mind—with the neuroses and all kinds of things that develop in one's mind. Secondly, you put all that into a certain perspective, as workable. You make a relationship with your thoughts; you work with the thoughts. So this process could be represented by the analogy of trapping the crazy monkey.

The traditional analogy for the monkey mind is an ox or an elephant. In Tibetan we call that mind *sem*. Mind, or *sem*, is the intelligent state that relates with objects. It is fickle in nature, constantly moving, and this movement leaves impressions behind. The mind leaves impressions, and it also takes on the burden of others. Mind is a constant state of movement. Sometimes, extraordinarily, the mind extends itself into speeding along very fast; and at some points, it seems to slow down, but that is also an expression of speed. Whether it is slow or fast, the nature of mind is restless, completely restless. At times, there may be room for irritations or obstacles to pass through, but even the occasional stillness of mind lasts no longer than a fraction of a second. That is the definition of mind.

Awareness, or intelligence, is quite a different and separate category from the mind. The intelligence, or consciousness, has less speed and does not carry a burden. It also expects some hospitality: this particular intelligence expects to be accommodated. Intelligence or awareness is therefore referred to as the rider or herder who works with the ox or the elephant or the monkey. Awareness regards the mind as its property; intelligence, or consciousness, is the owner of monkey

mind. The idea is that the monkey is supposed to have been domesticated a long time ago, but, somehow, we did not get around to it. So now we have this big project of setting a trap and trapping this monkey.

The schema is that there is consciousness, which is the intelligent aspect of the mind; and within consciousness, the most sane aspect is the awareness fraction, or portion. The monkey mind is caught in the trap because of the constant practice of sitting meditation, which provides a camouflage. Being completely still, it is complete entrapment. But at this point it is still a game. We are uncertain as to whether we are going to trap the monkey; it is uncertain; it is still a challenge. It could be regarded as a big joke, but nevertheless we are pursuing it and going ahead with it.

One of the problems with the monkey mind is speed. The intensity of the speed, instant by instant, has prevented us from taking a good look at this particular monkey, so it has become a myth. We are uncertain and question whether such a monkey exists. But the monkey mind is finally caught in the trap purely by constant patience and forbearance. As practitioners, we do not react against the displays that monkey has provided us: the discursive thoughts and subconscious gossip. The monkey has provided us with all kinds of things, but we continue to remain still. We are faithful to the technique of awareness of breathing and walking.

By the practitioner's sheer discipline and sheer patience, the monkey finally feels that there is no life around it or around the trap. As the monkey begins to relax a little but still practices its inquisitiveness, suddenly it is caught in the net by our sheer stillness and faithfulness to the technique. The monkey struggles and tries to get out of the net, but that net was well prepared a long time ago by highly accomplished craftsmen, who handed down from generation to generation the tradition of how to provide such a good entrapment. Every knot in the net is well produced, and it is very tough and functional. So now the monkey mind cannot get out of this trap. Knowing that as well, the monkey makes only feeble attempts, a kind of tokenism. Another analogy for this process is that of capturing an elephant or an ox, as demonstrated in the Zen Ox-Herding Pictures.

In the end, the monkey turns out to be not all that monkey-like in strength and solidity—it turns out to be a gorilla! It has power and strength, and it is worthwhile training this gorilla as a vehicle. Sometimes it is ferocious, sometimes slightly stupid, but nevertheless it is very powerful. So that is another realization: this monkey mind is not all that feeble. It is not as weak, inquisitive,

and speedy as we thought it might be.

In the practice of meditation, in dealing with this gorilla, once we have captured such a creature, we have to examine it and study it. We cannot just do something with it without knowing its habits and its behavior—patterns that might have to change. This is called vipashyana practice, or in Tibetan, *lhakthong*, which literally means “clear seeing.” *Lhak* is “superior”; *thong* is “seeing”; therefore, *lhakthong* could be translated as “superior vision” or “clear seeing.”

Now that this mind has been captured by the discipline and techniques we applied, we have to examine it carefully to see what we can do with this animal and how we can use it—whether we could use it as a farming ox or a vehicle or a baggage carrier. So we look at this discursive thought finally entrapped in the net of discipline and see what we can do with it. This provides a first step, some hope, because after all the trips that we have gone through, the hypothetical ceases to be hypothetical. It finally becomes reality. After all, we are not kidding ourselves and pretending to be meditating; we are actually doing something with our mind—and this is the proof.

Lhakthong is called clear seeing because it is awareness of every detail and at the same time it is very spacious. It goes beyond a breathing exercise alone. There is a sense of openness and a sense of appreciation of the environment around oneself. The focus on the breathing is no longer the important point—you focus on the totality of the breathing. The space around you becomes extremely important and extremely powerful. At that point, mindfulness becomes awareness, which is the next stage of practice.

Awareness also means comprehension. In other words, you cannot just be aware without being intelligent. The notion of wakefulness still continues at this level, but awareness not only means seeing; it means that seeing, as well as the product of seeing, is being perceived properly. So first you see something, but you do not quite perceive it. Your vision has to be very clear to see properly. Then, having already seen, there is still constant discipline, which continues afterward. Having seen things as they are, the object you discovered comes back to you, and you begin to comprehend. That is, you begin to understand what you have seen, rather than purely seeing. That is the difference. It is like the difference between things perceived through a camera lens and things perceived by a human mind. One is completely mechanical: things can be seen as clearly as possible by a macro lens, but that lens does not transmit its message back. In

the case of consciousness, the awareness process is a level of perception that utilizes what is seen as a part of its working situation. Through awareness, you get a very abrupt, definite, and clear perspective of the spontaneous working of perception and reality—suddenly! Vision and perception happen constantly; and with lhakthong, seeing and knowing take place at the same time.

We now realize that this gorilla has all kinds of potentialities. This gorilla can be trained in domestic manners, in every sense of the word. At the same time the intelligence, the conscious mind—which is the hunter of this gorilla—has established its ownership and trust and understanding. At this point, the speedy mind becomes somewhat workable—even highly workable.

On one hand, in this hinayana approach to the Zen tradition, the aesthetic appreciation of Zen poetry, or poetic vision, sometimes makes things more complicated. On the other hand, as things become more inspiring in the Zen tradition, and somewhat fun, we have koans of all kinds appearing. These koans are composed by the herdsman who captured the ox and who is the possessor of this gorilla. The herdsman questions all kinds of things, so koans generally come in the form of questions, as a way of producing something to test this monkey mind. There are known to be one hundred predominant koans, some of which are based on quotations from the sutras and the various *gathas* that Buddha spoke in his teaching. According to the sutras, the Buddha's speech was sometimes prose and sometimes in the form of song or inspiration. When the Buddha spoke poetry, the verses were called *gathas*, and some koans are products of those *gathas*. We find *gathas* in the sutra teachings, the abhidharma teachings, as well as in the *vinaya* teachings, but predominantly in the sutra teachings. Those three types of teaching—sutras, abhidharma, and *vinaya*—are what are known as the three baskets or, if you like, the three gospels, of Buddhism. The *vinaya* contains teachings on discipline; the sutras contain teachings on practice; and the abhidharma contains teachings on metaphysical understanding. A lot of koans come from those sources.

Koans contain such familiar phrases as “Does a dog have buddha nature?” and “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” These questions—koans in the form of questions produced by the Zen masters as synopses of the essence of the sutras—have a very powerful impact on the monkey mind. The monkey has now been caught in this net and has been trying to struggle, but finally it gives up struggling. It is hopeless, and quite possibly pissing and shitting profusely. The monkey is looking for some entertainment—and along comes a koan! That koan looks very colorful. It looks like a simple biscuit: “Here, try this!” The poor

monkey doesn't know whether it should eat it, examine it, or hold on to it. It just doesn't know. The koan looks appealing, but the monkey doesn't know whether it is food or whether it is something else, maybe a toy. That is how the koan produces inquisitiveness. The nature of koans is to arouse your inquisitive mind. These biscuits do not look like biscuits; they look like pieces of rock. Some of them look like flower petals or icicles or pieces of dung. So the monkey has enormous trouble trying to find out what he should be doing. The koan, or the biscuit, is supposed to be eaten. You are supposed to chew it, but that still doesn't sound quite right. You chew it and you chew it and you chew it. And finally, "Ah-ha! It's food! Why not swallow it?" There! You've got another koan solved!

So you go through a hundred of these koans, each of them of a different nature. But you don't get any result after you have chewed it and swallowed it. You end up saying, "So what?" That is supposed to be the point of a koan: to say, "So what?" Okay, I know what the sound of one hand clapping means—"So what?" It is not just a naive, reactionary, resentful "So what?" but it is an appreciative "So what?"—something of a relief. But it still contains a question constantly.

If you read a translation of Basho, his poems and haikus often expressed enormous sentimentality over something very insignificant. "There is a violet flower on my slipper"—he was so amazed by that. "On my very slipper this very violet flower. On this mountain path, how beautiful, how fantastic it is! How simple and how beautiful and how colorful it is!" His poetry has a childlike quality, almost absurd and simpleminded. But from the point of view of very simplemindedness, that approach is Zen. The monkey has swallowed the biscuit! In the Zen aesthetic tradition, which is connected with Yogacharan philosophy, there is beauty in simplicity. Feeding the captured gorilla biscuits could be a very beautiful thing to do—but at the same time, it is absurd. Therefore, the combination of beauty and absurdity brings another dimension to life, an appreciation of life.

According to Yogachara, the world is made out of mind. The monkey's net and the monkey itself and the place where you caught the monkey and the owner of this particular animal are also made out of mind. Yogacharans call this mind, which is the owner of the monkey, the self-illuminated mind. The herdsman who captured the ox is the self-illuminated mind. The appreciation of things as they are becomes vast and open. One of the basic points in the understanding of Zen tradition is to discipline and train the wild animal of mind, which should have

become domesticated a long time ago, because this wild animal has buddha nature—not just buddha nature, but it is buddha. So Zen is largely based on the idea of what is known as the trusting in the heart, or believing in the heart. Every experience we might go through has the potentiality of truth—everything—including the confusion. So Zen involves not only the sheer discipline of a stiff orthodox moralistic approach alone, but also involves an enormous sense of humor and enormous aesthetic appreciation. Zen is based on seeing that the whole world is made out of mind, which comes from the development of mindfulness and the awareness of seeing things precisely, directly, and openly.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* What happens to the gorilla after he's eaten all the biscuits?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* He comes back tomorrow and gets fed a lot more biscuits.

*S:* How many biscuits are there?

*CTR:* There are a hundred of them.

*S:* After all this has been done, what is left to feed the gorilla?

*CTR:* Well, maybe that might be the time for him to come out of his net. By then he should pull a plow or drive a tractor.

*S:* At first you said that the consciousness or awareness is the owner and should be the tamer of mind, and later you said that all things are included in the mind. You brought it back together and said that the tamer, or the owner, was part of the mind, as well. I was wondering if you could say a little bit more about how that break occurs and how it comes back together.

*CTR:* In terms of mind, the whole thing is included in big mind. It is mind's world. It is a complete big world. But within that world—you might say the human world—there are businessmen and salesmen and bakers; there are cooks, servants, and there are taxi drivers; there are presidents. All kinds of things happen within that big world.

*S:* Rinpoche, when you say that in Zen or Yogachara there is this idea of one mind, that everything is mind, are you simply saying that everything that one individual can experience is his mind? Do you mean a person experiences

everything as an expression of his mind, or do you mean that in fact there is one mind in the universe that expresses itself in each person, but also expresses itself in the woods, in the air, in the sky, and the trees?

*CTR:* It is fundamentally a purely phenomenological approach, which includes oneself. This kind of phenomenological experience includes oneself and everything. Therefore, there is the possibility of writing poems. The poet gets enormously amused that he could see a tree out of his mind or his mind out of a tree, which is bent down to a rock, which is another aspect of his mind. There is a frog jumping underneath, which is another part of his mind. So you begin to see the facets of beauty and interest that go on there. One mind can produce tree, rock, and frog, simultaneously existing.

*S:* Does he think that is his mind?

*CTR:* According to Yogacharan theology, so to speak, it is all supposed to be mind—it could be a mind, whatever you would like to call it, but it is still one's mind.

*S:* Does he imagine the frog looking at him?

*CTR:* Yes, he is viewing it. He is writing the poem himself.

*S:* The frog?

*CTR:* The poet, who is frog.

*S:* That seems a little bit too nondualistic! [*Laughter.*] Is this big mind in Zen experience dwelling in shunyata, without the willingness to cross over?

*CTR:* It is still dwelling on shunyata, definitely so, because you have created your universe, which neither belongs to the others or this one, but is total. Totality.

*S:* In that sense there is probably still a fear of losing shunyata?

*CTR:* I think so, very much, because shunyata is regarded as a treasure. Often the discovery of shunyata is referred to in the Zen textbooks as the treasury, the treasure, the jewel, the gem. There still is a sense of value, a sense of the preciousness, that imitating the Buddha is very important.

*S:* Rinpoche, is there anything in the Tibetan tradition that serves the same functions as the koans do in Zen?

*CTR:* There are actually Tibetan koans, which were taught to the Tibetans by Chinese Ch'an masters such as Kamalashila, who came to Tibet in the eighth century. So Ch'an masters taught Ch'an Buddhism in Tibet; the influence of Ch'an carries over from the Ch'an tradition to the early Kadampa tradition in Tibet, founded by Atisha Dipankara. The Tibetan tradition of the Kadampa school, instead of the sudden enlightenment that Zen presents, has put more emphasis on the benevolent practices and work of a bodhisattva. In that context, a lot of koans developed, which the students would repeat to themselves as they sat and meditated. A rough translation of one such koan is, "Try to be the lowest of the lowest and the highest of the highest; therefore, you have nothing to gain and nothing to lose." Those bodhisattva koans may have slightly moralistic overtones, but such benevolent koans are presented, and there are lots of them.

*S:* Are there tantric practices involved in Zen?

*CTR:* Tantric practices involved in Zen? I do not think so. The closest thing to the magical aspect of tantra we can find in the Zen tradition is the cosmic joke that has been played on you. How frivolous is the sun: it rises; it sets. That kind of mentality. There is a lot of humor involved in that, so I suppose you could say that is closest to tantra.

*S:* I am not quite clear about what you are doing here. You are presenting Zen and describing it. But at the same time, obviously, you are presenting your own teaching at the same time, such as when you describe the different stages of meditation practice. So are you saying you are a Zen master? Or that the Zen teachings and your teachings are the same at this level? Or is this just basic Buddhism? Perhaps we should clarify that a bit.

*CTR:* I would say this is just basic Buddhism and that we are going through Zen territory. Definitely it is basic Buddhism. Zen does not particularly belong to the Japanese tradition or the Chinese tradition as such. It is part of the evolutionary thought of schools that developed throughout the Buddhist journey of philosophy and the practice of meditation. From that point of view, I could say that I am a Zen master or a tantric master or a hinayana master or whatever you would like to call it. Is it clear?

*S:* I think you are basically talking about hinayana and mahayana stages of the path.

*CTR:* Yes.



S: Is the Buddhist journey still continuing? Is it developing, or is it completed? You said that the journey from hinayana to vajrayana is lineal, and I wondered if it ends. I mean, has it ended historically, or are there new developments, new discoveries?

CTR: The historical development has by no means ended at this point; experiential development is still taking place. It is like school: we first go through grade school, then grammar school, high school, university, and so forth. While education is constantly happening to us in that way, the educational system has gone through that process already.

S: I smoke tobacco occasionally, and I regard it as mildly neurotic and mildly pleasurable and somewhat detrimental to my health. I suspect that it negatively affects my meditation. How do you feel about your cigarette smoking and mine as well? [*Rinpoche is chuckling and smoking; laughter.*] No, I am serious.

CTR: Is that a Zen question?

S: [*Laughing.*] Oh, I don't know if it's a Zen question.

CTR: Let me tell you about my personal experience with smoking Marlboros and an occasional pipe a long time ago. I don't find it particularly detrimental to my health. When I do smoke, I do it. The cigarette ends, I put it down, and watch throughout the process. And you have accomplished another occupation in your life, as much as your toilet flushing down.

S: At the point of development when all is seen as mind, can that mind develop the ability to perceptibly direct material, at the point where duality is truly seen as illusory?

CTR: You have to go beyond duality, and you also have to go beyond nonduality at the same time. You have to return to duality: that is the final goal. It is like the Ox-Herding Pictures: finally, you return to the world, with a big belly and with the ox behind you. That picture, returning to the world, is the final point. So you have duality; then you discover nonduality because of duality; then you transcend both nonduality and duality because of them. So you have to go through that threefold process. In fact, that's precisely the purpose of what is known as the three-yana principle—the hinayana, the mahayana, and the vajrayana. When you attain enlightenment, you never leave your fellow sentient beings; you still work with them constantly. You return to the world, which is the expression of compassion.

## ***Dynamic Stillness and Cosmic Absorption***

*When we talk about intellect here, we are not talking about intellectualizing things, or analyzing things. We are talking about intellect in the sense that things are already elucidated, already disentangled. Your only job is to see them and not be afraid of seeing such nakedness.*

**I**N DISCUSSING THE EVOLUTION toward tantra from the hinayana and mahayana traditions, the question seems to be how basic intuitive practice leads toward intellectual discipline. From this point of view, shamatha and vipashyana practice are connected with intuition, and the vajrayana, or tantric tradition, is related with the intellect. But let me make it quite clear that when we talk about intuition, it is not purely a simple ape-instinct form of intuition; rather, it is intuition in the sense of clearly seeing things as they are, without any questions, without any doubt.

Within intuition there is enormous room for discipline. When there is less discipline, there is less chance to see the clarity. So discipline and intuition work hand in hand, and the combination of the two slowly produces a sense of intellect. It is like rubbing two sticks together, producing a spark: the spark is intellect, and the two sticks are intuition and discipline. So the discipline of meditative practice, the basic training of mind, the development of peace and awareness—all those processes are extremely important. They are the workings of the intellect, on the way to tantra.

A portion of the practices in the early stages of the hinayana and mahayana is known as the Zen tradition, which is a school of meditation. Zen practitioners have devoted their lives completely to sitting practice and to dissolving questions and answers by wholeheartedly disciplining themselves in sitting practice. That intense discipline of training the mind and developing fantastic, extreme precision brings another kind of perception, which leads toward samadhi. *Samadhi*, as I described earlier, literally means “absorption,” or “holding still.” In Tibetan, it is *tingdzin*, which also means “holding still.”

Tingdzin has nothing to do with the effort of holding still—it is being still. Ultimately, you are without any reference point to make sure that what you are holding, or what you are developing, is a big deal. Instead, you are simply just being—in a very direct, very simple, very precise, and very dynamic stillness.

Absorption in this case is not restricted to the sitting practice of meditation or going into a state of a trance: absorption is the totality of experience. Every aspect of your life is included: the world of emotions, the world of conflict, the world of intellect. Everything is included. Therefore, it is absorption in the larger sense—in the cosmic sense, if you like—and this notion of cosmic absorption is what is called tantra. In tantra, there is continuity: *tantra* literally means “thread,” or “continuity.” That absorption, or continuity, is what continues from the spark developed through discipline and meditation. That spark continues—and finally it produces dramatic fire, fantastic flames.

At this level, the trained monkey, who is still caught in the net, has finally relaxed. The monkey is settling down and beginning to work with its master. It is willing to follow any orders the master has given. It is willing to do anything. It is not so much that the monkey has been badly beaten or starved to death, and therefore it has had to tune in to survive. Instead, there is comfort, a sense of hospitality and safety. The speediness of the monkey mind has been completely changed. The monkey has had a change of attitude in which it begins to realize that rushing around, gallivanting here and there, does not help. The only thing to do is just to relate with what is there. If the monkey relates properly and thoroughly, a net to hold it down will no longer be necessary. So, in that regard, freedom has developed. The monkey has been well trained—not by sheer pressure but by sheer hospitality.

At the beginning, of course, when the monkey is caught in the net of discipline, that isn't very nice. It is somewhat uncompassionate. Nevertheless, it is the first lesson that it is creating its own problem, which is why it has been caught. Then the monkey begins to eat this food of spiritual antidotes—or anecdotes. The monkey begins to make friends with itself more, as much as it makes friends with each biscuit it is fed. There is a sense of openness, restfulness, and trust.

This is precisely the point where samadhi, or absorption, can be achieved—when there is a sense of trust in oneself. Having developed a sense of trust in oneself, slowly that expands its expression outward, and the world becomes a friendly world rather than a hostile world. You could say that you have changed

the world: you have become the king or queen of the universe. On the other hand, you can't quite exactly say that, because the world has come toward you, to return your friendship. It tries all kinds of harsh ways to deal with you at the beginning, but finally the world and you begin to speak with each other, and the world becomes a real world, a completely real world, not at all an illusory world or a confused world. It is a real world. You begin to realize the reality of elements, the reality of time and space, the reality of emotions—the reality of everything. That is the absorption we are talking about.

When the monkey has been thoroughly trained and has completely become part of the owner's household, there is no problem. The loneliness of the owner and the struggle the owner faced trying to train this monkey is no longer necessary. The owner has finally found a companion, rather than purely a pet. This is known as the union of joy and meditation. The owner begins to dance with this gorilla, who is now a good friend. The owner begins to explore together with the gorilla, to climb up trees, eat fruit, take long walks, swim in the ocean. All kinds of things can be done because the world is friendly, and the monkey is friendly, and the owner himself is friendly. So an interesting reaction is that in trying to tame this monkey, the owner has also made friends with himself, without knowing. The notion of compassion has approached you from the backdoor, from that point of view. You realize compassion; you realize friendship, friendliness, and openness.

Earlier, we looked into the poetry and the aesthetic appreciation of Zen, and at this point, we might contrast that with the roughness, directness, and piercing quality of tantra. This does not necessarily mean that becoming a tantric master or tantric adept makes you clumsy, crude, and inartistic. In fact, it is the opposite: your level of appreciation of aesthetics becomes higher; it is at a much greater level. The pine tree and the rock and the frog—composing such poetry and appreciating such a poetic scene were still like watching a stage show. Now you become the actor on the stage as well as the audience at the same time. You are infested with appreciation in yourself, so you do not have to comment or to congratulate the world for how beautiful it is, particularly. The world is—is what? It's not particularly beautiful; it's not particularly ugly. The world is. Period.

In the tantric tradition, there is a lot of emphasis on pleasure, on appreciation of one's body and appreciation of the environment. A kind of transcendental sybaritic attitude develops in the tantric tradition, which is another form of absorption. It is not so much that you are indulging in pleasure as such at the

tantric level, but the world ceases to become hostile. The absence of hostile forces is nothing else but hospitable, without any conditions. There are no common enemies to fight; there is no struggle. But at the same time a dynamic challenge takes place—it's not all that lovey-dovey! There are enormous challenges to face, and these forces come at you as you are experiencing yourself and life around you. The reality and the nakedness of emotions, and the reality and nakedness of sense perceptions become piercingly irritating, because there is no defensive mechanism to protect you from the world. Since there is no mechanism created to shield you from all that, nothing to shield you from the brilliance and vividness of the world—like wearing a shade to protect yourself from glaring sunlight—the whole thing becomes much more demanding. That is the notion of absorption.

In the tantric tradition, there are basically what is known as the four orders of tantra. The first one is *kriyayoga*: this is based on a notion of purity and cleanliness, in which the purity is being seen as it is. Then there is *upayoga*, which is based on seeing that the purity and cleanliness is also a means of action. Rather than simply involving yourself in purity, you are exploring the world, exploring your life situation in an awake, very wakeful way. Then there is *yogayana*, the third one, in which action and the discovery of purity are one. That is, activities complement purity and cleanliness. You are transcending any hang-ups, leftovers, or hangovers, transcending any kind of preconceptions. Action and experience are combined together, and therefore it is fundamentally pure and approachable.

The fourth one is called *anuttaratantra*. Anuttaratantra is connected with experiences that are completely transcendent. Even the notion of unity is transcended. There is no point in making a big deal about nonduality or unity, particularly. The notion of oneness is a belief, a trip; therefore, the notion of nonexistence is also a trip. So there is no belief, no notion. That is why it is called anuttara. *Anuttara* is a Sanskrit word, which is the same as the Tibetan word *lama*. *La* means “above,” and *ma* makes it “those who are above or superior,” or “higher persons.” Anuttara means “none above.” Anuttara transcends even aboveness. No notion of above or below is necessary or important. The notion of a higher level of spirituality or lower level of spirituality is no longer an important issue.

The sense of space and the sense of time become more precise and direct here, because you begin to realize the sacredness of the universe. The universe is not regarded as sacred as opposed to ordinary, but one just begins to realize being

aware and being mindful—and also, being. You begin to realize your time and your space. That is known as the activity of the victorious one, the fearless one. A person spontaneously chooses a spot in relationship to the world and relates with a certain time. The notion is that there is no choice. The choice is never thought about, but at the same time there is awareness and mindfulness of the highest level. That is why it is absorption, completeness.

From this point of view, the teachings of Zen are the vanguard of tantra. The heroic attitude derived from the Zen tradition is, from the tantric point of view, still a conditional one, because you are making a statement of this and that. In the tantric tradition, there is no need for making a statement about anything at all: things are as they are. Finally this monkey mind has become a part of the inspiration, a part of the intellect—of the highest intellect.

When we talk about intellect here, we are not talking about intellectualizing things, or analyzing things, as in the ordinary notion of intellect. We are talking about intellect in the sense that things are already elucidated, already disentangled. Your only job is to see them and not be afraid of seeing such nakedness. That seems to be the highest point of intellect: not being afraid of the nakedness of reality as it is. In a certain tantric tradition, that is known as the realization of ordinary mind, *thamal gyi shepa*, ordinary mind being that no one thing is better than anything else. When you try to say this is much better than that one, that is further better than this one, this is again much better than that one, then you have nowhere to go: you are completely and constantly escalating. With *thamal gyi shepa*, or ordinary mind, therefore, nothing can go up. But now there's nothing: there is no highest or lowest, at all. It is very ordinary, just ordinary experience.

That seems to be one of the basic points of tantra—the experience of ordinary mind. This ordinary mind is different from the Zen tradition of ordinary mind. In the Zen tradition, ordinary mind has the connotation of being simple and at the same time poetic. It is aesthetically ordinary and beautiful, like the ordinariness of the pine tree and the rock and the frog. That is a very ordinary scene: there are no jewels, no gold and silver. It is just a simple rock, a simple pine tree, and a simple frog, which is another form of ordinariness. In contrast, in the ordinariness of the tantric tradition, there is the needlessness of description of anything at all. It is superordinary; it is completely ordinary.

Altogether, there seem to be three journeys, or levels, in the Buddhist tradition. The hinayana is based on the discipline of seeing directly; the

mahayana experience is one of openness and friendliness; the vajrayana is the experience of greater precision. You see the world from its own place, but at the same time it is a transcendental view. It is an aerial view of the world, in that you see the orders of the world functioning, as they are.

## QUESTIONS

*Student:* You mentioned in *Meditation in Action*<sup>5</sup> two ways of meditation—the Buddhist approach and another approach based on ego and an outside force you become united with—and you said the end point may be the same. Would the end point in a tradition, such as a Hindu tradition, where there is a uniting with some other force, be the same ordinariness?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The point seems to be that if there is a notion of unity, that is still a struggle. This is no reflection on Hinduism as such, but it is a reflection on individuals' attitudes as to what they think Hindu doctrine, or Hindu teachings, should be. The notion of unity has the connotation that you are fighting some kind of common enemy, which might create separateness or a state of partisan chaos. So unity is a feeble attempt to bring something together. But that whole approach is based on being defensive, or project oriented. That is, we try to achieve unity, and finally we say, "Let us celebrate that we are united, that we have done it!" But that celebration is somewhat achievement oriented, in that we have gained victory over some threat from somewhere else. So, from the tantric view, and perhaps from the Vedic tradition of Hinduism as well—possibly it is the same—the notion of unity is not even important. Instead of unity, there is ordinary mind, ordinariness rather than anything special.

*S:* You said that in meditation there are two different schools, or approaches.

*CTR:* There are not exactly two different schools, but two different attitudes students use: looking outward and trying to find an answer or looking at oneself and trying to discover an answer. In both schools students have to give up their trips, so to speak. However, the answer cannot be outside or within! That is the function of tantra—to transcend those two approaches.

*S:* You mentioned the absence of hostile forces but the existence of dynamic challenges, to a person who is along the path. Do those dynamic challenges end at a certain point, and if so, when? And how do you interpret them?

*CTR:* Dynamic forces are regarded as adornment, as further richness, as an expression of being alive. They continue constantly; otherwise, there's no life to it. There is no energy to return to the world and show confused people the path. There's no working situation, no dynamic force.

*S:* I don't understand what dynamic stillness means. Can you say a little more about it?

*CTR:* You could say it is a state of being that is extremely intense. It is just being—but it is indestructible. That state of being or stillness cannot be challenged, because it does not admit the logic of possibilities of challenge at all. It has never known challenge.

*S:* To me, as I experience them, the difference between the state of consciousness that is most important in tantra and that which is most important in Zen is that in tantra it is more like what we refer to as being spaced and in Zen it is much more like being stoned. Do you want to comment on that? As I experienced them, from having practiced for some time, there is this distinction. Do you experience this also, or could you comment on it?

*CTR:* Well, I think what you said is quite accurate in many ways, but at the same time, it is not accurate at all! The notion of stillness like a rock could also be very spacious. If you can really be a complete rock that does not allow anything else in but rockness, so there is no choice, then it's really blunt, very stubborn. That stubbornness brings enormous space. At the same time, in tantra, space could also become a kind of rock—but maybe on a larger scale in which the whole of space is filled with concrete.

*S:* But the experience itself seems to be sensed or experienced or consciousness oriented in a way that is simply different. You made reference to a poem by Basho, the Zen poet, in which he is obsessed with the violet or the flower or the butterfly on his slipper. This almost childish obsession with the immediate effect, which is so visible in Zen art—this sort of flourishing flow of almost an immaturity at times but at other times a tremendous depth—is very different than tantric art, which is very highly elaborate. I don't know if you follow what I'm saying, but there is a very big distinction in the consciousness states.

*CTR:* There is; definitely there is. But that doesn't mean that there is a contradiction, particularly. It is like the evolutionary differences between an



adult and an adolescent.

S: Is there any situation you've come across that is enough to give one experience in both?

*CTR*: I don't think so. It would be like saying you could be old aged and a baby or infant at the same time. I suppose you could, metaphorically speaking, but experientially that is impossible. You cut your umbilical cord a long time ago, and now you are old like a baby—that doesn't quite make it.

I think there is no one particular complete thing in the Buddhist teachings, at all. People have to go through a process, and each experience that they go through in that process is a unique one, for its own level of consciousness. You have to go up and up and up, and finally, you have nowhere to go up, and you have to come down completely. You relate with yourself as the lowest of the lowest. You become a grain of sand.

S: But there are many colors in the spectrum of a rainbow.

*CTR*: Sure.

S: They are not better or worse; they are just different.

*CTR*: They are different, but they are not particularly better or worse, as you said.

S: Would you agree, then, that tantra is more like being spaced and Zen is more like being stoned?

*CTR*: It's a matter of opinion, actually.

S: Would you put it in those terms?

*CTR*: Sure, yes, if you like.

S: Do you perceive it this way?

*CTR*: If you like.

S: I'd like to know if there's anything similar to the koan in the tantric tradition, especially as it developed in Tibet. And if there isn't, there seems to be an awful lot of emphasis on the use of deities and bodhisattvas, as seen in the tremendously crafted, beautiful illustrations you find in Tibetan art. From what I'd heard, the meditator is trying to develop concentration in order to reach a

certain stage of identity with these illustrations, in the sense that he tries to see the deities—the wrathful deities and the joyful deities—as being more or less just manifestations of his own mind. Is this analogous to the koans in the Zen tradition?

*CTR:* I suppose you could say so, roughly. But at the same time, koans are working on sounds and word combinations, using very simplified phrases or poems. The closest to that seems to be the mantras that developed in the tantric tradition. The difference is that a mantra doesn't make any sense. Mantras are just simple cosmic sounds.

*S:* Is a koan supposed to make sense?

*CTR:* The koan is supposed to make sense unless you lose the sense of it—then that is the flash! Mantra doesn't go through that process; it is just a cosmic onomatopoeic noise. As far as music is concerned, musically, it makes some sense. It has tones; it has vowels and consonants. But, at the same time, mantras are supposed to be regarded as an expression of space. There are no challenges involved for students who are involved in mantra, as there are with a koan. You work with the mantra as an expression of space. Then you begin to realize a manifestation of space, according to how it has been colored by your own emotions, concepts, and ideas. It is the same as the deities: the deities are discovered because of your own state of consciousness.

*S:* Would mandalas be similar to mantra?

*CTR:* The mandala is just a geography, giving you a map of spiritual development: where you are at, which location. Mandalas are connected with the idea of absorption. They give an aerial view of things as they are completely.

*S:* Are you supposed to make sense out of the mandala in the same way you are supposed to make sense of a koan?

*CTR:* You are supposed to know your own spot. That's it.

*S:* When you're in this ordinary experience, you say there is essentially no defense, no organized shade or protection from the world. But is there not some way you can stop experiencing aggression and different things like that as directly painful?

*CTR:* From that point of view, there is no such thing as real pain: pain is pleasure and pleasure is pain. There is experience, but experiences are not

regarded as conditional experiences. That is very difficult to perceive if you are trying to perceive it. You have to know it; you have to be it.

S: You have been referring to the Ox-Herding Pictures frequently, and I was wondering, are the last three pictures considered vajrayana, or tantra?

*CTR*: It seems that the pictures the tantric tradition is involved in are the blank space and the two spaces after that—"Reaching the Source" and "In the World."

S: The next question is, since these pictures came from the Zen tradition, it must be a sort of paradigm that the tantric tradition and the Zen tradition are a very similar experience.

*CTR*: There is no similar work of art that is equal to that, but there is a Tibetan tradition of an elephant-herding picture. That picture doesn't go as far as the no ox, no herdsman; it goes up to the level of discovering the ox or discovering the elephant.

S: The feelings or ideas of karma and grace: how do they relate on the path to the practice of this kind of meditation?

*CTR*: Well, you are discovering yourself. You can relate with the herukas or dakinis, rediscovering your potentiality in the form of dynamic energy. You begin to realize your own potentiality in the form of enormous, tremendous energy. You practice the appropriate sadhana, and you recite the mantra according to that.

S: Could you elaborate on the notion of choosing your spot spontaneously in time and space?

*CTR*: That's a question of practice and experience, rather than something I can describe with terms, particularly, but there is a sense of being what you are. There is also a sense of knowing your environment and knowing that there are no hostile forces to disrupt your continuity. Having those situations, you begin to have a feeling for a particular spot, a particular area of the mandala. You begin to develop a sense of self-existing power. You have conviction and fearlessness; you have authority as to how to handle the universe. It seems that you don't need any permission from anyone.

S: I'd like to introduce the question of death. When you say you reach the point where there are no hostile forces, isn't the fear of death, which most people

have down there somewhere, especially as they get older, a hostile force? What do you have to say about that?

*CTR:* It's a question of whether you regard your life as completely under your control. Then even birth or death, sickness or old age, or whatever your experience—accidents, eating lunch and breakfast, going to sleep—all of those things become deliberate acts. Within the spontaneity, you are actually doing it. You have reference points as to what you do with your life. Your life is very, very precious and sacred, so a sense of deliberateness is always there. Therefore, death doesn't come as a shock, because when you want to die, you die. It is just like stepping out of someone's house and saying good-bye to the world. There is a sense of conviction. It's not a question of death alone. We could be terrified that the sun sets at a certain time, beyond our control, or that we are late or we are too early, because that is beyond our power. If relationships are made with all those situations that go on in life, death becomes simply one of those situations.

*S:* And birth?

*CTR:* And birth was a rehearsal, I suppose, for dying.

*S:* In a large part of the Tibetan written tradition, there is a lot of mention of karma; while in the Zen tradition, there are very few mentions of karma. I've noticed that you seldom use the concept of karma, seldom talk about it. Why is that?

*CTR:* I think I've mentioned karma a great deal in past teachings. Recently, we have been talking about American karma and Tibetan Buddhism, and we have been talking about our own individual coincidence that we have arrived at this particular situation together. The notion of karma is one of the most important points of the Buddhist tradition. It means that your world is not dictated by a higher power, a cosmic power, external deity, or God. Instead, your functioning in life is constantly a result of your previous actions. That process happens constantly. People get messages constantly—if they are speeding or if they are slowing, if they are tripping out or not, whatever they are doing. Constant answers come to you, which is karmic expression—cause and effect. It is very mechanical, maybe even scientific.

In the Zen tradition, practice is purely based on the practice of meditation. The Zen tradition is no longer regarded as a philosophical school at all. Zen Buddhism functions in Japan and comes from China. Chinese Ch'an Buddhism

evolved and developed within the basic framework of Buddhist philosophy, at a time when the whole country had already accepted the notion of karma. Therefore, in Zen, karma is not particularly important. For you personally, as you sit and practice, there is no point in getting paranoid about your karmic consequences. The sense of sitting is more important than speculating about the consequences of sitting. That seems to be the basic point.

S: What's happening to the monkey when the person gets dreamy? Where does dreaminess fit in?

CTR: Just dreams, I suppose. Nothing happens. You wake up. It's no big deal.

S: Is dreaming maybe the monkey of the intelligence running around, playing its own game?

CTR: It could be doing anything, eating a banana.

S: I think the point was that you feel you have more control over the monkey when you're awake than you do in your dreams. You certainly have none then.

CTR: You still have control as to what you do when you're awake, which is connected with practice. You can't meditate and sleep and dream at the same time; that's why there is the need for practice. The emphasis on practice is because it is the only time in your life you can steer your karmic situation.

S: You said that the highest function of the intellect is seeing things as they are, which means that they are already elucidated and not requiring further elucidation. Is the Buddhist tradition part of things as they are, and doesn't the evolving of the Buddhist tradition require a further elucidation? I'm not sure what you mean by things already being elucidated, because it seems that there is a whole system of intellectual or conceptual thought to elucidate further what is.

CTR: The point is, when you see things as they are, either you see it or you don't see it. There are no stages or levels, particularly. According to Buddhist tradition, there is a problem at the beginning of seeing things as they are. Having seen things as they are, there is also a problem of how to handle it, rather than whether seeing things as they are is valid or not. That is why the non-spiritual-materialistic approach is necessary and important. Having seen things as they are, you don't dilute what you have seen; you just leave it alone. You do not make a trip out of it. Even before you see things as they are, you do not make trip out of it! Otherwise, you cannot see things as they are.

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5. *Meditation in Action* (Shambhala Publications, 1969) is reprinted in *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, vol. one (Boston: Shambhala, 2003).

*Part Three*

**OX-HERDING**

## *Ox-Herding Pictures*

**T**RUNGPA RINPOCHE ENCOUNTERED the ten Ox-Herding Pictures at the home of his publisher, Sam Bercholz, in the hills above Berkeley, California. These very drawings by Tomikichiro Tokuriki sat amid other Zen lore assembled by the haiku poet Paul Reps. When Reps published this collected material in 1957 with Tuttle and Co. under the title *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, it had an immediate, strong effect on the spiritual seekers and Beat-generation readers.

Trungpa Rinpoche's close student Michael Kohn (Sherab Chödzin) reports that Rinpoche was excited by this Zen representation of stages on the path when first he saw them in 1971 and that he began composing his own commentary. The work continued, as Trungpa Rinpoche decamped from Berkeley and returned to his fledgling community at Tail of the Tiger (Karmê Chöling) in Vermont.

As Kohn described it: "The material was very potent and over my head. I remember the sessions as conveying that powerful sense that often surrounded Rinpoche in those days, of conveying the whole of the very essence of the teachings in one glorious dispensation. the continuous invisible golden smile... The Cheshire cat had absolutely nothing on him."

### **COMMENTARY BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA**

The ten Ox-Herding Pictures are a well-known Zen representation of the training of the mind, a process so basic that it could be considered fundamental to all schools of Buddhism. A deeper way of looking at it is in terms of the spiritual development from *shravakayana*<sup>6</sup> to maha ati.<sup>7</sup> In the Tibetan tradition there is an analogy of elephant herding, but it refers mainly to the practice of shamatha. The symbolism does not go beyond riding the elephant. In the Ox-Herding Pictures, the evolutionary process of taming the bull is very close to the vajrayana view of the transmutation of energy. Particularly, returning to the



world as an expression of the compassion of the nirmanakaya<sup>8</sup> shows that the final realization of Zen automatically leads to the wisdom of maha ati.

## 1. *The Search for the Bull*

The inspiration for this first step, searching for the bull, is feeling that things are not wholesome; something is lacking. That feeling of loss produces pain. You are looking for whatever will make the situation right. You discover that ego's attempt to create an ideal environment is unsatisfactory.



一  
尋  
牛

## 2. *Discovering the Footprints*

By understanding the origin, you find the possibility of transcending this pain. This is the perception of the four noble truths. You see that the pain results from the conflicts created by ego, and you discover the footprints of the bull, which are the heavy marks of ego in all play of events. You are inspired by unmistakable and logical conclusions, rather than by blind faith. This corresponds to the shravakayana and *pratyekabuddhayana*<sup>9</sup> paths.



見跡

### 3. *Perceiving the Bull*

You are startled at perceiving the bull, and then, because there is no longer any mystery, you wonder if it is really there; you perceive its insubstantial quality. You lose the notion of subjective criteria. When you begin to accept this perception of nonduality, you relax, because you no longer have to defend the existence of your ego. Then you can afford to be open and generous. You begin to see another way of dealing with your projections, and that is joy in itself, the first spiritual level of the attainment of the bodhisattva.



見<sup>三</sup>牛

#### 4. *Catching the Bull*

Seeing a glimpse of the bull, you find that generosity and discipline are not enough in dealing with your projections, because you have yet to completely transcend aggression. You have to acknowledge the precision of skillful means and the simplicity of seeing things as they are, as connected to fully developed compassion. The subjugation of aggression cannot be exercised in a dualistic framework—complete commitment into the compassionate path of the bodhisattva is required, which is the further development of patience and energy.



得<sup>四</sup>  
牛

## 5. *Taming the Bull*

Once caught, the bull is tamed with the precision of meditative panoramic awareness and the sharp whip of transcendental knowledge. The bodhisattva has accomplished the “transcendent acts” (paramitas)—not dwelling on anything.



五  
牧牛

## 6. *Riding the Bull Home*

There is no longer any question of search. The bull (mind) finally obeys the master and becomes creative activity. This is the breakthrough to the state of enlightenment—the vajra-like samadhi of the eleventh bhumi. With the unfolding of the experience of mahamudra, the luminosity and color of the mandala become the music that leads the bull home.



六  
騎牛  
歸家

## 7. *The Bull Transcended*

Even that joy and color become irrelevant. The mahamudra mandala of symbols and energies dissolves into maha ati through the total absence of the idea of experience. There is no more bull. The crazy wisdom has become more and more apparent, and you totally abandon the ambition to manipulate.

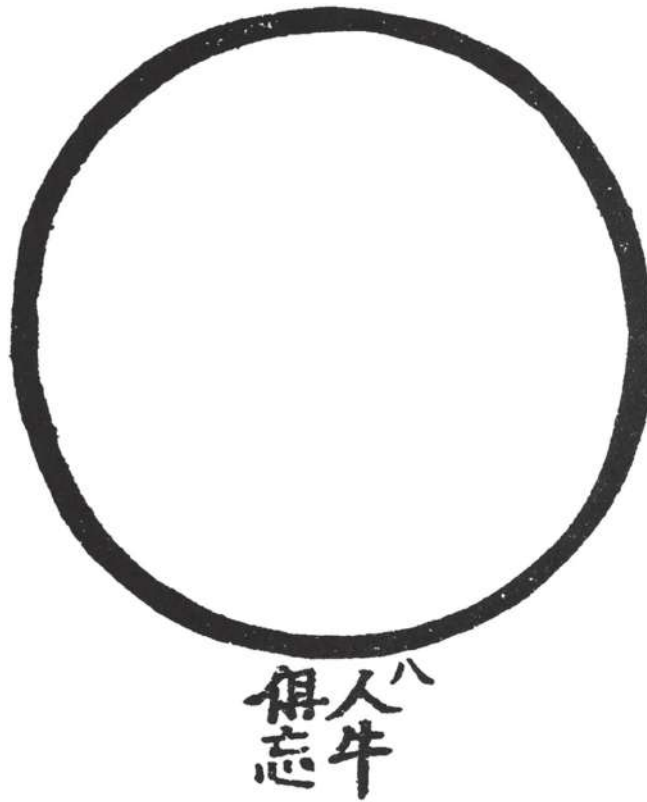


忘<sup>七</sup>  
人牛



### 8. *Both Bull and Self Transcended*

This is the absence of both striving and nonstriving. It is the naked image of the primordial buddha principle. This entrance into the dharmakaya<sup>10</sup> is the perfection of nonwatching—there are no more criteria, and the understanding of maha ati as the last stage is completely transcended.



## 9. Reaching the Source

Since there is already such space and openness, and the total absence of fear, the play of the wisdoms is a natural process. The source of the energy that need not be sought is there. You are rich rather than being enriched by something else. Because there is basic warmth as well as basic space, the buddha activity of compassion is alive, and so all communication is creative. It is the source in the sense of being an inexhaustible treasury of buddha activity. This is, then, the sambhogakaya.<sup>11</sup>



九  
返源  
本

## 10. In the World

Nirmanakaya is the fully awakened state of being in the world. Its action is like the moon reflecting in a hundred bowls of water; the moon has no desire to reflect, but that is its nature. This state is dealing with the earth with ultimate simplicity. You have transcended following anyone's example. It is the state of "total flop" or "old dog." You destroy whatever needs to be destroyed, you subdue whatever needs to be subdued, and you care for whatever needs your care.



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6. shravakayana (Skt., "vehicle of the hearers"). It is the first of the three vehicles on the practitioner's path that can lead to realization. It is part of the hinayana path.

7. maha ati (Skt., "great completion"). The highest tantra and the final stage on the path of realization. Trungpa Rinpoche says: "Things are as they are, very simply, extremely simply so." Ati yana is regarded as the "king of the yanas...The ati approach is a larger way of thinking...larger view" (Chögyam Trungpa, *Journey without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha* [Boston: Shambhala, 1985]).

8. nirmanakaya (Skt., “emanation body”). “At the nirmanakaya level, something’s actually taking place. Those long-winded descriptions and ideas, those intangible, unbiased, unconditional ideas and thoughts of enlightenment are finally captured in this particular sieve of the human mind...Immense space, created through the process of enlightened awareness, is finally manifested on earth” (Chögyam Trungpa, *Glimpses of Realization* [Vajradhatu Publications, 2003]).

9. pratyekabuddhayana (Skt., “vehicle of the solitary realizer”). The pratyekabuddhayana is one of the two hinayana vehicles; it describes the path of one who has realized one-and-a-half-fold egolessness due to insight into dependent arising, without relying on a teacher.

10. dharmakaya (Skt., “body of dharma”). “At this level, intelligence begins to appear in terms of the awakened state or enlightenment, as opposed to samsara. After this level, a separate reality apart from samsaric confusion and nirvanic liberation does exist. That’s where the actual awakening aspect begins. The utterance of the dharmakaya according to the maha ati tantra of Rigpo Rangshar is, ‘I am unborn; therefore I am intelligent. I have no dharma and no form. I have no marks. I am the charnel ground where all existence is exposed. Since I was the origin of kindness and compassion, therefore I have transcended the definition of shunyata, or any ideology...I shine brilliantly; therefore I have never known the darkness’ ” (Chögyam Trungpa, *1974 Seminary Transcripts: Vajrayana*[Vajradhatu Publications]).

11 sambhogakaya (Skt., “body of joy”). “Joy has nothing to do with pain or pleasure, but it is the body of stimulation...All kinds of perceptions could be experienced from the stimulation that comes from the dharmakaya of the origin...In terms of speech and movement...the expression is experiencing sense perceptions very clearly and precisely, and understanding them as they are. There are no blurry visions at all. Everything speaks for itself. In seeing the phenomenal world, the experience is very direct, definite, and clear” (Chögyam Trungpa, *1974 Seminary Transcripts: Vajrayana* [Vajradhatu Publications]).

*Part Four*

SUZUKI ROSHI



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*The Tibetan inscription reads, "A boulder who dwells alone radiates majesty. In memory of the elder Suzuki. By Chökyi Gyatso." This is the literal translation.*

*The translation in Garuda: Tibetan Buddhism in America reads, "A solitary rock is majestic. In memory of Suzuki Roshi. Chögyam."*

## *Suzuki Roshi*

### **A RECOLLECTION OF BUDDHA, DHARMA, SANGHA**

*The following essay was composed on the occasion of Suzuki Roshi's death, at which time Trungpa Rinpoche also created the calligraphic tribute entitled "Solitary Rock."*

**T**HE VENERABLE SHUNRYU SUZUKI ROSHI, founder and abbot of Zen Center, San Francisco, and Tassajara, Carmel Valley, California, died on December 4, 1971. He taught on the West Coast of the United States for eleven years. Personal contact with him and exposure to his written works inspired thousands of people to a living experience of Buddhism. The style of his teaching was direct, thorough, and without ambition.

His way of working with students transcended cultural barriers, as well as any others, reflecting his real being. Roshi's style shines through as part of the living lineage of Dogen Zenji; it is direct experience of living Zen. His quality of not dwelling on any particular trip provides an extraordinary situation in contrast to the militancy of American Zen.

At Tassajara in June, 1970, I first met Roshi, an old man with a piercing look, who quite ignored the usual Japanese diplomacy. All his gestures and communications were naked and to the point, as though you were dealing with the burning tip of an incense stick. At the same time, this was by no means irritating, for whatever happened around the situation was quite accommodating. He was very earthy—so much so that it aroused nostalgia for the past when I was in Tibet working with my teacher. Roshi was my accidental father, presented as a surprise from America, the land of confusion. It was amazing that such a compassionate person existed in the midst of so much aggression and passion.

On my second visit, he blessed my child. The ceremony was short but thought provoking. There was a sense of care and accuracy, a sense that energy was

actually being transferred. We had a talk together over tea in the courtyard garden at Zen Center. Roshi spoke about the fact that Americans name only their biggest mountains, unlike the Japanese, who name them all. American Buddhists are too concerned with pure form rather than with spirit, an insensitivity that comes from being drunk on their power as conquerors. They can't be bothered to name the smaller mountains and the details.

At my last meeting with Suzuki Roshi when he was sick in bed, he expressed tremendous delight at the situation that Buddhism in America could be a fundamentally creative process. His death was a happy one, for he was satisfied with the practice of his students, and he felt that they had really been exposed to the teachings.

Shunryu Suzuki Roshi is a rare teacher in American Buddhism. Recalling the Buddha, dharma, and sangha is the traditional way in which people are inspired to work toward buddhadharma. Roshi's way of relating, as an example of complete commitment to other beings, is the same kind of inspiration. His openness and conviction cannot be questioned. His example as someone walking the path of the *tathagatas* is very solid ground for others. He was a person who dared to utter the Lion's Roar of Buddha. His positive vision of American Buddhism is one of the most powerful and creative messages that the American spiritual scene has heard.

—CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE



## *Acknowledgments*

THE EDITORS WERE pointed to these talks by the indefatigable Fabrice Midal, whose research and seminal biography, *Trungpa*, have opened the door to an ocean of memoir, reminiscence, and further biography. Much gratitude is due him.

All associated with the Shambhala Archives, especially Mrs. Carolyn Gimian, Mr. Gordon Kidd, and Mrs. Helen Bonzi, are to be heartily thanked. Transcribers John Castlebury, Nancy Castlebury, Pamela Twachtmann, and anonymous contributors from 1974 have done marvelous work—many thanks. We are grateful for the work of the unknown photographers whose pictures appear in the introduction. These photos were used by permission from the Shambhala Archives. Many thanks to Liza Matthews for her beautiful design, and to David Brown and Tony Matthews for the skullcup and teacup drawings.

Vajradhatu Publications directors Cheryl Campbell and Ben Moore stood solidly in support of this project from the beginning, for which we are very grateful; and we appreciate as well the ever-meticulous copyediting, indexing, and production management of Ellen Kearney. Thanks also to Alice Haspray and John Sell for their careful proofreading.

The editors wish to thank Diana J. Mukpo for her kind permission to print these talks, as well as Shambhala Publications, for permission to reprint the Ox-Herding Pictures and commentary.

The hope is that these talks by Vidyadhara Trungpa Rinpoche will open, clarify, and inspire the minds of practitioners and aspirants from authentic traditions. May it fall into the right hands, and may there be many of them!

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# SMILE AT FEAR

*Awakening the True Heart of Bravery*

***Edited by* CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN *Foreword by* PEMA  
CHÖDRÖN**

When you are frightened by something, you have to relate with fear, explore why you are frightened, and develop some sense of conviction. You can actually look at fear. Then fear ceases to be the dominant situation that is going to defeat you. Fear can be conquered. You can be free from fear, if you realize that fear is not the ogre. You can step on fear, and therefore you can attain what is known as fearlessness. But that requires that, when you see fear, you smile.

*Chögyam Trungpa, Great Eastern Sun*

## *Foreword*

FOR ME, CONTEMPLATING the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa is like dipping into a well from which endless wisdom can be drawn. I have been going back to this source for more than thirty years now, and I always find that it contains something to inspire me, to challenge me, and to help me on my path. More than ever, with the great problems that our society and each of us are facing, Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings are there to help us.

How is it that the words of someone who passed away more than two decades ago can feel so amazingly fresh, up-to-date, and applicable to what we are facing at this time? It's not so strange, really, because Rinpoche was always addressing what's happening in this very moment, and that kind of direct, spontaneous teaching never goes out of fashion.

As well, he seemed to know what problems we would face in this millennium. There is so much speed, anxiety, and fearfulness in us and all around us, and this is exactly what he speaks to. We can try to hide, but deep down we know that the only real choice is to embrace and befriend the uncertainty of these times. We really need to do this *now*—we don't have any time to lose.

Chögyam Trungpa's way of waking us up is provocative, heartfelt, and delightful. I find that his Shambhala teachings, which are the core of this book, help us to open our hearts and to find real bravery, so that we can extend ourselves to others. This is based on being vulnerable yet strong. There is a great deal of strength in nonaggression, or peacefully abiding. This is what Rinpoche means by being a Shambhala warrior. I think it is something we all aspire to. As he invites us to do, let's look honestly into ourselves so that we can be fearless, gentle people.

PEMA CHÖDRÖN

## *Editor's Preface*

THIS IS A BOOK about all the fears we have, from momentary panic and anxiety up to the biggest terrors we may face about our life and our death. It is also about the fundamental sources of fear and anxiety, which affect all of us. The author presents practical advice, but not quick fixes. He is trying to help us fundamentally transform our lives and our perceptions so that we can *conquer* fear, not simply suppress it for a time. To become truly fearless, he suggests, we must stop running from our fear and begin to make friends with it. We must learn to smile at fear. This is a critical part of the conquest.

As I write this preface, we are in the midst of a dramatic economic crisis that is creating shock waves of fear and anxiety around the world. It seems a very appropriate time for a book on working with fear. However, given the human condition and the ongoing chaos in the world, it is probably always a good time to look into the issues of fear and fearlessness.

Chögyam Trungpa, one of the greatest Buddhist teachers of the twentieth century, died in 1987. Yet these teachings on spiritual warriorship and bravery seem as though they were written for this very moment in time. He felt that the West, and indeed the world as a whole, would face immense difficulties in the twenty-first century, and he spoke to his students of those potential hardships with a mixture of confidence and realism. Trungpa Rinpoche (rinpoche is a title for realized teachers that means “precious one”) was sure that humanity could handle what might be coming, but equally sure that the challenges would be substantial. I participated in sobering conversations with him about the economic and political future of North America and other parts of the world.

Rinpoche himself was a man who embodied fearlessness and compassion. In 1950 his homeland of Tibet was invaded by the Chinese communists, and he was forced to flee the country in 1959 with the knowledge that there was a price on his head. He set off on foot from a remote area in East Tibet to seek refuge in India, leading a group of three hundred Tibetans on a journey that took ten months. Needless to say, they met with extreme challenges and many opportunities to face their fears.

Most of the group was captured in the last months of the journey as they crossed the Brahmaputra River in southern Tibet. Just over fifty of them made it all the way to India. Throughout this journey, Trungpa Rinpoche relied on meditative insight as the basis for his strength and courage, and he never ceased to recommend this approach to others.

After escaping Tibet, sadly, he never saw his mother or any other members of his family again. Yet years later, he expressed his feelings of great compassion for Mao Tse-tung, the revolutionary leader who ordered the invasion of Tibet. In this book he shares the Buddhist teachings that are the basis of this kind of tenderhearted bravery.

Each of us can awaken the same kind of courage in our lives now. What terrifies us doesn't change so much from decade to decade or from one person to another. The fundamental fear we have to work with is the fear of losing ourselves. When the stronghold of ego is threatened, fear is one of our strongest defense mechanisms. Beginning to dismantle it is one of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves or others.

In this book, Chögyam Trungpa uses the image of the warrior to describe the attitude we can take to invoke fearlessness and bravery in our spiritual practice and in our lives. Rinpoche realized that the secular and the religious would have to be more fully joined in modern spirituality, if spirituality were to truly serve the needs of this time. This is reflected here in his use of the imagery of Shambhala, a mythical country of enlightened citizens ruled by benevolent monarchs. Shambhala is a symbol of the aspiration to build a good society. It also emphasizes the importance of completely engaging with our everyday life. By speaking of the power of the Shambhala world, he is in part pointing to how working with the worldly, ordinary aspects of life can have a transcendent dimension, showing us that the world as it is contains dignity and beauty.

Chögyam Trungpa discusses many levels of working with fear, including how to engage properly with the most extreme situations, such as having to fight an actual enemy, not just an obstacle in your mind. The times we live in seem to call for the kind of gut-level bravery that he exemplified. Having worked with particularly difficult situations in life, he understood real-life challenges. He does not shy away from discussing such situations here. At the same time, he also talks about how each moment can be the opportunity to awaken confidence, through seeing the sacredness of everyday life. This too is a powerful antidote to fear and anxiety. One of the truly remarkable characteristics of his approach is

that it steadfastly rejects aggression as a strategy for overcoming obstacles. A deep and powerful well of gentleness is the basis for the bravery of the Shambhala warrior, the practitioner who wants to fully engage life without arrogance or aggression. When we are threatened, it is all too easy to react with anger. When we're hit, we want to hit back. Rinpoche shows us alternatives that are powerful without being destructive. This is wisdom we need.

At the same time, these teachings are not just hard-hitting but also heartfelt. They emphasize our connection with the heart of the teachings, which we could say is both the heart of the Buddha and the heart of Shambhala. Love is immensely powerful, as we all know. Chögyam Trungpa describes a connection to tenderheartedness and sadness as the energy that powers the development of true human bravery or warriorship, returning to this topic over and over again. Unifying softness and toughness as part of the warrior's path is also a key element. Over and over again, he recommends the discipline of meditation as the key to unlocking this potential.

In the end, this is a book about being genuine, being fully human. If we are willing to be vulnerable, from that vulnerability we can also discover invincibility. Having nothing to lose, we cannot be defeated. Having nothing to fear, we cannot be conquered.

May you enjoy this journey through fear and fearlessness. May it give rise to genuine bravery. May it bring you the smile of fearlessness. May it help to bring peace and prosperity to this world.

CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN  
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

## *Part One*

### THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

*Becoming a warrior and facing yourself is a question of honesty rather than condemning yourself. By looking at yourself, you may find that you've been a bad boy or girl, and you may feel terrible about yourself. Your existence may feel wretched, completely pitch-black, like the black hole of Calcutta. Or you may see something good about yourself. The idea is simply to face the facts. Honesty plays a very important part. Just see the simple, straightforward truth about yourself. When you begin to be honest with yourself, you develop a genuine gut level of truth. That is not necessarily cutting yourself down. Simply discover what is there; simply see that, and then stop! So first, look at yourself, but don't condemn yourself. It's important to be matter-of-fact, on the spot. Just look, and when you see the situation in its fullest way, then you begin to be a warrior.*



## ONE

### *Facing Yourself*

**O**UR SUBJECT MATTER IS WARRIORSHIP. Anyone who is interested in hearing the truth, which in Buddhism we call the dharma; anyone who is interested in finding out about him-or herself; and anyone who is interested in practicing meditation is basically a warrior. Many approaches to spirituality and to life in general are influenced by cowardice. If you are afraid of seeing yourself, you may use spirituality or religion as a way of looking at yourself without seeing anything about yourself at all. When people are embarrassed by themselves, there is no fearlessness involved. However, if someone is willing to look at himself or herself, to explore and practice wakefulness on the spot, he or she is a warrior.

“Warrior” here is a translation of the Tibetan word *pawo*. *Pa* means “brave,” and *wo* makes it “a person who is brave.” The warrior tradition we are discussing is a tradition of bravery. You might have the idea of a warrior as someone who wages war. But in this case, we are not talking about warriors as those who engage in warfare. Warriors here refers to fundamental bravery and fearlessness.

Warriors are based on overcoming cowardice and our sense of being wounded. If we feel fundamentally wounded, we may be afraid that somebody is going to put stitches in us to heal our wound. Or maybe we have already had the stitches put in, but we dare not let anyone take them out. The approach of the warrior is to face all those situations of fear or cowardice. The general goal of warriors is to have no fear. But the ground of warriors is fear itself. In order to be fearless, first we have to find out what fear is.

Fear is nervousness; fear is anxiety; fear is a sense of inadequacy, a feeling that we may not be able to deal with the challenges of everyday life at all. We feel that life is overwhelming. People may use tranquilizers or yoga to suppress their fear: they just try to float through life. They may take occasional breaks to go to Starbucks or the mall. We have all sorts of gimmicks and gadgets that we

use in the hope that we might experience fearlessness simply by taking our minds off of our fear.

Where does fear come from? It comes from basic bewilderment. Where does basic bewilderment come from? It comes from being unable to harmonize or synchronize mind and body. In the sitting practice of meditation, if you have a bad seat on the cushion, you are unable to synchronize your mind and body. You don't have a sense of your place or your posture. This applies to the rest of life as well. When you don't feel grounded or properly seated in your world, you cannot relate to your experience or to the rest of the world.

So the problem begins in a very simple way. When body and mind are unsynchronized, you feel like a caricature of yourself, almost like a primordial idiot or a clown. In that situation, it is very difficult to relate to the rest of the world.

That is a simplified version of what is known as the setting-sun mentality: having completely lost track of the basic harmony of being human. The idea of the setting sun is that the sun is already setting in your world, and you cannot rise above the darkness. You feel that there is only misery, clouds, the dungeon, life in the gutter. To compensate for that, you might go to a very dark dungeon with bad lighting, where you get drunk. That is called a club. You dance like a drunken ape who has forgotten bananas and its home in the jungle a long time ago. So it feasts on cheap beer while wiggling its tail. There is nothing wrong with dancing per se, but in this case it is a form of escaping from or avoiding your fear. It's very sad. That is the setting sun. It's a dead end, a very dead end.

In contrast to that, the Great Eastern Sun is the sun that is fully risen in your life. It is the sun of wakefulness, the sun of human dignity. It is *great* because it represents upliftedness and the qualities of openness and gentleness. You have an uplifted sense of posture or place in your world, which we call having good head and shoulders. It is in the *east* because you have a smile on your face. East is the concept of dawn. When you look outside first thing in the morning, you see light coming from the east, even before the sun rises. So the east is the smile you have when you wake up. The sun is about to rise. Fresh air is coming with the dawn. So the sun is in the east, and it is great.

Here, the *sun* is a completely mature sun, the sun that you see in the sky around ten o'clock in the morning. It is the opposite of the image of the drunken ape dancing at midnight under the light of dim electric bulbs. The contrast is astounding, so extraordinary! The Great Eastern Sun vision is uplifted and

awake, fresh and precise.

We could get into further details later, but first we should discuss the fundamental understanding of fear and fearlessness. One of the main obstacles to fearlessness is the habitual patterns that allow us to deceive ourselves. Ordinarily, we don't let ourselves experience ourselves fully. That is to say, we have a fear of facing ourselves. Experiencing the innermost core of their existence is embarrassing to a lot of people. Many people try to find a spiritual path where they do not have to face themselves but where they can still liberate themselves—liberate themselves from themselves, in fact. In truth, that is impossible. We cannot do that. We have to be honest with ourselves. We have to see our gut, our real shit, our most undesirable parts. We have to see that. That is the foundation of warriorship and the basis of conquering fear. We have to face our fear; we have to look at it, study it, work with it, and practice meditation with it.

We also have to give up the notion of a divine savior, which has nothing to do with what religion we belong to but refers to the idea of someone or something who will save us without our having to go through any pain. In fact, giving up that kind of false hope is the first step. We have to be with ourselves. We have to be real people. There is no way of beating around the bush, hoping for the best. If you are really interested in working with yourself, you can't lead that kind of double life, adopting ideas, techniques, and concepts of all kinds, simply in order to get away from yourself. That is what we call spiritual materialism: hoping that you can have a nice sleep, under anesthetics, and by the time you awaken, everything will be sewn up. Everything will be healed. In that case, you do not have to go through any pain or problems.

In a genuine spiritual discipline, you cannot do that. You might convince yourself that there is some religious discipline that will allow you to pass directly into spiritual ecstasy. You might convince yourself that this world does not exist; only the realm of the spirit exists. However, later on, something will bounce back on you, because we cannot cheat the basic norm, which is known as karma, or the law of cause and effect. We cannot cheat that.

We have to face quite a lot. We have to give up a lot. You may not want to, but still you have to, if you want to be kind to yourself. It boils down to that. On the other hand, if you want to hurt yourself by indulging in setting-sun neurosis, that is your business, and it's nobody else's business. Nobody can save you from yourself. Go ahead. But you are bound to regret it later on, profoundly so. By

then, you may have collected so much garbage that it will be almost impossible to undo the situation. That would be a very wretched place to end up.

Often, we prefer to hurt ourselves. It seems to feel better to pursue our habitual patterns than to help ourselves. You may have heard in school that studying hard will be good for you. Your parents may have told you to eat all the food on your plate, because it's good for you. There are a lot of people starving all over the world, and you are fortunate to have this meal in front of you. Eat it up. Maybe such advice is helpful. At the time you heard these things, they may have seemed completely unskillful, in terms of your state of mind. However, such orthodoxy and expression of discipline may have an element of truth in them.

We must decide to look at ourselves and experience ourselves honestly. Some of us find ourselves in the most wretched and profoundly degrading situations. Some of us may have brilliant and good situations happening. Whatever the case may be, whether our exploration brings hope or fear, we look at ourselves. We need to find ourselves, face ourselves, and beyond that, give up our privacy, our inhibition.

There may be a semantic problem here with my use of the word *privacy* in the English language. The point is, that when you give up privacy, that is the only time you can be with yourself. Our normal version of privacy is not really privacy. We say, "I need my privacy." If you are bottling yourself up with your so-called privacy, you find yourself getting in your own way. There is no privacy in that situation. The privacy does not exist. Instead, you feel completely bombarded with internal emotions and thoughts, which take away from your chance to be with yourself and relax with yourself completely. Once you begin to give up privacy, you open your heart and your whole existence to the rest of the world, and then you find greater privacy. You find that an actual discovery of yourself is taking place.

The only way to relax with yourself is to open your heart. Then you have a chance to see who you are. This experience is like opening a parachute. When you jump out of an airplane and open the chute, you are there in the sky by yourself. Sometimes it is very frightening, but on the other hand, when you take this step, the whole situation, the whole journey, makes sense. You have to actually do it, and then you will understand. Giving up privacy is not so much a process of education and logic, but it happens on the spot, by doing so.

One has to give up inhibition, but that does not become exhibitionism. You

remain true to yourself if you give up inhibition. You just give up your privacy, your sense of shyness, and the longing to have a personal “trip.” When you give that up, it doesn’t mean you have to become an exhibitionist; but you could be a real person. When you give up smoking cigarettes, you don’t have to proclaim what you have done. Maybe nobody will notice. You just do not smoke anymore. It might be sad for you that nobody can appreciate your virtue, but on the other hand, so what? When you give up your privacy, you still stand and walk on two feet like other human beings. You look at the universe with two eyes, and it is okay, fine. You have become a fully decent human being for the first time, but you do not have to proclaim that. You stop at red lights. You drive when it is green. It’s a boring world. One has to take the first step. Then you find that you still maintain the same old standing, which is sometimes terrible, sometimes good, but still standing steady. It is very humorous in some ways, maybe painfully so. Maybe not! In any case, welcome to the warrior’s world.

Then you begin to realize that you have something in yourself that is fundamentally, basically good. It transcends the notion of good or bad. Something that is worthwhile, wholesome, and healthy exists in all of us. For the first time, you are seeing the Great Eastern Sun. Goodness arises from discovering the vision of the Great Eastern Sun. This goodness is basic or primordial goodness that you have. You possess it already. Such goodness is synonymous with bravery. It is always there. Whenever you see a bright and beautiful color, you are witnessing your own inherent goodness. Whenever you hear a sweet and beautiful sound, you are hearing your own basic goodness. Whenever you taste something sweet or sour, you are experiencing your own basic goodness. If you are in a room and you open the door and walk outside, there is a sudden breeze of fresh air. Such an experience may last only a second, but that whiff of fresh air is the smell of basic goodness.

Things like that are always happening to you, but you have been ignoring them, thinking that they are mundane and unimportant, purely coincidences of an ordinary nature. However, it is worthwhile to take advantage of anything that happens to you that has that particular nature of goodness. You begin to realize that there is nonaggression happening all around you in your life, and you are able to feel the freshness of realizing your goodness, again and again.

But you can’t jump the gun. First, let us look at ourselves. If you put one hundred percent of your heart into facing yourself, then you connect with this unconditional goodness. Whereas, if you only put 50 percent into the situation, you are trying to bargain with the situation, and nothing very much will happen.

When you are genuine in the fullest sense, you do not need the conditional judgment of good or bad, but you actually *are* good rather than you *become* good.

If we face ourselves properly, fully, then we find that something else exists there, beyond facing ourselves. Something exists in us that is basically awake, as opposed to asleep. We find something intrinsically cheerful and fundamentally pride-worthy. That is to say, we don't have to con ourselves. We discover genuine one hundred percent gold, not even twenty-four karat. According to the Buddhist tradition, that is discovering our buddha nature. In Sanskrit, buddha nature is *tathagatagarbha*, which means that the essence of the tathagatas, the buddhas who have already gone beyond, exists in us.

We are fundamentally awake. We ourselves are already good. It's not just a potential. It's more than potential. Of course, we will have hesitation again and again in believing that. You might think this goodness is just an old myth, another trick to cheer us up. But no! It is real and good. Buddha nature exists in us, and because of that, we are here. Your basic buddha nature brought you here.

The heart of the matter, the technique that seems to be the only way to realize this, is the sitting practice of meditation. Meditation is the key to seeing yourself, as well as to seeing beyond yourself. Seeing yourself is the first aspect, discovering all sorts of terrible things going on in you. Facing the possibilities and the realities of that is not all that bad. If you begin to do that, you are being an honest person. Then, beyond that, you have to have further vision. Your honesty allows you to realize your goodness. You do possess Buddha in your heart.

## TWO

### *Meditation*

#### TOUCH AND GO

ONCE WE BEGIN TO ACKNOWLEDGE that goodness exists within us, it is necessary to go beyond our doubts and adopt the attitude that we are worthy people and we have something going for us. We are not totally wretched. We have to go through the clouds, but then we see the sun. This basic approach to discovering the worthiness of our existence is the warrior's philosophy of looking at ourselves.

How do we get to this point? What is the technique for discovering ourselves in both ways, the negative and the positive? How can we do that? Should we put our mind in a machine or under a microscope to study ourselves? Should we discover ourselves by doing Outward Bound or by swimming in the ocean or lying on the beach?

There are all sorts of possibilities, obviously. However, there is really only one way to do this. The only way is to be with yourself for a long period of time, spending lots of seconds, minutes, and hours with yourself. We have never done this properly and fully at all. We may try to be with ourselves by reading a magazine, watching television, drinking beer, smoking all sorts of things, popping pills, having a chat with a friend, or taking a rest in bed. But we have not been with ourselves fully, properly. We always try to *do something* with ourselves, rather than simply be with ourselves. If you cannot *be* with yourself, you cannot find out who you are or where you are. In that case, the essence of what you are is impossible to find.

There is something further, which is also to find out how you are *not*, why you are not, where you are not. The essence of this discovery is that you are actually nonexistent. By trying to find out who you are, you might find out that you are not anything at all. Then, although you find out that you are *not*, you discover

there is still some glowing brilliance that exists within the experience of nonexistence.

The recommended technique to be with ourselves fully is the practice of meditation. In the sitting practice of meditation, we are not applying old methods to a new world, but we are simply learning to lead our lives fully. This style of meditation was particularly recommended by Shakyamuni Buddha himself, and it is the way in which I myself was trained. It has been known as the best technique for beginning meditators for more than twenty-five hundred years.

I personally have learned from applying this approach to meditation. This is not offered as some kind of testimonial, but I actually have gained wisdom and clarity myself from practicing in this way. I have gone through exactly the same basic training and discipline that I'm presenting to you. (The only difference is that you are not hearing the teachings in Tibetan!)

Cultivating mindfulness is the attitude that allows us to see ourselves and our world quite accurately and precisely. When we talk about *attitude* in this context, we are talking about developing the awareness of mind, which is precisely what mindfulness is. Awareness of mind means that you are fundamentally aware and that your mind is aware of yourself. In other words, you're aware that you're aware. You are not a machine; you are an individual person relating with what's happening around you. Mindfulness is developing this sense of being.

To describe meditation, we could use the phrase *touch and go*. You are in contact; you're touching the experience of being there, actually being there; and then you let go. That applies to awareness of your breath on the cushion and also beyond that to your day-to-day living awareness. The point of touch and go is that there is a feeling of being yourself fully and truly. The point of touch is that there is a sense of existence, that you are who you are.

When you sit on the cushion, you know and you feel that you are sitting on the cushion and that you actually exist. You are there; you are sitting; you are there; you are sitting. That's the touch part. The go part is that you are there, and then you don't hang on to it. You don't sustain your sense of being, but you let go of even that. Touch and go.

When you meditate, it is recommended that you sit cross-legged on a meditation cushion, as opposed to hanging out in any convenient posture. In any case, you sit properly, whether you sit on a cushion or, if you are unable to sit on the ground, you sit in a chair. You have a straight spine, your breath is not strained, and your neck doesn't have any strain on it. So sit, upright. If



necessary, you can change your posture and rearrange yourself. There's no point in punishing yourself.

This is a difference between animals and human beings. Some animals find relaxation while they are still standing, with their spines horizontal to the ground. Horses sometimes sleep that way. They could even meditate that way, if anybody taught horses to meditate. Snakes and lizards and horses and cows could meditate with their bodies horizontal to the ground. But as far as human beings are concerned, we don't walk on four feet at this point in our evolution. We have no chance of going back, so we have to walk on our two feet. For us, a vertical posture is natural, including when we meditate. So since we are formed this way, we should do it this way. The Buddha, setting an example for human beings, sits upright in the meditation posture. This isn't particularly anthropocentric in the sense that human beings are regarded as the highest beings. It's a question of what our makeup is, and we should go along with our makeup. So posture is very important. It's upright as opposed to animal style, and not too tense in your neck. Just sit up, very simply.

When you sit up properly, you are there. Your breathing follows naturally. I've noticed that when people see something interesting happening in a movie, everybody sits up in perfect posture. So that's an example for us. It is happening, it is your life, and you are upright, and you are breathing. Practice is very personal and direct.

The attitude toward the breath in meditation is to become the breathing. Try to identify completely rather than watching your breath or just observing the process of breathing. You are the breath; the breath is you. Breath is coming out of your nostrils, going out and dissolving into the atmosphere, into the space. You put a certain energy and effort toward your awareness of that. Then, as for in-breathing, should you try to deliberately draw things in? That's not recommended here. Just boycott your breath; boycott your concentration on the breath. As your breath goes out, let it dissolve. Just abandon it, boycott it.

So breathing in is just space. Physically, biologically, one does breathe in, obviously, but that's not a big deal and you don't emphasize it. Then another breath goes out—be with it. So it's out, dissolve, gap; out, dissolve, gap. It is a constant process: opening, gap, abandoning, boycotting. Boycotting, in this case, is a very significant word. If you hold on to your breath, you are holding on to yourself constantly. Once you begin to boycott the end of the out-breath, then there's no world left, except that the next out-breath reminds you to tune in. So

you tune in, dissolve, tune in, dissolve, tune in, dissolve.

Thoughts arise in the midst of practice: “Where should I take yoga?” “When can I write another article?” “What’s happening with my investments?” “I hate so-and-so, who was so terrible to me,” “I would love to be with her,” and “What’s the story with my parents?” All kinds of thoughts arise naturally. If you have lots of time to sit, endless thoughts happen constantly.

The approach to that is actually no approach. Reduce everything to the thought level—recognize that all of this is just thinking. Usually, if you have mental chatter, you call it your *thoughts*. But if you have deeply involved emotional chatter, you give it special prestige. You think those thoughts deserve the special privilege of being called *emotion*. Somehow, in the realm of actual mind, things don’t work that way. Whatever arises is just thinking: thinking you’re horny, thinking you’re angry. As far as meditation practice is concerned, your thoughts are no longer regarded as VIPs, while you meditate. You think, you sit; you think, you sit; you think, you sit. You have thoughts; you have thoughts about thoughts. Let it happen that way. Call them *thoughts*.

Then, there is a further touch that is necessary. Emotional states should not be just acknowledged and pushed off but actually looked at. During meditation you may experience being utterly aggressive and angry or being utterly lustful, whatever. You don’t just say to your emotion, very politely, “Hi. Nice seeing you again. You are okay. Good-bye. I want to get back to my breath.” That’s like meeting an old friend who reminds you of the past, and rather than stopping to talk, you say, “Excuse me, I don’t have time to talk. I have to catch the train to my next appointment.” In this approach to practice, you don’t just sign off. You acknowledge what’s happening, and then you look more closely as well.

You don’t give yourself an easy time to escape the embarrassing and unpleasant moments, the self-conscious moments of your life. Such thoughts might arise as memories of the past, the painful experience of the present, or painful future prospects. All those things happen, and you experience them and look at them, and only then do you come back to your breath. This is very important.

If you feel that sitting and meditating is a way of avoiding problems, then that is the problem itself. In fact, most of the problems in life don’t come from being an aggressive or lustful person. The greatest problem is that you want to bottle those things up and put them aside, and you become an expert in deception. That is one of the biggest problems. Meditation practice should uncover any attempts

to develop a subtle, sophisticated, deceptive approach.

In meditation, there is a sense of individuality, a sense of person. Actually, we are here; we exist. What about the nonexistence and egolessness that Buddhism emphasizes? What about spiritual materialism, wanting happiness and fulfillment from our practice? Aren't we going to stray into some kind of pitfall? Maybe you are. Maybe you are not. There's no guarantee, since there's no guarantor. However, it is possible that you could just do this technique very simply. I would recommend that you not worry about future security, but just do this, directly, simply.

Our attitude when we finish meditating is also very important. We should even out our whole experience of life and have a good time throughout life. Meditating is not like being in prison, and the rest of life is not vacation or freedom. Everything should be included. That seems to be the basic meditative approach to life. Whether you sit or you stand, it's the same thing; whether you eat or sleep, it's the same. It's the same good old world. You carry your world with you in any case; you can't cut your world into different slices and put them into different pigeonholes.

We don't have to be so poverty-stricken about our life. We don't have to try to get a little chocolate chip from one corner of our life. "All the rest of life may be sour, but here in this corner I can take a dip in pleasure." If your body is hot and you dip your finger in ice water, it might feel good, but it's also painful, not particularly pleasurable. If you really know the meaning of pleasure in the total sense, a dip in pleasure is just further punishment and an unnecessary trick that we play on ourselves. From that point of view, the practice of meditation is not so much about the hypothetical attainment of enlightenment. It is about leading a good life. In order to learn how to lead a good life, a spotless life, we need continual awareness that relates with life constantly, directly, very simply.

## THREE

### *The Moon in Your Heart*

**B**ECOMING A WARRIOR and facing yourself is a question of honesty rather than condemning yourself. By looking at yourself, you may find that you've been a bad boy or girl, and you may feel terrible about yourself. Your existence may feel wretched, completely pitch-black, like the black hole of Calcutta. Or you may see something good about yourself. The idea is simply to face the facts. Honesty plays a very important part. Just see the simple, straightforward truth about yourself. When you begin to be honest with yourself, you develop a genuine gut level of truth. That is not necessarily cutting yourself down. Simply discover what is there; simply see that, and then stop! So first, look at yourself, but don't condemn yourself. It's important to be matter-of-fact, on the spot. Just look, and when you see the situation in its fullest way, then you begin to be a warrior.

When you acknowledge that you feel so wretched, you can be fully cheerful. That is the interesting twist. You are being a wholesome, honest person. Usually, we aren't this honest. You may think you can cheat the universe, and out of that, you develop all sorts of naughty or neurotic potentialities, convincing yourself that you do not have to look into your situation honestly. However, when you are just there, then, if you see the actual darkness, that will inspire light or sunrise.

You begin to find that you are a genuine person. You begin to feel good and solid, and beyond that, more than solid, more than real, you realize that you have guts of some kind. Buddha nature is in you already, because you are so true to yourself, true in the sense of being unconditionally honest. In fact, there is no such thing as the true self, the solidly *real* self. When you see yourself genuinely, you find that the concept of reality actually starts to fade. Instead, you find a very large space there, which is unconditional and contains ventilation and breathing space. When you have seen yourself fully, you begin to feel unconditionally good.

At the same time, you begin to acknowledge the existence of greater wisdom.

You realize that actually, no matter how smart or learned you may be, you don't know very much about the nature of reality. You need help to make a genuine connection with yourself. Someone has to help you to wake up. For some people, it's enough to encounter this wakefulness or wisdom in a book or in the form of a contemplative discipline that you practice. Nevertheless, it comes from somewhere. Originally, wisdom had to come from a human being's inspiration and understanding, which he or she was willing to share. We are quite fortunate if we encounter a genuine teacher, a human being who shares his or her knowledge and wisdom directly with us, perhaps by teaching us to meditate or in other ways.

In the Buddhist tradition, when we make a genuine connection with ourselves, we also begin to respect the source of wisdom, the teacher. A genuine teacher has her own awe and respect for knowledge. Our relationship with that person is based on acknowledging her superior comprehension. So our appreciation of the teacher relates to her comprehension rather than to her rank. Our relationship and our respect are from the point of view of respecting the knowledge and the holder of the knowledge. Somebody who has more information than we do about the nature of reality is worthy of respect.

Relating with a teacher is not just a one-way situation. There has to be communication both from the teacher to the student and from the student to the teacher. As our relationship with a teacher develops, at a certain point the teacher may become what is known as a spiritual friend. Such a spiritual friend is an honest friend, a direct friend, a genuine friend, a friend who has developed enough power and strength to actually help others.

We begin to realize that the teacher is not just an information booth or spiritual encyclopedia. The genuine teacher has developed a certain kind of power, which expresses her connection to the phenomenal world. We are not talking about magical power. Rather, we are talking about the strength that comes from connecting with reality, which is much more powerful than any fantasy. As a result of her own training, the teacher develops the power to share or transmit that realization or sanity to others. That transmission takes place through communication between teacher and student and through their development of a basic understanding of each other, to begin with. It has to be an organic relationship. The spiritual friend has no hesitation in telling you the truth and in minding your business. And when the time is right, at the appropriate moment, an authentic spiritual friend can awaken the heart of enlightenment in your system. You become aware of the heart of buddha (which

has been there all the time) as though it is entering your heart, just like medicine injected into your veins.

Obviously, there will be resistance to allowing someone to come into your world and inject something into your existence. It could be very unsettling. This technique was not brewed up yesterday or today. It has been happening for more than two thousand five hundred years on this earth. It has been done thousands, even millions, of times, and it has succeeded thousands and millions of times.

When that particular element, which is your buddha nature, is awakened in your being, strangely enough you think it is a foreign element in your system. According to the Buddhist tradition, this experience is known as transplanting the heart of enlightenment, or transplanting the full moon, into your heart. It might be easier to understand if we speak of sharing or awakening, rather than transplanting the full moon, which helps us to realize that although we are receiving the moon as a gift, in fact it is already there within us.

Imagine the full moon coming through your living-room window, coming closer and closer and suddenly entering your heart. You might be freaked out or resent the whole thing, but usually it is a tremendous relief. "Phew, the full moon has entered my heart." It's great, wonderful in fact.

On the other hand, when the full moon comes into your heart, you might have a little panic. "Good heavens, what have I done? There's a moon in my heart. What am I going to do with it? It is too shiny." You might panic much more than if you discovered you were pregnant. When the baby is born, it is going to be tiny. It's not going to come out and start minding your business right away. It has to learn to breathe, suckle, walk, and talk. It has to be toilet trained. But this moon is fully developed. It may have just entered your heart this morning, but it's fully, totally there. That's it! We have absolutely no choice. So we might be somewhat fearful. The mind of the ego may feel that it's been deflowered. You have lost your stronghold.

We are used to calling ourselves "I" and speaking of "my" or "mine." "I would never let anybody into my world. My self is *my* self." Now that toughness known as aggression has been overcome. The moon has been transplanted into your heart, and you may not like it. Sometimes it feels terrible. "What have I done?" You hope it's just a dream, another phase. Unfortunately, it turns out not to be a phase or a trial run, but it is real, absolutely real. We have planted the full moon of enlightenment in our heart. By the way, that moon cannot wane. It never wanes; it is always waxing.

In the process of realizing that, we may also begin to feel very sad. We have lost the virginity of our ego, fundamentally speaking. We might feel somewhat good, but at the same time we feel a sense of loss. We want to hang on to our good old ego. Good old Joe Schmidt or Susie Doe used to be full of ego and used to have tremendous courage, flair, and aggression. We used to take tremendous pride in our jealousy, and we never experienced defeat. We used to do just fine. If people got in our way, we used to get rid of them one way or another. But now life is a mess. We let that silly moon come into our heart. We became softened and saddened, and we cannot carry out our machismo anymore.

In extreme cases, you might want to destroy anything connected with that principle of wakefulness. You might think about assassinating your teacher, burning your books, and, if necessary, destroying yourself, to get away from the moon. You think it could drive you crazy.

On the other hand, if you look at this from an unconditional view, this is the greatest breakthrough that you could ever have in your life. If you really look at the moon in your heart, you feel so good. It is the first step. For the first time, you have discovered yourself as a real person, as opposed to being a fake. Still, you remain somewhat lonely and sad. Such sadness is longing for higher wisdom and further discovery. There is more to come.

## FOUR

### *The Sun in Your Head*

**H**AVING AWAKENED the moon in your heart, you feel a sense of aloneness and natural heartache. Loneliness may be your resistance to going forward, a sign of holding back. Having the moon in your heart, you don't want to be hassled by further moons, other human beings. It feels good to be self-contained, and you hesitate to go beyond that. At that point, further heroism, or warriorship, is very much needed.

The next step is the acceptance of magic. We are not talking about changing water into fire or walking on the ceiling. By referring to magic here, we are saying that we can transform our experience of the phenomenal world. Our normal experiences of passion, aggression, and ignorance can be transformed into a natural state of existence, a state free from passion, free from aggression, and free from ignorance. Such an experience of natural magic comes from transplanting the sun into ourselves.

According to the Buddhist tradition, the sun represents the feminine principle and the moon is regarded as the masculine principle. The feminine principle is connected with giving birth and providing growth and fertility. Where do you transplant the sun? You might find this rather surprising, but the sun is transplanted into your brain, inside your head. The moon, the masculine principle, was planted in your heart, but the sun is planted in your brain.

What are the qualities of the sun? It contains natural wakefulness as well as fearlessness and gentleness. We use the word *natural* to describe this state of being to contrast it with anything that is manufactured. If something is manufactured, it is artificial, obviously. Here, natural wakefulness refers to a state of being without any struggle or aggression involved. So the sun represents ongoing gentleness and graciousness, as well as fearlessness. All of those principles are transplanted into your head.

When the sun, the feminine principle, is transplanted or awakened in your



brain, you see the need to organize your life to reflect this natural state of intelligence or discrimination. You would like your world to be somewhat neat and tidy, and beyond that, it could become glorious and handsome. So you begin to transform your world into a palace of sorts, a palace of accommodation and elegance. Such an elegant environment is not modeled on *House Beautiful* or *Architectural Digest*. The feeling is closer to Genghis Khan's court, shockingly enough. This has nothing to do with Asian culture or the martial arts, particularly, but rather with evoking a natural sense of dignity and splendor.

I worked with an architect when we were building an addition to Karmê Chöling, a practice center I founded with my students in rural Vermont. This gentleman planned the whole addition, from the shrine room to renovating the kitchen. We agreed about everything until I suggested that we needed columns in the shrine hall. He couldn't understand that at all. He came up with myriad reasons why we shouldn't put columns in the middle of the hall. He thought it would destroy the visual appeal of the room and that it might actually create architectural problems. He almost was suggesting that the building would collapse if we put columns in the room. We talked and talked and talked. Finally, he begrudgingly agreed to the columns, but he still couldn't understand why I wanted them. Later, when the engineers reviewed the plans, it turned out that there was a structural need for the columns. The architect thought they were just ornamentation, but they turned out to have a function, and he did a *big* double take. This is an example of how the principle of the sun operates in your head.

The sun in your head brings natural intelligence to how you organize your world. A building has to have windows and doors and beams and even columns—if necessary. Your life requires structure as well. This sense of organization is more fundamental than putting carpet on the floor or whitewashing your walls. A sense of protection, or the quality of having a container, is needed in your life. That sense of a perimeter or container, as well as finding the natural exit and entrance that exist in your world, comes from the sun that you have transplanted into your head. You begin to see how the intelligence shines forth in the space, because the brilliance of warriorship has developed.

You need more than an empty structure to express wakefulness in your life. Who will inhabit the space? We are talking about creating a wakeful atmosphere in your life. Individuals create the atmosphere. Someone holds the posture or the function of a window in a situation, letting in light or ventilating the space. Someone else becomes the door, or the entrance; another individual becomes the

pillar that is holding up or reinforcing the space; and another person becomes the kitchen sink, the practicality in the situation. It's not enough to have inanimate objects creating the arrangement of space. Individuals have to become the ceiling, windows, and walls. That is the essence of natural existence, which we call the mandala principle.

There should be dignity and honesty in the environment. With the sun in your head, those qualities are the reference points for arranging our world. Many people have never experienced dignity and honesty put together. People may think that dignity is pompous or fake, very different from the ruggedness of honesty. They think that honesty is like throwing up, regurgitating everything and not holding anything back. But there's another kind of honesty, in which we can be dignified and humble people. That is the essence of the warrior's decorum.

The honesty and trustworthiness of the environment speaks for itself. If someone has been suspicious of what you're doing, when they come into an environment that you've created and they can see your vision actualized, they might begin to relax and accept you. When you transplant the sun of wisdom in your head, there is wakefulness, there is a natural sense of existence, and there is genuineness, all at the same time. It is quite a cheerful world, extraordinarily delightful.

## FIVE

### *Indestructible Nature*

WARRIORSHIP IS A NATURAL PROCESS of growth. Having developed a basic understanding and connection to warriorship, we plant the moon in our heart, which contains gentleness, compassion, and wakefulness. Then we plant the sun in our head, which brings further wakefulness and genuineness into the whole situation.

The growth of warriorship comes from an absence of laziness. We are generally quite lazy about making a spiritual journey in life. Laziness here is simply that we can't be bothered. You might be vaguely interested in becoming a more developed person, but you're too lazy to do so. Having overcome that attitude, then you can transplant the moon in your heart, which is connected with developing your giving, compassionate nature. You develop kindness and gentleness, or *maitri*, in yourself, and beyond that you develop compassion, or *karuna*.

Planting the sun in your head is connected with the development of further intellect, or *prajna*. Sometimes we resist the idea of developing our intellect. Intellectualization has a bad connotation. We associate it with distancing ourselves from our feelings, refusing to look at ourselves or examine ourselves in a fundamental way. However, using our intellect to understand life is actually quite good. Intellect, or *prajna*, represents the sharpest point in our experience. Sharpening our intellect brings precision. Intellect brings a direct way of seeing things as they are so that we don't neglect the potential in our experience. *Prajna* teaches us to be aware and precise on the spot.

Then we can separate our experiences into the samsaric or confused ones and the enlightened or wakeful ones. In the sitting practice of meditation, we are able to discriminate between what are discursive thoughts and what is the essence of mindfulness and awareness. We begin to realize there are differences between the two. However, neither of them is rejected or accepted per se. We include everything in our practice. Our world of practice does not have to be stingy, but

it becomes highly intelligent.

If we understand how to go about things in our own life already, then we will develop a natural sense of how to extend out to others as well. That ability to reach out is based first on how one actually views oneself as Joe Schmidt or Karen Doe. Is this a good Joe Schmidt? Is this a wretched Karen Doe? Or is this David Doe questionable? It is possible, and it has been done in the past, to take an attitude toward oneself that is quite positive and ordinary, in some sense, but which is also extraordinary and which sees life as worthy of celebrating. We can cheer up our attitude toward ourselves. Joe Schmidt could feel a genuine sense of Joe-Schmidt-ness in himself. There is an actual connection that we could make with ourselves.

In some sense, that's very tricky. If you are trying to attain Joe-Schmidt-hood, egohood, it is problematic. Joe-Schmidt-hood is stubborn, aggressive, and speedy. On the other hand, Joe-Schmidt-ness is quite reasonable; such a Joe Schmidt is not looking to attain Joe-Schmidt-hood at all, but rather a could-not-care-less existence. That Joe has planted the sun in his head. That Joe Schmidt has a natural sense of dignity. At that point, Joe Schmidt or Karen Doe has achieved some genuine understanding of him-or herself. It may not be a full-blown accomplishment, but at that point, Joe and Karen begin to relax and feel good about themselves.

Step by step, the situation evolves and becomes cheerful and humorous at the same time. Karen and Joe develop industriousness. They enjoy life; they eat good food; they enjoy how they dress, how they walk, how they talk, how they live. Although they might be living in just one room, their living situation can be uplifted and elegant. Having lots of money and a big apartment doesn't solve your problems. You still experience emotional struggles of all kinds. The point is that, whatever your environment is, you can create an uplifted living situation. In the warrior's world, you are the king or queen of your domain, in your own right. This sense of celebration comes from joining the moon in your heart and the sun in your head. Elegance and dignity become natural and lovely, wholesome and good. There is no deceit and no pretense of any kind.

This natural wholesomeness is the beginning of developing what we call vajra, or indestructible nature. *Vajra* is a Sanskrit word; it is *dorje* in Tibetan. There is really no good English translation that I have found. Vajra means having a diamondlike nature, a nature that is indestructible. Having developed some elegance in our own personal existence, which is reflected in our sense of

demeanor and composure, we then discover something further, which is known as vajra nature. It is a quality of indestructible wakefulness and undeniable presence.

The indestructibility of vajra nature is the idea that nobody can talk you out of your commitment or your existence. Nobody can actually challenge your realization of warriorship at all. The perimeter has been covered; therefore, there is no chance that intruders will get in. You cannot get inside a diamond. The diamond is completely a diamond already, completely indestructible and unassailable. You might think that if you begin to develop such a vajra existence, you might become too proud, too arrogant, and you might try to build up your own egocentrism. That is possible in theory, but in practice, if a person has actually planted the moon in his or her heart, that is already giving up one's individual reality or egotism.

Without the practice of meditation, it is difficult if not impossible to achieve this understanding. Even though you may have only ten minutes a day in your schedule to practice, it is worthwhile to meditate for those ten minutes. It will help you to discover gentleness and goodness in your life, and it will help you to organize your life properly, so that you can actually appreciate the moon in your heart and the sun in your head and develop vajra nature as well.

Vajra nature is associated with enlightened warriorship. It refers to uncovering the warrior's basic being. The word *warrior* is a neutral term, as we have said. It does not particularly refer to either a man or a woman. If we said "warriorette" or "warrioress" to refer to a woman warrior, that would diminish the sense of feminine warriorship altogether. So we just use the term *warrior*.

The feminine principle is very powerful, according to the Shambhala principles of nonaggressive warriorship, as well as the Buddhist principles of nonaggression. When you must engage or attack an enemy, an obstacle, the best attack is based on employing the power of the feminine principle. One of the most lethal weapons arises when the feminine principle turns into wrath. The symbolism of arrowheads, exploding bombs, the tip of a whip, and tongues of flame is all based on the feminine principle, a touch of femininity, which is deadly.

The masculine principle is actually very quiet and gentle, just like the moon. Consider a torch, for instance. The masculine principle provides the handle for the flame. The stick you hold in your hand is the masculine principle, which is solid, reliable comradeship. On top of that burns the feminine flame, which is

unpredictable or perhaps untrustworthy in this sense. You cannot take it for granted.

The feminine principle fulfills actions at the same time. If you study a sword with a blade on only one side, the feminine principle is associated with the sharp blade or the cutting process. The masculine principle provides the weight behind the blade. The blade is regarded as the feminine principle, which actually cuts through the situation. It can produce blood, and it creates birth and death. In the case of a sword, it can cause death. The thick metal behind the blade provides weight, which is a sense of loyalty and connectedness. In some traditions, the moon is regarded as feminine and the sun is masculine, but here it is the opposite. If you look at your experience and how we relate with one another, I think you'll find this way of seeing is far more accurate.

What connects or joins the sun and the moon together is the genuineness or straightforward truthfulness of vajra nature. The two principles have to be joined together without deception. To make a good sword, the sharp blade and the weight of the sword must be merged. If you handle a samurai sword, you will feel how it is light and heavy at the same time. Vajra nature is how we can join our experience together to manifest ourselves in the world. It is the diamondlike manifestation of buddha nature. It is putting buddha nature into practice.

## SIX

### *Sacred World*

THE EXPERIENCE OF SACREDNESS brings together the moon in your heart and the sun in your head, as well as supporting the basic sense of sanity or vajra nature in your existence. As we have been discussing, we often have a wretched and small notion of our lives. We try to be good boys and girls. We struggle through life, making our journey stitch by stitch, day by day. We struggle through the day, we go to sleep, we get up the next day, and we do it all over again, without much sense of inspiration. That approach to life is often depressed and undignified, small and flat, like flat Coca-Cola. Sometimes something exciting happens, and we feel a little better for a while. We cheer up, and we feel pretty good. But behind that, there is the same familiar depressing “me” haunting us all the time.

The wretched familiar “me” is like a lead shoe that weights us down. However, we don’t actually have to live that way at all. We could have a sense of celebration and positive arrogance. It’s not that we should abandon one part of ourselves and cultivate the other part, but we could simply look at our Joe-Schmidt-ness, the you-ness, with openness. When we do that, there is space to fall in love with ourselves, in the positive sense. You begin to like Joe Schmidt, and at that point, the other wretched Joe begins to phase out. It’s not that your personality has changed, particularly, but rather that the positive aspect of yourself has expanded. We could see our world as a big world and see ourselves as open and vast. We can see our world as sacred, which is the key to bringing together the sun and moon.

Sacredness comes from developing gentleness toward ourselves. Then the irritation of being with oneself is taken away. When that kind of friendliness to oneself occurs, then one also develops friendliness toward the rest of the world. At that point, sadness, loneliness, and wretchedness begin to dissipate. We develop a sense of humor. We don’t get so pissed off if we have a bad cup of coffee in the morning. Appreciating our human dignity comes from that, and

then the moon in your heart becomes natural and obvious, and the sun in your head is also obvious and natural.

Sacredness is not trying to look on the bright side of life and using that as a stepping-stone, but it is unconditional cheerfulness that has no other side. It is just one side, one taste. From that, goodness begins to dawn in your heart. Therefore, whatever we experience, whatever we see, whatever we hear, whatever we think—all these activities have a sense of holiness or sacredness in them. The world is full of hospitality at that point. Sharp corners begin to dissolve, and the darkness begins to lift in our lives.

This is not too good to be true. Such goodness and sacredness are unconditionally good. At the point of realizing this, we become decent human beings and real warriors. We need to remind ourselves over and over that this approach always has to be accompanied by the sitting practice of meditation. Meditation acts as a training ground, a stronghold, and out of that, the seed of friendliness to oneself is planted. The main point is to appreciate our world, which becomes the vajra world, the warrior's world, which is a cheerful world. It never becomes too good or too bad.

For a true warrior, the basic notion of victory is not one-upmanship over your enemy. Victory is unconditional victory, based on unconditional warriorship. Sacredness means that fearlessness is carried out throughout everyday life situations, including brushing your teeth and washing the dishes. Fearlessness takes place all over the place, all the time.

In the setting-sun, or confused, world, discipline and uniformity have been abused quite a lot. But acting with discipline and maintaining some uniformity does not have to be aggressive. Uniformity in the warrior's world can be a powerful vehicle for us to achieve one mind. That one mind is the mind of gentleness. The warrior's discipline is not an expression of aggression, but it is guarding against one's own aggression. So warriors should be very gentle, and not only gentle but resourceful, awake, and good human beings.

For a warrior, whatever you wear is a uniform, in some sense. If you have two arms and two eyes and one nose, that is your uniform. Everybody has it! The artificial uniforms that are put on top of that in the setting-sun world are often an expression of aggression, obviously. But in the warrior's world, some uniformity is an expression of confidence and gentleness.

Unconditional fearlessness is cheerful and very light. There is no need for any kind of cowardice or fear, or any moments of doubt. It might actually be better



to speak of being doubtless rather than fearless. For the warrior, there is no doubt; there are no second thoughts about anything. Because the world is complete, as it is, there is no room for doubt. So the real notion of victory is not having to deal with an enemy at all.

If victory is the notion of no enemy, then the whole world is a friend. That seems to be the warrior's philosophy. The true warrior is not like a person carrying a sword and looking behind his own shadow, in case somebody is lurking there. That is the setting-sun warrior's point of view, which is an expression of cowardice. The true warrior always has a weapon, in any case. Many things in your life function as a weapon, a vehicle for communication that cuts through aggression. It could be anything. If you are wearing a mustache, that could be your weapon. It's not necessary for the warrior to carry an artificial weapon, like a gun. Cowardly people carry guns because they are so cowardly, so afraid. One doesn't have to be afraid of touching a weapon, such as a gun, or even using it when necessary, but that doesn't mean you have to carry one all the time. The definition of warriorship is fearlessness and gentleness. Those are your weapons. The genuine warrior becomes truly gentle because there is no enemy at all.

## SEVEN

### *The Education of the Warrior*

**I**N THIS CHAPTER, we will look at the education of the warrior to help us to tune in to the warrior tradition altogether. This gives us another view of working with fearful mind so that we can awaken the warrior discipline in ourselves and have a clear vision of the Great Eastern Sun, the sun of wakefulness. We must make a personal journey through the warrior principles, and that journey is based on our personal psychological development or processing. When we describe the education of the warrior here, it is a way of reflecting on what we have accomplished on our own path, as well as providing inspiration for how to work with others.

To begin with, we have fearful mind. That fearful mind is the mentality of those who are still taking pleasure in hibernating in the cocoon of comfort. People come up with long lists of reasons they would like to hibernate. They complain that the world has not provided enough hospitality, so therefore they have to stay in their cocoons. Philosophers, psychologists, musicians, mathematicians, cooks, and seamstresses alike—all kinds of people with all kinds of mentalities—may have their own answers as to why they should be left in their own particular cocoons.

Based on that situation of fear, the baby or infant warriors, would-be warriors, may have arguments or logics to justify remaining in their cocoons. Those of us who have left the cocoon and joined the warrior's world always treat such would-be warriors gently. We respect them, but on the other hand, we don't just let them lie in their cocoons forever. We gently take the cocooners out of their cocoons and we place them, instead, in the cradle of loving-kindness, hoping that they will not be bothered by being disturbed.

Sometimes they are offended. They might cry and kick and even shoot a jet of diarrhea right in our face, but they are still somewhat feeble and sweet. In spite of their kicking and screaming, we place them in the cradle of loving-kindness. We take pride in such persons and regard them as would-be warriors, in spite of

all their bad temper. We are not put off. Nevertheless, the first step, providing loving care and loving-kindness, takes lots of patience.

Having settled them in the cradle, then we provide them with the profound and brilliant milk that comes from doubtlessness. Doubtlessness is the style in which we feed these cocooners. The milk is profound and brilliant because it is not ordinary milk but comes from the blessings of the warrior lineage. So this milk does not just nourish their cocoonness so that one day they can return to their cocoons. This is special milk, right from the breast of the feminine principle, which here represents the peace and harmony of the Shambhala world. It's excellent milk.

Drinking this milk, the cocooners begin to evolve further. However, we shouldn't be too naive in our expectations. They might still kick and scream at the top of their lungs, but it is good exercise that develops them further. They should have good lungs; they should have good muscles. So we let them kick and scream. As long as they get this profound and brilliant milk, that's the best thing they could have at this stage.

Then, in the atmosphere of fearlessness, the cool shade of fearlessness, you wave the fan of joy and happiness. You don't want to overfeed the cocooners with this thick and sweet milk or let them stay completely enveloped in their small domestic situation, constantly drinking milk. You want them to experience some sense of the bigger atmosphere at this point. The educational process is designed so that they will step out of the crib, the cradle, sooner or later, so to help prepare them for that, in the atmosphere of fearlessness, you wave the fan of delight, joy, and happiness. They can go out a little bit, at least into the backyard or the garden. They are being introduced to the world outside, which in this case is just the shade of fearlessness. It's not the greatest step, but it's better than being cooped up in their little homes all the time.

At this point the cocooner rides in a baby carriage or a stroller. It's grown quite strong in the cradle from kicking, but it still has to be driven around in a carriage. Nevertheless, you can take it to witness all kinds of situations, all kinds of shows of phenomenal existence. You take the cocooner to the self-existing playground, which includes both setting-sun and Great Eastern Sun displays of all kinds. The playground is self-existing because it's not something we manufacture. It's a natural situation.

It's a little bit like going to Disneyland. You might say that Disneyland has the ultimate setting-sun possibilities, but it is also very well intentioned. At

Disneyland there is a lot of goodness, gentleness, and humor that is almost comparable to the level of the Great Eastern Sun, and which doesn't seem to be purely based on financial gain. The self-existing playground is like that. It is a display of phenomena that can be seen as both a setting-sun and a Great Eastern Sun situation. When there is mutual humor, that kind of connection comes through.

The next stage is quite serious. It's a major step. The cocooner steps out of the baby stroller and begins to walk, taking a few little steps. The first experience of this is shocking. There is no gentle transition. And then, to promote the primordial confidence of the would-be warrior, suddenly the cocooner is presented with a weapon.

That's quite a dangerous thing to do. We don't do this with human infants. You don't give babies a knife and fork, because they might do something funny with those implements. They might stab themselves. But here, the cocooners are not actual infants. They may be eighty years old or twenty-five years old or sixteen. However, we should remember that we're not talking about bringing up babies here. We are talking in terms of how to actually inspire grown-up people to step out of their cocoons. So in this case, we take the cocooners to the archery range of the warriors, which possesses primordial confidence. We let the cocooners shoot arrows, play with the bow, and acknowledge the target.

Stepping out of the baby stroller is the first real breakthrough. When you take them to the archery range, the would-be warriors begin to click in and connect, because they do possess primordial confidence within themselves. They possess basic goodness, basic humanness, basic warrioriness. Therefore, they may wake into their primordial nature.

To help them awaken, the cocooners are finally introduced to their neighbors, fellow warriors, as well as to their aunts and uncles and the elder statesmen, the elder warriors of the Shambhala world. If you tried to introduce them to such people too soon, they might say, "Waaah! I don't want anything to do with this." So first we let them play with the instruments of warriorship, with bows and arrows, which are half toy, half weapon. Then, after they go to the archery range, they begin to connect with the elder statesmen, who represent the best of human society or the society of warriors, which possesses beauty and dignity.

When the cocooners connect to this, then they can go out without any stroller at all. They can walk by themselves, and they might begin to dress up in elegant suits and dresses or suits of armor, whatever they have. The cocooners have

finally been transformed into fully human beings.

Then, the fearful mind can actually be converted into the mind of the warrior. The cocooner has ceased to be a cocooner. He or she has long since forgotten the cocoon, although he still might want to jump back into his stroller. But the real connection to the warrior's world has been made. It is not really so much that the cocooner's mind is changing into the warrior's mind, but the cocooner is realizing his innate nature, which is basically good.

Since the cocooner has now become a warrior, he or she begins to realize eternal youthful confidence. This confidence is connected with experiencing the first glimpse of magic in her state of being. The cocooner's mind begins to relax. She begins to develop a natural state of goodness that has no beginning or end. At that point, when wakefulness begins to take place, the cocooner is finally transformed into a real warrior who will experience the Great Eastern Sun.

## EIGHT

### *Nonviolence*

**I**N THE LAST CHAPTER, we looked at the would-be warrior as an infant in the cocoon. There is another way we could describe the education of the warrior, which is by looking at the development of ego and how the warrior works with fear and other problems that arise from a mistaken belief in the self as a solid entity.

From this point of view, the ego feels rather lonely and, at the same time, keeps busy trying to defend itself. It finds that it consists of a collection of desires, expectations, ideas, conclusions, memories, and many other things. This collection is too complex for the ego to grasp; therefore, it conveniently constructs “I am” or “I am the ego” and tends to put this label on itself, as if it were a real individual entity. Having found a name for itself, the ego has to constantly work to secure itself, because fundamentally it knows that it is not real and sound. So ego keeps busy trying to build a wall around itself, to shut itself away from the “other.” Then, of course, having created this barrier, immediately the ego also wants to communicate with the other, which it now perceives as “outside” or not part of itself.

If anyone gets too near the wall that ego has built, it feels insecure. It thinks that it is being attacked and then thinks that the only way to defend itself is to ward off the threat by showing an aggressive attitude. However, when one experiences a threat that seems to come from outside—whether it is illness, some undesirable experience in the world, or literal opponents—the only way to develop a balanced state of being is not to try to get rid of those things, but to understand them and make use of them. Thus, the development of egolessness—the opposite of ego’s game—leads one to the concept of *ahimsa*, or nonviolence. *Ahimsa* is a nonviolent way of dealing with a situation. It is the warrior’s way.

To develop the nonviolent approach, first of all you have to see that your problems are not really trying to destroy you. Usually, we immediately try to get rid of our problems. We think that there are forces operating against us that we

have to overpower. The important thing is to learn to be friendly toward our problems, by developing what is called *maitri* in Sanskrit, or loving-kindness in English translation. All of these problems and difficulties are fundamentally generated from the concept of duality or separateness. On the one hand, you are very aware of others and also very aware of yourself, and you want to do something to work with and make use of others. But you are unable to do this because there is such a big gap between others and yourself. So a sense of threat and separation develops. That is the root of the problem.

At a certain point, you develop a genuine aspiration to get rid of the wall—the separation between you and others. However, you should not think in terms of having to fight with and defeat these problems. Furthermore, you should not develop the idea of being on a battlefield, because this just solidifies the problems. In relationship to this situation, the martial arts are quite interesting, because of their way of dealing with problems and exercising the real art of war.

To work with this dichotomy of self and others, first it is necessary to consider the facts and patterns of life—that is, your behavior, your approach to communication, and your way of life overall. There are certain aspects of your life that are not balanced, but those very things can be developed into a balanced state of being, which is the main thing that we need to achieve. Three things make for imbalance: ignorance, hatred, and desire. Now, the fact is, they are not bad. Good and bad have nothing to do with this. Rather, we are dealing only with imbalance and balance. We are not purely discussing the spiritual aspect of our lives or the mundane aspect, but the whole of life. In the unbalanced way of behaving, one does not deal properly with a situation. One's action is not appropriate. One action overlaps another, and the action is not fully completed. This boils down to not being fully aware in the situation and not feeling present. The present moment of action is not properly accomplished, for when a person is halfway through dealing with the present action, he or she is already drifting on to the next action. This produces a kind of indigestion in the mind, for there is something always left incomplete, like leaving a fruit half eaten.

If you are picking fruit from a tree, you may see a particular piece of fruit that looks delicious, ready to eat. You really want to eat that one. But as you are biting into it, you see another fruit on the tree, one that looks even better. So you immediately leap up and grab that piece of fruit as well. In that way, you keep stuffing yourself with one fruit after another. You end up eating fruit that is not properly ripened, which finally produces indigestion.

Therefore, the idea of balance is very down-to-earth and simple. There are certain patterns of behavior that are not balanced and that are caused by either ignorance, hatred, passion, or a combination of these factors.

Ignorance in this case means that someone is not able to accomplish his or her present work thoroughly. Ignorance ignores what is, because your mind is occupied by either experiences from the past or expectations of the future. Therefore, you are never able to be now. Ignorance means ignoring the present.

Another problem is aggression. If you are aggressive, in terms of your emotions or your sentiments, you are not developing your strength at all, but you are just trying to defend yourself in a rather feeble and clumsy way. In the state of aggression, you are constantly trying to fight with someone else. Your mind is so occupied with your opponent that you are continuously defensive, trying to defend yourself in the fear that something will happen to you. Therefore, you are not able to see a positive alternative, one that would allow you to actually deal effectively with problems. Instead, your mind is clouded, and you do not have the clarity of mind to deal with situations. The ability to respond and act appropriately in situations has nothing to do with cranking up aggression. On the other hand, it is not particularly based on the pacifist idea of not fighting at all. We have to try to find a middle ground, where one engages the energy fully but without any aggression.

The real way of the warrior is not to become aggressive and not to act against or be hostile to other people. Normally, when we hear that there is some challenge to overcome, we tend to think of an aggressive action or response, which is wrong. We have to learn that aggression is quite different from using or channeling our energy properly.

According to some traditional Chinese Buddhist sources, monks in some monasteries practiced judo, karate, and other martial arts—but not in order to challenge, kill, or destroy other people. Rather, they used these martial arts to learn to control their minds and to develop a balanced way of dealing with situations without involving oneself in hatred and the panic of ego. When one practices the martial arts, one appears to be engaged in aggressive activities. Nevertheless, one is not fundamentally being aggressive, from the point of view of generating or acting out of hatred. The true practice of the martial arts is a question of developing a state in which one is fully confident, fully knowing what one is and what one is trying to do.

What is necessary is to learn to understand the other side of any situation, to



make friends with the opponent or the problem in order to see the opponent clearly and to understand what move he or she is going to make next. In Tibet, this idea is put into practice in the study of logic. When I was studying in Tibet, we learned a very elaborate system of logic, where you don't just argue a point any way you want to, but you have to use particular logical rules and terms. When your opponent in a debate makes an argument, you are allowed to answer with only one of four possible responses: "Why?" "Not quite so." "Wrong." Or "No." These are the only four answers you can give. The other person can make their argument and attack you in many different ways, but you can only use these four phrases to refute them. In order to choose the right phrase, you must know exactly what your opponent is going to say in the next ten minutes. You don't just know; you *feel* it, because you are one with the situation. Theoretically at least, you don't have any combative feelings toward your opponent. Therefore, there is no aggression to produce a blinding effect on you or to make you ignorant of what is going on. You see the situation very clearly, and you're able to deal with it more effectively.

In general, if you want to develop a really effective way of challenging something, you have to develop a lot of *maitri*, or loving-kindness, toward your opponents. The term *loving-kindness* or even *compassion* is generally rather sentimental and rather weak in the English language. It has certain connotations connected with the popular concept of charity and being kind to your neighbors. The concept of *maitri* is different from that. In part, of course, it does involve a sentimental approach, since there is always room for emotions. However, *maitri* is not just being kind and nice. It is the understanding that one has to become one with the situation. That does not particularly mean that one becomes entirely without personality and has to accept whatever the other person suggests. Rather, you have to overcome the barrier that you have formed between yourself and others. If you remove this barrier and open yourself, then automatically real understanding and clarity will develop in your mind. The whole point is that, in order to successfully challenge someone, first of all you must develop loving-kindness and a feeling of longing for openness so that there is no desire to challenge anyone at all. If one has a desire to conquer or win a challenge against another, then in the process of challenging him or her, the mind is filled with this desire, and one is not really able to challenge the other properly. Going beyond challenge is learning the art of war.

Real warriors do not think in terms of challenge; nor are their minds occupied with the battlefield or with past or future consequences. The warrior is

completely one with bravery, one with that particular moment. He or she is fully concentrated in the moment, because he knows the art of war. You are entirely skilled in your tactics: you do not refer to past events or develop your strength through thinking about future consequences and victory. You are fully aware at that moment, which automatically brings success in the challenge.

From this point of view, it is very important that the warrior really be able to become one with the situation and develop maitri. Then the whole force of opposition becomes one with you. The opposing force needs another strength coming, advancing, toward him. As the opponent is approaching you, the closer he gets, he expects more and more to encounter another strength coming toward him. When that strength is not there at all, he just collapses. He misses the target, collapses, and his whole force becomes self-defeating. It is like someone trying to fight his hallucinations: as he tries to strike them harder, he himself falls on the ground. That is the whole point: when you do not produce another force of hatred, the opposing force collapses. This is also connected with how to deal with one's thoughts in the practice of meditation. If you do not try to repress your thoughts, but you just accept them and don't get involved with them, then the whole structure of thoughts becomes one with you and is no longer disturbing.

The practice of yoga, which has been taught through the Indian tradition, also has some connections with the nonviolent art of war. In yoga everything is based on the concept of uncovering strength within oneself. This is different from the ordinary idea of developing strength. Generally, we tend to think of strength as developing the power to overcome or control someone else. We think of strength as a force that we are lacking, which can be found and developed in order to challenge and defeat someone.

In the proper practice of yoga, as well as within the martial arts, one's strength or power comes from the development of a balanced state of mind altogether. That is to say, one is going back, or returning, to the origin of the strength that exists within oneself. If one had to develop new strength through gymnastics or physical practices alone, such strength created out of gymnastic practice, as it were, would have no mental strength to reinforce it, and it would tend to collapse. But the kind of strength we are talking about here is known as strength in its own right, the strength of fearlessness (*jigme* in Tibetan). To be without fear is to have great strength. The realization of fearlessness is the genuine martial art.

## *Part Two*

### THE PATH OF FEARLESSNESS

*A warrior should be capable of artfully conducting his or her life in every action, from drinking tea to running a country. Learning how to handle fear and how to utilize both our own and other people's fear is what allows us to brew the beer of fearlessness. You can put all of those situations of fear and doubt into a gigantic vat and ferment them.*

*The path of fearlessness is connected with what we do right now, today, rather than with anything theoretical or waiting for a cue from somewhere else. The basic vision of warriorship is that there is goodness in everyone. We are all good in ourselves. So we have our own warrior society within our own body. We have everything we need to make the journey already.*

## NINE

### *Overcoming Doubt*

WHEN WE BRING TOGETHER the ancient spiritual traditions of East and West, we find a meeting point where the warrior tradition can be experienced and realized. The concept of being a warrior is applicable to the most basic situations in our lives—to the fundamental situation that exists before the notion of good or bad ever occurs. The term *warrior* relates to the basic situation of being a human being. The heart of the warrior is this basic aliveness or basic goodness. Such fearless goodness is free from doubt and overcomes any perverted attitudes toward reality.

Doubt is the first obstacle to fearlessness that has to be overcome. We're not talking here about suppressing your doubts about a particular thing that is taking place. Nor are we talking about having doubts about joining an organization or something like that. We are referring here to overcoming a much more basic doubt, which is fundamentally doubting yourself and feeling that you have shortcomings as a human being. You don't feel that your mind and body are synchronized or working together properly. You feel that you are constantly being shortchanged somewhere in your life.

When you were growing up, at a very early stage—perhaps around two years old—you must have heard your father or mother saying no to you. They would say, “No, don't get into that,” or “No, don't explore that too much,” or “No, be quiet. Be still.” When you heard the word *no*, you may have responded by trying to fulfill that *no*, by being good. Or you may have reacted negatively, by defying your parents and their *no*, by exploring further and being “bad.” That mixture of the temptation to be naughty and the desire to be disciplined occurs very early in life. When our parents say no to us, it makes us feel strange about ourselves, which becomes an expression of fear.

On the other hand, there is another kind of *no*, which is very positive. We have never heard that basic *no* properly: a *no* free from fear and free from doubt. Instead, even if we think that we're doing our best in life, we still feel that we

haven't fully lived up to what we should be. We feel that we're not quite doing things right. We feel that our parents or others don't approve of us. There is that fundamental doubt, or fundamental fear, as to whether or not we can actually accomplish something.

Doubt arises in relating with authority, discipline, and scheduling throughout our life. When we don't acknowledge our doubt, it manifests as resistance and resentment. There is often some resentment or a reaction against the sitting practice of meditation as well. The moment that a gong is struck to signal the beginning of meditation practice, we feel resistance. But in that situation, we find that it's too late. We're already sitting there on the cushion, so we usually continue to practice.

However, resistance in everyday life provides us with many ways to manipulate situations. When we are presented with a challenge, we often try to turn away rather than having to face it. We come up with all kinds of excuses to avoid the demands that we feel are being put on us.

The basic *no*, on the other hand, is accepting discipline in our life without preconceptions. Normally, when we say the word "discipline," it comes with a lot of mixed feelings. It's like saying "oatmeal." Some people like hot cereal, and some people hate it. Nevertheless, oatmeal remains oatmeal. It is a very straightforward thing. We have similar feelings about discipline and the meaning of *no*. Sometimes, it's a bad *no*: it is providing oppressive boundaries that we don't want to accept. Or it could be a good *no*, which encourages us to do something healthy. But when we just hear that one word, *no*, the message is mixed.

Fearlessness is extending ourselves beyond that limited view. The *Heart Sutra*, an essential teaching given by the Buddha, talks about going beyond. "Gone beyond," *gate* in Sanskrit, is the basic *no*. The sutra says there is no eye, no ear, no sound, no smell—none of those things. When you experience egolessness, the solidity of your life and your perceptions falls apart. That could be very desolate, or it could be very inspiring, in terms of shunyata, the Buddhist understanding of emptiness. Very simply, it is basic *no*. It is a real expression of fearlessness. In the Buddhist view, egolessness is preexisting, beyond our preconceptions. In the state of egolessness everything is simple and very clear. When we try to supplement the brightness of egolessness by putting a lot of other things onto it, those things obscure its brilliance, becoming blockages and veils.

In the warrior tradition, sacred outlook is the brilliant environment created by basic goodness. When we refuse to have any contact with that state of being, when we turn away from basic goodness, then wrong beliefs arise. We come up with all sorts of logics, again and again, so that we don't have to face the realities of the world.

We run up against our hesitation to get fully into things all the time, even in seemingly insignificant situations. If we don't want to wash the dishes right after we've eaten, we may tell ourselves that we need to let them soak. In fact we're often hoping that one of our housemates will clean up after us. On another level, philosophically speaking, we may feel completely tuned in to the warrior's world. From that point of view, we think that we can quite safely say, "Once a warrior, always a warrior." That sounds good, but in terms of the actual *practice* of warriorship, it's questionable. "Once a warrior" may not always be a warrior if we disregard the beauty of the phenomenal world. We prefer to wear sunglasses rather than face the brilliance of the sunshine. (Of course, I'm not speaking literally here, since you might very well need to protect yourself from the damaging rays of the sun.) We put on a hat and gloves to shield ourselves, fearing that we might get burned. The colorfulness of relationships, household chores, business enterprises, and our general livelihood are too irritating. We are constantly looking for padding so that we don't run into the sharp edges of the world. That is the essence of wrong belief. It is an obstacle to seeing the wisdom of the Great Eastern Sun, which is seeing a greater vision beyond our own small world.

The ground of fearlessness, which is the basis for overcoming doubt and wrong belief, is the development of renunciation. Renunciation here means overcoming that very hard and tough aggressive mentality that wards off any gentleness that might come into our hearts. Fear does not allow fundamental tenderness to enter into us. When tenderness tinged by sadness touches our heart, we know that we are in contact with reality. We feel it. That contact is genuine, fresh, and quite raw. That sensitivity is the basic experience of warriorship, and it is the key to developing fearless renunciation.

Sometimes people find that being tender and raw is threatening and seemingly exhausting. Openness seems demanding and energy-consuming, so they prefer to cover up their tender heart. Vulnerability can sometimes make you nervous. It is uncomfortable to feel so real, so you want to numb yourself. You look for some kind of anesthetic, anything that will provide you with entertainment. Then you can forget the discomfort of reality. People don't want to live with their

basic rawness for even fifteen minutes. When people say they are bored, often they mean that they don't want to experience the sense of emptiness, which is also an expression of openness and vulnerability. So they pick up the newspaper or read anything else that's lying around the room—even reading what it says on a cereal box to keep themselves entertained. The search for entertainment to babysit your boredom soon becomes legitimized as laziness. Such laziness actually involves a lot of exertion. You have to constantly crank things up to occupy yourself with, overcoming your boredom by indulging in laziness.

For the warrior, fearlessness is the opposite of that approach. Fearlessness is a question of learning how to be. Be there all along: that is the message. That is quite challenging in what we call the setting-sun world, the world of neurotic comfort where we use everything to fill up the space. We even use our emotions to entertain ourselves. You might be genuinely angry about something for a fraction of a second, but then you draw out your anger so that it lasts for twenty-five minutes. Then you crank up something else to be angry at for the next twenty minutes. Sometimes, if you arouse a really good attack of anger, it can last for days and days. That is another way we entertain ourselves in the setting-sun world.

The remedy to that approach is renunciation. In the Buddhist teachings, renunciation is associated with being nauseated and pained by samsara, the confused world. For the warrior, renunciation is slightly different. It is giving away, or not indulging in, pleasure for entertainment's sake. We are going to kick out any preoccupations provided by the miscellaneous babysitters in the phenomenal world.

Finally, renunciation is the willingness to work with real situations of aggression in the world. If someone interrupts your world with an attack of aggression, you have to respond to it. There is no other way. Renunciation is being willing to face that intense kind of situation rather than cover it up. Everyone is afraid to talk about this. It may be shocking to mention it. Nonetheless, we have to learn to relate to those aspects of the world. We have never developed any response to attack—whether it is a verbal attack or actual physical aggression. People are very shy of this topic, although we have the answers to these challenges in our warrior disciplines: our exertion and our manifestation, or general state of being.

In the warrior tradition, fearlessness is connected with attaching your basic existence to greater vision, the Great Eastern Sun. In order to experience such

vast and demanding vision, you need a real connection to basic goodness. The key to that is overcoming doubt and wrong belief. Doubt is your own internal problem, which you have to work with. But then beyond that there may be an enemy, a challenge, that is outside of you. We can't just pretend that those threats never exist. You might say that your laziness is some kind of enemy, but laziness is not actually an enemy. It would be better to call it an obstacle.

How are we going to respond to real opposition when it arises in the world? As a warrior, how are you going to relate with that? You don't need party-line logic or a package-deal response. They don't really help. In my experience of how students usually relate with conflict, I find that they tend to freeze up when someone is very critical of them. They become noncommunicative, which doesn't help the situation. As warriors, we shouldn't be uptight and uncommunicative. We find it easy to manifest basic goodness when somebody agrees with us. Even if they're half agreeing with you, you can talk to them and have a great time. But if someone is edgy and negative, then you freeze, become defensive, and begin to attack them back. That's the wrong end of the stick. You don't kill an enemy before they become the enemy. You only slash the enemy when they become a hundred percent good enemy and present a real hundred percent challenge. If you're attracted to someone who is interested in making love with you, you make love with them. But you don't rape them. This is the same idea.

When a warrior has to kill his enemy, he has a very soft heart. He looks his enemy right in the face. The grip on your sword is quite strong and tough, and then with a tender heart, you cut your enemy into two pieces. At that point, slashing your enemy is equivalent to making love to them. That very strong, powerful stroke is also sympathetic. That fearless stroke is frightening, don't you think? We don't want to face that possibility.

On the other hand, if we are in touch with basic goodness, we are always relating to the world directly, choicelessly, whether the energy of the situation demands a destructive or a constructive response. The idea of renunciation is to relate with whatever arises with a sense of sadness and tenderness. We reject the aggressive, hardcore street-fighter mentality. The neurotic upheavals created by overcoming conflicting emotions, or the *kleshas*, arise from ignorance, or *avidya*. This is fundamental ignorance that underlies all ego-oriented activity. Ignorance is very harsh and willing to stick with its own version of things. Therefore, it feels very righteous. Overcoming that is the essence of renunciation: we have no hard edges.



Warriorship is so tender, without skin, without tissue, naked and raw. It is soft and gentle. You have renounced putting on a new suit of armor. You have renounced growing a thick, hard skin. You are willing to expose naked flesh, bone, and marrow to the world.

This whole discussion is not just metaphoric. We are talking about what you do if you actually have to slash the enemy, if you are in combat or having a sword fight with someone, as you see in Japanese samurai movies. We shouldn't be too cowardly. A sword fight is real, as real as making love to another human being. We are talking about direct experience, and we're not psychologizing anything here. Before you slash the enemy, look into his or her eyes and feel that tenderness. Then you slash. When you slash your enemy, your compassionate heart becomes twice as big. It puffs up; it becomes a big heart; therefore, you can slash the enemy. If you are small-hearted, you cannot do this properly.

Of course, many times conquering the enemy might not involve cutting them in two. You might just turn them upside down! But you have to be willing to face the possibilities.

When the warrior has thoroughly experienced his or her own basic rawness, there is no room to manipulate the situation. You just go forward and present the truth quite fearlessly. You can be what you are, in a very straightforward and basic way. So tenderness brings simplicity and naturalness, almost at the level of simplemindedness.

We don't want to become tricky warriors, with all kinds of tricks up our sleeves and ways to cut people's logic down when we don't agree with them. Then there is no cultivation of either ourselves or others. When that occurs, we destroy any possibilities of enlightened society. In fact, there will be no society, just a few people hanging out. Instead, the fearless warriors of Shambhala are very ordinary, simpleminded warriors. That is the starting point for developing true bravery.

## TEN

### *The Tools of Bravery*

THE PATH OF FEARLESSNESS begins with the discovery of fear. We find ourselves fearful, frightened, even petrified by circumstances. This ubiquitous nervousness provides us with a stepping-stone so that we can step over our fear. We have to make a definite move to cross over the boundary from cowardice to bravery. If we do so properly, the other side of our cowardice contains bravery.

We may not discover bravery right away. Instead, beyond our nervousness, we find a shaky tenderness. We are still quivering, but we are shaking with tenderness rather than bewilderment. That shaky vulnerability contains an element of sadness, but not in the sense of feeling bad about oneself or feeling deprived. Rather, we feel a natural sense of fullness that is tender and sad.

It's like the feeling you have when you are about to shed a tear. You feel somewhat wealthy because your eyes are full of tears. When you blink, tears begin to roll down your cheeks. There is also an element of loneliness, but again it is not based on deprivation, inadequacy, or rejection. Instead you feel that you alone can understand the truth of your own loneliness, which is quite dignified and self-contained. You have a full heart, you feel lonely, but you don't feel particularly bad about it. It is like an island in the middle of a lake. The island is self-contained; therefore, it looks lonely in the middle of the water. Ferryboats occasionally carry commuters back and forth from the shore to the island, but that doesn't particularly help. In fact, it expresses the loneliness or the aloneness of the island even more.

Discovering these facets of fearlessness is preparation for the further journey on the warrior's path. If the warrior does not feel alone and sad, then he or she can be corrupted very easily. In fact, such a person may not be a warrior *at all*. To be a good warrior, one has to feel sad and lonely, but rich and resourceful at the same time. This makes the warrior sensitive to every aspect of phenomena: to sights, smells, sounds, and feelings. In that sense, the warrior is also an artist, appreciating whatever goes on in the world. Everything is extremely vivid. The

rustling of your armor or the sound of raindrops falling on your coat is very loud. The fluttering of occasional butterflies around you is almost an insult, because you are so sensitive.

Such a sensitive warrior can then go further on the path of fearlessness. There are three tools or practical guides that the warrior uses on this journey. The first is the development of discipline, or *shila* in Sanskrit, which is represented by the analogy of the sun. Sunshine is all-pervasive. When the sun shines on the land, it doesn't neglect any area. It does a thorough job. Similarly, as a warrior, you never neglect your discipline. We're not talking about military rigidity here. Rather, in all your mannerisms, every aspect of behavior, you maintain your openness to the environment. You constantly extend yourself to things around you.

There is a complete absence of laziness. Even if what you are seeing, hearing, or perceiving becomes very difficult and demanding, the warrior never gives up. You go along with the situation. You don't withdraw. This allows you to develop your loyalty and connection to others, free from fear. You can relate with other sentient beings who are trapped in the confused world, perpetuating their pain. In fact, you realize that it is your duty. You feel warmth, compassion, and even passion toward others. First you develop your own good conduct, and then you can extend yourself fearlessly to others. That is the concept of the sun.

The second guide on the warrior's path is represented by the analogy of an echo, which is connected with meditative awareness, or *samadhi*. When you try to take time off from being a warrior, when you want to let go of your discipline or indulge mindlessly in some activity, your action produces an echo. It's like a sound echoing in a canyon, bouncing back on itself, producing more echoes that bounce off one another. Those echoes or reflections happen all the time, and if we pay attention to them, they provide constant reminders to be awake. At first, the reminder might be fairly timid, but then the second, third, and fourth time you hear it, it's a much louder echo. These echoes remind you to be on the spot, on the dot. However, you can't just wait for an echo to wake you up. You have to put your awareness out into the situation. You have to put effort into being aware.

Becoming a warrior means that you are building a world that does not give you the degraded, setting-sun concept of rest, which is purely indulging in your confusion. Sometimes you are tempted to return to that cowardly world. You just want to flop and forget the echo of your awareness. It seems like a tremendous

relief not to have to work so hard. But then you discover that this world without even an echo is too deadly. You find it refreshing to get back to the warrior's world, because it is so much more alive.

The warrior's third tool is actually a weapon. It is represented by the analogy of a bow and arrow, which is connected with developing wisdom, or *prajna*, and skillful means, or *upaya*. *Prajna* is the wisdom of discriminating awareness, which is experiencing the sharpness of sense perceptions and developing psychological accuracy. This is the same quality of natural intelligence we discussed earlier as the sun in your head. Here you are wielding that intelligence as a weapon of awareness. You can't develop this kind of sharpness unless some experience of egolessness has manifested in your mind. Otherwise, your mind will be preoccupied, full of its own ego. But when you have made a connection with basic goodness, you can relate with both the actual sharpness of the arrow and with the skillful means provided by the bow. The bow allows you to harness or execute the sharpness of your perceptions.

The development of this discriminating-awareness wisdom also allows you to accurately detect the enemy. A real enemy is someone who propagates and promotes ultimate selfishness, or ego. Such enemies promote basic badness rather than basic goodness. They try to bring others into their realm, tempting them with anything from a cookie up to a million dollars.

In the Shambhala warrior tradition, we say that you should only have to kill an enemy once every thousand years. We mean here the real enemy, the basic *rudra* principle, which is the personification of egoism, or ego run wild. You can work with other enemies by subjugating or pacifying them, talking to them, buying them out, or seducing them. However, according to this tradition, once in a thousand years a real assassination of the ultimate enemy may be necessary. We're talking about an extremely rare situation in which someone can't be reached by any other means. Your action has to be completely free from aggression, and it cannot be motivated by anger, greed, or a desire for retribution or vengeance. The motivation has to be pure compassion. You might use a sword or an arrow, whatever means you need to overpower them, so that their ego is completely popped. Such an assassination has to be very direct and personal. It's not like dropping bombs on people. If we pop the enemy, and only then, they might be able to connect with some basic goodness within themselves and realize that they made a gigantic mistake. You always look for other alternatives to cure the situation, but sometimes there are none. It's like having rotten teeth in your mouth. Eventually you have to have all your teeth removed,

replacing them with false teeth. After that, you might be able to appreciate the teeth that you lost.

Overall, these three principles—the sun, the echo, and the bow and arrow—are all connected with the natural process, or path, of working with our basic intelligence. Beyond that, they describe the fundamental decorum and decency of the warrior's existence. A warrior should be capable of artfully conducting his or her life in every action, from drinking tea to running a country. Learning how to handle fear and how to utilize both our own and other people's fear is what allows us to brew the beer of fearlessness. You can put all of those situations of fear and doubt into a gigantic vat and ferment them.

The path of fearlessness is connected with what we do right now, today, rather than with anything theoretical or waiting for a cue from somewhere else. The basic vision of warriorship is that there is goodness in everyone. We are all good in ourselves. So we have our own warrior society within our own body. We have everything we need to make the journey already.

## ELEVEN

### *Unconditional Fearlessness*

**F**EARLESSNESS HAS A STARTING POINT, it includes discipline, it makes a journey, and it reaches a conclusion. It is like the Great Eastern Sun: the sun rises, it radiates light, and this benefits people by dispelling the darkness and allowing the fruit to ripen and the flowers to blossom.

The fruition of fearlessness is connected with three analogies. The first is that fearlessness is like a reservoir of trust. This trust arises from the experience of basic goodness, which we have already discussed. When we feel basically good, rather than degraded or condemned, then we become very inquisitive, looking into every situation and examining it. We don't want to fool ourselves by relying on belief alone. Rather, we want to make a personal connection with reality.

The reservoir of trust is a very simple, straightforward idea. If we accept a challenge and take certain steps to accomplish something, the process will yield results—either success or failure. When you sow a seed or plant a tree, either the seed will germinate, the tree will grow, or it will die. Similarly, for the inquisitive warrior, trust means that we know that our actions will bring a definite response from reality. We know that we will get a message. Failure generally is telling us that our action has been undisciplined and inaccurate in some way. Therefore, it fails. When our action is fully disciplined, it usually is fulfilled; we have success. But those responses are not regarded as either punishment or congratulations.

Trust, then, is being willing to take a chance, knowing that what goes up must come down, as they say. When a warrior has that kind of trust in the reflections of the phenomenal world, then she can trust her individual discovery of goodness. Communication produces results: either success or failure. That is how the fearless warrior relates with the universe, not by remaining alone and insecure, hiding away, but by constantly being exposed to the phenomenal world and constantly being willing to take that chance.

The reservoir of trust is a bank of richness from which the warrior can always draw conclusions. We begin to feel that we are dealing with a rich world, one that never runs out of messages. The only problem arises if we try to manipulate the situation in our favor. You are not supposed to fish in the reservoir or swim in it. The reservoir has to remain unconditional, unpolluted. So you don't put your one-sided bias, or conditionality, into it. Then the reservoir might dry up.

Normally, trust means that we think that our world is trustworthy. We think that it's going to produce a good result, success. But in this case, we're talking about having a continual relationship with the phenomenal world that is not based on either a good or a bad result. We unconditionally trust the phenomenal world to always give us a message, either success or failure. The fruition of our action will always provide us with information. Such trust in the reservoir keeps us from being too arrogant or too timid. If you're too arrogant, you'll find yourself bumping into the ceiling. If you're too timid, you'll be pushed up by the floor. Roughly speaking, that's the concept of the reservoir.

The ancient Chinese *Book of Changes*, or *I Ching*, often talks about success being failure and failure being success. Success sows the seeds of future failure, and failure may bring a later success. So it's always a dynamic process. For warriors, fearlessness doesn't mean that we cheer up by saying, "Look! I'm on the side of the right. I'm a success." Nor do we feel that we're being punished when we fail. In any case, success and failure are saying the same thing.

That brings us to the next analogy, which is music. Music is connected with the idea of continuously being joyful. The feedback or the result that comes from the warrior's practice is never a dead end. It presents another path. We always can go on, go beyond. So while the result of action is fruition, beyond that, the result is the seed for the next journey. Our journey continues, cycling between success and failure, path and fruition, just as the four seasons alternate. There is always further creativity, so there is always joy on the journey, joy in the result.

Why are you so joyful? You are guided on the path by the disciplines of the sun, the echo, and the bow and arrow. You have witnessed your basic goodness, taking joy in having nothing to hang on to. You have realized the fundamental *no*. You are free from doubt, and you have experienced a sense of renunciation. So whether the situation brings success or failure, it brings an unconditional good understanding. Therefore, your mind and body are constantly synchronized; there is no deficit of any kind in the body or the mind. Your experience becomes like music, which has rhythm and a melody that is

constantly expanding and being re-created. So the sense of celebration is constant, built-in, in spite of the ups and downs of one's personal life. That is continuously being joyful.

Having developed trust and appreciation, you can finally conquer fear, which is connected with the analogy of a saddle. In the Buddhist teachings we talk about developing such a good sense of mental balance that, if you become mindless, your awareness automatically brings you back, just as in the process of skidding on the ice and losing your balance, your body automatically rebalances itself to keep from falling. In the saddle, as long as you have good posture and a good seat, you can overcome any startling or unexpected moves your horse makes. So the idea of the saddle is taking a good seat in your life.

An overreaction or an exaggerated reaction to situations shouldn't happen at this level. You have trust, you are constantly being joyful, and therefore you can't be startled either. This doesn't mean that your life is monotone, but rather you feel established in this world. You belong here. You are one of the warriors in this world, so even if little unexpected things happen, good or bad, right or wrong, you don't exaggerate them. You come back to your seat in the saddle and maintain your posture in the situation.

The warrior is never amazed by anything. If someone comes up to you and says, "I'm going to kill you right now," you are not amazed. If someone says they are going to give you a million dollars, you think, "So what?" Assuming your seat in the saddle at this level is achieving inscrutability, in the positive sense.

It is also taking your seat on the earth. Once you have a good seat on the earth, you don't need witnesses to validate you. Someone once asked the Buddha, "How do we know that you are enlightened?" He touched the earth in the gesture known as the earth-touching mudra and said, "Earth is my witness." That is the same concept as holding your seat in the saddle. Someone might ask, "How do we know you won't overreact to this situation?" You can say, "Just watch my posture in the saddle."

Fearlessness in the warrior tradition is not training yourself in ultimate paranoia. It is based on training in ultimate solidity—which is basic goodness. You have to learn how to be regal. Trust is like becoming a good citizen, celebrating the journey is like becoming a good minister in the government, but holding your seat in the saddle is finally assuming command. It is how to be a king or queen.



At the same time, conquering fear is not based on blocking your sensitivity. Otherwise, you become a deaf and dumb monarch, a jellyfish king. Sitting on the horse requires balance, and as you acquire that balance in the saddle, you have more awareness of the horse. So, when you sit in the saddle on your fickle horse, you feel completely exposed and gentle. If you feel aggressive, you don't have a good seat. In fact, you are probably not even riding the horse. You don't put your saddle on a fence railing; you have to saddle a real horse. In this case, riding the horse is riding somebody else's mind. It requires complete connection, or working with the other person. In the Buddhist tradition, this is called compassion. You are completely exposed in this situation. Otherwise, it's like a medieval knight encased in his armor. It's so heavy that he has to be cranked up onto the horse. Then he rides off to battle and usually falls off. There's something wrong with that technology.

Often, when someone tells us not to be afraid, we think they're saying not to worry, that everything is going to be all right. Unconditional fearlessness, however, is simply based on being awake. Once you have command of the situation, fearlessness is unconditional because you are neither on the side of success nor on the side of failure. Success *and* failure are your journey.

Nevertheless, sometimes you become so petrified on your journey that your teeth, your eyes, your hands, and your legs are all vibrating. You are hardly sitting in your seat; you are practically levitating with fear. But even that is regarded as an expression of fearlessness if you have a fundamental connection with the earth of basic goodness—which is unconditional goodness at this point.

## TWELVE

### *Joining Heaven and Earth*

OUR NEXT TOPIC is joining heaven and earth together, which is to some extent the natural outgrowth of the disciplines we discussed in the last three chapters. At the same time, joining heaven and earth has its own logic that can be applied to our journey as a whole. In this case, heaven is our state of mind, and earth is our physical body and surroundings. When mind and body are joined together properly, there is a sense of joining heaven and earth. This comes from the sitting practice of meditation, to begin with. We have to sit and slow down. The discipline of meditation is both training the mind and training the body. In the discipline of meditation, we have both a constant posture of uprightness, which is the quality of body, and a means of relating with the greater depth of space, or experiencing great openness, which is working with our mind.

When you practice, your posture is very important. Ordinarily what we call a relaxed posture is actually rather hunched over. In the practice of meditation, your posture doesn't have to be stiff, but it needs to be upright. Your spine should feel straight. On the other hand, you don't want to be so rigid that it's lifeless, like a wax figure. Your shoulders should feel natural. Check your body before you get into your practice. When you sit down to practice, first check your spine, from your waist up to your shoulders. Then check your shoulders themselves, and finally check your neck. Your seat should be solid, and your posture should feel uplifted and definite, but still relaxed.

The traditional analogy is that your posture should be like a king or queen sitting on a throne. In this case, of course, we are speaking of an enlightened monarch, a Shambhala monarch, rather than any old monarch sitting on the throne, with his or her head made heavy by the crown. This everyday monarch feels uncomfortable and hopes that the day's events will end as soon as possible. By contrast, the Shambhala monarch is quite happy to be there.

When mind and body are synchronized in your life and practice, there is very little chance for neurosis of any kind to arise. The basis of neurosis, or even

physical discomfort and pain, is mind and body not joining together. Sometimes the mind is miles away, and the body is here. Or the body is miles away, and the mind is there. The main point of practice is learning to be a proper human being, which is known as being a warrior. When mind and body are joined together, then you are joining heaven and earth, and you can be a genuine warrior. This quality of harmony will bring fearlessness. However, this fearlessness will also be punctuated by occasional fear, uncertainty, and confusion.

Fearlessness comes from fear. The logic is quite simple. You might ask, for example, why someone takes a shower. You shower because you feel dirty. You aren't inspired to shower purely because you have clean clothes in your closet. We might say that basic goodness is like the clean clothes in your wardrobe. It's great to know that they are there, but it's not always enough motivation to get you to shower. The dirt is what really makes you want to clean up. Similarly, fearlessness comes from fear.

Being fearless is first of all, quite simply, having less fear or experiencing the cessation of fear. When as warriors we experience doubt and fear, then by rousing both our mind and body so that they are joined together, a good dose of fearlessness comes into our state of mind and is reflected in our body as well. Then we can appreciate the basic goodness we possess.

The first stage of fearlessness contains a feeling of joy and relaxation or well-being. From the goodness of simply being yourself, a quality of upliftedness arises, which is not overly solemn or religious. It is joyful to be in such good health, joyful to have such good posture, joyful to experience that you are alive, you are here. You appreciate colors and the temperature of the air. You appreciate smells and sounds. You begin to use your eyes, your ears, your nose, and your tongue to explore the world.

You have never seen such penetrating and extraordinary red before. For the first time, you see such cool and beautiful blue. For the first time, you see such warm and delicate yellow. You see such refreshing, earthy, and wet green; such pure, clean white, as though you are opening your mouth and breathing out at the same time. For the first time, you see such wonderful black. It's so trustworthy that you can almost sleep on it. It has a sheen, which reminds you of stroking a black horse.

We can expand this to include the rest of our sense perceptions: sound, smell, taste, and touch. Everything comes with a sense of appreciation. How wonderful the world is! How beautiful the world is! How exotic and how fabulous the

world is! You might take the world for granted, but if you look again, you will find that tremendous beauty and subtlety exist in perception. You begin to feel almost as though you have been born again, or truly born for the first time. There is such pleasure and appreciation.

The warrior's virtue or decency comes from this basic sense of well-being, free from any neurotic or habitual preoccupations. Decency here expresses a sense of joy, the joy of living, the joy of being alive. So there is more to fearlessness than merely having overcome fear. Beyond that, when we speak of fearlessness, we are describing a positive state of being full of delight and cheerfulness, with sparkling eyes and good posture.

This state of being is not dependent on any external circumstance. If you can't pay the electric bill, you might not have hot water in your house. The building you live in may not be well insulated. If you don't have indoor plumbing, you may have to use an outhouse. Millions of people in the world live this way. If you can raise good posture in your head and shoulders, then regardless of your living situation, you will feel a sense of joy. It's not any kind of cheap joy. It's individual dignity. This experience of joy and unconditional healthiness is the basic virtue that comes from being what we are, right now. You have to experience this natural healthiness and goodness personally. When you practice meditation, that brings the beginning of this experience. Then, when you leave the meditation hall and go out and relate with the rest of reality, you will find out what kind of joy is needed and what kind of joy is expendable. The experience of joy may be a momentary experience, or it could last a long time. In any case, this joy is an eye-opener. You are no longer shy of seeing the world. You find that the joy of warriorship is always needed.

In the midst of joy, your memory of fear may come up again. However, you are able to ride that fearful state of mind, whatever it may come from. So the second stage of fearlessness is being able to connect with or ride one's own mind properly. From that, the last stage of fearlessness is that you can steer your mind in whatever direction you want to go, into whatever area you want to explore and perceive.

Fearlessness is not like a wild tiger or brown bear that is locked up in a cage and growls every time you open the door. Fearlessness is powerful, but it also contains gentleness and constant loneliness and sadness. Wisdom and consideration for others are also part of fearlessness. When you are more fearless, you become more available and kinder to others, more considerate of

others and more touched by them. The more fearlessness evolves, that much more available and vulnerable you become. That is why sadness and gentleness are part of fearlessness.

The joy of fearlessness brings the sadness. Joy doesn't stay by itself. If it did, there would be something wrong, something perverted about it. Real fearlessness is like mixing sweet and sour together. The tone of joyful sadness is like the sound of a flute, which is so melodic and beautiful. It ravishes your mind. It is not accompanied by any other musical instruments. The solo melody of the flute brings the echo of emptiness into your mind.

Such loneliness is almost romantic, as if you were in love. You think you might be falling in love, but you don't know with whom. You are in love without a particular object in mind. Such sadness is very soft. It's not a miserable sadness, but it feels sad because it is soft and pliable.

In this state, your mind doesn't buck like a young horse. Your mind is flowing like a gentle brook. There is only one brook in each valley, so the brook is all alone, making its gossipy little sound as it runs over the rocks. That kind of sadness and gentleness is synonymous with warriorship and fearlessness, which make life worthwhile.

This experience brings sympathy toward the world, including the world of the setting sun. The sadness you experience, as well as a sense of delight, encourages you to share your experience with others. You want to include them in your vision. You want to work with others and help them as much as you can. Confused existence, samsara, is not regarded as something that we have to attack; nor do we regard confusion as a disease that we should stay away from. Of course, if you are not very strong, you might have to stay away from the most confused experiences for a while so that you won't be overly influenced by the neurosis of the setting-sun world. But when sadness and fearlessness are strong enough, you should look into how people in the setting-sun world conduct themselves.

People who have experienced the Great Eastern Sun are constantly gentle and fearless, whereas those who are still trapped in the world of the setting sun are aggressive and fearful. Whenever genuine sadness attempts to enter their minds, they try to block it from happening. To counteract the feelings of sadness and emptiness, people seek entertainment to distract themselves. This world of entertainment is designed to help you forget who you are and where you are. The setting-sun version of enjoyment is to forget your gentle sadness and instead

become aggressive and “happy.”

However, what you’re experiencing is neither real happiness nor enjoyment. This perverse notion of happiness is based on forgetting that you exist, forgetting that your mind and body could ever be synchronized. Such a notion of happiness is based on separating mind and body altogether. You try your best to do this by putting your mind on a TV screen while your body is slouched in a chair. That’s the closest to magic that exists in the setting-sun world. All sorts of entertainments have been developed so that your mind is kept away from your body. The objective here is completely the opposite of joining heaven and earth. Joining heaven and earth is not separating this and that, but making them indivisible. That unity or harmony is “it” or “That” with a capital T, without qualifications.

Ordinarily, people have many difficulties in relating to the world, which manifest in the form of passion, aggression, and ignorance—and this is far from being able to join heaven and earth. Nevertheless, working with others, regardless of their attitude, is still very important. The approach of the warrior in working with the setting-sun world is like an autumn leaf floating down a river. It doesn’t change its color, and it doesn’t struggle with the river. It goes along with it. This has a natural effect, because the brook or the river has never carried such an autumn leaf before. The setting-sun world will be uncertain what to do with this leaf. So by simply being there, you make people think twice, automatically.

It takes people off guard when you don’t react to them. You don’t fight back when they attack you, but you just remain as an autumn leaf, whatever they do. This is the gentle way of working. If there are hundreds of thousands of autumn leaves coming down a small brook, then the appearance of the brook will be changed by them altogether. The joke is on the people who are living in the world of the setting sun, and they have to think twice. They might smile and pretend to laugh, but behind that really they will be crying, weeping. So you see, an autumn leaf has a great deal of power over the world of the setting sun. Such little leaves could stop the flow of water altogether. If there are enough powerful autumn leaves, that is possible. It has been done in the past.

Working with others in this way, one is able to work with oneself at the same time. One’s appreciation of the world never diminishes. When you open your eyes early in the morning, you don’t say, “Oh, here’s another day, another pain.” First, you hear the rustling of the sheets on your bed. You feel your hair lying on

your pillow, if you have any hair. In any case, you feel your head lying on the pillow, and you begin to look around, and you see the walls in your bedroom. That's where the delight begins to happen, from the first moment when you wake. There's a feeling of beauty and sensuality, almost as if you were in a royal palace. You think about what you're going to have for breakfast and what you're going to wear that day. Every decision becomes part of a celebration rather than purely a hassle. You feel that you are a complete human being. You don't feel that you are still dragging your umbilical cord with you throughout your life. Instead, you are a wholesome, complete, and independent human being.

Those qualities of celebration, dignity, and goodness provide almost a quality of worship in your life. From that, you discover the principle of the ruler in your life, being the king or queen in your own life. The Great Eastern Sun king or queen sits on the throne of exertion and wears the crown of patience. A setting-sun king would sit on the throne of laziness, wearing the crown of aggression and authority alone. The Great Eastern Sun ruler holds the scepter of mercy and genuineness, whereas the ruler of the setting sun carries the scepter of deception and unguineness.

There are two situations of ruling. One is personal: ruling one's own household. You and your partner or your friends or roommates could set up such a kingdom. Beyond that, there is a larger vision of enlightened society, in which the whole country or even the whole world is ruled on the basis of joining heaven and earth.

The ruler of the Great Eastern Sun views the world, the entire universe, with panoramic vision. He or she sees what needs to be done, what needs to be conquered, what needs to be overcome, what needs to be destroyed, what needs to be cherished. When you join heaven and earth, you experience total unity, a total sense of *That*, which is unshakable. You cannot be disturbed by cowardice of any kind at all. You are there, right there. You are riding your mind, and the rider and what is ridden are the same thing. They are one piece. It is the complete synchronization of body and mind.

## THIRTEEN

### *Making Friends with Fear*

WE ARE DISCUSSING how to benefit others by joining heaven and earth, while fulfilling our own wishes and developing a perfect notion of warriorship. Because you are a warrior, fulfilling your wishes arises in the context of not harming others, not taking advantage of others, and not causing suffering to oneself or others. We have already talked about the basic virtue or decency of warriorship that arises from fearlessness and how that allows you to appreciate the world around you. We have also discussed the possibility of waking up our basic instinct toward unconditional goodness. Such goodness is neither good nor bad in the conventional sense. It is based on reawakening your own basic nature.

The expression of basic goodness is our next topic. This principle is known in Tibetan as *Ashe* (pronounced ah-SHAY). *A* means “first” or “primordial.” *She* means “stroke” and also “life strength.” So *Ashe* is the primordial stroke or strength of life. It can also mean “power” or “storehouse of power.” Such power is not the gift of any external agents. It is reawakened power that exists naturally. Fire has power of its own. Wind has power of its own. Earth has power of its own. Space has power of its own. Such power has neither beginning nor end, and such power exists in you, individually, inseparable from basic goodness.

Sometimes *Ashe* is referred to as a razor knife. Basic goodness can't be too naive. It has its own strength, which is the quality of cutting through unnecessary neurosis. If you're bringing up a child and you love that child, sometimes you have to be sharp with him or her. Sometimes you say yes, and sometimes you say no. On the whole, your purpose is to be good to your child. Similarly, the *Ashe* principle manifests basic goodness through its strength and the power of cutting through. This allows us to be clear, precise, and boundless in our vision.

The strength of basic goodness allows us to remain good, as we are, in the face of attacks of all kinds against this goodness. One of the greatest examples of the strength of basic goodness is the experience of the Buddha at the time of his enlightenment. At the very moment of his enlightenment, many evil forces



attacked the Buddha, but he remained pure and in a state of tranquillity. *A* is that fundamental basic openness, that imperturbable and peaceful space. That is joined with the stroke or force of *she*. So *Ashe* altogether is the powerful existence arising out of basic goodness.

The *Ashe* principle has both relative and absolute aspects. Relative *Ashe* is connected with the fundamental principle of fearlessness. As we know, in order to understand fearlessness, one has to understand fear itself. Fear is a trembling, shaky feeling. Fundamentally, it is the fear of nonexistence.

Sometimes fear expresses itself in complete cowardice. When you are afraid, you may want to jump into somebody's lap or even hide in a pile of garbage, because at least that is reassuringly warm and smelly. Sometimes you might be so terrified that you can't even cry, and you lose any trace of a sense of humor. You lose your good posture and begin to hunch over like an animal. You begin to lose all the reference points that normally anchor your existence. You become empty-hearted, in a negative sense. You completely lose the quality of the monarch or ruler that we discussed in the last chapter.

Such fear is not necessarily problematic. It is like an attack of sneezing. It comes and goes. However, you have to study your fear. That is very important. You should have no problem discovering your fear. It is too obvious and visible. When you have a problem appreciating a chrysanthemum or the sunshine, that is a sign of fear. Because of your fear, you may lose your sense of humor, your sense of appreciation, and you may be blocking the vividness of your perceptions. You should see the vividness of the phenomenal world. When you are unable to do so, you need to develop mindfulness and awareness so that you can work with your fear. Study how fear arises, how it manifests, and how it is actualized. When you begin to understand your fear, then you find that it is almost a big joke rather than a big problem.

At that point, you shouldn't try to cast fear out. Instead, fear should be regarded as the kindling to build a big fire of fearlessness. You have to realize fear as the starting point of fearlessness. Fear is not regarded as black, and fearlessness is not regarded as white. You have to make friends with fear.

Fearlessness arises out of understanding fear. Step-by-step, you begin to understand why you are terrified of nonexistence, and at last you begin to understand fearlessness. At first there is a sense of relief, that you are finally looking into your fear and facing it. Then you develop inquisitiveness. You want to explore the whole area of fear. Having explored it, you can actualize real

fearlessness. Such fearlessness is quite sharp, which is the principle of Ashe. The razor knife of Ashe cuts fear.

Then fearlessness dawns as a sense of humor or light touch. At that point, you remember that you are not just a frightened, solitary person. You remember that you live in a society. When we connect with other human beings, we touch into our creativity as human beings, and we begin to expand our world. That is the expression of fearlessness.

## FOURTEEN

### *Monumental Nonexistence*

**T**HE PRINCIPLE OF ASHE resides in your heart whether you are cowardly or brave. It is synonymous with basic goodness, and it is a manifestation of basic goodness. It is in our body, in our heart, in our brain, in our veins, in our blood, in our flesh. We all have the Ashe principle in us. It is the sense of constant magic that exists in us. That magic doesn't have to be sought for, but the magic is in us already. The only thing we have to do is to recognize it.

Although everybody has the Ashe principle in them, you must be introduced to the idea that such a thing exists in you. Then you can activate and proclaim it in your existence. So discovering the Ashe principle also brings a general sense of vision. You might be lost, roaming around in the wilderness, thinking that you're one of the apes. Then a human being comes up to you, taps you on your shoulder, and says, "Hey! You are not a monkey. You are a human being." At first you might be bewildered, but then you realize, "Ah! It might be true." Then you begin to make a fire, which monkeys don't do, and you cook food on the fire, which monkeys don't do. That's somewhat an analogy for this kind of transmission. It awakens you to a whole new dimension of your existence.

Realizing the Ashe principle in us brings an experience of brilliance and vitality. The term for that in Tibetan is *ziji*. *Zi* means "brilliance," and *ji* means "dignity"; so *ziji* is brilliance and dignity put together, which shines out. When you meet a friend who is in good health, you say, "You're looking good." The well-being you see in your friend is an expression of *ziji*. It could be regarded as basic charisma, although not in the style of a politician or a movie actor. It is a quality of basic health, which is good and definite. There is no tentativeness. It is solid, like a rock, but at the same time it is bouncy like a tiger. You are basically healthy and strong, so there is no room for sickness or obstacles to arise.

The way of the warrior is to reflect the brilliance of Ashe in body, speech, and mind. You have a good posture of upright head and relaxed shoulders. That doesn't cost you any money to achieve! *Ziji* is reflected throughout your

appearance. You don't have to buy expensive clothes or get a fancy haircut. You can wear simple outfits, which still express your natural basic goodness. The whole approach is based on how you carry yourself and how you conduct yourself.

A warrior's speech is gentle but powerful. You don't slur your words. You pay attention to the vowels and consonants you are pronouncing, as well as to syntax and grammar. You proclaim yourself, whether you are talking to your two-year-old or fighting with your partner. The warrior's way is to pay attention to communication thoroughly, whether you are talking to a university professor, a bank manager, a taxi driver, a bus conductor, or a garbageman, or whether you are asking somebody for directions. The warrior's speech is never sloppy.

As far as the discipline of mind is concerned, you should rest your mind in basic goodness and appreciate that. Appreciating goodness brings a sense of celebration. Your world might be falling apart, you might be in tremendous financial debt, your husband or wife might be leaving you, or you might be living in a depressed neighborhood where the police sirens keep you awake at night. In spite of all these problems, if you appreciate being a Shambhala warrior, that inner glow of warriorship will help you. Think of the Ashe principle, the razor knife that cuts aggression; and think of basic goodness, which creates constant upliftedness. Those principles are not mere theory or concept. Sadness and joy are one in basic goodness. Don't try to push out the nightmare, and don't try to bring in the bliss. Just rest your being in a state of basic goodness. If necessary, you can actually say to yourself: "Basic goodness." It will help.

Up to this point we've been exploring Ashe in the relative sense, how it manifests in our ordinary, everyday experience. At the absolute level, the Ashe principle is nonexistence, which here means being vacant or empty of duality. It is just open space. In the Buddhist tradition, nonexistence is referred to as *shunyata*. *Shunya* means "empty," "not," or "no." *Ta* makes it "emptiness," "no-ness," or "nonexistence." Nonexistence is always in the background. Either it can be covered up or it can manifest, which allows us to work with this and that, good and bad, in the relative sense.

In the Buddhist tradition, as we have discussed, we talk about vajra nature, which is the diamondlike quality of nonexistence that is absolutely indestructible. It does not have any bias toward good or bad. Similarly, the absolute Ashe principle is described as being like a diamond and impossible to

destroy. You cannot wound or slash space no matter how sharp your sword may be.

In the English language we talk about the hard truth, the hard facts of life. The Ashe principle is the hard facts and the hard truth that cannot be altered. There is nothing mystical about it. If you want to grasp it, it is simple, open, and intangible, but it is very much there. It is no longer regarded as a fanciful, mystical experience. The Ashe is in you; it is in the cosmos. It is universal. It is *That*. It arises in the form of a razor knife that cuts dualistic preoccupations and concepts of any kind. On the whole, this principle of basic goodness is non-ego, nothing to dwell on anywhere, but utterly sharp and superbly immovable and steady. It is monumental nonexistence. It is the essence of joining heaven and earth.

## *Part Three*

### RIDING THE ENERGY OF WINDHORSE

*A windhorse is a special kind of horse. Horses are wonderful animals. Any sculpture of a horse is a sacred symbol. Horses represent the wild dreams that human beings would like to capture. The desire to capture any wild animal or to capture the wind, a cloud, the sky—all those are represented by the image of the horse. If you would like to ride on mountains or dance with waterfalls, all of that is incorporated in the symbolism of the horse. The actual physique of the horse—its neck, ears, face, back, muscles, hooves, tail—is the ideal image of something romantic, something energetic, something wild, which we would like to capture. Here, the horse is used as an analogy for that energy and all of those dreams.*

## FIFTEEN

### *Unconditional Confidence*

AT THIS POINT, we are ready to talk about how we can work with others and communicate the essence of the Shambhala teachings to them. The point is not to convert anyone to our view, but rather to help people wake to their own view, their own sanity. Practically speaking, how can we do that? We have to go back to the beginning and take another look at our journey on the path.

Our opinions and attitudes about ourselves are very important. We cannot ignore the slightest tendency to feel wretched, inadequate, or fundamentally distrustful of ourselves. Those feelings always show through. This doesn't mean that you are not allowed to think anything bad about yourself. However, there is another side to you that is an expression of goodness. That has to be recognized as well. Otherwise, without that nature of goodness, the human race wouldn't be here at all. We would have destroyed ourselves a long time ago.

We have made our journey, we have gotten this far, and we can go on. That's basically what we call the Great Eastern Sun view. There's nothing particularly glamorous about it. It is a simple attitude. Beyond that, we have the interest or the desire, as well as the ability, to continue this journey. There is a spark that exists within us that allows us to feel healthy, together, and good.

What are we going to do with this sense of friendliness to ourselves? How does it affect our lives or the lives of others? When we have a feeling that life is worthwhile and we are worthwhile, from that, a sense of softness or gentleness begins to develop.

It is like watering the seeds in a garden. In this case, the gentleness that develops is like the moisture that helps a seed to grow so that greenery will unfold and flowers will blossom. Then, beyond that, you develop confidence. In this case, we are talking about unconditional confidence. The ordinary sense of confidence is confidence about something, which is conditional or qualified. But in this case, gentleness and softness give rise to an unconditional feeling that is

awake, brilliant, and warm. When we have both moisture and warmth, we know that the plant will definitely grow. That confidence is the seed that we should share with the rest of the world.

Unconditional confidence is the pragmatic aspect of tenderness or gentleness. It is the action arising from the softness. Developing confidence is like watching the sun rise. First it seems very feeble and one wonders whether it will make it. Then it shines and shines. Confidence is not about arrogance or pride. It is a natural unfolding process. It's not a question of needing confidence or not needing it. It's naturally there. In fact, we actually don't have to develop confidence. It's more that we have to *acknowledge* the confidence that already exists.

If we want to present this unconditional confidence to others, to help others appreciate this quality in themselves, we don't have to be pedantic or heavy-handed. Confidence is there. It is a fact. It is the case. But surprisingly, nobody noticed it before. So telling people about this state of being is simply telling the truth. You don't have to make up anything at all.

This unconditional confidence manifests in our lives as appreciation: appreciation of our intelligence, our sympathy toward ourselves and others, appreciation of good food and drink, appreciation for our meditation practice. Appreciating the details of life begins to open up our life so that it is no longer purely a struggle but a jolly good life.

So the real way to share our understanding with others is to cheer ourselves up to begin with. Then, when we communicate with others, it should be very moving. Tenderness is based on touching the aspect of ourselves that is positive but at the same time slightly sad. We are talking about a human situation and how to feel like a human being. The humanness that exists within us is perhaps like a woman's womb, which is very sensitive and which nurtures life and is capable of giving birth. The heart of the Shambhala approach is this fertile gentleness. From that space you can wield the Great Eastern Sun. Because you are so human, you could be almost superhuman. But first we have to start with the humanness. One of the biggest problems in the world is that people don't feel themselves properly. So we are simply trying to feel ourselves, appreciate ourselves. The whole presentation of the way of the warrior is based on this gentleness.

Acknowledging that human beings possess goodness is the starting point. Otherwise we may indulge in our wretchedness or invite depression. We may



turn away from ourselves, rather than being fully genuine. On the other hand, refusing to be a simple human being and trying to always be superhuman, not recognizing our basic human situation with all its difficulties and contradictions, is another way of being ungentle. In either case, we are trying to be somebody or something else, and we're not paying attention to what's happening in our lives. We often invent and substitute somebody else for ourselves, some mythical person who doesn't even exist. Then we fail to find our own human quality, and we run into a lot of trouble. When you are being genuine, that state of being is indestructible. It depends on how much you can be a warrior.

## SIXTEEN

### *Discovering Windhorse*

**I**N THE LAST CHAPTER WE discussed the importance of genuineness, truly feeling oneself as a human being. From that, you begin to realize that there is no fundamental problem with your human existence. Nothing about you needs to be destroyed or razed; no warfare is necessary. That, as we discussed earlier, is the ultimate idea of warriorship: being all-victorious. If you have to fight, you are not all-victorious. When you are all-victorious, you don't have to conquer anything. That's the attitude that we take here toward ourselves. Recognizing the goodness of human life is not based on suppressing or overlooking negativity, however. Rather, if you look at your experience and your mind, and you trace back through the whole process of your life, of who you are, what you are, and why you are in this world, if you look systematically, step-by-step, you won't find even a little drop of any problem at all.

If you take the Great Eastern Sun approach, the world hangs together already, and there isn't much room for chaos at all. Again, it's not a matter of *believing* in goodness. Rather, if you actually look, if you take your mind apart, your whole being apart, and examine it, you find that you are genuine, along with the rest of existence. The whole of existence is well constructed, and there's no room for mishaps of any kind.

Out of that, a further sense of healthiness or wholesomeness arises. Physically, psychologically, domestically, spiritually, you feel that you are leading your life in the fullest way. You feel gut-level wholesomeness, as if you were holding a solid brick of gold, which is heavy and substantial and shines with golden color. The situation feels not only real but also quite rich.

Movement or energy arises from that bank of richness. That energy is quivering, because it is so alive, so awake, and it begins to radiate out, making a journey back and forth to communicate or relate with the phenomenal world, your world. Normally, when a person projects energy, he or she tries to use that process of projection to fulfill desires or to confirm expectations. That produces

a gap or a break, which subverts the wholesomeness. Doubt often arises at that point. You can catch all kinds of psychological fevers or flus in the gap of unhealthiness, and you may also communicate that unhealthiness back to the rest of your world.

In the true human situation, which is the situation of warriorship, we shouldn't have that problem. Rather, we expand and extend ourselves fully to a situation, and from that we receive the feedback to develop a true and clear understanding. There is no doubt about anything. Overall, the warrior's doubtlessness comes from continually connecting back with the original feeling of being truly oneself. From that, tremendous health can be propagated.

At this point, we refer to the Great Eastern Sun as the Golden Sun of the Great East, which refers to this quality of healthiness. Having uncovered this in ourselves, we might have a tendency to try to immediately convert people to our own healthiness, which is a mistake if we don't really know what we're doing. We may have experienced something that we can't even put our finger on, and although the experience may have been very powerful, nothing much happens when we try to communicate it to others prematurely. The only thing that really happens is that we contract mental and emotional sicknesses from others and become subject to their problems.

Genuine communication with others has to be a slow and organic process, which begins with ourselves. If we work with ourselves properly and thoroughly, then we can project wholesomeness effortlessly and naturally. This is not yet the experience of being a warrior completely, but just touching the essence or the seed of warriorship.

Naturally existing interest in the world is part of the Great Eastern Sun vision. Even though you might be doing something quite repetitive, like working in a factory or at a fast-food restaurant, whatever you are doing, you find that every minute of every hour is a new chapter, or at least a new page, in your life. A warrior doesn't need television. A warrior doesn't need comic books to entertain himself or be cheerful. The world that exists around the warrior is fully what it is, and the question of entertainment doesn't even arise.

Ordinarily, inquisitiveness comes from boredom, trying to occupy your time with something interesting. Or, if you are afraid, you may employ inquisitiveness to help you find a safe haven to protect yourself from whatever threat exists. For the warrior, inquisitiveness arises spontaneously and comes with a sense of raw delight. It is soft and tough at the same time. Sometimes,

when you are delighted about something, you develop a thick skin, and you feel smug. You think, “*I am delighted.*” It’s self-affirmation. But in this case, there’s a touch of pain, which is not negative but just a touch of soreness or rawness. Whenever there is interest, you reflect back to the fundamental sadness and tenderness, which then allows you to project further genuineness, which in turn sparks further interest. At this point, you feel that your life is constantly moving forward.

So the logic of the Great Eastern Sun has a lot of psychological subtleties to it. Sometimes we refer to the *way* of the Great Eastern Sun. The vision of the Great Eastern Sun provides a path for us. When you look at the sunrise, you may see beams or rays of light coming toward you. This is an analogy for the pathway of wakefulness and gentleness that is provided by the vision of the Great Eastern Sun, which is inviting you to walk on the path of the warrior. Unless you experience this personally, you cannot share this journey with anyone else.

Great Eastern Sun vision is also connected with the concept of windhorse, or *lungta* in Tibetan. Windhorse is a sense of gallantry, cheerfulness, upliftedness, and gentleness—all bundled into one state of being in the person of the warrior. Windhorse is a particular kind of magic that you discover when you connect with the principle of Ashe, or primordial confidence. The principle of Ashe actually sparks or ignites energy within the warrior, making him or her into almost a superhuman person. The way you carry yourself changes. You actually begin to look different. You begin to develop tremendous strength and elegance, which we have described earlier as *ziji*. Windhorse is tapping into the fundamental energy of Ashe; *ziji* is the product of windhorse. An analogy for this would be driving your car on the highway. Ashe is the engine, *lungta* is the gasoline that powers the car, and *ziji* is the speed you achieve traveling on the road.

To be elegant, you don’t have to wear the latest fashions or have your suits custom made. Elegance is not based on eating in the most expensive restaurants, driving the fanciest cars, or speaking with a certain pronunciation or an air of sophistication. Many people have tried to achieve elegance in those ways, if they could afford it. Those who couldn’t often felt bad because, as they saw it, looking good was a matter of money. But in this case, the case of the warrior, you don’t have to be extravagant. You can get something from the thrift shop, and when you put it on, it looks terrific, not because you’re smart about putting certain combinations of clothing together but because you’ve developed windhorse.

Windhorse arises in the environment of Great Eastern Sun vision, which creates an atmosphere of sacredness in which you are constantly moving forward and recharging your energy. You feel that you are truly leading your life in the fullest sense. Then, you don't need an architect or a tailor to redesign your world for you. At this point, a further sense of warriorship takes place: becoming a real warrior.

All of this is part of what we call the warrior's meekness. By meek here, we don't mean being submissive or easily taken advantage of. Rather, meekness refers to the warrior's genuineness. Your life feels wholesome because you have been so thorough and methodical in examining your whole being. This basic experience is the foundation for the whole Shambhala path. Otherwise, the discussion of the Shambhala world may feel like it's purely presenting a myth. You might as well be watching a movie about Shangri-la, which is somewhat corny and convincing but completely made up.

When we talk about elegance, we are not talking in terms of arrogance. When we talk about fearlessness, we are not talking about heavy-handedness. Genuineness is different from trying to convince ourselves that something is there when it doesn't exist. Gentleness doesn't mean being polite and putting on the false mask of a bodhisattva.

Windhorse arises in the basic atmosphere of awareness and mindfulness. Out of that space of basic, constant sanity, a spark of delightfulness or a sudden flash of wakefulness can take place. This happens over and over again in your life. In the course of a day, you might descend into an almost subhuman level of doubt and depression and then bring yourself back to the level of warriorship over and over, throughout the day. The key to cultivating windhorse is the practice of meditation. On top of that, you make a connection to the principle of Ashe, or primordial wakefulness. Finally, your whole life is occupied or filled with the atmosphere of genuineness, and flashes of windhorse can take place all the time.

Windhorse could be described as a bank or storehouse of energy, which is the product of genuineness. If you're a beginning warrior, first you have a flash of genuineness. Then, having recognized your genuineness, you automatically experience health and wholesomeness. Finally, you feel the spark or the wind of lungta, windhorse. In a fully developed warrior, that process happens all at once, but we can talk about it in stages.

Everything reverts back to being genuine. Whenever there's a gap, the only way to be a warrior is to refer back to the genuineness, which is somewhat raw

and so tender and painful. That is the saving grace or the safety precaution so that the warrior never goes astray and never grows a thick skin.

Discovering windhorse is really just a question of giving up your resistance, rather than working too hard to understand or finalize something. It's very simple and raw. Japanese koto music has these qualities of rawness and genuineness, musically speaking. Occasionally, people are afraid to recognize these qualities, which is an expression of their cowardice. If we don't understand ourselves, then we cease to be genuine, and we lose everything that comes out of being genuine. You become unhealthy, and you lose your windhorse, your lungta. Not knowing the nature of fear, you can't go beyond it. But once you know your cowardice, once you know where the stumbling block is, you just have to climb over it—maybe just three and a half steps.

## SEVENTEEN

### *The Spark of Confidence*

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE between the amateurish warrior and the genuine warrior, which we could discuss in connection with the union of the secular and the spiritual. These subjects go hand in hand. A secular approach refers to looking directly at ourselves and discovering our existence, our health, and our glory without being influenced by a religious outlook. We're not particularly talking about the secular as something desecrated. You have your own resources and existence, and you simply embrace whatever is there to be discovered.

We might find that these secular experiences coincide with spiritual discoveries on the Buddhist path. We definitely are using the discipline of mindfulness and natural exertion to open to ourselves and constantly check up on ourselves, so to speak. In some subtle way, we might find that the secular becomes very sacred, very real and genuine. From that point of genuineness where the secular becomes sacred, we begin to discover the true warrior, the genuine warrior, as opposed to the mimicking or amateurish warrior.

At this point, we might discuss a little more about how we can work with other people and perhaps help them to wake up. We have developed our own discipline and understanding of fearlessness, but how can we share that with others? Metaphorically speaking, there are all sorts of extreme ways of waking others: knocking on their doors, shouting, pouring cold water on them—all sorts of ways of waking people up. Most of us have tried those ways of communicating with others in our life, as well as pounding on their heads and overwhelming them. When we use too much force without enough basic authority, or presence, then the joke will be on us. Things will bounce back on us. A genuine warrior wouldn't act in this way at all.

If your basic approach to communication is to get exasperated with people, as though you are tearing yourself to shreds onstage in front of an audience, some people might be convinced by your performance. If the audience is gullible enough, this technique might work. This has been done quite successfully by

some people in the past. This is often the approach of charlatan teachers. However, when you have already discovered and connected with your own genuineness, a display like this won't work. It will backfire on you. That is the warrior's saving grace. It's a natural protective mechanism that makes it impossible for the true warrior to con others successfully.

There's only one way a true warrior can project to others: through personal understanding. Then you can demonstrate to people that their poverty logic about their lives does not hold truth. Let them wake that way.

A genuine warrior has a lot of resources within herself, resources that are always there. Although you feel that you've run out of ideas, you're not really running out of anything. You're being attacked by your own cowardice. You can go beyond that and find further resources within yourself. Banks and banks of inspiration unfold constantly.

The magical trick or practice, the key to relating with others, is to project the physical and psychological healthiness of lungta, or windhorse. You might have had a terrible day, but when you turn your mind to communicating with others in the Shambhala style, you tune yourself in to lungta. You feel good, healthy, and ready to launch.

It is at this point that we have to be very careful that we're not purely trying to mimic windhorse, which is a bit tricky. Especially if you are facing a big challenge, such as giving a public presentation, asking someone to marry you, asking for a divorce, or asking your boss for a raise, you might have a tendency to artificially puff yourself up. Mimicking is conning yourself by saying, "I'm going to do this, whether I feel real confidence happening or not." You have understood a few bits of simplistic logic and made a few notes, and you try to use those tricks to overwhelm others. Mimicking can't be bothered with genuine discipline or technique. It is being very pushy, very numb and heavy-handed. People are not going to be inspired by you strong-arming them. Nothing will come of it, because you haven't actually tuned in to the spark of windhorse at all.

Confidence comes from nowhere. It just arises. It's a sudden flash that has a very healthy note. Before you have to present yourself to others, you could spend at least five or ten minutes tuning in to confidence. Sit in a chair or on a meditation cushion and tune in to the giant ocean of healthiness. Then, when a spark of confidence arises, let it project out. Then there is no problem. Genuine communication is based on tuning in to the spark of confidence, which contains



all the elements of wakefulness and power that we have been discussing. All these principles are included in this spark, this one basic flash. It is spiritual as well as secular, all in one. That is what will catch people's attention. Through that, their wandering thoughts and their subconscious gossip can be stopped.

## EIGHTEEN

### *The Other Side of Fear*

AS A WARRIOR PROCEEDS ON THE PATH, he or she may go through phases of intense fear. Frequently, such fear comes out of nowhere. It just happens; it just hits you. It may cause you to question everything in yourself: everything you have studied, everything you have learned and understood, as well as your general life situation. You feel the wretchedness of the world around you, as well as within yourself.

These attacks of fear often happen after you have understood the Great Eastern Sun vision and the principle of unconditional confidence. When you have understood things spotlessly, then this fear may arise. It is actually a further phase in the development of confidence. You are about to discover further confidence.

Fear arises in this way many times on the warrior's path. It is a hallmark of your progress on the path. In the early stages of the warrior's growing-up process, we feel no contradiction between our understanding and our ability to apply what we have learned. Logically, we understand the process, and experientially we can connect with windhorse. But each time we take a further step, as we begin to discover a further stage or challenge of warriorship, just as we are about to give birth to further confidence, that breakthrough is preceded by a sense of utter fear.

When this occurs in your life, you should examine the nature of fear. This is not based on asking logical questions about fear: "Why am I afraid?" "What is the cause of my fear?" It is simply looking at the state of fear or panic that is taking place in you. Just look at it.

For some people, fear has no logic. For certain others, it brings tremendous logic of this and that. There are infinite possibilities, so many ways to prove that one's fears are valid. We can always find good reasons to be afraid. But in this case, rather than taking an analytical approach to fear, you should just look at

your fear directly. Then, jump into that fear. If you do that, the next thing you will experience is a sense of complete flop. Fear brings together a lot of intense energy. When you dive into it, you feel as if you have just pierced a balloon. Or it's as if you have just dived into ice water; there's a sudden coldness.

Then you will feel the tinge of sadness that we've been talking about over and over again. Beyond that, you may feel some continuing sense of isolation and uncertainty, which is the leftovers of the fear, but nevertheless, the quality of intense fear begins to subside, and your fear becomes somewhat reasonable and workable.

We're not talking about a big event that takes place in one afternoon. The journey of working with fear takes place slowly and repeatedly as you go along the path. You may have many reruns: big reruns and then smaller reruns. Each time you experience fear, you reexperience and reconnect with the whole idea of genuineness, further and more completely. Fear will definitely arise in your life. Therefore it's crucial to understand how to combat that fear by going further into it and then coming out. None of us should regard ourselves as being trapped. From this point of view, we are free. We can do what we want to do. That is one of the key attitudes we should adopt. Even if you experience great fear, you can go in and out of it. That can be done. That is taking an imperial attitude: it can be done, and we can do it. That sense of freedom and fearlessness is very important.

If you understand this, then you won't dwell on your fear. In some sense, when you realize your fear, you will have already come out on the other side. Going into your fear is like going through a fog. The key is whether you're regarding what you experience as simply something real or instead as monumental entrapment, imprisonment. If you panic further, you breed cowardice. If you don't descend into cowardice, then you just have an experience of fear. You can break through without being a coward, at that point. It's a matter of invoking fundamental windhorse. If you are able to join fear and uncertainty with genuine confidence, then you will come through to the other side.

Dealing with the two sides of the coin in yourself is difficult, but it can be done. You discover a further commitment to working with yourself on the warrior's path and a further feeling of connection in your life. At that point, you are actually witnessing the joining together of heaven and earth. Heaven means sanity, or a good and direct understanding. Earth is practicality. Joining them together means that practicality and sanity, or wisdom, are put together so that

we can actually transmit that sanity to others.

Another way of seeing this is that heaven is oneself and the other is earth. The joining of heaven and earth is oneself and other joining together in sanity. In the past, you may have felt as though there were some kind of missing link with the universe. Sometimes there was no earth; sometimes you had no heaven. Sometimes the two didn't come together properly. Now, finally, experience feels full and completely joined together. You rediscover the sense of healthiness, a strong, healthy state of both mind and body. Your attitude toward yourself and others begins to brighten up. Only then can you actually hold the universe in your hand.

## NINETEEN

### *Invincibility*

AS WE NEAR THE END of our journey together, it is important to discuss how to actually maintain the Shambhala world in ourselves twenty-four hours a day so that we don't just have theories about overcoming arrogance and developing confidence. How can we apply the insights we have had so that there is a sense of continual practice taking place? Invoking windhorse and having the confident awareness of the Shambhala warrior are very important disciplines, but there's something else we need to cultivate, which is a constant experience or quality of sacredness in everyday life.

We talked about the basic discovery of sacredness earlier, in [chapter 6](#). Here I would like to introduce a further way to cultivate unconditional sacredness. Problems, difficulties, and challenges may arise quite suddenly in everyday life. We may have a flash of doubt or pain or an attack of emotion. At that very moment, at the same time, we can also have a flash of the sacredness in whatever arises, a sudden awareness of unconditional sacredness. It is very important to actually practice this and maintain it. This is very similar to the spark of confidence we have already discussed, as well as the idea of realizing vajra nature and the vajra world. The cultivation of a sacred world on the spot is the practice that allows all phenomenal experience to become part of a Shambhala mandala, or the basic enlightened structure of your life.

Sacredness is not just an idea. It is an experience. Having a realization of sacredness means that you experience an element of power and dignity in everything, including the ballpoint pen you are using, your comb, taking a shower, or driving your car. Such little details of life have an element of the bigger vision and dignity of warriorship in them. Heaven and earth are joining together in each moment, which is the essence of sacredness.

Even though you may feel that many situations in your life are difficult or even degraded, nevertheless the entire world still possesses the potential for intrinsic awareness. All kinds of challenges and frustrations come up in life. We

have to recognize that such frustrations, challenges, and negativity always have an element of sacredness in them. Appreciating sacredness is appreciating the sky in which the Great Eastern Sun can be brought out. If there's no sky, you are trying to give birth to the Great Eastern Sun on a concrete wall. There's not much dignity in that.

First, there is the flash of sacredness. Then, if we explore further, we find that there is a sense of humor in sacredness. Humor in this case does not mean mocking the world, but discovering a quality of delight and a light touch. This understanding of sacredness can actually ward off attacks of fear and negativity. Our existence is fortified, so to speak, with a sense of appreciation and sacredness. If fear tries to latch on to us, it finds us very slippery and it falls off easily.

Sacredness also provides space or accommodation in our life. If we don't have a sense of space, we begin to feel claustrophobic, which invites attacks of negativity. Sacredness is a spark of accommodation and generosity that can evoke further sympathy for and understanding of the nature of the setting-sun, or degraded, world. It shows us both how much pain people experience in that world and how ugly the whole scene is. When you witness this, you can be very understanding, but you don't have to go along with the neurosis. It shouldn't make you depressed, particularly. You feel good that you are free of that world and that you have alternatives to offer, which can free yourself and also help to free others.

You begin to see the ins and outs of the samsaric, or setting-sun, world very clearly because you and your world are so brightly lit up. Sacred space allows you to see the contrasts, between elegance and the lack of elegance, between confidence and cowardice.

It's like a bright light shining in a dark room. When you see bright light, you see the darkness around it at the same time, and the more darkness you see, that much brighter the light becomes. The reason the warrior is invincible is that he sees his opponent's world so clearly and thoroughly. Because he knows the other world so well already, therefore the warrior can't be attacked or challenged. Here, spaciousness makes you sympathetic to others but invincible at the same time. Invincibility doesn't have to be insensitive. Instead, because you are so sensitive, so raw and rugged, therefore you can be hard like a diamond at the same time.

At this point, the warrior is meek like a tiger, not like a pussycat. There's real

heart to your meekness. Meekness can actually roar and proclaim. Being meek is not being overly cautious and afraid to make mistakes. You may encounter many problems, but they will correct themselves if you have a true connection to the sacredness of the world.

At the same time, the realization of sacredness brings further loneliness, that sad and tender feeling we have been discussing. It comes with a sense that only you know your world. You can express only so much to others. There are always aspects of your experience that you cannot share. It's a feeling of unrequited love. But that isn't a problem, particularly. Rather, it's the source of the sacredness. Tenderness balances your experience, so that you don't feel you are wearing a suit of armor and beating your chest. For the warrior, proclaiming your wisdom always comes along with softness and sadness.

## TWENTY

### *How to Invoke Windhorse*

WHAT INSPIRES Great Eastern Sun vision altogether is the notion of being delighted to be human beings. The rising sun has the qualities of an infant or teenage sun, whereas the Great Eastern Sun is the mature sun, the sun in the sky at about ten in the morning. We are delighted to be who we are and delighted by the situation we are in. We appreciate the coincidences that have led us to this point in our lives.

Having discovered the Great Eastern Sun, how can we fulfill that vision? The first step is just basic warriorship, appreciating who we are, what we are, where we are. Such appreciation and investigation may bring up fear and many questions. Fear becomes our study material, which in turn becomes our working basis. We begin to realize that we have no choice but to work with fear and then to step over our fear and hesitation. Because our journey is choiceless, we develop a further sense of warriorship. We actually identify ourselves as warriors, and beyond that, we become citizens of the Shambhala world, the warrior's world.

How do we proceed at this point on the warrior's path? The mechanism or technique that we use is to invoke windhorse, or lungta. The practice of windhorse is a way of casting out depression and doubt. It takes the form of a cheering-up process. That is to say, invoking windhorse actualizes the living aspect of fearlessness and confidence.

The process of invoking windhorse begins by taking your seat, taking your place in the warrior's world, the sacred world. It is finding the right place to be. Only you can choose the magical spot. This cannot be found by intellectual speculation or scientific research. You cannot use technology to locate the right spot. You simply take the attitude of your existence as a warrior. Having assumed the warrior's posture, you feel oriented to the world that surrounds you. East is where you are facing; South is to your right; West is to your back; North is on your left.



These are not geographical directions, nor is this sense of direction scientific. It is intuitive. For instance, if I am talking to someone, my East is coming toward them and their East is approaching me, so we meet in the East. Wherever there is a meeting place, it happens in the East, which we could call the Great East at this point. It is where forward vision takes place. That includes many human activities: eating, making love, walking. You are always going toward the East. You walk forward, usually; when you eat, your food is in front of you; when you talk to someone, you usually face them. That is the idea of forward vision.

Having assumed the magical spot, you should arrange the throne of the ruler. This is acknowledging that you are not invoking windhorse in isolation but as part of a larger society. In order to have a society, there must be some sense of leadership. The ruler's throne symbolizes that. As a warrior, you belong to the people of the Great Eastern Sun. You are a citizen in that world. Connecting with this sense of larger community or society is arranging the throne of the king or queen. In your own life, you may be the ruler. In the greater society, you are an integral part of the whole mandala.

In the process of raising windhorse, the next step is to contemplate the Great Eastern Sun. Taking your place in the world produces an almost physical effect. A great deal of energy comes from that, and you begin to feel that you almost *are* the Great Eastern Sun. You have a sense of radiance and brilliance. It's an almost dazzling experience. This might be prolonged or just a quick glimpse. When you feel this, you should just touch it. Touch on the energy, not indulging or exaggerating it. Just touch.

Then you feel that you are connecting with greater energy, something beyond your own personal existence or even your place in society. You feel that you are tapping into your heritage, the tradition of warriorship altogether. So at that point, you feel that you are welcoming the Shambhala lineage of warrior kings and queens and inviting them to witness, or even judge you, as you invoke windhorse. In other words, you feel that the experience is legitimate, that there is no phoniness at all. What you are doing is deliberate, precise, clear, and real. It might be empty, in the Buddhist sense that all experience is empty. Nevertheless, this is genuine emptiness, genuine and powerful imagination, or visualization, we might say.

Then, having prepared the ground and invited the guests or the witnesses, you are ready to actually invoke or raise windhorse on the spot. What we are invoking is a wind *horse*, which is a special kind of horse. Horses are wonderful

animals. Any sculpture of a horse is a sacred symbol. Horses represent the wild dreams that human beings would like to capture. The desire to capture any wild animal or to capture the wind, a cloud, the sky—all those are represented by the image of the horse. If you would like to ride on mountains or dance with waterfalls, all of that is incorporated in the symbolism of the horse. The actual physique of the horse—its neck, ears, face, back, muscles, hooves, tail—is the ideal image of something romantic, something energetic, something wild, which we would like to capture. Here, the horse is used as an analogy for that energy and all of those dreams.

In the process of invoking windhorse, there are three stages. The first is having a joyful mind, free from doubt. When you ride on a horse, if you relax with the horse, you find that you are actually riding on top of the world. There is a sense of conquering and being conquered at the same time. At that very moment when you are on the horse, there is no sadness involved, and there is no doubt that you are on top of the universe, riding the world. Of course, at the same time, you have to pay attention to the reins, your posture, balancing your weight on the horse, and many other factors. Still, you have to admit that you are riding your own mind at its best. There is almost a military feeling of strength and presence about it, and maybe a regal feeling as well.

You are in contact with an entirely different energy. The horse and rider are different entities, obviously. You are human, and the horse is a horse. Nevertheless, some kind of connection can be made. When you are riding on the horse, you experience oneness, particularly if you are a good rider who is free from doubt.

The same thing applies to riding your own state of mind, your own state of being. There are doubts of all kinds: doubts about yourself, doubts about others, and doubts about the situation. As you ride your horse, you may have doubt about the horse, about the environment, and about your capability to ride that particular horse. Still, there is an overall sense of togetherness or oneness. Fundamentally being free from doubt can take place when you are properly mounted on the horse of mind.

The second stage of longing for the horse is having a genuine mind of sadness. Having overcome your doubt completely, at that point you are mounted on your horse and you feel *there*, right there. At the same time, there could be a little bit of frustration, wishing that you could go further. You wish you could ride the horse so well, so effortlessly, that you wouldn't even have to think in

terms of riding at all, but you would just be working effortlessly with your own mind. The notion of sadness comes from frustration of that nature.

Your sadness is almost nostalgia, although that is not quite the right word. Nostalgia means longing for something in the past, but here it is nostalgia for the present taking place. It is heartache. You wish that you could impart all the things in your mind to somebody else. You wish you could completely communicate to somebody. Everybody wants to do that, particularly when they are in love, or when they are angry. But it is usually impossible. Such communication can only take place in gestures. There are a lot of things that words don't say. That is the biggest frustration of human beings.

When we talk about sadness here, we are talking in the context of our devotion to warriorship and the Shambhala world. We feel so much commitment to the heritage of sanity that has been shared with us, so much longing to express that. You would like to capture or embody the true, genuine, and enlightened warrior in your state of being. But you cannot do it completely.

This sadness also comes with joy. The joyful, uplifted, and almost arrogant experience of riding on this particular horse makes you feel so good. Yet the goodness is always tinged with sadness. This is genuine sadness as opposed to a performance of sadness or a sadness of desperation. Windhorse touches your heart because it is so real. When the warrior is in this state of mind, she begins to feel that she is flying a kite that soars in the air, while the cord is attached to her heart with a hook. So you ride your horse, flying your kite, with the hook at the end of the cord touching your heart.

Beyond that, the third stage of longing is being suddenly free from fixed mind. You are not looking back at all or trying to confirm anything. Free from fixed mind means that there is no feedback. You are not trying to build a case or a logic to confirm your experience. There is the powerful sense that you are experiencing the highest level of genuine sadness and joy without doubt. You have no subconscious gossip in your mind at all. Your mind is completely stopped, just stopped, in the positive sense. The attempt to create subconscious mind would be problematic at that point. Therefore, the idea is to cut through that, in exactly the same way as we do in the sitting practice of meditation. We let go of thoughts, naturally and powerfully. Because you are fully there, completely there, there is no subconscious mind at all.

The fruition of invoking windhorse is symbolized by the universal monarch with a broken heart. Such a person is also humble because of his broken heart.

He is a real person. But at the same time, there is a lot of presence, in the positive sense. The feeling of this state of being is like looking at where the horizon meets the ocean. You have great difficulty distinguishing exactly where the sea dissolves into the sky. So heaven and earth are one.

This is the best description of invoking windhorse that I can offer. You have to experience this. We can't really talk about it too much. In some sense, it's a physical experience, but on the other hand, it is also psychological. Having ridden such a good horse, you have glimpsed what it would be like to conquer the universe. This is not conquering the universe from the point of view of acquiring power and wealth and subjugating others. We are not talking about feeling good by imposing your power on somebody. This is more psychological. We are describing the ultimate experience of feeling wholesome and real. You have nothing else to conquer. You have conquered what needed to be conquered completely. Basic goodness, genuineness, and fearlessness all come from that.

## *Conclusion*

**I**N ONE SENSE, our discussion here has been quite simple and reasonable. The proclamation of gentle sanity may seem straightforward and almost self-evident, but on the other hand, it is somewhat outrageous. The more you get into the wisdom of Shambhala, the more you realize the outrageous aspect of these teachings.

Without some experience of the sitting practice of meditation, you may find it difficult to develop much understanding of what I've been trying to say. And you might find it difficult to cultivate these teachings in everyday life. One of the best ways to develop and apply your understanding is through the sitting practice of meditation. It is a very important discipline to cultivate.

As you practice this discipline, you may see many problems in yourself and in society, but please don't reject yourself or your world. We talked earlier about the virtue of renunciation, but that doesn't mean that you should give up on this world. Renunciation here is renouncing a small-minded attachment to privacy. You can jump in and involve yourself in life. As you continue your life's journey through fear and fearlessness, please remember to appreciate your world.

You have to develop yourself first; then you can begin to work with others. In the Shambhala tradition we don't jump the gun, so to speak. As warriors, we don't put on a suit of armor to go into battle against the setting sun until we are sure that we ourselves are fundamentally strong, well trained, and in good health. Essentially, we know that we have unconditional confidence so that we can stand on our own, without any gadgetry. We also make sure that the tools we use and the armor we don are well made. The armor of gentleness and fearlessness fits us well and is completely broken in so that it will work *with* us rather than against us.

Although our discussion of the development of human warriorship uses many colorful analogies of battle and warfare, being a warrior in the Shambhala

tradition has nothing to do with the normal aggression and warfare in the world. The warrior is one who is brave enough to live peacefully in this world. Courage is needed at every stage of life. If for some reason a newborn infant is afraid to suckle at his mother's nipple, we have to help that infant to connect with his world. He needs to be a warrior so that he will not reject the source of nurturing in his world. So while being a warrior may have different connotations, the fundamental, basic definition is embracing goodness.

In talking about such seemingly advanced subjects as joining heaven and earth and raising windhorse, we should always remember that, in essence, these teachings are simply rousing our innate nature of goodness, which is completely without aggression. When there is aggression, you lose your confidence and energy. You become weak, stubbornly self-centered, and angry. When there is no anger, you can raise yourself up, and you expand yourself. You find that life is full of humor and cheerfulness.

Authentic fearlessness arises from this connection with basic, unconditional *goodness*. By goodness here, we simply mean being yourself. Accepting yourself—rather than trying to be good by being solemn and religious about your behavior—leads to uplifted confidence in body, speech, and mind. When goodness and virtue are awakened through the sitting practice of meditation, you train yourself to have good posture and to harmonize your mind and your body. Then goodness or virtue develops naturally in your speech and throughout your life, and you find the genuine way of working with others.

Being genuine means not having aggression and being true to oneself. A lot of us feel attacked by our own aggression and by our own misery and pain. But none of that particularly presents an obstacle. What we need, to begin with, is to develop kindness toward ourselves and then to develop kindness toward others. This approach may sound very simpleminded, which it is. At the same time, it is *very* difficult to practice.

Pain causes chaos, fear, and resentment, and we have to overcome that. It is an extremely simple logic. Once we can overcome pain, we discover intrinsic joy, and we have less resentment toward the world and ourselves. By naturally being here, we have less resentment. When we are resentful, we are somewhere else, because we are preoccupied with something else. Being a warrior is being simply here without distraction and preoccupation. And by being here, we become cheerful. We can smile at our fear.

So fearlessness is not the simpleminded product of overcoming or

overpowering your fear. For the warrior, fearlessness is a positive state of being. It is filled with delight, cheerfulness, and a sparkle in your eyes. Mahatma Gandhi was an example of someone who embodied such virtue and fearlessness. Gandhi was totally committed to helping India become an independent nation. He embraced all the obstacles, all the problems, and he used every possible way to win independence without violence. In one's own life, one can apply a smaller version of that kind of courage. We can become fearless and genuine, gentle and daring. But to do so, we have to keep a sense of humor, always.

Whenever there is doubt, that creates another step on your staircase. Doubt is telling you that you need to take another step. Each time there is an obstacle, you go one step further, beyond it, step-by-step. You walk or you jump one step at a time until you see the Great Eastern Sun. I wouldn't suggest that in the beginning you look at the Great Eastern Sun directly—the light might burn you—but I wouldn't suggest you wear sunglasses all the time either. In the shade of fearlessness, you can appreciate the light that comes from the Great Eastern Sun, and then you can appreciate how it illuminates the colors of everything around you. Then slowly but surely, you will actually see the Great Eastern Sun directly without its blinding you. That is the warrior's way, and that is the way that we can conquer fear.

You may feel lonely on your journey; still, you are not alone. If we sink, you and your warrior comrades and I will all sink together. If we rise, we rise together. So you have a companion, even if we never have met one another personally. In the Shambhala tradition, we cry a lot because our hearts are so soft. And we fight the setting sun because we feel that basic goodness is worth fighting for, so to speak. Our obstacles can be conquered. So we should cry and fight, as long as we know that the warrior's cry is a different type of cry and the warrior's battle is a different type of battle.

As a warrior without aggression, you are fearless and good. Fundamentally, you can never make a mistake, so please cheer up. Even in the darkest of the dark age, there is always light. That light comes with a smile, the smile of Shambhala, the smile of fearlessness, the smile of realizing the best of the best of human potential. All of the teachings, the very heart's blood of Shambhala, are yours. We are all part of the same human family. Let us smile and cry together.

## *Fearlessness and Joy Are Truly Yours*

When a warrior king presents a gift, It could be a naked flame, which consumes  
the jungle of ego, Or an ice-cold mountain range, which cools the heat of  
aggression.

On the other hand, it could be a parachute.

One wonders whether it will open or not.

There is a further choice—Thunderbolt:

Whether you are capable of holding it with your bare hand is up to you.

So, my heartfelt child, take these gifts and use them In the way that past warriors  
have done.



## *Editor's Afterword*

*SMILE AT FEAR* is the last of three volumes that presents the Shambhala teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. I worked on the first book, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, quite intensively with the author. It was the first time I served as the lead editor of one of Rinpoche's books for general publication. In retrospect, it's amazing that he trusted me to edit the material, as I was rather green and young for the task. I suppose, in a sense, that his students all were, in those days. Nevertheless, because of his genius and with his guidance and the feedback of many other people, that effort worked out all right. The book was published in 1984. It was well received, and it still is.

After his death in 1987, the success of the first volume gave me the confidence to edit some of the wealth of the remaining material for publication. With the support of Shambhala Publications, *Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala* was published in 1999. I applied a lighter hand to the editing of that book, which I hope retains the energy of the original presentations.

Now, ten years later, *Smile at Fear* has been published. The theme of fear and fearlessness was first presented in *Shambhala*, and the association of fearlessness with a sad and tender heart is one of the often-remarked-upon themes from that volume. Over the years, I came to see that fearlessness was a component of the Shambhala teachings at every level and that Rinpoche had often identified it as the core or heart of the Shambhala teachings. I began to think about making the teachings on fear and fearlessness the focus of the final book. As events unfolded in the last ten years, it seemed that these teachings on fear and fearlessness were the very teachings that might be the most useful for this era. And coincidentally, many of them were from talks that had not yet been edited at all. As he did so often during his lifetime, Rinpoche seemed again to have known with uncanny foresight and accuracy what tools we would need, in order to work with twenty-first-century experience. He had embedded those tools—or weapons, as a warrior might call them—into the Shambhala teachings, so that they would be right at hand when they were required.

For this volume I have drawn on a great variety of material, as detailed in the

sources section. In consultation with my editor at Shambhala Publications, Eden Steinberg, I decided to take some risks with the editing in order to produce a coherent, continuous flow so that the book would read as a unified whole rather than as a collection of talks or articles. I also edited with the aim of revealing as much as possible of the immediacy and heartfelt quality of these teachings.

In the preparation of all three books, I held in mind the instructions and the feedback that Chögyam Trungpa gave me directly about the first volume. (You can find a detailed discussion of this in the introduction to volume 8 of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*.) The editorial approach I adopted for *Smile at Fear* was guided by Rinpoche's wish to reach out to as many people as possible with these books.

I have been cautious about adding my own words to the author's, but in places I found it necessary to insert a phrase of explanation or a sentence to create continuity in the argument. I've also updated some references. For example, whereas Chögyam Trungpa in 1978 alluded to people going to Dairy Queen for entertainment, I substituted Starbucks. *Perambulator* was replaced by *baby stroller*, and other Anglicisms were changed to American terms. Gender references were updated as well, which I think Rinpoche would have appreciated. He went out of his way a number of times in his Shambhala talks to make it clear that *warrior* was a term that applies equally to brave men and women.

Throughout his presentation of the Shambhala teachings, Rinpoche stressed the importance of meditation and how the understanding of and connection to the teachings arise from sitting practice. In some sense, the teachings unfold from the practice. Because his instructions for practice were unique and somewhat unusual, especially in the emphasis on the gap and identifying with the out-breath, I thought it important that his approach to meditation be clearly presented here.

A person could take a stab at practicing meditation purely based on reading these books. However, Rinpoche himself always emphasized the importance of receiving personal instruction in meditation. The resources section gives information about centers where you can learn to meditate. For those who already have a background in meditation, I trust that Rinpoche's discussion of practice also will prove helpful. The view and details of any meditation practice will influence one's perception in everyday life as well as on the meditation cushion. I think that the connection between Chögyam Trungpa's unique

approach to meditation and the profundity and immediacy of the Shambhala teachings was not just a coincidence.

Rinpoche's use of royalty as a recurring metaphor and symbol may feel anachronistic to some readers. It seeks to address the human aspiration for a good, uplifted, and fulfilling life. In the vajrayana tradition of Buddhism, the practitioner in some ceremonies receives a crown, a scepter, even a new name as part of the empowerment to begin a practice. This has similarities to Trungpa Rinpoche's introduction of the idea of ruling your world as a king or queen. He had a somewhat democratic view of monarchy, in that he felt that every human being can play this role in his or her own life. The ability to see people at their best reflects the sacred outlook that he brought to every moment and experience of life. He actually saw the people he worked with as potential royalty. I remember once hearing from some friends how Rinpoche had spent an evening describing each of them as they would appear *when* they became a buddha—not if, but when.

Similarly, his use of the metaphor of the warrior arose from his own experience. He was intimately familiar with the way fear and fearlessness operate in life, and he genuinely wanted to share his understanding of how the experience of fear can help us to meet life's challenges with bravery, rather than to see fear as our enemy. This was obvious from the way in which he himself constantly took chances and also in how he encouraged his students to do the same. Encouraging me to be the editor of *Shambhala* is just one small example of how he trusted his students and pushed us to undertake things we might never have thought we were capable of yet longed to do. This, I think, is one reason that so many of his students feel that they could never do enough to repay his kindness.

## *Acknowledgments*

MANY PEOPLE HELPED TO RECORD and transcribe the material in *Smile at Fear*. In particular, Tingdzin Otro spent many hours transcribing previously unused material, after Gordon Kidd of the Shambhala Archives provided the tapes for transcription. Their efforts are greatly appreciated. Altogether the staff at the archives was generous in providing access to the extensive collections they preserve. Some of the material used here was previously recorded, transcribed, and, in some cases, edited for use in other contexts. Thanks to David Rome, Judith Lief, Sara Coleman, Helen Berliner, Barbara Blouin, Richard Roth, Paul Halpern, Robert Walker, Bruce Wauchope, Ned Nisbet, and others for these earlier contributions.

In 2001, following the events of 9/11, Melvin McLeod encouraged me to edit an article by Chögyam Trungpa on fear and fearlessness for the *Shambhala Sun* magazine. This led me to revisit a seminar from 1979. I reedited the material for the *Sun*, and this started me thinking about the book as a whole. (That article appears here as a core teaching.) I appreciate Melvin's role as muse for this material.

Many people at Shambhala Publications have played a part in the unfolding of these three books. Samuel Bercholz, the founder of Shambhala Publications and its editor-in-chief, supported the publication of all three volumes. His inviolable connection to the material has been an important underpinning. Hazel Bercholz played a prominent role in the design of all three covers, bringing a powerful connection between appearance and meaning, which in part arises from the visual dharma that she studied with the author himself. Thanks are also due to Liza Matthews, who executed the final design for the cover of *Smile at Fear*. Emily Hilburn Sell was the patient and insistent editor of *Great Eastern Sun*. Both her appreciation of the material and her critical feedback were invaluable. Eden Steinberg is the editor of *Smile at Fear*. She brings a fresh sensitivity to her reading of the material. She has a way of guiding the editorial process that is both light-handed and penetrating, and I always feel that her involvement improves the books we work on together. Peter Turner has also been encouraging in crucial ways. Kendra Crossen was the in-house editor of *The*

*Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa* and the freelance copy editor for *Smile at Fear*. Her gentle, meticulous hand and penetrating eye improve everything she works on, in a way that is somewhat invisible but undeniable. I also would like to thank Jonathan Green, who works on the foreign rights, contracts, and permissions associated with all of Chögyam Trungpa's books. Thanks to Ben Gleason for editorial contributions and to Daniel Urban-Brown for the design of the book.

I would also like to thank the members of my family, who have supported my editorial work over the years in many ways, from relieving me of financial stress to the much more important psychological and spiritual support they have provided. In particular, I thank my parents, Edward and Evelyn Rose, now deceased; my husband, James, and my daughter, Jenny. In addition to my biological family, many thanks are owed to my dharma brothers and sisters, who have encouraged the work I do in many ways.

Rinpoche's family has been supportive of the publication of his work for many years, and I thank them all. The author's widow, Diana Mukpo, continues to encourage the publication of new work, and her keen oversight, her protection of the teachings, and her kindness and friendship to me have been of great importance. Rinpoche's eldest son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, as Buddhist and Shambhala lineage holder, continues to present the Shambhala teachings of his father. His own teachings reflect this connection. I am grateful to him for his dedication and support. Trungpa Rinpoche's senior students support his legacy in myriad ways. And very importantly, new students continue to discover the work of Chögyam Trungpa and to benefit from the wisdom of Shambhala.

To Chögyam Trungpa himself, profound and brilliant teacher, I offer a deep Shambhala bow. May the world breathe the air of goodness and bravery that comes from your lips, dispelling the clouds of ignorance. May we see the smile of Shambhala, which is also your smile, on the faces of those we encounter. There are no adequate thanks for the gift of these teachings. May we apply them in life and in death, and may they save all sentient beings from the warring evils of the setting sun.

CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN  
*Halifax, Nova Scotia*

## Sources

THE EPIGRAPH ON PAGE 449 is a quotation from “Mirrorlike Wisdom,” in *Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1999), 75. © 2001 by Diana J. Mukpo. Used by permission.

Part one is primarily based on Warriorship in the Three Yanas, an unpublished seminar given at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center (now Shambhala Mountain Center), Red Feather Lakes, Colorado, August 22–27, 1978. Secondary sources include the “Dathün Letter,” an unpublished article on meditation, put together from talks in the early 1970s and given to students beginning a dathün, or monthlong meditation program; talk one of The Warrior of Shambhala Seminar at the Naropa Institute (now Naropa University), summer 1978; and talk one of a seminar on meditation at the Naropa Institute, June 12, 1974. [Chapter 7, “The Education of the Warrior,”](#) is based on material in *The Collected Kalapa Assemblies: 1978–1984* (Halifax: Vajradhatu Publications, 2006), pp. 133–38, used by permission. [Chapter 8, “Nonviolence,”](#) was originally published as “The Martial Arts and the Art of War” in *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, volume eight, pp. 413–19. © 2004 by Diana J. Mukpo. Used by permission.

[Chapters 9–11](#) of part two are reprinted and slightly reedited from the article “Conquering Fear,” which appeared in the March 2002 issue of the *Shambhala Sun* magazine, pp. 26–33, 70–74. © 2002 by Diana J. Mukpo. Used by permission. It also appears in volume eight of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, pp. 394–407. [Chapters 12–14](#) were compiled and edited from unpublished talks given by Chögyam Trungpa within the Shambhala Training program in 1982 and 1983. The various seminars were simply entitled Level B/F or Level F. They do not correspond to any nomenclature in use within that program today.

Part three is a newly edited version of talks given to directors of Shambhala Training in 1978.

The conclusion is based on material from Level B/F and Level F, mentioned above, as well as a small amount of material excerpted from *Great Eastern Sun*:

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“Fearlessness and Joy Are Truly Yours” is an excerpt from a longer unpublished poem written to the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin as a birthday greeting, composed on August 20, 1981.



*Chögyam Trungpa in the robes of the Tenth Trungpa.*  
PHOTO BY MARTIN JANOWITZ.



# **THE MISHAP LINEAGE**

*Transforming Confusion into Wisdom*

*Edited by* CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN

*Dedicated to the people of Surmang*

## ***Editor's Preface***

*THE MISHAP LINEAGE: Transforming Confusion into Wisdom* is Chögyam Trungpa's personal reflection on his lineage, the lineage of Trungpa Tülkus, or incarnate teachers, which began in Tibet in the fifteenth century. Chögyam Trungpa himself, who was born in Tibet in 1940, was the Eleventh Trungpa.<sup>1</sup> In this book, Trungpa Rinpoche—*rinpoche* is a title for reincarnate teachers that means “precious one”—is not so much documenting the history of the teachers in the lineage as he is informing our own contemporary experience with the myths or stories of his predecessors. Here, stories from the lives of the Trungpas are a point of departure for the discussion of the principles and the experiences that guide a practitioner's journey on the path. These discussions are also related to how he viewed the introduction of the Buddhist teachings in North America and his hopes for their future.

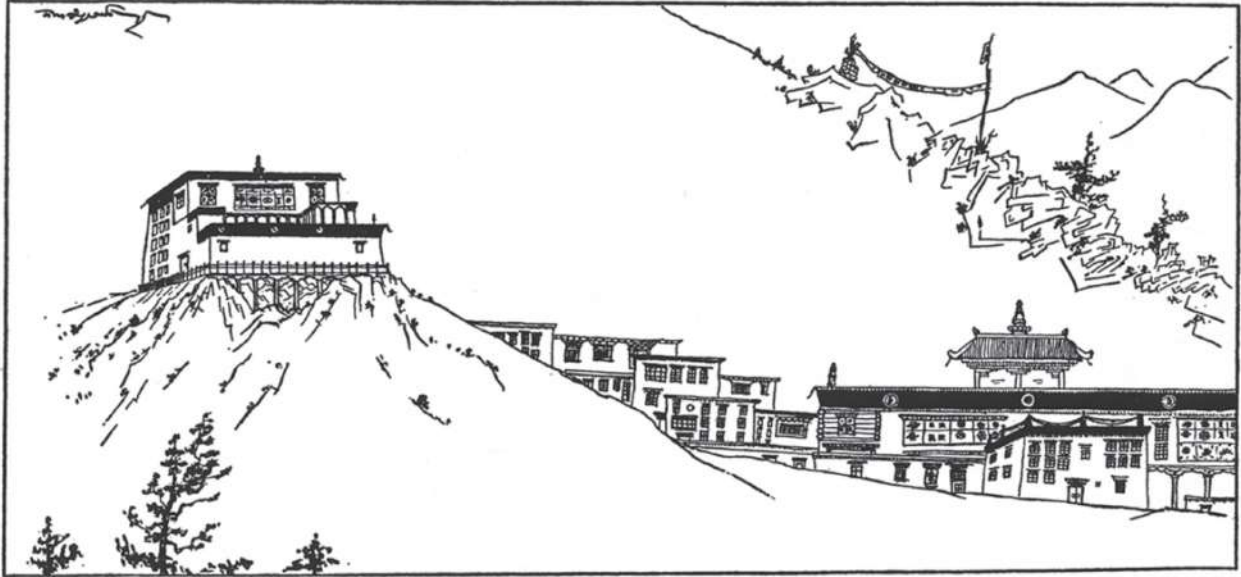
He uses the historical framework to help us understand how we can relate to the idea of lineage and community in the modern context of a spiritual journey. What is the nature of lineage? How can we, as twenty-first-century practitioners, connect with the stories of practitioners' experiences hundreds of years ago? Does their experience apply to us? Is it true? Is it relevant? Is it real? These are questions the reader can explore in this volume. Perhaps some of the questions will be answered. Perhaps some will remain as fuel for the journey. That would certainly be in keeping with how the author taught. He was much more interested in awakening curiosity than in providing certainty, and the style of the presentation here is in keeping with that.

The idea of the Mishap Lineage, encountering and sometimes even inviting constant mishaps and then using them as the ground for the next stage of development on the path, is introduced here as a defining characteristic of the Kagyü lineage, and particularly of the line of the Trungpas. The theme of mishaps and the lineage of mishaps comes up over and over. So far as I was able to uncover, there is no term for Mishap Lineage in Tibetan. Chögyam Trungpa gave us dynamic translations for key Buddhist terms in the English language, many of which have shaped the view of practice and the Buddhist path in

America. Beyond that, he coined new phrases that have no equivalent in Tibetan or Sanskrit, such as *spiritual materialism*, *meditation in action*, and—now we learn—*Mishap Lineage*. These terms may be among the most important concepts he presented; clearly, they are particularly applicable to Buddhism in America. The concept of the Mishap Lineage also reflects the personal quality of his own journey. His coming to the West only occurred because of the “mishap” of the Chinese invasion of Tibet. His coming from England to America only took place because of many mishaps that occurred in England. He himself feasted on mishaps, using them as fuel and food for the continuing journey rather than shying away. *The Mishap Lineage* was chosen as the title for this book because this principle seems to resonate so strongly with our experience of Buddhist practice in the West. The seminar that was the basis for much of the material in this book, as far as this editor knows, is the first place where this concept was introduced.

Chögyam Trungpa died more than twenty years ago, on April 4, 1987, yet his teachings are still practiced today by thousands, many of whom never met him, and read each year by tens of thousands more. There is a growing appreciation for the central role that he played in bringing the Buddhist teachings to the West, in particular his pivotal role in establishing the tradition of the Practicing Lineage in America. This book is an offering to him, the teachers of his lineage, and to his students, both those who knew him and studied with him personally, as well as those who encounter him in his written work or are practicing now in his tradition, applying his teachings in their practice of meditation, following the path he laid out.

This volume is also an offering to the current teachers and practitioners at the Surmang monasteries in East Tibet, especially those at Surmang Dütsi Tel, Trungpa Rinpoche’s main monastery in Tibet, which his Western students are now helping to rebuild; Kyere Gön, a small monastery not far from Surmang Dütsi Tel, where Rinpoche discovered many important *terma* teachings;<sup>2</sup> and Wenchen Nunnery, near Kyere, where the nuns practice many of Rinpoche’s teachings in their retreats. After all, as Rinpoche says in the last talk: “Surmang is Trungpa. Trungpa is Surmang.” It is where most of the events described in this volume took place. And we should not forget that without Surmang and the mishaps that affected Tibet, there would never have been a Chögyam Trungpa in America. We owe these people and this place an enormous debt.



*Surmang Dütsi Tel.*

DRAWING BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA.

In December 1975, when Rinpoche presented the Mishap Lineage Seminar (originally titled *The Line of the Trungpas Seminar*) that is the basis for this book, he had little reason to believe that his dharma lineage had survived at Surmang. Rinpoche began his journey out of Tibet in 1959, after receiving a report of the sacking of the monastery. His bursar described to him how the sacred remains of the Tenth Trungpa were desecrated by the Chinese. The bursar, having cremated the remains, brought them to Rinpoche. Understandably, Trungpa Rinpoche saw little future for the dharma in Tibet. Many terma teachings that he had discovered at Surmang were destroyed, as far as he knew, as well as other practice texts and writings. He rarely spoke about these teachings, perhaps in part because he saw no chance that they would be recovered.



*Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Chögyam Trungpa's eldest son and lineage holder, conducting a long life empowerment at Surmang, 2004.*

PHOTO BY PETER G. SEIDLER.

Toward the end of his life, Trungpa Rinpoche received letters and other communications from Tibet, including a letter from his mother, and he expressed a desire to visit Surmang by helicopter (since he was not well enough to get there by other means), but this was not to be. Following his death, a number of his students traveled to Surmang and began to reestablish relationships there.<sup>3</sup> In the late 1990s, the first teacher from Surmang Dütsi Tel came to America. Khenpo Tsering Gyurme traveled to Colorado to meet his Western dharma family, to bring us news of our Tibetan dharma brothers and sisters, and to ask for assistance in rebuilding and reenergizing the situation there. In 2003, he worked with the Nālandā Translation Committee to bring two other teachers from Surmang to America: Karma Senge Rinpoche (a.k.a. Karseng Rinpoche), Trungpa Rinpoche's nephew; and Damchö Tenphel Rinpoche, Trungpa Rinpoche's younger brother. Karseng Rinpoche, who never met Chögyam Trungpa, spent years traveling throughout East Tibet gathering copies of all of the texts that Chögyam Trungpa had written or received as terma during his twenty years in Tibet. Karseng Rinpoche received the transmissions for these

texts from practitioners there, who kept their copies of these texts as their precious treasures. Now the Nālandā Translation Committee is translating this material, and Rinpoche's students in North America are beginning to receive these transmissions.<sup>4</sup>



*Family portrait from the visit of Diana Mukpo (Chögyam Trungpa's widow) to Tibet, summer 2002.*

If we could ask him, Trungpa Rinpoche—even knowing that the dharma tradition in Surmang had survived—would surely still emphasize that a key component of the future of Buddhism lies in the West. He was a remarkably prescient person. His emphasis on the teachings going forward in the West was not just a response to what had happened in his homeland. While paying homage to the history of the lineage and with respect and love for our Asian origins, we must look to ourselves, Western practitioners of the dharma, to stabilize and carry forward the future of Chögyam Trungpa's dharma legacy. We must make the teachings our own. Choicelessly, we carry a responsibility for the propagation of his teachings. What he did in America was unique, and the burden to preserve that is ours. He trusted his Western students in a way that is almost beyond comprehension. How can we not repay that trust?

Nevertheless, we feel humbled by the exertion, devotion, and realization of those teachers we've met from Surmang.<sup>5</sup> More than that, meeting them feels like meeting family. How extraordinary to feel so at home with people from this far, far away place, so different from our own and yet so similar. It is also that sense of meeting family that recurs throughout reading the stories in *The Mishap Lineage*.

During a break while working on this volume in the country outside of Halifax, Nova Scotia, I went for a walk through fields behind the retreat house. It had been a winter with little snow, so although it was only mid-March, most of the snow had melted, and I was able to trudge through the fields of long, unmown hay. In many places, the undergrowth was pushed up in peaks and hillocks by a combination of wind, snow, and animals bedding down in the grass. I was reminded of Trungpa Rinpoche's story about the origin of the name *Surmang*, which means simply "many cornered." The teacher Trung Mase took the name *Surmang* from the reed hut in which he lived for many years. The hut had a lot of corners, because you need those if you build a house out of just reeds. Here, centuries later and thousands of miles away, in the fields behind a little house in eastern Canada, I saw hundreds of corners made out of long grass, and it felt as though I were seeing the footprints of the teacher, pushing up the grasses wherever he walked.

In this small volume, may you encounter some of these footprints making a path through your mind and into your heart. May we all benefit from the teachings of the Mishap Lineage.

CAROLYN ROSE GIMIAN  
*Trident Mountain House*  
*Nova Scotia*

## ***Ocean Waves of Devotion***

*A Supplication to the Garland of Births of the Surmang  
Trungpa Rinpoches*

OM SVASTI

Supreme lord of the hundred devas of Tushita,  
Great Maitreya of great maitri, protector of beings,  
Dharma regent, the great prince himself,  
We supplicate you, the future buddha.

Born of a royal family, you attained the *siddhi* of Hevajra; By the action of a  
great lord of yogins,  
Riding a miraculous tiger, you are victorious in all directions.  
We supplicate you, Dombi Heruka.

In the mansion of the luminous vajra pinnacle Vidyadhara arises in the form of a  
mahasiddha.  
The protector who makes the doctrine of the supreme yana shine like the sun,  
We supplicate at your feet, Shri Simha.

Heart son, blessed by the great Ugyen,  
Who pierced the evil king with a vajra arrow,  
Vajrapani disguised as a man, We supplicate at your feet, Palkyi Dorje.

You accomplished the realization of the nonduality of prana and mind, Self-  
liberating all dharmas of samsara and nirvana in mahamudra; Never passing  
from there, Truku Repa,  
We supplicate you, great lord of siddhas.

You pleased the supreme guru and obtained the profound instructions; Practicing  
them correctly, appearance dawned as dharmakaya; You realized mind as  
unborn dharmakaya



ལྷོ་བོ་ལྷོ་གཞུང་།

We supplicate at your feet, Lhopa Gomchung.

The prince, born from the family of Nyö,  
Perfected the great mind power of completely knowing the sutras and tantras,  
Exalted on the crest of the ocean of siddhas and pandits.

We supplicate you, Thingma Sanggye Trak.

Heart son of Lodrö Rinchen, mahasiddha of the Practice Lineage, Greatly  
empowered with the realization of true meaning, Completely attaining the  
dharmakaya kingdom of nonmeditation, We supplicate at your feet, Künga  
Gyaltsen.

You planted the victory banner of practice in the place of Tserlung.  
Mahakala has shown you his pleasing face again and again.  
Supreme commander of the ocean of ability and power, We supplicate at your  
feet, Künga Sangpo.

Outwardly, completely caring for the practice of a shravaka, Inwardly, mind  
steeped with the two bodhichittas,  
Secretly, binding all dharmas of samsara and nirvana in the avadhuti, We  
supplicate at your feet, Künga (Öser.

Seeing clearly all the vast knowable dharmas of the universe, Holding still the  
essence of prana, nadi, and bindu, Great chief of the siddhas of  
Chakrasamvara and others, We supplicate at your feet, Künga Namgyal.

Exalted amid the ocean of the Practice Lineage, Perfect in learning,  
contemplation, and meditation, you attained their essence And  
accomplished the siddhi of *samyagjnana*.

We supplicate at your feet, Tenpa Namgyal.

All the rivers of the four oral lineages  
Are gathered in your mind's ocean—you ripen disciples And have reached the  
highest mark of the paths and stages.

We supplicate you, Tendzin Chökyi Gyatso.

Wealthy in the treasure of the ocean of the hearing lineage, Raising the jewel

victory banner of the two siddhis, The friend who leads worthy ones on the good path of the four kayas, We supplicate you, Jampal Chökyi Gyatso.

Supreme among the million holders of the Karma Kagyü doctrine, Fully manifesting the mark of the path that achieves the profound secret, Completely holding the powerful force of buddha activity, which benefits others, We supplicate at your feet, Gyurme Tenphel.

You who became the heart son of Karmapa,  
With the eye that sees the ultimate teaching just as it is, Lord of dharma, you spread the hearing lineage, which ripens and frees.  
We supplicate at your feet, Tenpa Rabgye.

Only heart son of the Jamyang guru,  
Resplendent leader of siddhas and pandits,  
Holding the life-force of the Karma Kagyü doctrine,  
We supplicate at your feet, Chökyi Nyinche.

Lord of yogins—Künga Lekpa and so on—  
In the play of the million siddhas and pandits of the old and new schools, You possess the mind that recalls previous existences.  
We supplicate you, all-pervading lord, the glorious guru.

Prince, great moon of compassion,  
You spread the power of the enlightened family,  
Showing the great yana, the good path of the Victorious One.  
We supplicate you, Karma Thrinle Künkhyap.

Likewise, to the assembly of root and lineage gurus, We respectfully prostrate, make offerings, confess evil deeds and degrading actions; Rejoicing in virtue, we request you to turn the wheel of dharma; We request you to remain, not passing into nirvana, and we dedicate the accumulation of virtue.

May the multitude of beings stretching to the limits of the sky, Purify obscurations, perfect the accumulations, and attain the state of the four kayas.

From today onward, until I and others attain the essence of enlightenment, May the glorious guru accept us and never be separated from us.

*At the request of Karma (Ösal Lhüntrup, who holds the treasure of the three disciplines, I, Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö, wrote this so that the blessings of the guru may seep into your heart. SARVADA MANGALAM<sup>6</sup>*

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## ONE

### *The Practicing Lineage*

THE SUBJECT OF THIS BOOK is the Trungpa lineage, or the line of the Trungpas. The author of this book belongs to this lineage. He is one of the Trungpas. In fact, I am the eleventh one of them. We are not talking about the dynasty of a kingdom, and we are not talking about a family history. But we are talking about *how* the lineage situation evolved through the various Trungpas over the ages, up to the present situation.

The first question is, what particular tradition is the line of the Trungpas associated with? To begin with, Buddhism, of course, and then the Buddhist tradition in Tibet. What kind of Buddhist discipline is associated with the Trungpa lineage? And what particular locality of Tibet is the lineage connected to? We are forced to consider the background story, which is connected with what is known as the teachings of the Practicing Lineage. All of you who are reading this book and studying these teachings are also part of that lineage. At this point, a lot of you have inherited it, a lot of you are just about to inherit it, and a lot of you are just beginning to dip into this particular tradition. That tradition, again, is called the Practicing Lineage.

There are four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism. These are the old, or older, school; the medium, or middle, schools; and the newest one. The old school is known as the Nyingma tradition. It is continuing the tradition of Padmasambhava, the great Buddhist adept, saint, and yogi who formally, officially introduced, or instigated, the teachings of Buddha into Tibet from India. Then there are the medium, or middle, schools, which are two: the Kagyü and the Sakya. They came into the picture much later, presenting further Buddhist teachings from India. Then, the latest one, the newest one, the youngest one of all, is the Geluk tradition.

The Geluk tradition is, we could say, completely and fully a Tibetan product of Buddhism, because it did not have any direct historical relationship to Indian Buddhism. At the time that the Geluk tradition arose, Indian Buddhism was

already far gone and slowly dying out, due to the Muslim invasions of India. Most of the remaining Buddhists in India were persecuted or had gone underground. A lot of the Buddhist monasteries were attacked by the Muslims, because the Muslim troops thought that people wearing uniforms must be soldiers. So monks were killed, and monasteries were completely destroyed.

The Islamic tradition, particularly, doesn't believe in making idols out of any deities. They believe that any images representing the truth shouldn't be anthropomorphic. Consequently, the Muslims destroyed many Buddhist statues, wiping out evidence of Buddhist culture as much as they could. Still to this day, from excavations taking place in India, we are finding Buddhist temples, stupas, and images that have received a token Muslim seal on them: either the statue is without a nose, or without ears or fingers, as a mark of disapproval of the deification of anthropomorphic images.<sup>7</sup>

To get back to the main subject, the Practicing Lineage is one of the middle schools, the Kagyü, which came after the old, or ancient, schools. The Kagyü lineage developed through various Tibetan masters—scholars who visited India and received teachings there and then returned to establish their particular situation in Tibet. Namely, there was the famous translator-saint Marpa, who visited India three times and brought the teachings he received there to Tibet. His disciple Milarepa was the greatest yogic poet of Tibet, or shall we say, singer-poet. We could call him the first Tibetan blues singer. And then there was his disciple Gampopa, and then Gampopa's descendants established the lineage of the Karmapas. At this point, the lineage of the Kagyü, the Practicing Lineage, consists of something like forty-five generations—up to the time of the Eleventh Trungpa, whoever he might be!

The meaning and significance of the Practicing Lineage is important for you to understand before we can consider the rest of the story, so to speak. *Practicing Lineage* is a term that was developed by Milarepa. Previously, the tradition was known as the “lineage of the sacred word,” which is actually a phrase that we are using again these days. In the Kagyü tradition, *ka* means “Logos,” “sacred word,” “command,” “truth,” and *gyü* means “thread” or “continuity”—which is close to the idea of lineage. In Milarepa's time, the Kagyü tradition became known as *drubgyü*: *drub* means “practice,” and *gyü* means “lineage” or “line.” The Practicing Lineage places a lot of importance on the necessity to practice, to sit or meditate. Without practicing, without understanding the meaning of practice, no *real* communication or development

takes place in your understanding of Buddhism, or the buddhadharma.

In the Practicing Lineage, it is equally important to have a great deal of devotion to your teacher, who actually embodies the symbolism or the concept of practice. The guru himself or herself has already achieved a high degree of enlightenment through practice. Moreover, the guru is the only person who can actually push you and who can be a heavy-handed friend, who can actually make you sit a lot and go beyond your slothfulness and laziness. If you want to boycott anything, only the guru can push you and make you sit a lot, practice a lot.

Theoretically, a cosmic guru could send you blessings and encouragements through your psychic antenna, and he might tell you all kinds of stories and send you all kinds of messages. Such things are regarded as very fishy according to the Practicing Lineage. We can always reinterpret such messages according to our own desires. To begin with, our own interpretations, received through our antennae, are not so substantial. But on top of that, we can actually reinterpret things according to our liking.

So it is necessary that the guru be an earthly person, born and raised on this planet earth, to begin with. You need someone who regards himself or herself as a human being, who would like to share the love and hate, sweet and sour, and hot and cold of this particular world. It must be someone who can speak to you on a person-to-person basis, who acts as a mirror reflection, in some sense, and also provides real, genuine communication, independent of politicking or overindulgence in either charitable kindness or obsession with masochistic trips. The guru-student relationship must be free from all those things. It requires someone who is somewhat sensible, reasonable, but at the same time unyielding. Traditionally, this is a wise person, somebody who can't be persuaded to buy your side, or your trip. It must be somebody who can actually be clear about the whole thing, somebody who buys your story with a pinch of salt, but at the same time is kind and friendly—to a certain extent. Such a person is the teacher, who then teaches you to practice a lot, to sit and meditate a lot.

The basic teachings of Buddha are about understanding what we are, who we are, why we are. When we begin to realize what we are, who we are, why we are, then we begin to realize what we are *not*, who we are *not*, why we are *not*. We begin to realize that we don't have basic, substantial, solid, fundamental ground that we can exert anymore. We begin to realize that our ideas of security and our concept of freedom have been purely phantom experiences.

We would like to use spiritual discipline and traditional wisdom to fit into our

own particular pigeonholes, our own desires. We usually want to glorify ourselves by collecting stories and wisdom from every worthy person. We would like to meet lots of people who are seemingly worthy people according to our own judgment, and we constantly collect all of those stories and reedit them according to what we want. When we begin to do that, we develop our own version of freedom, which is, “I would like to become a greater version of myself, spiritually uplifted, and so forth. I might even have a special place in social situations, be known as an important wise person, so that people will come to me and consult me.” We have those kinds of desires. We are not really interested in developing spiritually; we are more interested in evolving politically in the name of spirituality. Such a situation is known as spiritual materialism. I actually wrote a book about it, called *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. The Practicing Lineage teaches us that we have to get rid of those ego-centered conceptualized notions of the grandiosity of our own development. If we are truly involved with spirituality, we are willing to let go of trying to witness our own enlightenment, the celebration of our enlightenment. One can’t watch one’s own burial, in other words. We have to learn to be willing to die, to subside. This particular “me” that wanted to attain enlightenment has to go away. When that happens, then you actually attain enlightenment.

In order to shed the ego, in order to understand the principle of egolessness, we have to practice a lot, sit a lot. We have to *experience* a lot. We might have some intellectual, analytical understanding, but even that understanding has to be based on an intuitive experience of the practice situation. Without that, we can’t develop at all. We are simply creating and expanding further schemes related to our own grand plans for a spiritual ego trip, spiritual materialism, and so forth.

Everyone in the lineage of the practicing tradition has been extremely sarcastic and critical of the current scenes taking place around them. They were extremely critical of the subtle corruption taking place in the name of the dharma. We could say that the Practicing Lineage is the guardian of the buddhadharma, not only in Tibet alone but in the rest of the world. Someone should at least have a critical view of how things should happen, how things shouldn’t happen. That particular sharp vision, traditionally known as prajna vision, is very important. And that is a very lively situation, a living situation, which still is up-to-date. In fact, that is why we are here.

The Practicing Lineage is the most pure and is unhampered by any kind of spiritual materialism. Instead of just viewing this lineage from a purely historical point of view, we should realize that this experience of lineage can take place in

ourselves.

How we have come to be, how we have come to practice—our particular basic, general background—is that we would like to become richer and more conscious people, highly evolved people. That is why we are interested in spiritual practice. That is our “trip,” and those trips are known as real trips.<sup>8</sup> Those trips are questionable, and such trips require a very heavy critical dosage of the Practicing Lineage message so that we can be woken up from our naiveté, our confused attitude about spirituality, and our attempts to pollute the spiritual world of the current century.<sup>9</sup>

*Student:* Is the desire to be more aware always problematic?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It seems that way. That very word *desire* makes the whole thing questionable. However, there is a difference between desiring to be more aware and being willing to be more aware. If you’re just willing, it’s very straightforward. But if you *desire* to be, and you are *trying* to be, and you’re trying to reach some degree of reference point, that seems to be problematic.

*S:* Have you ever experienced a desire to spread Buddhism in the West, or is it just a willingness?

*CTR:* Both.

*S:* I’m curious to know what happens next when you experience the desire?

*CTR:* Well, if you are at the point of being willing to spread Buddhism and having your desire be for Buddhism, I don’t see any particular problems. When you get into Buddhism completely, you have the capability of spreading the teachings. I wouldn’t exactly equate that with the desire such as Hitler or Mussolini had. It seems to be a slightly different kettle of fish. Spreading the dharma is such a big undertaking that you can’t make it your show, your private project. You can’t have a large-scale personal desire anymore. You are basically intimidated [by how huge the project is]. You could try to use guns and bullets, as a Hitler or a Mussolini might do, but that is quite contradictory in spreading Buddhism. You also can’t use too many pamphlets, and you can’t spread the dharma in the style of Billy Graham, either. Spreading the dharma is not a situation of emotionally invoking the teachings. Buddhism is very dull. You have to be willing to come across all kinds of obstacles. If you are willing to take such chances, quite possibly you’re willing to be fearless at the same time. At the point where you’ve reached the level of fearlessness, your desire has somewhat subsided.



*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Somebody else? Resident poet? [*Laughter.*]

*Allen Ginsberg:* Does meditation tend naturally to cut through ambition?

*CTR:* I think so, unless you are in some kind of an endurance contest. That happens in some American Zen traditions. But I think fundamentally it should and could and would.

*Student:* Is there any way that a person can hope to share something he's found that he thinks is of value, with his friends or his family, without getting manipulative and into a power thing?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Absolutely. This is what the essence of compassion is, you know: to copy how you relate with your child. I think the question is how much you want to be the head of the family or the ringleader of your friends. You know, if that ambition is not there, but you have a genuine willingness to share, that is precisely the concept of sangha, in traditional terms. You are willing to be friends with everybody, but at the same time you are not particularly taking credit. You don't make people depend on you. Everybody can stand on his or her own feet. The idea of helping is to make others independent of you. You help them to become more independent rather than making them addicted to you. Those are the two kinds of help. As long as that understanding is clear, there's no problem. The whole thing is delightful.

*Student:* Rinpoche, as one's practice deepens, one becomes more and more aware of spiritual materialism, to the point that one experiences it so much that one reaches a state of complete nausea. How can this be used as an inspiration to go on?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think we have to go slightly further and then stop there. You see what I mean?

*S:* You mean by welcoming the feeling? By acknowledging it?

*CTR:* Not necessarily. But you're still willing to face further icebergs.

*S:* Further what?

*CTR:* Icebergs. Then the whole thing is terrific. [*Laughter.*]

*S:* Is that a promise?

*CTR:* If you like. Great icebergs. [*Laughter.*] It's a very cold promise.

*Student:* I've heard you talk several times about the guru being a mirror to the students. I'd like you to say something more about that.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, I think I've said enough. Maybe if I say too much, the guru ceases to be a mirror. He becomes a tape recorder.

S: Gotcha.

*Student:* One thing I was wondering about was political ambition in the name of spirituality and how that connects with some kind of political scene. This would also dampen one's naive notions about spirituality.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think people would like to build themselves up into important people who can manipulate others, starting with their friends and finally including the rest of the world. Whenever the ego orientation is to make the whole thing grand, that is related with a power trip, shall we say, which becomes political.

S: I see a lot of people personally getting carried away with some small sense of power that they may have in a spiritual community. Sometimes I wonder what the balancing factor is. Who keeps on top of them?

*CTR:* Well, I don't think the whole thing works that way, particularly. It doesn't have to be that somebody keeps on top of them or that the whole situation is purely a computerized system of levels of bureaucracy. We could say that the whole situation is based on natural evolution, in some sense.

Sometimes a person would like to exert his or her power in practicing spirituality in order to develop further grandiosity, glorifying his or her own existence. That is quite transparent, which is to say that in this situation people are not actually in keeping with the lineage heritage. They would like to step out of it and create their own little satellite, which is known as an unguided missile.

However, we can't lay a trip on a head cook who has to lay a trip on the rest of the cooks in a kitchen. We can't lay a trip on the head garbageman who is laying trips on the rest of the garbage crew, or the head builder who is laying trips on the rest of the builders. Those are not particularly regarded as spiritual trips. They are necessary trips, in order to make things happen. There has to be a central headquarters of information that is redistributed or passed on to others. And since your question was by innuendo, my answer could also be by innuendo. [*Laughter.*]

I would like to encourage everyone to sit and practice meditation. If you don't do that, you are creating further pollution and further problems. If you haven't

practiced meditation before, you might experience some difficulties, both physical problems and problems with boredom. Such things are purely petty problems. If you are willing to go ahead and practice, you can do it. I would very highly encourage you to take part in the sitting practice of meditation. In that way, you create further purity in your life situation, rather than further pollution.

## TWO

### *Kagyü Lineage / Mishap Lineage*

WE COULD GO FURTHER in understanding the meaning of the contemplative tradition and why the tradition that I come from, the Practicing Lineage or the Kagyü lineage, exists. It is not just an accident or a matter of chance. Rather, the whole thing is somewhat planned or programmed, to the extent that there is an intelligent awareness or a vision at work as to how a practitioner's lineage can exist and continue.

As far as that vision is concerned, lineage is a prolonged sense of commitment to humanity and to working with the neurosis of humanity. The Practicing Lineage is not based on practitioners locking themselves up in their meditation cells so that they become social nuisances. But practitioners in our lineage work with their commitment to their teacher and with surrendering, openness, and devotion altogether, which is their commitment to the rest of the world: all sentient beings.

Usually, when we practice some kind of discipline and we begin to teach that discipline to others, we tend to present a great number of personal qualifications and credentials, hoping that they will carry us a long way. After that, we just say what we have to say, which is quite short and maybe presented with the pretense of some kind of wit, which is based on not having enough confidence in oneself. So the whole thing short-circuits. That is the usual style of presentation for somebody without any background or lineage. Traditionally that has been a problem. But in this case, borrowing the name of the lineage is not so important in order to reach people. It is not so much proving one's credentials or using them as one's own decorations. Rather, the point is to tell people that their lineage had good forefathers and that there is a good background, a good lineage, *behind* them. So it is a trustworthy situation.

Similarly, the Kagyü tradition has developed more pride in an individual's practice and less quotation from the lineage as a reference point. People relate with practice much more closely, but not in the Ram Dass fashion, which is a

mutual confession:<sup>10</sup> “I’m fucked up, you’re fucked up, so let’s meet together and have a nice time and talk it over.” But in this case, let us meet each other in the spirit of the Practitioner’s Lineage. Let us encourage each other to sit; let us practice together. Let us encourage each other properly, fully, thoroughly, so that we can inspire ourselves in the spirit of awake rather than in the spirit of confusion. When that begins to happen, there is lots of room to expand.

Traditionally, it is said that Kagyüpas and goats like to preside over rocky mountains, and Gelukpas and horses like to roam around in the fields. That is an interesting saying. The reason the Kagyüpas would like to preside over rocky mountains is partially that we are mountain freaks, traditionally and geographically, and partially we would like to approach things from the hardcore practitioner’s angle—in a very personal style.

You might ask, “If your particular tradition is so interested in locking yourselves up in caves and practicing by yourselves, how is it possible to expand your administration? How can administration and expansiveness take place all together?” That is a very interesting point, which you should understand. It’s a very important point here. Although the Kagyüpas like to live in the rocks in the mountains, they don’t particularly make a nest in the mountains, the rocks, and the caves. They conquer the mountains and the rocks. They don’t regard their caves as hippie pads or as apartments where they can indulge themselves. You have no idea what goes on in the rest of the apartment building, but you have a nice little cave on the fifth or sixth floor. In this case, it is conquering the whole mountain.

Likewise, the Kagyüpas are known for conquering foreign territory. The rings of Kagyüpa expansion took place not only within the heart of Tibet alone, but the Kagyüpas also liked to live in the territories. The Kagyüpas established rings of expansion into Bhutan, Sikkim—which is on the border of Tibet—and India. They also expanded into the Xinjiang Province of China, into Mongolia, and all the rest of the countries bordering Tibet. The Kagyüpas are not afraid of the cliffs or sheer drops of cultural misunderstanding that exist. If you jump from one culture to another, you may find that the next culture does not have any connections with you. You find that jumping into another country is like jumping off another cliff. But the Kagyüpas never feared that. And likewise we are here now in America. We are not afraid of foreign space. Foreign space is domestic space at the same time.

The expansion of the Practicing Lineage is interesting. It sheds light on

Buddhism altogether, in some sense. The southern tradition of Buddhism had reservations about conquering the mountains. So the hinayana tradition went to the south, into Southeast Asia.<sup>11</sup> The vajrayana tradition went to northern India, crossing the barbarian lands. The Indians used to call Tibet the “monkey land” or the “vampire land,” “the land of red-faced people who eat raw meat and drink raw milk,” which was regarded by the Indians as a terrible thing to do. From their point of view, to have never known vegetables is absolutely terrible.

The Kagyü tradition also developed a sense of fearlessness. We often find that relating with our own bodies and minds is a foreign situation as well. We are confronted with foreign territories constantly, again and again, all the time. We are always faced with the unknown. Our death, our birth, our parents, our emotionality—everything is always a foreign country. And *that* mountain, *that* foreign territory is also conquered in the Kagyü tradition, as much as the physical geographical territory beyond Tibet has been conquered.

You might say this is such Kagyü chauvinism. I think that is true. But behind such chauvinism, there is an immense sense of devotion. With that hardcore conquering of the mountains and conquering foreign territory, at the same time there is also an immense sense of softness, surrendering, and sentimentality. The Kagyü tradition is based on sentimentality—of a higher level, of course. [*Laughter.*] It is not so much the sentimentality of dreaming about one’s mother’s chicken soup when you’re hungry or thinking about a well-made kreplach or Christmas pudding, for that matter.

An interesting thing develops by being emotional and hardcore at the same time. We don’t usually connect those things together. We don’t usually smoke menthol cigarettes and Marlboros at once. [*Laughter.*] But they could be blended together. That is what the Kagyü tradition is actually doing. The hardcore of relating with the foreignness of foreignness of foreignness exists all the time in our life. You pay your landlord the rent, and you think that at least you can relax for a month. Suddenly, the landlord knocks on your door and says, “I want to kick you out because you did such and such a thing. Leave. Otherwise, I’m going to call the police.” Or you think that your love affair is going well. Suddenly, something comes up. Your lover has apparently not spoken out enough, and suddenly the pimple begins to burst. A big explosion takes place.

All kinds of things like that take place in our life. We think we have settled or solved our most outrageous or outstanding problem. Whew. We try to relax. Then something else comes up and scares us. We might think that we know New

York City completely, inside out—which street not to go on, which areas to avoid. But we get mugged on Fifth Avenue or in the United Nations building. That is always possible. Such things happen to us all the time. So we find that we can't actually relax to the extent we thought, and we can't be caught up in our situation completely or up in arms all the time, either. There's room for romanticism, and as well there's room for working with foreign territory all the time.

The Kagyü tradition begins to teach us that. We experience, simultaneously, both situations together at once. *One* situation is *both* situations. Both situations mean both romanticism and the threat from foreign territory. In romantic situations usually you're settling down, helping yourself to something, lying back and enjoying the pleasure. That's romanticism. And foreign territory means being up in arms, watchful.

The Trungpas had the same experience as the pioneering Kagyüpas. In some sense, it was on a much lesser scale than Milarepa, Marpa, and Naropa, but the Trungpas had a similar kind of experience constantly taking place. One of the Kagyü mystics once said, "Being in the Kagyü tradition, the Kagyü lineage, is like inheriting constant mishaps." Constant mishaps. That's true. If you are actually in contact with reality, and particularly if you are in control of reality, then you are in contact with completely constant mishaps. Because you are in contact and in control, therefore the mishaps begin to come to you rather than you bumping into them. They begin to come to you constantly. These little things are taking place all the time. Fantastic. Delightful. And it is that which makes everything very cheerful.

Take the story of Milarepa. He was told by Marpa that he could leave his guru and go back to his home. He had finally been accepted by Marpa, who had made him his chief disciple and an important person, the only son of the lineage. Milarepa was completely fine, feeling extremely good. Then he went back to his family home, and everything was ruined, completely destroyed. That kind of mishap is always apropos of the Practicing Lineage, once you begin to have any association with the lineage. Milarepa found his house ruined, his mother enskeletoned inside. Nobody had even conducted a funeral service for her. His father was long dead, and his aunt and uncle and everybody were up in arms, and there were no friends—none at all. It was like returning to a completely haunted house, like the haunted house in Disneyland. Everything is seemingly shrieking and haunting. Of course, for Milarepa this was not regarded as a ride, like in Disneyland. In Milarepa's case it was real.

One shrieking situation after another shrieking situation, one haunted situation after another haunted situation, takes place because you are on top of situations. We would like to come face-to-face with a ghost. We hear stories about ghosts, and we would like to find out whether ghosts actually exist or not. If you are in a playful mood, ghosts don't appear, because they are not interested in haunting you at that point. Ghosts are only interested in haunting you when you are in a transitional period or else when you are on top of the situation. On the other hand, we are not talking about the reality of ghosts here. We don't want to get back into that psychic phenomenal world. That's another waste of time, of course. But ghosts will come to us. They come to you. [*Laughter.*]

The Practicing Lineage is very much in contact with what's going on, virtually what is going on, actually what is going on, on the spot, on the dot, constantly. Interestingly, students in the Kagyü tradition have had less guidance from substantial phenomena, or the realistic world. In other words, they had less tutorship from people telling them how to do things or how not to do them. They had to take chances all the time, constantly. But they have more commitment to their guru, their teacher. So they have more devotion at the same time, which is an interesting point. When you have completely signed on with a church or an existing club, the company pays for the damage. Or else you are completely abandoned. Between those situations, there is some sense of actual reality taking place. How much you are connected with reality somewhat depends on your degree of sanity. At the same time, your disconnection with reality also comes through—a message will come through very clearly, strongly, properly.

Before we get into too many details about the line of the Trungpas, I would like to lay the ground for you so that you understand the difference between the Practicing Lineage and other lineages. So I will be interested in further feedback, such as your nightmares, your dreams, your thoughts about the whole thing.

*Allen Ginsberg:* Coming to you interested in Buddhism, what we wind up with is *you*, in a sense, or with your particular specialty, rather than some larger, maybe more vague Buddhism. But really, then, it comes right down to yourself and your lineage—which is often a kind of nightmare. [*Laughter.*] Is that the way it's supposed to be?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's good. That's great. I'm sure that if you exchanged notes with Milarepa, he would say the same thing about his father, too. Maybe much more so.



AG: If this is the Practicing Lineage, do other lineages not practice as much?

CTR: Well, they do practice.

AG: What is the custom in the other lineages?

CTR: They do practice, but in many cases they don't *actually* practice. Very few people lock themselves in a cave. Nobody actually faces reality that far. Therefore, this tradition is sometimes looked upon by other people as an evangelical tradition. The evangelical traditions of Christianity are slightly different, by the way. But getting off on the mountains, rocks, and caves and locking yourself back in a cave and sitting a lot and devotioning a lot are regarded by some Buddhist lineages as an evangelical trip. We are definitely regarded as very eccentric. [*Laughter*]

*Student*: You talked about conquering the mountain and expanding. Aggression normally goes into conquering, expanding. Would you comment on that?

CTR: It's not so much aggression; it's more a sense of inspiration. If you are really hungry, you have a fantastic relationship with food. Let's say it's a hot dog. For many days, you want to have a hot dog. And finally you have a hot dog. You can actually have it on your paper dish, or whatever dish you have. You have a fantastic relationship with the hot dog. You eat it with complete delight and complete communication. That could be said to be a very aggressive trip. But I don't think that's true, actually, because you have open-mindedness toward that particular hot dog. You have designed visualizations and devotions [*laughter*] and you have a sense of longing, and everything's completely softened. You become softened, a soft person and a reasonable person. You have a hot dog, and you can eat that hot dog very beautifully, you know. You hold it in your hand, and you feel it. You take a bite, and you chew it and feel the goodness of it at the same time. So it's a very real experience. That seems to be the difference between conquering, or expanding, and aggression, which is, you know, just completely off-the-wall. [*Prolonged laughter.*]

*Student*: In the same context, yesterday you referred to the distinction between desire and just making yourself available. When you're filled with neurotic desire to eat the hot dog, what do you do with that desire while you're waiting for the enlightened inspiration to be available?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: That's a very difficult one, actually. Sometimes the desire can only be transmuted once you have what you desire. You can't

have completely pure intention at the beginning. Your desire to have a hot dog in a neurotic fashion probably could wear off. When you begin to see that the actual hot dog is available, it begins to go beyond the realm of your imagination. There's actually a hot dog stand, and you can eat the hot dog, and your imagination doesn't have any role to play anymore. You're actually relating with an earthy situation. You see, we can't start perfectly, but once we begin to have any physical contact with a situation of that nature, then it can be worked out. So I wouldn't try to start with a transcendental hot dog. That would be deadly. Then you don't actually eat the hot dog at all. You think you are chewing some cosmic energy, swallowing the cosmic energy of the hot dog. You get entirely different results. You get high on eating the hot dog, and after that you begin to compose paeans and songs, and you try to dance in celebration of the divineness of the hot dog—which is not necessary. Hot dog is hot dog. [*Laughter.*] You could flush it down the toilet.

*Student:* I'm not sure that I understood what you meant by inheriting constant mishaps or that if you're on top of situations, the mishaps automatically come to you, if you know what's going on. Is that because what is always going on is actually a mishap?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* If you know what's going on, that is a mishap? Did you say that? *No.* Something unexpected happens to you. When you find yourself being too naive, something else happens. In dictionary language, that's definitely a mishap. A mishap is a surprise. While trying to polish the table, you get a splinter in your finger. Something like that. A mishap is very, very understandable. It happens unexpectedly. That's why it's called "mishap," because it happens unexpectedly. You have been too naive, thinking that the smoothness of things will go on and everything's going to be okay. Suddenly something comes up—which is a mishap.

Let me tell you a little story. This happened recently. In the Buddhist community in Boulder, a couple decided to get married. His mother-in-law was terrified of driving on mountain roads. On the way to the wedding ceremony, the couple and the in-laws drove down from the mountains in two cars. Halfway down, the first car went off the mountain road and rolled over. Everything was okay. Nothing was broken. The people in the car crawled out of the windows, and they got in the other car and finished driving down, and everything was okay. They had the wedding ceremony. After the ceremony, they went back to the car to go to the reception, and they had two punctured tires. But everything

went okay. That's the kind of mishap we're talking about, on a very small scale.

When you think that everything's going to be okay and everything's going to be fine, there are always reminders taking place. A larger degree would be Milarepa's mishap. Finally he was accepted by Marpa, who made him his chief disciple and an important person, the only son of the lineage. Milarepa felt extremely good. He went back home and everything was ruined. The whole place was completely destroyed. That kind of mishap is always apropos of our particular practicing lineage, once you begin to have any association with this kind of thing.

Do you have more to say?

*Student:* Was it Milarepa's fault that he found his home ruined and all of that?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, it's part of his creation. I wouldn't say it was his fault.

*S:* Was it a result of his lack of mindfulness or clumsiness? I have the impression that the reason the mishap is unexpected is because of some gap in a person's awareness.

*CTR:* What usually happens is that when you begin to relax in the teachings, but you are not quite adult enough, you're not grown-up enough, at that point you're still thinking that everything is going to be okay. At that level, when the relaxation and the tension both begin to take place together, you get a mishap. Otherwise, how can you have the accident? An accident happens when tension and relaxation are put together.

*S:* So it's not anything as simple as lack of mindfulness.

*CTR:* That seems to be a layman's joke, you know, that you are not aware of yourself so that is why something happened: "Look what you've done." It's like dealing with the kids, something like that. But in this case, it's actually much more sophisticated.

*S:* What is the element of tension?

*CTR:* Well, it's beyond nervousness. Rather than getting off, it's getting beyond. Having achieved something to get beyond the nervousness, there is an element of tension at the same time. It's like hot and cold air together creating explosions.

*S:* It seems as though you are saying that it's kind of a product of extra confidence, or something like that.

*CTR:* Well, at an introverted level it's a product of extra confidence. At the same time it's the product of extraordinary...distrustfulness, put together.

*S:* Where does the distrustfulness come in?

*CTR:* It comes from the fickleness of your uncertainty.

*Student:* When you speak of being on top of the situation, that sounds like something positive. Yet you don't really mean being in contact with the situation.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* When you are more in contact with a situation, you begin to get hit with both sides of the fever, so to speak. So you're more vulnerable.

*S:* Could there be a situation where nothing unexpected could happen to a person? Where mishaps couldn't occur because the person was so enlightened?

*CTR:* Sure, absolutely, there's the possibility of that. Let's not talk about that too much. That creates a further accident, if you talk too much about that.  
[*Laughter.*]

## THREE

### *Trung Mase and the Three Idiots*

CONTINUING THE DISCUSSION of the Mishap Lineage, I would like to discuss further how practitioners develop as the product of such a tradition and discipline. Students become very realistic, earthbound, and ordinary, and at the same time highly awake, because no preconception exists within them. Their minds are completely set or attuned to the practice; therefore, their understanding of the teachings becomes much clearer and more realistic.

Sometimes you interrupt your state of mind. You are continually concerned about the state of your sanity and concerned about how many preconceptions you are laying on your world or yourself. You question whether your ideas are too heavy or too light. Throughout that questioning process, even though the motivation and the situation may be right for practice and even though your understanding may be correct, at the same time those preconceptions begin to drive you into complete madness. You want to split hairs. You want to question the question of the question of the question, constantly, again and again *and* again. In that case, you don't find any room to actually allow yourself to practice and sit and develop discipline at all.

In that situation, it is necessary to cultivate the students' simplemindedness. In some sense, we could say uneducatedness, not having too much of a sophisticated vocabulary, might be necessary in that situation. At the same time, the earthbound quality provides a lot of room or space to understand the teachings to the fullest, very precisely, very directly, on a real, direct, and straightforward level.

In the Practicing Lineage, when devotion is emphasized, it becomes natural devotion, direct devotion, earthbound devotion, as opposed to being equated with the father principle, mother principle, husband principle, or wife principle. Devotion is based on one's loneliness and one's claustrophobia. In that way, devotion becomes strict and direct at the same time. Whatever situations occur within the learning process, they become straightforward, rather than being

looked at from too many angles with too much analytical process. Things are approached from a realistic level rather than just from the level of preconceptions. That provides the general atmosphere and the general approach to working with situations or the teachings, which is very up-to-date and applicable to the present, as much as it happened and was up-to-date in the past.

The Surmang lineage, which is the lineage of the Trungpas, began around the fifteenth century in Tibet. A child, Trung Mase, was born in the far east of Tibet in the principality of Minyak, a province that is now part of Szechuan. He was the son of a local lord from a family named Mase. This child happened to be illegitimate, and he was the youngest child in the family. There was some resentment of him because he was illegitimate, but still the family paid him a certain amount of respect, honoring him simply because he was born into this particular family. That particular area of Tibet was predominantly Nyingma, which as we discussed is the earliest school of Tibetan Buddhism. In school, students were taught the culture and the meditative traditions of the Nyingma school. When this child grew to be about fifteen, he became a very learned and powerful person of this particular principality.

His full name was Trung Mase. *Trung* is a classical term in Tibetan for an attendant to the guru. *Trung* means “closest to the teacher.” So Mase was the family name and Trung referred to somebody who was the closest to his guru, who in Trung Mase’s case was the Fifth Karmapa, Teshin Shekpa.

The birthplace of Trung Mase was in what would become the province of Surmang, which is where the Trungpa lineage was established a little later. The king of Minyak was making a pilgrimage to Lhasa, and Trung Mase’s mother was part of the traveling party. This illegitimate child was born in the same area where the Surmang monasteries would be established in the future. When I was at Surmang, there was a particular place, a certain field, which we referred to as the place where the king of Minyak had set up his encampment. It was there in that particular place that this child was born. [*Presumably, the king then returned to Minyak, where Trung Mase was raised.—Ed.*]

The child was raised in both the spiritual and the temporal, or secular, disciplines that had evolved at that time. When he was older, he wanted to leave his homeland [Minyak], and he did so with the permission of his parents. He journeyed to Central Tibet. He had already received the teachings of the ati tradition from the Nyingma school as part of his upbringing. In Central Tibet, he visited the Fifth Karmapa, Teshin Shekpa, and received instruction from the

Karmapa. He remained there practicing for something like seven years.

The Karmapa encouraged Trung Mase to return to East Tibet and to establish himself there, in a certain place [that turned out to be close to where he was born]. Following the Karmapa's instructions, Trung Mase went to a geographical location where he established a monastic retreat hut and began to teach a group of students. The province that he went to at that time was controlled by a local lord who was called Adro Shelu-bum. Adro was the family name, and Shelu-bum was the first name. Under his leadership, there were something like nine hundred families in an area comprising perhaps three hundred square miles of property. There was a lot of timberland and also a lot of highlands with a great pasture area and a salt lake. This is where Mase established his hermitage.<sup>12</sup>

His dwelling place was a reed hut. Having practiced and taught there for quite a long time, Trung Mase began to attract many prominent students. Eventually, he was teaching to a public audience of several thousand students. Many hundreds of his devotees, something like 360 of them, were considered close students. Among these, there were eight very close students, who were known as the eight mystics. Then there were the three idiots, who were the closest students of all. The First Trungpa was one of the idiots.

The reason they were known as idiots was because they were so stubborn and so earthy that they did not flinch at anything at all. They simply set their minds to one thing at a time. When the teacher told them to do something, they just did it. They became known as the idiots for their stubbornness. The eight mystics were quite good in their idiotness, but they didn't quite qualify to be known as idiots. They were somewhat good students and nice people.<sup>13</sup>

As Trung Mase's teaching situation became stronger and clearer, his students requested that he give a name to his establishment, saying, "We don't have a name for what we are doing here." Trung Mase suggested that they could name the establishment after his reed hut. It had a lot of corners, because a reed hut needs a lot of support, which is provided by all the corners. Therefore they called the place Surmang. *Sur* means "corner" and *mang* means "many," so *Surmang* means "many cornered." It was quite arbitrary. He wasn't particularly concerned with creating a glorious name.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, we have very little direct information about Trung Mase and his approach to spirituality. Some information can be abstracted from various teaching manuals about other subjects. There are very few stories about how Trung Mase actually conducted himself, but his story begins to come through in

manuscripts and other places where there are stories about the Trungpas and also about the three idiots altogether. Seemingly, Trung Mase was very concerned with trying to blend together the Nyingma tradition and the Kagyü tradition. The Nyingma tradition was his inheritance in terms of his family background, while the Kagyü tradition was his inheritance from the teachings that he had received from the Fifth Karmapa.<sup>15</sup>

Trung Mase was known to be a very powerful person, but he was not a particularly metaphysically outspoken person, to say the least. He was married, and his plan was to continue the Trung family lineage through successive generations of priests. In Tibet in those days it often happened that lineages were continued through the family of the teacher. On the other hand, he also intended to have another lineage, which would be continued by a student carrying on the lineage through instruction to future generations. Somehow, Trung Mase's family lineage didn't continue.<sup>16</sup>

I think that his approach toward discipline was extraordinarily simple and straightforward. He always recommended sitting practice as the most important discipline. In those days, this was known as “devoting yourself to the caves.” He also taught that it was important to have a sense of celebration at the same time. Beginning in those days, that sense of celebration became an important part of the Surmang tradition. People were constantly having feasts, and they received a sense of delight from their teacher and an appreciation for what was happening.

Toward the end of his life, Trung Mase didn't stay in the place where his reed hut was, but he traveled all around the province in a huge caravan, camping in different places. This caravan was known as the “caravan of joyousness.” The villages that had famines and depressions, problems after problems, were waiting for the joyousness camp to arrive and cheer them up so that a further sense of humor could develop. It seems that this concept of an encampment is still continuing in our situation, in some sense. Toward the end of Trung Mase's life, he traveled with the three idiots and the eight mystics and the 360 close disciples altogether—he covered a lot of ground in that part of Tibet. A lot of people in that area began to regard Trung Mase as their teacher.

Trung Mase's approach to working with people was very mechanical in some sense, but on the other hand it was seeing situations clearly as a game, playing with situations. Trung Mase's approach was not so much to have a clear vision to begin with. His approach was first to take advantage of whatever arose in situations, and then clear vision would develop out of that. That seemed to be



how the whole thing worked, and that has been continuously happening, up to this particular age.

*Student:* Rinpoche, what did you mean about working with situations and then clear vision developing, as opposed to having clear vision and then involvement with a situation? I'm not quite sure of the distinction.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* First there has to be a mishap. You remember? Then that *is* the situation. On top of the mishap, there is clear vision. You begin to evolve and involve yourself beyond the mishap, and you begin to expand beyond that particular situation.

Any problems with that? Can you ask me more questions about that?

*S:* Well, we might say that the mishap was caused by not having clear vision to begin with.

*CTR:* Clear vision to begin with doesn't have any ground. It's just clear vision, which purely means concepts and chain reactions of some kind. We could use the establishment of our practice centers in America as an example. Take the example of Karmê Chöling, the first center in America. We had a mishap [that brought me and my students from England to America], which was based on chain reactions, and on that basis Karmê Chöling was founded by a group of people. Everything was operating on mistakes of all kinds. Then we began to use those mistakes as the ground to operate on, and then we began to correct the mistakes and evolve further. It's something like that. I don't have to go into too much detail particularly, testimonial style.

*Student:* You've been talking a lot about the Practicing Lineage in the last few days. Tonight you mentioned the emphasis in the Kagyü tradition on going to caves and that being something unique in the Kagyü tradition as opposed to other sects. We seem to be talking about something that took place six or seven hundred years ago. What is the real difference between the experience of someone like Milarepa or one of Trung Mase's students and our experience?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Not very much. I mean, the only difference is that they heard different noises then. These days we might hear airplanes flying above, and in those days they might hear flies buzzing about. Otherwise, it's pretty much the same. The American approach, in the USA, is thinking that ancient times were more romantic. Antiques are fantastic to Americans because this country is very young and doesn't have a lot of antiques. Americans have nostalgia about Europe or any *old* place where you can get old stuff. The prices

are fantastic. Dealers make money on that. A lot of antiques are shipped to America these days. They send over anything that's old, including a little peg, an old mug, whatever they have.

In actual reality, as far as the living situation is concerned, it's essentially the same then and now. There's nothing very different. In those days caves were routinely used for sitting practice, not for romantic reasons but because in that geographical area, there were lots of caves. You didn't have to spend money to build a cabin; there were holes in the mountains already. You just went and lived there. But nowadays we can't find many holes in the mountains around here. It's simply a question of geography. So we have to build cabins. Then we have to meet with the inspectors about the health code, or whatever. Those are incidental issues. Basically, it's still the same thing. Actually things haven't changed that much.

This is an important point. We might romanticize the "good old days," but if you were there right now, you wouldn't think that these were the "good old days" at all. You would have the same experience then as now, anyway. It's just a gap in time, a time lapse. But it was the same then as what we are doing right now.

*Student:* Rinpoche, how is Trung Mase's technique a blend of the Nyingma tradition and the Kagyü? How is it different than either one separately?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It's not particularly different, but it's very clever, in some sense. The Nyingma tradition was his heritage. He was brought up that way from childhood. He didn't regard the Kagyü tradition as stepping out of his own background into another tradition. Instead, he found that he was able to blend the whole thing together.

In this country, problems may exist. When somebody studies with more than one teacher, even if both teachers are from the same lineage, the student may find it difficult to blend the whole thing together. That is a problem inherited from the Christian tradition, which is to say it's a guilt complex. Trung Mase never heard of Christ. That might sound like a terrible thing to say, very shocking and completely heathen. However, he was a complete human being, if I may say so, a pure human being who could actually relate with reality. The inheritance from his family and the inheritance from his lineage could be brought together without any problems.

S: It was more just his experience of the teachings?

*CTR:* Yes, the sameness of it. The beauty of both could be put together. It is like a jewel mounted in gold. Something like that. Sunshine in the sky. Very simple.

*Student:* Rinpoche, yesterday when you spoke about mishaps, I had the feeling that this was almost like a technique or a tool that the Kagyü used to create a sort of in-between space of transition where things could happen. Today, you are speaking of mishaps as being just a series of circumstances, coincidences, perhaps. Is the mishap both of those things, or is it...?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think I would say both, considering present situations. Both.

*S:* What present situation?

*CTR:* Your guess is as good as mine. *The present situation.* [*Laughter.*]

*Student:* Rinpoche, what kinds of things did Trung Mase do to form a relationship with so many students? How was he able to do that in so short a period of time?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, he was dealing with the three idiots. Remember those? And the eight mystics and the rest of them. He didn't have to particularly relate with every one of those students too much, manually, but he began to develop some kind of sangha-ship. Sangha—do you understand that word?

*S:* No, but I was waiting for you to pause before I asked.

*CTR:* It is group spirit and group sanity, which is transmitted *through*, constantly. Then things don't have to get caught in a bottleneck situation anymore. Group spirit, group sanity: the Kagyü tradition works with that always. And that's what we are doing here, too. Group sanity. Group sanity as opposed to group encounter. [*Laughter.*]

*S:* As opposed to groupie?

*CTR:* Yes. Allen?

*Allen Ginsberg:* What is the Tibetan etymology for *idiots* and *mystics*? Was that a structural tradition that came through the Trungpa line?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, the Tibetan word for idiot is *ja* (Tib. 'ja 'mo).<sup>17</sup> It's a very localized idiom, which literally means "moron." [*Laughter.*]

*AG:* Literally?

*CTR*: Literally, it's the three morons. *Ja* actually means "lower, flat, and very naive-like," like a sitting duck. [*Laughter.*] The word for mystics is *tobden* (Tib. *rtogs ldan*), which means "someone who is realized" or "endowed with realization."

*AG*: Did those categories continue? Were they repeated in the Trungpa line, or was it just that one occasion?

*CTR*: It was just that one occasion. We didn't have any further idiots. [*Laughter.*] I beg your pardon!

*AG*: I was hoping to be an idiot. [*Laughs; laughter.*]

*Student*: The notion of the sitting duck brings up the idea of mishaps, too. I mean, it's just waiting.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: Definitely so.

*Student*: Last night in your description of mishap, you mentioned a number of elements. You described a combination of relaxation and tension. Under tension, you said that one of the elements was distrustfulness. And you said that was fickleness about one's own uncertainty. Could you talk more about this fickleness? I have a feeling for it, but I'm not quite clear just what that is.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: I think that uncertainty comes from jumping back and forth, rather than solid uncertainty taking place. You see what I mean? Uncertainty is never really solid. It's jumping back and forth.

*S*: Between certainty and uncertainty?

*CTR*: Yes.

*S*: Is it conceivable that one could arrive at a state of solid uncertainty? Could you sit down and really think about it for a while?

*CTR*: No, not at all. Then it couldn't be uncertainty.

*S*: It would become...

*CTR*: It would become very certain, very real. Yes or no. [*Grinds his teeth.*] There's no fickleness when you have a [*grinds teeth ferociously; laughter*]...It's all set in the gothic style.

Language is interesting. *Uncertain*: not having certainty. *Uncertain*, meaning not *quite* certain, but still it is certain in some sense. So there's lots of room to move back and forth. It's like the word *unknown*, which doesn't mean *completely* without knowledge. It implies there are possibilities of knowing and

possibilities of not knowing. Therefore, something is “unknown.” It’s just behind the curtain, behind the venetian blind. There could be lots of possibilities of that, at the same time.

S: What are we poor souls, who have a whole bunch of ideas already, to do?

CTR: To begin with, you don’t have souls. [*Laughter.*] And your ideas are not solid ideas, because they are not founded on aggression or dogma. You have open ideas, which we work with all the time, anyway. There is no problem with that. Ideas are not founded on solid ground. They are just...ideas. That’s a very important point, actually. Can you say something more about that?

S: I feel that I have so many ideas about what should happen or what I want to happen or how you should be or how the teachings should be. So I don’t feel open and receptive to what is really happening.

CTR: That seems to be good, actually, utterly good. That particular open-and-closed fickleness tends to bring a lot of understanding. Whereas if you completely buy in, so to speak, then it’s like being caught in the jaws of a crocodile. You have no outside reference point. You are just completely buying in. That seems to be one of the problems with many present spiritual advertisements. It’s like the Divine Light approach: either you are *in it* or you are not in it.<sup>18</sup> Out...in. You can’t actually experience the space between the two. That is a problem, and that seems to be a spiritual materialistic trick to use on people: trying to save them from their problems. I think that approach is based on a hesitation or inability to provide everything legitimately, step-by-step. The leaders of a trip feel somewhat inadequate, so they tell potential students, “Buy it or don’t buy it.” That seems to be too cheap.

S: So is it best to have a questioning attitude?

CTR: Yes, absolutely. Spiritual discipline is not based on becoming somebody else. But you become you—in your enlightened version. That is the whole point.

S: Is this fickleness and uncertainty supposed to characterize vajrayana study too?

CTR: Yep—but on a much more...suicidal level.

S: Is it a suicidal contest with the teacher?

CTR: With yourself. However, that level of understanding and practice is beyond what we’re discussing.

## FOUR

### *Tent Culture*

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS the experience of establishing monasticism, at the beginner's level of starting an administration as well as discussing the continuing potential chain reactions of an organization. As far as Trung Mase was concerned, he was quite nonchalant about the outcome of working with particular students. However, he paid attention to *how* the administration would work and how in the future people would reflect back on the situation and work with the projects he had started.

One concern seemed to be future problems: how the teachings might deteriorate or be diluted or misguided in the future. In order to save us from such problems, how could his particular presentation be made more lively and be more powerfully presented? As far as Trung Mase was concerned, his approach to presenting the dharma was taking care of both situations at once: the present situation and the future. He emphasized that people should respect their personal practice, the sitting practice of meditation, and the training that they were going through. However, he didn't give any particular administrative guidelines or set up anything at all for the future. Everything was purely presented in a homemade fashion, based on human connections alone.

From the establishment of those types of human connections, a lot of students began to erupt into emotionality, complaints, and uncertainties of all kinds. Those things were accepted as part of the journey. The teaching situation was not purely based on political manipulation or on a political visionary level alone. It was very personal. Students got freaked out, students got depressed, and they felt unworthy. Sometimes they felt that they could do better; they felt that they could do something else with their lives, so they would leave and take a trip around the countryside. At the same time, there was the basic genuineness of their individual dedication. In those days, people living in the Surmang area and in the area around Adro Shelu-bum's lands were so fascinated by the teachings—as much as people are fascinated by the teachings today on this continent.

They felt that there was a great deal that they wanted to learn, study, and practice with this particular teacher, Trung Mase. At the same time, the situation was mysterious...much like what is taking place here in this country.

The First Trungpa was Kunga Gyaltzen, which literally means “all joyful victory banner.” He was born and raised as an aristocrat, a prince, in a neighboring principality. Growing up, he was fully educated in reading, writing, and arithmetic. He received a complete basic training, based on what the tradition allowed. Then he went to study with Trung Mase. Having studied with him and become one of the idiots, he returned to his home area, where he practiced in a jungle of neem trees. The twigs and bark from the neem tree are used for brushing your teeth, and the plant has many other medicinal properties. Kunga Gyaltzen sat and practiced in a grove of neem trees for something like ten years. In addition to the sitting practice of meditation, he practiced all kinds of yogic disciplines. After many years, he was urged by his teacher, Trung Mase, to take a trip around the neighborhood.<sup>19</sup>

Kunga Gyaltzen had a dream that told him that in order to establish the ground for his future monastery he should acknowledge himself as an incarnation of the Indian saint Dombipa. He should throw a cup of *chang* in the air, which is a Tibetan beer made out of barley. The cup would fly through the air, and wherever it landed, that particular spot would be the future location of his monastery, his establishment.

When he woke up from this dream, the First Trungpa was somewhat concerned as to whether this dream was purely of his own making or if something more was taking place. Making predictions from dreams, or dream yoga, was regarded with suspicion in those days, which is always true in the Buddhist tradition. Dream practice or dream predictions are regarded as phantoms. Sometimes they somehow make sense, particularly if your state of mind is in the right frame of reference. Then dreams are regarded as a worthwhile thing to relate with. But otherwise, dreams are regarded as purely neurotic garbage.

In this case, Kunga Gyaltzen, the First Trungpa, decided to follow the inspiration that came out of his dream. He had a cup full of beer, and he decided to throw it up in the air.<sup>20</sup> It flew beyond his visual perception. Supposedly there was a big explosion of some kind, a big bang, when the cup landed. It actually landed on the rooftop of Adro Shelu-bum’s second palace, which is now called Dütsi Tel, which means “Hill of Amrita” (*amrita* means “blessed liquor”). News

went all over the country that due to some miraculous power, an object had landed on the flat rooftop of Adro Shelu-bum's abode. Adro Shelu-bum and his court and his subjects were all concerned as to whether this was a bad omen or a good omen.

This gossip got back to the First Trungpa, so he decided to walk over to Adro Shelu-bum's palace and find out what happened. While he was walking there, Künga Gyaltsen was reciting a text of Manjushri. When he reached the doorstep of the palace, he came to a particular line in the sutra, which says, "Firmly plant the victorious banner of dharma."<sup>21</sup> He repeated that line three times. At our monastery, Surmang Dütsi Tel, we repeat that particular line twice when we chant the sutra. Currently, that line has been made into one of the main phrases, or slogans, of Naropa University.<sup>22</sup> We have translated it as "We firmly plant the banner of victory of dharma." That has become the logo, the expression, or motto, shall we say, of Naropa University.

When Künga Gyaltsen arrived at the palace of Adro Shelu-bum, he found his cup there. He approached Lord Adro and identified the cup as his. He described certain cracks and scratches on his cup, which was actually a wooden bowl.<sup>23</sup> It definitely was his own cup. Adro Shelu-bum's people checked, and they verified what the First Trungpa had described. So Adro Shelu-bum was extraordinarily impressed by this. Lord Adro was a very courteous, kind, and very religious person. He decided to offer as much hospitality as he could to Künga Gyaltsen and to accommodate him by providing the right kind of teaching situation for him. Künga Gyaltsen at that point accepted the hospitality and the acknowledgment from the lord of the principality. He accepted the offer to use Adro Shelu-bum's palace to teach his disciples, his students, during a certain portion of the year. However, they didn't want to be pinned down by establishing a monastery. He and his students wanted to be free to travel around.

It's an interesting point that the First Trungpa had hesitation about establishing anything, any institution, completely. Also, he had a longing to firmly plant the seed of dharma in society. That is somewhat a dubious situation, somewhat schizophrenic, we could say. We can use that word positively. There's no problem with that. He wanted to be loose; at the same time, he wanted to create something permanent. A lot of traditions have begun that way, particularly within the Kagyü lineage. For instance, Milarepa didn't want to call what he was doing the Practitioner's Lineage, particularly. Then at the time of Gampopa, it became known as the "Practitioner's Lineage" or the "Practicing



Lineage of the Kagyü.” So that’s an interesting reference point from an earlier time.

In the time of the First Trungpa, there were very few solid, permanent monastic situations established. Particularly, a lot of the Kagyüpas didn’t want to settle down in one place, and they traveled in large encampments, or caravans. This included the Karmapas, up to the seventh or even the eighth generation of Karmapas. For instance, there is a story about the drum used by the Fifth Karmapa and his party. They had a huge drum that was used in many ceremonies. The drum could be taken apart in sections and loaded onto a mule pack, or a yak pack, whatever they had. Whenever they encamped, the drum could be put back together, and the skin could be stretched overnight.

Everything was adapted for a traveling group situation, which was somewhat based on ideas borrowed from Genghis Khan and Mongolian culture all together. It was possible to set up a magnificent capital, a temporary modern city, right on the spot. They set up residence tents as well as the main meditation hall where ceremonies were conducted and abhishekas were performed. Then the next day, they would pack up the whole thing and move on.

Apart from the Romans, in the West we find very little tent culture. The Tibetan tent culture, however, was prominent and became powerfully important. There are some theories that this tent culture actually influenced the Chinese court and the Chinese military culture. At that time, all of the Kagyü traditions developed what was known as a *gar*, which is the Tibetan word for encampment. Interestingly, this provided possibilities of establishing complete splendor in one night. The next day, the whole thing could be disassembled, and the people could continue on their journey. That tradition is extraordinarily powerful and wondrous at the same time for a lot of people.

The age of encampment extended from the fourteenth century into the late sixteenth century, as far as Tibetan monasticism goes. The camps were constantly moving. It was a much more grandiose level than gypsies and much more powerful than military camps. Villagers would wake up in the morning and go out to take their herds into the mountains. They would look down into the next valley and find a whole huge monastery encamped there. It’s a fantastic concept. The villagers would be hoping that the camp would be there for a long time. Then the next day when they woke up, the camp was gone. All that was left were the rocks that were used in the stoves. Or there might be little dying fires, horse dung, mule dung, or whatever.

That type of monastery was able to travel to a lot of areas. Each time the camp arrived somewhere, they could give the local people a real demonstration of their understanding of how to conduct an administration and how to conduct ceremonies properly. It's like Karmê Chöling, which is a rural practice center, coming to New York, Karmê Chöling going to Boston, Karmê Chöling being in Ottawa or Texas. Each day in each place, you could see full-fledged, real monasticism actually taking place...quite free from those little caravan trips of Steve Gaskin or whoever you have.<sup>24</sup>

In this case, the real thing was actually taking place. The full splendor, wealth, and dignity was manifested. Sometimes hippies make a big deal about camping out. I don't know whether it's actually hippies or beatniks—I'm not sure—but for such people, traveling in a caravan is regarded as a fantastic thing to do. They are promoting funkiness at the same time, rather than the establishment of such *splendor* and such magnificent tents.

According to the stories of the Karmapa's camps, the huge assembly tent came in seventy-five parts. Each part was loaded onto a mule. When they made camp, they would assemble the whole tent and button it together. It was a huge assembly hall, with magnificent brocades hanging in it, thangkas everywhere, and fantastic rugs on the floor. There were magnificent thrones and seats for people to sit on and do their practice. The shrine was fully assembled. This was far from any kind of hippie trip or beatnik trip, if I may say so. It was *real*, doing the whole thing one hundred percent.

It's an interesting point that we haven't developed that kind of tent culture in America at all. The way to reduce pollution and save ourselves from urbanization might be to have a fantastic magnificent dharma tent culture. You could establish the whole situation at once, on the spot, with all its splendor. The organization could fulfill its duties wherever it goes. The administration would have a chance to relate with each locality as well, and then fold everything up and move somewhere else. That is a very heroic and very Buddhistic approach: nothing is particularly permanent, but you keep on moving all the time.

That's what the First Trungpa did. He developed the first Surmang *garchen*, which means the "great camp of the Surmang people."<sup>25</sup> It turned out to be very successful. It was a fantastic display of how you can actually handle life, not leaving too much mess except for the little dying fires that you leave behind when you break camp. Little areas of grass have been burned because you set fire to them in order to put a kitchen there. The rest of the field stayed pretty

neat.

In those days, Tibetans were very involved with tent culture. We could say that we are still involved with tent culture somewhat. Hopefully, ours won't be too much like caravan parks, trailer parks where you have your own little house, electricity, and toilet system. In that situation, you can't actually move; you're fastened to your ground. Modern tent culture also shouldn't be a hippie trip or a beatnik trip at all. It should be a genuine, dignified situation.

In the time of the First Trungpa, there was tremendous appreciation of the Surmang camp throughout the locality, or the neighborhood. The camp was set up in the highlands in the summertime, where they could enjoy the yogurt, milk, and cheese of the highlanders. In the autumn and the wintertime, the camp moved down to the lowlands to enjoy the grain and vegetables of the lowlanders.

This was a work of immense vision. These people were quite aware that eventually they would have to settle down in one particular place. At the same time, they were interested in and open to the tent culture of Tibet of that particular age, that time in history.

*Student:* I'm not quite sure I understand why there was such a need for an elaborate tent culture, which seems a bit of a contradiction to the simplicity of the picture you described before. How could people separate out the materialism when they saw such a magnificent array?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* People at the time were confused. I wouldn't say that the whole thing was perfectly ideal, actually. You should take it with a pinch of salt—the whole thing. Spiritual materialism could be taking place, obviously. But at the same time, the teachers were trying to communicate, reach out, with the message of dharma to everyone, very simply. I'm sure that the splendor and the royalty did come out of spiritual materialism, obviously. That always happens.

One of the interesting points is that problems of spiritual materialism are more prominent these days in the West. In those days, people did not have the automation of machines and drugs of all kinds—downers and uppers. In those days, people felt that they could still take their time going through things. But these days, particularly in the United States and in North America in general, there are lots of drugs, lots of machines, and lots of quick promises. Charlatans are available to keep you from any hard way of working with situations.

In those days people had less time to use tricks. Everything was manual. If

you had to put up a tent, it took a lot of time to do that. If you wanted to move camp, that involved a journey. Everything was very manual, all the time. Nothing was automated. If you were tired or sick, you couldn't reach anybody by calling them up on the telephone, saying, "Save me!" You couldn't take a taxi. Everything had to be done manually. Unavailability of that kind is very, very powerful. The manual world saves sanity.

*Student:* Is there some connection between a particular monastic tradition settling down in one place and the idea of lineage, such as the lineage of the Karmapas or the lineage of the Trungpas?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Probably there is. I don't know exactly what to say about that. I think both apply. An encampment is powerful, and at the same time having a solid situation is also very powerful.

*S:* It seemed that the line of the Trungpas started when the First Trungpa settled down in one spot, and the line of the Karmapas started when Gampopa established a monastic situation. Is there a direct connection between a monastic situation developing and the rest of the lineage becoming an ongoing thing as well?

*CTR:* I think so. There's some truth in that. Let's wait and see what happens here in America.

*Student:* Could you say a little bit more about the Indian saint that Künga Gyaltzen dreamed about?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Dombipa? Can you say something, Robin?  
[*Speaking to one of his students, Robin Kornman.—Ed.*]

*Robin Kornman:* Actually not. I don't know much about Dombipa.

*CTR:* I'm sure you can. Get the microphone.

*RK:* I have to put my ignorance on tape?

*CTR:* Yes. [*Laughter.*]

*RK:* December 23, 1975: I don't remember anything about Dombipa.  
[*Laughter.*]

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Anybody else? Okay. Wait for the microphone so that you can be taped.

*Student:* As I recall, Dombipa was an Indian siddha who at some point in his life had a skullcup, and he said, "I'm going to throw this skullcup in the air, and,

many generations in the future, I'll be reincarnated where this skullcup lands." He threw it in the air in India, and it flew to where the Surmang monasteries were later established in Tibet.

*CTR*: Yes. Dombipa was born as a brahmin, very high class, in India. The Trungpas are a reincarnation of Dombipa. He was raised in a brahmin household, and he studied Buddhism. He was a student of mahamudra. In those days, Buddhism—tantra as well as mahayana and hinayana—flourished in India.

As far as his parents were concerned, a fatal moment in Dombipa's life occurred when, although he was a brahmin, he took a girl from a lower caste, an untouchable, as his girlfriend, his consort. This shocked his parents immensely. Not only that, but he went up to the rooftop of his parents' house, and he was constantly partying up there with this girl, drinking and making love all the time. That was happening simultaneously, all the time. Finally his parents got very upset, thinking that he was going to ruin their reputation as a good brahmin family. The father was also some kind of local chieftain, and this behavior would misrepresent their social placement.

Dombipa would drink something like seven gallons of Indian alcohol in one night. I don't know what it's called. In Tibet, we would call this drink *chang*. He was having a good time on the rooftop drinking and being with his girlfriend. He was already an accomplished siddha, an accomplished meditator, a realized person, so he knew what he was doing. But his parents didn't. Usually, that's the case. [*Laughter.*] There's a saying that the first people to know you are your parents, and you are the last people they know. First and last. So they have difficulties, obviously. They were worried about the respectability of Dombipa's social situation. In fact, his family name wasn't Dombipa. *Dombipa* means "he who relates with the lower caste."

One day his father and mother got very upset, and they decided to climb up on the rooftop. Before, they were too horrified to even go up there and do anything about what was happening. Finally, the whole thing became too much for them. So they went up on the rooftop, and they were going to arrest the couple and have both of them put in jail. Dombipa, realizing what they were up to, kicked over seven gallons of liquor with one blow, and he flew up in the air, levitating with his consort. Those seven gallons became much more than seven. Liquor was churning out of the container, an unending stream of liquor. It flooded the whole house and then the whole village. Everybody was about to drown. The parents had run away, but they came back to the rooftop and supplicated

Dombipa, saying, “Please forgive us.” Then Dombipa sang a famous song, which was translated into Tibetan later. He sang, “He who knows the nature of mind, does not know the nature of confusion,”<sup>26</sup> and so forth. Then his parents and the whole village were converted to Buddhism. [*Laughter.*]

Then Dombipa left the palace with this lower-caste, supposedly terrible dirty woman, and he rode on a tiger. Occasionally people would see him riding his tiger here and there in the jungle. He finally became a real siddha. Supposedly, he appeared to be constantly drunk, as well as riding on a tiger at the same time. [*Laughter.*]

*Student:* I wonder if you could say something about the nature of Buddhism in Tibet at the time of the First Trungpa. Hadn't Buddhism been established in Tibet for many centuries? Why was it necessary for the Trungpas to be doing all this tent traveling?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Buddhism wasn't properly established at all. There were just dots, patches, at that time.

*S:* So the people were still practicing the Bön tradition?

*CTR:* Yes. You see, Tibetans are very dense. The population was not all that big, but people were very dense, very stubborn. Individually they were very powerful people. In order to get through to one person, it would take much more than Billy Graham can imagine. [*Laughter.*] There was no room for mass conversion. People had to be dealt with individually, somewhat, which we as Tibetans are proud of. I don't think Tibetans would be willing to buy televisions or radios, particularly. They would like to talk to the newscaster personally. [*Laughter.*]

I would like to encourage you to practice as much as you can. You might find yourself hesitating, thinking you're unable to do so, which is completely regarded as bullshit, or more likely as monkey shit. [*Laughter.*] You can do so. Please take part in the sitting practice of meditation as much as you can, in the name of the Trungpas personally and the rest of the lineage. Thank you.

## FIVE

### *The Fourth Trungpa*<sup>27</sup>

IN DISCUSSING FURTHER QUESTIONS about the line of the Trungpas, there are a lot of interesting points. The First Trungpa established a starting point for administering and organizing the learning situation, the teaching situation, but that was not quite enough. Having started by sowing the seeds in the spring, how are we going to handle the rest of the year? The summer and the autumn still depend on us. Similarly, having founded a monastic institution by means of the tent culture we discussed, the tradition was still very dependent on the commitment of individuals. Practitioners began to sit a lot, much more so in those days than what we are doing here. And students began to learn and understand the philosophy behind the practice as well. The floating organization [the tent culture established by Künga Gyaltzen] meant that no permanent establishment was provided. At the same time, wherever the camp moved, it encouraged the creation of a permanent establishment there, since they had to continuously set up an administrative center wherever the camp traveled.

After the time of Künga Gyaltzen, the First Trungpa, the teaching situation continued through the reign of four generations of Trungpas. The tent culture was still continuing at the time of the Fourth Trungpa, Künga Namgyal. At that point, the Surmang caravan had grown immensely, to such a great extent that there were now several thousand people involved. Many devotees were still joining the Surmang encampment.

In the reign of the Fourth Trungpa, Künga Namgyal, he decided to turn the forts that had been offered to the Trungpas into permanent monastic situations. All the *dzongs*, which means “castles” or “forts,” were made into monastic headquarters. They were no longer forts or castles. The big audience halls, assembly halls, and meeting halls were converted into meditation halls, and little rooms were converted into monks’ living quarters, and so forth.

At that point, there was a sense of conquering the secular situation, a sense of victory over the secular situation that was already set up, and turning that

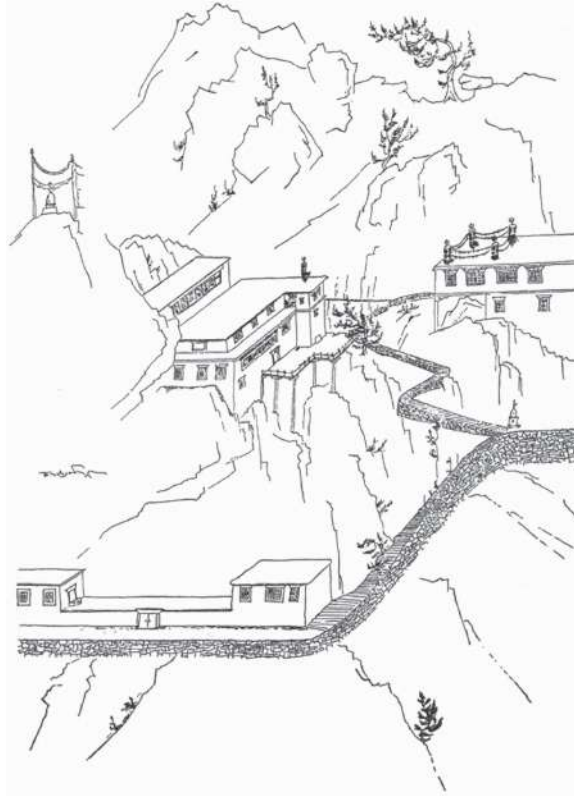
environment into a spiritual situation. The monks and their abbots began to establish their monastic headquarters. Dütsi Tel, which was an extension of Adro Shelu-bum's original castle, as we discussed previously, was finally established as a permanent monastery.

The monastic setup became the central focus of society, much more so than before. Finally at that point, the principality, that particular kingdom around Surmang, began to hand over the administrative duties, as well as the spiritual duties, to the Trungpas. The Fourth Trungpa received acknowledgment from the Chinese emperor as an important political leader. He was presented with seals of all kinds from the emperor. In his youth he was horrified by his political role, unlike the rest of the Trungpas who came after his generation. He handed over the political administrative duties to his brother, who was then acknowledged by the emperor of China as being an important, powerful local ruler.

The Fourth Trungpa set off by himself, purely by himself. He acquired a hornless yak, which is a pack animal that is particularly trained for carrying a load. The yak's nose was punctured through so that you could put a loop through it. Then wherever you needed to lead the yak, it would go with its master. That's a traditional practice in Tibet. The animal is called *nalo* (Tib. *sna lo*), which literally means the "looped-nose one." Packing his bags and his supplies onto this animal, the Fourth Trungpa set forth to visit 108 pilgrimage places around the neighborhood. According to folktales, a lot of these places were supposedly completely haunted by ghosts of all kinds. He also meditated in the caves a great deal. His whole journey took about three years.

At the end of the third year, Künga Namgyal came back to his monastery after he had accomplished his visit around the countryside. Immediately he went into retreat for six years, about a half mile from Dütsi Tel Monastery of Surmang. He did his retreat in a cave that is presently a retreat center. If you look at the drawings in *Born in Tibet*, there is an architectural drawing I did of that place, Dorje Khyung Dzong, which literally means the "vajra garuda fortress."<sup>28</sup>





*Dorje Khyung Dzong.*

DRAWING BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA.

The cave was very primitive, and apparently it was not a very good cave; it had a lot of leaks. It is said that due to the leaks, Trungpa's body was sometimes completely soaked in water up to his waist. According to the stories, he sat so still that birds made nests in his hair—which is not quite believable. However, it is said that birds began to nest in his hair because he never moved. He became part of the architectural design of that particular cave, like a tree. Being an important person, Trungpa had one attendant who was always there with him. Trungpa distrusted anybody who came to see him from the administration of Surmang, anybody representing the political scene there. Visiting him was terrible [because he was so nasty to visitors].

He practiced for six years. At the end of six years, he collapsed and lost consciousness. When he recovered from his collapse, he suddenly woke into a different frame of mind altogether. Some people thought he was completely crazy, at the level of schizophrenia, or whatever you might call it. Some people thought he had completely attained enlightenment. Seemingly, according to the favorable stories, he attained enlightenment. He behaved entirely differently. He

was more fearless, powerful, enlightened—on that particular spot.<sup>29</sup>

His particular studies in the cave were involved with pushing beyond possessiveness of one's body, giving that particular concept up, giving it away. His practice was also involved with a sense of generosity. In this practice, your body is fed to the enemies or to the spirits, the ghosts, whatever you have. Whoever would like to take possession of your body, you give it to them completely. That particular technique is called *chö*, which literally means "cutting through." Cutting through involves giving up your security. After your security is given away, nothing replaces it. So there is a sense of complete leap, a sense of giving, constantly giving, opening: "If somebody would like to possess me or eat me up, go ahead. Kill me, eat me up! So what! You're welcome to do so." This technique actually originally developed out of the study of the *prajnaparamita*. The technique is based on no form, formlessness, no ego. Ego is empty, form is empty, and so forth.

The example set by Künga Namgyal turned out to be one of the landmarks of the Trungpa lineage, which made the existence of the Trungpas more powerful. In addition to all the practice he did, he was also very scholarly, very learned. He composed something like twenty volumes of writings, which consisted of history, particularly the social science of the Tibetan tradition of that time, and commentaries on all kinds of books. He was also a great musician. He composed a lot of monastic musical tunes and developed various chants. Above all, he was a great contemplative person.

There was a change in the emphasis at this time. The tent culture began to become a more solid monastic situation, rather than being purely a caravan culture alone. More emphasis was put on the establishment of institutions, monasticism, and so forth.

*Student:* Rinpoche, I don't see the connection between *prajnaparamita* and *chö*.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The connection is letting go. If there's no form, if there's no body, if everything's empty, so what? [*That experience or understanding is the essence of both prajnaparamita and chö.*—Ed.] It's letting go: "Take anything you want from me." That's basically the approach.

S: There still seems to be some sense of interaction [rather than just emptiness] there.

CTR: No. It's the *prajnaparamita* practice *in* practice, rather than in theory.

“No nose, no eyes, no ears—take them all—literally take them.”

S: Have a bite.

CTR: “Take it.” Yes, that’s the approach. So there’s no point in holding back anyway, because they [the things you are giving up] are not really there.

*Student:* Are the practices connected with chö quite specific? It sounds very general.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It’s not very general. It’s very specific. You go to a spot to be haunted; you let yourself be haunted on that particular spot. In that particular place that is supposedly a very haunting place, you are haunted. You give yourself completely up, over and over again. There were 108 places of that particular type that the Fourth Trungpa visited. If you feel that the place or the situation is eerie—or you can’t handle the insects around you or the local people around you or anything else about the situation around you—you give it up, give it away. Would you like to do that?

S: So you specifically look for unpleasant situations?

CTR: Somewhat...Take a trip to Brooklyn! [*Laughter.*]

S: Does that mean that when you take a trip to Brooklyn, you walk in the streets alone at night, in the middle of the night, and take your chances, even though it might be dangerous?

CTR: Something like that, something like that. But you have to be very composed. There is a lot of composure that takes place at the same time.

S: If you have your composure, then you’ll be all right?

CTR: There’s no promise. [*Laughter.*]

*Student:* It almost seems that Künga Namgyal’s life was a reaction to the solidification of the monastic situation. Is that a reasonable assumption?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, he wanted to be by himself. He wanted to be *himself*, that’s all. I don’t think he was particularly a beatnik or a hippie, trying to escape something, from that point of view. He was still interested and connected with what was happening at the monastery. He just needed to complete his meditation practice first. After he finished his training program, he presided over the monastic community, and at the same time he played a very important role in politics.

*Student:* Regarding the practice of chö, it seems that in order to have

composure in the situation, one would have already established an understanding of formlessness, of shunyata. Or should one try to reach an understanding of shunyata by trying to be composed in threatening situations, seeing how long one's composure will last?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* You jump into situations first, and then you relate with shunyata after that. However, without composure, it would be fatal.

S: So you open yourself to the haunting situations and the insects—

CTR: Or the Scotsmen.

S: The Scotsmen or the Irishmen or the Dutchmen—

CTR: Yup!

S: And then out of that situation of surrendering to that, would it lead to an understanding of shunyata?

CTR: Yes. Something like that.

*Student:* Rinpoche, where does the sense of warmth and nonaggression come from in chö practice?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Both are simultaneously there within the experience of being haunted. There's no room for aggression if you're going to work with these situations all the time. Warmth is there because what you're doing, your practice, is based on benefiting all sentient beings. I'm sorry if that seems like a cliché. But actually it's true.

*Student:* When Künga Namgyal left the monastery, he was going out on his own to see how much he could take on by himself. Is that correct?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* He was trying to see how much was *there*, rather than how much he could take.

*Student:* You said that, in the time of Künga Namgyal, there was an emphasis placed on the development of institutions and monasticism. How did their practice differ from the practice of their predecessors?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* The predecessors' practice was still purely at an embryonic level. It was conquering Tibetan territory according to Buddhist principles. It was at a very early level or stage.

*Student:* I don't understand how going to a haunted place and allowing yourself to be haunted, or for that matter meditating in a cave, benefits other

sentient beings.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* To begin with, there is no pollution created by your practice. If you work on yourself, it is much better than working with somebody else, haunting somebody else. You begin to develop a certain technique or realization within yourself, such that you don't actually pollute the rest of the psychological world that exists around you. When you attain some understanding, you don't pollute the rest of the world. If you use the rest of the world as the source of your development alone, people may give you good antidotes. At the same time, they are hurt by giving you antidotes. They are hurt as well, at the same time. So doing this by yourself is ecologically sound.

*Student:* What was happening in Tibetan society that led to the monasteries taking a political role? It seems that some of the religious leaders weren't happy about that. Why did they do it?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think the religious leaders were very happy about that, because they could create a Buddhist nation, basically speaking. They could encourage everybody to sit, to practice, and to go along with the techniques that were already developed in society. The social norms of goodness could be continued and supported. They were quite happy, actually, and quite willing to do that. There was no problem particularly.

*Student:* Would you describe the nature of the ongoing association between the Trungpa lineage and the Karmapas?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Each Trungpa lineage holder visited the Karmapa of that time. The gap was always bridged. There was no distance, no problem. The Karmapa always knew what was happening with the Trungpas, geographically, physically, and the Trungpas received encouragement and instructions from the Karmapas constantly. In fact, at times there was a lot of bonding, binding. The Karmapas bowed to or appreciated what was taking place in East Tibet with the powerful Kagyüpa administrators and powerful Kagyüpa teachers. Sometimes, due to Tibetan politics, very little was happening with the Kagyüpas in Central Tibet, where the Karmapas have their monastery. The Kagyü situation in Central Tibet was sometimes very scarce, very thin. A lot of the thickness, the solidity, of the Kagyü tradition took place in East Tibet. So the Karmapas were delighted that their colleagues in the East were working hard and that the dharma there was becoming more powerful.

## SIX

### *Trungpas Five through Ten*

**P**REVIOUSLY, WE DISCUSSED the Fourth Trungpa, Künga Namgyal, and how he was able to take time off from other responsibilities and practice a lot. He was not conducting too many seminars, not teaching courses at Naropa University, and not flying back and forth from various dharma centers. He had a chunk of time to practice, something like thirty years. Such fantastic luxury *he* had. [*Chuckles.*]

Most of his time was spent trying to consolidate the teachings of the Kagyü lineage. Künga Namgyal was one of the great editors of the Kagyü teachings, the Kagyü tradition. He wrote six hundred pages on the experience of mahamudra, as well as the training and discipline of how to get into mahamudra and how to understand mahamudra. Toward the end of his life, he also reorganized the administrative and political power of Surmang and the running of the organization. I would like to make it clear that the Fourth Trungpa wasn't particularly an anarchist who rebelled against authority or any kind of red tape. He had an enlightened approach to organization, which continued after he died.

After the death of the Fourth Trungpa, the situation was quite calm. His people in the administration began to fulfill various local functions. They were in charge of the district within Surmang province, as well as being responsible for maintaining the dharma practice of the Surmang tradition at the same time—which was quite a big task for them. However, they were able to do so.

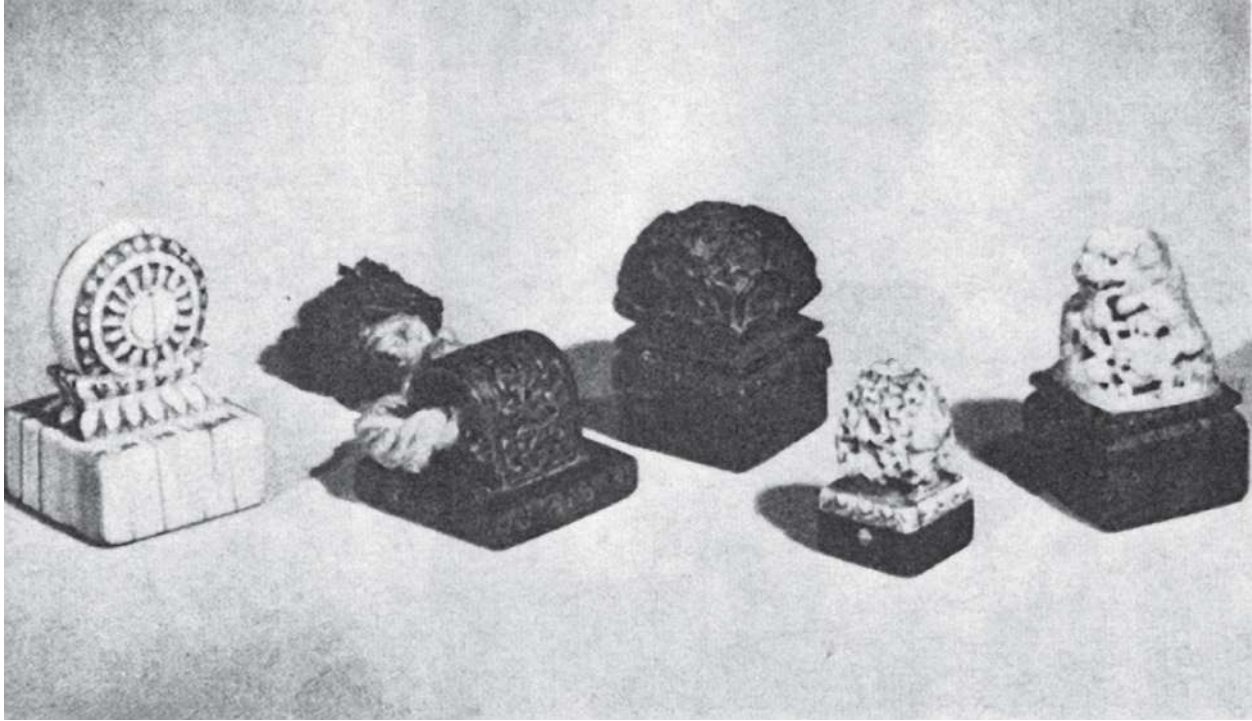
The Fifth Trungpa was able to receive proper training. He was trained by a lot of the students of the previous Trungpa. All the necessary disciplines were already developed and available to him. The Fifth Trungpa's name was Tenpa Namgyal. He was born into a noble family in the local principality, and he was trained as a teacher. He became the ruler of that locality, as well as a powerful spiritual leader. He was known as an expert on the philosophy of Buddhism. He promoted the contemplative disciplines existing in the Surmang tradition. In those days, the Surmang monasteries were very much in the contemplative

tradition. It was a contemplative community. There was very little need to set up any extra contemplative discipline. The monastic situation altogether was almost like a retreat center.

Tenpa Namgyal decided to make some changes, further transforming the traditional tent culture approach into a well-established, permanent setup. His court and the fort of Adro Shelu-bum were properly incorporated into a monastery. He received what is known as *hutoktu*,<sup>30</sup> an honorary degree or post as the teacher to the emperor of China. We still have the official seals that were presented to him. I was able to rescue them, to bring them with me from Tibet, and these seals are in Boulder at this point.<sup>31</sup> If you'd like to see them at a later time, you would be welcome to look at them. They're quite impressive seals that were presented by the Chinese emperor to the Fifth Trungpa as an imperial teacher.

At that point, the Fifth Trungpa's political power grew much larger. He was very well respected in that locality. He had a particular talent in dealing with the local kingdoms. Surmang belonged to the kingdom of Nangchen. The king of Nangchen was the ultimate power in that area. Surmang province was one of twenty-five provinces within that kingdom. The Fifth Trungpa, being an imperial teacher, had a great deal of power over that kingdom.

At that point, the Kagyü lineage in the country was going through a transformation. The Kagyüpas began to realize that in order to have higher spiritual participation in the country, they also had to have equally higher political participation. That particular process of combining the two was natural in Tibet. The Kagyüpas became politically active. It had nothing to do with the American notion of politics. In America when somebody runs for the presidency, somebody has to make up a story line and write speeches for the candidate to deliver. You have to create a "Reelect the President" committee, or something of that nature. In this case, the Kagyüpa statesman had an inspired vision that was needed by the people of the particular locality. The leader was taking an active role in the spiritual welfare of the people, as well as taking care of their psychological and economic welfare. That is what was known as a politician in those days. In those days it wasn't so much that you had political parties running against each other or that you had the likelihood of running into problems like Watergate, for that matter.



*Seals of the Trungpas.*

Consequently, the Fifth Trungpa became a very affluent person and a very enlightened person at the same time. Because of his particular approach to dealing with the economy of the local villages and families all around the countryside, the Surmang province became an excessively wealthy province. The economy was built on timber and salt export. There were many talented businessmen and talented statesmen of all kinds. The Surmang province became a highly powerful province and a very wealthy province at that point.

The Central Tibetan government, which had nothing much to do with the province of Surmang, was quite shocked by the affluence. In Surmang the people were afraid of a possible political invasion by the Central Tibetan government. And in fact troops were sent out to invade and ransack Dütsi Tel and Namgyal Tse monasteries. They wanted to control the whole of Surmang province. The rest of the kingdom was left alone.

The Fifth Trungpa was imprisoned in the district capital of the Central Tibetan government.<sup>32</sup> The local capital representing the Central Tibetan government was called Chamdo. Tenpa Namgyal was put in prison with a number of others for five years, and his monasteries were ransacked. One of the excuses given by the Central Tibetan government for the invasion of one of the main Surmang monasteries was that it had a gold roof. They had created a gigantic shrine room,



which was painted in gold leaf. A painting of the Buddha was drawn in vermillion paint over the gold. The Central Tibetan government said that this was illegal and that no monastery, no one in Tibet at all, was allowed to make such an ostentatious display of their wealth without receiving permission from the Central Tibetan government. This reasoning was quite absurd. Surmang was located in an entirely separate kingdom, politically and economically. Nevertheless, this took place.

When Tenpa Namgyal and his regent and many abbots and others were imprisoned, the kingdoms in that area didn't particularly lend him any support. The local government was afraid of possible warfare with Central Tibet. They didn't particularly help the Fifth Trungpa and his friends, his colleagues.

From the first year of the imprisonment of the Fifth Trungpa and his people, that province had constant droughts and constant mishaps with the harvest. At the end of the fourth year, everybody got very confused and concerned about a possible famine taking place. In the fifth year, famine actually took place in that area. People were starving. They didn't have grain to eat, and they had nowhere for the cows to graze. The whole country became completely dry. Supposedly this was the first time in history that this occurred in this area.

One of the cabinet ministers of the province said, "Maybe we should ask the Trungpa people to do something about this. Maybe we should ask them to create rain." Some people said, "Well, they're just a bunch of schmucks in prison, so what can we do?" On the other hand, somebody else said, "We've heard that they are very powerful people. Maybe it's because we imprisoned them that all these things and this chain reaction took place." All kinds of discussions took place.

Finally they decided to approach Trungpa himself and his colleagues. However, the prisoners had achieved immense discipline in their practice at that point, and they didn't want to be disturbed at all. They were having a great time in prison. [*Laughter.*] Trungpa had been able to finish three hundred million recitations of the Avalokiteshvara mantra. His friend, Chetsang Sung-rap Gyatso Rinpoche, who was also in prison, was painting thangkas.<sup>33</sup> He had completed something like one hundred beautiful thangka scrolls. We had them in our monastery, actually. They were beautifully painted. Another prisoner, Garwang Rinpoche, had written something like six volumes of commentary on mahamudra experience. So they were having a great time, and they didn't particularly want to be disturbed.

Then somehow this request from the government came: “You should make rain for us. Otherwise, we’re going to keep you in prison much longer, and you might be executed, killed.” So Trungpa said, “Yes, sure. I could create rain for you.” He asked to be taken to a local spring, a source of water, saying, “I could just go over there and do some little thing, if it helps. That will be fine.” He washed his *mala* beads, his rosary. He dipped the beads in a fountain and washed them and sat there for a while. Then he went back to jail. Supposedly a lot of smoke arose; a sort of cloudy mist came out of the fountain and created clouds in the sky. There was fantastic rainfall.

That was in the late summer of that year. Everybody rejoiced and wanted to find out what had happened. The local people were very excited to finally have rainfall after five years. When they heard what had happened, that Trungpa did that, everybody unanimously demanded that Trungpa be freed from his imprisonment. Trungpa wasn’t particularly happy about that. [*Laughter.*] Prison was his retreat place. But he was given a pardon, and he was able to skip out of his retreat, so to speak. [*Chuckles.*] He was given back all his privileges and his monastery.

Such political situations took place frequently. In that era, the Gelukpa kingdom of the Central Tibetan government was paranoid and constantly tried to control any area where a local teacher had power over people. The Central Tibetan government regarded that as very bad. At some point, a regent of the Karmapa lineage, who was called Shamar, was beheaded. Supposedly his head was buried underneath the shrine at Lhasa so that everybody would walk over it while they were on pilgrimage. All kinds of things like that took place. It’s true that this went on, and it’s terrible that these kinds of things would take place in a supposedly Buddhist world. Nevertheless, those problems existed.

The Fifth Trungpa was victorious. He was still respected by the Chinese emperor as an imperial teacher. There were no other particular highlights of the story of the Fifth Trungpa, and he passed away peacefully.

Then we have the Sixth Trungpa, about whom very little is known. He died when he was very young. Some time after he was discovered as the Trungpa Tülku, when he was about eighteen or nineteen years old, one of his students was carrying him to help him cross a bridge. They both slipped and fell, and he died on the spot. So much for the Sixth Trungpa.

The Seventh Trungpa was a very intelligent person who studied a great deal. But he also died young, around the age of twenty-five. There’s no particular

monument that he left behind, except that he wrote lots of poetry. Many of his poems were lost, but some of them were kept in the archives of the Surmang monasteries. It was a very romantic type of poetry, somewhat adolescent but insightful nevertheless. It was not particularly good as poetry. He was developing, but he died very young.

The Eighth Trungpa's name was Gyurme Tenphel. He was a very eccentric person and a great artist. He was supposed to have had a mustache and a beard, which is unusual for Tibetans. He was a very articulate person in terms of visual dharma, so to speak. He was a great calligrapher and a great painter. At the same time, he was a great composer. He produced music for monastic chants. He also edited and collected the works of the previous Trungpas and of the Surmang tradition in general. He collected the songs and life stories of Trung Mase as well. He also paid a visit to the Fourteenth Karmapa.

The Eighth Trungpa was one of the chief instructors, teachers, and possessors of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. When the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* was first discovered by Karma Lingpa, he presented it to the Eighth Trungpa and asked him to take care of this book and said that Gyurme Tenphel should actually help in promoting this particular teaching. So the Eighth Trungpa became very powerful in presenting the whole source of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. We, as Surmang people, actually regard the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* as belonging to us as one of the Surmang traditions. If you read in the book when it recounts the lineage of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it mentions that it belongs to the Surmang tradition of contemplative discipline within the Kagyü discipline.<sup>34</sup>

I've seen some of the illuminated manuscripts and artwork by Gyurme Tenphel. They were fantastic and very beautiful. His handwriting was impeccable. He seemed to have artistic tendencies. He was also a very gentle person. Supposedly he had two fights during his whole life. Once a cat jumped on his dish of food. He pushed the cat aside, and he got very angry. The cat was trying to lick his soup or something. [*Chuckling.*] The second time, his attendant cut his bamboo pen, his calligraphy pen, in the wrong way. Trungpa lost his temper. He lost his temper twice in his life. Isn't that shocking? [*Laughter.*]

He was very gentle and artistic, a well-meaning person. We had some of his art in our monastery. His taste was extraordinarily rich, in terms of creating mountings for thangkas. He would buy brocades and use them to mount the scrolls, and he would cover books with silk scarves of all kinds. His taste was impeccable and very rich, wealthy, and with a somewhat aristocratic flavor. He

was supposed to have come from a wealthy aristocratic family.

Then we have the Ninth Trungpa, who was very special. All the Surmang people loved him a lot, but he didn't do anything at all in his life. [*Laughter.*] He was educated in the traditional style, nevertheless. He spent his whole life drinking Tibetan tea and taking snuff, sunning himself in the courtyards and chatting with his old friends. The only literary work he composed in all his life was a four-line poem supplicating Mahakala. It was very simple, actually. It goes like this:

Chief protector of the teachings  
I supplicate you, Mahakala, the four-armed one.  
Accept this offering.  
Fulfill the four karmas.

That's it! [*Laughter.*]

He was the least charismatic person among all the Trungpas, throughout the whole lineage. He was just sort of a basic good old Surmang redneck. [*Laughter.*] Nothing very much happened with him at all. He enjoyed having a sit-together situation in certain spots in the courtyard where usually, particularly on winter days, the sun would shine. He used to have those sit-together sessions with people, in whatever particular spot was best, where they would drink tea and have snuff and gossip about little things. That's our Ninth Trungpa.

The Tenth Trungpa, my own predecessor, was quite a different person. Not deliberately but coincidentally, he was born to a local chieftain of Surmang. He was raised with very strict discipline by his uncles, as well as his tutors, his bursars, secretaries, and whatever you have. In the early part of his life, he took everything extraordinarily seriously. He took everything in the Kagyü lineage very seriously—his ngöndro practice, his shamatha-vipashyana practice, and everything. He did every practice one by one very successfully.

He didn't like being told what to do. Particularly, he felt that people were trying to make him into a good moneymaking person. Traditionally, the monastery set up a winter trip, a summer trip, and an autumn trip to collect donations from the locality. That had recently become traditional. During the summer trip, the monks would collect dry cheese and butter. In the autumn, they would collect certain sorts of turnips and potatoes, vegetables of that nature. And during the winter trip, the monks would collect grains of all kinds,

predominantly wheat and barley, with some beans and peas, or whatever was available. So the poor Tenth Trungpa was pushed to make these trips all the time. It was always time to make the next round of trips. That became problematic for the Tenth Trungpa, and he didn't like it. He didn't want to constantly involve himself with the work of collecting donations while not practicing anymore.

One night, he decided to leave. This is all written about in *Born in Tibet*. You can read the story of the Tenth Trungpa there, which is quite colorful in some sense. At this time, he decided to leave his monastery and his camp and try to seek teachings from Jamgön Kongtrül the Great. He managed to do so, and having received some teachings from Jamgön Kongtrül, he decided to stay with him for a long period of time, continuing his practice, his discipline, and his study.

He was very hard up at that time. The monastery wanted to lure him back, so they didn't give him any resources. There was not even enough butter for him to create a butter lamp so that he could read the scriptures in the evening. He had to buy sticks of incense and try to read the texts, studying and memorizing them by the glow of an incense stick. Supposedly, when the Tenth Trungpa was memorizing texts and trying to practice, he tied his hair to the ceiling with a cord, and he stuck nettles around himself on his bed. If he dozed and started to fall over, he would be pulled up by his hair, or he'd be stung by the nettles. He kept himself alive by practicing constantly under the great Jamgön Kongtrül. It was a very rare situation to become a student of Jamgön Kongtrül. The Tenth Trungpa became one of the world-renowned teachers of the Kagyü tradition.

He also had his political problems. The same old problem kept coming back again and again in our province. Our monastery kept being attacked by a local Geluk monastery. They raised legal points questioning Surmang's power over them. The Tenth Trungpa spent something like three months in the local capital, Jyekundo,<sup>35</sup> arguing his case. There were no lawyers like we have these days. The Tenth Trungpa had to create his whole case by writing out each point one by one. There was nobody else actually able to compose this literature for him, so he had to write everything out at night and present the points during the day. He spent three months presenting the case for the survival of the Surmang monastery, fighting for its existence.

He asked his friends for suggestions and help. He asked those who were also well versed in Tibetan law to contribute. A famous line came out of this from

one of the local chieftains, who told him, “It is okay even for a lama or a *tülku* or a rinpoche to argue a court case. That’s fine. But you must accept one thing, which is that you should tell the body of truth with the tentacles of a lie. Otherwise, if you are constantly truthful and honest, you won’t win your court case.” [*Chuckles.*] This was actually very helpful to the Tenth Trungpa in winning his court case.

When he won the case, this infuriated a lot of people in the locality, particularly the Gelukpa factions in the province. His monastery was attacked by the troops of the Central Tibetan government. The monastery was completely burned down and looted, and the Tenth Trungpa was taken prisoner. He was eventually rescued by friends. The general of the Central Tibetan government, who was also a local king, the king of Lhathok, saved him.<sup>36</sup> It’s an interesting situation that the political neuroses of the country were still taking place even in those days, which was in the 1920s. Even that late in time, there were still these political problems taking place.

Having recovered control of his monastery, the Tenth Trungpa rebuilt it completely, fully, much better than it had been before. It had been burned down and looted, and the libraries were destroyed. Some people said that it was great that the monastery was destroyed, because then they could create a fresh situation, much grander. That actually was the case at Surmang. In rebuilding the monastery, the ambition of the Tenth Trungpa was to change the shape of the situation altogether. Instead of having a monastery alone, he also established a contemplative community center to go along with the monastic center, with possibilities for a study situation to take place within that. Through this process, the Tenth Trungpa reestablished monasticism and contemplative discipline at the same time.

The Tenth Trungpa died at the age of sixty-three, still trying to raise funds for the monastic establishment. [*Chuckles.*] The monastery was doing okay, but it still needed a financial boost to provide more oomph. He was an example of a hard worker, a political visionary, and a powerful person who was able to win others over. He could conquer someone else’s false concepts. He was a great, dedicated person in the contemplative tradition, who united all this in one situation. He was such a powerful, open, and fearless person. One chaos after another chaos occurred in his life, yet he was still able to hold on to his basic integrity. I’ve been told that he had fantastic integrity. So there we are [*chuckles*]—those are the Trungpas.

*Student:* Can you say something about the different incarnations and how they found the different Trungpas?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It was the same process as with myself, in some sense. There's often a message left behind by the previous incarnation, saying where that person is going to be reborn. You follow that instruction, basically. Sometimes, if no message had been left, you would ask the head of the order, which was usually the Karmapa, and he would give you directions. In my case, the Tenth Trungpa didn't leave any directions, but the Sixteenth Karmapa gave some indications. He said that the particular place where the Eleventh Trungpa would be born was a house that faces the south. The family would have a brown dog, and they would have a daughter, as well as a young son in the family. This son would be the Eleventh Trungpa. The Karmapa gave the names of the father and mother. The monks found that everything fitted that particular description. So by following that tradition, everything continued that way. It's not so much a continuing soul or ego, but it's some kind of deposit of intelligence, a possible way of reawakening the intelligence, which takes place.

*Student:* I have two questions. One refers to this "mishap" you spoke of again today. I'm wondering, does a mishap always have to be a kind of negative experience, a painful experience, or can it also be a positive or good experience in some sense?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, usually we don't use the word *mishap* to refer to a good experience.

*S:* Does it always have to be something you're not too happy about—

*CTR:* It's somewhat unpleasant.

*S:* I'm also wondering about the energy that keeps various lines or tülkus going, particularly as regards someone like the Ninth Trungpa. You said he didn't seem to do much. Also, the Sixth and the Seventh Trungpas died very early. What is it about them that kept the lineage going? Why didn't it stop then?

*CTR:* I think it's some fundamental integrity that is always there.

*S:* And that was initiated after the First Trungpa?

*CTR:* Yes.

*Student:* In the last lecture, you were talking about students at the time of the Fourth Trungpa, saying that they sat a lot more than we do now. I was wondering if you could say something about the approach to sitting and

discipline that's different now from in the past?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* According to the tradition that directs us, it says that people of future generations in the dark age should sit more than they did in the golden days, the golden age.

S: Was it so golden?

*CTR:* Yes, in terms of there being fewer temptations. The world was not particularly geared or oriented for pleasure. The world was a manual world, rather than a mechanical world.

S: It also seems that at this time you're not particularly encouraging students to sit much more than what we're already doing. Is that just because we're not ready for it?

*CTR:* I think I'll be doing much more—or you will be. [*Laughter.*]

*Student:* I've been thinking throughout this seminar about all the people around the Trungpas. There are no particular stories about them, and somehow they didn't make it to the big time, you know. [*Laughter.*]

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Which people are you talking about?

S: Well, the ten or twenty or hundred or two hundred students who were around the Trungpas. Thinking along this same line, what is it that makes an enlightened person an enlightened person? We have these stories about the Trungpas, who in some sense are very heroic and did heroic deeds. At the same time, I know that for myself, I'm not particularly putting nettles around myself if I'm falling asleep. In fact, quite the opposite.

*CTR:* Quite the opposite? [*Laughter.*]

S: Is there some suggestion being made that some sort of heroism is absolutely necessary?

*CTR:* It's not trying to make yourself loud and polluting things around you. But as a practitioner, some kind of heroism is necessary. That is to say, it's not trying to proclaim yourself as better than somebody else. At the same time, it seems to be good to have some kind of heroism within yourself. It's not so much based on the example of each president in this country, who says, "I'm making history, and this is fantastic. I won the elections," or whatever. But some kind of heroism is needed, that you are doing what you are doing. It seems to be very simple. It's heroism toward yourself, rather than anything else.

*Student:* I'd like to ask a further question about the relationship between the



work that the Trungpas had to do and their practice. You've talked about the relationship between their lives as administrators and their lives as practitioners, which seemed generally to be very simpleminded. They went through a period of intense practice, and then having developed somewhat, they could afford to get into running Surmang. Many of your students, on the other hand, seem to constantly be adapting our practice schedule, attempting to sensibly adapt it, to some kind of ongoing work. Then we experience emergencies. There always seem to be developments we're going through that suddenly make it incredibly difficult to do intensive practice. Then the question arises: is it just my lack of organization, or is this a special situation where I have to practice less because there's so much work to do? Should I feel guilty? You expect that kind of question to come up only when you're given a sudden unexpected and heavy amount of responsibility. But that kind of responsibility seems to occur twice a year, year after year. What kind of attitude should we have toward that? [The student is referring to the exigencies of running a practice center.—Ed.]

*CTR:* Interestingly, at this point administration and work rely on mechanical devices, literally mechanical devices, and efficient phone conversations. If you want to talk to somebody across the country, you don't have to go there, or you don't have to send a messenger there and pay for his food and organize his life situation. If you want to heat the room, you don't have to employ a group of people to make a fire for you. No one has to constantly use a bellows to keep a fire going to keep us warm. No one has to hold up torches instead of using lightbulbs. From that point of view, a lot of things have been solved. Because a lot is taken care of, therefore a lot of practice and further intelligence play a very important part. The administrative situation at this point is just purely pushing a button, compared with the middle ages of the Tibetan world. It's a very, very light responsibility. You don't have to administrate a lot of people. You just do things based on your own level of intelligence. From that point of view, it seems to be very simple.

At this point, the administration and the practice come together, quite rightly so, because there are not so many management problems as there were at the time of the Tenth Trungpa or the previous Trungpas. Instead of involving something like three hundred people working together to build a house, now we have a very few people doing the work together, because a lot of things are controlled by mechanisms, machinery, electricity, and everything.

*S:* Well, for the few people who are doing these things, perhaps because of the industrial aids, which make it more efficient than before, they might go through

a period of time when they can meditate four and a half hours a day or take a retreat. If you're living in the city, you build up the money, and then you can do an intensive practice period. But suddenly a period of time will come when practice is cut way down or cut out entirely, except with some extraspecial effort.

*CTR*: Extraspecial effort is always important. [*Laughter.*] Otherwise, nothing would happen, you know. You can't just slide into the airplane, like your baggage that is checked at the airport and loaded automatically onto the plane. It's not automatic that now you have time to sit, now you have time to work—things don't happen that way, anyway. There's always room for you to play the role manually and understand the whole thing in a manual way, which is always going to be harsh truth, sooner or later, later or sooner.

*S*: Harsh truth?

*CTR*: Harsh truth.

*Student*: I don't understand the last part of what you were saying about the manual way.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*: You can't just go along with automation. You always have problems of fitting yourself into the right socket. It's always manual—finding the right socket.

## SEVEN

### *The Eleventh Trungpa*

THE TRADITION OF THE TRUNGPA evolved to its best capability in presenting what is known as the three disciplines. These are the disciplines of exertion, meditation, and knowledge, or prajna, presented at their best. The Trungpa lineage became one of the most genuine lineages in the Buddhist world of Tibet. There were all kinds of sociological problems—social upheavals, political intrigues, and economic problems within the community—that interfered with the execution of teaching the dharma. Nevertheless, the lineage of the Trungpas turned out to be one of the highlights of East Tibet, and it was also a central point or focus for Tibet as a whole.

The Central Tibetan government, which was very interested in political power, had to bend down to the efforts of the Trungpas. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the practice of the Central Tibetan government was to try to centralize power in order to keep political control over the rest of Tibet. The Surmang traditions became painfully prickly and threatening. I could give you an American analogy, I suppose. If the White House didn't have a sauna bath, any wealthy households or householders would not be allowed to have one. That was the kind of political poverty that had developed. This mentality was partly governed by mistrust and paranoia toward the Kagyü tradition, which was regarded by some as the order of crazy people. If anybody from this crazy Kagyü world began to do something funny or strange, the Central Tibetan government couldn't cope with it and felt they should clamp down. Basically speaking, they were afraid of crazy wisdom. Crazy wisdom is one of the most promising things for us in the Kagyü lineage, and it was very prominent in the general psychology of Surmang.

As far as the government of Central Tibet was concerned, this part of East Tibet was governed by a bunch of whatnots. At the same time, as far as those in the Kagyü tradition were concerned, there was no particular antagonism or resentment per se. The Kagyü approach was somewhat like the hippies'

mentality toward the police force, or the approach of freestyle people—freaks versus the rednecks. It is an interesting social study. Even these days in exile, there is some measure of caution. Only certain Tibetans from the refugee camps are allowed to leave India—namely, those who don't belong to the crazy-wisdom lineage. [*Chuckles.*]

That's a very interesting point. The Eleventh Trungpa was able to sneak out of a tightly controlled political situation in India. There was no bribery involved and no need to prove myself, but it just simply occurred because of the plain old facts. When I received a grant from the Spalding Trust to attend Oxford University, I applied to the Tibetan government-in-exile to study in England, saying, "I have this grant, and I would like to leave India and go to England." It was very simple and direct. Until then, I had been employed as a spiritual adviser in a school for young tülkus in India, and I was seen as a would-be candidate for good things. [*Laughter.*] I had tried to lead three hundred refugees out of Tibet, unsuccessfully for the majority of them, but still nevertheless, I made an attempt to help many people get out of the country, and some of us succeeded. There was a promising future for this young man, who was able to relate with foreign languages. I was a bright young guy who had studied a lot and seemed to comprehend everything about the West. So there was no reason to prevent this bright young man from leaving the country. They allowed me to go out—which was not a particularly big deal. It was a natural decision. I was fantastically yielding and seemingly very nationalistic, and all the rest of it. So there was no reason to prevent me from leaving the country.

It might be an interesting sidetrack to discuss how Tibetan politics work in the present day [1975]. The living situation for many Tibetans is quite wretched these days. Those who are still under the protection of the Tibetan government-in-exile benefit from this a great deal. A few little internal political sparks or fireworks still go on. This is not so bad, actually. It's what is needed. Otherwise the whole situation would completely flop, like a dead horse. People do their best to energize themselves by their involvement with politics. It's a way for them to survive, I suppose.

I don't want to talk too much about the Eleventh Trungpa, because that is myself. But since I have personal experience of my life, this will be a firsthand account. If you don't mind, it would be interesting to discuss some little highlights, although it might be beating one's own drum or something like that.

The training and discovery of the Eleventh Trungpa took place beginning

around the fortieth year of the twentieth century.<sup>37</sup> The death of the Tenth Trungpa shook a lot of people, including the Sixteenth Karmapa and important members of the Kagyü tradition. The Central Tibetan government had fairly recently just about finished destroying the Surmang monasteries. So when the death of the Tenth Trungpa occurred, it was not particularly pleasant for them either. They had their particular guilt about things that had occurred.

The Tenth Trungpa left no directions for how to rediscover the Eleventh. So the monastic committee of Surmang had to go to visit His Holiness the Karmapa in Central Tibet. According to his vision—which we already discussed briefly in the last talk—this particular child had been born in a house, or actually an encampment, five days' journey from the Surmang monastery. The place was named so-and-so; the province was named so-and-so; the family had a brown dog; the father's name was Yeshe Dargye; the mother's name was Chung Tzo; there were two children, a sister and a younger brother. The younger brother would be the Eleventh Trungpa.<sup>38</sup>

The monks from Surmang searched and searched. They selected all kinds of names of different villagers, which they brought back to the Karmapa, but none of them was right. Finally on their third search, they found the place and discovered my parents' names. They took this information back and presented it to the Karmapa, and with one short glance His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa said, "This is the right person; you've found him." [*Laughs; laughter.*]

The monks took a selection of articles that had belonged to the last Trungpa with them on their search, as well as objects and household articles that belonged to others. And when these things were presented to the Eleventh Trungpa, he passed all the tests completely by selecting the objects that had belonged to his predecessor. They also showed him a list of the six realms and told him to point to the realm he came from: "If you come from the hell realm, point to that. If you come from the hungry ghost realm, point to that. If you come from the human realm, point to that. If you come from the *asura* realm, the realm of the jealous gods, point to that," and so on. The Eleventh Trungpa pointed to the human realm, of course. Having passed all of these tests, so to speak, this little boy turned out to be the fateful Eleventh Trungpa.

I was brought back to the monastery with my parents when I was about eighteen months old. His Holiness Karmapa was visiting in the locality at this time. He was there to study with his tutors and teachers in East Tibet. So the enthronement ceremony for the Eleventh Trungpa was conducted by His

Holiness himself. He also conducted the first cutting of the hair, which is a sign of becoming a monk and a Buddhist. It's kind of a baptism ceremony.

My education began very simply, around the age of five. I think I may have been four and a half, something like that, when I started learning to read and write. My tutor had a scar on his forehead. He was a bald-headed guy who was invited from the province next to Surmang to come and train me. He had been a disciple of the previous Trungpa. I remember one winter morning the snow was very thick outside, and people were trying to push it off the flat roof of the monastery. I was woken up earlier than usual, and I had an early breakfast. "This is a very special occasion," somebody said, and they lit incense and prostrated to the shrine. I was brought into the shrine room, and other people said their little, "Hey nonni-nonni"—their religious things—in the shrine room. Then I was brought back into the living room and told, "Now you are going to learn to read." First I learned to read *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, *nga*, *ca*, *cha*, *ja*, *nya*, and all the other letters of the Tibetan alphabet. I was told that *ka* looks like somebody walking on three legs \$\$, and *kha* is somebody with a big mouth and their tongue hanging out \$\$\$. *Ga* is like an animal walking \$\$, and *nga* looks like a worm \$\$\$. They gave me all these little descriptions of the letters, and it was very enjoyable at the time.

As a child, you wonder what's going to happen when you begin to learn. Are they going to switch your mind around or inside out and show you something different inside? Apparently they are just going to show you these designs. It was okay. And it was quite light and relaxed that morning. I was waiting for when the actual beating was going to take place. [*Laughter.*] It didn't happen for several days, but then, slowly but surely, it came along. [*Corporal punishment was an expected part of the educational process.—Ed.*]

Learning was quite simple. I was moved into the retreat center, Dorje Khyung Dzong, which had been created by the Tenth Trungpa. It was very bleak up in the retreat. Winter was continuing, and snow was falling constantly, again and again. Dogs were barking in the distance. You could hear the retreatants ringing their gongs and gathering their drums in the evenings for the Mahakala pujas. Apart from that, nothing was very exciting or entertaining. At the same time, the learning process was quite exciting. You were constantly challenged by little things. However, your mind would tend to wander a great deal to something else. A child's mind is constantly drifting to something else.

For instance, I used to get very fascinated by the grain of the paper on which

the alphabet was written. The letters were written on handmade paper with lots of grain in it that made designs. Sometimes I would confuse the designs on the paper with the alphabet. Sometimes I would make out a little tiger or a little dragon or snake in the designs, all kinds of little things like that. But still, my education went on okay.

Suddenly, everybody was very excited about me. I didn't quite know what it was all about. My tutor said, "You learned the whole alphabet right away. Now we can teach you the next thing." We went on to training in spelling and reading, which went on for a long time.

This particular tutor was a very kind person. He used to tell me stories about Milarepa, Padmasambhava, the previous Trungpas, and lots of other lineage figures. It was very exciting. I used to like to ask him questions, partly because I was trying to avoid studying too much, and partly I was interested in hearing stories about all these people. It was very interesting.

On several occasions, lots of occasions, my tutor lost his temper. More likely in his case he actually thought that he *should* lose his temper. When he would lose his temper, he would take his time before he actually beat me. He used to get up and light a stick of incense first. Then he would go out and wash his hands. Then he prostrated three times, and then he would begin to beat me. That ceremony was a very intense one. After a while, he didn't have to even go as far as washing his hands. He would just light the incense, and I would know the whole thing that was coming. [*Laughter.*]

At a certain point, when I was about nine, the monastic committee and particularly the bursar, or the secretary, thought that my tutor was being too kind, telling me too many stories and not teaching enough. The committee decided to appoint someone else to replace him, which as far as I was concerned was a terrible idea, [*chuckles*] and I still think so! [*Laughter.*]

The new tutor was a man with a reputation for immense accomplishment in training young kids. His own nephew and his relatives and all of his students became great learned people. But at the same time he was very hot-tempered, short-tempered, and he was very strict and wouldn't allow me any space to have a good time. I rarely heard stories about anything from him. He was my tutor for quite a long time.

At a certain point, I began to surpass his talent. My handwriting was better than his, and my reading ability was better than his. He still worked to create a better version of me. His help was very powerful. We had at least three scenes

every day, where I was either being hit or being pinched or having things thrown at me. That was constantly taking place. In between times, he was very loving, nice, and kind, very fatherly. He would speak in a high-pitched voice, praising me. “Oooooo, nice Rinpoche, oooooo,” or what have you. [*Laughs; laughter.*]

We had quite a lot of fun toward the end of my development. He was very proud and kept on gossiping with others, telling them stories about how well I was doing with him. But whenever I was in front of him, he would say, “Still not so good. That’s terrible.” That was an interesting experience.

At a certain point, people in the monastic community, as well as my attendants—which consisted of a food server, a person in charge of interviews, a person who screened the people who came out and in, and a person who was in charge of my general welfare—all of these people began to get very tired of my tutor because of his short-temperedness and how he constantly created scenes. A very hot situation took place.

One evening as I lay down to go to sleep, my tutor said, “I have to talk to you. I’m thinking of resigning.” This was when I was about thirteen. “You seem to have learned what I have to teach you, and I have no more to teach you. But if you are interested, I could stay on, if you like.” [*Chuckles.*] My response was, “That’s good.” And I told him, “You did a great job, and I appreciate it, but I think you should go.” [*Laughter.*] He swallowed, and you could hear him swallowing his ownin-breath. The next day he presented his resignation to the committee, and the day after that he packed, and the day after that he left. This gave me a very interesting feeling. I felt somewhat terrible, and at the same time I experienced fantastic freedom. Now I could do what I wanted. But I couldn’t think of what I wanted to do, particularly. Just the same old thing. [*Laughter.*] However, it was a fantastic experience of rediscovering freedom. I’m sure this is similar to American kids finally leaving home or running away, or something like that.

The situation of my work, practice, and study continued after that. At that point, the situation became very natural to me. Particularly, my own little hesitations, problems of laziness, feelings of inadequacy—all those feelings of being a dumb person were completely uplifted. There was a sense of realizing that whatever further things I wanted to do, I could do them. A sense of delight and sort of dancing in the learning situation took place. This situation continued, particularly when I studied with my root teacher, Jamgön Kongtrül, at his monastery, Sechen (known as Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen). There was a *khenpo*,



Khenpo Gangshar, at Jamgön Kongtrül's monastery, who was one of the teachers, or professors, and you had your own tutors for studying. The learning situation at the Sechen monastery was very energetic. I felt inadequate at the beginning. But I learned that as soon as you are able to click in to one particular point, you begin to cultivate that, and from that you begin to build everything around it. You begin to realize that you have a lot of responsibilities and a lot of capabilities taking place simultaneously, which is fantastic.

Meeting Jamgön Kongtrül was remarkable, and I think it's worth telling this particular story. Throughout the whole time I was with my tutor and with other people at Surmang, they were telling me stories about their admiration for people who had died, great teachers they had met who'd lived in the past. I had never met any of them. According to these stories, the whole spiritual thing is that you have to be a completely religious person. Even if you are not, you should pretend. You pretend to be good, and you keep smiling at everybody. You say nice things to everybody, and you half close your eyes all the time, as if you are pretending to meditate all the time. That was the kind of story I heard. But then, meeting Jamgön Kongtrül, I began to actually see what people really meant. It was not so much that he half closed his eyes all the time or behaved in a saintly way particularly. He joked around, he was very jolly, and he was very kind and soft and insightful. Sometimes he didn't even sit upright. I had been told to always sit upright. He lay down in his seat, and he accommodated people. There was immense power coming to you from that presence.



*Chögyam Trungpa (right) with the Khenpo from Sechen, Khenpo Gangshar, who was an important guru for Trungpa Rinpoche.*

From that time onward, I would say that the journey was very definite and really committed. Before that particular point, I felt that I was being made to be a charlatan and asked to make a fool of myself. This happened particularly when I was told to say certain things to visiting dignitaries. I would be virtually made to memorize the whole conversation. The monks would say, “Then he will say that, you will say that, and then he will say that, and you will say that.” Well, the problem was that the other people wouldn’t say the things that you expected them to say. [*Laughter.*] So then I was completely lost, and there were occasional confusions like that involved. [*Laughter.*] At first I thought that even those people were programmed as well, so everything should be synchronized. But somehow that wasn’t the case, as I realized. I felt envious of them that they could speak freely, while I had to memorize what to say. So it was very interesting meeting Jamgön Kongtrül, who was the real embodiment of sanity.



*Jamgön Kongtrül, Chögyam Trungpa's root guru.*  
PHOTO BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA.

I think the early part of my upbringing is the important point. There is not really much point in going on. We could go on for twenty-four hours, but there's no particular point in going through the rest of it. The interesting point here is how you begin on an ordinary level, on this sort of imbecile-child level, and from that how you begin to click into the various stages of sophistication, sanity, and a visionary kind of world. That theme seems to play a very important part in my life. How can you emulate a greater person? By imitating them? By memorizing their speech? By pretending? None of those seems to work. One just has to *be* it, on a very simple level.

The dreams of all of the Trungpas were to propagate Buddhism, just as the dreams of all of those in the Kagyü tradition were to conquer foreign territories in the name of the Practicing Lineage, in the name and in the style of basic sanity. The general idea is that the presentation of Buddhism should be carried forward somewhat in the manner of crazy wisdom. So here we are! Buddhism is in America at this point.

*Student:* Several nights ago you talked about the deliberate practice of exposing oneself to being haunted. You mentioned that this kind of practice requires a great deal of composure. I take it that this composure is not the usual sense of composure, which is some sort of cool head that comes from the confidence that you are going to be okay. What is the composure that you were talking about based on? What does it rely on?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Very interestingly, this kind of composure is based on bluntness, which is not the usual idea of composure. It's not supposed to be blunt usually, but it's supposed to be very delicate. This sense of composure is bluntness, not in the sense of vomiting out everything, but bluntness in the sense of fearlessness. You are not allowing any kind of bullshit to get in between the two situations, but just simply presenting the facts as they are.

*S:* One other question: The word *haunting* brought to mind the experiences we have when we sit a lot. When we sit longer and longer, our trips become pretty apparent. Some sort of superwatcher seems to go on, and one tends to feel somewhat desolate and haunted by that. Is this kind of technique recommended in a situation such as you described? Should we be that deliberate?

*CTR:* Yes. Deliberate.

*S:* Deliberately abandoning, giving in to that sort of haunted situation?

*CTR:* Wouldn't hurt a flea.

*Student:* I would like to ask you some questions about the two methods that you mentioned: working with mishaps and the cutting through that you just described now. I gather that, being in the Kagyü lineage, we inherit mishaps. The point is not to try to get to a state where there are no mishaps around you, but maybe to try to get to the state where you can use mishaps almost as a means of locomotion. You might use them to move forward. Like explosions in an engine, the mishaps would drive you forward. Would it be something like that?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think so, but not to the extent of self-destructiveness.

*S:* No, but like energy.

*CTR:* Yes, definitely. In other words, the Kagyü lineage is not afraid of any mishaps. They welcome them.

*S:* They get more mileage per mishap than any other lineage on the path.  
[Laughs; laughter.]

*CTR:* Absolutely. Otherwise, the Kagyüpas wouldn't be taking journeys out to foreign territories to convert people into Buddhism.

*S:* Then I also wanted to ask you about the cutting through. It seems it might almost be an extension of the mishap principle of movement, only taking it a whole step further. A mishap is something you wait for, until it happens to you, and then you work with it. With the cutting through it's almost as if you would anticipate and walk into a—

*CTR:* Sometimes cutting through becomes the vanguard of mishaps, but still that cutting through is the right thing to do. Yes.

*Student:* When you described the composure as bluntness, it reminded me of something you talked about at your Tibetan Buddhist Path course at Naropa in 1974. You talked about magic and one aspect of it being the ability to go through obstacles by means of crushing them with a certain bluntness, like the bluntness of a hand-hewn rock knife. This sounds like the same thing.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think so. Yes. You have a good memory. That's pretty good, sir.<sup>39</sup>

*S:* I remembered it because of the strong image. It makes sense to me. [*Laughter.*] I would like to know what the connection is between practicing meditation and this sense of using mishaps and cutting through, and between those two things and the state known as the "state of nonmeditation."

*CTR:* I don't want to go too far with that discussion here.

*S:* I'm sorry, what do you mean?

*CTR:* I wouldn't go too far with discussing that state of nonmeditation.

*S:* Well, it seems that with the cutting through, there's a question of leaping into something. Would you rather not talk about that state?

*CTR:* That's not particularly for discussing in public, shall we say. That discussion comes later, as you progress further on the path. [*Laughs.*]

*S:* Finally, would you say that the mishap situation is working with hope and that the cutting-through situation is working with fear?

*CTR:* Yes, that's right. That's good actually.

*Student:* Each of the Trungpas seems to have a distinct style. I believe you mentioned how some students begin to develop a certain style in relating to the teachings. I was wondering if there is a style of relating to the teacher and the

teachings that is somehow different from the way we approach other things in life? Is there something specifically happening in the student-teacher situation that affects our style of relating to the whole process?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think the style is largely based on national behavior, or just the general karma that we are stuck with, that we're in. How we relate depends on the larger situation, the general karma that we've created. It's like how to relate with the winterness in Vermont or the Karmê Chöling-ness of the situation. [The seminar took place at the Karmê Chöling practice center in Vermont.—Ed.] You know, you can't just change the whole situation completely at all. We have to adapt to that situation. In the summer, when we have a water shortage, we might have to bathe in the lake and flush the toilets less because of a shortage of water, or whatever. Those situations are timely. The style is not particularly an individual version, but it's related with how the situation is handled, how the situation has evolved around you.

S: What exactly do you mean by how you relate to the situation around you in terms of style?

*CTR:* Well, you are *there*, in the situation. So you can't be here [somewhere else], because of the crowd or the distance, between there and here.

S: I wanted to get into the question of having a certain style of relating to a situation. I'm basically asking about the Trungpas. What makes a Trungpa?

*CTR:* What makes Trungpa is what makes Surmang. Surmang is Trungpa. Trungpa is Surmang, in some sense. You know, that situation or that kind of connection is developing here, too. Generally, the style of the teachings is based on the national psychology and national attitude. Either that psychology makes things completely workable for the development of the lineage, or if you have the completely wrong handle, or the wrong end of the stick [i.e., if the national psychology and the teachings are at odds], things are constantly destructive, and obstacles of all kinds occur to you.

*Student:* I've heard a rumor that you are supposed to be the last of the Trungpas. Is this because you have an idea about what's going to happen in America? Is it that the style of the Trungpas is just not workable in America, and a new style has to be developed?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* You see, the style of the Trungpas as it relates to a monastic situation and that kind of bureaucracy won't continue at this point. But the teachings of Buddhism continue to flourish in this country. Maybe the

next Trungpa will be just *one* of the leaders, rather than the messiah.

S: But would he be considered a Trungpa, or would he be a—

CTR: Well, it's uncertain what kind of a name he might have. That doesn't really matter.

*Student:* Rinpoche, could you say a little more about beginning at an ordinary level, beginning with confusion, and then clicking in to an area of sanity and cultivating that?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It's a question of how much you do, as opposed to what you just talk about doing. You can't purely talk about transforming confusion. Otherwise you might be caught up in a very powerful, slick trick, and then you are completely fooled.

S: But there's some sense that we'd better do it now?

CTR: *Right now.* Allen?

*Allen Ginsberg:* This is a somewhat similar question to what was raised before. Is the Trungpa lineage continuable in America, given the situation here? Would you like to see some form of that lineage continuing, and would that involve a tülku? Or is that something that is up to the sangha here to try to figure out with you?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think it depends on how the psychology of the sangha actually evolves. The general plan is that some kind of reign of sanghaship will take place for a while. That's how it happened at the beginning of many lineages. At the beginning, we didn't have tülkus of Naropa constantly. We had Naropa and Marpa and Milarepa and Gampopa, who were separate individuals, successive high-ranking, highly developed students. Then when the actual fermentation took place, finally they were able to reproduce their particular reincarnation, their particular teachers. It's a little tricky at this point to have a little kid on whom you lay a lot of trips. Quite possibly, that little kid might not buy it, if he's smart enough! [*Laughter.*] I wouldn't buy the idea that I'm going to come back. [*The implication is that the next Trungpa wouldn't believe that he actually was the Trungpa or that he was going to come back again as another Trungpa.—Ed.*] [*Laughter.*]

AG: Can you envision, though, students with enough energy, meditation, and prajna to continue on the level that you're working?

CTR: Yes, well, I think it needs group spirit. Quite hopefully, it has been said

that the Kagyü lineage gets better as the time gets darker. The Kagyü lineage becomes much brighter.

AG: With the children stronger than the parents?

CTR: Yeah, yeah.

*Student:* Do you think it's possible for any future Trungpas to be a woman?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* That's an interesting thought. [*Laughter.*]

S: Why weren't there any women in the lineage? Or were there women that we don't know about?

CTR: Well, there were a lot of them, but none of them became particularly... men. [*Laughs; laughter.*] Historically, how things developed was based on the social situation. The men were hard workers and they went out—if they had work to do. You know, Gampopa was pushed by his wife to go out and become a saint. [*Laughter.*] [*This remark was said in a way that implies that Gampopa's wife wanted him to succeed at something and support the family by becoming a saint.—Ed.*] In those days, there was no automation, no washing machine, no automatic babysitter, so everybody had to do everything manually and share everything on the domestic level. So I don't think the roles of men and women were a reflection of the teachings, but it was just purely a social norm. Men went out and did most of the work outside, and the women stayed back and bore the children and did domestic work. I'm sure that Milarepa's mother was a very powerful factor in Milarepa becoming Milarepa. There were a lot of women saints, women siddhas, but they were not particularly celebrated, prominent, in the lineage of the Kagyü or in many other traditions.

S: Do you think it will change in the future if the tradition continues?

CTR: Sure, hopefully. That's an interesting or auspicious ending, actually. Maybe one of the Trungpas will be a woman in the future! It will be an interesting experience. [*Laughs; laughter.*] Why not? Gladly.

From an experiential view, the point here is not to speculate too much on history and which Trungpa was a good guy or a bad guy. Rather, by studying this material, we are trying to encourage the sitting practice of meditation. The future seed of the potential lineage, such as the line of the Trungpas, can be born out of your particular participation, your work. As we discussed already, it's not so much which was the good king, which was the bad king, as in generations in history. The king is also produced by the public. Of course, such a king cannot



be particularly inbred. But once the king has been born, he needs to be educated properly. It depends on the general public intelligence that exists around that world, that particular area in which a king is born.

Historical studies and the scholarship of talking about the Trungpas may be futile. The question is, how can we create our next line of lineage holders, which remains sane and powerful in American Buddhism? This is entirely your responsibility, as well as mine. I'm doing my best, and you should do your best. In the meantime, keep on sitting a lot.

## *Appendix*

### **THE TRUNGPA TÜLKUS**

*The following is a lightly edited transcript of the final talk Chögyam Trungpa gave at the 1974 Vajradhatu Seminary, an advanced program of study. It was given a year before the Mishap Lineage Seminar (The Line of the Trungpas) took place. It provides additional information about the fundamental concept of a tülku, as well as the Trungpa lineage specifically, so it seemed appropriate to append it here.*

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS the Trungpa lineage and how the notion of tülkus fits into all of this. The tülku principle is basically connected with the three-kaya principle as well as the idea of the guru principle, the yidams, and other vajrayana principles. I think basically it is very simple. The enlightened state has three levels: the dharmakaya, which is the ultimate being, the origin of everything, formless and all-pervasive; the sambhogakaya, which is the manifestation of the activities of dharmakaya into the visible level of energy, play, and everything; and the nirmanakaya, which represents the sense of actual earthly connections, energy materializing on a physical plane, particularly as human beings. The good intention extends toward all the rest of the realms as well, but in general the enlightened ones find that human beings are more workable. They speak language; they have developed intelligence; they have complicated social systems; and they also experience pain more acutely than beings in the other realms, who are dissolved much more into their own confusion and so are more freaked out than human beings. So the human realm is the most workable situation of all.

The Tibetan translation of “nirmanakaya buddha” is *tülku*. *Tul* means “emanation,” and *ku* means “body,” so *tülku* means “emanated body.” In this

context, for instance, Gautama Buddha is a tülku.

There are several types of tülkus. The Buddha on earth is one type of tülku. The images of Buddha are also known as tülkus, tülkus of art. Another tülku is the tülku who continues to be reborn constantly in order to help beings on various levels. But the Tibetan tradition of discovering tülkus who are incarnate lamas, that somebody is the tülku of so-and-so, is a different kind of setup, in a sense. There are actually various types of incarnate lamas and various types of rebirth taking place. There is the tülku who incarnates before the previous incarnation has died, several months or even years earlier. And then there is what's called a "blessed tülku," in which the previous person chooses the person who is closest to him or blesses some passing bodhisattva who hasn't quite attained the highest of the bhumis. He blesses that person, and he takes certain types of energy, or spiritual energy, which transcends ego anyway, and transfers it to the chosen person. That person then comes back as the incarnation of the previous person. Actually it is a different kind of ego; but at the same time there is a spiritual continuity that takes place. Those are the various levels of incarnation.

Generally in Tibet the blessed tülkus seem to be most prominent. Such tülkus have to be raised and educated; they have to go through training and practice and everything. They have the element of realization; they have more potential of realization than just an ordinary person who has no push or encouragement and nothing injected into them. So these people have a great deal of potentiality. But they haven't quite realized it, so therefore they have to go through training, education, and everything. They begin to come up to the level of their previous incarnation because such spiritual energy has been put into them.

The reason why this is possible but we ordinary people can't do it is because we believe ourselves to be one entity, in spite of philosophical indoctrination. So we find it very difficult to split our personality, unless we become schizophrenic, which is the neurotic level, not a very pleasant or enlightened way of splitting oneself. So there may be a higher level of splitting personality, not into just one person, but many. Usually the body, speech, mind, quality, and action aspects of a particular being are transferred. So you have five types of tülkus, who particularly specialize in scholarship or contemplation or are very active in propagating the dharma and so forth. So the Dalai Lama, Karmapa, or any other tülkus that we can think of seem to be generally the blessed-tülku type of personality. They are recognized by their predecessor, and that person actually blesses that new ego of somebody who is already making some progress in some

way. They encourage them or enforce them in a certain way so that the person can reincarnate as the next Karmapa or the next Dalai Lama. Therefore such a person also has to study and go through various trainings. Otherwise, if everybody is already enlightened or if everybody has to begin all over again, it seems to give the wrong impression. If in each life you have to struggle all the time, it seems to contradict the perpetuating development of enlightenment.

Another question is, what happens to those people who have already injected their essence and their wisdom into somebody else? What happens to the original people? Where do they go? It seems that those original people also come back to this world, not as the reincarnation of themselves particularly, but anonymously, incognito, so to speak. They come back as farmers or fishermen or businessmen or politicians or whatever. They don't necessarily have to come back into a Buddhist environment particularly, because the teachings of enlightenment could be taught at any level. People can be helped at all kinds of levels. That seems to be the basic point. There are possibilities of meeting such people who never heard or thought about any form of the teachings of Buddha, but who somehow are realized in themselves. And in such cases some memories exist within them; they have some idea of their basic being. But there's no point in advertising that eccentricity, particularly if they're going to communicate with the ordinary world. So that seems to be the general setup.

In connection with that I was thinking of discussing some of the Trungpas, who are notable as a whole lineage of blessed incarnations. There are ten incarnated Trungpas. The first one is not an incarnation of Trungpa but Trungpa himself, which makes eleven Trungpas and ten incarnations.

The First Trungpa was one of the disciples of Trung Mase, a siddha who was a disciple of the Fifth Karmapa, Teshin Shekpa. Trung Mase was born in the far east of Tibet as a prince. He renounced his kingdom and became just a traveler. Then he arrived at Karmapa's monastery and became a disciple of the Fifth Karmapa. Karmapa sent him back to his home ground and told him to start anywhere where he could find a practicing place and a teaching situation. So he came back to East Tibet and settled down. He practiced meditation there in a hut made out of reeds. He spent a long time there doing sitting meditation practice, something like six years, and he had very little to eat, but nobody discovered who he was. Eventually he began to feel that he was able to relate with students and that he was in a situation to do so. The story says that he decided to go back and ask his guru. But somehow he got a message—some merchants brought mail for him that said something like, "Don't come back. Go ahead." He understood

this to mean that he didn't have to ask if it was okay for him to teach or not. So he realized the message. Then, having gotten the message, he came back to his hut again and began to teach. In particular he began to teach the six yogas of Naropa and the teachings connected with that—*anuttarayoga*.<sup>40</sup> He was an expert on that, and he gathered a large number of disciples. The local principalities also began to take an interest in his teachings and his being. He had already built the reed hut, so he began to teach in that hut. Eventually he had eleven disciples. Eight of them were called the eight realized ones, and three of them were called the three idiots. [*Laughter.*] The First Trungpa was one of the three idiots.

The word *trungpa* is an honorific term, which literally means “attendant.” Ideally when somebody serves their guru twenty-four hours a day, they begin to get some glimpse of the workings of his mind. They begin to get messages and reminders of awareness and things like that. So the best way to develop is to be the guru's servant. That's the tradition. So *trung* means “close,” “nearby,” and *pa* makes that a noun, so *trungpa* means “he who is close to the teacher.”

The First Trungpa was born in the family of one of the local lords. He was educated and raised as an educated person. In his youth, his teens, he worked with his father ruling the country, collecting taxes, and fighting with the hostile neighbors and everything. Then he left his kingdom, his principality. He had heard the name of Trung Mase, so he abandoned his home and settled with him. He spent a long time, something like twenty years, practicing meditation. And he received a lot of teachings at the beginning: the various levels of studying Chakrasamvara tantra; and various sadhanas, such as the external sadhana, the internal sadhana, the secret sadhana, and so forth. He studied and practiced the six doctrines, or yogas, of Naropa. And then his teacher sent the First Trungpa away. He said, “Now it is time for you to go away from me; you have received enough of what I have. You should find your own monastery, your own place to stay, and teach other people.”

So he visited various places. He traveled toward East Tibet and came to the fort of Adro Shelu-bum, who was the local landowner and local lord. When the First Trungpa arrived, he was repeating a text of Manjushri [see [chapter 4, note 21](#)]. In it there's a particular phrase, *chökyi gyaltsen lekpar dzuk*, which means “Firmly plant the banner of dharma.” So he arrived at the door of Adro Shelu-bum's castle with that particular verse. He was well received, and he became a teacher of Adro Shelu-bum, who offered his fort and his castle as a monastery.

Without very much interest, the First Trungpa accepted, but then he just continued his travels.

The Second Trungpa (there are very few stories about him) was also a traveler. After the First Trungpa's death, the Second Trungpa was discovered by Karmapa, as usually happens. The Second Trungpa was discovered as an incarnation of the First Trungpa. But there was no monastery, no establishment. He just became a student of Trung Mase, a student of a student of Trung Mase by that time.

During the time of the Third Trungpa, something happened. The Trungpa incarnations organized a group of Surmang monasteries, which were not previously actually stationed in one place. They usually camped around. In fact it was called Surmang garchen, which means "Surmang, the great camp." The monks traveled in caravans: their libraries were on pack mules, the shrine was a large tent, the monks' quarters were also tents, and the abbots' quarters were tents as well. There were supposed to have been something like 140 people traveling around. They usually traveled among the different districts of East Tibet; they traveled great distances. The pattern of the culture was that you traveled in the highlands during the summer when the highlands were not too cold, and you traveled in the lowlands in winter because the climate there was relatively reasonable. And they set up temporary monasteries in each place they camped. So the monks had their practices developing, and the student newcomers could be instructed. And in many cases, local students began to join the camp; they wanted to become novices, and they were accepted. So as they went on, their camp became larger. That was the pattern in Tibet at the time. Tsurphu, the Karmapas' monastery, was itself happening in that fashion. It was called the "great camp of Karmapa." So in most of Tibet, the Tibetan monastic system was not in permanent dwelling places but in tents.

Finally, at the end of the life of the Third Trungpa, one of the Karmapas (I don't remember exactly which generation of Karmapas it was) had a sudden insight. He sent an invitation to the Third Trungpa to come and visit him. So the Third Trungpa took a journey to Central Tibet, which usually takes about six months, and Karmapa told him that the prophecy of the *mahasiddha* Dombipa had come true: "It is you. You are the incarnation of Dombipa. And the prophecy goes like this. Dombipa lived in India. One evening at the end of his life he was drinking out of his skullcup, and he finally decided to transplant his mahamudra teachings somewhere other than India. He said, 'In ten lifetimes'—or something like that—I'll be going wherever my skullcup lands.' And then he

threw his skullcup into the air, and the skullcup flew across India and landed in Surmang, on a particular little mountain. So you should establish a permanent monastery there.” And the place where the skullcup landed happened to be the castle of Adro Shelu-bum. Since then it has been called Dütö Tel, *dütö* meaning *amrita*, and *tel* meaning “hill.” Apart from that story about how the Third Trungpa received instructions to establish a permanent monastic residence, nothing very much is known about him.

The Fourth Trungpa was very well known as a teacher throughout the Kagyü tradition. He was the only person who actually received what’s called the *shi-je* tradition, one of the contemplative schools of Tibetan Buddhism often associated with the teachings of chö.<sup>41</sup> The basic philosophy of chö is that, instead of asking for protection from the mahakalas or your guru, you give up your negativities and your security and ask the enemies or the demons, whoever they are, to consume you. That particular technique is very revealing to a lot of people, particularly in dealing with death and dealing with life, sickness, and chaos. That particular practice is actually something that the contemplative tradition extracted, so to speak, from the Prajnaparamita Sutras. As well there is a touch of tantric outrageousness, stepping on your problems, stepping on your threat. That particular practice is called chö, and it usually takes place in the evening or at night.

The Fourth Trungpa made retreat centers, something like 108 retreat centers, supposedly in haunted places. And at the age of twenty-four he actually left his monastery. He bestowed the ruling of his monastery on his brother, and he traveled around the country. He had a white yak without any horns, which is the most domesticated type of yak, so that it wouldn’t be temperamental. It had a ring through its nose, so you could lead it wherever you wanted. He rejected any services from the monastery and decided to travel by himself. In our monastery we used to have the ring, the wooden loop, that went through his yak’s nose. And he had a thighbone trumpet, which we also used to have in the treasury of the monastery. He used it to call the haunting evil spirits to eat you up.

The Fourth Trungpa was also one of the great teachers of the subsect of the Kagyü tradition called the Nedo (Tib. *gnas mdo*) Kagyü, which is not included in the four great and the eight lesser schools. It developed based on the idea of the Pure Land. Like the Pure Land tradition in Japan, it placed enormous emphasis on the worship of Amitabha and so forth.<sup>42</sup>

So from that time onward the Fourth Trungpa actually sat in a particular cave

in Dütsi Tel. In a valley just north of Dütsi Tel he found a cave, and he sat and meditated in it for six years. According to the story, he fainted many times, but he regained consciousness and still continued to practice. He rejected any kind of hospitality from his monastery.

I think one of the outstanding aspects of the Fourth Trungpa is that he was a great scholar. He wrote a three-volume commentary on mahamudra, each volume probably having about a thousand pages in it. At that time nobody had ever written a commentary on mahamudra in the Kagyü lineage except for various manuals on visualization and other things. But this particular manual of mahamudra was straightforward; nothing else like it had ever been written. And according to the stories, one of the Karmapas was very shocked that the Fourth Trungpa could say so many things about mahamudra, a three-thousand-page book. He said, “The Fourth Trungpa’s skull must be bursting,” or “He must be just about to explode his skull if he has so much to say about mahamudra.”

The rest of the Trungpas, apart from the eighth one, are rather mellow and seem to be very ordinary, very domesticated people. The Fifth Trungpa received an official title from the emperor of China. He was given seals and various official things, because that was the time of the Muslim invasion of Tibet. He was made into what’s called a hutoktu [see chapter 6, note 30], which is a particular title of “royal imperial teacher” or “imperial guru,” or something like that. But apart from that, there isn’t very much known about him.

And I think the Seventh Trungpa actually died very young. He was about eighteen years old when he died. When he was an infant, his mother accidentally dropped him on the floor, which caused a concussion in his head. And that sickness continued throughout his life. But nevertheless he was supposed to be a very bright kid. He composed a lot of poems, and if his life had been prolonged, he could have written many more. He could have become a great poet-saint, but he died at the age of eighteen.

The Eighth Trungpa is known to have been a very great artist, particularly good at painting. He had a goatee, and he used to love drinking a very thick tea. And he was very kind and gentle. He spent a long time practicing meditation, something like ten years. He locked himself in the top part of his castle, which had been given to him and his lineage earlier on.

*Student:* You didn’t say anything about the Sixth Trungpa.

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, there’s nothing very much to say



particularly.

Anyway, we used to have the Eighth Trungpa's handwriting and his calligraphy and the thangka paintings that he did. It was similar to the thangkas I've seen of the kings of Shambhala, that type.<sup>43</sup> He actually did little thangkas of the eighty-four siddhas. They were very beautiful Gardri school paintings and fantastic works of art. And he compiled the library of Surmang, which was destroyed at the time of the Tenth Trungpa.

The Ninth Trungpa was supposedly a very shameful person, not in the sense of being wild or anything like that, but he just spent his life sitting around outside in the sun, chatting with people and taking anise snuff. He was very peasantlike and uneducated, actually. The only thing he composed in his life was four lines of a puja-type offering to Mahakala, which we used to chant in our monastery, and that doesn't say very much. He was very ordinary. I think at the time there was not very much learning or very much intellectual work going on, and there was also not very much practice going on. And he just existed. His death was supposed to be a quite interesting one. He kept saying, "Tomorrow I'm going to die. Since I'm going to die tomorrow, at least I'm going to die in a dignified way." He called his attendant to come and take off his old clothes and put on his yellow robe. Then he sat up in the cross-legged vajra posture, and he was gone. This was the only testimonial that he knew what he was doing.

And then there is the Tenth Trungpa. I'm sure I don't have to tell you too much. If you like, you can read about him in *Born in Tibet*, in which there are detailed stories. He was born into the family of a local lord of the Surmang district. He won lots of court cases that had been initiated against our monastery by various Geluk monasteries in our district. They were in league with the Central Tibetan government, which actually finally invaded our monastery and sacked it, and there was a court case going on afterward. The Tenth Trungpa was a great politician, and he was also a great scholar. He had studied with Jamgön Kongtrül the Great for a long time. Supposedly in his early life when he was with Jamgön Kongtrül, he couldn't get hold of butter to make a butter lamp, so he used incense to create a glow on the text just to be able to read a little bit. Then he would memorize what he had read.

When he meditated he sat in a meditation box, which is a traditional thing. You have a little box that you sit in; you lean back at night and sleep in it, and to get up you just lean forward. So you get up, and you meditate all the time. He supposedly tied his hair to the ceiling during sitting meditation so that if he

nodded off, his hair would wake him up. He did that for about six years, actually. And sometimes he found that even that wasn't effective enough, so he had stinging nettles arranged around the rim of his meditation box so that if he leaned over, he would get stung. He was a very tough person, and once he set his mind to something, it never changed. And he was very much into austerity. When he was searching for his guru, he abandoned his monastery; he gave up riding on horseback, eating meat, wearing leather or animal products apart from wool, and so forth.

I think that's most of the Trungpas. As we discussed previously, all the Trungpas were blessed tülkus, blessed incarnations, rather than a one-shot deal.

*Student:* Who were examples of the other types of tülkus? Do we know anyone by name?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I don't think we do. I don't think there's anybody that we can mention. But sometimes some of the actual incarnations, the direct ones, are known to be a particular person, like the great Khyentse Rinpoche, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. There are some extraordinary stories about such people. When they are brought up and they are something like six years old, they're very articulate. They seem to know everything. And their parents begin to feel very inferior to their kids. Their kids seem to function much better in the world than they could. They haven't been taught reading or writing, or maybe they are taught just a hint of it, but they pick it up very fast, and they even correct their teachers as they go on. It's the same sort of thing as Mozart, who was supposed to be playing music when he was six years old. It's that kind of approach. Very little training is needed, and you can just continue all the time and in fact get better each time. There is a genius in the family who is a direct incarnation—which doesn't seem to be the case with any of the present incarnate lamas.

Such direct incarnations need a lot of special attention. It is interesting to see what happens when an incarnate lama who was actually assigned to be a direct incarnation rejects his life completely. I met a local king in the neighborhood next to mine. He had five sons, and one of them was an incarnate lama that he didn't want to let go because he didn't want him to face hardships, such as being mistreated by tutors and everything. He was held back and kept home, and eventually he married. And he went completely insane. People had to restrain him to keep him from jumping out of windows and things like that. Somehow something begins to fuse when you don't meet that particular kind of karmic

demand from higher authorities, so to speak, and you just turn back into a vegetable.

S: In something that I read recently that gives an account of the various Kagyü sects, it said that one of the small divisions was the Surmang Kagyü. I don't know if that is true or not. But it said that there's a separate sect, called the Surmang Kagyü, of which the Trungpas are the head. I wonder if that's true and, if so, what characterizes this particular division of the Kagyü order.

CTR: Well, the interesting point is that the Eighth Trungpa incorporated a great deal of Nyingma teachings. His role was similar to Rangjung Dorje's role in unifying the Kagyü and Nyingma teachings.<sup>44</sup> The Eighth Trungpa incorporated a lot of Nyingma teachings, and he actually adopted Ekajati as the protector of the Surmang monastery. Actually, the Kagyü didn't have Ekajati. [*She is a Nyingma protector.—Ed.*] Andearlier, the Fourth Trungpa's characteristic teaching was that particular chö teaching, which made him very special. And we also have the Surmang version of the complete mandala performance of the Chakrasamvara sadhana, which was translated into a form of dance. That was the discovery of the teacher of the First Trungpa, Trung Mase.<sup>45</sup> Other characteristics of the Surmang Kagyü were that there was more research work done on the six yogas of Naropa, and there were definitely more studies made on mahamudra by the Trungpas, particularly the Fourth Trungpa's commentary. Based on that, the Surmang people had a great deal of information about mahamudra. They were experts on that. And in fact the Fifteenth Karmapa actually invited Tendzin Rinpoche, who is supposed to be the previous birth of Taggie [Chögyam Trungpa's son], to teach him the Surmang Kagyü's ideas about mahamudra.

But soon after the Fifteenth Karmapa died, Tendzin Rinpoche also died, so there was no chance to do that. So mahamudra seems to be one of the Surmang Kagyü specialties in which they are expert; another is bringing the Nyingma tradition into the Kagyü. The Tenth Trungpa was very emotional about the Nyingma tradition. He and Gyaltsap Rinpoche, who was Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen's teacher, had sort of a spiritual love affair. The Tenth Trungpa would say, "I wish I was born in your monastery," and Gyaltsap Rinpoche would say the same to him. There was a very moving experience before the Tenth Trungpa left Sechen, where he met Gyaltsap Rinpoche. The two of them went up to the roof of the monastery, and they sat together and chanted this tune of invocation to Ekajati so that Ekajati would keep an eye on them after they departed and they

would still be together.

I think that, not in a particularly flashy or extraordinary way but in a very subtle way, the Surmang people have somehow managed to maintain their intelligence and wisdom.

*Student:* Could you say something more about the lama dance?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* It's very elaborate. It has 360 moves or themes, and the performance usually takes about a day and a half; there's about a three-hour performance first, which is the preparation of the ground; and then there is another approximately five-hour performance establishing the shrine, the creation of a mandala; and then there is a twenty-four-hour dance concerned with the actual mandala itself. There are certain movements connected with taking refuge and taking the bodhisattva vow as you chant and dance. And then there is exorcising the hostile environment and the calling upon blessings. And then you have visualizations. All of them are in the form of dance.

This particular dance is different from the basic Tibetan dance that you might see or have seen already in films, where the dancers are wearing robes. In this Chakrasamvara dance they are dressed in heruka costumes, with bone ornaments and crowns made out of bone, usually ivory or mule or horse bones, carved and inlaid with jewels and so forth. That's supposed to represent the various yogic exercises that have developed. This is part of hatha-yoga practice, supposedly. The idea is that there is what's known as fast dance and slow dance. In fast dance you're supposed to speed up the slow dance—which is competing with a cloud, you know; you are not moving at all. You know that idea. It's a complete sadhana; you begin to get into it more and more.

I started to learn when I was about sixteen. And not having had enough exercise the first three days, my whole body completely ached; I had flu and everything. And they said, "You shouldn't just lie down. You should come down and do at least three hours of practice." And I kept hanging on, and finally I felt much better. I could get into the rhythm of the whole thing and the energy that exists. It's more like just movement dance, more connected with T'ai Chi or something like that than the traditional Tibetan dance, which is jumpy and very fast. But this one is very slow and movement oriented. You have a drum in your right hand and a bell in your left hand, and you have to learn to use them properly as well. After every full beat, you ring your bell. So everybody has to be synchronized, the whole orchestra and all the dancers. And it's very defined, six of this and seven of that and then ten of that. Then the leaders of the dance

make certain moves that indicate which part of our body we're going to use to begin with as a main movement. It's very much like the feeling of Chakrasamvara; you dance all the time. And you sort of put your passion out constantly. You relate with your passion. And the more you relate with your passion, the more you get into it.

This particular dance is based on a great feast. So in the middle of the dance circle there's a great feast, which is eventually distributed to everybody. And there is a blessing of the feast, visualizing yourself and the altar table with the feast as part of the great mandala as well. And you bring in the *jnanasattva* by a certain dance movement; usually that particular part is very slow. I was able to dance only about six times, because it happens only once every year. And I began to enjoy it more every year. I wasn't particularly approved the first year as a good dancer, but as I went on I had memorized the whole thing completely. People used to carry little books attached to their ornaments or dance costumes, but I didn't have to use that either. I was very good at it; I had become a good dancer. I was actually just about to teach it the next year at the monastery. Every six years you recruit new dance students, and you spend three months training them, teaching the movements first and the disciplines, and then the actual themes and songs and everything. I was going to teach the next year and then, thanks to Chairman Mao...

S: Does everybody wear the same costume?

CTR: Yes. They all wear the same costume. In a certain part of the dance, all the dancers are divided into twos, you and your partner. And the movements are the opposite. The rhythms are the same but the movements are opposite, so it is very difficult to do. That's the particular part when you visualize you and your consort.

S: Are the movements one set pattern of movements? Is it the same pattern each year?

CTR: Yeah, sure. Otherwise you couldn't learn. But the movements are very precise. I found that first you have the hassle of learning the dance and how to do the dance properly. And after that you begin to know the implications behind it. And traditionally what used to happen is that when you sounded your bell a certain way or the monk in charge of chanting sounded his bell a certain way, it was a tea sound. They brought tea around as you danced. And there's also another sound you make that's the liquor sound. So you have tea and liquor alternately. And while you dance you are actually allowed to drink some kind of

beer, barley beer or chang or even *arak*, which is a more concentrated sort of thing.

*Student:* What's the quality of memory involved in being a tülku? For example, do you have accurate, kind of acute memories of previous lifetimes?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* Well, let's say that I'm not the real Trungpa, who was the tenth one, Chökyi Nyinche. I'm not him exactly, but I have maybe been part of his memory, part of his being. Goodness knows who I am—I could be a gentleman from Osaka or one of the Trungpa's disciples, whatever. But there are memories—which it is usually forbidden to talk about for some reason. I suppose that's understandable if people are going to trip out on the whole thing. But I was only allowed to tell about memories to my tutor when I was younger. And those memories continued until I was about thirteen or something like that. It's just at the level of puberty that these memories begin to disappear. You don't get those flashback things happening anymore. Which is, I think, very significant. At the level of puberty you begin to relate with the world; you become a man of the world. Before that you are still a past-oriented infant somehow.

And I remember visiting—now I'm telling. I don't think there's any harm. There are more tutors around. [*The implication here is that the author is telling these stories to tutors in the present environment, which is allowed. Normally it would be forbidden to speak of these things.—Ed.*] There was a place where the Tenth Trungpa died, some local lord's house. He died in the house, and there was a particular place where his bedroom was and where the shrine and everything was. And I visited there. People were busy organizing my welcome party outside, and I was helped off my horse and walked in. Nobody was leading me. Traditionally there's somebody to lead you, you know, with incense or something, but somehow they didn't get their act together. And I had to walk in, because otherwise there'd be a lot of people waiting because it was getting rather late and everything. And as soon as I walked through the door, I knew exactly where to go, and I knew where the room was. And my attendant, who had never been to the house before, followed me. All the doors were closed, and he said, "Well, maybe we should get somebody." I said, "Well, let's find out first," and "How about here?" And we went on that way, and everything was okay. It was exactly the same place as when the Tenth Trungpa arrived; it was arranged exactly the same way, so there was exactly the same pattern.

And another time we were lost in the rain and mist, traveling toward some

nomad people with their tents set up in various camps. There's a certain fork in the road you are supposed to take. And everybody was completely bewildered and cold and freaky, and everybody was hungry. And the monk in charge of discipline with his loud voice was really getting hungry, and whenever he got hungry, he got mad. Everybody was completely down. And they began to curse the people who had invited us to this strange place. I wasn't quite sure, but I thought I knew the whole way. I thought everybody knew it, you know. Then suddenly it clicked with me that nobody knew about this, but somehow I had some memory about having been here. I didn't even bother to ask the question, "Have I been here before in this life?" or whatever. Maybe when I was an infant they took me there or something. As far as I could remember, I had never been there in this body, so to speak. [*Laughter.*]

There was usually a guy who rode on a white horse, who was supposed to lead the procession or journey. And then there was a guy with flags and then a guy who carried the umbrella behind me. Then the rest of the people were supposed to follow after me; everything was set as to who comes next. Although the whole thing was very miserable, the ceremony still continued. I said that I would like to break the rule, and maybe I should go with the guy with the white horse. And my attendant didn't know what to do: "Maybe we shouldn't tell anybody. Okay. Well, we should do it." And I said, "Don't tell anybody," and we broke the rule. I rode with the guy with the white horse at the head of our procession. I said, "Well, let's go this way. Go this way, and then there's going to be a pass. Then we are going to pass another village, which is not our place. We are going to pass the next one, which is not our village either. There's a bridge on the other side. Beyond that, seemingly hidden in a sort of dimple in the meadow—you can't see it until you get to it—you can see their village setup, the smoke going up and everything." And we got there. Actually I expected that somebody would be surprised about that. But nobody said anything at all. [*Laughter.*]

*Student:* Is this memory you had the same kind of memory that's operating, so to speak, from the seventh consciousness? Or is there a kind of memory that's like *bodhichitta* itself?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I really don't know, actually. I would guess that these memories seem to be based on something much purer than just the seventh consciousness, which is usually very impermanent and is liable to forgetfulness because you go through your birth-and-death trip, which begins to shock you so much that you forget your past constantly. That's what usually happens,

basically, to ordinary people.<sup>46</sup>

*Student:* Is the Trungpa line going to continue?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I don't think so.

*S:* You spoke of tülkus who are reborn outside of a situation where there would be Buddhist teachings, but the teachings are still in operation in their lives. But isn't there a possibility, because there's no support by having the teachings available, that these people will be prone to neuroses setting back in again? Would they forget the teachings?

*CTR:* I think that those people who are real incarnate persons have no problem at all, because anything that happens in their life is a reminder of their intelligence, their enlightenment, reminding them that they are completely realized beings. Nothing could undermine them at all, nothing whatsoever. I don't think there is any problem with that because they are already unconditioned in their basic being, so any condition that comes up is superfluous. The analogy is that the sun is never influenced by the clouds.

*Student:* Do you think you're going to be a Buddhist in your next life?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I don't know.

*S:* Maybe?

*CTR:* I would be at least in essence, but who can tell?

*Student:* So after you, there are no more Trungpa Tülkus? Do you just go off somewhere and be an ordinary guy? What happens to that energy, that Trungpa Tülku energy? Does that just die?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I suppose in this case, since I have no intention of continuing the Trungpa line, the energy is still there. When you give this energy to someone else, you don't give it away—you radiate it. But you have the same amount of energy left, exactly the same volume, you know. So energy is not a separate entity, particularly. A sunbeam coming through the window is not different from the sun itself.

*S:* So that you individually embody the Trungpa energy. It's not independent at all, but it sucks up different people at different times.

*CTR:* That's the idea. I was hoping to come back in Japan as a scientist.

*Student:* Are we more likely to be reborn around you or reborn back in the



sangha here? Is there a connection specifically with you?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* There must be *something* happening. Maybe one of you will introduce me to *Meditation in Action* or *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*. And then we could work our way around.

*Student:* Did you just recently discover that—you seemed to say before that you weren't the real Trungpa—

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* What?

S: You seemed to say before that you weren't the real Trungpa, that you weren't Chökyi Nyinche or something like that. And that you might have been one of his disciples, that you were involved with his energy. That was a very shocking remark to me. What did you mean by saying you weren't the real Trungpa? I'm very upset.

*CTR:* Well, it's saying the same thing as what we just discussed about the blessed tülkus. Since we have exposed the mystique of incarnations tonight, I thought I should make myself very articulate. Otherwise, I wouldn't bother to question whether a Trungpa is real or unreal. Who cares? Even the Tenth Trungpa wasn't really "real." Or the First Trungpa wasn't real [he wasn't the same person] as soon as he became the Second. There's always duality.

*Student:* Is there any special relationship between the teachers of the Trungpa Tülkus?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think very much, yes. It's like my relationship to Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen. He was also the student of the Tenth Trungpa, who studied with Jamgön Kongtrül the Great as well.

S: So unique relationships exist between the teachers?

*CTR:* I think so. Jamgön Kongtrül of Pepung, who was my preceptor, is known to have an incarnation in the Rumtek monastery, the seat of the Karmapa. When I was at Rumtek the last time, meeting him felt very personal.<sup>47</sup> I paid my respects to him, and there was some feeling that continued happening from my relationship with the previous incarnation. Actually I think I frightened him when I visited him. He didn't know exactly what to do. I was coming on with strong emotion, and he was just an innocent little kid.

## *Light of Blessings*

### **SUPPLICATION TO THE ELEVENTH TRUNGPA, CHÖKYI GYATSO**

In supreme unchanging great bliss, vajradhatu, Forefather who emanates and gathers all kayas and buddha fields, Glorious heruka, lord of oceans of mandalas,

We supplicate the guru, the primordial buddha.

From the wisdom play of all-pervasive compassion, You continually appeared as the learned and accomplished charioteers of the teachings Of India and Tibet and especially of the Kagyü and Nyingma.

We supplicate you.

In particular, as the magical emanation of sacred wisdom, Lord, your marvelous virtues of hearing, contemplating, and meditating Manifested for our sake as buddha activity.

Chökyi Gyatso, we supplicate at your feet.

Actualizing the wisdom of ultimate dharmata,

Confusion exhausted at its base, your spontaneous wisdom came forth.

Apparent existence perfect as the one mandala of dharmakaya, We supplicate space, Chökyi Gyatso.

By the power of birth and death being naturally pure in enlightenment, With the vision of compassion beyond decrease or increase, Looking after us disciples who are left behind, Please ripen and free our beings.

Perfecting the excellent path of the effortless yana, Glorious guru, may our minds mix with yours.

Thoroughly liberated in the youthful vase body endowed with the six qualities, May we perfect the two benefits.

*Encouraged by gifts and the sincere mind of faith of Könchok Paldrön, secret*

*friend of the supreme one, Mangala Shri Bhuti [Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche] wrote this. May it be a cause for seeing the very face of the guru of the ultimate natural state.*

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## *Editor's Afterword*

**I**N THIS VOLUME, Chögyam Trungpa articulates the forces and the principles that shaped the lineage of enlightened teachers and teachings from which he came, while also demonstrating how our practice and study of the teachings today is shaped by similar issues. The Line of the Trungpas Seminar, on which most of the present volume is based, took place at the Karmê Chöling meditation center near Barnet, Vermont, in December 1975. It was an opportunity for Rinpoche to reflect back on the history of his lineage from the perspective of having been in the West for more than ten years and in North America for five years, during which time he had gathered around him a sangha of more than one thousand committed practitioners. These discussions were clearly related to how he viewed the introduction of the Buddhist teachings in North America and his hopes for their future.

When Chögyam Trungpa arrived in America in 1970, he was somewhat of a renegade, from the point of view of the Kagyü lineage. He was estranged from some Tibetan colleagues, and His Holiness the Gyalwang Karmapa, the head of the lineage, was not sure what Trungpa Rinpoche was up to. It must have been difficult for the Karmapa to fathom what Chögyam Trungpa was doing in North America. Tales of the counterculture folk who flocked to him and the lifestyle he adopted to accommodate them must have seemed questionable to the traditional Tibetan world. In 1974, Trungpa Rinpoche invited the Karmapa to visit the United States, just a few months after two thousand spiritual seekers, a.k.a. students, came to the first session of the Naropa Institute. By that time, Rinpoche had also conducted the first Vajradhatu Seminary, an advanced three-month program of practice and study, and he was in the middle of conducting a second seminary. He had more than two hundred students who were practicing or about to embark on the vajrayana practices of ngöndro. The Karmapa surely would have been somewhat surprised by the sophistication of Western practitioners, and no less by the devotional outpouring that accompanied his arrival in America. From all indications, he was delighted and moved to see that Trungpa

Rinpoche was in fact pouring his heart and the lifeblood of the lineage into the American psyche and that he was succeeding admirably in “taming untamable beings.”<sup>48</sup> In a ceremony in Boulder, Colorado, attended by hundreds of Trungpa Rinpoche’s students, the Karmapa confirmed Chögyam Trungpa as a vajra master whose mission was to plant the seeds of the buddhadharma in American soil. In a few short years, Rinpoche had created a meeting point between the ancient tradition and the new reality of Buddhism in the American world. It was just after His Holiness had concluded his first visit to America that Trungpa Rinpoche closed the 1974 Vajradhatu Seminary with “The Trungpa Tülkus,” a historical discussion of the lineage, which appears as the appendix in this volume. A year later he gave The Line of the Trungpas Seminar. His Holiness’s visit deepened the appreciation of tradition and devotion. Before that, it would have been much more difficult to tell these lineage stories in this intimate fashion.

In *The Mishap Lineage*, Trungpa Rinpoche focuses on some of the most important holders of the Trungpa lineage, while skipping over or largely ignoring others. This seems to be in keeping with the Tibetan histories written about the lineage. There is a great deal to say about some of the Trungpas and their contributions; there is little known about others.

Altogether, Trungpa Rinpoche’s treatment of the historical facts and details in *The Mishap Lineage* is loose and often sketchy. Were he still alive at the time of the editing of this material, his editors would have had the opportunity to supplicate him to add additional material and to consult him about numerous details as well as inconsistencies. Since he is not here to address these issues, the material has been left with its ambiguities and contradictions.<sup>49</sup> Some of these have been documented in the notes. In the end, they do not take away from the main thread of these teachings, which is to give us insight into how the practitioners of the past built their Buddhist world, much as we are building it today.

In *The Mishap Lineage*, Rinpoche gives us many hints about why he was going about things in America in certain ways, and in places he also provides indications about how we should proceed. He describes, for example, how Trung Mase, the First Trungpa’s root guru, was concerned not only about the current situation but also about future generations, and how he taught with both in mind. To guard against future problems, Trung Mase emphasized the sitting practice of meditation as the foundation of sanity for his students. This is reminiscent of

concerns that Chögyam Trungpa expressed and of advice he gave his students.

There are puzzling contradictions in the various versions of the lineage stories that Chögyam Trungpa told at different times. For example, in *Born in Tibet*, Chögyam Trungpa's autobiography published in 1966, he tells the reader that the First Trungpa, Künga Gyaltzen, was one of Trung Mase's eight highly realized students, who were known as the eight mystics, or eight tobdens (Tib. *rtogs ldan yab gye*). However, in *The Mishap Lineage*, Trungpa Rinpoche tells us that the First Trungpa was not one of the mystics at all but rather one of Trung Mase's three idiots, who according to Rinpoche were actually the closest students of Trung Mase. In a meeting to review the manuscript, Larry Mermelstein (the director of the Nālandā Translation Committee) and I discussed this inconsistency with Khenpo Tsering from present-day Surmang. Khenpo seemed very surprised, almost shocked, that Chögyam Trungpa would say that the First Trungpa was one of the idiots. He said that he and all the Surmang people knew which of the eight mystics the First Trungpa was and that the First Trungpa was in fact the most realized of the tobdens. He referred to several texts that contain this information. Nevertheless, he also said that because this is what Trungpa Rinpoche told us, we should not change it in this book. By the end of our conversation, he said that maybe he would be the first Surmang person to say that Künga Gyaltzen was one of the idiots. Then he laughed heartily. Whenever we discussed other contradictions between Trungpa Rinpoche's accounts in the West and the stories and texts from Tibet—which themselves are inconsistent—the Khenpo would always say that we should stick with whatever Trungpa Rinpoche said. This itself may be a clue to how spiritual history was traditionally told and regarded in Tibet: authenticity seems to have less to do with historical fact and more to do with the realization of the teller.

Interestingly, I think that many of Trungpa Rinpoche's students liked the idea that Künga Gyaltzen was one of the idiots. It spoke to our frontier mentality, our individualism, and to our counterculture roots. Americans love antiheroes. More than that, it spoke to the direct relationship between the First Trungpa and his guru. As an idiot, the Trungpa was a down-to-earth disciple, a “just do it” kind of guy, to quote a favorite command from the Eleventh.

Most readers will presumably feel that only one version of the story can be correct, and other versions must be mistaken, but I think it is also possible to view them both as aspects of the truth. Chögyam Trungpa's approach was to focus on important influences on the lineage that would be helpful to his Western students, and to examine those influences through the life stories of the

lineage holders. Did it matter if events were told differently from time to time? Not to the teller, seemingly, as long as the *point* of the story was clear.

A Buddhist understanding of non-ego might affect how one treats history. Grossly simplified, if we're not solid, then history is not all that solid either. However, it doesn't require a Buddhist view of egolessness to know that the view of history changes over time, depending on who the historian is, what his or her cultural framework is, what part of society one looks at, and many other factors. The story of Columbus "discovering" America that was taught in the 1950s is no longer told in this way in most schools—far from it. It's not unusual for a historian to change his or her view of history, but usually a scholar would point out how and why the interpretation has changed, based on new sources, information, or whatever it may be.

It may be that Trungpa Rinpoche misspoke in one place or the other, or that he himself had consulted different texts that had different versions of the stories. He was not able to bring any of these texts out of Tibet, so he would probably have been going purely on memory when he told these stories to his students. We simply don't know why the inconsistencies exist. However, we can say that Chögyam Trungpa was scrupulous about many details. We can only speculate as to why, regarding stories of his ancestors, his approach was so fluid.

We do know that Chögyam Trungpa was not just concerned but consumed with how he was growing Buddhism in America and how to help it take root here. Throughout his tenure in North America, his job, shall we say, was to build a Buddhist world, a world of sanity, a world of practitioners. The stories of his forefathers were invoked to help build that world.

The first account of the Trungpa lineage that appeared in print was in *Born in Tibet*, Chögyam Trungpa's autobiography, originally published in 1966 in England. He was then a monk living in England, studying at Oxford University. He wrote the book with Esmé Cramer Roberts, an Englishwoman who volunteered to help him tell his life story. The result is a charming and proper English telling of the story. Several of Rinpoche's early students in England have reported that Mrs. Roberts simply changed certain things in *Born in Tibet* that she thought were "unseemly." I don't think the three idiots stood a chance with her. *Born in Tibet* was Chögyam Trungpa's first book published in the West. He too may have wanted the approach to be more formal for that reason. It is certainly very detailed and an excellent accompaniment to the present volume.

In the Mishap Lineage Seminar, Chögyam Trungpa was communicating an

essential understanding of the lineage to his students, a view that he wanted them to have and to use, to inform their future practice and their efforts to help establish that lineage in the West. In this seminar, Rinpoche chose a very personal tone, weaving stories into the telling with a flavor like those you hear on your grandfather's knee. I have tried to keep this intimate quality and to respect the sense of storytelling in the editing of the material. Some might prefer a more scholarly approach, but for me these are the best stories, the ones that stick.

With Chögyam Trungpa, any story begins in the same way, with the need for the practice of sitting meditation. We could almost say that his version of “Once upon a time” was “Once upon a meditation cushion...” It's no surprise then that the first chapter of *The Mishap Lineage* is “The Practicing Lineage.” Having given the reader the barest summary of the historical origins of the Kagyü lineage, he introduces the term *drubgyü*, or “Practice Lineage.” From the beginning of the book, he also stresses the need for a teacher—which is hardly surprising, considering the subject matter of the whole seminar.

Another theme that recurs in this volume is the discussion of the administrative responsibilities of the Trungpas. Clearly, this was on the mind of the Eleventh Trungpa as he established scores of city and rural practice centers, not to mention numerous other institutions, such as the Naropa Institute. In the book, he describes a certain amount of tension and ambivalence on the part of the early Trungpas about building permanent monastic headquarters. While he does not seem to have hesitated in his own efforts, he seems to appreciate both sides: the freedom and spontaneity of propagating dharma based on tent culture versus the power of institutions and “bricks and mortar.” Tent culture was a part of the Vidyadhara's lineage that he clearly loved. Perhaps he gained some of his affection for camping during the long ten-month voyage he made on foot to escape from Tibet in 1959.

In any case, tent culture became a feature of the culture in which he presented the buddhadharma and Shambhala teachings in America. At the Rocky Mountain Dharma Center (now Shambhala Mountain Center), starting in the early 1970s, a great tent city grew up each summer. Students pitched tents all over the land when they attended Rinpoche's summer seminars. To this day, in several areas of the facility there are large cabin tents pitched on permanent platforms each summer. Tent culture was also a preeminent feature of the Magyal Pomra Encampment, which began at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in 1978. This program still occurs each summer at Shambhala Mountain Center and



at Dorje Denma Ling in Nova Scotia. Whereas at “land seminars” at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center and in other locations, the use of tents for housing was primarily functional—permanent housing wasn’t affordable initially—at Magyal Pomra Encampment tent culture is highly celebrated and very much a part of the discipline. At the beginning of the program, the camp is set up in an empty field and returns to that open, empty state at the end. A few compromises have been allowed, such as a permanent kitchen facility on the Magyal Pomra Encampment grounds at Shambhala Mountain Center (as required by the health inspectors), but the principle underlying the program is to set up a great dharma encampment, or living mandala, in a day, from nothing, and then at the end of the program to return the land to its original state.

Although Rinpoche discusses the ambivalence of the Trungpas toward becoming administrative and political leaders and sympathizes with them, nevertheless he takes pride in the prominent role that the Trungpas played in governing their area of Tibet and the role they played in resolving disputes. He also discusses difficulties that arose between the Kagyü monasteries in East Tibet and the Central Tibetan government. He describes the negative view that some officials held of crazy-wisdom people, even as it applied to his own ability to leave India and come to the West. Sharing this conflict with his students was another way in which Chögyam Trungpa demonstrated the depth of his trust in his Western disciples. Openly discussing these issues was also part of training his students to have critical intelligence and not to shy away from conflict and difficulty.

The discussion of Tibetan politics may help to demystify the spirituality of Tibet and make it apparent that one cannot use spirituality as a refuge from the politics of the world. Trungpa Rinpoche was concerned about corruption within Tibet in the first part of the twentieth century, and in a number of places in his writings, he attributes the root of the communist invasion to the declining lack of genuine spirituality in his homeland—with great exceptions to be sure. Showing the human side of lineage politics helps to undercut our tendencies to overemphasize the magic and mystery of Tibet.

A rather shocking ambiguity that confronts the reader of *The Mishap Lineage* is the discussion in several places about whether the Trungpa lineage will continue. He says that the next Trungpa might consider being a woman or that the next Trungpa might not accept that he was a tülku at all. In the appendix, “The Trungpa Tülkus,” he’s pretty clear that he doesn’t think the Trungpa lineage will continue, but he’d like to come back as a Japanese scientist, which

was echoed in other private discussions that some close students will remember. Nevertheless, there is a Twelfth Trungpa, Chökyi Senge, at Surmang Dütsi Tel now, and we also have the continuity of Rinpoche’s family lineage, headed by Chögyam Trungpa’s eldest son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, who is the spiritual leader of the organizations that Chögyam Trungpa founded in the West.

After 1974–75, when these talks were given, there were many changes in how Chögyam Trungpa viewed the future of his lineage and his teachings. In *The Mishap Lineage*, Trungpa Rinpoche is not trying to predict or solidify the future of the lineage. He seems most interested in provoking intelligence and awakening devotion so that students can deal with both change and continuity in the lineage—from the perspective of their individual sanity and exertion. He also places a great deal of emphasis on his students feeling personally responsible for carrying the lineage forward. When asked by Allen Ginsberg about the future of the Trungpa lineage, he suggests that there will be a “reign” of sangha-ship.



*The Twelfth Trungpa, Chökyi Senge, leading the Chakrasamvara dances at Surmang Dütsi Tel, 2006.*

PHOTO BY KHENPO TSERING GYURME.

In *The Mishap Lineage*, Chögyam Trungpa also discusses his own education

and upbringing, especially how everything changed for him when he met Jamgön Kongtrül. The difference between imitation and emulation, which he mentions here, is directly relevant to the educational approach he took with his own students. Students of Chögyam Trungpa's teachings will recognize this theme as central to how Rinpoche presented dharma in the West: his emphasis on embodying the teachings rather than using them as credentials.

It's notable that Trungpa Rinpoche stresses the sitting practice of meditation throughout *The Mishap Lineage* and does not emphasize the vajrayana practices associated with the Trungpa lineage. He mentions the chö practice done by the Fourth Trungpa, but he doesn't provide much detail. Similarly, he refers to the famous text on mahamudra written by the Fourth Trungpa but almost as an afterthought. Rinpoche also refers to the Eighth Trungpa receiving transmissions connected with the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* and says that the Eighth Trungpa was one of the primary holders of the lineage of these teachings. He doesn't elaborate, however. In 1975, when these talks were given, it would have been premature to go into tantric ritual and doctrinal details with a public audience. As well, he never wanted to feed the tendency toward spiritual materialism and making credentials out of one's practice.



*Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche (right) with Chökyi Senge, the Twelfth Trungpa, at Surmang Dütsi  
Tel, 2001.*

PHOTO BY DIANA CHURCH.

Although *The Mishap Lineage* does not emphasize the crazy-wisdom aspect of his lineage, there are instances where it stands out. The first is the discussion of the Indian siddha Dombipa. Like Dombipa, Chögyam Trungpa was known for unconventional behavior, and often he put it to use in transmitting the Buddhist teachings. Many present-day Tibetan teachers refer to him as a mahasiddha. He used ordinary activities to great effect, absent the neurosis and aggression that usually accompany them. As it says in Dombipa's song, "He who knows the nature of mind, doesn't know the nature of one's confusion."

*The Mishap Lineage* also contains a story of the Fourth Trungpa, Künga Namgyal, awakening from a swoon after meditating in a cave for many years. Trungpa Rinpoche writes that Künga Namgyal's behavior changed radically after that and that some people thought he was crazy, while others thought he was enlightened. Almost these exact words might be used in discussing events in the Vidyadhara's own life. His behavior and demeanor at times confounded and disturbed people. Yet from another point of view, not only was he greatly realized, but he was able to enlighten others on the spot with his unconventional manifestations, showing them an entirely different and authentic way of being. Like Künga Namgyal, the Eleventh Trungpa was completely stubborn in his adherence to sanity and completely unwilling to compromise about that as the bottom line. Because of their own confusion, some who encountered him missed the point. Rinpoche always hoped that in the long run, people would get the punch line—for their own benefit, not his.

At the time of writing this afterword, more than twenty years after his death, he is still very alive in all of his students and his readers, still teasing us with mischief, still urging us on with constant mishaps, continuing to help us transform our confusion into wisdom. For this, we can be extremely grateful. And this, surely, is an inheritance we must pass on to future generations. May the Mishap Lineage raise the victory banner of dharma throughout the world. May we never forget to supplicate the incomparable guru, Chökyi Gyatso,<sup>50</sup> the Eleventh Trungpa Tülku.

## *Editor's Acknowledgments*

**T**HANKS TO THE SHAMBHALA ARCHIVES for the preservation of the audio record of the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa and for providing tapes and transcripts of the Mishap Lineage Seminar and the talk at the 1974 Vajradhatu Seminary. The work of the original transcribers is greatly appreciated, as well as the efforts of the original editors of the talk from the Vajradhatu Seminary that appears here. In the 1990s, I worked with a group of senior students interested in learning to edit Chögyam Trungpa's lectures. The group did a first edit of the first two talks of the Karmê Chöling seminar on which much of this book is based. Another version was published in the newsletter of the Halifax Shambhala Centre, and yet another version of these two talks appears in volume five of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*. I would like to thank these student editors for their contributions. Khenpo Tsering Gyurme was kind enough to be interviewed in connection with this book and also to allow reference to his talks on the Trungpa lineage. Larry Mermelstein was generous in answering many questions, contributing to the interview with Khenpo, and also deserves thanks for his comments on the manuscript and on the introduction, as well as his review of the Tibetan terms in the book. Many thanks to Scott Wellenbach for his generous help with Tibetan terms and his reading of the preface and afterword. Thank you to the Nālandā Translation Committee for the translation of the chants that appear here.

Thanks to Rudy Wurlitzer and Lynn Davis for the opportunity to work on this book at their house in Cape Breton. To Jim, Jenny, and Amy the dog, thanks, love, and ruff. Thanks also to Ellen Kearney, who copyedited an earlier version of this manuscript. Both Ellen's overview and her attention to detail were very helpful. Thanks also to Cheryl Campbell, Ben Moore, and Vajradhatu Publications, who supported the original book proposal.

Thanks to Peter Turner, the president of Shambhala Publications, for seeing the wisdom of publishing this book, and to Sara Bercholz for her editorial stewardship of the manuscript.

Thanks to Ginny Lipson, Lyndon Comstock, Khenpo Tsering, and the Konchok Foundation for help in locating photographs. Thanks to Khenpo Tsering for permission to use his photograph of the Twelfth Trungpa, Gaye Carlson for her photograph of the *shedra* at Surmang Dütsi Tel, Martin Janowitz and the Shambhala Archives for the photograph of Chögyam Trungpa in the robes of the Tenth Trungpa, and Jane Carpenter for permission to use the Mukpo family portrait in Tibet, 2002.

Thanks to Diana J. Mukpo for her continuing commitment to the publication of her husband's work. Thanks as well to Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche and all the members of the Mukpo family for their continuing support of Surmang, through the Konchok Foundation and other initiatives, as well as for ongoing support of Chögyam Trungpa's teachings and his legacy altogether. And finally, to Chögyam Trungpa himself, the embodiment of all the siddhas of the Trungpa lineage, to whom the IOU will never be repaid, gratitude for these teachings and the opportunity to work with them.

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## Notes

1. According to *Born in Tibet*, Chögyam Trungpa was born in 1939. Later he corrected the date to 1940, the Year of the Dragon.
2. Termas, literally “treasures,” are teachings—and often actual ritual objects—that Padmasambhava or other teachers are said to have concealed in various places in Tibet, to help people in future generations. Such teachings often reveal a new understanding, or wisdom, at the appropriate time. The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* is a famous example of a terma. Some termas are discovered hidden in a rock in a cave or are found in a container left at the bottom of a river, or in other unusual places. Some of them are said to be hidden in the unconscious, and they arise or are discovered in the mind of a tertön, a teacher capable of revealing the terma. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche was a tertön who was able to find such mind termas or mind treasures, as well as physically concealed terma. Before leaving Tibet, he discovered a number of physical termas in caves near the Kyere Gön monastery.
3. The first to travel to Surmang was Lee Weingrad, who made his way there in 1987, the year that Chögyam Trungpa died. Lee later founded the Surmang Foundation, which has focused on health care and other humanitarian projects in the area. Following visits to Surmang by the Vidyadhara’s eldest son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, and Chögyam Trungpa’s wife, Lady Diana Mukpo, the Konchok Foundation was established in 2001 to provide for the education of the Twelfth Trungpa, to help rebuild Surmang Dütsi Tel, and to establish a shedra there for the education of local monastics and other children.
4. In 2003, Karseng Rinpoche transmitted a guru yoga for the Vidyadhara, which Chögyam Trungpa wrote while still in Tibet. In 2006, Karseng Rinpoche conferred the abhisheka for an Avalokiteshvara sadhana that was received by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche as a terma in Tibet. In future years Karseng Rinpoche hopes to confer the transmissions for a wrathful Vajrayogini practice, a chö practice, and many other practices and texts received by Chögyam Trungpa as termas.

From Karseng Rinpoche, we also have begun to learn more about the history of Trungpa Rinpoche’s activity as a tertön in Tibet. According to some sources, he began to discover terma as early as age six. In his teenage years, while practicing in caves near Kyere, he had a vision of the protector Ekajati, who appeared to him during a feast where many practitioners were present. She presented him with a small stone casket, which he placed on the shrine and which opened spontaneously within a few days. It contained a terma scroll, which he was able to decode and thus reveal a cycle of terma. Trungpa Rinpoche’s tertön name was Trakthung Rigdzin Tsalchang. Rinpoche was the emanation of Nyak Jnanakumara, a direct disciple of Guru Rinpoche. Nyak Jnanakumara also manifested as the tertön Ramo Shelmen some centuries ago. The Nālandā Translation Committee, which is deeply involved in translating all the texts collected by Karseng Rinpoche, is documenting Trungpa Rinpoche’s activity as a tertön in Tibet and gradually making this information available. This only deepens the appreciation of the terma that Rinpoche found in the West. Considered against the background of what he found in Tibet, his Western terma discoveries seem unquestionably genuine and more and more extraordinary.

He received three large collections of terma teachings in Tibet. Many of these were lost when the communist Chinese took over the area, but a remarkable number have survived through Karseng Rinpoche’s efforts and the steadfastness of Trungpa Rinpoche’s disciples in Tibet. The three collections are the teachings of the *Embodiment of the Wisdom of the Three Roots*, the teachings of the *Profound Heart-*

*Essence*, and the teachings of the *Heart Treasure of Samantabhadra*. For each of those three, there is the treasury of tantric teachings, the treasury of the hearing lineage of oral instructions, the treasury of the ordinary yogic applications, and the treasury of extraordinary secrets. Furthermore, for each of those four, there are many teachings of the general and the particular, the root and the branch. (This information is excerpted from *The Great Ship of Accomplishment*, a text compiled by Karseng Rinpoche for the use of a master bestowing the Avalokiteshvara abhisheka. Used here by kind permission of the Nālandā Translation Committee.)

5. The teachers from Surmang and the current practitioners there set a remarkable example of devotion and dedication to Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and the teachings of the Trungpa lineage. They guarded these teachings throughout a terribly difficult period. Karseng Rinpoche reported to me that following the Chinese takeover, more than ten thousand people died of starvation in the Surmang area. Today there are still many reports of malnutrition. Karseng Rinpoche is the abbot of Wenchen Nunnery, where close to one hundred nuns live in extremely modest circumstances. The nuns practice principally the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, to whom they are deeply devoted. This kind of dedication is almost inconceivable in our situation of Western affluence and freedom.

6. The writer of this, Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö (Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche), was the primary incarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo the Great and was a disciple of the Tenth Trungpa. Of the twenty-one *shlokas*, or stanzas, the first seven deal with seven of the eight predecessors of the Trungpa Tülkus. Dombi Heruka was one of the eighty-four Indian mahasiddhas. Shri Simha was one of Padmasambhava's gurus. Palkyi Dorje, a chief disciple of Padmasambhava, is known for having shot King Langdarma, a Tibetan king who tried to suppress Buddhism. Truku Repa was of a Kagyü subsect at the time of Karma Pakshi, the Second Karmapa. Lhopa Gomchung was also from one of the eight lesser schools of the Kagyü. Thingma Sanggye Trak was Kagyü/Nyingma and also a local leader.

The following ten shlokas are for previous Trungpa Tülkus. Lodrö Rinchen is the siddha Trung Mase Togden. Jamyang guru refers to Jamgön Kongtrül the Great, of whom the Tenth Trungpa was a very close and significant disciple. In the following verse, Chögyam Trungpa himself is mentioned as Künga Lekpa, the Mad Yogin of Bhutan, who was also one of his incarnations. That he is mentioned in this line instead of in a separate shloka, as with the others, is apparently to suggest a similarity in style between the two, although this was written when Trungpa Rinpoche was ten years old. The following shloka was originally written as a supplication for Trungpa Rinpoche's long life, using the name that His Holiness the Sixteenth Karmapa bestowed upon him when he was ordained. As is customary after a teacher's passing, this was modified to accord with the previous verses.

7. Interestingly, during the Cultural Revolution in China, the same approach was taken by the Red Guards, and one finds Buddhist temples in many parts of China where the communist Chinese lopped off the nose, mouth, or whole face of a Buddha statue.

8. At the time that this seminar was presented, the use of "trip," originating with the drug culture, was a common way of referring to self-deception or delusion. The idea of laying a trip on someone, which the author refers to later, could also refer to imposing one's view of things onto others, as in an ego trip.

9. The author originally said "twentieth century," but this was changed to reflect the emphasis on what's happening now, which was his focus.

10. Baba Ram Dass was an American college professor at Harvard, originally named Dr. Richard Alpert, who after experimenting with LSD and other drugs, left the university and became a Hindu practitioner, studying with various teachers in India. He was a colleague of Timothy Leary's. Ram Dass was very popular in the late sixties and the seventies, and was well known for his book *Be Here Now*. In 1974 he was



invited to teach at the first session of the Naropa Institute, where he conducted an evening class that alternated with Chögyam Trungpa's class. Here, Trungpa Rinpoche characterizes Ram Dass's style of presenting himself.

11. Chögyam Trungpa used the term *hinayana* to refer to the shravakayana and pratyekabuddhayana. It was not meant as a derogatory term. Now, it's not common practice to refer to the Southeast Asian tradition this way, as "hinayana" refers to schools in vajrayana, not to living traditions.

12. This area is now the home of Surmang Namgyal Tse, the largest of the Surmang monasteries.

13. As discussed in the afterword, the First Trungpa is often named as one of the eight realized ones. See for example Chögyam Trungpa's own account in *Born in Tibet*, chapter 2, "The Founding of Surmang."

14. There are a number of other explanations for why Trung Mase gave the name Surmang to this area. However, this one was most commonly used by Chögyam Trungpa himself.

15. Trung Mase was also well-known as a holder of an important ear-whispered, or hearing, lineage within the Kagyü tradition. Chögyam Trungpa gave a thorough description of this ear-whispered lineage in the article "Sacred Outlook: The Practice of Vajrayogini" in *The Heart of the Buddha*. (This can also be found in volume three of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, 412-41.) In preparing *The Mishap Lineage* for publication, this editor had access to transcripts of a talk given by Khenpo Tsering Gyurme on the Trungpa lineage, which included a discussion of the hearing lineage. With Khenpo Tsering's permission, some information from that talk is included here, supplemented by comments by Chögyam Trungpa. For a thorough discussion of the Vajrayogini lineage transmitted to Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the reader may wish to consult "Sacred Outlook."

Trung Mase was said to be an emanation of Tilopa. In "Sacred Outlook" Trungpa Rinpoche says:

After studying the basic Buddhist teachings for many years, Tilopa (998–1069 CE) traveled to Uddiyana, the home of the dakinis, or female yidams, to seek vajrayana transmission. He gained entrance to the palace of the dakinis and received direct instruction there from Vajrayogini herself, who manifested to him as the great queen of the dakinis. It may be rather perplexing to speak of encountering Vajrayogini in anthropomorphic form....However, this account of Tilopa's meeting is the traditional story of his encounter with the direct energy and power of Vajrayogini. (Chögyam Trungpa, *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, vol. 3 [Boston: Shambhala, 2004], 424)

Tilopa returned to India, where he had many disciples, primary among them Naropa, to whom he passed on the oral tradition of the Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara practice, which is also called the hearing lineage of teachings. The Vidyadhara tells the rest of the story in this way:

The First Trungpa was a close student of the siddha Trung Mase (fifteenth century), who was a close disciple of the Fifth Karmapa, Teshin Shekpa (1384–1415). When Naropa transmitted the teachings of Vajrayogini to Marpa, he told him that these teachings should be kept as a transmission from one teacher to one student for thirteen generations, and then they could be propagated to others. This transmission is called *chig gyü*, the "single lineage" or "single thread" transmission. Because of this, the Kagyü lineage is frequently called the "hearing lineage." Trung Mase received the complete teachings on Vajrayogini, Chakrasamvara, and Four-Armed Mahakala, and these became the special transmission that he was to hold. Since Trung Mase belonged to the thirteenth generation, he became the first guru to transmit this particular lineage of mahamudra teachings to more than a single dharma successor, and in fact he taught it widely. The First Trungpa, Kunga Gyaltzen, was one of Trung Mase's disciples who received this transmission. As the Eleventh Trungpa Tülku, I received the

Vajrayogini transmission from Rölpa Dorje, the regent abbot of Surmang and one of my main tutors. (ibid., 426–27)

The Surmang hearing lineage came to be regarded as a special lineage or tradition within the Kagyü lineage altogether. Chögyam Trungpa transmitted the Vajrayogini and Chakrasamvara sadhanas to his Western vajrayana students. Students in the West thus have the opportunity and burden of helping to preserve aspects of this tradition, as uniquely articulated by Trungpa Rinpoche. He gave many talks to his vajrayana students, including fourteen Vajra Assemblies, as well as many lectures to Vajrayogini practitioners, which may come to be recognized as related to the hearing lineage. The incredibly direct understanding that he transmitted is unusual and undeniably profound. He transmitted pith understandings that are so intimate one does feel as though they should be whispered into the ears of practitioners so that they travel directly to the heart.

16. According to Khenpo Tsering Gyurme of Surmang, the family lineage did continue for a while, and then in the fifth generation it became a tülku lineage as recognized by the Karmapa.

17. *Ja* was a title for the leader of two or three villages. It later became a family name. The word literally means “idiot” or “moron.”

18. The Divine Light Mission was founded by Shri Hans Ji Maharaj in northern India. It was a popular movement in American spirituality in the seventies mainly due to the popularity of Guru Maharaji, one of the sons of the founder. Chögyam Trungpa here is referring to a heavy-handed approach to converting people to a spiritual movement or teaching.

19. At that time, Trung Mase had established the area around Surmang Namgyal Tse as his seat. According to Khenpo Tsering, Trung Mase sent the First Trungpa out to establish his own monastic seat.

20. According to Khenpo Tsering, it was Trung Mase who threw the cup, and it was a skullcup. In “The Trungpa Tülkus,” included here as an appendix, Chögyam Trungpa tells this story in connection with the Third Trungpa. In this telling, the Indian siddha Dombipa had thrown the skullcup of liquor many centuries before, and the Karmapa recounts this story to the Third Trungpa, telling him to build his monastery wherever Dombipa’s cup fell. In *Born in Tibet* Trungpa Rinpoche offers another account, in which Trung Mase appears to the First Trungpa in a dream and tells Trung Mase that he is an incarnation of the siddha Dombipa and that, just like Dombipa, he should throw a cup in the air and see where it lands. In all tellings, the cup lands on Adro Shelu-bum’s roof, and it is here that Surmang Dütsi Tel is eventually established.

21. In “The Trungpa Tülkus,” it is the First Trungpa who is reciting the sutra. In *Born in Tibet*, it is Trung Mase who recites this line from the sutra *Manjushri-nama-sangiti* (*Chanting the Names of Manjushri*), VIII:28, last line, and it is in connection with the founding of Surmang Namgyal Tse. This is similar to the version of the story that Khenpo Tsering told this editor. In Khenpo’s telling, a farmer is reciting the sutra, and Trung Mase feels it is very auspicious and must indicate that he is close to finding the place where he should establish the monastery.

22. Originally, Chögyam Trungpa referred to “Naropa Institute,” which has now been renamed Naropa University.

23. According to Khenpo Tsering, the cup that flew through the air was a skullcup, and when they found it on Adro Shelu-bum’s roof, the amrita in it was boiling. This impressed everyone greatly.

24. Steve Gaskin was a counterculture hippie icon of the 1960s who traveled across the United States in 1970 with a caravan of sixty vehicles, journeying from San Francisco to Tennessee, where he and his

followers founded an intentional community called The Farm.

25. In “The Trungpa Tülkus,” it is the Third Trungpa who establishes the great camp of Surmang. However, *Born in Tibet* agrees with the telling in this chapter.

26. The sense here is that if one knows the nature of mind, one does not experience confusion at all.

27. Chögyam Trungpa did not discuss the Second and Third Trungpas in this seminar. He mentions the Second Trungpa in the appendix but doesn’t say much about him. In that talk, he also connects the Third Trungpa with the founding of the great camps of Surmang and ascribes the story of throwing the cup of amrita to the Third, rather than to Trung Mase or the First Trungpa.

28. The author originally said “fortress nest.” The garuda is a bird; this seems to be an allusion to the fortress being the home of the garuda.

29. According to Khenpo Tsering Gyurme, when Künga Namgyal came out of this retreat, he flew down from his retreat place to the courtyard of the monastery and left his footprints in the stone. They are still there and can be seen to this day.

30. This is a Mongolian title for a spiritual teacher. Hutoktu is commonly cited as *khutuktu*, which comes from the Mongolian *gutuytu*. In Tibetan, the word is ‘*phags pa*, which is the translation of the Sanskrit *arya*, or “noble one.” In the standard Khalkha dialect, it is *hutagt*, which is often used as an honorific title for tülkus in Mongolia.

31. Following Chögyam Trungpa’s death, the seals were placed in the Shambhala Archives in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

32. In *Born in Tibet*, this story is attributed to the Seventh Trungpa. That seems unlikely, since he died at a very young age. Esmé Cramer Roberts, the editor of *Born in Tibet*, would not have known this.

33. Chetsang Rinpoche was one of the eight tobdens (“mystics,” “realized ones”), who were students of Trung Mase. This particular Chetsang Rinpoche, the Sixth, was a very famous teacher.

34. In *The Hidden History of the “Tibetan Book of the Dead”* by Bryan J. Cuevas, in the chapter “Traditions in Eastern Tibet,” the author mentions the role of the Trungpas in the transmission of the teachings from the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. See in particular 152, 153, and table 9.3.

35. According to Khenpo Tsering, the court case was in Rashul, which is closer to Surmang than Jyekundo.

36. The king of Lhathok also gave Kyere Gön monastery to Surmang, which became one of the Surmang monasteries. Before his escape to India, Chögyam Trungpa resettled his family there in the late 1950s, thinking they would be safer there than at Dütsi Tel. This proved to be true.

37. The author originally said the thirty-eighth year. This has been changed to reflect the most recent information about his year of birth.

38. The details are spelled out in the first chapter of *Born in Tibet*.

39. The questioner is referring to the final talk in the Tibetan Buddhist Path course taught by Chögyam Trungpa at the Naropa Institute in the summer of 1974. These talks are available as a DVD series from [www.shambhalashop.com](http://www.shambhalashop.com).

40. See [chapter 3](#), [note 15](#), concerning the hearing lineage that Trung Mase held.
41. The Fourth Trungpa composed a text for the practice of chö that has remained the most important such text in the Karma Kagyü tradition, the practice sometimes being known as the Surmang chö.
42. Karma Chagme is regarded as the founder of the Nedo Kagyü. He was an important disciple of the Fourth Trungpa.
43. Chögyam Trungpa is probably referring here to thangkas of the kings of Shambhala that are now housed in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. From remarks on an audiotape in the Shambhala Archives, this editor believes that students of Chögyam Trungpa had obtained slides of these thangkas, which were shown to students at the 1974 Vajradhatu Seminary. At this time, Chögyam Trungpa and a group of his students were preparing an exhibition that took place the next year at the Hayden Gallery of MIT.
44. Karmapa Rangjung Dorje introduced a high level of intellectual understanding as part of the practice and unified the traditional mahamudra teachings of the Kagyü with the ati or dzogchen teachings, which until his time had been transmitted mainly through the Nyingma lineages.
45. According to information from Khenpo Tsering, the First Trungpa received the transmission of these dances directly from Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini. As Khenpo Tsering tells the story:

One time, the First Trungpa wanted to practice Chakrasamvara in semiretreat and he told his students, “Seal the door; close the door, and I’m going to do this practice in here and no matter what happens, don’t open it. No matter what you hear, no matter what goes on, don’t open the door.” So they did that; they closed the door. He had said, “Until I tell you, don’t open it.” But then all kinds of noise and commotion was going on inside as if there were a big crowd in there, even though he was locked in there by himself, alone. Finally the caretaker of the retreat couldn’t stand it anymore. He thought to himself, “What’s going on? Something is going on in there and I have to look.” So he opened the door a crack, and inside he saw Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini and other yidams all dancing. As soon as he saw them, they vanished. They disappeared and then there was only Künga Gyaltzen, who manifested in a very angry, wrathful way, saying, “What have you done? I told you not to open the door no matter what you heard and now you’ve opened the door and made this big obstacle for the dharma.” The attendant whimpered and cried. Then Künga Gyaltzen said, “Well, maybe it’s okay. I got one day of this training of the Chakrasamvara dances. It would have been seven days, but perhaps this transmission of one day of the Chakrasamvara dancing will be good enough.” (From an interview with Khenpo Tsering Gyurme conducted by Carolyn Rose Gimian, 2006)

According to Khenpo Tsering, the Chakrasamvara dances are still performed every year at Surmang Dütsi Tel. Even within the small retreat center there, Dorje Khyung Dzong, they have a performance every year before the Tibetan New Year. In 1975, when the Mishap Lineage Seminar was given, it’s doubtful that Chögyam Trungpa knew that this tradition had survived. He would not have been able to teach the dances directly to his students in the West, because he was partially crippled on the left side from a car accident in England. However, he incorporated some of the principles of the dance into the Mudra theater group exercises that he created in the early 1970s.

46. The eight types of consciousness are the six sense consciousnesses—the traditional five senses plus mind as a sense consciousness—and then *klišhtamanas*, the seventh consciousness, and the *alaya*, or eighth consciousness. At the first Vajradhatu Seminary in 1973, Chögyam Trungpa attempted to relate these terms to more well-known Western psychological ideas about mind, describing the seventh consciousness as the

subconscious and the eighth as the unconscious. In that talk, he says that memory is in the seventh consciousness. Here in the appendix, however, the questioner is asking about a memory that carries over from one life to the next.

47. When this remark was made, Chögyam Trungpa had last visited Rumtek around 1968, which was during the time he lived in England.

48. Taken from a longevity supplication composed by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche that was a daily chant in Chögyam Trungpa's community during his lifetime. The whole chant can be found on pages v and vi of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*, volume one.

49. Initially, this editor thought that she could resolve the inconsistencies, but the more they were looked into, the more contradictions and competing versions emerged. Perhaps directly consulting the various Tibetan texts that present the history of the lineage will enable future scholars to resolve the difficulties. However, the various informants I consulted told me that even the texts do not agree on all points, and the oral histories that have been passed on have different versions of certain stories.

50. Chökyi Gyatso is the expanded form of Chögyam. It means "Dharma Ocean."

# **SELECTED WRITINGS**

## *Guru Nanak in Tibet*

**I**T GAVE ME GREAT PLEASURE when I was asked to write this article, as I have wanted for a long time to say something about my impressions of the religion of the Sikhs in India and my connections with it. After my escape from Tibet, I lived as a refugee in India for several years, alongside so many of my countrymen. There I had the great good fortune to be looked after by a Sikh family, by Baba Bedi, his English wife, and their three children.<sup>1</sup> While I was with them, I was able to visit many of the Sikh holy places, and I was given hospitality there.

My interest in Sikhism is not only a personal one, however. In Tibet, Guru Nanak is revered as an emanation of Guru Padmasambhava. Many of our pilgrims visited Amritsar and other holy places, which they looked upon as equal in importance to Bodhgaya. They always said that the Sikhs treated them with great respect and were very hospitable: as our expression goes, they bowed down to their feet. It seems that the Sikhs really practice the doctrine of their religion; perhaps they are the only ones who give such wonderful *dana* to travelers.

Most Tibetans know that Guru Nanak visited Tibet, and the mystical ideas of our two religions are very similar. I have noticed that the Sikhs never worship images in their shrines but that there is in the center a book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*. In our tradition, one of the last things that the Buddha said was that in the dark age after his death he would return in the form of books. "At that time," he said, "look up to me and respect me." Just as we do not believe in mystifying rituals, so in the Sikh ceremonies, it seems that the people simply read and contemplate the words of their text so that no misunderstandings arise.

I was interested in the Sikh symbolism of the three daggers. In Buddhism, a knife often appears as a symbol for the cutting off of the roots of the three poisons: greed, hatred, and illusion. I was also very interested in the Sikh practice never to cut one's hair, as this is also the practice among Tibetan

hermits and contemplatives. The most famous of these was Milarepa, who said that there were three things that should be left in their natural state: one should not cut one's hair, dye one's clothes, nor change one's mind. It is true that most Tibetan monks wear yellow and shave their heads; these are practices that come from India and symbolize humility and detachment from worldly things. Outside the more organized monastic tradition, however, the emphasis is that the natural goodness and power of growth within should be allowed to develop freely without interference from outside.

Both Guru Nanak and the Buddha said to their followers that the real nature of the universe should not be limited by the idea of a personal god and gods. Those who made offerings at their shrines would remember that the whole universe was the power offering, offered before and to itself.<sup>2</sup> Although Guru Nanak did not think of himself as a founder of a new school of thought, it seems that there is very much in common between our philosophies.

When I return to India, I hope to increase understanding of the Sikh religion among Tibetan people, and it is my wish one day to translate the *Guru Granth Sahib* into Tibetan. Now I am living in England, and I can see that much good might be accomplished by Sikhism in England, Europe, and America, and I wish success to everyone whose concern this is.

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1. Baba Bedi was the husband of Sister Karma Kechog Palmo, the first Englishwoman to become a nun in the Karma Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism. See the epilogue "Planting the Dharma in the West," in *Born in Tibet*, in volume one of *The Collected Works* for more information.

2. The sense here is that the offering is both offered in front of itself and to itself.



## *The Positive Aspect of Suffering*

**A**LTHOUGH IT MAY SOUND a bit philosophical, relative and absolute truth is what one has to learn and study in connection with meditation practice. Or one might say, meditation practice is a kind of channel, a kind of true vehicle, which you can use in order to see something more in things than there appears to be. Moreover, spirituality does not exist on another level, or on a “higher plane,” quite different from ordinary life, as is generally assumed. That is to say, if we are what we are, and this existence is not a real one, and we must become different to see “reality,” then there is little or no hope, because spiritual development would not seem to fit with the general pattern of life. It is no use trying to be different—different from your neighbor, different from the general public. So religious or spiritual practice is not of this nature. It is not trying to be something more than you are or something better than you are, for that matter. What is known as relative truth, or the truth that exists right here, now, in our everyday life—that truth has to be accepted as the general ground, and it is also the absolute truth.

So, therefore, this gives us a wonderful hope, not only hope, but a wonderful opportunity. We don’t have to be different people. We don’t have to be solemn and “religious.” But somehow, let ourselves be what we really are. We have a great variety of experiences. And what we really are may be very painful, from one point of view: full of misery, suffering, depression, illness, perhaps. This is the kind of intricacy, the kind of richness of life, but only if one is prepared to accept it—not with blind faith, but seeing things, say suffering, for example, as a kind of inspiration, if we are only able to see it.

Generally, when we talk of suffering, we mean mental pain or physical pain. Take the example of physical pain first. When there is pain, there is physical pain, but also there is a kind of mental irritation connected with it. And this mental irritation, this pain, is something we build up unnecessarily with the hope of getting rid of the physical pain. In fact, it produces even more pain. We feel that we are shut in, that we are helpless, that we have to contact the doctor, that

we have to have medicine, that we have to do something about it. So there is a continual searching, a running for something, rather than first just examining, questioning, seeing it. “Where did this pain come from?” “What actually is it?” So that always means that everything is done with speed, without checking into it, without seeing properly. When you are able to see with faith in yourself, rather than asking for help all the time, and you realize that there is nobody else to help you, perhaps then you might do something to help yourself. Perhaps after a certain incident, you find your whole pattern of life changed: through an accident in which you realized that there was something profound, or a severe illness or going through a war. Because until one really develops that kind of self-confidence and understanding of the positive element in oneself, it is very difficult to see the true pattern of this relative truth, which also contains the absolute.

And then suffering—physical suffering in this case—becomes merely a physical sensation or feeling. Mental pain consists of this helpless attitude or, one might say, this fascination toward the pain, the problem, the trouble. So when one is not fascinated and no longer thinking of the pain as something separate from oneself, then one finds something familiar in it, something to be learned from it.

In this way, suffering acts as a vehicle, and the problem does not belong to the devil. One realizes that there is a kind of positive element in it. That is what, in fact, the Buddha found on the historical journey he made outside the palace in his chariot. The first thing he saw was the suffering in the town streets: a sick person, a funeral procession, all sorts of things happening. Behind the appearances, he sensed a deep, solemn feeling, as if everyone were wearing a mask. He saw this pattern, and it was a source of inspiration. The world was like that twenty-five hundred years ago, and we can still find such things. Although the world is technologically developed and has become sophisticated in one sense, nevertheless, the simplicity of the origin still remains—that is, the understanding of pain, of suffering.

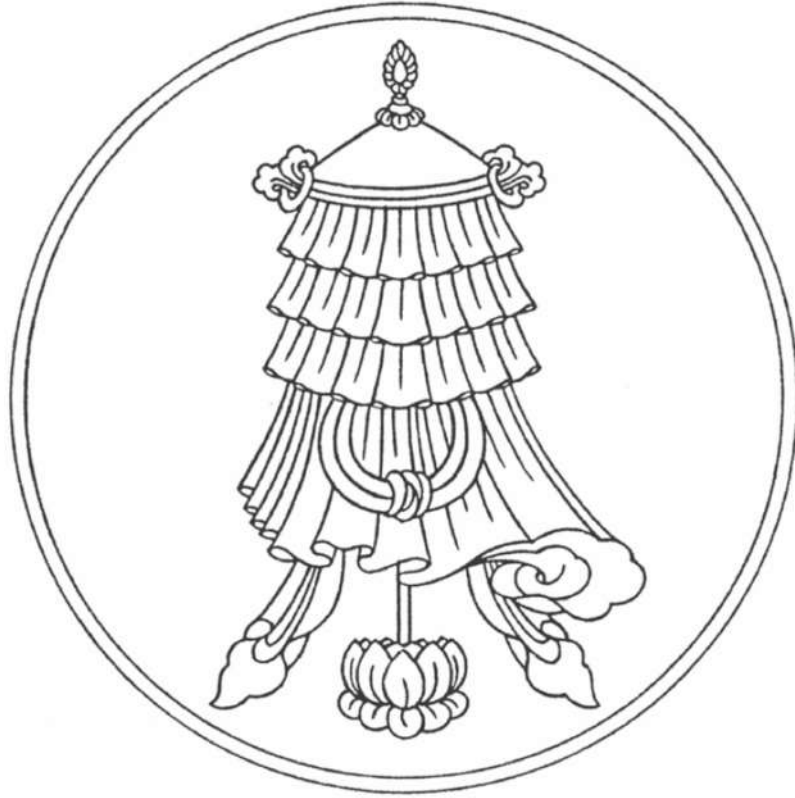
## ***The Eight Auspicious Symbols<sup>2</sup>***



*The Conch-Shell of Dharma* presents the triumphant proclamation of the teaching similar to the fanfare of the trumpet.



*The Umbrella of Protection* protects against the heat of intense emotions. It provides coolness, like sitting in the shade in the heat of summer.



*The Banner of Victory* celebrates the triumphant appearance of sanity and the overcoming of the confused mind.



*The Vase of Amrita* holds the antideath potion, which represents the eternal existence of the awakened state of mind—the Buddha.



*The Golden Fish of Wisdom* represents penetrating insight, which pierces confusion as a fish sees underwater, never blinking.



*The Lotus of Compassion* grows out of the mud of desires and hatred but is unharmed and pure, as compassion grows out of aggression but retains its own qualities.





*The Wheel of Dharma* is without end and without beginning, eternally revolving with the teaching, always up-to-date.



*The Knot of Eternity* is the symbol of meditation, always present without preference to past or future, enabling one to work with the situations of life. The interwoven quality represents the interpenetration of the teaching and everyday life.

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2. These drawings are courtesy of Robert Beer and were originally published in his book, *The Handbook of Tibetan Buddhist Symbols* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2003, xviii).

## *The Common Heart*

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY brings all religions closer because it forces you to look deeper, and then you discover the same thing.<sup>3</sup> Spiritual interest is coming out more strongly in people now because of the character of this century: the river of materialism has overrun its banks. Not only are there endless gadgets and machines, but there is pervasive spiritual materialism under which the great traditions have become just so much milk in the marketplace. The twentieth century is the age of ego.

So now people want personal and direct spiritual experiences rather than handed down ones. The religious instinct in all human beings is the same, but the dogma makes a great deal of difference. And the dogma is the obstacle to that spiritual instinct, that primeval intelligence in all religions. It is the obstacle because things are worked out beforehand rather than just being experienced spontaneously. This is true of Buddhism as well as Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, and so forth.

To work on the practice and experience of meditation is the only way to see the common link. Meditation has been part of the path of all traditions. The Sanskrit term *samadhi* means “meditation,” or total absorption, which indicates clearly that the dualistic notion of aiming from somewhere to somewhere else is futile. You must completely become one with what is, instead of weighing the *this* and the *that*. Therefore, contemplation or visualization could hardly be said to be meditation.

Such experiences of the total dissolving of duality bring delight and confidence, which is a spark of primeval intelligence. You have still to face all apparent phenomena, because seeing beyond duality doesn't mean the end of everything. Energy continues to manifest itself in the creative and destructive display (birth and death) that is life. You must dance with it or be caught again in the subjective notion of friends and enemies, good and bad. Fully being with life brings total sanity. You no longer have boundaries that are threatened, and

so there is no more paranoia and the wish to destroy. Rather, one senses the union with everything, and a very honest compassion and love arise. It is called the instinct of dharmakaya, the all good.

It might be interesting to look closely at this duality that functions so strongly in our world and minds. In many cases one might build dogma and hallucination on the basis of something “tangible,” such as believers being included and nonbelievers excluded. But the tangible and the dual are the same thing. You would like to build a ground so that everything could be related to from there. This ground is the ego trying to establish its territory. This ground can function only if all happenings are seen in relationship to it as center. Otherwise you feel threatened, and paranoia, or a feeling of separation, develops. So the dogma or concept is the panicked desperation of this ego to pull everything to its side. This provokes overwhelming passion to grasp, to try to hold on to something. When these problems arise, natural mechanisms invite you to take refuge outside of these complexities and to glorify this outside as companion or lover, because this ego feels belittled. This simplicity is seen as the only mother or father. But unless you are willing not only to submit but to wholeheartedly identify with simplicity, mere seeking shelter there does not fulfill that prayer for security. That is why nonduality is the only way; and the great sacrifice of surrendering, not only paranoia but the ground as a whole, is required.

This experience is the common heart, the common link. When you are exposed totally and fully, the nourishment of the simplicity is so powerful and inspiring that the living flame of compassion radiates. This is not because *you* would like to see others happy but because it is the action of the spontaneous common sense of enlightenment.

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3. The meaning of this sentence is not entirely clear, but from other places where Chögyam Trungpa discusses something similar, I think he is saying that, when you look more deeply into your experience, beyond dogma, you discover that many seemingly different views or beliefs are actually pointing to the same thing.—Ed.

## *Gardening*

**T**HE ANALOGY OF GARDENING is a traditional way of expressing the idea of acceptance of the basic ground. However, there could be a misconception that spiritual development is rejecting the natural ground and introducing foreign elements into the soil. So the accurate analogy is that of organic spiritual farming.

In this context, the gardener is inquisitive mind, cunning but confused, constantly trying to find a way of relating with the ground that he or she is living on. The garden is the basic nature where the birth and death of impulses and consciousness take place. Also, it is fertile energy. Its self-destructive nature is also creative.

There is a separation between the gardener and the garden, which is an important point to see, no matter whether the gardening is seen as conscious effort or as an acceptance of the weeds. Therefore, there is some dualistic attitude that becomes necessary. The wishful dream of the gardener combined with the creative interplay with the garden is a necessity, as transcendental knowledge and skillful means are applied from the beginning to the end.

In “The Song of the Staff,” Milarepa mentioned “the field of desires,” which is composed of ego, ignorance, passion, and aggression. Without a base to work with, there is no inspiration. Within the base of those desires, acknowledging them is regarded as fertilizer; you don’t reject, and you don’t accept, but you see the nakedness of these desires. This process or act in itself becomes fertilizer.

That is the preparation for the traditional practice of appreciating human life and seeing the cause and effect of karma. These, as well as acknowledging the reality of death and the suffering of the samsaric realms, are the preparatory practices. Having discovered this suffering, then your karmic situation becomes itself self-explanatory. Confidence in the teachings and receiving the teachings become more real. One begins to discover that you are a potential buddha.<sup>4</sup> Discovering buddha nature is the sprouting of the seed that Milarepa referred to

as “the non-confusing mind.” The situation we are in at this point confirms that our search for teaching is the right move.

THE SONG OF THE STAFF

In this month of spring the peasants  
Of Tibet are busy on their farms.  
I, the Yogi, also farm.

Upon the bad field of desires, I spread the fertilizer of the Preparatory  
Practice; I wet the field with manure of the Five Nectars; I plant the  
seeds of the Non-confusing Mind, Farming with discriminative thought.

I plow with Non-dualistic oxen Harnessed to the Wisdom Plow,  
With Observation of Precepts as the nose-rope, And Non-distraction Effort  
as the girth.

Diligence is my whip, and skill my bridle.  
With these tools and efforts, the bud of Bodhi sprouts; In due season ripe  
will be my fruit.

You are a farmer who grows annual crops; For eternity I cultivate.  
At harvest you are proud and joyful.  
Which of us will be happier in the end?

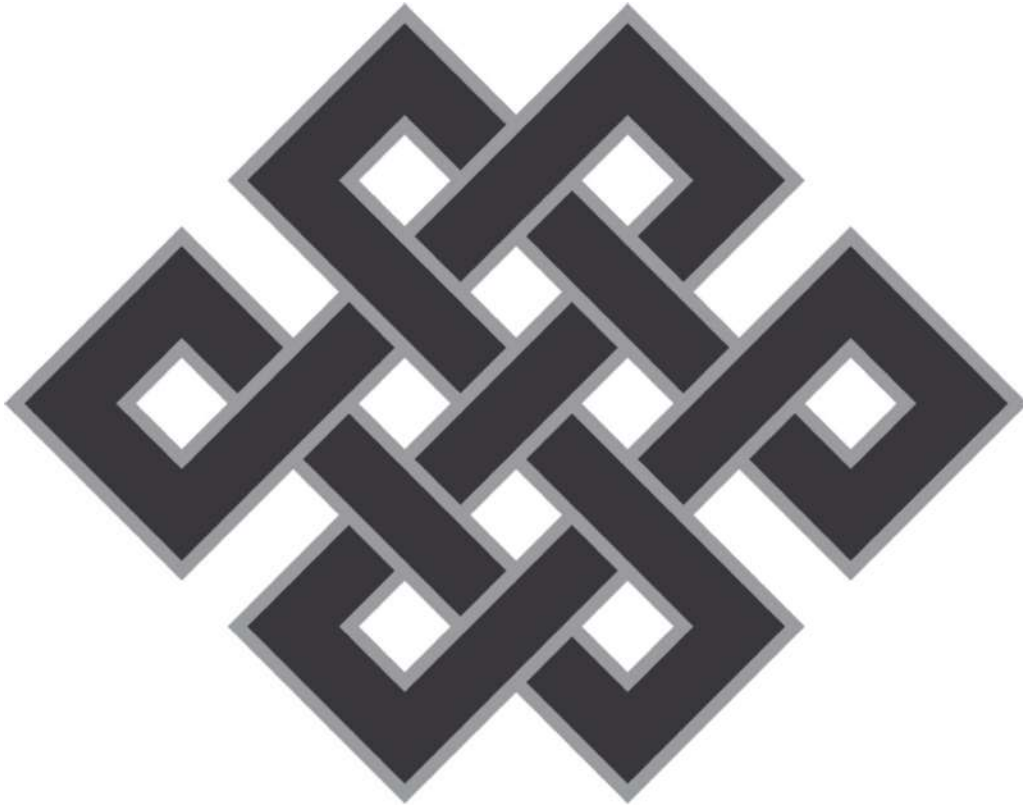
In allegory I have phrased this song of farming.  
Though proud and arrogant, be now gay and joyful.  
By making many offerings, accumulate  
Merits for your own good.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Referred to in Milarepa’s song as “the bud of Bodhi.”

5. Excerpted from “The Song of the Staff,” in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa*, translated by Garma C. C. Chang. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1999, pp. 190–191. © 1999 Shambhala Publications. Published by arrangement with Carol Publishing Group, Inc., Secaucus, NJ © 1962 Oriental Studies Foundation.

## *The Knot of Eternity*



**S**ANITY MAY BE TOO MUCH of a hang-up. Judgment cannot be made on this crazy wisdom. That is why the knot of eternity without garuda comes into the picture. Garuda is the symbol of confidence; the knot of eternity is that of action that is never-ending—it can't be switched on and off. Maybe it is based on the feminine energy principle.

The organization of a particular spiritual scene must be based neither on materialism nor on the apparent sanity of a “sensible” feminine hierarchy—nor, for that matter, on the “logical” sanity of a masculine hierarchy. It must rest on the flowing strength of nonpossessiveness.

## *Meditation and the Practice of Dathün*

**M**EDITATION IS THE WAY OF BUDDHA. A dathün, or a monthlong training period, is a systematic method of putting the teaching into practice.<sup>6</sup> Alternating formal sitting with meditation in action (daily living experiences as practice) creates a confrontation with hidden neuroses and a means to transmute them.

Traditionally, group meditation is combined with chanting sadhanas or sutras, which takes a great deal of time. However, in this case, Western students need more training in sitting practice itself. The chanting becomes more meaningful as they begin to understand what they are saying.

Anyone who is seriously interested in practicing buddhadharma should commit themselves into a framework of discipline. In order to discipline the mind, it is essential to devote part of one's life to the practice of meditation.

Students might feel apprehensive about their ability to take part in the full monthlong meditation program, but usually, to their surprise, they only have to break through their hesitation. Some people manage to find many professional or domestic excuses to avoid participating fully, but in the long run, that becomes more a form of imprisonment rather than freedom. Some people might approach this practice as sacred or therapeutic, but their solemnity is self-defeating because it creates a self-consciousness, as though you were the audience and the actor simultaneously.

It is unnecessary to establish an absolute rule of silence; rather one should minimize the amount of useless chatter. The point is that you have an opportunity to refrain from impulse and make verbal communication simple and functional.

It is preferable to sit in either full or half vajra posture with a straight back, but there is no point in inflicting pain on oneself. However, keeping the spine straight is necessary so that the breath flows naturally. One should not attempt to make oneself excessively comfortable by leaning against anything. Either opening or closing the eyes, as well as eye gaze, are related to individual



instruction.<sup>7</sup>

During the monthlong training period, in the evening after the sitting practice has ended for the day, the time should be left spacious and not overcrowded. People should enjoy each other's space rather than sparking each other's frivolousness.

The disciplines are stepping-stones, but they are not a way of solving problems. The mind's cunning tricks are endless; therefore, one should develop one's own way of freeing oneself from frivolousness. Meditation provides an immediate opportunity to bring one's neuroses to the surface, examine them, work with them, and recognize them as materials of the path rather than the villains. Finally, when one gives up the struggle—no longer struggling with apparent resistance—the discipline of meditation becomes part of one's lifestyle, and one begins to develop skill and clarity.

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6. The original manuscript said “nyinthün,” but that is now associated with a day of practice. The dathün is the monthlong retreat.

7. To clarify, the suggestion here is individual meditation instruction will guide whether one practices with one's eyes open or closed and whether one's eye gaze is lower, or closer, or higher.

## *Two Film Concepts*

### **THE BATTLE OF THE EGO**

The psychological structure of the ego will be portrayed using the analogy of the physical structure of the atom.

It begins from nowhere through continual coincidences and interplay with the physical world. A very complex pattern begins to develop—shapes and colors and sounds. Phenomenal experience becomes solid and begins to try to develop into its own individual entity.

Through this search, individuality and its solidness begin to dissolve, returning to the origin. It is the discovery of its unoriginated, primordial ground.

### **THE TIBETAN BOOK OF THE DEAD**

Man's unsurveyed territory is the law of impermanence. Continual birth brings death as well as bewilderment. Within this state of apprehension, flashes of the past and future, hope and fear, begin to take the shape of the peaceful and wrathful deities.

The suspension between death and birth is both desolate and colorful—overwhelming. The experience of different elements dissolving from the gross to the subtle level is like being in a ship that is sinking into the sea. Clinging to the raft of rebirth brings expectations of the ideal home. (The film will look into this unsurveyed territory by visual and audio means.)

## ***Foreword to The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment***

**I**T IS A PRIVILEGE to write this introduction, which seems to mark a joining of the clarity of Zen tradition with the vividness of Tibetan tradition. In the United States, Zen has been the vanguard of buddhadharma, and it remains genuine and powerful. Its simplicity and uncompromising style have caused Western minds to shed their complexities and confused ideology. It has been remarkable to see Western students of Zen giving up their territory of ego purely by sitting, which is the genuine style of Shakyamuni Buddha. On the other hand, some people tend to glamorize their ego by appreciating Zen as a coffee-table object, or by dabbling in Zen rhetoric. Another problem has been fascination with cultural beauty, causing a failure to appreciate the austerity of the true practicing tradition.

As we know, *zen* derives from the Chinese word *ch'an*, from the Sanskrit *dhyana*, meaning “meditation.” In Tibetan it is *samten*. *Sam* means “cognitive mind,” and *ten* means “steady.” So *samten*, or *zen*, is the notion of being in a state of stillness. In the *Dasabhumika Sutra* and the *Samadhiraja Sutra*, the Buddha talks about the means for practicing *dhyana* as cultivating the right motive, which is refraining from fascination with external sensory input. This technique has become one of the most powerful in overcoming theism and psychological materialism. Theism in this case is belief in an external savior, which leads to a fundamental dualism between self and others. Psychological materialism is shielding oneself from the fear of death and decay through intellectual and aesthetic pursuits, trying to make oneself into a perfect work of art.

The profounder right motive, according to the *Tathagatagarbha Sutra*, is to awaken oneself to buddha nature. Whenever doubt arises, one should cut through it; doing this, one finds behind it a state of brilliant wakefulness. The doubt that must be cut through is not so much intellectual uncertainty, but general slothfulness.

There are the different traditions of sudden and gradual paths to realizing

buddha nature. But it seems that the conclusion is the same, no matter how suddenly it dawns. Still, every path has a beginning, middle, and end. Therefore, sudden could be called gradual, and vice versa. As long as there is a need for clearing away clouds of confusion, there is a path. In fact, the concepts of sudden and gradual are merely mental flickers. In either case, when the student begins to have a longing or passion for buddha nature as his or her prize, that in itself is an obstacle. Sometimes we find that very dedicated students have difficulty in making progress. When there is some sense of carefreeness combined with tremendous exertion and practice, then buddha nature begins to shine through. But it seems to be dangerous to talk too much about buddha nature: we might formulate a mental image of it.

When this twofold right motive of refraining and awakening begins to develop in the practitioner, then the sense of stillness begins to dawn. In this case, stillness is not something distinguished from motion: it is stillness without beginning or end. In this stillness, the five eyes of the Buddha begin to open, so that finally dhyana gives birth to prajna, which is the sixth paramita of the bodhisattva path. Prajna, or “discriminating awareness,” is a two-edged sword that cuts oneself and others simultaneously. At the level of the emergence of prajna, the experience of samadhi becomes apparent. *Samadhi* means “being there” or “holding acutely.” According to the sutras, there are millions of samadhis, but they all simplify into two approaches: *sugata*, which is “well-gone,” and *tathagata*, “gone as it is.” Both achieve the *tathata*, which is “as it is.”

It is very soothing to talk about these things; however, if there is no exertion and wakefulness, we are not even finger painting but deceiving ourselves in the name of the dharma. I feel that the existence of the practice tradition is the only hope. It alone can wage war against ego. It alone is the way that we can comprehend the dharma.

The Venerable Taizan Maezumi Roshi’s teaching has caused true Zen to penetrate into people’s minds and has cut through the trappings of their ego-oriented intentions. I have strong conviction that through his wisdom, buddhadharma will shine into the world, dispelling the darkness of samsaric confusion and bringing the gentle rain of compassion.

Riding the horse of mirage  
Watching the sea of stars  
Blossoming Great Eastern Sun.

CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA  
*The Kalapa Camp*  
*December 1977*

## ***Foreword to the German Edition of Glimpses of Abhidharma***

I AM VERY HAPPY to write this foreword to the German edition of *Jenseits von Hoffnung und Furcht* [Beyond Hope and Fear].

There seem to be many forms of spiritual discipline in this world, but the inner essence of them all is an understanding of oneself and others. The Buddhist tradition particularly emphasizes that we must understand the basis of freedom before we can attain freedom. When we do not know ourselves, then frustration, ego fixation, passion and aggression, and all sorts of other negative things come up. However, if students do not indulge in judgment but instead simply learn what the structure of their minds is, they might experience some relief and develop a certain sense of connection with the journey toward spiritual clarity. This sort of state of mind can be cultivated through shamatha-vipashyana, the discipline of sitting meditation. With the help of this discipline, students might discover the dawn of wakefulness.

The wheel of dharma has been turned rapidly in America, and this activity is now beginning to show its effects. The time has now come for the teachings of the Practice Lineage of Buddha to be encouraged to spread in Europe as well. I hope the German translation of this book will contribute toward this end. May the radiant sun of enlightenment be awakened in the heart of all.

WITH BLESSINGS  
*Vajracharya the Venerable  
Chögyam Trungpa  
August 7, 1978  
Boulder, Colorado*

## ***Preface to the Japanese Edition of Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism***

**F**OR MANY LIFETIMES I have been accepted by the Kagyü lineage and blessed by its teachings—particularly to have been born in the Land of Snow, where unbroken traditions flourished. Under the present circumstances, the spiritual and cultural wealth of Tibet has been interrupted by the recent Chinese destruction, but those of us who were able to escape have continued the teachings of the Buddha and the cultural heritage of Tibet. I have personally, tirelessly dedicated myself to transmitting the dharma to those who wish to learn. These ten years of work, primarily teaching Europeans and Americans, have been very gratifying and fruitful. Many of the students may have had some connection to the dharma in previous lives or good karmic circumstances. The methods of teaching I have used have been both scholastic as well as meditative, and it seems that many students have benefited a great deal.

This book has been translated into Dutch, French, German, Italian, and Spanish. This present translation is very auspicious in returning these teachings to a true, living Buddhist culture such as Japan. I hope that Japanese readers will benefit from this translation. Because of my personal appreciation of Japanese tradition, I am delighted that this work is being published. My studies of ikebana, chanoyu, kyudo, and the calligraphy and poetry of Japan have opened my vision and made me appreciate the ageless and timeless qualities of Japanese wisdom.

VAJRACHARYA THE VENERABLE  
*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche*  
*Boulder, Colorado*  
*August 21, 1980*

## ***Contradiction within Contradiction Makes Sense***

**T**HE AWAKENING OF individualism took place in this world because of servants resenting their masters: milkmaids resenting their landowners, secretaries resenting their bosses, and common soldiers resenting their generals. The glory and the beauty of the ruling monarchs began to be corrupted, their wisdom declined, and pleasure and luxury became the theme of the principalities of their kingdoms.

The supposedly heavenly appointed rulers began to take advantage of cruel systems that existed in their own kingdoms. Local landowners or warlords began to appreciate their power over the serfdom and poor farmers. The European system began to break down, and workers rose in arms on account of various industrial revolutions in different parts of the world.

Religion was condemned and belief in true authority was questioned. A lot of musicians and self-styled poets and a handful of artists declared that their works of art were the expression of revolution or a new style of living life on this earth. So we produced such men as Engels, Marx, and George Washington, except that George found his trust and judgment in spiritual conviction. Since he belonged to various Masonic orders, he held a mystical concept of how the world could be changed and believed that, if they could only found the United States of America, the world could be saved. In the name of unity, one could create a lot of chaos, because basic unity came from common struggle, the struggle of poverty, equality, and the brotherhood of man. In the twentieth century, Dr. Sun Yat-sen came up with a modern idea borrowed from Western concepts, known as *kuo ming*, or the “people’s kingdom.”<sup>8</sup> He wished to be a self-styled George Washington, having seen the tremendous American victory of their style and their warfare and strength. The Chinese believed that the Germans were the best technicians to organize proper bureaucracy; the English were the best to create hierarchy within the ranks; the French were the best in putting human conditions together in one pot; and the Americans were the best in applying modern concepts. With those four borrowed concepts, they could actually conquer the



world, or if not, they could at least maintain their own domestic kingdom. In the early twentieth century, the students of democracy, such as China, felt embarrassed by their own local customs and systems, which seemed ugly and old-fashioned. They felt that the workers could be raised in their level of sophistication; industry could be modernized with the latest modern inventions of all kinds; and the common goal of sanity could be established in their particular country.

At that time, such people as Ho Chi Minh, who later became a saint of communism, were observing how the wisdom of the latest modern systems could be used to create a brand new world ruled by the people, organized by the people, and manufactured by the people. They espoused the slogan, "Government of the people, for the people, by the people."<sup>9</sup> Instead of having a king for a ruler, everything could be handled by individual conviction, which relieves a lot of tension: you don't have to be the pencil seller on the street corner to make a living, but you can join a union and work in a factory and get decent pay, and your rights are preserved. You could be part of the people.

Whether it be the system of federalism or republicanism, or for that matter, democratism, any kind of union of people working together was regarded as good and healthy. Tremendous celebration took place (and maybe still takes place). Working for the masses is much more appealing than working for one individual.

The purpose and goal of all this was to gain a decent living situation and good education such that everyone involved could become rich and have a comfortable home. They could raise their children and have plenty to eat, which we might think is a very simpleminded approach. But on the other hand, it has profound possibilities of all kinds.

Modernization and a high standard of living seem to be the theme. Whether Jimmy Carter sells peanuts or friends, it is the clear intention that human beings can live like anybody else.<sup>10</sup> Everyone can drink a good cup of coffee and eat a square meal, with a roof over their heads and air-conditioned or centrally heated living quarters. Any obstacles that come along with that, such as crabs in your crotch or germs in your meal, can be warded off by modern technical inventions.

This was the very interesting and opportune situation in the year 1979 when the historical event occurred of Teng Hsiao-p'ing deciding to visit the United States. The Chinese have never experienced American luxury. Teng is the first person to take a sip of Coca-Cola and test if it is suitable for his people to drink.

At the same time, Mr. Teng is trying to take his own time off from the People's Republic to have some kind of holiday in which he could have a good time and personally experience the luxury of America. According to the mutual declaration of normalization between the United States and the People's Republic of China, they should live side-by-side, good and honest, and pure in conduct; but the emphasis is purely on business transactions and educational exchange. There is no mention of the two philosophies that exist: that of capitalism and that of communism.

This brings us a very interesting surprise. During the time of Mao Tse-tung's reign, communism was kept very pure in the People's Republic. In those days, the Gang of Four were regarded as if they were fundamentalists who would step on a poisonous snake and not get hurt, receiving all kinds of confirmation. However, Hua's<sup>11</sup> China does not believe in that kind of puritanism—in fact they are somewhat embarrassed about it.<sup>12</sup> China, they feel, should become less hysterical about its communism, as America is less hysterical about its spiritualism, in spite of their slogan on the dollar bill, "In God We Trust." These days people regard that as either a joke or as confirmation that America is controlled by Jehovah. They still would like to believe in Jehovah as a saving grace, just in case anything goes wrong.

The forefathers of America demonstrated unity and sanity, but the joke is on them: in case the Americans violate their principles, they could proclaim further truth and tighten up their rules and regulations and their genuineness, such as the impeachment of Nixon and getting soft in their international tactics after the embarrassment of the Vietnam War.

Americans have relaxed their CIA control in the rest of the world, including the Tibetan cause, which they are very hot on in working with Taiwan intrigue.<sup>13</sup> America decided to let go of any embarrassing outrageous support of funnelling funds to any military governments. The American government has come to the conclusion that their support of the Shah of Persia amounted to having an embarrassing friend, so they decided to let go of him.

However, anywhere except Angola, the Americans are willing to export Coca-Cola and to propagate Americanism at the human rights level. President Carter is swayed by his advisors, unable to keep his mind on how he should be manifesting himself in true statesmanship.

Teng Hsiao-p'ing appearing at this particular timely juncture was, in the minds of the President and the State Department, a good way to take a break and

produce a sudden gap, and a sudden revelation: Ah! China could be invited. At the same time, China is hassled by its marriage with the Russians—the long face of Brezhnev may not approve of them and détente talk is questionable.<sup>14</sup> Ironically, China still builds up Communist power, and by having a good relationship with the United States, the Russians will constantly keep on building their nuclear power, because no agreement has been made in any case, so escalation of the nuclear race is constantly imminent.<sup>15</sup> The American government in its fundraising of the military budget is subject to opinion. The Carter administration has been crippled by this, unable to escalate its spending on nuclear arms and the military budget, but at the same time, the Brezhnev regime quite happily perpetuates further military and nuclear weapons, by the hundreds of megatons. China experiences a free playground in which she also can produce and strengthen her nuclear weapons. When the administrations of China and the United States confer, it is not on that particular topic, because they are trying to avoid conflicts of military strategy; this area China is not interested in discussing with the United States. The two governments of the United States and People's Republic are interested in talking about cultural and economic exchange—in short, China would like to discuss the USA's food and clothing, but she would like to keep her switchblade knife to herself, in her pocket.

When the two democratic nations meet together, China and the United States, their mutual interest is based on upgrading lifestyle. The approach can be a goalless goal—how their nations can be more involved technically and their citizens become richer and richer. The American contribution to the People's Republic will obviously manifest in further technology, further upgrading the people of China—which will provide the potential corruption of China. Joke of all jokes: China becomes one of the most hierarchical societies, against the vision of Marx and Mao Tse-tung himself. Bureaucrats of the government would obviously have some chimney sweepers and more chauffeurs and good cooks as they begin to afford them, so China will begin to become an autocratic world comparable to the Latin American societies, which are ruled by government officials and intelligentsia particularly. According to Hua's Four Modernizations, technocrats and intelligentsia can be the ruling monarchs.<sup>16</sup>

And so the clock turns round once more in full circle: the servants again resent their masters, milkmaids resent their landowners, secretaries resent their bosses, and common soldiers resent their generals. The only switch in this case is that it is not resentment as such, but the people are fearful of the hierarchy. Thanks to

the American influence, China still remains an imperial kingdom, ruled perhaps by several kings, who are known as the politburo. We are certain that Chinese society cannot be introduced to American society—China still remains untouchable by one hundred percent democracy. As time goes on, we may find that the Chinese have the potential of experiencing fully disciplined possibilities of spiritual hierarchy. We might find that within three hundred years in China.

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8. *Kuo ming* is more commonly translated as “the people’s nation” and relates to Sun Yat-sen’s three people’s principles: democracy, nationalism, and livelihood.

9. A very unusual use of this famous phrase from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address.

10. The reference to selling “peanuts or friends” may be a reference to a 1979 investigation into whether funds loaned to Carter’s peanut business by a bank controlled by a close friend, Bert Lance, might have been diverted into Carter’s presidential campaign. Lance lost his job over questions of impropriety related to these loans. The investigation found no evidence to support the allegations.

11. Hua Kuo-feng was a close associate of Mao Tse-tung. Upon Chou En-lai’s death in January 1976, Hua succeeded him as the premier of the People’s Republic of China, and he was also named as the first vice-chairman of the Communist Party in China. After Mao’s death, Hua also became the chairman of the Communist Party and of the Central Military Commission. He was the only leader to have held the offices of party leader, premier, and CMC chairman at the same time. On October 6, 1976, Hua brought the Cultural Revolution to an end and ousted the Gang of Four from political power by arranging for their arrests in Beijing.

12. This gives us some idea of when the article was written, since Hua Kuo-feng was himself forced into retirement by Teng Hsiao-p’ing in late 1978, early 1979.

13. This somewhat cryptic reference to the CIA and a relationship between the Tibetan cause and the situation in Taiwan is actually quite prescient, in that the Chinese under Teng Hsiao-p’ing tried to negotiate with proposals to both Taiwan and the Dalai Lama in the 1970s. Beginning in the 1990s the Tibetans and the Taiwanese began to communicate quite closely about their common cause, in some sense.—Ed.

14. Obviously written before Brezhnev’s death in 1982 and during the period when he was seeking nuclear agreements with the United States and détente.

15. In 1979 Brezhnev reached agreement with US president Carter on a new bilateral strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II), but the US Senate did not ratify the treaty.

16. The Four Modernizations essentially established that, in the future, the attainment of economic goals would be the measure of the success of policies and individual leadership; in other words, economics, not politics, was in command. Generally attributed to Teng Hsiao-p’ing, here Chögyam Trungpa refers to them as “Hua’s Four Modernizations.”

## *Proclaiming the Lion's Roar*

**W**E COULD REGARD ENLIGHTENMENT as the complete experience of fearlessness. The samsaric kleshas—passion, aggression, and ignorance—are what prevent us from being fully awake. They are the product of the fearfulness of ego, which constantly tries to maintain itself and to run away from any threats that might reveal its nonexistence. The Lion's Roar is the proclamation of nonexistence that cuts through the kleshas and allows us to experience the vajra, or indestructible, quality of wakefulness.

When the Buddha spoke of the four noble truths—the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the noble eightfold path—it made some people tremble, because the Buddha pointed out the true state of samsara, which is *duhkha*, or “suffering,” and he revealed the path that must be followed to transcend ego-clinging, the cause of suffering. This teaching of the four noble truths and the dharmic journey of discipline and passionlessness are the Lion's Roar of the hinayana, which provokes fear in those who wish to remain complacent and provokes courageous action in those willing to enter the path of meditation.

The Buddha's proclamation of shunyata, the principle that all experience is by nature empty of concepts and of any fixed thing, is said to have given heart attacks to some of the Buddha's disciples. This Lion's Roar of the mahayana was apparently deadly to those trying to maintain some solidity or reference point in their practice or livelihood. In proclaiming the culmination of mahayana, the Buddha taught that the state of enlightenment is brilliant and its nature is vajra-like and free from twofold ego, the ego of self and the ego of phenomena, or other. This final turning of the wheel of dharma of mahayana is traditionally known as the Lion's Roar. In the Madhyamaka tradition of mahayana, there is another meaning to the Lion's Roar. When a student's intuition and the truth of the dharma come together through practice and study, this is described as the proclamation of the Lion's Roar in all directions. The idea is that the student's own reasoning and the truth, or substance, of dharma

that he or she connects with are like two lions standing back to back. The sound of their roaring extends in all directions and leaves no hidden corners where ego can hide.

In the vajrayana, the Lion's Roar is referred to as resounding thunder. This is the sound of the vajra proclamation, which is the complete embodiment of fearlessness. Such a bold statement makes the vajrayana teachings self-secret: the roar of the lion deafens some, who are fearful, and is wakeful for others, who are willing to rouse themselves from the sleep of basic ignorance. When the Lion's Roar of vajrayana is heard properly, the kleshas and other neuroses are shaken and turned into amrita. This is the notion of transmutation. Through the discipline and devotion of vajrayana practice, the poison of ego is transmuted into vajra nature.

In general, throughout the Buddhist teachings, the idea of the Lion's Roar is twofold: on the one hand, it is the Buddha's presentation of the basic teachings of dharma. On the other, it is based on students' own practice and their proclamation of the dharma, having recognized its truth from their own experience. In this way, the Lion's Roar continues to be heard, and the teachings can spread in order to wake all sentient beings.

## ***Dharma Art / Discovering Elegance: Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements by Chögyam Trungpa Mukpo***

**D**HARMA ART FULLY MERGES ART AND LIFE. Based on the contemplative traditions of the Oriental and Occidental worlds, it is the proclamation of the elegance and magic inherent in daily life.

This exhibition is a vivid expression of dharma art, demonstrated in a series of rooms or areas, each with an appropriate arrangement of flowers. The arrangement of the rooms manifests the quality of awakened mind, which transcends cultural division.

We start in the *GARDEN*, the place of birth, the ground of our journey. Here, through the natural play of intelligence and inquisitiveness, we choose our way of entering the world.

In the *KITCHEN* we encounter the center of home life, providing warmth and nourishment. Here we see the natural order of father, mother, and children; here, we learn to survive and maintain our existence, as well as to entertain honored guests and friends.

In the *STUDY* we enter the discipline of scholarship and artistic expression. We might feel that the vastness of scholarship is too monolithic and unapproachable, but by meeting learned and wise teachers, we find it is actually workable. We learn to appreciate our forefathers and how they have transmitted their knowledge and discoveries to us. By learning ideographs, hieroglyphs, or for that matter, English spelling, we find we can play with words, creating poetry, and eventually we may discover that we have become scholars, learned persons and accomplished artists.



*Garden, Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY HARREL.

After the study we come to the *TENNO ROOM*. *Tenno* is the Japanese word for emperor and literally means “heavenly appointed one” or “universal monarch,” one who is capable of creating universal harmony and peace. Learning and acquisition of wisdom are no longer mythical as we will meet a person who embodies these qualities. Here we experience the brilliant and majestic possibility that we, too, could be sharing the vision of the emperor, that we are capable of joining heaven and earth. Once we accommodate that possibility, we allow ourselves and others to become universal monarchs, truly genuine persons.





*Kitchen, Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY HARREL.

As we enter the *BUDDHA ROOM*, we learn to overcome further frivolity and realize our true buddha nature. Here we discover a sense of sacred world and the power of non-ego, which allows us to be compassionate toward ourselves and others throughout the universe.

*WARRIOR ROOM*: *warrior* does not mean “the creator of war” but rather overcoming cowardice in order to attain the sense of fearlessness and expansive vision, which allows us to develop fundamental sanity. Anything that needs to be transformed will be transformed; anything that needs to be cultivated will be cultivated. In such a way we develop the complete fulfillment of enlightened action for the benefit of all sentient beings.



*Study, Winter Beauty: An Environmental Installation, Boulder Center for the Visual Arts, 1981.*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY J. BARKIN.

The *DRUM* represents the Lion's Roar, which both entices us to embark upon our journey and is the fearless proclamation of dharma throughout the universe. The drum represents overcoming conceptual time and space. Since we have conquered our mind and our body, now we conquer our environment. The Lion's Roar is heard everywhere with each stroke of the drumbeat. We are in a state of freedom from conditional time and space, and we are free from anything that is dictated by our second thoughts. Nothing but first thought, best thought. So we are finally awake; thus we create enlightened society.

*Discovering Elegance* is a process of seeing the inherent beauty of things as they are. Boundlessly extending outward toward the world, the warrior's way of life becomes a proclamation of sanity, gentleness, and dignity.



*Tenno Room, Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements,  
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.*

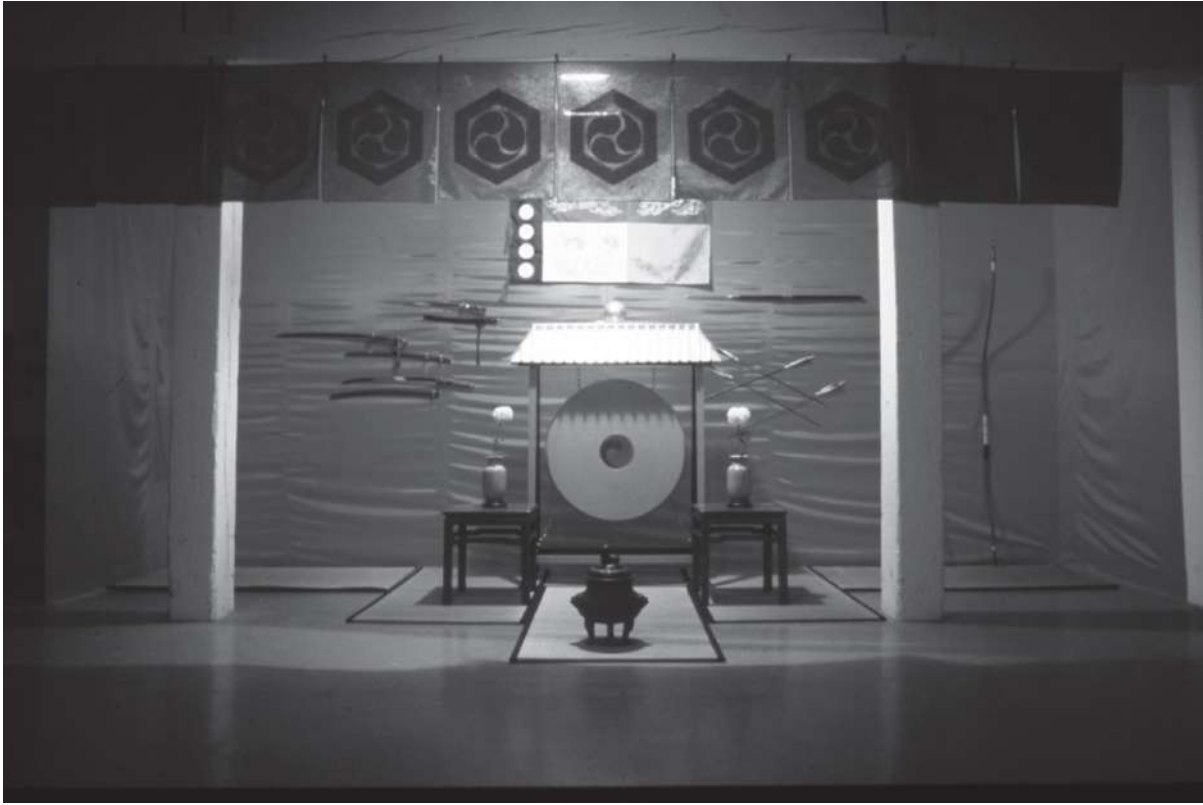
PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY HARREL.



*Buddha Room*, Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements,  
*Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY HARREL.



*Warrior Room, Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements,  
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.*  
PHOTOGRAPH BY A. ROTH.



*Drum, Discovering Elegance: An Environmental Installation and Flower Arrangements, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, 1980.*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY A. ROTH.

## *Meeting the Guru*

**I**N ONE OF HIS SEMINARS, Trungpa Rinpoche talked about his experiences with his root guru, Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen:

When my root guru first came to our monastery, I was nine years old. The day before he arrived, it was decided that my head was to be shaved again, which is an excruciating experience. The razor was somewhat dull, there wasn't enough soap, and in place of shaving lotion, the sulfur deposit from hot mineral springs was used. Whenever I complained, I was told that if I want to meet this great teacher, I better just endure it, and that half of my head is already shaved anyway, so the rest of the job better be completed. After having gone through that ordeal, I felt a sense of relief and expectation for the next day.

In the traditional welcoming ceremony, I was the one who had to precede him with the incense stick to lead him to the place where he was to stay. The first glimpse of him was of a kindly old monk, nothing extraordinary about him particularly, except that he seemed to find everything that he saw very funny. He kept on laughing and making little jokes about this and that, commenting about the doorways and his seat and the musicians.

The situation was very simple. He sat down in his seat in a somewhat sloppy way that one wouldn't expect of a great teacher. I had been taught that a great teacher would be extraordinarily refined, so Jamgön Kongtrül's spontaneity and sloppiness called forth in me a sense of kinship with him because my tutors constantly accused me of being sloppy myself, giving me examples of the tenth Trungpa's style. So I felt somewhat relieved and almost expected them to correct his actions as they used to do mine, but they accepted them and in fact began to appreciate them. I felt that they had kept hidden from me this new area of wisdom that is actually possible if a person is disciplined and well trained. This was my first glimpse of crazy wisdom.

I was very attracted to this person who for the first time showed me that my own style was okay. I myself could be spontaneous, and a holy man could be

very human rather than superhuman or divine, an understanding that in my experience had been rejected in the past.

Several extraordinary things about Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen were that occasionally he would stop conversing as though he didn't care for anything in particular or as though he were completely open, and then after a while he would continue. Also, although he was supposed to be very near-sighted and when reading a letter had to hold it up very close to his eyes, yet sometimes he would spot people miles away. It was somewhat confusing; he somehow did not fit into the social norm expected of a great guru. His spontaneity caused my tutor and bursar, who usually presented themselves to me as being well prepared and imperturbable, to become embarrassed and bewildered, which was a new experience for me.

The first problem that I came across was to understand Jamgön Kongtrül dialect. I worked very hard, not having a translator at the time, and within about two weeks, I could speak his dialect. Jamgön Kongtrül found it very funny that his own monks were very pleased at this but that my tutor and bursar were somewhat worried that I would become a frivolous actor, imitating everything. In fact, I was able to translate for them when he talked.

Jamgön Kongtrül decided to stay for a while at Dorje Khyung Dzong, the retreat center at which the fourth Trungpa had meditated. This was the occasion for me to receive my first instruction in meditation, which was very simple. I came at about seven o'clock in the morning, presented the traditional gifts, and sat down, feeling very inquisitive about it and thinking that it would make me Buddha on the spot or that something might come through. As I sat in front of him, the first sunbeams shone through the latticework of the window. He began to talk about mind, and he asked me, "Do you have a mind?" I answered, "Well, I think so many things; therefore, I must have a mind." He had a good laugh at that. Then he said, "Let's sit together and do nothing for a few seconds," which we did. I expected something extraordinary to happen, like suddenly seeing some great vision, but nothing happened, and he was very pleased. I was confused, not understanding why he was pleased that nothing actually had happened. He told me not to talk about it to any of his people or to my tutors, but I wasn't sure what not to tell, as there was nothing to talk about. Therefore, when I went back to my room, I tried to visualize the whole process, the conversation, the atmosphere, the sun shining through the tinted windows, its beams striking the floor, his face, his posture, his smile, and his sudden excitement. But I couldn't understand exactly what had happened, and as I had heard that one is



supposed to have great faith and conviction, I felt that maybe I was lacking in faith and conviction.

During my second meeting with him to review what development had taken place, he asked me what had happened at our first meeting. I said, “Actually, nothing happened. I can’t see what it’s all about.” He said, “Let’s sit together again.” We sat together again and exactly the same thing happened—nothing happened, but something *did* happen. Maybe it was just my visual perception of the room, its light, or the sun shining through. The whole atmosphere of the room was very light. Traces of incense could be smelled. When I sat on the cushion next to him, everything smelled very fresh and felt very light. Then he began to instruct me in the shamatha-vipashyana practice of watching the breath. That was a great help because then something actually happens simultaneously with nothing happening, and I found that I was able to re-create that feeling.

I met with him again after he moved back from the retreat center to the monastery. I was very excited and wanted to show him what I experienced. He was pleased when he watched me and told me to go ahead but not tell anyone about it. Then I asked him, “What about enlightenment?” By this time I felt more relaxed with him, and he too was very light and open and delightful, making puns and jokes, constantly joyful with occasional silliness, which I found quite thrilling. He answered, “There is no such thing as enlightenment. This is it.” I was bewildered and then asked, “If that’s so, do I still have to study with my tutor and have all that hassle?” He became very sad, almost in tears, and said, “Don’t worry. Everything will be okay. Come and visit me in my monastery four years from now.”

Many students from my monastery had personal meditation interviews with Jamgön Kongtrül. Some of them thought they were having mahamudra experiences, and he would recommend that they return to their breath, a suggestion that offended some of them who thought that they were being told to revert to a more primitive level. But others were delighted with the correction, having been uncertain of what they were doing. The atmosphere created by Jamgön Kongtrül was so solid and so definite that one had simply to tune into that atmosphere. I remember feeling that atmosphere all the time. When one was approaching his residence, one felt some kind of radiation, and when one came closer, the atmosphere became more and more dense so that when one opened the door into his rooms, there was a feeling of uncertainty, fear, but at the same time, a feeling in the bottom of one’s heart somewhat of being tickled: pain and pleasure together, sweet and sour at once. Meeting with other teachers did not

really tickle the heart. Being with him brought a strong sense of energy and reality, an experience that was by no means a dream, but very much alive.

When I was older, I would make up lists of questions to ask him during our interviews, but as soon as I would look at the list, the questions seemed completely absurd and made no sense at all. Toward the end of my stay with Jamgön Kongtrül, he would usually check on how my studies with Khenpo Gangshar were going: how much I understood in terms of scholarship, philosophy, and facts and figures, and what I understood on the intuitive level.

Later, I began to take fewer notes but to write some six-syllable poetry that I would give to him when I visited him, which he carefully corrected. Later, I would just scribble something down, and there were fewer corrections. I thought that he was getting bored with all my poems, but actually he read them all. He said, “If you write with an intention, it doesn’t work. You have to write without intention.” We had a three-hour session together in which he would write one line, and I would write the next line. When he read through the three pages we had written together, it sounded like his own writing, not mine. This was not particularly helpful to me as it was too much of an ego boost. I began to write a lot of poetry, writing formal poems instead of letters. I felt that I was becoming too literate, too good at mimicking, but Jamgön Kongtrül did not discourage me. He began to introduce me to great poets or scholars who visited him, and I would be asked to write a poem on the spot, which made me feel that I was somewhat of a showpiece. At that time, I began to write *dohas* and various short sadhanas. I slowly developed a sense of vajra pride in expressing myself, that in essence everything was okay and that Jamgön Kongtrül’s approval was not the main point. One particular sadhana that I wrote, he said, influenced him so much that he was still high on it the next day, a remark that I was uncertain whether to interpret as sarcastic or real.

Now, Jamgön Kongtrül began to generate moments of black cloud permeating the atmosphere, particularly after he had witnessed a logical debate in the seminary at which I was a brilliant student, a young smart kid overcoming everybody’s arguments. I expected some sort of reward when I later walked into Jamgön Kongtrül’s room, but it was dark. I could just make out his silhouette and hear the crack of his mala beads. I sat down. Nothing happened. He said nothing for about forty-five minutes. His attendants brought in his food and tea, and I could hear the crack of his jaws in their sockets as he chewed his meat, a very threatening sound. The situation became very intense. Before I left, he spoke a few words, “Watch your step. You could become a brilliant logician.

But there is no warfare happening in this country, and there is no such job for that sort of person. Think about it.” After that, I began to work more on the experiential rather than on the purely logical level of the abhidharma and Madhyamaka.

Immediately after that, for a period of about fifteen days, Jamgön Kongtrül was particularly critical, and everyone was very frightened of him. The atmosphere was a black cloud. He beat the abbot of Sechen with his solid bamboo walking stick and kicked him. His cook and his old tutor were very frightened. In those days I used to exercise by walking toward and away from his house. I could feel the change in the atmosphere, like a change in temperature.

At the end of the summer, Jamgön Kongtrül decided to take all the young tülkus and young scholars on a vacation, and he told the tutors that they were not allowed to come. We collected whatever people could contribute—a pound of butter, a bag of rice, a brick of tea, or a leg of lamb—and we camped in a tent in a big field beyond Sechen monastery at the junction of two rivers. We played all kinds of games and had a big feast. Everyone felt free because there was nobody watching. Jamgön Kongtrül himself completely changed his personality so that one forgot what had happened in the previous several weeks. This was a most powerful experience for me. To be without a watcher, your tutor or your own watcher, was an enormously powerful and delightful experience. You get a better sleep and wake up with delight.

In the relationship with my guru, it became very obvious that the world is extraordinarily clear and precise, not purely speculative, but having soft edges, a real world that happens. And a lineage holder—a complete, thorough, one hundred percent lineage holder—manifests a world of a particular nature, which becomes very evident. Within that world there is a general sense of sanity, where one’s neurosis is workable.

# *The Early Years: Life and Training in Tibet*

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH KESANG GETZA TASHI, PART ONE**

*Kesang Getza Tashi:* Rinpoche, you were eleven when you took the bodhisattva vow and started your ngöndro practice, along with studying poetry and metaphysics. You were constantly exposed to great teachers, including Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche, Khenpo Gangshar, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and others. In retrospect, how would you evaluate your vigorous discipline, your study, reflection, and practice in the environment of Dütsi Tel, from such an early age?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I think that one of the interesting points is that, from being in a monastic environment since my infancy, there were no other reference points and no other temptations outside of that monastic life. This was a great help afterward. Also, at the same time, my meetings with my teachers had a strong effect on me, in their way of teaching and also in their sense of gentleness and their kindness toward me.

Before I met these teachers, I was with my tutor, studying reading, grammar, and a little bit of philosophy. At the time, my tutors always talked about what the great teachers were like. And I never had any idea what they were talking about. They told stories about my previous incarnation, the tenth Trungpa, and that kind of thing. As soon as I met people like Jamgön Kongtrül and Khyentse Rinpoche, I began to realize that they always created some kind of an environment. When you walked into their room, you would feel the sacredness that they built around them. This was actually one of the most important teachings I received, apart from what they said.

Those teachers created an environment that was very impressive, and from that, I began to realize what is meant by a “great” teacher. And of course, I used to practice reading by studying the lives of Milarepa, Padmasambhava, the Buddha, and so on. Somehow I was able to make a connection from the readings with what I had experienced of those great teachers.

*KGT:* What about study, reflection, and practice specifically? You have talked about the spiritual environment. Can you evaluate the systematic curriculum for us?

*CTR:* Taming the mind was an important part of the whole curriculum. The teachers always talked about that. There was also the concept of mind following the dharma. As far as my experience and my study are concerned, as you know, in Tibet we immediately start with vajrayana. But along with that, there is some sense of becoming gentle and taming yourself, through the practice of meditation, which actually is very provocative. In the beginning, you realize that there are lots of discursive thoughts, and as such, you have to come back to your breath; you come back to your sitting practice. Being young and also inquisitive-minded, there was lots of struggle. I think it's good to begin that way. It is very much working with the heart of the matter rather than purely with the external side of things.

*KGT:* How would you compare your own practice, steeped in the monastic tradition of Tibet, with the training and practice you lay out for your own disciples in the United States, who come from a Judeo-Christian background? Are there any forms of knowledge or passion obscurations you have encountered with your students that are particularly identifiable with their upbringing?

*CTR:* I think that in the West people's situation is the complete opposite to what I had in the monastic environment. They have too many reference points, and they have never seen the complete world of the practice that we had in Tibet. So there are lots of outside reference points. Furthermore, a lot of the students come from either some kind of spiritual search, or they are psychologically oriented or scientifically oriented. There are so many reference points.

Therefore, the sitting practice of meditation is the only way to bring them to the point that they don't have too many metaphysical reference points. Sometimes, it's quite hard to work with the students here because they have tremendous expectations, or they come with their own preconceptions and try to fit the buddhadharma into their particular style of thinking.

At the beginning of working with students here, I had to somewhat go along with them, at least a bit. At the same time, I tried to introduce some kind of discipline and to slowly wean them away from their mainstream. Gradually, they were asked to do more sitting practice of meditation. Then, as they began to sit more, I could present more of the basic Buddhist point of view, such as the

concept of egolessness. Gradually people began to come around. They began to give up their preconceptions. But it took, well, we could say, seven years to arrive at that situation.

*KGT:* You mention students' expectations. This is something that other teachers I've talked with have pointed out. There is a certain kind of rush to get results. Some teachers cited examples of students checking on the immediate effectiveness of certain practices. Do you see that tendency quite a bit?

*CTR:* Quite a lot, actually. Some students talk about how the sitting practice of meditation might help to save them. Then, when they begin to do the actual practice itself, they begin to realize that they have been fooling themselves, in some sense. Particularly in my style of teaching, I don't present anything to them with goal orientation, and I try to shy away from the magical aspects of vajrayana. I think that the sitting practice and the boredom that they are able to experience as part of it help a lot.

*KGT:* Boredom, did you say, Rinpoche?

*CTR:* Yes, the boredom that they experience in sitting practice. Gradually, they begin to realize that, first of all, you have to overcome your neurosis. And then you might get magical results after that. We also had some problems with students who came from other teachers who already had given them abhishekas, initiations, transmissions, and so forth. The students wanted to latch on to those things, and sometimes they would fool themselves into believing that they had obtained something.

I had my doubts in the beginning. But again, you go along with them a little bit and also make suggestions to them. Particularly, I think that the environment that is created is very important. It's very helpful to the new students that we provide facilities for the sitting practice of meditation. We have shrine halls, retreat huts, and provide those kinds of practice environments.

*KGT:* You have been the foremost teacher in the Western world in propagating the buddhadharma. With your insight into Western mind and the creation of a powerfully simple and direct language, you have made buddhadharma widely accessible. Rinpoche, when you were in Tibet, did it ever occur to you that you would have so much to do in the West? Is this your karma?

*CTR:* My guru, Jamgön Kongtrül, used to talk about this question, saying that we had to do something to maintain the teachings and that it was “up to you people.” He also used to talk about the political situation with the communist Chinese and all sorts of things. He often talked about how America was the only hope.

*KGT:* He mentioned America specifically?

*CTR:* Yes, he said that America was the only hope—and he said that a long time ago!

*KGT:* That was in the early fifties, Rinpoche?

*CTR:* Yes, that was in the early 1950s. As soon as I was leaving my monastery, heading toward India, I had a strong feeling that I was going to definitely try to reach as far as I could, go as far as I could, geographically and also to try to find out and solve the mysteries of the Western world. There was some very definite feeling, almost as if I took a vow, a vow to see to it that I would go as far as I could. We went through a lot of obstacles. In the refugee camps in India, for example, we had to cut our way through physically very bad situations. As soon as the opportunity arose, immediately I went to New Delhi and began to study English.

Later I became one of the first Tibetans to come to Britain. I was vaguely expecting that something like that would happen, but at the same time, I had to cut down my own ambition. Sometimes I thought that I was just fooling myself. Sometimes I thought that something might actually happen. Each time that something happened, it almost seemed as if the general force of karma had taken over my life. Whatever I had to do in life—I was almost helpless to influence it. Often, it seemed that I couldn't make my own decisions, because the decisions were made for me by the situations. The only thing that I needed to do was to realize that I couldn't step back and change my mind toward life. So I just went along with it. And here we are!

*KGT:* You mentioned that you wanted to go as far as possible. What was that notion from, Rinpoche?

*CTR:* I think it was feeling the tremendous power coming from the Christian world, and the modern world altogether, and a tremendous sense of that

undermining our tradition. Sometimes, it felt to me as though the force of the Western world was almost like an evil factor that was disrupting the continuity in one's practice and in dharmic situations. I wanted to challenge that. I wanted to find out whether, if I went along with that Western energy, how far I could go and still maintain complete balance. That was an interesting thing to do.

*KGT:* So going as far as you could was a notion of presenting yourself with the most obstacles, right?

*CTR:* The most obstacles, yes.

*KGT:* To further clarify, the conditions you are speaking of are those that present the most challenge and the greatest obstacles to genuine spirituality?

*CTR:* Yes, yes. I also felt that the whole notion of scientific exploration was based on some kind of Christian ideal. But when I began to study Christianity, I found out that the Christians themselves had to go through their own struggles as well.

*KGT:* That's right.

*CTR:* So it's interesting.

*KGT:* In your autobiography, *Born in Tibet*, you describe a day when the first rays of the sun fell auspiciously on you as you entered the room to receive teachings from your root guru. You said that after this incident, the teachings you received were so profound that you felt that Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche was returning the spirituality he himself received from the tenth Trungpa. Jamgön Kongtrül was overjoyed when he realized that you could absorb his teachings without any barrier, even though you were quite young then. Could you recapitulate that experience of transmission? Is that what is called "the meeting of two minds"?

*CTR:* I think you can call it that, but actually it is a sudden glimpse of enlightenment, which my teacher was showing me. He was showing me that it is possible and it is still alive: such lineage and such strength are still alive. Partly because of my own innocence, I had no preconceptions, no reference points, as we talked about earlier. This helped a lot. I was simply being there, without any



kind of defense mechanisms on my part, which is what we might call devotion and trust.

That experience seemed to be the starting point, like planting a seed. From then on, any of the other teachings that I received were a further elaboration of that experience. It's the continuity of wakefulness that has been handed down through generations, and I saw a glimpse of that. That gave me tremendous confidence that it is possible; it can be done.

Sometimes I had a problem of treasuring that transmission and trying to cherish it too preciously. Then I thought I had lost it, but then I realized that it is there always. And it is regained constantly. Actually, that experience happens even today. Nowadays, it's still the same thing.

*KGT:* As you said earlier, this is much more of the experience of the heart rather than something that you can go on and on discussing discursively. Am I correct, Rinpoche?

*CTR:* I think so. This has nothing to do with philosophy or technical studies of any kind. It's just the environment that the teachers create, and we are joining in. So therefore, there is some kind of explosion, and the resounding of the explosion still remains with you all the time.

*KGT:* You mentioned your innocence, Rinpoche. Can some of what happened be attributed to your karmic disposition? Is that something valid?

*CTR:* Well, I think so.

*KGT:* Tibetans talk about *sonam* or merit. Was it that?

*CTR:* Um-hmm. I think it's a question of my good fortune, to have been raised in the way that I was. Sometimes, when you are being beaten by your tutor, when you are being punished and that kind of thing, you have some sense of doubt, and you don't know what they are doing to you. But on the other hand! [*Laughter.*] Beyond that, there is some sense that you are being completely put into that self-contained place, that self-contained situation that is obviously a result of a good karmic situation.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, when did you encounter your first experience and exposure to

the crazy-wisdom teaching? Who was the teacher and what was it like?

*CTR:* [*Laughs.*] I think actually we could say that my first transmission of crazy wisdom was when I was nine years old and received the teachings from Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche. That experience was the seed of crazy wisdom. There definitely was some sense of a leap and an open explosion, and that continued. Then, the second time, it was clarified further by Khenpo Gangshar.

*KGT:* Ha-ha!

*CTR:* We were leaving my monastery, Surmang Dütsi Tel, after a long period of studying philosophy, and my learning was improving a great deal. At some point, he had to stop me, because I was becoming a completely intellectual person. He stopped me, and he said, “What you’ve learned is bullshit.” [*Much laughter from both.*] “Nothing has happened. Nothing has developed. Now you have to give up what you have studied.” That startled me. Then, he switched his approach, and everything was very direct and simple.<sup>17</sup>

*KGT:* When was that? How old were you?

*CTR:* I don’t know. It might be mentioned in *Born in Tibet*. I think it was about a year before we left our monastery, Dütsi Tel. So it was probably 1957 or 1958.

*KGT:* *Laso.*<sup>18</sup> What was your reaction? You were very startled first?

*CTR:* I think so. I was building myself up in this situation, such that I thought that I understood the teachings completely. I understood everything logically, entirely. We used to do a lot of debate. We studied a lot of logic and Madhyamaka and other philosophical schools, and I could answer everything. After Khenpo Gangshar’s remarks, I couldn’t answer anything. The whole thing turned around. Then, the idea came to me that what’s learned should be mixed, or integrated, with dharma so that the teachings become real to you rather than being speculation. That realization was a big shock.

*KGT:* Would you say that what Khenpo Gangshar pointed out to you is more the style of the Kagyü lineage? The Gelukpa lineage, as an example, has been praised for its scholarship. But at the same time, the Gelukpas have sometimes been criticized for almost being “addicted to logic.” So I wonder if the approach

that Khenpo Gangshar presented to you would be more frequent in the Kagyü lineage or perhaps in the Nyingma lineage?

*CTR:* I would say that both the Nyingma and the Kagyü traditions have that way of stopping your false pride in your learning. Khenpo Gangshar was somewhat a Nyingma teacher. The experience that he transmitted was obviously a combination of mahamudra and ati. Those two experiences are always mixed together. The particular tradition of mixing the mahamudra and the ati traditions together has been handed down since the time of Rangjung Dorje, the third Karmapa. Since that time, this tradition has been handed down through people like Jamgön Kongtrül the Great. Both he and Rangjung Dorje practiced the Kagyü-Nyingma tradition, with the two inseparable and combined together. The early Kagyü tradition is more connected with the contemplative version of the Kadam tradition.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, the next question is related with dharma and politics. Could you reflect back on your days at Dütsi Tel and the Surmang monasteries, the sangha there, the administration, and you as the supreme abbot? To what extent were prajna and upaya, or intellect and skillful means, exercised in dealing with the phenomenal world of economics and politics, to maintain the monastery? In dealing with the encroaching communist Chinese problems, to what extent was the monastic tradition giving in to the corruptive influence of self-perpetuation of an institution?

*CTR:* The general sense of people's dedication, their faith, the effort that they put into the practice and study of the dharma, and their overall discipline were very good. Basically, the discipline in the monastic situation was pure and alive. On the other hand, too much emphasis was put on purely the sense of magic, the sense that one doesn't have to work too hard and one could say a few mantras to cure sickness, or whatever. That almost folk style of believing in the dharma was the beginning of corruption.

In our monastery, we were the ruling administration, the seat of local government, for that particular province, as well as being the leading monastery in the area. That was a problem. People begin to reflect less on the teachings, and there was very little notion of actually renouncing samsara. People were appreciating their particular administrative roles and feeling that particular strength and power. That was also beginning to become corruption I would say, definitely. There was very little upaya and prajna, particularly.

On the other hand, there was no economic corruption or any general practice of our monastery collecting taxes or that kind of situation. The setup was quite innocent and simple, for the very reason, I think, that the setup was quite primitive. It was unlike some big monasteries where they economically abused people. That kind of thing didn't take place in our monastery.

*KGT:* So would you say, Rinpoche, that the problem was more that people were preoccupied in their roles, feeling self-satisfied in their roles within the monastic setting and lacking a genuine sense of renouncing samsara, rather than corruption coming from institutional self-perpetuation?

*CTR:* Yes, I think that it actually helped, in some sense, that the setup was primitive. There was also some security of just living in a monastery. There were a few realized monks, but for the rest, the general trend was to join in and just do your memorizing of your texts and your chanting.

*KGT:* It's a kind of livelihood, isn't it?

*CTR:* Yes, it's a kind of livelihood, and there is very little thinking about what you're doing.

*KGT:* How would you compare the situation in Tibet with the modern setting? How does that situation compare with Vajradhatu, the Dharmadhatu, the sangha, the administration, your regent and yourself now in dealing with similar problems in the day-to-day world? What kind of lessons can be learned from the past?

*CTR:* In Tibet, we had the monks and the monastic situation, and then we had laypeople. But in the American Buddhist setup, we have a third situation: the yogis. These are not only laypeople, but they are also practitioners. This is a third category, which is also a part of the sangha.

In the future, I hope to introduce monastic situations in the West. In my opinion, the monks in Western monasteries should lead very simple lives. They should not do anything connected with the administration of the organization or running anything. They should have a really pure monastic situation, like the situation at the time of the Buddha. The organizations should be run by the yogis who have families and deal with business situations and that kind of thing.

There is a natural progression here. When people are newly converted to a religion or the religion is new, at the beginning the situation is quite pure and good. At this point in our community, that is what is happening. Everybody understands what they are doing, in terms of their practice, and they are trying to renounce their world and practice. So in some sense what is happening here supersedes or becomes much more pure than what happened in Tibet when I was there.

I think the lesson of corruption in the Tibetan situation at that time is one we can learn from. It's the problem with blind faith. When everybody is doing it, you do it too. Then, you don't have to work on yourself. So it's important to have tremendous checks and balances, checking every student and the students checking themselves, checking their own state of mind. And there should be great rapport among those in the administration. Then, I don't think there will be any particular problem. But it is quite hard work keeping up with that, because there are constantly possibilities of just letting go and not paying much attention. Any of the meditation instructors or the practices themselves might be neglected. So there has to be a lot of exertion.

*KGT:* You mentioned that one of the problems in the monastic situation was getting used to one's role and not really having renunciation. How about the problem in terms of the yogis you mentioned here in the sangha? Your teachings deal with all life situations. Given that, what is the parallel for people here, in getting habituated and not having genuine renunciation of samsara?

*CTR:* I think that renunciation is very much internalized in your own psychological state. Practitioners in the West have much less sense of security, because they are not living in a monastery. They have to deal with their own economy, their own family situations, and also with their own practice situations. So there is very little rest for them, in this case. It's unlike in the monastery, where you have tremendous facilities built for you, and you can just be there very easily. Here, I think people are constantly being challenged, much more so. That probably is the saving grace.

*KGT: La lesa.*<sup>19</sup>

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17. See also “Meeting the Guru” in this volume for another time that Chögyam Trungpa was criticized by his teacher Jamgön Kongtrül for intellectualizing the teachings.
18. A Tibetan phrase meaning, “I see,” or indicating agreement.
19. Another form of “laso,” discussed in an earlier footnote.

# ***Yogis and Pandits: The Future of Buddhism in the West***

## **AN INTERVIEW WITH KESANG GETZA TASHI, PART TWO**

*Kesang Getza Tashi:* You have pointed out that in the United States the three lords of materialism—the lords of form, speech, and mind—have developed sophisticated technology, ideology, and conceptual systems to create an apparent psychological comfort in defense of ego. What comes to ego's aid in less developed societies? What about parallels in Tibetan society? How did the three lords of materialism manifest themselves there?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* This problem does not necessarily belong to this country alone. Rather, it's a general sense of corruption that makes one unable to practice the teachings properly. In Tibet, for instance, or in many other countries, originally there was tremendous tradition and discipline behind the practice, but gradually that began to decline. People began to use spiritual practices purely to gain wealth or fame. In the conduct of ceremonies, for instance, concentration and the sense of devotion and actual practice were forgotten. People only paid attention to the ritual aspect. They would simply mumble mantras without paying attention to what they were saying. There was that kind of general decline.

*KGT:* La leso.<sup>20</sup> It seems over there, in Asia, that the tradition was so strong and established that there was the problem of habituation and an attitude of taking things for granted.

*CTR:* Very much so. Yes.

*KGT:* And over here, there is a powerful attraction to the dharma because of suffering and confusion.

*CTR:* Yes.

*KGT*: Yet there are a lot of new obstacles.

*CTR*: Yes, there are new obstacles because people think that, if they just follow the form, it will save them. That seems to be the basic point. Obviously, the high technology and good standard of living have provided dissatisfaction for them. So they want to go beyond that and get another form of gadget created for this country. That's the attitude.

*KGT*: Since you mentioned it, I'd like to ask a question about the standard of living as it relates to dharma. Historically, it seems that buddhadharma has always appealed to the upper class. It was adopted first in India by the newly emerged merchant class, as a result of the expansion of commerce. In Tibet, it began in the palace among the nobility. In the West, too, it seems that the dharma appeals to the middle and upper-middle leisure classes. And of course, there is Buddha Shakyamuni's own princely background.

Rinpoche, do you think that it is mainly those who are blessed with fortunate karma who can study, reflect on, and practice the dharma? The first noble truth, the truth of suffering, is more of universal suffering than our own immediate suffering, isn't it?

*CTR*: That's a very interesting question, actually. Generally speaking, I think that as far as the philosophy is concerned, the idea is to renounce whatever you have and lead the life of a beggar. For example, monks have simple robes and begging bowls. Renunciation means living the life of a humble person. But as you have said, the first introduction of Buddhism took place among the well-to-do in society. I think they began to see the splendor of the teachings. They also had more to give, whereas the beggar doesn't have anything to give up. The concept of accumulating merit is to let go of what you have.

Generally speaking, you will find that the less affluent people are the more genuine Buddhists. Simple people are much more genuine, because they are satisfied with or at least accustomed to their poverty. Also, they usually don't have to organize or run a country or even manage a household. So they can just sit and practice. It is possible that Buddhism might have been introduced in a different way. But it will have different effects on those who practice, once the teachings are completely established in a country. And I think that it is highly possible that the dharma *can* be established. It can be done.



*KGT:* Can you elaborate on the point you just made, that people whose lives are simpler make more genuine Buddhists?

*CTR:* One example would be someone like Milarepa, obviously. There are a lot of people in the Kagyü tradition, as you know, who were simply inspired by their own poverty and their own suffering. Therefore, they were much more willing to go along with their situation. So the notion of living in a cave, for instance, was regarded as a luxury by many practitioners. As you know, in this country as well, people take practice retreats where you take simple provisions, you go into a hut, and you practice simply. That kind of situation is very natural.

*KGT:* Related to the class question, let me ask you about the first noble truth, the truth of suffering. There is a gap between the immediacy of personal suffering and the universal suffering that goes beyond one's personal sorrows and so forth. But one is still able to readily sympathize with others' suffering. In that context, I wondered if perhaps people who are struggling desperately, day in and day out, just to keep themselves alive, may be so taxed in a strange way that they cannot look beyond their own corner of the world or their own survival.

*CTR:* Well, I think that if they meet the right teacher, they could become very inspired. Somehow, they could switch their attitude, although they might still be living in poverty. If they feel inspired, they can do something as well. You know, this can happen to anybody, including wealthy people who also have to manage their business and have other responsibilities. It's a question of meeting the right teacher. Then, having heard the teachings, it's a question of being in the right state of mind at that particular point.

*KGT:* So the communist doctrine, their allegation that religion is the indulgence and the tool of the upper and leisure class, is somewhat superficial.

*CTR:* I think so, yes. In their own perverted way, they have probably seen some religious lords of materialism in religious establishments. You know, like seeing gold statues and expensive hangings in shrines and that kind of thing.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, you often speak of American karma. How is Tibetan karma different from that? Do your teachings address American karma in particular? Would you address the Tibetans in India or in Tibet, for that matter, very

differently?

*CTR:* Based on the training I received and the way I studied, I would say that my approach to teaching in Tibet, India, and America quite possibly would be the same. In my approach, we are trying to go back to the original style of Buddhism, starting with the sitting practice of meditation. So we would be doing the same thing, wherever I was teaching. I think this approach has tremendous effect on people.

*KGT:* Laso. If the same teachings can be readily taught to people from different social and economic conditions and those from different cultural background, does that imply, Rinpoche, that there is no distinction between the American karma and the Tibetan karma?

*CTR:* American karma is that they were able to receive the Buddhist teachings because of the troubles in Tibet, the communist invasion, and other situations that brought Buddhism into this country. That's the American karma, the American destiny, in some sense. It's that rather than a different state of mind, particularly. We are not talking about that.

Also, the Americans have a way of exploring scientifically and psychologically, to find something out. Finally they found Buddhism, which is the closest approach to what they were looking for. That's American karma, the American situation.

*KGT:* Laso. Some teachers have expressed the handicap they feel in communicating with Western students because of the language and cultural barriers. Could you discuss the importance of the language and your insight into the native cultural situations, particularly in dealing with spiritual materialism?

*CTR:* At the beginning, the teaching has to be very, very simple and straightforward, such as the straightforward sitting practice of meditation. It is very simple. You might introduce just a few metaphysical points, such as the understanding of ego, the understanding of the mind and thought patterns and how emotions work. Those kinds of simple explanations are similar to how a doctor will explain to his or her patient why the patient is ill. It should be just simple and straightforward things.

I personally also try to adopt certain handles, so to speak, as the starting points, such as using psychological terms and commonly understood symbols in

Buddhist art and things like that. I started with the kinds of things that the students themselves had experienced. I made it very simple, extremely simple. Then people begin to respond to you, and they begin to present things to you in their own language. Of course, you cannot rely on their culture entirely. You have to slowly bring them to Buddhist culture. Very slowly. Once you have set up the zafus, the shrine rooms, the lighting, the incense, other things come very slowly, such as learning how to prostrate and things like that.

The first point is that they have to have some kind of faith. Once they have faith, you could say only a few words, but they will begin to understand. When you speak very simply, they realize that you are speaking to their mind. Another thing is that one has to trust the students' intelligence and not constantly be trying to convince them. They have their intelligence, and their intelligence could be used and worked with. I think language is very important also. Particularly in the Buddhist teachings, we have a lot of logical arguments and logical conclusions. We also have a lot of examples, such as using the stories of the lives of great teachers as examples and so on. All these materials are very helpful.

*KGT:* You mentioned the word “faith.” Faith and doubt have come up quite a bit in interviews that I’ve done with other teachers. One of the important points you mentioned, concerning your own training and practice, was that you came into it with innocence and very few reference points. In this context, can you make some comments about the faith and doubt of your students when you teach them the buddhadharma, Rinpoche?

*CTR:* In a lot of cases, when the students first come, they come with their intrigues or some kind of fascination with doubt. To begin with, you might say that 75 percent is doubt, and the rest is inquisitiveness. And we have to work with that. The way to work with it is, to begin with, not promising anything, particularly.

But you simply ask them to work with themselves, through the sitting practice of meditation. During the sitting practice itself, a lot of doubts come out. Somehow, however, when the sitting practice is introduced quite severely, in a very disciplined way, the students begin to feel some sense of joy, a little bit of joy, and maybe some sense of relief. From that relief, they begin to develop trust. As the trust and the practice go on, further and further, the students finally begin to develop faith. So it’s a process—faith is based on first working with

their doubts.

*KGT:* So, in a sense, in order to develop faith, there are many hurdles to be cleared, so to speak. In order to develop faith, one goes through a long process of doubt, trust, doubt alternating with trust, and much patience.

*CTR:* It's a very slow process.

*KGT:* But it's quite natural.

*CTR:* It's quite natural. In fact, it's preferable that the students have a lot of doubts in the beginning. That way, once they overcome their doubt, their faith becomes very permanent. Otherwise, in the beginning, people could develop temporary faith, a sort of gullibility actually, but then you find them doubtful later on.

*KGT:* La leso. Rinpoche, in your autobiography, you mentioned that it was during your retreat at Taktsang, after invoking Guru Rinpoche and the Kagyü forefathers, you received a jolting message and your vision for the future. The message to you was to exorcise spiritual materialism and present the vajrayana teachings of mahamudra and ati in the West. Could you please make some comment on this message and your teaching in the West?

*CTR:* We can't just present mahamudra and ati teachings to students right away. At the same time, the approach of presenting the nine yantras step-by-step is the only way to expose the three lords of materialism. Particularly at the beginning, one must be very careful not to present vajrayana at all, instead concentrating a great deal on hinayana and the practice of meditation.

By doing so, people begin to realize that they can work with their minds. You also have the mahayana principle, which is that people can trust themselves and at the same time generate compassion for others. Then, when they are ready, and only then, they begin to cut through their neurotic minds through the powerful teachings of mahamudra and ati. That's the process.

*KGT:* La leso. Do mahamudra and ati have a particular ability to expose spiritual materialism?

*CTR:* Well, first you have to expose the crude materialism by means of hinayana

and mahayana. Then, if the student is still hanging on to some kind of security, that final security can be cut through by the higher teachings.

*KGT*: La lesa. Nagarjuna has taught: “When the river is crossed, the raft is to be abandoned.” It seems here that the *acharya* Nagarjuna is pointing to the vajrayana practice. In this context, Rinpoche, could you explain the change of shunyata in mahayana to the luminosity in the vajrayana? Also can you speak to the introduction of ordinary mind and crazy wisdom in the vajrayana? Do these powerful direct actions of the vajrayana relate with the dialectics of the two truths, the relative and the absolute, and with dependent origination? Or is the vajrayana practice a complete departure from any framework at all?

*CTR*: Throughout the path, we constantly talk about upaya and prajna, even from the early stages of the hinayana. In the mahayana, we talk about the first five paramitas as being the upaya and the sixth paramita as being the aspect of prajna. With that in mind, to begin with, we see the phenomenal world as our projection. In the second stage, phenomena are seen as not only our projections alone but as empty. From there on, students begin to realize that they can’t abandon phenomenal experience. At this stage, it is seeing water as water and fire as fire. They see phenomena as very straightforward truths but without clinging to that. That’s where the birth of vajrayana occurs, and it continues from this point on. Beyond that, there is the vajra concept of seeing the world as an indestructible mandala, which combines together the reality of *kündzop*, or relative truth, with the absoluteness of *dondam*, or absolute truth. The interplay of the two truths runs through the three yana principles all along.

You also asked about shunyata and luminosity. Shunyata is the absence of the conceptual mind, having no fixation, no clinging. Luminosity is beyond no fixation. It’s not just empty, but it is filled with radiance. It’s filled with some sense of seeing the emptiness as full at the same time.

*KGT*: What about the ordinary mind?

*CTR*: [*Laughs.*] Ordinary mind is the final state of vajrayana experience, where the whole world is seen as completely sacred. It’s so sacred that it is very ordinary, so that you don’t have to particularly cherish it or abandon it. In this naturalness and this simplicity the yogis begin to develop the experience of what is known as *mahasukha*, or the “great joy.”

*KGT:* And what about crazy wisdom?

*CTR:* Crazy wisdom? It's the actual expression of fearlessness, the wisdom that does not know any limit in any way at all. In that state of awareness, the wisdom does not stop or start anywhere. It's perpetuating itself all the time. It's like a very powerful, turbulent river running through a canyon and cutting through rocks and trees.

*KGT:* Looking at the quotation of Nagarjuna, can we look upon crossing the river as going beyond dualism?

*CTR:* The interesting thing is that first you abandon the raft and you go beyond. Then, you actually conquer both the shores. So abandoning the raft has no importance at all, because you are the river; you are the shores. That is why the vajrayana teaching is called the imperial yana, which is like the umbrella notion: it covers the whole area entirely.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, your emphasis on meditation practice is complete identification with the here and now. And this nowness is enhanced by simply identifying oneself with one's breath, and it's free from analytical struggle. In the Gelukpa tradition of meditation on emptiness, a systematic analysis of "I," the mind and the five skandhas, is stressed. The purpose of that analysis is to counteract the misconception of an inherent "I." Would you evaluate or comment on the merits of the two systems?

*CTR:* Both systems are actually employed by the Kagyü tradition as well. The systematic analysis is called the pandit<sup>21</sup> style of practice, and the other is called the yogic style of practice. As for my style of teaching Americans, they have already done enough research work and scientific studies. This tendency might lead them to use meditation purely for speculation and for accumulating more reference points or for going back to Western styles of analysis, such as Freud, Jung, and so forth. So, we decided to use the yogic style or approach, which is just simply doing it! However, when the students have practiced quite a lot of shamatha, then they might do some meditation using the pandit approach. So both traditions are employed. The Kagyü tradition stems from vajrayana teachings of India and the Kadampa teachings of India put together. So we are using both traditions, and I don't see any conflict.

*KGT:* What about the relative merit of the two methods?

*CTR:* I think it depends on the individual practitioners, definitely. That's why we have different techniques and different styles. It very much depends on the individual.

*KGT:* And you have found the shamatha approach is more appropriate here?

*CTR:* It's much more direct. I have also studied various Zen traditions to see how they handle their students. The simplicity of shamatha has provided much more footing for the students. It seems to work the best for the Western students.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, this is a question that is somewhat related to the crazy-wisdom style of teaching. There are many rich and powerful stories in this tradition, such as Tilopa slapping Naropa's face with a sandal, as the source of Naropa's sudden or final awakening. But one image that I don't understand is the image of a drunken elephant that runs rampant without considering where he is going. Is that imagery related with crazy wisdom?

*CTR:* That image is used in both a negative and a positive way. The negative image is that discursive thought is like a drunken elephant, which needs to be tamed. The positive image is the expression of fearlessness and also treading on ego fixation without any consideration. Then it could be an expression of crazy wisdom.

*KGT:* So the positive image is a certain fierce aspect...

*CTR:* Being without hesitation.

*KGT:* Could you please discuss your vision of creating a Buddhist culture that transcends national boundaries? How do Shambhala society and the Great Eastern Sun vision fit into that?

*CTR:* I think that Buddhist culture consists of certain modes of behavior. It could also be a society in which the entire citizenry is part of the Buddhist world, and everyone's discipline is based on the practice of the buddhadharma. Buddhist culture is also connected with art—with Buddhist-influenced art from countries

such as Tibet, Japan, China, and India. It's also a vision inspired by such things as Ashoka's empire.

The Great Eastern Sun is the idea that, whenever there is a challenge, you don't give in. You just continue, or perpetuate, your practice, and you go beyond the challenge. Whenever there is doubt or an attack on genuine practice, you don't give in. You simply go forward, which requires a lot of psychological strength. You perpetuate greater faith in and devotion to the forefathers, people like King Trisong Detsen and King Songtsen Gampo. You appreciate how they started Buddhism in Tibet and how the whole Tibetan world became a Buddhist-oriented situation. That is the Great Eastern Sun concept. Of course, we are also inspired by the stories of Gesar of Ling and how he defeated his foes in order to defend the dharma. We are not talking about killing non-Buddhists, of course not. But the idea is to have a whole vision of society, rather than being like rich Mormons settling down in Utah and having their little church.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, you have mentioned that the fearless propagation and practice of dharma could be very intimidating and threatening to other people, particularly when it is expressed through a large community, like yours. Often it creates a lot of reactions. Recently, there have been some confused and somewhat indulgent articles written about your activities in Boulder.<sup>22</sup> How do you deal with such reactions?

*CTR:* I think that you don't deal with them directly. There is no way of dealing with them head on. If you try to prove that your way is right and their views are wrong, it becomes a dogfight. Instead, we just keep on perpetuating our vision. It's as simple as that. You just practice more, study more, and build your individual strength. It has been known in the past that when goodness is present, evil is more active. That has happened many times in history.

A lot of obstacles will obviously come about. It's similar to what arose at the time of Padmasambhava's presentation of Buddhism in Tibet. Many of the Bön ministers tried to destroy the whole teaching system. This happened in Lhasa. Similar things happen here, but we continue. The only way to work with these attacks is to simply continue and to have tremendous faith in our forefathers. As they say, actions speak louder than words, eventually.

*KGT:* How do you see the prospect of the next generation of the sangha



evolving, in relationship to the maturation and energy of the present sangha? Also, how do you check the tendency toward exclusivity and self-satisfaction of the community, in relation to its growth?

*CTR:* I think that, if you only have the hinayana and the vajrayana put together, then it could possibly create some problems, such as self-satisfaction and also becoming provincial and localized. You might have Buddhists forming themselves into an island where there is no communication with the world outside. But when you have hinayana and mahayana put together, I don't see many problems. The mahayana aspect includes going out and relating with the world, which is one of the commitments on the bodhisattva path. When all three yantras work together, I don't think there is much of a problem. It's building in a natural safeguard. Obviously, for our future, we also need many good leaders and good teachers to train the students and take care of them.

*KGT:* La lesa. Can you comment, Rinpoche, on how you see the next generation of the sangha evolving? I'm talking about children growing up in families where their parents are Buddhist practitioners. As you know, in this society there is a tendency for the younger generation to rebel against their parents, against authority and their own backgrounds, in order to search for newer things. This was particularly pronounced in the 1960s. I am particularly thinking about children under the influence of enthusiastic converts, who have become Buddhist in the last five or six years.

*CTR:* What happened in America in the 1960s was based on a reaction against the style of the parents. Many of them were completely heavy-handed. They pushed their dogma, their morals, and their philosophy onto their children. Obviously, they placed a lot of restrictions on their children's behavior, and they told them things like, "If you don't believe in God, you'll go to hell." A lot of that kind of heavy-handedness was taking place.

In our situation, one of the safeguards is that the parents have been extremely accommodating, and they show their children the celebration aspect of their Buddhist practice. Also, people view working with other people in the community and also working with their children as helping people to develop themselves, rather than imposing a rule on them. That seems to be the only way I can imagine that future generations will want to join in.

*KGT:* At the moment, do you see this taking place or blossoming?

*CTR:* A lot of children want to be involved. They want to hear life stories of the Buddha. We have a children's class, and they enjoy it very much. At this point, we have something like sixty children joining in. And we are starting a preschool and a preparatory school that will go throughout the year. At this point, most children feel that they are missing something rather than wanting to rebel, because the parents are so tentative about laying any trips on their children.

*KGT:* There is a metaphor used in the Buddhist teachings of a monkey who is captive in a house with five windows. If this is a metaphor for the development of ego, then is the monkey's eventual liberation on the path his final return to the jungle, his natural habitat?

*CTR:* You could say that. The imprisonment, as it is called, of samsara is regarded as unnatural. That is why there is a lot of suffering and why, when things change, it becomes like being in more natural surroundings. The cage is not the natural place for the monkey. But when the monkey is released, that is much more natural. So the idea of enlightenment is something very natural that we return to, rather than something that is specially made or cultivated. That is also the idea that, having once returned to enlightenment, there is no more returning, because you have returned already to your natural state.

*KGT:* Could you describe the process the imprisoned monkey must go through in terms of the journey through the three yanas?

*CTR:* Discovering you are in the cage is the hinayana. You discover that you are in samsara, that you are trapped. The second stage is realizing that you can get out. There is the possibility of escape, which is the concept of shunyata and the compassion of the mahayana. By realizing that, then the cage begins to fall apart, which is the vajrayana principle.

*KGT:* Rinpoche, I wonder if you would make some brief comments on the convergent and divergent points in the doctrine and the practice of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as saying something about the Bön religion in Tibet and its relationship to buddhadharma. It seems that Bön is often neglected.

*CTR:* The Bön tradition has a tremendous sense of realization and connection to

the basic Tibetan tradition. Bön sees the Tibetan nation as a sacred nation and a sacred people. For people in Tibet, following the various techniques of Bön and the magic that comes out of Bön has been part of growing up. Basically, Tibetan society is a warrior society. The Tibetans expanded beyond that base, through the vision of the Tibetan kings, for example, such as Songtsen Gampo and others. Interestingly, the norms of how the country is organized are still very much influenced by the Bön tradition.

*KGT:* In what ways, Rinpoche?

*CTR:* You see the influence of Bön in the attitude toward your relatives, the attitude toward your ruler or leader, and the attitude toward your neighbors. Mountains, trees, rivers—everything is regarded as sacred. We have a lot of local deities in Tibet, which is related to Bön. There is a notion that a human being has his or her own place, or spot, and there are places that call for a person to build him-or herself into a warrior. That continues. I think every Tibetan feels very proud to be a Tibetan. That kind of basic fundamental strength comes from the Bön tradition.

As far as the four schools of Buddhism are concerned, it is difficult to explain anything in such a short space. But as I see it, the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism consist of the yogic tradition and the pandit tradition that we already talked about. Each school has adopted a certain amount of the yogic tradition and a certain amount of the pandit tradition. Naturally, you might say that the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions have more leanings toward the yogic tradition, while the Sakya and Geluk traditions lean much more toward the pandit tradition. On the other hand, the pandit training within the monastic tradition altogether is regarded as one of the most important aspects of Tibetan Buddhism.

As you know, the yogic tradition of Milarepa transformed into a pandit tradition under Gampopa, his dharma heir, and the Kagyü monasteries were established at that point. On the pandit side, in the Gelukpa school, within the pandit style of Tsonkhapa's monastic tradition, vajrayana and the yogic style were also included within the tantric colleges. Also, within the Sakya tradition, the basic monastic and yogic traditions are put together.

Sometimes, there are disagreements among the schools. Those who are trained in the pure pandit tradition feel that, because their realization came from that method, therefore that should be the sole method used, and vice versa. So there are differences of opinion, but fundamentally speaking, I think that both of those

are ways that Buddhism was introduced from India to Tibet.

*KGT:* La leso. Since the Tibetans have been displaced from their country, do you think that groups that formerly were separate are coming closer together, with better communication? If so, are there more opportunities for the genuine expression of the Ri-me school?

*CTR:* I think that's possible if there is strict emphasis on practicing and studying the teachings thoroughly and fully. If each school studies the teachings of the other schools and if there is an interchange of wisdom and learning—which is the Ri-me tradition anyway—then it's a natural situation, and there is no problem at all. I think it is a question of whether there will be a mingling of the two styles of teachings. In other words, can there be a further integration of the yogic tradition and the pandit tradition? At present, there are no quarrels over things such as the ownership of Kham or Golok, or other regional territorial issues like that. Since everybody is now outside of those political and governmental problems, I think there is a great chance for genuine exchange to take place. Then it will become truly a Ri-me tradition.

*KGT:* Do you think this is taking place already?

*CTR:* It's happening with certain people, perhaps, but the efforts are not sufficient. I think it's still not enough. More could be done.

*KGT:* In talking with other teachers, the last question I've asked them is whether they have some advice for Western Buddhist students. For you, Rinpoche, I'd like to change this and ask you if you have a few words of advice for the Tibetans in India. Since you have been teaching dharma abroad, you may have some distance and insight into the dharma practice of Tibetans in India.

*CTR:* I think the main thing for the Tibetan people, as I see it, is for each Tibetan to have a sense of pride and appreciation of their being Tibetan, which we have already talked about in relationship to the cultural influence of Bön.

The reason why this should be so is that we Tibetans were brought up with this pride. We don't have to start from scratch, like many Western students had to. There is already a cultural education that exists and which we share as Tibetans. I wish that people would take more interest in this. On the other hand, people can have some practice of dharma, definitely. Finally, less fascination

with the Western world would be helpful.

*KGT*: Would you say anything in particular to the younger generation and to the older generation?

*CTR*: I think younger people should try more, and the older people also must not give up. That seems to be the natural thing.

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20. See footnotes in part one of the interview for explanation.

21. Originally, the interview said “pundit” throughout, but this word in the English language—based on the Sanskrit *pandit* and *pandita*—could be very misleading. Generally, in many other instances, Chögyam Trungpa used the Sanskrit term.

22. Probably a reference to an article published circa 1979 in *Harper’s Magazine*, criticizing Chögyam Trungpa’s community and an incident involving W. S. Merwin.

## *Buddhism in America*

### **AN INTERVIEW WITH CATHERINE INGRAM**

*Catherine Ingram:* Rinpoche, what would you say is the major source of suffering in the world today?

*Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche:* I would say aggression and ignorance, as well as the modernization of the world, in part. This brought a reliance on science and mass media. They are not bad in themselves, but the way that people use them is problematic.



*Catherine Ingram interviews Chögyam Trungpa for the “Buddhism in America” article.*  
COURTESY CATHERINE INGRAM.

*CI:* Could you say more about how mass media is used in a destructive way?

*CTR:* I think it's a question of people using the media for their own purposes, to further their own ideologies and their own logic. They distort the media for their own ego-centered purposes.

*CI:* As an astute observer of our culture, could you talk about the particular problems in American society? Do you think that America is a forerunner in media or scientific distortion?

*CTR:* In fact, America had these problems very early on, maybe in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. Now, other nations have begun to copy the whole approach so well that America is no longer the greatest leader in terms of this particular problem. In fact, America is lagging a bit. The country feels guilty—about the Vietnam War, CIA activities, and other things like that. Now, America has begun to apologize more than other nations who are on the way to achieving Americanism.

*CI:* Do you think there is any situation that could be called a holy war? Of course, in the past we could think of fighting Hitler, but in current times, there is terrible oppression in many parts of the world: El Salvador, Guatemala, and the Philippines, for example. Do you think there is ever a situation where stopping a dictator or oppression of this sort would be a compassionate act, even if it involved killing?

*CTR:* Well, I think it doesn't have to involve killing. There are other ways to modify the situation, for instance through social, economic, and other worldwide public pressures that could be put on a dictatorship. That would definitely make them think twice. The main point is not to operate on a fistfight level but to organize an environment where the oppressive situation cannot exist anymore.

*CI:* The Dalai Lama spoke at the Insight Meditation Center in Barre, Massachusetts, and he said that it's important to love one's enemies but that it is also important to know that they are your enemies. Then, as I interpreted his remarks, he described a naiveté among the people in Tibet, a certain trusting attitude, which changed as a result of the Chinese taking control of the country. People have become more wary, rightly so. Often the inspiration for change in a

society has come from anger or feeling oppressed. How can you rouse energy for change without these feelings of anger and aggression toward one's oppressors?

*CTR:* It's a question of inquisitiveness and learning from your enemy. When you feel angry toward somebody, you close him or her out. You cut off communication, and you stop studying and learning about the person. One must learn more about one's enemies. When you have thoroughly studied your enemy, then you have conquered him. If you begin to close down and stop communicating, you develop a set attitude about your enemies; you put them in pigeonholes. When you have a set idea about who they are and what they are, you begin to create the destruction. Then you end up killing them because you don't understand them, and therefore you have to kill them. That becomes the only way you think you can stop them, which is wrong. I'm sure that in the First and the Second World Wars there was a lot of that approach. Each side refused to learn from the other and chose to just shoot the other. You just turn the other into a corpse so that they cannot speak and think.

*CI:* So you're saying that education and learning about the other side and their point of view, seeing the other side as human beings, is a way of cutting through the need to make war on each other?

*CTR:* Very much so.

*CI:* People speak about our being at a turning point in history. We now have the capability for so much destruction, and there are possibilities of nuclear accidents or other disasters. We are on the brink of either doom or awakening. What is your vision?

*CTR:* I don't think anything catastrophic is going to happen really.

*CI:* That's good to hear.

*CTR:* Everybody knows the consequences, and therefore they are careful, for their own sake. People expect this big drama is going to take place one day. But in my way of thinking, I don't think there is going to be that kind of entertainment.

*CI:* Yes, that's a show I'd just as soon miss. Perhaps if more people were



optimists about preventing these disasters, it would help them not to happen.

What is the place for social action in Buddhism, or more specifically in your particular tradition?

*CTR:* Poverty and social problems come from not paying attention to details and the realities of people's lives. Most people follow certain dogmas, certain religions, and certain concepts. The role of Buddhism is to propagate the dharma. *Dharma* is a Sanskrit word that means "law" or "truth." It's about how to take care of your children properly, how to relate to your neighbors properly, how to relate to your bank manager properly, how to build a house properly, and how to run a company properly. I think that is the vision of Buddhism, and also it is the Shambhala vision. In order to solve social problems, people have to pay attention to how to walk and how to eat. Have you witnessed people practicing oryoki, the Japanese monastic discipline of eating?

*CI:* No, I never have.

*CTR:* You should see this! It demonstrates how to eat properly. Buddhism's contribution is teaching us to do things correctly. It's not purely about religion alone, but it's about human conduct, human behavior. It's about how to drink a cup of tea properly.

*CI:* I just read the manuscript of your forthcoming book, *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. I very much appreciated the pragmatic discussion of how neurosis shows up in our daily lives, for example, when we throw our clothes on the floor or live in a sloppy manner.

In this context, have you heard the term *voluntary simplicity*? As you may know, there's a movement that proposes that we in the wealthier nations of the world must learn to live more simply and give up some of the luxuries that we enjoy. This is ultimately for the good of all of us. The planet cannot support our affluent lifestyle much longer, and so many people around the world are going without. How do you feel about this movement?

*CTR:* It seems to be fine as long as it doesn't become a trip. I think there could be a problem of making a dogma out of it. Then it becomes a closed situation, where certain people join in and other people don't, because it is dogmatic. If it is an open approach, then there is no problem.

*CI:* Marpa the Translator was a great teacher in your lineage. I heard the story that, when his son died, Marpa was crying and grieving for a long time. His students came to him and said, “We don’t understand this attachment that you have, all this grieving and crying, when you’ve always taught us that it is all illusion.” And Marpa said, “Yes, but this is superillusion.” I also recall that in your autobiography, *Born in Tibet*, in the epilogue, you say that you have never felt nostalgic about anything. I was wondering, in relation to both of these, what is the place for emotions in your own life?

*CTR:* Emotions are inquisitive. If I didn’t have any inquisitiveness, I wouldn’t have learned the English language, for instance. I wouldn’t have learned how to dress in the Western style. For me, the reason why you and I are talking together is based on emotion. Your openness and my willingness to talk to you represent emotion. Our communication is basically based on openness and inquisitiveness. It’s some kind of emotion that makes me read the newspaper or watch television. I rarely watch TV, but when I do, I usually watch a news broadcast.

*CI:* In *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, your new book, you said of a warrior: “The fullness of his experience is his own and he must live with his own truth. Yet he is more and more in love with the world” (from chapter 9, “Renunciation and Daring”). You also spoke about the rawness and the tender heart of a warrior. Often, it seems that the path of insight is one of seeing more and more subtle levels of dukkha, or suffering, and that as we become more raw, we begin to see suffering all around.

As I was preparing this, I looked up from where I was sitting and saw some butterflies. I realized that they were searching for food, for pollen or whatever they eat. I wonder about the love affair with life when feeling suffering in so many ways.

*CTR:* That love affair and the awareness of suffering are connected with the experience of sadness. At the same time that you feel love, you also feel sad or nostalgic. When you have those feelings, then the basic emotions and one’s willingness to be a warrior come out of that. Being a warrior is a very romantic assumption: using a sword or a bow and arrow, or riding on a horse or wearing a suit of armor. Those are very romantic images. But at the same time, it’s sad, because you feel so in tune with the situation. It’s like kissing your own child. You feel sad but happy at the same time.

*CI:* Do you think the sadness is connected with the potential for loss?

*CTR:* No, it's simply so tender that you feel almost raw. That's why people kiss. It's touching each other's raw part. I suppose that's why people make love. It's very intimate and very joyful at the same time. [*Long pause.*] I suppose we mustn't get carried away.

*CI:* Well, this brings us to the question of the tantric path. It has been said that entering the tantric path is like a snake in a bamboo tube: either it goes straight up or straight down. It does seem that there are incredible possibilities of danger on this path. Discussing the rawness of ourselves as human beings reminds me of the possibility of wallowing in emotion. I'm imagining that is possible in practicing tantra—that one can get out of balance easily. What are the dangers and how are they overcome?

*CTR:* One possible perversion is to use the emotions wrongly, thinking that they are sacred. In tantra, passion, aggression, and ignorance can be used as part of the practice. But at the same time, they could be misused on an emotional level, for the sake of convenience. Then, they are being boosted and wrongly cultivated.

*CI:* Are you saying that the emotions should not be seen as sacred in tantra?

*CTR:* They should be seen as sacred, but that doesn't mean to say that you have to indulge them.

*CI:* On the tantric path, don't we practice seeing the sacredness in all things, whether we're brushing our teeth or...

*CTR:* In everything, everything! But that doesn't mean to say that you indulge everything.

*CI:* So, it's a question of knowing what the balance is?

*CTR:* Yes, there is a lot of training before you get into that. That sacred outlook is the end product of your training rather than jumping into the deep end of the pool right away. First you must learn how to float. Otherwise, you will sink.

*CI:* It's unfortunate that people in this country have a distorted view of what tantra is. I don't think that it's been properly understood in the West yet.

This brings to mind a question that I have had to deal with in my own life, and I know that many of my friends have this question as well: what is the place for passion in our lives? We often associate spirituality with dispassion. For myself, I've begun to see this issue in a different light. I know that you've often spoken about a certain richness in one's life, embracing life fully. Can we be fully passionate beings—making love, making babies, having careers, and feeling great sorrow—can we do all of that and not live in duality?

*CTR:* What you're describing is quite an advanced level. At the beginning, one has to train oneself in how to relate to passion and also train oneself in how to be soft toward oneself, which is a mahayana principle. This is important because passion, we could say, is somewhat soft. But at the same time, it has an element of aggression, because you *want* something so much. So one has to tone down the grasping or aggressive aspect of it.

*CI:* The wanting?

*CTR:* The wanting, yes, the grasping part of it. When there is no grasping in the wanting, then passion is like a rainbow in the sky. It comes and goes.

*CI:* What fuels it?

*CTR:* Basic joy, coemergent joy, intrinsic joy. There's a term for that in the vajrayana language, which is *mahasukha*. Have you heard that term?

*CI:* *Sukha* is "bliss" in Pali. *Maha* is "great." So "great bliss."

*CTR:* Yes. There is a cheerfulness and a kind of constant celebration. This seems to be the key to working with passion. Now, again, we mustn't get carried away. [*Laughter.*]

*CI:* It's okay with me....Moving on, what about the place for monasticism in the tantric path?

*CTR:* Monasticism is also part of the same joy. Then, as a monastic, you don't feel that you are trapped in anything, but you feel a sense of celebration. In the

Western tradition, there is a lot of emphasis on guilt and sin. In the Buddhist tradition, there is no such thing as original sin or guilt, so you feel that your monastic existence is celebrating something. A monk might see a pretty girl and have his passion aroused. From the Buddhist perspective, whatever you perceive, you don't feel guilty anymore.

*CI:* Is that what renunciation is? Being able to just see the object?

*CTR:* But not grasp. Yes, that is the idea of renunciation.

*CI:* What do you think about the practice of renunciation for American students in particular?

*CTR:* I don't see any big difference. It's the same thing.

*CI:* Do you find that Asian cultures and the Asian minds are conditioned similarly to Western minds?

*CTR:* Well, all the neurosis is the same everywhere. When you have passion, it's the same passion. Asians produce babies, and Westerners produce babies. They all fight. In some way, fundamentally speaking, there's no real difference.

*CI:* In your first years of teaching here in America, there was a great expression of freedom in people's spiritual practice. In the last few years, there has been more emphasis on discipline and perhaps more traditional form. There's quite a lot of mystique about you, and I think people believe that you have a long-range plan. I was struck in reading *Born in Tibet* with how intuitively you were working, almost by the day, during your escape. You used divinations and were relying on just intuition about what your next move should be. I wonder if that is how you are working now. Or are you working with a long-range plan?

*CTR:* Well, my approach becomes more strategic when the students provide the substance. At the beginning, it was impossible to tell anybody to sit still and become dignified. But then, the students began to come to the conclusion that they needed to do that. Generally, it's not my indoctrinating them in some way but that they begin to come to the conclusion themselves. Then, they were able to receive abhishekas, which we couldn't have given them in the beginning. Then, they began to do their ngöndro practice. Each year, the Vajradhatu

Seminaries became more and more traditional and orthodox.

You should come and visit a seminary. You might find more to write about if you watch how we behave there. It's largely the students doing it, rather than me laying down the law, except for one thing. I had to tell people that drug use was not appropriate.<sup>23</sup> Apart from that, it has been an organic process.

*CI:* Are you happy with the training of your students?

*CTR:* Well, sometimes I am surprised that the students have actually done something before I tell them to do it.

*CI:* What gives you your greatest joys in life?

*CTR:* Writing poetry, flower arranging, having exchanges with students, doing calligraphy, and initiating further projects. Our finance department is always nervous about that, in case I might come up with building another something-or-other.

*CI:* In your new book, you've said, "When you spell out the truth, it loses its essence...becomes undignified, a giveaway. By implying the truth, the truth doesn't become anyone's property" (*Shambhala*, chapter 20, "Authentic Presence"). I found this intriguing. I've heard that the Buddha said that one must always tell the truth but that it was not always necessary to tell everything, spilling out your entire mind. But when you did speak, you should tell the truth. What did you mean in your statement?

*CTR:* I think it's a question of the truth having to be realized rather than being told. The realization has to be personal experience rather than being told something. Then there is some kind of shock. That's precisely what realization means. When you say, "I realized how hot the chili is," that's very different from somebody telling you how hot the chili is.

*CI:* Do you have moments of new satoris in your life? Are there times when you think it all looks different than before, and you think to yourself, "I'm going to change my course." Do you experience moments of realization when you say, "Aha! That's how it is. It's different than I thought."

*CTR:* Yes, like now. I haven't met you before. Now we're having pleasant conversation, having a nice time. That's it! It's nothing dramatic particularly. That's why I've thought that I'm getting older.

*CI:* No great flashes?

*CTR:* This *is* the great flash, to me, anyway.

*CI:* You've had a longtime interest in the Christian-Buddhist interface. In your autobiography, you spoke about how significant meeting Thomas Merton had been for you. Now, this is the third summer of the Christian-Buddhist Conference of dialogues and exchange at the Naropa Institute. What is your vision for these two traditions coming together? What are you hoping to achieve?<sup>24</sup>

*CTR:* One of the main inspirations for the Christian-Buddhist Conferences was that we wanted to sort out the confusion between theism and nontheism and also explore how the contemplative practices could be introduced in both traditions. We as Buddhists don't worship, and Christians do worship. In Christianity, there is prayer and supplications and all sorts of things. Yet, at the same time, I find these practices are very familiar to me. I have been to many monasteries in Great Britain and studied with people there. In fact, I had a tutorial in Christianity at Oxford University with a Jesuit priest who had studied Buddhism.

The main point is to sort out the confusion and also to try to bring together the notion of meditation in both traditions. That is my greatest hope: to bring the contemplative disciplines together.

*CI:* Each place that Buddhism has gone in the world, it has taken on the flavor of the culture of that country. I was wondering what you feel will characterize Buddhism in America?

*CTR:* I think it's going to be Anglicized Shambhala.

*CI:* A kingdom of spirituality?

*CTR:* Yes.

*CI:* What do you think the Western version of that will be?

*CTR:* Westerners have their own history, coming from Europe, apart from the American Indians, whose tradition I find is very close to the Tibetan tradition. Americans have their own tradition here, and that's the natural situation to build on. For example, I've been working quite a lot lately with my students on elocution, how to speak proper English. And I've been teaching my students good table manners. As you know, my wife, Diana, is a dressage teacher. She studied in Vienna. I've been doing a lot of riding myself. Any Western cultural discipline, such as music, poetry, riding, or other things, will be included as Shambhala expressions.

*CI:* So you see the arts as an avenue to Western mind?

*CTR:* Yes, very much so. And also business, law, journalism, and running the government could be other avenues for connecting Buddhism with Western mind.

*CI:* That's very practical, yes. Well, thank you very much for your time.

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23. A discussion of how Chögyam Trungpa discouraged the use of drugs is found in the movie *Crazy Wisdom*. See also *Taming Untameable Beings: Early Stories of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche with the Pygmies and Other Hippies*, by Jim Lowery.

24. See xxv to xxvii in the introduction to volume two of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa* for more information on the Christian-Buddhist Conferences at Naropa. Also see 584–601 of that volume for Chögyam Trungpa's articles based on his talks at the conferences.



## GLOSSARY

THE DEFINITIONS given here are based on how the terms are used in the text and do not attempt to be comprehensive.

**abhidharma** (Skt.). The systematic and detailed analysis of mind, including both mental processes and contents. Also, the third part of the Tripitaka, the “three baskets” of early Buddhist scripture.

**abhisheka** (Skt., “anointment”). A ceremony or formal experience of vajrayana transmission. The student is ritually introduced into a mandala of a particular tantric deity by a tantric master and is thus empowered to visualize and invoke that particular deity. The essential element of abhisheka is a meeting of minds between teacher and student.

**acharya** (Skt.). A learned spiritual teacher.

**alaya** (Skt.). The fundamental unbiased ground of mind. Also used to refer to the eighth level of consciousness, literally the “storehouse” consciousness. In that usage, it is the fundamental ground of dualistic mind and contains within it the seeds of all experience.

**Amitabha**. An important mahayana and tantric deity connected with the Pure Land schools of Buddhism. Amitabha is the ruler of the western paradise, Sukhavati, and the buddha of the padma family, connected with the western quarter of a tantric mandala.

**amrita** (Skt., “deathless”; Tib.: dütsi). Consecrated liquor used in vajrayana meditation practices. More generally, spiritual intoxication.

**anuttarayoga** (Skt.). The highest of the four tantric yanas (“vehicles”), according to the New Translation school of Marpa and his contemporaries. The first three yanas are *kriya*, *upa*, and *yoga*. The realization of mahamudra is the highest attainment of anuttarayoga.

**Ashe**. A Tibetan term meaning “primordial or first stroke.” In the Shambhala teachings, the principle associated with the realization of both the ultimate

and the relative nature of warriorship.

**Ashe practice.** A calligraphy practice for connecting with the dralas and the energy of Ashe, or the heart of warriorship.

**Ashoka** (d. 238? BCE). The last major emperor in the Mauryan dynasty of India. He converted to Buddhism and renounced armed conflict in the eighth year of his reign, when he saw the sufferings that a war he had promoted had inflicted on the conquered people. Buddhism at that time was a small Indian sect, and his patronage of the Buddhist religion is credited with its spread throughout India.

**asura** (Skt.). A jealous god in the six realms of existence.

**ati** (Skt., also maha ati; Tib.: dzogchen). Great perfection. The ultimate teaching of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism; maha ati is considered the final fruition of the vajrayana path. It teaches the indivisibility of space and wisdom. Chögyam Trungpa frequently used the term maha ati. The more common term is now dzogchen.

**Avalokiteshvara.** The great bodhisattva of compassion; he is an emanation of the buddha Amitabha. His limitless compassion is said to help all beings who turn to him in difficult times. His Holiness the Karmapa is considered to be an emanation of Avalokiteshvara.

**bhumi** (Skt., “land”). One of the ten stages or spiritual levels that a bodhisattva must go through to attain buddhahood: (1) very joyful, (2) stainless, (3) luminous, (4) radiant, (5) difficult to conquer, (6) face-to-face, (7) far-going, (8) immovable, (9) having good intellect, and (10) cloud of dharma.

**Bodhgaya.** The site in India where Buddha attained enlightenment, under a bodhi tree. Today it is a place of pilgrimage for all Buddhists.

**bodhichitta** (Skt.). Awakened mind or heart. Ultimate or absolute bodhicitta is the union of emptiness and compassion, the essential nature of awakened mind. Relative bodhicitta is the tenderness arising from a glimpse of ultimate bodhicitta that inspires one to work for the benefit of others.

**bodhisattva** (Skt., “an awake being”). A bodhisattva is an individual who, by taking the bodhisattva vow, is committed to helping others and who gives up personal satisfaction for the goal of relieving the suffering of others. In the Buddhist teachings, a bodhisattva is more specifically one who has committed to practicing the six paramitas, or the transcendent virtues, of

generosity, discipline, patience, exertion, meditation, and knowledge.

**bodhisattva vow.** *See* bodhisattva.

**Bön** (Tib.). The pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet.

**Brezhnev, Leonid.** The general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, presiding over the country from 1964 until his death in 1982. In 1979 Brezhnev reached an agreement with US president Carter on a new bilateral strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II), but the US Senate did not ratify the treaty.

**buddha** (Skt.). Literally means “awake.” When capitalized, it refers to the historical buddha Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, the Awakened One. When lowercase, it refers to the basic quality of wakefulness or enlightenment, or it may refer to one of many buddhas or awakened beings who, according to the vajrayana teachings, may exist in the past, present, or future in this world or in another realm.

**buddhadharma.** The teaching of the Buddha or the truth taught by the Buddha. *See also* dharma.

**Carter, Jimmy.** Jimmy Carter served as the thirty-ninth president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. Building upon the work of predecessors, he established full diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China and completed negotiation of the SALT II nuclear limitation treaty with the Soviet Union. However, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan caused the suspension of plans for ratification of the SALT II pact. President Carter was awarded the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize for his work to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development.

**Chakrasamvara** (Skt., “binder of the net of dakinis”). An important deity in the anuttarayoga tantras and in the Karma Kagyü school of Buddhism. Vajrayogini is his consort, and in tantric iconography he is frequently shown in union with her. The Trungpas are holders of an important hearing or ear-whispered lineage of teachings connected with Chakrasamvara.

**ch’an.** *See* zen.

**chanoyu** (Jpn.). The Japanese tea ceremony, also called the Way of Tea, is a Japanese cultural activity involving the ceremonial preparation and presentation of *matcha*, powdered green tea. The original meaning

indicated quiet or sober refinement, or subdued taste.

**chö** (Tib.). Tantric teachings in which the practitioner visualizes giving his or her body to ghosts and various spirits as an offering. Often practiced in graveyards and places that are believed to be haunted. An advanced practice for the realization of egolessness, based on applying the teachings of the prajnaparamita. The fourth Trungpa was a great practitioner of chö, and the practice he composed is still used by many practitioners today.

**Chökyi Gyatso.** The eleventh Trungpa. The formal name and title for Chögyam Trungpa, the eleventh incarnation of the Trungpa lineage. Chögyam is the shortened form of Chökyi Gyatso, which means “ocean of dharma.”

**chöten** (Tib.). See stupa.

**crazy wisdom** (Tib.: yeshe chölwa). Meditative realization or insight that is both knowledgeable and fearless. It involves a willingness to do whatever is required in a situation, in order to promote wakefulness, compassion, and sanity in the environment. The wisdom arises first; the craziness, or unconventionality, is an ornament or later evolution of skillful means that works together with the wisdom. “Crazy wisdom does not occur unless there is a basic understanding of things, a knowledge of how things function as they are. There has to be trust in the normal functioning of karmic cause and effect....According to that logic, wisdom does not exactly go crazy; but on top of the basic logic or basic norm, craziness as higher sanity, higher power, or higher magic, can exist” (Chögyam Trungpa, *Journey without Goal*, p. 138).

**dakini** (Skt.; Tib.: khandroma). A wrathful or semiwrathful female deity signifying compassion, emptiness, and transcendental knowledge. The dakinis are tricky and playful, representing the basic space of fertility out of which the play of samsara and nirvana arises. More generally, a dakini can be a type of messenger or protector.

**Dalai Lama, His Holiness the fourteenth.** Revered by the Tibetan people, the spiritual head of the Gelukpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, and the head of state of the Tibetan government-in-exile. The Dalai Lama is a much beloved world figure who received the Nobel Peace Prize.

**dana** (Skt.). Generosity, giving without expectation, or opening, welcoming others. The first of the six paramitas, or perfections. As is said in the

bodhisattva disciplines, welcoming is the first gesture of the bodhisattva. Without this, none of the other perfections could be put into practice.

**dark age.** In Sanskrit, this is the Kali Yuga, or the “age of vice.” It refers to a time when the ethics and the aspirations of society degenerate, and spiritual teachings are difficult to practice and in danger of being lost. Chögyam Trungpa sometimes referred to the current era as the dark age, particularly in connection with the problems of spiritual materialism.

**Dasabhumika Sutra** (Skt.). The “Ten Bhumis, or Ten Stages, Sutra” is an early mahayana Buddhist scripture that also appears as the twenty-sixth chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*. It concerns the ten stages in the attainment of enlightenment, as well as the discovery of buddha nature. *See also* bhumi.

**dathün.** A monthlong training period and retreat, focused on the sitting practice of meditation. Developed by Chögyam Trungpa as part of the path of meditation for his students.

**Denma.** One of the great generals who commanded the troops of the Tibetan warrior king Gesar of Ling. Denma was particularly known as a master archer and strategist. Chögyam Trungpa suggested Denma as the name and inspiration for the Dorje Kasung leadership training college.

**dharma** (Skt.). Truth, norm, phenomenon, or law. Often used to refer to the teachings of the Buddha, which are also called the buddhadharma. Dharma may also refer to the basic manifestation of reality or to the elements of phenomenal existence.

**dharmadhatu** (Skt.). The “space of things” or “space of phenomena.” The all-encompassing, unoriginated, and unchanging space or totality of all phenomena.

**dharmakaya** (Skt.). One of the three bodies of enlightenment. The dharmakaya is enlightenment itself, wisdom beyond any reference point—unoriginated primordial mind, devoid of content. *See also* kaya.

**dharmapala** (Skt.). Protector of the Buddhist teachings. May be used as a general term to refer to any Buddhist protector or more specifically as a term for a transcendent, or enlightened, protector as opposed to a lokapala, or worldly protector.

**dhyana** (Skt.). Meditation, one of the six paramitas.

**dhyana states.** Meditative states of absorption—the experiences of the realm of the gods—which need to be transcended in order to develop wisdom.

Although strictly speaking these states can be “achieved” by advanced practitioners, Trungpa Rinpoche sometimes speaks of them pejoratively and warns that they should be cut through. Dhyana, in general, can refer more broadly to meditation and is one of the six paramitas.

**doha** (Skt.). A song expressing spiritual realization.

**Dombipa**. One of the eighty-four mahasiddhas of India. The Trungpa tülkus are considered to be emanations of Dombipa, a king of Magdha who became a highly realized siddha.

**dondam**. *See* töndam.

**Dorje Dradül of Mukpo**. Dorje Dradül is a Tibetan title that literally means, “Indestructible Warrior.” Sometimes, Chögyam Trungpa used the extended title Dorje Dradül of Mukpo. Mukpo was his family name and the name of his clan in Tibet. Both titles were most commonly used in connection with his presentation of the Shambhala teachings. *See also* Mukpo.

**Dorje Dzong** (Tib.). Literally, “Indestructible Fortress.” The name given by Chögyam Trungpa to the building that housed his national headquarters in Boulder, Colorado. It housed the main shrineroom in Boulder, where many events took place. The title Dorje Dzong was also given to his international headquarters in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and to the headquarters in Europe, in Marburg, Germany.

**Dorje Kasung** (Tib.). Literally, “Indestructible Protector of the Command.” The members of the Vajra Guard as a whole. Prior to 1978, Dorje Kasung was the title of the head of the Guards. The Dorje Kasung were a service and security organization that practiced the principles of Shambhala warriorship.

**Dorje Khyung Dzong** (Tib.). Literally, “Indestructible Garuda Fortress.” The main retreat center at Chögyam Trungpa’s monastery in Tibet, Surmang Dütsi Tel. He also named another solitary retreat center Dorje Khyung Dzong, in a remote area in southern Colorado. *See also* fourth Trungpa.

**dralas** (Tib., “above or beyond war”). Sometimes translated as “war gods.” In the Shambhala teachings, dralas are the manifestation, strength, or bravery that transcends or conquers aggression.

**dream yoga**. An advanced tantric practice in which the practitioner is aware while dreaming and able to transform the confused experiences of the dream into wakefulness. Also associated with recognizing that this life is fundamentally a dream.

**duhkha** (Skt.). Suffering, the first of the four noble truths. Physical and psychological suffering of all kinds, including the subtle but all-pervading frustration occasioned by the impermanence and insubstantiality of all things.

**dzogchen** (Tib). *See* ati.

**Ekajati** (Skt.). A female protector associated with the Nyingma lineage but also adopted by others, including the line of the Trungpas. Ekajati has one eye, one fang, and one breast. She was a very important protector for Chögyam Trungpa and is associated with the terma teachings that he received before leaving Tibet. In the West, he wrote poetry to her, painted a thangka of her, and composed a chant that is used by his students to ask her to protect the teachings.

**Engels, Friedrich** (1820–1895). A German philosopher, social scientist, and journalist who founded Marxism together with Karl Marx.

**feminine energy principle.** In Buddhism, the feminine and masculine principles have nothing to do with gender differences. They are a way of looking at how reality is experienced in terms of space and what is contained in the space. The feminine principle is the container, the atmosphere, or the environment; the masculine is what arises or manifests in that vast space. The feminine is described as unborn, unceasing, with a nature like sky, and is equated with wisdom; while the masculine is connected with skillful action, including the bodhisattva activity of compassion. *See also* dakini.

**five buddha families** (Tib.: sang-gye kyi rik; sangs rgyas kyi rigs). The mandala of the five buddhas, who embody the five wisdoms. Because all phenomena are said to possess one of these five as a predominant characteristic, they are called families: vajra, ratna, padma, karma, and buddha. Each is associated with a particular buddha, a type of wisdom, a skandha, a klesha, a direction, and a color.

**four dignities.** Four stages in the development of warriorship. Meek, Perky, Outrageous, and Inscrutable are the four dignities, represented respectively by the Tiger, Lion, Garuda, and the Dragon.

**four karmas.** Pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and destroying. The four

actions are associated with the accomplishment of yogic discipline in the vajrayana.

**Four Modernizations, The.** A policy in the People’s Republic of China establishing that the attainment of economic goals would be the measure of the success of policies and individual leadership; in other words, economics, not politics, would be in command. Generally attributed to Teng Hsiao-p’ing, Chögyam Trungpa refers to them as “Hua’s Four Modernizations.”

**four noble truths, the.** The essence of the Buddha’s first teaching, or turning of the wheel of the dharma: (1) suffering, (2) the origin of suffering, (3) the cessation of suffering, and (4) the path.

**Four-Armed Mahakala.** A protector associated with the Trungpa tülku lineage and with the Surmang monasteries in Tibet. The Four-Armed Mahakala also has a particular connection with Chakrasamvara, an important yidam in the Kagyü lineage. *See also* dharmapala.

**fourth Trungpa.** Künga Namgyal was the fourth Trungpa. He was famed for his meditative insight and for a great text on mahamudra. He attained enlightenment while meditating at Dorje Khyung Dzong, the retreat center of the Trungpas at their monastery, Surmang Dütsi Tel.

**Gampopa.** Founder of the monastic order of the Kagyü lineage, Gampopa was the chief disciple of Milarepa and the author of *The Jewel Ornament of Liberation*.

**Gang of Four.** A group of four influential Chinese Communist Party figures during the latter years of Mao Tse-tung’s rule, consisting of Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, and her associates Wang Hongwen, Yao Wenyuan, and Zhang Chunqiao. They rose to prominence during the Cultural Revolution in China. As Mao’s health declined over that decade, they gained control of a number of major government functions.

**garuda** (Skt.). A mythical bird associated with tremendous speed and power. Like the phoenix, it is said to arise from the ashes of destruction; thus it has an indestructible quality.

**Gautama Buddha.** The historical buddha of this age or era.

**Geluk.** The most recent of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, founded early in the fifteenth century by Lobsang Trakpa, surnamed Tsong Khapa.



In this school great emphasis is placed on scriptural study and learning generally. The Dalai Lama is the spiritual head of this school. A follower of this school is called a Gelukpa.

**Gesar of Ling.** A Tibetan warrior king particularly associated with eastern Tibet. Stories about King Gesar form the greatest Tibetan epic. Gesar of Ling was a great inspiration to Chögyam Trungpa.

**guru** (Skt., “heavy”; Tib.: lama; bla ma; “none higher”). A master or teacher, especially in the tantric or vajrayana tradition of Buddhism.

**Guru Granth Sahib.** The central religious scripture of Sikhism.

**Guru Nanak.** The founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Sikh gurus.

**Guru Rinpoche.** “Precious Teacher,” the name by which Padmasambhava, a great teacher who helped to bring Buddhism to Tibet, is often referred to by the Tibetan people. *See also* Padmasambhava.

**heruka** (Tib.; Skt.: daka). A wrathful male deity in vajrayana Buddhism.

**hinayana.** The narrow way or path. The first of the three yanas of Tibetan Buddhism, the hinayana focuses on meditation practice and discipline, individual liberation, and not causing harm to others. The hinayana is made up of the shravakayana and the pratyekabuddhayana, or the path of those who hear the dharma and those who are individual or solitary sages. *See also* yana.

**Ho Chi Minh** (1890–1969). A Vietnamese communist revolutionary leader who was prime minister and president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

**Hua Kuo-feng** (1921–2008). A close associate of Mao Tse-tung. Following Chou En-lai’s death in January 1976, Hua succeeded him as the premier of the People’s Republic of China, and he was also named as the first vice-chairman of the Communist Party in China. After Mao’s death, Hua also became the chairman of the Communist Party and of the Central Military Commission. He was the only leader to have held the offices of party leader, premier, and CMC chairman at the same time. On October 6, 1976, Hua brought the Cultural Revolution to an end and ousted the Gang of Four from political power. He was forced into retirement by Teng Hsiao-p’ing in early 1979.

**ikebana** (Jpn.). The Japanese art of flower arrangement. It is more than simply putting flowers in a container. It is a disciplined art form in which the arrangement is a living thing with the elements symbolizing how heaven, earth, and humanity are brought together.

**Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen** (1901?–1960). Chögyam Trungpa’s root teacher, one of the five incarnations of Jamgön Kongtrül the Great. Chögyam Trungpa described him as “a big jolly man, friendly to all without distinction of rank, very generous and with a great sense of humor combined with deep understanding; he was always sympathetic to the troubles of others.”<sup>1</sup>

**Jamgön Kongtrül the Great** (1813–1899). One of the principal teachers of nineteenth-century Tibet, the author of hundreds of texts and compilations of practices, including a commentary on slogan practice entitled *The Basic Path toward Enlightenment*. Jamgön Kongtrül was a leader in the religious reform movement called Ri-me that sought to discourage sectarianism and encourage meditation practice and the application of Buddhist principles in everyday life.

**Jesus Prayer**. A short Christian prayer widely practiced in Eastern Orthodox churches.

**jñanasattva** (Skt.). The wisdom or ultimate aspect of a deity visualized in vajryana practice.

**Kadampa/Kadam** (Tib.). Oral instruction. School of Tibetan Buddhism founded by Atisha and noted for its emphasis on lojong, or mind-training teachings.

**Kagyü**. Tibetan for hearing (ear-whispered) or command lineage. *Ka* refers to the oral instructions of the teacher. The Kagyü is one of the four primary lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. The Kagyü teachings were brought from India to Tibet by Marpa the Translator in the eleventh century. The Karma Kagyü is a main subdivision of the Kagyü lineage, which was founded by Tüsum Khyenpa, the first Karmapa, or head of the Karma Kagyü lineage. Chögyam Trungpa was a major teacher in the Karma Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism. The Surmang Kagyü refers to a subsect of the Karma Kagyü, which emphasizes the special instructions and practices that have been initiated, incorporated, or preserved by the great teachers at the

Surmang monasteries, principally the Trungpas. The Nedo Kagyü is a subsect that places great emphasis on Pure Land teachings and the visualization of Amitabha.

**karma** (Skt.). Deed or action. The universal law of cause and effect. The entrapment of karma refers to the fact that our actions, since they are based on ego-clinging, entrap us in a never-ending chain of cause and effect from which it is more and more difficult to escape.

**Karmapa.** The Karmapa is the head of the Karma Kagyü school or lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, to which the author also belonged. *Karmapa* means “the accomplisher of buddha activity,” or enlightened activity and manifestation. The Karmapa is often called the Gyalwa Karmapa, which means “Victorious One,” or the Gyalwang Karmapa. Gyalwang means “Lord of the Victorious Ones.” The sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, enthroned the author as the eleventh Trungpa when he was a young child. The Karmapa, like Chögyam Trungpa, escaped from Tibet in 1959. He established his new seat, the Rumtek monastery, in Sikkim. He traveled to North America three times, sponsored by Vajradhatu (the author’s Buddhist organization) and Karma Triyana Dharmachakra (a Kagyü monastery in upstate New York): in 1974, 1976/77, and 1980. His Holiness passed away from complications of cancer in November 1981. His Holiness the seventeenth Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, made his first visit to the United States in 2008 and has made several subsequent visits. *See also* Kagyü.

**kaya** (Skt., “body”). According to tradition, the *trikaya*, or the three bodies of enlightenment, refers to three modes of existence of buddha, or enlightenment itself. These correspond to mind, speech, and body. The dharmakaya (dharma body) is unoriginated, primordial mind, devoid of concept. The sambhogakaya (enjoyment body) is its environment of compassion and communication. The nirmanakaya (emanation body) is the buddha that takes human form. In the mahayana, this usually refers to Shakyamuni, the historical buddha; in the vajrayana, it may refer to the body, speech, and mind of the guru.

**khenpo** (Tib.). Scholar, abbot: a title for a teacher who has completed a major course of studies in Buddhist thought.

**Khenpo Gangshar Wangpo** (Tib. 1925–?). A renowned twentieth-century Nyingma master and khenpo of the Sechen monastery, one of whose main

students was Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. Famed for his instruction in crazy wisdom, Khenpo Gangshar was invited by Trungpa Rinpoche to teach at the shedra (monastic college) at the Surmang monastery.

**Khyentse Rinpoche** (Tib. 1910–1991). His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche was one of Chögyam Trungpa’s primary teachers in Tibet. He made three visits to North America hosted by the Vajradhatu community: in 1976, 1982, and 1987, when he conducted the funeral rites for Chögyam Trungpa.

**klesha** (Skt.). “Poison” or obscuration. The five main kleshas are passion, aggression, delusion, jealousy, and pride.

**kündzop** (Tib.). Relative or conventional truth. This is contrasted to töndam, or absolute truth, in the teaching of the two truths. *See also* töndam.

**Kuo ming**. Commonly translated as “the people’s nation” and relates to Sun Yat-sen’s three people’s principles: democracy, nationalism, and livelihood.

**kyudo** (Jpn.). The Japanese art of archery. Chögyam Trungpa was a close friend and colleague of Kanjuro Shibata Sensei, the twentieth in a line of master bow makers and a lineage holder of the kyudo tradition.

**lama** (Tib.; Skt.: guru). A title for a Tibetan teacher of dharma. The title can be used as an honorific title conferred on a monk, nun, or advanced tantric practitioner to designate a level of spiritual attainment and authority to teach, or it may be part of a title such as Dalai Lama or Panchen Lama applied to a lineage of reincarnate teachers.

**lama dance**. A generic or popular term to refer to dances with spiritual significance done by monastic practitioners in Tibetan monasteries. Chögyam Trungpa was highly trained in the Chakrasamvara dances done each year at Surmang, a form of lama dance.

**Lama Govinda**. Anagarika Govinda, born in Germany in the 1920s, founded the order of the Arya Maitreya Mandala and was known for his writings on Tibetan Buddhism, abhidharma, and Buddhist meditation as well as other aspects of Buddhism.

**Lhasa**. Formerly, the capital of Tibet and the home of the Potala, the palace of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Now, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region.

**lungta** (Tib). *See* windhorse.

**Madhyamaka.** The middle-way school, a philosophical school based on the dialectical approach of undercutting any attempt to establish a solid logical position, developed by the great logician Nagarjuna (second to third century).

**Magyal Pomra Encampment.** An annual outdoor training program first held in 1978 for members of the Dorje Kasung, providing advanced training in the conduct and practice of warriorship. The original encampment grounds are above the site of the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya at the Shambhala Mountain Center. The secondary location is on the Willow Church Road, near Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia.

**maha ati** (Skt.). *See* ati.

**mahakala.** The chief dharmapalas, or protectors of the dharma. They are wrathful and usually depicted as either black or dark blue. The Four-Armed Mahakala is one of the chief protectors of the Surmang monasteries and the Trungpa lineage.

**mahamudra** (Skt., “great symbol or seal”). The central meditative transmission of the Kagyü lineage. The inherent clarity and wakefulness of mind, which is both vivid and empty.

**mahasiddha.** A greatly accomplished practitioner and wise teacher in the vajrayana tradition who has accomplished siddhi, or great power. Often used in reference to teachers who are unconventional, nonmonastic masters of meditative realization.

**mahasukha** (Skt., “great bliss”). An experience or state of spiritual development that arises from the realization of mahamudra, an advanced stage of realization in the vajrayana teachings, particularly practiced in the Kagyü school.

**mahayana** (Skt., “great vehicle”). The second of the three yanas of Tibetan Buddhism, the mahayana is also called the “open path” or the “path of the bodhisattva.” Mahayana presents vision based on shunyata (emptiness), compassion, and the acknowledgment of universal buddha nature. The mahayana path begins when one discovers bodhichitta in oneself and vows to develop it in order to benefit others. The path proceeds by cultivating absolute and relative bodhichitta. The result is full awakening. The ideal figure of the mahayana is the bodhisattva who is fully awake and who works for the benefit of all beings.

**Makkyi Rapjam** (Tib.). A title literally meaning, “Overall Commander” or

“General Commander.” Used by Chögyam Trungpa in connection with presenting teachings to the Dorje Kasung.

**mala** (Skt.). A strand of 108 beads that is used for counting repetitions of mantras or other chants. Similar to a rosary in the Catholic tradition.

**mandala** (Skt.). A total vision that unifies the seeming complexity and chaos of experience into a simple pattern and natural hierarchy. The Tibetan word *kyilkhor* used to translate the Sanskrit term literally means “center and fringe.” A mandala is usually represented two-dimensionally as a four-sided diagram with a central deity, a personification of the basic sanity of buddha nature. Three-dimensionally, it is a palace with a center and four gates in the cardinal directions. Mandala may also relate to the gathering of vajrayana practitioners to invoke the mandala of a particular yidam, or vajrayana deity.

**Manjushri** (Skt.). Bodhisattva of knowledge and learning. Usually depicted with a book and the sword of prajna in his hands.

**mantra** (Skt.). A combination of words (usually Sanskrit) or syllables that expresses the quintessence of a tantric deity. A mantra may or may not have conceptual content. Recitation of mantra is a vajrayana practice that is done in conjunction with visualization. Mantra is associated with protecting the mind. It was described by Chögyam Trungpa as onomatopoeic, archetypal, primordial sound.

**Mao Tse-tung** (1893–1976). Commonly referred to as Chairman Mao, he was a Chinese communist revolutionary and the founding father of the People’s Republic of China. He was also an important Chinese Marxist theorist, soldier, and statesman who led his nation’s Cultural Revolution.

**Marpa** (1012–1097). The third of the great Kagyü lineage holders and chief disciple of Naropa. Known as Marpa the Translator, he was the first Tibetan in this lineage and introduced many important teachings from India into Tibet.

**Marx, Karl** (1818–1883). A philosopher, economist, sociologist, and revolutionary socialist. He spent much of his life in London, where he developed his thought in collaboration with Friedrich Engels and published various works, the most well-known being *The Communist Manifesto*. He has had a huge influence on politics, philosophy, and world affairs.

**Milarepa** (1040–1123). The most famous of all Tibetan poets and the quintessential wandering yogin, Milarepa, or the “cotton-clad Mila,” was

Marpa's chief student and the fourth major lineage holder of the Kagyü tradition. His songs of realization are still recited and studied.

**Mukpo.** Chögyam Trungpa's family name and the name of one of the six clans, or tribes, of Tibet. Mukpo literally means "dark" or "black." According to Trungpa Rinpoche, Gesar of Ling belonged to the Mukpo clan, as did His Holiness the sixteenth Karmapa and His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Chögyam Trungpa frequently talked about how the members of the Dorje Kasung were part of the Mukpo clan.

**Nagarjuna** (second/third century). A great Indian teacher of Buddhism, the founder of the Madhyamaka school of Buddhist philosophy, and abbot of Nalanda, India's renowned Buddhist university. He contributed greatly to the logical development of the doctrine of shunyata and was the author of many key texts, as well as, in legend, the guru of various important Buddhist teachers who lived centuries apart.

**Nalanda University.** A large Buddhist monastery in the ancient kingdom of Magdha (modern-day Bihar) in India. It was an important center of learning from the fifth to thirteenth centuries. The great lineage holder in the Kagyü tradition, Naropa, taught at Nalanda before studying with his root teacher, Tilopa.

**Naropa** (1016–1100). A great Indian siddha or tantric master, second of the great enlightened teachers of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. See *The Life and Teaching of Naropa*, translated by Herbert V. Guenther (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1986).

**ngöndro** (Tib.). The preliminary, preparatory, or foundational practices common to all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. The preliminary practices establish the foundation for more advanced practice.

**nirmanakaya** (Skt.). "Emanation body," "form body," or "body of manifestation." Communication of awakened mind through form, specifically, through embodiment as a human being. *See also* kaya.

**nirvana** (Skt.). From the root meaning "to blow out," nirvana refers to the extinguishing of the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion. When these emotional and psychological defilements are destroyed by wisdom, the mind becomes free, radiant, and joyful.

**Nixon, Richard** (1913–1994). The thirty-seventh president of the United States.

Nixon ended American involvement in the Vietnam War in 1973. At the same time, he ended the military draft. His visit to China in 1972 opened diplomatic relations between the two nations, and he initiated détente and the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty the same year. He became the only US president to resign the office.

**nonmeditation.** One of the four stages, or yogas, of mahamudra in which the differentiation between meditation and ordinary experience dissolves.

**Nyingma** (Tib.). The oldest of the four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Padmasambhava is the founder of the Nyingma school. *See also* Padmasambhava.

**Nyinthün** (Tib.). A day of meditation practice.

**oryoki** (Jpn.). Japanese monastic practice for taking one's meals in the meditation hall.

**Padmasambhava.** One of the eight aspects of Guru Rinpoche, a great teacher who helped to bring Buddhism to Tibet from India in the eighth century. He is considered the father of Buddhism in Tibet and revered by all Tibetan Buddhists, but his teachings are primarily associated with the Nyingma lineage. He hid many teachings in places in Tibet, which are called *terma*, to be discovered for the use of future practitioners.

**pandit** (Skt., "scholar"). A scholar or learned person who studies and interprets sacred texts as an intellectual activity.

**paramita** (Skt.). "Transcendent," "perfection," or "gone to the other shore." The paramitas are the essential activities or practices of a bodhisattva. The six paramitas are generosity, discipline, patience, exertion, meditation, and knowledge or discriminating awareness (prajna). The paramitas are called transcendent actions because they carry us across the river of confused existence. They are nondual, not based on ego-clinging.

**politburo.** The principal policy-making committee in the former Soviet Union, founded in 1917.

**Practice Lineage.** *See* Practicing Lineage.

**Practicing Lineage.** A designation for the Kagyü lineage of Buddhism, emphasizing the importance of meditation practice.



**prajna** (Skt.). “Transcendent knowledge” or “perfect knowledge,” it is the sixth paramita. It is called transcendent because it sees through the veils of dualistic confusion. Prajna is like the eyes, and the other five paramitas are like the limbs of bodhisattva activity. Prajna can also mean wisdom, understanding, or discrimination. At its most developed level, it means seeing things as they are from a nondualistic point of view.

**prajnaparamita** (Skt.). The paramita, or mahayana practice, of prajna, discriminating awareness. When capitalized, *Prajnaparamita* refers to a series of about forty mahayana sutras, gathered together under this name because they all deal with the realization of prajna. *See also* prajna.

**pranayama** (Skt.). Form of vajrayana yogic practice that involves controlling mind, body, and especially the breath.

**puja** (Tib.). Ritual and often devotional practice that may include bowing, prostrations, and chanting.

**Rigden King.** The king of Shambhala who is said to watch over worldly affairs from his celestial kingdom. According to tradition, in the course of human history there will be twenty-five Rigden Kings. Symbolically, the Rigden King represents the complete attainment of bravery and compassion in the Shambhala teachings.

**Ri-me** (Skt.). Unbiased. Refers to an ecumenical school or movement within the Nyingma, Kagyü, and Sakya traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, as well as some Bön traditions. Chögyam Trungpa’s root guru, Jamgön Kongtrül, was a leader in the Ri-me tradition.

**Robinson, Heath** (1872–1944). An English cartoonist and illustrator best known for drawings of ridiculously complicated machines for achieving simple objectives.

**sadhana** (Skt.). Practice. A ritual text, as well as the accompanying practice. Ranging from very simple to more elaborate versions, sadhanas engage the mind through meditation, the body through gestures (mudras), and the speech through mantra recitation.

**Sakya** (Tib.). One of the four major schools or lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, known for a balance of scholarship, meditation, and contemplative studies.

**Sakyong** (Tib., “Earth Protector”; Skt.: bhūmipala). A Shambhala title used by Chögyam Trungpa in connection with his presentation of the Shambhala teachings. Now, also a title used by his eldest son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche.

**samadhi** (Skt.). “Meditation” or “concentration.” A state of total meditation in which the mind rests without wavering and the content of the meditation and the meditator’s mind become one.

**samaya** (Skt., “coming together”; Tib.: damtshig, “sacred word or vow”). In the vajrayana, samaya is the principle of commitment whereby the student’s total experience is bound to the teacher, the practice, and the path.

**sambhogakaya** (Skt.). “Body of enjoyment” or energy. The environment of compassion and communication linking the dharmakaya and the nirmanakaya. *See also* kaya.

**samsara** (Skt.). The vicious cycle of confused existence; the world of struggle and suffering that is based on ego-clinging, conflicting emotions, and habitual patterns. Its root cause is ignorance of our true nature, which is openness beyond the duality of self and other. Samsara is the whirlpool of confusion, and nirvana refers to the cessation of confusion, or enlightenment. *See also* nirvana.

**samten** (Tib.). *Sam* means “cognitive mind,” and *ten* means “steady.” Another term for meditation. *See also* dhyana and zen.

**sangha** (Skt.). The third of the three objects of refuge (Buddha, dharma, sangha). In a narrow sense sangha refers to Buddhist monks and nuns; in the mahayana sense, sangha refers to the entire body of practitioners, both lay and monastic.

**satori** (Jpn.). In the Zen tradition, great emphasis is placed on the experience of satori, sudden realization or enlightenment.

**shah of Persia**. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was the shah of Iran from September 16, 1941, until his overthrow by the Iranian revolution on February 11, 1979. The Pahlavi dynasty was the ruling house of Iran from 1925 until 1979, when the monarchy was overthrown and abolished as a result of the revolution.

**Shakyamuni Buddha**. The historical Buddha, Gautama Buddha. Literally, this means “the sage of the Sakya clan.”

**shamatha-vipashyana** (Skt.). The combination of mindfulness and awareness,

principally in the sitting practice of meditation, in which the concentration, stillness, and precision of shamatha are in harmonious balance with the expansiveness, inquisitiveness, and clarity of vipashyana, or awareness practice.

**Shambhala.** A mythical kingdom in which Shakyamuni Buddha is said to have taught the *kalachakra* tantra. Chögyam Trungpa presented a series of teachings on basic goodness and human warriorship, using the image of the Shambhala kingdom as an enlightened society.

**shedra** (Tib.). A monastic college or school.

**shravaka** (Skt.). One who hears and proclaims the basic teachings of the Buddha.

**shravakayana** (Skt., “way of the hearers”). The focus of the shravakayana is on individual salvation through listening to the teachings and gaining insight into the four noble truths and the unreality of phenomena. The shravakayana can be equated with the hinayana.

**Shunryu Suzuki Roshi** (1904–1971). A Soto Zen priest who founded the San Francisco Zen Center and Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. He was the author of *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*, an early and very influential book on the practice of Zen and meditation in general. Chögyam Trungpa met Roshi in 1970, just the year before he died. The two were very close, and Chögyam Trungpa modeled much of his approach to meditation and group retreats on Roshi’s approach.

**shunyata** (Skt., “emptiness”). A completely open and unbounded clarity of mind characterized by groundlessness and freedom from all conceptual frameworks. It could be called “openness” since “emptiness” can convey the mistaken notion of a state of voidness or blankness. In fact, shunyata is inseparable from compassion and all other awakened qualities.

**siddha** (Skt.). A realized practitioner who has accomplished siddhi, or power, over the phenomenal world and more fundamentally over mind itself.

**Sikhism.** A monotheistic religion that originated in the Punjab region of South Asia. The fundamental tenets of Sikhism, based on the teachings of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, and the other ten Sikh gurus, are articulated in the sacred scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*.

**six realms.** Worlds or realms that can be regarded as literal or metaphorical descriptions of existence. They are the realms of hell, hungry ghosts, animals, human, jealous gods, and gods.

**six yogas of Naropa.** Also called the six dharmas of Naropa. Advanced tantric practices that the mahasiddha Naropa transmitted, which became key practices in the Karma Kagyü and other lineages. They are the yoga of inner heat, dream yoga, the yoga of luminosity, the yoga of *bardo*, the yoga of illusory body, and the transference of consciousness.

**skandha** (Skt., “group,” “aggregate,” or “heap”). Each of the five aggregates, or aspects, which constitute what is generally known as personality or ego. They are form, feeling, perception, concept or mental formations, and consciousness.

**skullcup** (Skt.: kapala). A cup that is either made from a human skull or visualized as being made from a human skull. The kapala is used in vajrayana rituals and usually contains amrita. It represents conquest over extreme beliefs or the intoxication of extreme beliefs.

**Songtsen Gampo.** The first great Buddhist king of Tibet. Under his reign, Tibet consolidated a great deal of political power, and in fact his rule began a period of both political and religious greatness that lasted some two hundred years, from the middle of the seventh century until around 836, when Ralpachen, the last of the kings in Songtsen Gampo’s line, was assassinated. One of Songtsen Gampo’s greatest accomplishments was the introduction of a written Tibetan alphabet, which was required for the translation of Indian Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan. He also established the Tibetan capital at Lhasa. He constructed the oldest and most revered temple in Lhasa, the Jokhang, to house a sacred Tibetan statue, the Jobo Rinpoche, which was brought to Tibet by his Chinese wife, a princess of the Chinese court.

**stupa.** (Skt.) (Tib.: chöten). A structure or building that contains the relics of a great teacher. A stupa may also refer to a small reliquary on a shrine containing the relics of a great teacher.

**sugatagarbha** (Skt.). Indestructible basic wakefulness, buddha nature. Similar to tathagatagarbha; however, sugatagarbha emphasizes the blissful aspect and the path aspect of buddha nature, while tathagatagarbha emphasizes the wisdom or isness aspect. *See also* tathata, tathagatagarbha.

**Sun Yat-sen** (1866–1925). A pre-communist Chinese revolutionary, first president and founding father of the Republic of China. He is referred to as the Father of the Nation in Taiwan and the forerunner of democratic revolution in the People’s Republic of China. *See also* kuo ming.

**sutra** (Skt.; Tib.: do; mdo). Thread, string, cord. Sutras are texts in the Buddhist canon that are attributed to the Buddha. *Sutra* means a meeting point or junction, referring to the meeting of the Buddha's enlightenment and the student's understanding. A sutra is usually a dialogue between the Buddha and one or more of his disciples, thus elaborating a particular topic of dharma.

**Taizan Maezumi Roshi** (1931–1995). Founding teacher of Yokoji Zen Mountain Center and the Zen Center of Los Angeles, Hakuyu Koun Taizan Maezumi Roshi was one of the most significant Zen practitioners of the twentieth century. He was the author of *The Hazy Moon of Enlightenment*, *Appreciate Your Life*, and many other books on the practice of Zen. He met Chögyam Trungpa in 1976 and taught at Naropa University in the summer of 1977.

**Taktsang** (Tib.). The cave in Bhutan where Guru Rinpoche manifested in his wrathful form as Dorje Trolö. Chögyam Trungpa received the terma *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* while he was doing a retreat at Taktsang in 1968.

**tantra** (Skt., “continuity”). A synonym for *vajrayana*, the third of the three main yanas of Tibetan Buddhism. *Tantra* means “continuity” and refers both to the root texts of the vajrayana and to the systems of meditation they describe. *See also* vajrayana.

**tathagata** (Skt.). Literally “thus gone,” an epithet for a fully realized buddha. *See also* sugatagarbha.

**tathatagarbha** (Skt.). Buddha nature. The enlightened basic nature of all beings. *Tathagata* means “thus come” or “thus gone” and is an epithet for the Buddha; and *garbha* means “womb,” or “essence.” *See also* tathagata, tathata, and sugatagarbha.

**tathata** (Skt.). Tathata is isness and the quality of dharmaness. Related to sugata, which is “well-gone,” and tathagata, “gone as it is.” Both achieve the tathata, which is “as it is.”

**Teng Hsiao-p'ing**. A prominent Chinese revolutionary and statesman. He was the paramount leader of China from 1978 until his retirement in 1989. After Mao Tse-tung's death, Teng led his country through far-reaching market-economy reforms.

**terma** (Tib.: gter ma). Hidden treasure teachings. Terma are usually attributed to

Padmasambhava and his consorts, who are said to have hidden certain teachings to be revealed at a proper time in the future by a *tertön*, or terma discoverer. Terma can take the form of a physical object, such as a text or ritual implement buried in the ground, hidden in a rock or crystal, in a tree, a lake, or in the sky. Terma also refers to teachings understood as being concealed within the mind of the guru, the true place of concealment.

**thangka.** A form of Tibetan religious painting that depicts the gurus, mandalas, deities, and other iconographical aspects of the vajrayana.

**theism.** Religion based on belief in a deity or deities. Chögyam Trungpa used the term to refer to seeking salvation outside of oneself and contrasted theism with nontheism, or working with the wisdom within oneself as the basis for spiritual realization.

***Tibetan Book of the Dead*** (Tib.: *Bardo Thödol*, “Book of Liberation in the Bardo through Hearing”). A famous Tibetan tantric terma text on working with death and dying and the after-death state. Chögyam Trungpa worked on a translation, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which is still quite popular and which makes these teachings much more available to Western readers, through the explanation of their psychological significance. The origin of these teachings can be traced to Padmasambhava and his consort, Yeshe Tsogyal. It was later discovered as terma by Karma Lingpa, in the fourteenth century. Intensively studied in Tibet, both academically and during retreat practice, the text is often read aloud to dying persons to help them attain realization within the bardo.

**Tilopa.** A renowned teacher of vajrayana Buddhism in India in the eleventh century. His most famous disciple was Naropa, who through his student Marpa introduced Tilopa’s teachings into Tibet.

**töndam** (Tib.). Ultimate truth or nature; higher understanding. This is contrasted with relative truth, or *kündzop*, in the teaching of the two truths. *See also* *kündzop*.

**torma** (Tib.). A sculpture made out of roasted barley flour and molded butter, used as a shrine offering, a feast offering substance, or as a representation of vajrayana deities.

**trident.** A weapon with three points, or prongs, which in the Buddhist teachings is traditionally one of the weapons employed by Mahakalas and other protectors of the dharma. Chögyam Trungpa associated the trident with the mahakala principle of protection. *See also* mahakala.

**Trisong Detsen** (c.742–c.800). Second of the three great religious kings of Tibet and one of the main disciples of Guru Rinpoche. It was due to Trisong Detsen’s efforts that Shantarakshita and Guru Padmasambhava came from India and established Buddhism firmly in Tibet.

**tülku** (Tib.). Emanation body or nirmanakaya; a person who is recognized as the reincarnation of an enlightened being.

**vajra** (Skt.; Tib.: dorje, “noble stone”). In the vajrayana, vajra is the basic indestructible nature of wisdom and enlightenment, penetrating wisdom that cuts through solidified ignorance. A vajra is also a tantric ritual implement or scepter representing a thunderbolt, the scepter of the king of the gods, Indra. This thunderbolt is said to be made of adamantite or diamond, and this is connected with its basic symbolism: the indestructibility of awakened mind. When used with the ritual bell, or *ghanta*, the vajra symbolizes skillful means, and the bell, transcendental knowledge. Vajra is also the name of one of the five buddha families, whose enlightened quality is pristine clarity and whose confused or neurotic quality is aggression.

**vajra master**. A guru qualified to teach the vajrayana and to train individual students in the path of tantra.

**Vajradhatu** (Skt., “Indestructible Realm or Space”). The name given by Chögyam Trungpa to the international organization he established in 1973 to bring together his various meditation centers and teaching activities. More generally, in the vajrayana teachings of Buddhism, vajradhatu refers to the ultimate realm of space, the primordial realm of mind from which everything arises.

**Vajrasadhu**. A Kagyü and Nyingma protector whom Chögyam Trungpa established as the protector of “the practitioners and place of Karma Dzong,” the name given to his international headquarters. The choice of the lokapala Vajrasadhu for Karma Dzong, Boulder, was a bit of a pun; he is said to dwell in rocky mountainous places (i.e., among boulders).

**vajrayana** (Skt.). The diamond way or the indestructible vehicle, vajrayana is the third of the three great yanas of Tibetan Buddhism. It is synonymous with tantra and is sometimes subdivided into four or six subsidiary yanas. The vajrayana emphasizes the attainment of vajra nature, or indestructible

wakefulness, and its indivisibility with compassion. The practice of vajrayana emphasizes devotion to the guru, or vajra master. In the vajrayana, buddhahood is presented as already existing, available to be actualized through the skillful means of visualization, mantra, and mudra.

**Vajrayogini** (Skt.). One of the principal deities or yidams of the Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism. Vajrayogini is the consort of Chakrasamvara. She represents the principle of nonthought or wisdom beyond conceptual mind.

**Vetali**. A female protector associated with the Kagyü lineage since the time of the lineage forefathers Naropa and Marpa. Chögyam Trungpa chose her as a protectress of all Vajradhatu centers. She is the consort of the Four-Armed Mahakala.

**vidyadhara**. A title for a vajrayana teacher, signifying a holder of wisdom or a crazy-wisdom lineage holder. Capitalized, an honorific title given to Chögyam Trungpa.

**Vikramashila University**. Vikramashila was one of the two most important ancient centers of Buddhist learning in India, along with Nālandā.

**Washington, George** (1731–1799). The first president of the United States. He became a master Mason, the highest basic rank in the secret fraternity of Freemasonry, at the age of twenty-one. Masonic symbols, approved by Washington in the design of the Great Seal of the United States, can be seen on the one-dollar bill. The all-seeing eye above an unfinished pyramid is unmistakably Masonic.

**windhorse**. English translation of the Tibetan *lungta*. Self-existing energy that can be harnessed, or ridden, through the exercise of warrior disciplines and by invoking one's sense of confidence and goodness.

**yana** (Skt.). A vehicle, in which, symbolically, the practitioner travels on the road to enlightenment. The different vehicles, or yanas, correspond to different views of the journey, and each yana comprises a body of knowledge and practice. The three great yanas in Tibetan Buddhism are the hinayana, mahayana, and vajrayana.

**yidam** (Tib.). A vajrayana deity who embodies various aspects of the awakened nature of mind.



**Yogachara School.** An influential school of Buddhist philosophy, sometimes referred to as the “mind only” school.

**zafu** (Jpn.). A round meditation cushion used in the Zen tradition and many other traditions.

**zen** (Jpn.). Derives from the Chinese word *ch’an*, from the Sanskrit *dhyana*, meaning “meditation.” In Tibetan it is *samten*. *Sam* means “cognitive mind,” and *ten* means “steady.” So *samten*, or *zen*, is the notion of being in a state of stillness. Capitalized, it refers to several schools of Japanese Buddhism and has many other popular connotations in the English language and culture of North America.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

IT HAS BEEN MORE THAN TWELVE YEARS since the first eight volumes of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa* appeared. In 2017, volumes nine and ten are being published, some thirty years after Chögyam Trungpa's death in 1987. All of the individual titles included in these volumes were published following his death, and as these volumes nine and ten of *The Collected Works* go to press, there are several forthcoming titles being edited or prepared for publication, while a number of others are under discussion. New books by Chögyam Trungpa and additional volumes in his *Collected Works* may continue to appear for several more decades.

In addition to the work of Rinpoche's editors, the efforts of many others are needed to support this publishing program. Shambhala Publications has been the main publisher of Chögyam Trungpa's work for more than forty-five years. Additionally, Vajradhatu Publications has been publishing source books and small editions of Chögyam Trungpa's work during that period. Thanks are due to all the many people in the editorial and publishing fields who have worked on Trungpa Rinpoche's books and who now continue to contract, edit, proofread, design, publish, and shepherd his work into the world.

As well, the staff and volunteers of the Shambhala Archives, now and since its inception in 1990, deserve our deepest gratitude. Special thanks are offered to Gordon Kidd and Jeanne Riordan, longtime staff of the archives, for their ongoing help. Without the efforts of the archives to preserve Rinpoche's words, including massive efforts to digitize his work in many media, we would have no materials for the ongoing publishing program.

Without those who are inspired by Chögyam Trungpa and continue to practice according to his instructions—without the readers, that is—there would be no demand for these books. Thanks to this audience—readers, students, and scholars—who make publications like this possible and make them more than an academic exercise.

Specifically for the material in volume nine, thanks are due to Kalapa Media, especially Terry Rudderham, Emily Sell, and Jeanne Cain, for their assistance

and their kind permission to include *True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung* here. Thanks to David Schneider, Sabine Putze, Matthias Pongracz, and especially Otto Picklhoefer for help in locating the German edition of *Glimpses of Abhidharma*; Sherab Chodzin for the translation of Trungpa Rinpoche’s foreword to this book back to English from German; to Fran Lewis for comments related to the article “Meditation and the Practice of Dathün”; to David I. Rome and Judith Lief for advice on several of the selected writings; to Gelong Lodro Sangpo and Gelongma Migme Chödrön for comments on “Meeting the Guru,” and especially to Ani Migme for the original editing of this article. I would like to thank Kesang Getza Tashi and Catherine Ingram for permission to use the interviews they conducted with Chögyam Trungpa, and for reviewing the second edit that I did on both interviews. I would especially like to thank Catherine for the photograph she provided, taken at the time of her interview, which appears on [here](#).

Diana Janowitz has been the editorial assistant for this project. I don’t know how I could have kept to the schedule or included much of the material that required retyping without her excellent help. Thanks to Diana also for compiling the glossary terms for volume nine and for providing many of the definitions.

Liz Shaw at Shambhala Publications has been the excellent in-house editor, and I’m truly grateful for her participation in the project. Thanks also to the other editorial and design staff at Shambhala: Audra Figgins and Lora Zorian. Hazel Bercholz designed *The Collected Works* originally, and I’m so grateful that we have this elegant, dignified container for Chögyam Trungpa’s teachings. Thanks also to Nikko Odiseos and Jonathan Green for general advice and for their support of this project, and to all of the Bercholz family, not only for this volume but for their longstanding support and commitment to the work of Chögyam Trungpa.

I’d also like to thank my husband, Jim, and daughter, Jenny, for all the ways that they support my work.

Diana Mukpo has made so much possible through her steadfast belief in the importance of the publication of Chögyam Trungpa’s teachings over the last thirty years. To her, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, and to all of the members of the Mukpo family, we offer a deep bow of appreciation.

To the Vidyadhara Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche: there is no greater privilege than to work on this material. I feel blessed and grateful; it seems to work on me as well, at least a little, and it’s proof—or at least a hopeful sign—that even a

half-blind idiot like myself can be helped by this marvelous dharma. E MA HO!

## A BIOGRAPHY OF CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

THE VENERABLE CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA RINPOCHE was born in the province of Kham in eastern Tibet in 1939.<sup>1</sup> When he was just thirteen months old, Chögyam Trungpa was recognized as a major tülku, or incarnate teacher. According to Tibetan tradition, an enlightened teacher is capable, based on his or her vow of compassion, of reincarnating in human form over a succession of generations. Before dying, such a teacher may leave a letter or other clues to the whereabouts of the next incarnation. Later, students and other realized teachers look through these clues and, based on those, plus a careful examination of dreams and visions, conduct searches to discover and recognize the successor. Thus, particular lines of teaching are formed, in some cases extending over many centuries. Chögyam Trungpa was the eleventh in the teaching lineage known as the Trungpa tülkus.

Once young tülkus are recognized, they enter a period of intensive training in the theory and practice of the Buddhist teachings. Trungpa Rinpoche, after being enthroned as supreme abbot of the Surmang Dütsi Tel monastery and governor of Surmang District, began a period of training that would last eighteen years, until his departure from Tibet in 1959. As a Kagyü tülku, his training was based on the systematic practice of meditation and on refined theoretical understanding of Buddhist philosophy. One of the four great lineages of Tibet, the Kagyü is known as the Practicing (or Practice) Lineage.

At the age of eight, Trungpa Rinpoche received ordination as a novice monk. Following this, he engaged in intensive study and practice of the traditional monastic disciplines, including traditional Tibetan poetry and monastic dance. His primary teachers were Jamgön Kongtrül of Sechen and Khenpo Gangshar—leading teachers in the Nyingma and Kagyü lineages. In 1958, at the age of eighteen, Trungpa Rinpoche completed his studies, receiving the degrees of *kyorpön* (doctor of divinity) and *khenpo* (master of studies). He also received full monastic ordination.

The late fifties was a time of great upheaval in Tibet. As it became clear that the Chinese communists intended to take over the country by force, many



people, both monastic and lay, fled the country. Trungpa Rinpoche spent many harrowing months trekking over the Himalayas (described later in his book *Born in Tibet*). After narrowly escaping capture by the Chinese, he at last reached India in 1959. While in India, Trungpa Rinpoche was appointed to serve as spiritual adviser to the Young Lamas Home School in Delhi, India. He served in this capacity from 1959 to 1963.

Trungpa Rinpoche's opportunity to emigrate to the West came when he received a Spalding sponsorship to attend Oxford University. At Oxford he studied comparative religion, philosophy, history, and fine arts. He also studied Japanese flower arranging, receiving a certificate from the Sogetsu school. While in England, Trungpa Rinpoche began to instruct Western students in the dharma, and in 1967 he founded the Samye Ling Meditation Center in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. During this period, he also published his first two books, both in English: *Born in Tibet* (1966) and *Meditation in Action* (1969).

In 1968 Trungpa Rinpoche traveled to Bhutan, where he entered into a solitary meditation retreat. While on retreat, Rinpoche received a pivotal terma text for all of his teaching in the West, *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, a text that documents the spiritual degeneration of modern times and its antidote, genuine spirituality that leads to the experience of naked and luminous mind. This retreat marked a pivotal change in his approach to teaching. Soon after returning to England, he became a layperson, putting aside his monastic robes and dressing in ordinary Western attire. In 1970 he married a young Englishwoman, Diana Pybus, and together they left Scotland and moved to North America. Many of his early students and his Tibetan colleagues found these changes shocking and upsetting. However, he expressed a conviction that in order for the dharma to take root in the West, it needed to be taught free from cultural trappings and religious fascination.

During the seventies, America was in a period of political and cultural upheaval. It was a time of fascination with the East. Nevertheless, almost from the moment he arrived in America, Trungpa Rinpoche drew many students to him who were seriously interested in the Buddhist teachings and the practice of meditation. However, he severely criticized the materialistic approach to spirituality that was also quite prevalent, describing it as a "spiritual supermarket." In his lectures, and in his books *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (1973) and *The Myth of Freedom* (1976), he pointed to the simplicity and directness of the practice of sitting meditation as the way to cut through such distortions of the spiritual journey.

During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, Trungpa Rinpoche developed a reputation as a dynamic and controversial teacher. He was a pioneer, one of the first Tibetan Buddhist teachers in North America, preceding by some years and indeed facilitating the later visits by His Holiness the Karmapa, His Holiness Khyentse Rinpoche, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and many others. In the United States, he found a spiritual kinship with many Zen masters, who were already presenting Buddhist meditation. In the very early days, he particularly connected with Suzuki Roshi, the founder of the San Francisco Zen Center. In later years he was close with Kobun Chino Roshi and Bill Kwong Roshi in Northern California; with Maezumi Roshi, the founder of the Los Angeles Zen Center; and with Eido Roshi, abbot of New York Zendo Shobo-ji. *The Teacup and the Skullcup: Chögyam Trungpa on Zen and Tantra*, published by Vajradhatu Publications in 2007, is based on two seminars where Chögyam Trungpa discussed the interrelationship of these two great Buddhist traditions. (Shambhala Publications reissued this book with a new subtitle, *Where Zen and Tantra Meet*, in 2015.)

Fluent in the English language, Chögyam Trungpa was one of the first Tibetan Buddhist teachers who could speak to Western students directly, without the aid of a translator. Traveling extensively throughout North America and Europe, he gave thousands of talks and hundreds of seminars. He established major centers in Vermont, Colorado, and Nova Scotia, as well as many smaller meditation and study centers in cities throughout North America and Europe. Vajradhatu was formed in 1973 as the central administrative body of this network.

Beginning in 1973, Trungpa Rinpoche initiated a three-month advanced program of practice and study, the Vajradhatu Seminary, attended by his senior students. Over the course of thirteen years, he gave hundreds of talks on the Buddhist teachings at these programs. In 2013, the three-volume *Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma* was published based on these talks at the seminaries. Judith L. Lief was the compiler and editor of this work, having spent more than ten years on the intensive editing of the material.

In 1974 Trungpa Rinpoche founded the Naropa Institute (now Naropa University), which became the first and only accredited Buddhist-inspired university in North America. He lectured extensively at the institute, and his book *Journey without Goal* (1981) is based on a course he taught there during the first summer session. In 1976 he established the Shambhala Training program, a series of seminars that present a nonsectarian path of spiritual

warriorship grounded in the practice of sitting meditation. His book *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (1984) gives an overview of the Shambhala teachings.

In 1976 Trungpa Rinpoche appointed Ösel Tendzin (Thomas F. Rich) as his vajra regent, or dharma heir. (Ösel Tendzin worked closely with Trungpa Rinpoche in the administration of Vajradhatu and Shambhala Training. He taught extensively from 1976 until his death in 1990 and is the author of *Buddha in the Palm of Your Hand*.)

Trungpa Rinpoche was also active in the field of translation. Working with Francesca Fremantle, he rendered a new translation of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, which was published in 1975. Later he formed the Nālandā Translation Committee in order to translate texts and liturgies for his own students, as well as to make important texts available publicly.

In 1979 Trungpa Rinpoche conducted a ceremony empowering his eldest son, (Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo, as his successor in the Shambhala lineage. At that time he gave him the title of Sawang (“Earth Lord”).

Trungpa Rinpoche was also known for his interest in the arts and particularly for his insights into the relationship between contemplative discipline and the artistic process. Two books published since his death—*The Art of Calligraphy* (1994) and *Dharma Art* (1996, a new edition appeared in 2008 under the title *True Perception: The Path of Dharma Art*)—present this aspect of his work. His own artwork included calligraphy, painting, flower arranging, poetry, playwriting, and environmental installations. In addition, at the Naropa Institute he created an educational atmosphere that attracted many leading artists and poets. The exploration of the creative process in light of contemplative training continues there as a provocative dialogue. Trungpa Rinpoche also published two books of poetry: *Mudra* (1972) and *First Thought Best Thought* (1983). In 1998 a retrospective compilation of his poetry, *Timely Rain*, was published.

Shortly before his death, in a meeting with Samuel Bercholz, the publisher of Shambhala Publications, Chögyam Trungpa expressed his interest in publishing 108 volumes of his teachings, to be called the Dharma Ocean Series. “Dharma Ocean” is the translation of Chögyam Trungpa’s Tibetan teaching name, Chökyi Gyatso. The Dharma Ocean Series was to consist primarily of material edited to allow readers to encounter this rich array of teachings simply and directly rather than in an overly systematized or condensed form. In 1991 the first posthumous volume in the series, *Crazy Wisdom*, was published, and another seven volumes

followed in the ensuing years. Beginning around the year 2000, Shambhala Publications, in consultation with Rinpoche's editors and his family, decided that all of Trungpa Rinpoche's books could now be considered part of the Dharma Ocean Series, regardless of the level of editing. In essence, the series as a separate designation was no longer useful, but the publication of his work continues at quite a pace.

Trungpa Rinpoche's published books represent only a fraction of the rich legacy of his teachings. During his seventeen years of teaching in North America, he crafted the structures necessary to provide his students with thorough, systematic training in the dharma. From introductory talks and courses to advanced group retreat practices, these programs emphasized a balance of study and practice, of intellect and intuition. *Chögyam Trungpa* by Fabrice Midal, a biography, details the many forms of training that Chögyam Trungpa developed. *Dragon Thunder: My Life with Chögyam Trungpa* is the story of Rinpoche's life as told by Diana Mukpo. This also provides insight into the many forms that he crafted for Buddhism in North America. In the last ten years, a number of other books penned by Trungpa Rinpoche's students have started appearing. They offer a rich and diverse view of this extraordinary human being, his life, and his impact on his students.

In addition to his extensive teachings in the Buddhist tradition, Trungpa Rinpoche also placed great emphasis on the Shambhala teachings, which stress the importance of meditation in action, synchronizing mind and body, and training oneself to approach obstacles or challenges in everyday life with the courageous attitude of a warrior, without anger. The goal of creating an enlightened society is fundamental to the Shambhala teachings. According to the Shambhala approach, the realization of an enlightened society comes not purely through outer activity, such as community or political involvement, but from appreciation of the senses and the sacred dimension of day-to-day life. A second volume of these teachings, entitled *Great Eastern Sun*, was published in 1999. The final volume of these teachings, *Smile at Fear*, appeared in 2009.

Chögyam Trungpa emphasized the primacy of the sitting practice of meditation as the basis for the practice and study of both the Buddhist and the Shambhala teachings. In the early 1970s, he helped to popularize the practice and the understanding of both mindfulness and awareness. A book of teachings based largely on this early work, *Mindfulness in Action: Making Friends with Yourself through Meditation and Everyday Awareness*, was published in 2014 at a time when the "mindfulness movement" was gathering momentum in North

America and Europe.

Chögyam Trungpa died in 1987, at the age of forty-seven. Soon after his death, the Shambhala Archives was established as the primary repository for audio, video, and written documentation of his life and teachings. The more than twenty-five books of his teachings published since 1987 are almost entirely based on the documents, especially the audiotapes, in the archives. As of 2017, thirty years after his death, his editors estimate that as many as forty additional titles still remain to be edited and published. In 2016, two of his senior editors—Judith L. Lief and Carolyn Rose Gimian—working together with Naropa University, inaugurated a training program for new editors.

By the time of his death, Chögyam Trungpa was known not only as Rinpoche (“Precious Jewel”) but also as Vajracharya (“Vajra Holder”) and as Vidyadhara (“Wisdom Holder”) for his role as a master of the vajrayana, or tantric teachings of Buddhism. As a holder of the Shambhala teachings, he had also received the titles of Dorje Dradül (“Indestructible Warrior”) and Sakyong (“Earth Protector”). He is survived by his wife, Diana Judith Mukpo, and five sons. His eldest son, the Sawang Ösel Rangdröl Mukpo, succeeds him as the spiritual head of Vajradhatu. Acknowledging the importance of the Shambhala teachings to his father’s work, the Sawang changed the name of the umbrella organization to Shambhala, with Vajradhatu remaining one of its major divisions. In 1995 the Sawang received the Shambhala title of Sakyong like his father before him and was also confirmed as an incarnation of the great ecumenical teacher Mipham Rinpoche.

Trungpa Rinpoche is widely acknowledged as a pivotal figure in introducing the buddhadharma to the Western world. He joined his great appreciation for Western culture with his deep understanding of his own tradition. This led to a revolutionary approach to teaching the dharma, in which the most ancient and profound teachings were presented in a thoroughly contemporary way. Trungpa Rinpoche was known for his fearless proclamation of the dharma: free from hesitation, true to the purity of the tradition, and utterly fresh. May these teachings take root and flourish for the benefit of all sentient beings.

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1. Because the Tibetan calendar is distinct from the Western calendar and because Chögyam Trungpa’s exact date of birth was not recorded, there are two dates used for his birthday in different publications, one in 1939 and one in 1940. We have used the earlier date here, consistent with the date given in *Born in Tibet*.

## BOOKS BY CHÖGYAM TRUNGPA

*Born in Tibet* (George Allen & Unwin, 1966; Shambhala Publications, 1977)

Chögyam Trungpa's account of his upbringing and education as an incarnate lama in Tibet and the powerful story of his escape to India. An epilogue added in 1976 details Trungpa Rinpoche's time in England in the 1960s and his early years in North America.

*Meditation in Action* (Shambhala Publications, 1969)

Using the life of the Buddha as a starting point, this classic on meditation and the practice of compassion explores the six paramitas, or enlightened actions on the Buddhist path. Its simplicity and directness make this an appealing book for beginners and seasoned meditators alike.

*Mudra* (Shambhala Publications, 1972)

This collection of poems mostly written in the 1960s in England also includes two short translations of Buddhist texts and a commentary on the Ox-Herding Pictures, well-known metaphors for the journey on the Buddhist path.

*Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (Shambhala Publications, 1973)

The first volume of Chögyam Trungpa's teaching in America is still fresh, outrageous, and up-to-date. It describes landmarks on the Buddhist path and focuses on the pitfalls of materialism that plague the modern age.

*The Dawn of Tantra*, by Herbert V. Guenther and Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala Publications, 1975)

Jointly authored by Chögyam Trungpa and the Buddhist scholar Herbert V. Guenther, this volume presents an introduction to the Buddhist teachings of

tantra.

*Glimpses of Abhidharma* (Shambhala Publications, 1975)

An exploration of the five skandhas, or stages in the development of ego, based on an early seminar given by Chögyam Trungpa. The final chapter on auspicious coincidence is a penetrating explanation of karma and the true experience of spiritual freedom.

*The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo*, translated with commentary by Francesca Fremantle and Chögyam Trungpa (Shambhala Publications, 1975)

Chögyam Trungpa and Francesca Fremantle collaborated on the translation and are coauthors of this title. Trungpa Rinpoche provides a powerful commentary on death and dying and on the text itself, which allows modern readers to find the relevance of this ancient guide to the passage from life to death and back to life again.

*The Myth of Freedom and the Way of Meditation* (Shambhala Publications, 1976)

In short, pithy chapters that exemplify Chögyam Trungpa's hard-hitting and compelling teaching style, this book explores the meaning of freedom and genuine spirituality in the context of traveling the Buddhist path.

*The Rain of Wisdom* (Shambhala Publications, 1980)

An extraordinary collection of the poetry or songs of the teachers of the Kagyü lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, to which Chögyam Trungpa belonged. The text was translated by the Nālandā Translation Committee under the direction of Chögyam Trungpa. The volume includes an extensive glossary of Buddhist terms.

*Journey without Goal: The Tantric Wisdom of the Buddha* (Shambhala Publications, 1981)

Based on an early seminar at the Naropa Institute, this guide to the tantric teachings of Buddhism is provocative and profound, emphasizing both the dangers and the wisdom of the vajrayana, the diamond path of Buddhism.

*The Life of Marpa the Translator* (Shambhala Publications, 1982)

A renowned teacher of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition who combined scholarship and meditative realization, Marpa made three arduous journeys to India to collect the teachings of the Kagyü lineage and bring them to Tibet. Chögyam Trungpa and the Nālandā Translation Committee have produced an inspiring translation of his life's story.

*First Thought Best Thought: 108 Poems* (Shambhala Publications, 1983)

This collection consists mainly of poetry written during Chögyam Trungpa's first ten years in North America, showing his command of the American idiom and his understanding of American culture, as well as his playfulness and his passion. Some poems from earlier years were also included. Many of the poems from *First Thought Best Thought* were later reprinted in *Timely Rain*.

*Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* (Shambhala Publications, 1984)

Chögyam Trungpa's classic work on the path of warriorship still offers timely advice. This book shows how an attitude of fearlessness and an open heart provide the courage to meet the challenges of modern life.

*Crazy Wisdom* (Shambhala Publications, 1991)

Two seminars from the 1970s were edited for this volume on the life and teachings of Guru Rinpoche, or Padmasambhava, the founder of Buddhism in Tibet.

*The Heart of the Buddha* (Shambhala Publications, 1991)

A collection of essays, talks, and seminars presents the teachings of Buddhism as they relate to everyday life.



*Orderly Chaos: The Mandala Principle* (Shambhala Publications, 1991)

The mandala is often thought of as a Buddhist drawing representing tantric iconography. However, Chögyam Trungpa explores how both confusion and enlightenment are made up of patterns of orderly chaos that are the basis for the principle of mandala—a difficult but rewarding discussion of the topic of chaos and its underlying structure.

*Secret beyond Thought: The Five Chakras and the Four Karmas* (Vajradhatu Publications, 1991)

Two talks from an early seminar on the principles of the chakras and the karmas, teachings from the Buddhist tantric tradition.

*The Lion's Roar: An Introduction to Tantra* (Shambhala Publications, 1992)

An in-depth presentation of the nine yanas, or stages, of the path in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Particularly interesting are the chapters on visualization and the five buddha families.

*Transcending Madness: The Experience of the Six Bardos* (Shambhala Publications, 1992)

The editor of this volume, Judith L. Lief, calls it “a practical guide to Buddhist psychology.” The book is based on two early seminars on the intertwined ideas of bardo (or the gap in experience and the gap between death and birth) and the six realms of being.

*Glimpses of Shunyata* (Vajradhatu Publications, 1993), now included in *Glimpses of the Profound: Four Short Works* (Shambhala Publications, 2016)

These four lectures on the principle of shunyata, or emptiness, are an experiential exploration of the ground, path, and fruition of realizing this basic principle of mahayana Buddhism.

*Training the Mind and Cultivating Loving-Kindness* (Shambhala Publications,

1993)

This volume presents fifty-nine slogans, or aphorisms, related to meditation practice, which show a practical path to making friends with oneself and developing compassion for others, through the practice of sacrificing self-centeredness for the welfare of others.

*The Art of Calligraphy: Joining Heaven and Earth* (Shambhala Publications, 1994)

Chögyam Trungpa's extensive love affair with brush and ink is showcased in this book, which also includes an introduction to dharma art and a discussion of the Eastern principles of heaven, earth, and man as applied to the creative process. The beautiful reproductions of fifty-four calligraphies are accompanied by inspirational quotations from the author's works.

*Illusion's Game: The Life and Teaching of Naropa* (Shambhala Publications, 1994)

The great Indian teacher Naropa was a renowned master of the teachings of mahamudra, an advanced stage of realization in Tibetan Buddhism. This book presents Chögyam Trungpa's teachings on Naropa's life and arduous search for enlightenment.

*The Path Is the Goal: A Basic Handbook of Buddhist Meditation* (Shambhala Publications, 1995)

An in-depth investigation of the practice of meditation, with emphasis on the vipashyana teachings on awareness, this volume evokes the author's penetrating insight and colorful language.

*Timely Rain: Selected Poetry of Chögyam Trungpa* (Shambhala Publications, 1998)

With a foreword by Allen Ginsberg, this collection of poems was organized thematically by editor David I. Rome to show the breadth of the poet's work. Core poems from *Mudra* and *First Thought Best Thought* are reprinted here, along with many poems and sacred songs published here for the first time.

*Glimpses of Space: The Feminine Principle and Evam* (Vajradhatu Publications, 1999), now included in *Glimpses of the Profound: Four Short Works* (Shambhala Publications, 2016)

Two seminars on the tantric understanding of the feminine and masculine principles, what they are and how they work together in vajrayana Buddhist practice as the nondual experience of wisdom and skillful means.

*Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala* (Shambhala Publications, 1999)

This sequel and complement to *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* offers more heartfelt wisdom on Shambhala warriorship.

*The Essential Chögyam Trungpa* (Shambhala Publications, 2000)

This concise overview of Trungpa Rinpoche's teachings consists of forty selections from fourteen different books, articulating the secular path of the Shambhala warrior, as well as the Buddhist path of meditation and awakening.

*Glimpses of Mahayana* (Vajradhatu Publications, 2001), now included in *Glimpses of the Profound: Four Short Works* (Shambhala Publications, 2016)

This little volume focuses on the attributes of buddha nature, the development of compassion, and the experience of being a practitioner on the bodhisattva path of selfless action to benefit others.

*Glimpses of Realization: The Three Bodies of Enlightenment* (Vajradhatu Publications, 2003), now included in *Glimpses of the Profound: Four Short Works* (Shambhala Publications, 2016)

Teachings on the three kayas and on the universality of buddha nature.

*True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung, Volume One: The Town Talks* (Trident Publications, 2003; Vajradhatu Publications, 2009)

Teachings on how to be a leader and how to work with conflict, negativity, and obstacles. Colorful teachings given to the Dorje Kasung, a group established

to practice warrior disciplines of nonaggression while providing security and service.

*The Shambhala Warrior Slogans: 53 Principles of Living Life with Fearlessness and Gentleness* (Shambhala Publications, 2004)

Short sayings, or slogans, with commentary, intended to evoke the Shambhala teachings and deepen our connection to them. To be used as reminders of everyday wisdom and as objects of contemplation.

*The Sanity We Are Born With: A Buddhist Approach to Psychology* (Shambhala Publications, 2005)

A collection of twenty articles in which Chögyam Trungpa presents insights into meditation, mind, and psychology which he shared with Western psychologists and students of Buddhist meditation.

*The Teacup and the Skullcup: Where Zen and Tantra Meet* (Vajradhatu Publications, 2007; Shambhala Publications, 2015)

Two seminars on the similarities and the differences between the Japanese Zen Buddhist tradition and the Tibetan tantric tradition. As always, Chögyam Trungpa speaks from the point of view of the practitioner's experience and how it is shaped by both one's view and one's meditation practice.

*Ocean of Dharma: 365 Teachings on Living Life with Courage and Compassion* (Shambhala Publications, 2008)

365 short teachings excerpted from Chögyam Trungpa's books and unpublished teachings. Meant to inspire and inform everyday life.

*The Pocket Chögyam Trungpa* (Shambhala Publications, 2008)

108 classic brief teachings excerpted from Chögyam Trungpa's books and unpublished teachings, with an introduction to meditation as well.

*True Perception: The Path of Dharma Art* (Shambhala Publications, 2008), originally published as *Dharma Art* (Shambhala Publications, 1996)

Chögyam Trungpa was a calligrapher, painter, poet, designer, and photographer, as well as a master of Buddhist meditation. Drawn from his many seminars and talks on the artistic process, this work presents his insights into art and the artist.

*The Mishap Lineage: Transforming Confusion into Wisdom* (Shambhala Publications, 2009)

Chögyam Trungpa introduces us to the teachers from his lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and shows how their lives offer inspiration and insight for our own.

*Smile at Fear: Awakening the True Heart of Bravery* (Shambhala Publications, 2009)

Teachings on working with our fundamental fears and discovering our capacity for fearlessness in the face of uncertainty and obstacles. More wisdom, as well as practical advice, from the Shambhala tradition.

*The Truth of Suffering and the Path of Liberation* (Shambhala Publications, 2009)

This in-depth exploration of the four noble truths—the foundational Buddhist teaching about the origin of suffering and its cessation—reveals the subtlety and sophistication that lie beneath these deceptively simple teachings.

*Work, Sex, Money: Real Life on the Path of Mindfulness* (Shambhala Publications, 2011)

How to apply meditative insight and practice to the real issues that we face in our careers and workplace, our relationships, and in working with financial realities.

*The Profound Treasury of the Ocean of Dharma* (Shambhala Publications, 2013)

This three-volume compendium presents the advanced teachings given over

thirteen years by Chögyam Trungpa at the Vajradhatu Seminaries. In lively, relevant language, this meditation master presents these comprehensive teachings from all stages of the Tibetan Buddhist path.

*Mindfulness in Action: Making Friends with Yourself through Meditation and Everyday Awareness* (Shambhala Publications, 2015)

A manual for meditation, showing how to apply mindfulness and awareness to befriending even the most difficult situations and parts of ourselves, as well as learning to celebrate our ordinary life. Teachings in plain language with heartfelt appreciation for the challenges of modern life.

*Devotion and Crazy Wisdom: Teachings on The Sadhana of Mahamudra* (Vajradhatu Publications, 2015)

In-depth teachings on an important text, which Chögyam Trungpa left specifically for the West, to aid in working with the difficulties of this modern era. Teachings on how to overcome spiritual materialism, the importance of nontheistic devotion, and the development of compassion without bounds, or crazy wisdom.

*Glimpses of the Profound: Four Short Works* (Shambhala Publications, 2016)

Here, in one volume, are four out of the five volumes in the “Glimpses” series edited by Judith L. Lief: *Glimpses of Shunyata*, *Glimpses of Space*, *Glimpses of Mahayana*, and *Glimpses of Realization*. Potent doses of deep wisdom.

*Milarepa: Lesson from the Life and Songs of Tibet’s Great Yogi* (Shambhala Publications, 2017)

In this volume, edited by Judith L. Lief, Chögyam Trungpa retells the stories and realization songs of Tibet’s best-known and most-beloved religious figure, illuminating the meaning behind them, and always coming back to the relevance of Milarepa’s life to practitioners today.

## RESOURCES

**Practice Centers** FOR INFORMATION regarding meditation instruction or to find a Shambhala-affiliated practice center near you, please contact one of the following: SHAMBHALA Sovereign Place

5121 Sackville Street, Suite 601

Halifax, Nova Scotia

Canada B3J 1K1

phone: (902) 425-4275

website: [www.shambhala.org](http://www.shambhala.org)

KARMÊ CHÖLING

369 Patneude Lane

Barnet, VT 05821

phone: (802) 633-2384

website: [www.karmecholing.org](http://www.karmecholing.org)

SHAMBHALA MOUNTAIN CENTER

151 Shambhala Way

Red Feather Lakes, CO 80545

phone: (970) 881-2184

website: [www.shambhalamountain.org](http://www.shambhalamountain.org)

GAMPO ABBEY

Pleasant Bay, Nova Scotia

Canada B0E 2P0

phone: (902) 224-2752

website: [www.gampoabbey.org](http://www.gampoabbey.org)

DORJE DENMA LING

2280 Balmoral Road

Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia  
Canada B0K 1V0  
phone: (902) 657-9085  
website: [dorjedenmaling.org](http://dorjedenmaling.org)  
e-mail: [info@dorjedenmaling.com](mailto:info@dorjedenmaling.com)

DECHEN CHOLING  
Mas Marvent  
87700 St. Yrieix sous Aixe France  
phone: +33 5-55-03-55-52  
website: [www.dechencholing.org](http://www.dechencholing.org)

**Naropa University** Naropa University is the only accredited, Buddhist-inspired university in North America. For more information, contact: Naropa University  
2130 Arapahoe Avenue  
Boulder, CO 80302  
phone: 1-800-772-6951 toll free, or (303) 541-3572  
website: [www.naropa.edu](http://www.naropa.edu)

**Ocean of Dharma Quotes of the Week** Ocean of Dharma Quotes of the Week brings you the teachings of Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche. An e-mail is sent out several times each week containing a quote from Chögyam Trungpa's extensive teachings. Quotations of material may be from unpublished material, forthcoming publications, or previously published sources. Ocean of Dharma Quotes of the Week are selected by Carolyn Rose Gimian. To enroll go to [OceanofDharma.com](http://OceanofDharma.com).

**The Chögyam Trungpa Legacy Project** The Chögyam Trungpa Legacy Project was established to help preserve, disseminate, and expand Chögyam Trungpa's legacy. The Legacy Project supports the preservation, propagation, and publication of Trungpa Rinpoche's dharma teachings. This includes plans for the creation of a comprehensive virtual archive and learning community. For information go to [chogyamtrungpa.com](http://chogyamtrungpa.com).

**Media** For publications from Vajradhatu Publications and Kalapa Recordings, including both books and audiovisual materials, go to [www.kalapamedia.org](http://www.kalapamedia.org).



**Shambhala Archives** For information about the archive of the author's work, please contact the Shambhala Archives: [archives@shambhala.org](mailto:archives@shambhala.org) or go to [www.shambhalaarchives.org](http://www.shambhalaarchives.org).

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