

A teaching from the heart.

Spoken by Tarik Rinpoche

Though there is not much I can say, I would like to say these few words. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and I come from the same area in Eastern Tibet, but we still seemed to live quite far from each other. In those days we had no access to modern technology. Since there were no airplanes, no trains, and no cars everyone traveling had to either go by foot or on horseback, so a distance, which today we consider easy to cover by modern transportation in those days, seemed like a long, long distance. Although we had, of course, heard about each other, it was not until I first arrived in the Kathmandu Valley that we began to have a connection.

When I came to Nepal, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche was already here. Knowing about him, I kept bothering him until he kindly accepted to give me the transmission for the *One Hundred Empowerments of Chö*. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche was living in Kathmandu at the time and in those days I was quite poor and unable to make any significant offering for this transmission. Since he was extremely kind-hearted and we came from the same homeland, I was fortunate to receive all the empowerments. From then on we have maintained a very pure samaya connection, without any damage or breach, like the analogy of an unbroken egg-shell. Because Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche was someone with great kindness and a strong sense of loyalty, he never changed his feelings for someone once he had gotten to know them well.

In terms of practice, between Sutra and Tantra, he was more learned in the tantric teachings, and among the Sarma and Nyingma traditions, he was more accomplished in the Nyingma practices. He was not someone you could freely ask about his personal realization. Nor have I ever heard him mention that he had either any special experiences or high levels of realization. But, without a doubt I feel that he was definitely an extraordinary practitioner. Anyone who met him could feel he did not have no conceit, no ambitions of grandeur or fame, nor did he hold any resentment. He treated everyone kindly and cordially and never turned his back on a friend.

Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche was also free of deceit and duplicity. If he said something you could always trust that his words and his heart were in harmony. It was quite unlike him to act in a hypocritical way, saying one thing and doing another. In his relations with people he was never dishonest or unreliable.

In terms of spiritual relationships, he was connected to the Karmapa, one of the most important lamas in the great practice lineages. The Karmapa is on the same

level as the Dalai Lama, Panchen Rinpoche and Sakya Trichen. As one of the Karmapa's gurus, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche offered him many empowerments and teachings from the *Chokling Tersar*.

Even though he had the status of someone whom the Karmapa venerated at the crown of his own head, he didn't become full of self-importance or take advantage of this fame. When in a group of lamas or sitting in a large religious gathering he always refused to preside as the head, always insisting on taking a lower position. Taking the lower seat is a sign of having tamed one's own mind, and this is how he always acted. Otherwise, since he was the Karmapa's guru, it would have been perfectly fine to maintain some dignified presence, but because of being a *ngakpa* he would regard himself as lower than any other lama or even an ordinary, fully ordained monk.

True humility is the sign of having experience and realization. Without experience and realization we become involved in mundane attitudes - conceit toward people below, jealousy towards people above and competitiveness towards our equals. This is unavoidable because the five poisonous emotions of attachment, anger, dullness, pride and envy still remain alive within our stream of being. Even though someone may dress up as a renunciate or a yogi, these negative emotions still become evident from time to time. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, however, was not at all like that.

Our relationship was one of brothers; he treated me as an equal, just as if we had the same father and mother. When he shared his thoughts with me there was never any discrepancy between his words and what he really felt. This doesn't mean that other lamas are unreliable, but for me it was as if Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche was the only one I really felt I could confide and place my trust in. This may be because I am old-fashioned, or that times have changed, but for me he was the main person I would rely on.

This person, outwardly humble while inwardly totally reliable, has now passed away. On the one hand you can say that he left after having completed all his tasks but, on the other hand, maybe it was because of our general lack of merit.

As for the future, all his lineage-holders and disciples, please remember this: when it comes to Vajrayana practice samaya is extremely important. Samaya is formed through receiving empowerment. There is much to say about this, but, in short, there are the samayas of Body, Speech, and Mind, which are included in the threefold practice of regarding sights, sounds, and awareness as enlightened Body, Speech and Mind. All samayas are included within this, even the 100,000 samayas and the 25 major samayas. So, please observe these very carefully while maintaining unwavering trust in your guru.

In all the Buddhist vehicles it is taught that you should not regard your spiritual guide as an ordinary person. In Vajrayana practice, especially, everything depends on your guru; he is the basis for all accomplishment. So supplicate him sincerely, visualize him in the sky before you, mingle your mind with his mind indivisibly, and receive the four empowerments. By doing so you will soon have experience in realization and it will become possible for you to glimpse innate suchness - the Buddha within - in a single instant. This still holds true even when the guru is no longer within his body; if you supplicate him you can still realize his nature. So all of you disciples, please be very careful about keeping your samaya link with the guru.

In addition, remind yourself again and again of the words you personally heard him say and apply your minds fully to realizing their meaning. In short, in terms of learning, reflection and meditation, you should combine the words you have heard, reflect upon their meaning and then put them into practice - doing so will fulfill your guru's wishes. This is called the offering of practice, which is never matched by lavish or vast offerings of material things, which, of course, is also good. Instead, you should apply yourself in both word and deed, with unwavering trust and supplicate him one-pointedly. There is nothing superior to this 'offering of practice.' Please remember that this is what we all need.

Now the time has come to cremate his precious body. The body could have also been kept as a *mardung*, an enshrined body, or in other ways which are also good. Such ways are important for preventing the general merit from decreasing. However, we are in times when changes come swiftly. Look at what happened to the many *mardungs* in Tibet, which got thrown in the gutter during the Cultural Revolution. Tibetans, like myself, are both shifty and deceitful, and we aren't that clever. Tibetans helped to throw stones at the different *mardungs*, dragging them through the streets, and feeding them to the dogs. In these ways they have created immense negative karma. When I think of this I wonder what would be best for the future, since nothing lasts and times here may change as well. As you know, all things - from the aggregate of forms up to and including conditioned enlightenment, all composite things without a single exception - have the nature of emptiness. I feel that nothing in this world, nor a single sentient being, is beyond the grasp of impermanence. Every sentient being goes through birth, old age, sickness, and death; no one is exempt. In the end, even the world as a totality will be destroyed by fire and water. Therefore, I feel that it is better not to give anyone the extra chance to create negative karma when times change here as well. I also said this to Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's sons, Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche and Chokling Rinpoche.

It has been decided that the remains will be cremated in a fire puja and after that I expect that a thorough ceremony for the relics will be performed, *tsa-tsa* images

will be made, and, in various places stupas will be built in whichever way is appropriate.

Maybe I don't need to mention this, but still I feel that Tulku Urgyen's sons are remarkable people. They belong to the unique family line of Tsangsar, which is said to originate from divine beings. In this family line there have been a great number of accomplished masters, extraordinary, respectable and noble minded. I expect that Rinpoche's sons will live up to their heritage.

All of you, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche disciples, if you continue to keep your samaya connection with him throughout this life, the bardo and your next life, you will surely benefit. Follow the advice he gave you, serve him in any way you can. There is nothing greater than that. By pleasing the guru you can remove obstacles. Displeasing and upsetting him is equal to committing the five most severe misdeeds. In this lies the foundation for attaining accomplishment. The guru is considered more important than both the yidam deity and the Dharma protectors. Devotion to the guru is the universal panacea.

Many of you disciples have heard Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche's words with your own ears. Please continue to follow his advice and keep your samaya connection. There is nothing better than this for both this life, the bardo and the future. Dedicate the merit you create and make pure aspirations that his wishes be fulfilled.

In order to show that everything is impermanent, even a noble sublime being like Buddha Shakyamuni, who was beyond birth and death, still acted as if he passed away in Kushinagar. But this was only on the level of superficial reality. Similarly, Tulku Urgyen remains in dharmadhatu and is all set to come back. But a return is totally dependent upon the interest and inclinations of sentient beings. So, don't think that a master who has left remains impassive, there are many other realms besides this one where beings can be benefited. To create a link for the future necessitates a vast amount of merit. So, do your best to create merit and fulfill his wishes. This is all I can say. Please, everyone, keep this in mind.

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