

Chapter 3 – Cruelty, Anger and Vengeance

After arriving in Lho Zhong, Garchen Rinpoche had a discussion with the group from Gar village and monastery. Should they stay in that crowded place or should they find another place where they might be safe from the Chinese army? Someone suggested they leave and go to a place called Yu-Gyi Dewa, where a relative of Garchen Rinpoche's friend Mingyur Rinpoche owned a large piece of land. The relative leased parts of his land to other families to raise cattle or grow crops.

So, Garchen Rinpoche and the group, after having traveled from Gar village to Lho Zhong, the Tibetan army base, then traveled all the way to Yu-Gyi Dewa, which, like the village of Gar, was close to the border of China. When they arrived, Mingyur Rinpoche's relative kindly offered them several parts of his land on which the group could set up homes. There was one small problem. One of the families to whom he leased land, the Rushok Thyang family, was very wealthy and they paid him very well to rent the land. He would have to work out a deal with that family so the people from Gar could use part of the land. He promised to work out a deal to release some pieces of land to the newcomers.

But the Rushok Thyang family didn't like it. From their point of view, this group of 50 people suddenly arrived from someplace far away and started to set up camp on the land that the family was going to use and for which they had already paid rent. That seemed very unfair. And it didn't look like they were going to go away anytime soon. They weren't just quickly setting up tents for a simple camp. It looked like they were there to stay, staking out land as if they were going to make permanent houses there.

What was worse, and what the group from Gar didn't know, was that the village of Yu-Gyi Dewa, its leaders and even its monastery were all pro-China! These people and their ancestors had lived in the area for hundreds of years, and had been given many favors by Chinese authorities on the other side of the border. They became very friendly with the Chinese, and openly said that they are allies, that they would support of the Chinese. They didn't have a strong Tibetan identity and didn't feel connected to other Tibetan people, who lived rather far away. They had become nervous about the rising power of the Tibetan resistance army, the Chushi Gangdruk.

The Rushok Thyang family and other villagers in Yu-Gyi Dewa had no compassion for the refugees from Gar. Actually, they developed a resentment toward these outsiders. They did not like having those families and their rinpoches suddenly appearing in their village. So, they got together with the leaders of their monastery and secretly planned a scheme to scare away the unwanted refugees.

The group from Gar had no idea they were offending anyone. They thought a deal was made between the wealthy family and Mingyur Rinpoche's relative. After they set up their camp and settled into their tents, some of the men decided to go back to the Gar area. They heard that

the Chinese troops had left their village, so they wanted to go back and gather their herds of animals and bring back some of their belongings that they had left behind. While the stronger men traveled back to Gar, the young Garchen Rinpoche, Mingyur Rinpoche, Namdrul Rinpoche, a couple of young monks, a nun, one monk's father named Konchog Osel, and women and children were left behind.

One early morning, some of the leaders of the Yu-Gyi Dewa village arrived unexpectedly at the camp. A village leader commanded,



“You are not allowed to settle here on these lands! You are not welcome here! You and your group must leave!”

As if that wasn't clear enough or not enough of an insulting jolt, another man from the village suddenly shouted loudly,

“We don't want you people here! Just leave!”

The young Garchen Rinpoche was shocked. He rose up from the rug he was sitting on and was about to shout back, “These parcels of land belonged to the relative of Mingyur Rinpoche and his family. He already gave us the right to stay. You have no business to ask us to leave!” These thoughts swiftly crossed his mind and he was about to blurt them out when Konchog Osel immediately intervened. Konchog Osel was calm and known to be very experienced in negotiating when there was a dispute. He walked up to the village leaders, stood in front of them, and said,

“Please, you know we have nowhere to go. Please let us stay. If there is anything you want from us, we will be more than happy to offer them to you.”

The village representatives glanced at each other. Behind them stood more than a dozen of their supporters. Some of them were carrying sticks and knives. They looked not just unfriendly, but mean. The glare in their eyes shone with contempt.

“Please,” Konchog Osel went on begging, “we are willing to offer you whatever you want. If you want animals, we will offer you our animals. If you want cheese, we will offer you cheese. We can offer anything that your monastery or village asks for. Anything. Please just name them.”

They did not agree to what Konchog Osel proposed, and they refused to listen any further. Finally, someone in the Yu-Gyi Dewa group yelled out,

“Just shut up and get out!”

Then the whole group joined in, bellowing all together, “Get out! Get out!”

They shouted a terrible threat: “We’ll be back in a couple of days! We will teach you people a lesson if you haven’t left by then!” And then they left in a hurry.

What could the little group of people from Gar do? Most of the men were gone. Konchog Osel came up with the idea that one of them should travel back to Lho Zhong to seek help from the Chushi Gangdruk army officials. He was thinking that perhaps the Tibetan resistance army could come to the rescue and help resolve the dispute. Everyone was in despair, and they agreed with Konchog Osel. But who should go? The only men there were Namdrul Rinpoche, Mingyur Rinpoche, Garchen Rinpoche, Konchog Osel, and a couple of young monks. They continued to quietly discuss among themselves throughout the night. Of all of them, Garchen Rinpoche was the best speaker – he could best speak his mind to persuade others.

Mingyur Rinpoche insisted that Garchen Rinpoche be the one to go to Lho Zhong even though he was younger than the other tulkus.



Finally, Garchen Rinpoche agreed, and he and one of the young monks rode off on horses the next morning.

When they reached Lho Zhong, the Tibetan resistance army base, they met with Phurba Tsering, one of the highest-ranking officers there. He was originally a monk from a large monastery, but he joined the resistance army and was now serving as a commander in the Chushi Gangdruk.

It was strange that Garchen Rinpoche - who was taught that he was a refuge for all beings, who could grant protection in a time of danger, who could bring people happiness and rid them of their fears, who gave compassionate healing prayers for people ailing with disease, who gave advice and answers to desperate people in distress or delusion - would have to persuade someone else to grant him and his

people protection and a place to stay. Never before did he think he would have to do this.

He told the full story of what happened at Lho Zhong to Phurba Tsering, and asked for his advice. Rinpoche modestly made a suggestion that perhaps the resistance army could send a few soldiers with guns back to Yu-Gyi Dewa to enforce an order for his group to stay on the lands given to them by Mingyur Rinpoche's relative.

The commander carefully thought everything over and told Rinpoche that it would be best to give Rinpoche a letter to the Yu-Gyi Dewa village leaders, rather than sending soldiers. Most of the more experienced fighters had already been sent out on a mission, and he didn't want to send any more soldiers out. They needed to stay to protect the base, because the number of refugees who had settled there had grown uncontrollably within a very short time.



Phurba Tsering told Garchen Rinpoche to wait, then he sat down and wrote a forceful letter to the leaders of Yu-Gyi Dewa village and monastery. He ordered them to give land to the families from Gar, help them with food, give them every assistance necessary, and don't create trouble, or else the Chushi Gangdruk army will send soldiers to settle the matter.

He put the seal of the Chushi Gangdruk on the letter to prove it was genuine.

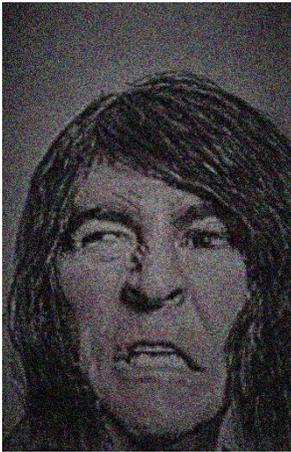
Holding this warning letter in his hand, Rinpoche was not quite sure how this letter could help the situation. Respectfully thanking the commander, he could not help but feel disappointed. He secretly hoped that someone from the resistance army would escort him on his way back. He wanted the resistance army to exert some power over the aggressive people of Yu-Gyi Dewa. He felt uneasy even though Phurba Tsering assured him:

“As long as the authorities of Yu-Gyi Dewa know that the Chushi Gangdruk army was aware of the hostility and of the provoking acts against the refugees from Gar, they will back off. And don't you worry! It will be alright after they see my letter! If they stir up any more trouble, then you just come back and I will send a few of my men with you at that time.”

However, at the very moment Rinpoche left the army compound and was about to mount his horse, he saw Mingyur Rinpoche and another monk galloping toward his direction from a distance away. The sight of them, and the sound of the horses' hoofs beat right through Garchen Rinpoche's chest.

He stared straight into the clouds of dust that came closer and closer, and when Mingyur Rinpoche and the young monk stopped right in front of him, he realized they were riding their horses bareback. There had been no time to saddle the horses when they had to urgently race out of the village in search of rescue.

Mingyur Rinpoche breathlessly told him,



“There were about forty or fifty of them, with sticks, swords and knives. They were on horses, and they circled around the tents of the Gar people many times while screaming ‘Get out! Get out of here!’ with hostile words.”

Then they began to cut down the strings of the tents and pulled them all down, one by one. After the tents collapsed, they began to attack the people. They beat up the women with sticks, and drove away the animals. They stabbed Namdrul Rinpoche, his older sister and many others. The worst was Konchog Osel, who was stabbed in the head with a sharp blade.

Garchen Rinpoche’s feeling of disbelief was suddenly replaced by a rumbling sensation of fury. His heart throbbed with horror and anger swelled up in him. Burying his head in his hands, he started to weep uncontrollably as he imagined the scene vividly like it was happening right in front of him. He felt terrible pain like something inside of him had been eaten out. His rhythmic sobs shook him thoroughly. Gasping for air, he turned around and rushed back to the army compound, yelling out the name of Phurba Tsering.



In front of the Chushi Gangdruk commander, the young Rinpoche suddenly dropped to the ground like an overripe mango.

He retold the story as he heard it from Mingyur Rinpoche and the other young monk. His voice got louder and louder as the horror increased in his mind, and his body twitched with emotion and rolled from one side to the

other on the ground. Someone tried to console him and hold him still, but his voice continued to get louder and more intense. The veins on his neck bulged and his face turned bright red.



He imagined the victims' pale faces and bloody maroon robes, their wounds, their crushed tents, the frightened little children wailing as they clutch at their mothers' bloodstained black chubas (Tibetan robes).

In those moments, Garchen Rinpoche forgot the prayers and Dharma teachings that his father and his lama, Chime Dorje had so patiently taught him. He couldn't remember anything. The warrior in him was more than ready to take vengeance. His raw emotions were overwhelmingly strong. His whole body and mind were completely soaked in a storm of rage. All he wanted to do was race back to the village and confront the attackers about their unjustified acts of cruelty.

He cried out at the top of his voice, "Let me go! I have to fight these beasts! We want justice!"

Phurba Tsering had to think about what to do now that such violence had happened. The experienced Tibetan resistance soldiers had already left Lho Zhong to fight the Chinese Communist troops. Those who remained at the base were mostly inexperienced or newly trained fighters. Many of them were local volunteers. Nevertheless, Phurba Tsering decided to send 25 soldiers to Yu-Gyi Dewa with Garchen Rinpoche and Mingyur Rinpoche. He also wrote a new letter to the Yu-Gyi Dewa leaders to replace his original one, and it included powerful orders to obey and a severe condemnation of what they had done to the Gar group.

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the wealthy family's problem with Garchen Rinpoche and his group living on the land of Mingyur Rinpoche's relative? (they already had paid rent to use that land)
2. Who did the villagers in Yu-Gyi Dewa side with and support, the Tibetans or the Chinese? (Chinese)
3. Why did most of the men leave the camp to go back to Gar village? (they wanted to bring their animals and belongings)
4. Why did the group choose Garchen Rinpoche to travel back to the Tibetan army base? (he could speak well and persuade others)
5. Why did Phurba Tsering, the Tibetan army commander, finally agree to send 25 soldiers to Yu-Gyi Dewa with Garchen Rinpoche and Mingyur Rinpoche? (Because the villagers had attacked the Gar people with knives and sticks)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – Cruelty, Anger, Vengeance:

Garchen Rinpoche had been taught for many years at the monastery about Dharma, compassion, being disciplined, self-controlled in body, speech and mind.

He had practiced meditation and chanted prayers every day in the monastery, which calm the mind and cool the emotions.

But when he heard about the horrible violence and injustice, he forgot the teachings and practices. The emotions of anger and revenge were so strong in his mind that they took over. He couldn't think about anything else.

Why do you think he was especially upset about it?

His group were so innocent, they had done nothing wrong, and they were very dear to him.

And it was such a shock that Tibetans would attack their own people, especially when they needed safety and protection from each other while the Chinese army had invaded Tibet.

And, they had attacked and injured women and monks.

Plus, he had extreme compassion for those who had been attacked.

Have you ever been so angry, so full of rage, that you can't think of anything else?

Have you ever wanted to take revenge on someone who had been horribly unfair to an innocent person? Then you have an idea of how Garchen Rinpoche felt.

Did you do anything to stop yourself from hurting someone?

Anger, hatred and vengeance (desire for revenge) are called "afflictive emotions" in Buddhism. There are other afflictive emotions, such as jealousy, arrogance and greed.

That means that they are negative and harmful to ourselves, and may be harmful to others.

Also, they are an "affliction," which means they are like an illness that afflicts you, like a virus that infects your body, or poison that spreads through your body, and harms you, making you feel terrible, unable to think clearly, and speak and act in unusual ways.

They can be so powerful that they take over your mind, making you say and do things you never thought you would do.

They can be so powerful that even Garchen Rinpoche, a disciplined monk who practiced Buddhist teachings of peace, love and compassion for all, might have attacked the Yu-Gyi Dewa villagers at least with violent words and maybe even with violent acts if he had the chance, in the moments when his anger was overflowing.

We should be aware of how powerful these emotions can be, because they are so dangerous.

We hear about people who kill others because of sudden anger or vengeance.

And there are many more people who injure others because of sudden rage.

And we can't possibly count the instances of people using terribly insulting or hurtful words when they are very angry.

All of these instances hurt others for the rest of their lives.

And those victims in turn may hurt others because of their own pain.

This is why it's so important to learn about our afflictive emotions, and what we can do to avoid a disaster if one day we experience a terrible injustice to ourselves or a loved one.

As we hear more about Garchen Rinpoche's life story, we will learn more about these topics.