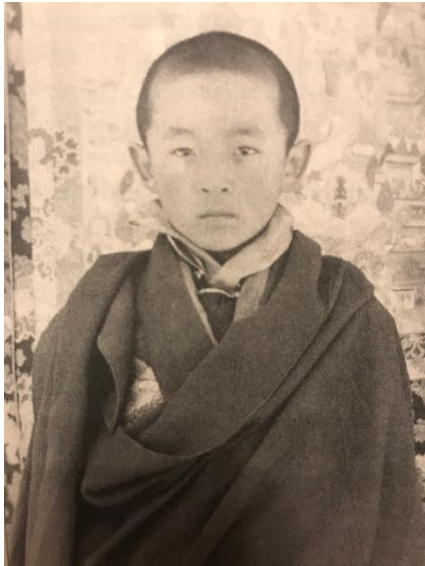


Part 7 – Anger



When Chetsang Rinpoche was ten years old, he and Chungtsang Rinpoche participated in a special nine-day ceremony held every 12 years in the Year of the Monkey in Tibetan astrology. Thousands of people traveled from all over Tibet to attend and hear teachings and receive empowerments. A huge tent was set up for the tulkus and important lamas, and there were several hundred tents for guests. Chungtsang Rinpoche, at age 14, and Chetsang Rinpoche each gave empowerments to the huge crowd.

At that time the Chinese Communist government was watching the Dalai Lama very carefully. It was especially concerned when the government of India invited the Dalai Lama to join the grand celebration of Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday, 2,500 years after his birth. The Chinese government was worried that the Dalai Lama may go to India to escape and not come back. The Communists wanted him to stay in Tibet so he would keep the Tibetans there, under the control of China. But they planned to force him to do what they want.

Chetsang Rinpoche's father, as well as many upper-class families in Tibet, thought that they should join the Dalai Lama for the celebration, and then stay in India, because this might be their last chance to escape the Communists, who were trying to eliminate the wealth and power of the Tibetans. So, he loaded up his car with his two daughters and two of his sons, and drove out of Tibet. As to his other son, Chetsang Rinpoche, he hoped that later on he would be able to bring him out of the monastery and into safety with the family in India.



The 21-year old Dalai Lama went to India but later returned to Lhasa, after Chairman Mao promised to delay his planned changes in Tibet as long as Tibet didn't revolt against the Chinese. (photo of Dalai Lama in 1956)

But in Kham, the eastern area of Tibet, the Tibetan resistance fighters were fighting against the Chinese army, and many families were escaping to Lhasa for safety. From the top of the monastery in Drikung, Chetsang Rinpoche could see with his binoculars the Tibetan resistance fighters setting up tents to camp nearby. People escaping Kham were also passing near the monastery on their way to Lhasa, as well as Chinese soldiers trying to hunt down the Tibetan rebels. Once at midnight, five Chinese officers demanded they be allowed into the monastery, to see if any

rebels were hiding inside. There weren't any Tibetan fighters there, but it was a threatening experience for the monks. Danger now was lurking even around the monastery.

So, when Chetsang Rinpoche was twelve years old, some lamas from Drikung went to Lhasa to see for themselves how serious the situation was and whether they should send him to India for safety until the political problem could be resolved. The lamas went to visit Rinpoche's grandfather, who was still living at his mansion in Lhasa, and told him they intended to bring his grandson to Lhasa so he could then be sent to India. The grandfather immediately made a detailed plan for his grandson's escape from Tibet and requested his grandson be sent to Lhasa right away. He was worried that some monks may change their minds and want to keep Rinpoche at the monastery. The message was sent to the monastery, by messenger on horseback, and soon Rinpoche was on his way.



When he arrived, he went to stay at his aunt's house, so he wouldn't hear the discussions going on between his grandfather and the lamas. He was happy at the thought of being with his family again in India.

A week later, however, some senior monks, high-ranking officials and village chiefs from Drikung came to the Tsarong mansion with different ideas. They all were determined not to let their dear Drikung lineage holder, Chetsang Rinpoche, leave under any circumstances. They argued that the Dalai Lama was still in Tibet and none of the well-known lamas had left, and they insisted that they be allowed to take Rinpoche back to Drikung.



Rinpoche's grandfather was terribly upset. To save his precious grandson, he argued with the Drikung manager for hours. He pointed out that his grandson was doubly at risk from the Communists – one, because he is a monk and two, because he is from an upper-class family – and the Communists wanted to wipe out the power and authority of both religion and wealth in Tibet. Furious and deeply disappointed, he thought, "These representatives of religion, who are supposed to be so wise, seem to be so blind to the danger of the Communists - this huge disaster that is closing in right now!"

The monastery manager did not give in, and even threatened to have Rinpoche's grandfather arrested, so then he had to give up, although he had feelings of anger, hostility and bitterness.

But he hid his feelings from his grandson, telling him to return to the monastery with the senior monks. Rinpoche was very disappointed that he couldn't go to India and be with his family. However, he remained courageous in this final separation from his family. The Drikung monks took him back to the monastery. He didn't know it then, but wouldn't see his family again for eighteen years.

Meanwhile, the Dalai Lama, now 23 years old, was invited by the Chinese Communists to attend a dance performance in March 1959. He didn't want to seem rude, so he accepted the invitation, but didn't specify which date he would attend. Promising to ensure his safety, they demanded that he appear without his usual entourage of ministers, bodyguards and important people. This was shocking and disturbing to the Dalai Lama's advisors. Why would they make such a demand that he come alone? Rumors were spreading like wildfire that maybe he would be kidnapped by the Chinese.



People started to get very worried, and soon thousands of Tibetans gathered in front of his palace, to make sure he wouldn't leave or be arrested. Such a big crowd soon became chaotic. Some of the people there thought others were secretly working with the Chinese, and attacked them.

Then, within a couple of days, a big mob of people chanted anti-Chinese slogans,

"Tibet is independent! Chinese leave Tibet!"

The largest demonstration ever seen in Lhasa was held below the Potala Palace, demanding Tibet's independence from China.

And outside the city of Lhasa, Chinese army troops and Tibetan rebel fighters each took positions, preparing for a fight.

Then the Chinese Army fired some large guns near the palace, probably to scare the crowds.

It seemed very dangerous for the Dalai Lama to stay in Lhasa. The Nechung oracle, a protector spirit who speaks through the body of a special monk while he is in a trance and who is a special protector of the Dalai Lama, was consulted for advice. A ceremony was held to encourage the monk to go into a trance, and special ceremonial clothes and a hat that are very big and heavy are put on the monk's body. When the Nechung spirit enters into his body, his face totally changes, puffing up with his eyes bulging out, his mouth moving in very different ways, and he

dances around with great strength. The Nechung oracle warned that it was no longer safe for the Dalai Lama to stay at the palace.



(photos of the monk through whom the Nechung spirit spoke, and the monk in a trance while the Nechung spirit speaks through him)

The next night, the Dalai Lama escaped the palace, dressed like an ordinary Tibetan man, along with members of his family, aided by a group of rebel freedom warriors from Kham. They went past the crowd of outraged demonstrators and the Chinese army, who had no idea who this group was passing by, and then traveled on to India.

When people heard that the Dalai Lama was no longer in the palace, there was confusion in Lhasa. Where was the Dalai Lama? Had he been kidnapped? The Chinese army opened up a massive attack on the city, fighting for three days against the Tibetan rebels, and finally claimed the Potala palace, flying the Chinese flag from its roof. Now with Tibet's leader gone, the Chinese Communists felt they weren't bound by any agreements they had with the Tibetans, and they took full control. They converted Tibetans who would go along with their ideas into their supporters, and harassed those who wouldn't, sending some to prisons or camps where they had to do hard labor all day.

Two weeks later, the Dalai Lama safely reached India. Soon afterward, thousands of other Tibetans, including many tulkus, lamas and freedom fighters, also escaped to India, having given up hope of resisting against China's overwhelming power.



Chetsang Rinpoche had no idea that this was happening. Life at the monastery was going on as usual.

One day, when he was sitting by the river with his friend Nangse Rinpoche watching monks wash their robes in the river, they heard the bells on a fast-moving horse galloping toward them. It was a messenger, who stopped his horse only long enough to shout to the monastery manager that Lhasa had been bombarded and taken by the Chinese, and the Dalai Lama had disappeared. He then rode on, to

continue spreading the message down the road.

The monks were very surprised. They had seen Chinese army troops only occasionally passing through Drikung. They had a meeting and decided it would be better to stay in Tibet. They started reciting prayers all day and all night in the temples of the protector deities, and a few monks went into retreat to be alone so they could chant and meditate on a protector deity.

After a few days, a group of warriors from Kham, along with one of the clan chiefs, Drakpa Namgyal, arrived at the Drikung Dzong monastery on horseback. Drakpa Namgyal was a well-respected man from a family of clan chiefs and leaders of Drikung monasteries. Having traded goods with Chinese, he knew something about their intentions and their strength, and knew the Tibetans could not win a war against them. Now, he thought only of the welfare of the Drikung Holinesses, Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche. The people of Kham revered the lineage tulkus of their monasteries even more than the Dalai Lama. He was determined to shield them from the Chinese. While the others waited outside, he and two companions entered the monastery, and first went to pay their respects to Chetsang Rinpoche in his private rooms. After prostrating on the floor to him, Drakpa Namgyal explained,

“The Chinese have taken over the country. The situation is very serious and very dangerous, and so we have come to escort you and Chungtsang Rinpoche to India.”

Chetsang Rinpoche listened calmly as he provided more details, and then said, “Please speak with the monastery manager.”

The monastery manager had no intention of letting the Holinesses leave. He had already argued intensely with Chetsang Rinpoche’s grandfather about it and refused to give in, and he would not be intimidated by these warlords from Kham with all their rifles and other weapons. He informed Drakpa Namgyal of the decision that the Rinpoches remain in Tibet, and so the Khampas (the people from Kham) left.

The next day, they came back to the monastery, along with Drakpa Namgyal's brothers, and spoke with the monastery manager. They said with great urgency, "We have no time to lose! The Chinese troops are after us!"

But the monastery manager still wouldn't budge. He said, "My nephew has a good relationship with the Chinese, so we feel relatively secure even with this new threat."

The Khampas became angry, showed their weapons, and shouted, "Your nephew deserves to die if he is working with the Chinese!"

But the nephew actually had already left the area. Drakpa Namgyal, knowing the horrible danger of the Chinese army close by, was extremely frustrated, so he pointed his rifle at the monastery manager's chest, threatening to kill him on the spot if he didn't let the Holinesses leave.

At that moment, Chetsang Rinpoche was up on the roof of the monastery. He saw Chinese soldiers – uniformed men on horseback, followed by soldiers on foot. He saw one soldier examining the monastery with binoculars. When Rinpoche heard the angry voices from downstairs, he sent his attendant to find out what was happening. The attendant went down and saw the Khampas pressing the monastery manager against the wall with their weapons. What a shocking sight, threatening a monk like that! Were they going to kill him? Rinpoche's attendant begged them to release the monastery manager and leave the building at once. They agreed, but wished to see Chetsang Rinpoche once more before leaving.

Rinpoche gave each of them an item for their protection, blessed with prayer and wrapped in mantras. On the way out, one man turned around in the doorway and did something very strange for a warrior, but not so strange considering the reverence, the deep respect and devotion, most Tibetans have for the Buddha. He placed his rifle at Rinpoche's feet, and said, "This weapon has killed many wild animals and even more human enemies. It's a tool of evil. Take it, destroy it, pray for the men killed by it!"

Rinpoche took the rifle and followed the Khampas down to the monastery entrance. The weapon seemed old and strangely harmless, now that there was no one to use it. He lifted the heaviest stone he could lift over his head, and smashed it down on the rifle with all his strength. The Khampas turned when they heard the crash. Relieved, they put their palms together in reverence, jumped on their horses and galloped away. Rinpoche hurried back to the roof to watch the large band of Khampa warriors with their noble horses ride off and disappear into the distance. Then he watched the Chinese soldiers approaching the monastery on their large, powerful horses. He saw a Tibetan try to escape them and then get captured, tied up and led away. His small Tibetan horse was no match for the tall, strong Chinese horses. Then the soldiers made camp below the monastery.

The monks were all frightened, wondering whether the army was going to attack the monastery. The monastery manager and senior monks decided to speak with the army officers,

and approached them with white scarves in their hands. The officers demanded that the monks surrender all weapons at the monastery, including every knife with a blade longer than the length of a hand, and that there would be severe penalties if even one weapon was found later. The monks handed over one old rifle, and the many swords, daggers and knives that had been hung on the walls of the Dharma Protectors' Temple.

The next day they heard a siren wailing in the distance, signaling that war planes were approaching, and everyone had to leave the building immediately. Chetsang Rinpoche ran to the hill behind the monastery to hide behind a large peach tree, surrounded by frightened monks. A plane approached and circled a few times above the monastery complex and then turned away and flew off toward Lhasa. Before it disappeared, they saw flames on the horizon and heard the deep thunder of explosions as bombs were dropped. They learned later that the bombs were dropped on Khampas who were trying to escape. It wasn't Drakpa Namgyal's group, however, as he eventually arrived safely in India.

After a week, Chinese soldiers took over the largest house in the village below the monastery, and set up a local army headquarters there. Soldiers herded the monastery manager and all the other leading monks at the monastery into one room, and then searched the monastery complex. They took Chetsang Rinpoche's binoculars and several old silver and gold items, and searched through the offices for any documents they might think are suspicious. The commanding officer treated the two young Holinesses with respect, however, and even invited them to have dinner with him. The two Rinpoches didn't know what to say to him, even with an interpreter. They were so young – only teenagers – and they were too shy to start a conversation. The officer tried to put them at ease, even offering them cigarettes. They didn't want to smoke, but the officer laughed and insisted that they join him in a smoke until they accepted a cigarette and smoked with him.

One day, soldiers brought the monastery manager and other monastery officials outside and heaved them up onto some horses, to be brought to a prison. When the villagers saw that, they surrounded the soldiers, begging them to let the monks stay. The soldiers were annoyed but not yet willing to be more harsh, and so the monks were taken back to the monastery.

Every day officers came to the monastery to conduct interrogations – interviewing monks and making them answer questions. Chungtsang Rinpoche was shy and usually ran away and hid, so the soldiers requested to talk to Chetsang Rinpoche more often. One time, the commander and a Tibetan interpreter burst into Chetsang Rinpoche's room without asking permission. The commander sat down, looked calmly around the room, and requested the monastery secretaries come in. The commander's mood suddenly changed when they walked in, and he shouted violently at them, accusing them of trying to stir up trouble with the Chinese and shaking a bundle of letters that he claimed were evidence. The commander shouted in Chinese, and the interpreter shouted in Tibetan immediately afterward,

“Did you write these letters or not?”

They didn't respond. He jumped up, shouted, and stamped his feet so hard that the noise was heard throughout the entire monastery. Chetsang Rinpoche had never seen such a frightening scene as this display of fury, with the officer's trembling legs and his red, distorted face and cruel expression, like the mask of a demon. Rinpoche escaped from the room and cowered in a corner behind a terrace wall.

After a while, when he heard the commander make a few curt orders and many footsteps going downstairs, he cautiously crept out of his hiding place. He saw the secretaries being tied and locked up in some rooms that the soldiers had taken over. Some days later, they were taken to a camp where they would have to perform hard labor every day.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Chetsang Rinpoche's grandfather get angry at the monastery manager? (he wanted to save his grandson and have him escape to India; the monastery manager wanted to keep him at the monastery)
2. Did he show his anger when he told his grandson to return to the monastery? (no)
3. Why did thousands of Tibetans gather around the Dalai Lama's palace? (they were worried he would be kidnapped by the Chinese Communists)
4. What did the Nechung oracle say about whether the Dalai Lama should stay at the palace? (he said it wasn't safe for the Dalai Lama to stay at the palace)
5. What was Drakpa Namgyal's plan to help Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche? (he wanted to take them to India to escape the danger)
6. Why did Drakpa Namgyal and his companions get angry? (the monastery manager wouldn't let Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche escape with them)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – Anger:

We heard several instances of people getting angry in the story.

Chetsang Rinpoche's grandfather got angry when the monastery manager refused to let his grandson escape Tibet.

Drakpa Namgyal and his companions got so angry with the monastery manager that he threatened to kill him, pointed his gun at him, and pushed him against the wall.

In these instances, they wanted to save Rinpoche from extreme danger. They were afraid of what the Chinese Communists might do to him.

And people in the crowd in front of the Potala Palace angrily attacked others because they were afraid that others working with the Chinese would endanger the Tibetans who were resisting the Chinese.

In all these instances, people were angry trying to protect others from life-threatening danger. But the Chinese commander's anger with the monastery secretaries, shouting and arresting them, was not to protect anyone from great danger. It was to take control over the monastery, force the monks out, and destroy religion.

So, we see that anger can be used in a constructive way, to protect when there is danger. For example, Dharma protectors use their anger to protect us. And your parents might show anger because it's their job to protect you from dangers, including dangers of developing negative behaviors and habits, like being lazy, careless or disrespectful.

Most often, anger is destructive – not only does it hurt others, but it hurts ourselves because we say and do things we later regret, and we build up negative karma. We all feel anger sometimes, but how long do we hold onto it? Who do we let it out on? Sometimes, we lash out in anger at people close to us - our parents, sister, brother, or a friend. Some people bully others with their anger, like the Chinese commander in the story. And some people hold onto anger a long time, annoying those around them, or taking revenge.

Can you think of the last time you got angry, when you shouted at someone in anger? Did you do anything to help yourself calm down? What do you do to calm down from anger?

Here are some ideas that might help:

First, notice when you start to get angry. It's ok to feel anger; say to yourself, "I feel angry." Try to pay attention to how it feels in your body. Notice if you feel any changes in breathing, heart going faster, tension in your face or in your stomach, or if you are moving restlessly. It helps you calm down when you are mindful of the feelings in your body.

You can let the person know you don't like what they did without using angry words in return, which only provokes more anger.

You can drink a glass of cool water or juice which helps you calm down.

You can take a walk, go outside, listen to music, or try journaling to calm down.

It's best to get away from the person who make you angry.

Remember, he hurt you because he isn't very happy; no one hurts others when they're happy.

His harmful actions - his bad karmas - will automatically make him suffer more in the future.

Try to think of good qualities he has.

Then, try to feel compassion for him, which feels better in your body and mind than anger.

Later, think about what made you angry. Do you fear you may lose something? Do you fear something may happen that you don't like, or that the person will upset you again? Often, anger arises from something that we fear.

Understanding why you got angry might help you overcome it in the future.

The more often we try using methods of calming our anger, the easier it becomes to control our anger in different situations.