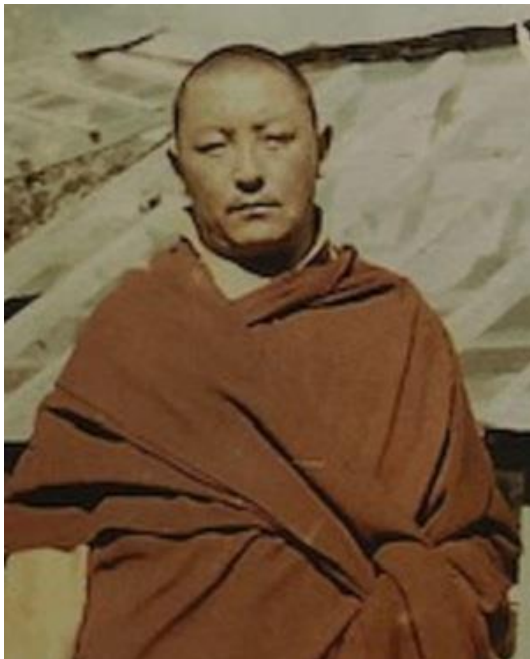


Part 4 – Judging Others

As the Chinese Communists took over control of Tibet, they called it a “peaceful liberation” even though the Tibetans had no idea what they needed to be “liberated” from. It was the Chinese government’s way of making it seem that they were helping the Tibetan people. Some Tibetans even saw the Chinese Communist leader, Chairman Mao Zedong, as having some good characteristics, like self-confidence, courage and strong leadership. They didn’t know that he actually intended to get rid of their religion, traditions and culture.

But none of this was known by little five-year-old Chetsang Rinpoche.

He was starting his education at the monastery. He was being taught how to read by one of his attendants, Solpön Tsewang.



Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche were also taught by Tritsab Gyabra, who was the leader of all the Drikung monasteries until the little tulkus were old enough to be the leaders. He was big and tall, radiating confidence and power.

(photo of Tritsab Gyabra Rinpoche)

The teacher that Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche spent the most time with was Ayang Rinpoche, who also was a tulku. He was an elderly, serious monk who had deep understanding of the Dharma. Although he was very often meditating, which usually makes people look very calm, strangely, he always seemed to be worried.

And even more strange, he sometimes had some kind of attack in his mind that made him suddenly scream uncontrollably in his room. It was a complete shock and frightening to the little tulkus that their teacher would freak out like that. On two occasions when he had one of those attacks, he even jumped out of a window! One of those times he wasn’t hurt, but the other time, he broke his leg. No one knew what was going on in his mind that made him do that. Some people thought that maybe he was overwhelmed by the immense responsibilities he had in taking care of the two tulkus and the many Drikung monasteries, which had so many spiritual treasures but never seemed to have enough money.

Another teacher was Rangdo Ali, who taught the tulkus handwriting, how to write beautiful Tibetan letters and words with elegant strokes of the pen. He was Chetsang Rinpoche’s favorite teacher because he wasn’t so strict and critical like his other teachers, who were all

monks. Rangdo Ali wasn't a monk, and he was very humble and respectful. If little Rinpoche made a mistake in copying the letters, words and sentences, Ali corrected him politely and gently. Maybe because his teacher was so encouraging, Chetsang Rinpoche for his whole life loved writing and appreciated beautiful ancient and rare Tibetan writings.

After Chetsang Rinpoche learned how to read and write, he learned to chant in very long sessions while a monk rhythmically struck a drum and cymbals. Every afternoon he had to chant for three hours. He found it a boring waste of time to repeat the same thing for three hours every day! He would much rather be outside playing.

Although most of the time he was busy with lessons, memorizing texts, and chanting he was allowed some time to play. The problem was, he didn't have many friends to play with. Because he was a special tulku, his teachers didn't want him to learn any bad habits from other children. So, even the regular young monks weren't allowed to play with Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche. And they each had a bedroom far away from any other children. Chetsang Rinpoche's room was on the top of the eastern part of the monastery, and Chungtsang Rinpoche's room was on the top of the western part of the monastery, as if they were two unreachable gods at the top of a palace. They were even called the "Eastern Holiness" and "Western Holiness" because of the location of their rooms. They didn't really like having such special rooms away from everything. They would rather hang out in the dusty courtyards around the monastery - or even better, outside the monastery where there was a river and there were animals to see, and even more importantly, some kids to play with.

Chetsang Rinpoche was much younger – four years younger – than Chungtsang Rinpoche, and their personalities were very different. Chetsang Rinpoche had a smiling, adventurous, happy and talkative personality, and Chungtsang was more serious, mature, and quiet. So, they didn't bond as close friends until they were older. In the meantime, Chetsang Rinpoche occasionally could play with two little tulkus who were closer to his age.

In the evening, he looked forward to the entertainment of an old man who was his cook. His cook brought him soup every night before bedtime. This was the same cook from his past life, when he as the Sixth Chetsang Rinpoche was an old man and the cook was younger. Each night after the cook brought the soup, he sat on the edge of little Rinpoche's bed and told him strange stories about a dead body that could talk.

The story begins with an Indian meditation master who gives his young student a crazy instruction: "Go to the cemetery and bring me the dead body of Rogen Ngodrub, but do not talk to it, or it will fly right back to the graveyard!"

"What?" the student thought, "Why would he want a dead body? And why would I want to talk to a dead body?"

The master said, "If you can bring the corpse to me without talking to it, then a great goldmine will appear that will be of immense benefit to all beings!"

In the next stories, the young man goes to the cemetery and searches for the corpse of Rogen Ngodrub. How disgusting, to have to look at the dead bodies! Then, even more disgusting, he has to touch the stiff, heavy dead body and hoist it onto his back. He starts to carry it back to his master. On the way, the corpse starts to talk! Ah! How shocking! Like a zombie? No, its voice was clear, not like a zombie.

It tells the student a very interesting story involving lots of magic; for example, about adventurers going to a dangerous place, witches, clever thieves, enchanted animals, or cruel powerful kings. Each story is so interesting that the young man forgets that he's not supposed to talk! In his excitement, he asks questions and makes comments about the story. And then the corpse punches his ears three times and flies away like a bird back to the cemetery. The student goes back to the cemetery and tries again to bring back the corpse and tries not to talk to it, but each time, he is so interested in the story that he forgets and talks to the corpse.

But the stories have important lessons in them, and the student learns with each story an important Buddhist virtue - a Dharma lesson. Finally, after many times carrying the corpse and hearing the stories it tells, the student realizes that he has learned great teachings from the dead body, and that all his efforts to carry the corpse again and again were actually worthwhile. Then his Indian meditation master joyfully tells him,

“Because of all the Dharma that you learned from the corpse, you have become like gold that will be of great benefit for all sentient beings!” These stories, called *Ro Dung*, were told all over Tibet to children.

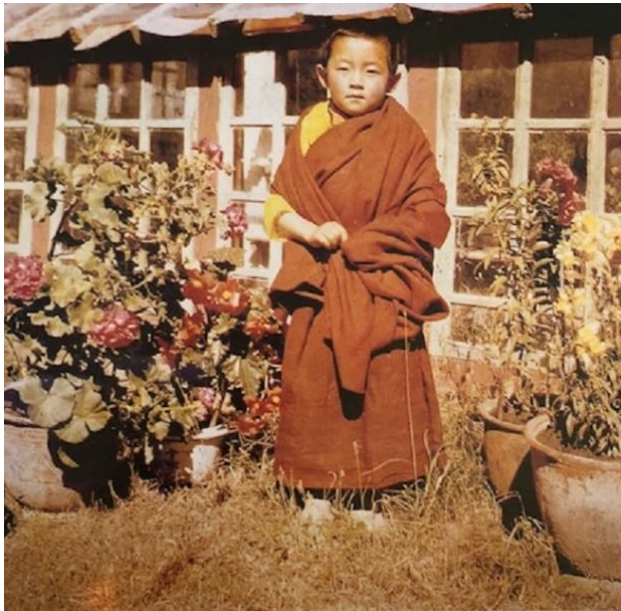
While Chetsang Rinpoche was listening to the stories, there was a real-life drama happening in Tibet, that was spreading out even to the Drikung area. One day, when he was looking out over the fields near the monastery, he noticed some Chinese soldiers of the People's Liberation Army. He wasn't afraid, but he was fascinated by what was going on. The soldiers didn't have extreme winter weather and high altitude in China where they lived, so they were suffering from the harsh cold winter weather and extremely high altitude in Tibet. They didn't have enough food, but they were under strict orders not to accept anything from the Tibetans, because the Chinese government wanted to convince the Tibetan people that the army was only going to help the Tibetans and not take things from them. So, the soldiers were calm and polite, being sure not to upset the Tibetans.

To further convince the Tibetans that the Chinese were kind and helpful, there were groups of Chinese people who visited villages to present programs of singing and dancing, and who provided medical treatment to Tibetans who were ill. They held banquets - expensive dinners - for the wealthy Tibetans, and opened a free but high-quality hospital for the poor. They showed films about Chinese Communist victories against the Japanese to show how successful they were.

And they built new schools. Before the arrival of the Chinese, the only schools in Tibet were in monasteries, for the education of monks. Wealthy families either hired tutors to teach their

children at home, like homeschooling, or they sent their children away to schools in other countries. The Chinese invited high-ranking Tibetans like Chetsang Rinpoche's grandfather to serve on education committees to build new schools, which of course seemed like a great idea. But the Chinese government actually wanted to use the schools to train the Tibetan children to believe that the Chinese Communist ideas were the best.

The Chinese Communists slowly took control of the Tibetan government. They forced the Dalai Lama to fire his two prime ministers, who were trying to resist the Chinese control. Then the Chinese military leaders could more easily gain power.



Now that the Dalai Lama was back in Lhasa, the Tsarong family also returned to Lhasa. Every year, usually late in the summer, Chetsang Rinpoche visited his parents there. When he arrived in Lhasa, he was shocked to see how many Chinese people were in the streets. He was also astonished at the sadness of his parents and grandparents. They tried to hide it from him, but he knew they were upset. He noticed how they listened intently to the news on the radio. They didn't talk about it though, as they wanted to keep their worries to themselves. His grandfather made every effort to make sure the children felt as happy and safe as possible in his house.



One year, Chetsang Rinpoche brought Chungtsang Rinpoche to his house to stay for almost four months. They had their tutors and attendants staying with them also, so they could receive their regular lessons. But they still had a lot of freedom and fun playing with Chetsang Rinpoche's brothers and sisters and cousins.

(photo of Chungtsang Rinpoche and Chetsang Rinpoche with his little brother walking pet goats)

QUESTIONS:

1. Chetsang Rinpoche's favorite teacher taught him what subject? (handwriting)
2. What was very strange about his teacher Ayang Rinpoche? (he started screaming uncontrollably in his room and jumped out the window twice)
3. Every afternoon he had to chant for how long? (three hours)
4. Who told him stories about the student carrying the dead body on his back? (his cook)
5. Why did the Chinese government build a hospital and schools in Tibet? (to convince Tibetans that they were going to help them, and that Communist ideas were the best)
6. Who did Chetsang Rinpoche visit every year? (his family)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – Judging Others:

Have you ever looked at someone and thought, “I don’t like him” or “I don’t want to talk to her”? Why did you think that way?

It’s something about the way they look. Or the way they talk. Or the way they are dressed. Sometimes we don’t notice when we avoid someone because of something about the way they look, or act.

We judge people all the time without really being aware of it.

That’s how we choose who to be friendly with and who to avoid.

We might think that we should avoid someone who is very unusual, like someone who suddenly screams for no reason, or jumps out a window.

But Chetsang Rinpoche’s teacher Ayang Rinpoche was a good teacher and a great meditation master.

We might think that an old man would be boring to talk to.

But Chetsang Rinpoche’s cook was extremely interesting.

In the stories told by the cook, the student failed over and over again to keep quiet when carrying the talking corpse.

Because he failed again and again, we might think he was just a total failure.

But he wasn’t a failure at all – he was *supposed* to hear the stories from the corpse, so he could learn the teachings.

We might think that people who promise they’re going to help us and make nice things for us are good people.

Yet the Chinese Communist government, that seemed so helpful to build schools and hospitals, and the soldiers who were so polite at first, actually had very bad intentions to trick the Tibetans into trusting them.



So we don't know how a person really is just by the way they look, how they talk, how they dress, or how they act.

They might actually be very different from what you expect.

So we shouldn't judge a person just based on how they look.

And we shouldn't say negative things about someone based on how they look.

There is an expression for that concept: "Don't judge a book by its cover"

As Buddhists, we practice lovingkindness – we're not only kind to our friends and family, but to all beings.

Of course we should stay away from those who might hurt us.

But are we practicing lovingkindness if we avoid someone just because they look strange, or dress differently, or talk in a different way, or act shy, or are in some way different from us? No.

So when you notice you're avoiding someone for those reasons, see if you can overcome that habit of judging and avoiding them, and be friendly instead!

That's the practice of lovingkindness!