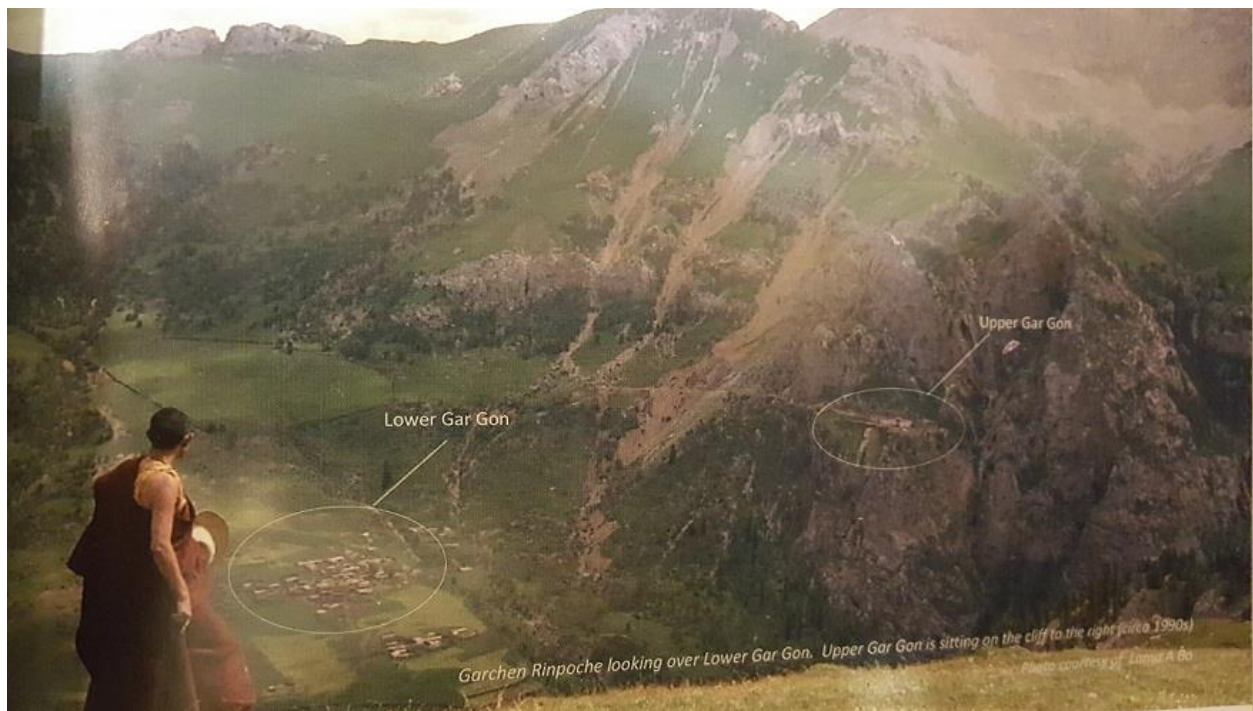


CHAPTER 7 – DISCIPLINE

After Konchog Gyaltsen was recognized as the Eighth Garchen Rinpoche and sat on his throne at the great Gar monastery, he went home to his village for a short visit. In some ways it was just coming home again, but everyone in the village looked at him as the tulku of a great lama. They bowed to him and looked at him like a great holy being. He knew that his life was going to be different now. He wasn't going to grow up in the village and farm the land like other boys. He was going to return to Gar Gon monastery, to study and learn to carry on the responsibilities of a Buddhist lama.

So after spending some days back at home in Dong-go drong, he and his mother rode on a horse back to Gar monastery. The monastery is more than 700 years old, and it is located at a high altitude. Gar Chodingpa, the very first Garchen Rinpoche, who was a student of Jigten Sumgon, founded the monastery in the year 1200. Actually, there were two monasteries there, a lower monastery and upper monastery.



The lower Gar monastery is where the main temple is, where the laypeople often visit, and where the young Garchen tulku first sat on his throne. It is surrounded by village houses, in a beautiful valley. Tall mountains, some with snow on them even in the springtime, tower above the valley.



Most of the people living in the village were nomads, people who had herds of yaks, sheep and goats, and who traveled around to different pasture lands for their animals. They had houses where they stayed in the winter, and in the summer they often camped in tents, which were black, made from the yaks' hair woven into sheets of fabric.



In the forest around the monastery there were many kinds of wildlife, like colorful birds, and monkeys, and blue sheep. They were not afraid of humans, and let people come close to them.



It takes a half hour to walk from the lower Gar monastery to the upper Gar monastery, which sits high on the edge of a cliff.



It is where previous Garchen Rinpoches and other great masters lived in the past.

There was no water up there, so anyone living there had to walk down the steps along the cliff

all the way to the valley, to the Palchu river, where fish can be seen swimming in the clear clean water. Then they had to carry the heavy jug of water all the way up the steps.



When guests came to the upper monastery to visit, they all had to eat out of one bowl and then lick it clean for the next person before they left. The only food available there was roasted barley (*tsampa*), yak meat, and dried cheese and thick yogurt from yak milk.

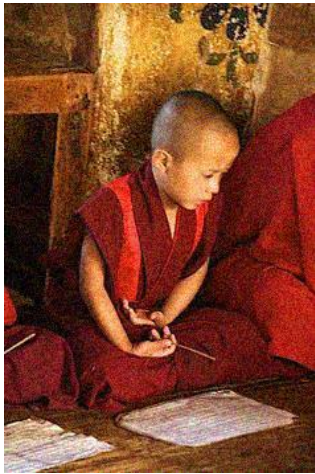
By the time the young Eighth Garchen Rinpoche came to Gar monastery to live, the upper monastery was not in very good shape. It was run down, dusty and in need of some repairs. The three previous great masters, reincarnated lamas of the Gar monastery, including the Seventh Garchen Rinpoche, had passed away.

Because the new Garchen tulku was so young, it was better for him not to live high up on the edge of a cliff, so he was allowed to live in the lower Gar monastery where it would be easier for the older monks to train and watch over him.

So the little Garchen tulku and his mother stayed at the lower Gar monastery. And the monks began teaching him to read, write, memorize and recite, and most importantly, learn the Buddha Dharma. But it was not easy to teach the young Garchen Rinpoche! He was not used to sitting still for long periods of time, and staying indoors all day. He was not used to having to be quiet, obey and follow directions. He was not used to the silent, serene atmosphere of a monastery. He would much rather explore the forest around the monastery, and wander through the village.

He had so much freedom as a boy living in Dong-go drong. He didn't go to school or study and didn't have to sit still when he lived there. He had so much free time. He would help his mother and do what she asked him to do because he liked to make her smile and hug him.

But the monks didn't smile when he did what he was told. They were so serious! They just expected him to do everything that he was told to do. They tried patiently to teach the young tulku, and to make him sit still through the lesson until it was over. But he kept getting distracted, looking around, and asking questions unrelated to the lesson. The monks set study hours for him to do his reading and writing in his room on his own, but he wouldn't stay seated on his cushion. He kept playing around, and looking out the window.



His teachers tried and tried to make him sit still and stay focused on his studies, and to behave properly. But if they forced him too much, he got angry and his temper exploded.

The monks asked his mother, Dega, to help him to be more disciplined, but she was of no help. She only knew how to be kind, gentle, and compassionate. She just encouraged him with a smile and soft words to do what he was told. She didn't know how to be strict. She never had to discipline him before, and didn't know how to start disciplining him now.

The monks didn't know how to train a child who had no basic discipline. They had no idea how they were going to get him to behave properly and study. After about a year of trying, they concluded that they could not really handle the young tulku. So, the senior lamas decided to call on his father to stay at the monastery and be his private teacher.

Garchen Rinpoche's father, Masei Sengey, received a message about his son, the reincarnated lama, at Gar monastery. The message requested that he teach his son there. He decided to go there immediately. He had no second thoughts about coming to take on this important responsibility.

So that is when the young Garchen tulku met his father for the first time. Now he really had a father, a *pala*. But he did not expect that he would have to share the same room with his father, even though it was a rather large room. He did not know his father before, and now he had to spend not only the whole day, but also the whole night with him!

His father and four brothers were yogis, meditation masters who had grown up in a very noble no-nonsense household with strict schedules and rigid rules, and with regular study and practice of Dharma. This enabled them to be great practitioners of meditation, able to spend weeks at a time alone in a cold, lonely cave meditating, with no comforts at all.

So his father wasted no time enforcing strict schedules and rules on his son. The father woke up his son at early dawn without fail, to recite many prayers. When the sun shone through the window at eight o'clock, Dega would serve them breakfast. After breakfast he had to learn and recite scriptures of the Buddha. At ten o'clock he had a short tea break, and at noon his mother served

them lunch, and he had another short break after lunch. Then he had to continue with his reading, writing and study until 4:00 in the afternoon, when they would have a very light meal. Between 5:00 and 7:00 in the evening he had to recite prayers, and then have dinner. After dinner he had to recite more evening and dedication prayers.

Then finally he could sleep. Every night his father would sing his little boy to sleep with a sweet, special prayer that had a nice melody. At that time he felt no hopes or fears, he just felt free and peaceful.

QUESTIONS:

1. How old is the Gar monastery? (700 years old; built around the year 1200)
2. What was interesting about the wildlife around Gar monastery? (not afraid of people)
3. Which monastery did the young Garchen Rinpoche stay in, the upper or lower? (lower)
4. Why was it so difficult to teach young Garchen Rinpoche? (he wouldn't sit still, was easily distracted, wasn't disciplined)
5. Why wasn't he disciplined when he was young? (no school, not many rules, his mother didn't know how to be strict)
6. What kind of person was his father? (strict, disciplined, a yogi)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – DISCIPLINE

“By being distracted, careless, and unmindful, you beings will become dull, foggy, and forgetful. By being unconscious and lazy, you will increase your ignorance.”
From The Prayer of Kuntuzangpo

“You must train the mind like a muscle. If you want to train your body, you must practice exercise regularly. Likewise, if you want to train your mind, you must practice meditation on a day to day basis. You will not be able to carry a heavy load with weak muscles. Training is a gradual process. You must persistently and constantly train your mind on a day to day basis if you wish to overcome difficulties and become stronger.” Garchen Rinpoche, *Quote 55*

What does it mean to be disciplined? Or, what does it mean *not* to have discipline?

Misbehaved, wild, uncontrolled, lazy, easily distracted, careless, impulsive, irresponsible, doing whatever they want, grabbing things without asking first.

So being disciplined means well-behaved, self-controlled, hard-working, focused, careful, mindful, responsible, respectful, and patient.

How do you feel if someone near you is very undisciplined? Annoyed? They distract you, so you can't learn and focus, right?

So then what do our friends think if we are not disciplined? That we are annoying, and we might even lose our friends.

What else might happen if we are not disciplined?

Like what happened when little Garchen tulku didn't have discipline when he was young, it becomes much more difficult to become disciplined later on - it's like a shock to have to be disciplined after we have lived without much discipline.

Why else is it important to be disciplined? What do we need discipline for?

To have a job, to learn anything, we have to have discipline – we must be able to work responsibly on our own, focus on our work, do it well, and not be lazy.

What other activities require discipline? Sports, like soccer? Yes. Art? Yes. Playing music? Yes.

It is said in the Prayer of Kuntuzangpo, if you are undisciplined - distracted, careless and unmindful - you will become dull (unintelligent), foggy (have a confused mind), and forgetful, and your ignorance increases. No one wants to be like that!

Let's talk about some examples of being disciplined.

What are some examples of having good discipline at school? Having your homework done, finishing schoolwork carefully, listening to the teacher, not talking when you should be quiet, being on time for class.

What are some examples of good discipline when playing a sport? Listening to the coach, following directions, waiting your turn, practicing, not distracting others, being on time.

What are examples of good discipline when you meditate? Good posture, sitting up straight, keeping your body still, staying silent, keeping eyes closed.

What are some examples of good discipline at home?

Helping parents, cleaning up after yourself, keeping room clean, listening to parents, doing what they ask you to do right away, putting things in their proper place.

PRACTICE THIS WEEK: Do a self-assessment of whether you are disciplined at home. Is your room clean? How do you help your parents? Do you put your things away when done?

ACTIVITY – CARD GAME:

Copy and cut each item from the lists below. The Problems list is the left column in small letters, and Solutions list is the right column in capital letters. Glue each item on each list onto a small card (e.g., pieces of index cards). Distribute an equal number of the Solutions cards to each student to hold in their hand. Place the Problems cards face down in the center of the table.

The first student draws a Problem card, and if any of his Solutions cards have an appropriate (and grammatically correct) solution for the “problem,” he places both cards face up in front of him. Then the student to his right draws a new Problem card. If not, he passes the Problem card to the student to his right. If that student has an appropriate Solution card for the “problem,” he places both cards face up in front of him. If not, he passes it to the next student to the right, and so on. The first student who has no cards left wins. If a student tries to give an inappropriate Solution card for the problem, he must either adequately explain why it is an appropriate solution or must keep the card.

Dropped something on the floor	PICK IT UP
Dinner is almost ready	SET THE TABLE
The dishwasher is full of clean dishes	PUT THEM AWAY
The sink has dirty dishes in it	CLEAN THEM
Dirty dishes are on the table	CLEAR THE DISHES
There is mud on the floor	WIPE IT UP
There is food smeared on the table	CLEAN IT UP
Shoes are not put away	PUT THEM AWAY
Homework is not done yet	DO IT NOW
Clothes are on the floor	PUT THEM AWAY
Someone left the light on	TURN IT OFF
TV is on and no one watching it	TURN IT OFF
Water is spilled on floor	WIPE IT UP
Crumbs are on table	CLEAN IT UP
Trash is on the floor	PICK IT UP
Toys are on floor, could get stepped on	PICK THEM UP
You just finished your meal	CLEAR THE DISHES
Trashcan (inside) is full	TAKE IT OUT
Laundry basket is full of clean clothes	PUT THEM AWAY
It's time to go to bed	DO IT NOW
Your mother tells you to get dressed	DO IT NOW
Your father is waiting for you outside but you are watching a funny video	TURN IT OFF
Your father asks you to clean your room	DO IT NOW