

CHAPTER 2 – AVOID JUDGING OR INSULTING OTHERS

The infant son of Dega grew up in a small house with his mother and grandparents in Dong-go drong, a simple rural village of about 40 or 50 families, far away from any cities. He had no real toys, other than simple homemade ones, but he had all the love, affection and everything that he needed. From his house, he could see the local monastery and temple, Kango Gon, which was on top of a hill. There were about 12 houses between his house and the monastery.

Dega took her little son, when he turned five years old, to a monks' retreat house to see Lama Tengye, the great yogi monk who had been a student of the Seventh Garchen Rinpoche, who had passed away about 6 years before.

Lama Tengye had spent almost all of his life in meditation and was now getting quite elderly. Dega had deep devotion to him, and wanted her little son to take his Buddhist refuge vows from this kind and wise lama. A "vow" means a promise, and taking Buddhist refuge vows means promising to follow the Buddha's teachings.

It was a tradition to take young children to a lama for their first hair-cutting ceremony, where they would take their first Buddhist refuge vows. Cutting the hair for the first time was a type of purification, because hair grown since birth was considered unclean.



When Dega first stepped into the monks' retreat house, it was rather dark, but many flickering butter lamps provided light. The lamps were filled with yak butter, so they make a smoky-buttery smell as they burned, which mixed with the smell of incense.

Dega's little son gripped onto her chuba, the Tibetan robe that she wore, not knowing what to expect.



Dega was surprised to see many men gathered there. They were not monks, but Tantric practitioners, students of Lama Tengye, who were there to receive a teaching from him.

They may have families, but they also practice spiritual techniques to develop wisdom.

Some of them had their long hair twisted in interesting ways on their heads, like hats.

Dega had a very serious expression on her face, so her son knew he could not just play or run around. She told him, “now, do what the *Lagin* says.” She referred to Lama Tengye as *Lagin*, a respectful way to address an elderly lama. Dega whispered to him, “From this day onward, you will take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.”



He knew he had to follow what his mother and the elderly monk told him. There was a lot of chanting, and he didn't really know what was going on.

The elderly monk took a lock of the little boy's long black hair and cut it with scissors.

He never thought it was unusual that he had no name. He was called “Bu” or “Abo,” like all other little boys in the village, and because he didn't go to school, there was no need anyone to call him by a particular name. He knew he would get a name later, when it was the right time. And this was the special time for him to get a name. Not just any name, but a spiritual name - a Dharma name.

Lama Tengye gave him the Dharma name of Konchog Gyaltsen. The first part, Konchog, was the same as the Lama's first name, and it meant “precious.” The second part of his name, Gyaltsen, meant “victory banner,” like a flag of success.

He had to say his name, and then repeat three times, “I take refuge in the Buddha, in the Dharma, and in the Sangha,” in Tibetan. This was the first time taking the Buddhist refuge vows.



Some of the Tantric practitioners looked at the little boy with wide eyes chanting the refuge vows. When little Konchog Gyaltzen was finished chanting, he looked back at the Tantric practitioners, with their interesting hairstyles.

He had a mischievous expression on his face, like he was going to go up and touch their hair.

One of the men said, “Today we found a new member for our sangha, who is going to sit below us at the end of the row!”

Little Konchog Gyaltzen looked displeased. He did not like what he heard. He would rather not sit at all, anywhere, any way! He rolled his eyes and then stared back at them. His mother smiled shyly at the practitioners.

Suddenly, Lama Tengye turned to his students and said sternly, “No, this child is not someone who is going to take a seat below us! We would be very fortunate if we could just take a seat below him!”

The wise old lama was then silent. His students also were silent, thinking about what their lama just said. Could it be that this boy is a great being? Could it be, that this mischievous little boy who rolls his eyes and stares at them, is really a great spiritual master? Or was the wise lama just trying to teach not to be quick to judge a person, to be humble and not assume that we are more important – and sit higher -- than someone else?

Lama Tengye chanted for a long time. Little Konchog Gyaltzen was getting restless, and he didn’t want to just sit still. He looked up at this mother anxiously, pulling hard at her chuba, and said, “Ama, let’s go home now, let’s leave!”

His mother gave him a look that directed him to sit still. When the chanting ended, he noticed his mother bowing and getting up to leave. Finally! He didn’t think or care about what the lama had just said to the men. He was happy they were going home.

From that time onward, Dega called her young son Kon-Gyam, short for Konchog Gyaltzen.

There were four other boys in the local Gar area who were his age, born in the same year, 1937. They all received Dharma names also – and one was given the same name as he got!



They often played together, but they didn't have many toys or activities to do. So as little boys, they tried to test each other, and pick fights with each other, to see who was the toughest. Konchog Gyaltzen was not afraid and wanted to show the other boys that they can't boss him around. He bossed them around. If they said something he didn't like, he would beat them.

One time, he got so furious at one of the boys that he threw dirt at the boy's face!

So this is the beginning of the story of how a little village boy - who was sometimes mischievous, impatient, rough and who even fought with other boys – was really a great spiritual master. His life is a message to us. Because he behaved like a regular person when he was younger, we can get the confidence that we can become great spiritual masters too.

QUESTIONS:

1. How old was Dega's son when he got his first haircut? (5)
2. Who cut his hair? (Lama Tengye)
3. What else did Lama Tengye give him? (a name)
4. When he took Buddhist refuge vows, what did he have to repeat 3 times? (I take refuge in the Buddha... the Dharma....the Sangha).
5. What did Lama Tyengye tell the men, when they thought the little boy might grow up and join them? (that they would be lucky if they could take a seat below him)
6. What might Lama Tengye be hinting to them? (that the little boy is a great spiritual master, or that they shouldn't judge others)

DHARMA DISCUSSION – AVOID JUDGING OTHERS:

“Everything is impermanent, changing moment by moment” Garchen Rinpoche, Quote 48.

“Since we do not know who is and who is not a bodhisattva, we must be extremely careful. Thus the swift path of Vajrayana teaches us to train in pure view, to recognize the buddha nature in all beings, the nature which transcends gender, race, culture and social status....

The mind that thinks that they are not good is a dirty mind. As long as you have negative thoughts in your mind, no matter how much to attempt to become pure, you cannot become pure. It is said that...within every sentient being dwells the Buddha.....But if you hold a biased view of attachment and aversion, your mind is miserable and you will slander others.

....

We have to purify our own minds. We should not insult each other, but rather uphold the Buddha Dharma. The Buddha Dharma is love and compassion....”

Garchen Rinpoche, Quote 29.

Can someone misbehave when they are young and still be a great spiritual master? Yes.

There are still roots of negative emotions in every person - anger, greed, hatred, selfishness, jealousy, ego, arrogance, etc. - until he or she is fully enlightened.

When a person is young, these feelings come up often because the young person’s brain and emotions are immature and not yet disciplined.

Also, when a person has difficulties, these bad emotions can arise.

So when we see people who are behaving badly, we cannot assume that they are a bad person.

Maybe they are struggling with a very difficult situation that we don’t know about.

They may actually be a great Bodhisattva! They may become fully enlightened in this life!

And even if they aren’t, they - like all beings - have the Buddha Nature inside.

The more pure their mind becomes, the more you easily can see their Buddha Nature.

But even if you can’t see it at the moment, remember that it’s there!

So we have to train our minds not to think *the person* is bad when they get angry, jealous, selfish, egoistic, or in some way misbehaved.

It’s only their *temporary behavior*, thoughts and words that are not peaceful or not appropriate.

And of course, we shouldn’t join in with their negative words or behavior.

So we shouldn’t act like them or say something angry or unkind to them.

We have to learn to control our impulses to say insulting or hurtful words.

That would make their behavior, and your behavior, worse! Then both of you more miserable!

Nobody really wins or feels better by thinking or saying negative things about the other.

If we have unkind thoughts or words, we are running away from love and compassion, the very things that make our minds peaceful and happy!

When we see a person misbehave, it’s best to wish him peace and happiness, so he can stop misbehaving.

PRACTICE THIS WEEK: Notice when you are upset with someone, even if you are just a tiny bit upset. Do you notice any changes in how your body feels, or how your mind thinks, when you are upset? Did you say anything unkind? Did you remember their Buddha Nature?

ACTIVITY:

MATCHING – write the number in column A of the correct definition from Column B:

A:	B:
__ VOW	1. for traveling long distance
__ ABO	2. village Garchen Rinpoche was born and raised
__ TSAMPA	3. farm animal, where butter comes from
__ GAR GON	4. Garchen Rinpoche's mother
__ YAK	5. gave Garchen Rinpoche his name when he was 5
__ TIBET	6. roasted barley flour
__ 7TH GARCHEN RINPOCHE	7. what little sons in Tibet are called
__ KONCHOG GYALTSEN	8. promise
__ DONG-GO DRONG	9. monastery where 7 th Garchen Rinpoche lived
__ DEGA	10. name of Garchen Rinpoche
__ LAMA KONCHOG TENGYE	11. wrote a letter for Dega to keep
__ HORSE	12. Land of Snows
__ CHUBA	13. Robe or dress in Tibet