

CHAPTER 12 – POWER AND WISDOM

Although Garchen Rinpoche was still just a young boy, people in the village around the monastery thought of him as the tulku of the Seventh Garchen Rinpoche. Because the Seventh Garchen Rinpoche had psychic powers, they thought that when he was reborn he still would have them. So some of the people in the village wanted him to give them a prediction or divination - to answer questions such as whether their illness would go away, the future of their children, whether they would have a child sometime soon, whether a certain person was the right match for their son or daughter for marriage, or how to help a family member. Divination was a formal method some lamas used for answering such questions - using a mirror, dice, or counting beads strung on a thread.

Garchen Rinpoche didn't know how to use these methods. Instead, he just knew and could directly tell people who came to him what was going to happen. Visions just appeared to him very clearly and he told the people what he saw. Often, before they could even say anything, he knew exactly what they were going to say or exactly what would happen to them. He could just read their mind. Other times, he listened to their question, closed his eyes for a moment, and saw a vision. He then gave them answers based on his visions. Many people asked about their friends and relatives who had some illness and whether they were going to live or die. Some people asked about things that were lost, stolen or misplaced.

The people who went to him for these predictions told others that the young tulku had clairvoyant power – he could see into the future or the past, and could see things that most people cannot see.

He admitted to his father that he had these extraordinary abilities, but his father was not happy about it at all! He was angry. He commanded his son to stop doing this direct divination using his clairvoyant power.

One day, a man came to the monastery to see the young tulku. As soon as he saw the man, Garchen Rinpoche suddenly exclaimed, “Be very careful! You are about to die!” He could see clearly with his special vision that this man was in the process of dying, and he felt sorry for the man, so he just wanted to give him some warning.

Garchen Rinpoche's father was there, and immediately scolded his son in front of the man! Later on, he spanked his son very harshly and shouted, “Don't you ever say such things! You absolutely cannot say such things, do you hear!”

His father continued to yell into his ear as the young tulku cried out in anguish with each lash.

“Don't you understand? Even if you know that someone is about to die, you cannot tell him so! You are creating fear in his mind! He will be frightened for many hours, day and night. Are you helping him by allowing him to die with a fearful state of mind? Unless you can teach him how not to be frightened, you cannot tell him. Even if the divination comes out badly, you still cannot say so! Do you hear?”

Not long after that, the man passed away. From that day onward, Garchen Rinpoche would never say to someone that he is about to die, or that he will live longer. He will just wholeheartedly and quietly recite many mantras and pray for them.

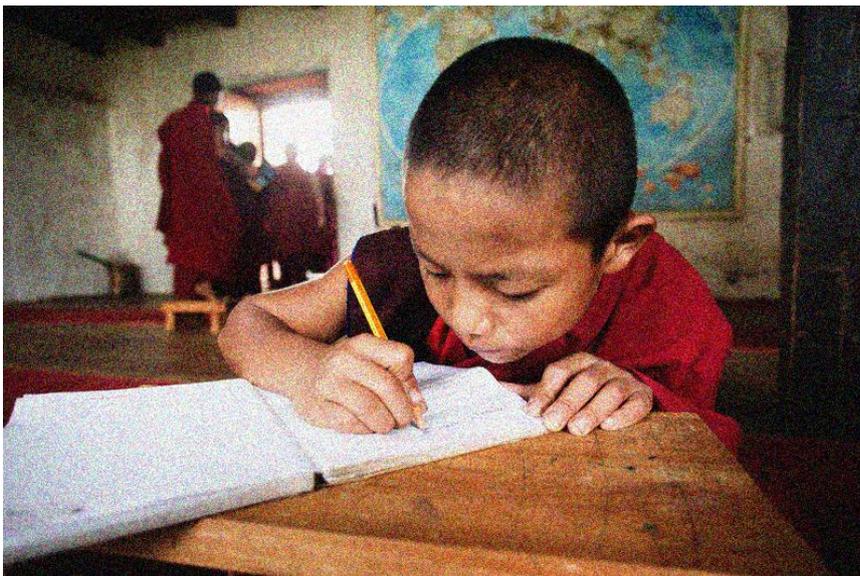
Since the young Garchen Rinpoche was not allowed to use his clairvoyant visions to make predictions for people, he began to rely on his dreams. All he needed to do before he went to sleep was think about what people asked him during the day, and then he would have a dream that would give the answers. For example, a village chief asked whether his wife would have a baby boy or baby girl. The young tulku told him, “I will wait for signs in my dream tonight and I will check the result for you.”



He had a dream the next night in which he saw a young girl holding a brilliant moon in her hand. So the next day, he told the chief that they would have a baby daughter.

But when the baby was born, it was a boy! The baby turned out to be a special boy. The brilliant moon in the girl’s hand

was a symbol of a special boy to be born. The young tulku hadn’t thought of that, so he had misinterpreted his own dream.



Sometimes the young Garchen Rinpoche began to write spiritual texts, but he didn’t know what he was writing. He had thoughts that just rose up in his mind and he wrote them down.

Later he found out that what he wrote were very meaningful, spiritual teachings that were like treasure writings, the

teachings that stay in the memories of great masters from one life to another.

Even that displeased his father. “What have I done wrong?” he thought.

His father explained that there were already many scriptures and other spiritual texts written by well-known lamas in the past, so it was not necessary for the young tulku to write new ones. If he writes his own texts, then he might not want to study what was already written by the great masters, and then he will get negative karma.

“There is no need for you to create new ones!” his father shouted across the room.

Garchen Rinpoche had some younger brothers and sisters, so his mother had to take care of them at home in Dong-go drong. She traveled back and forth between the village and the Gar Gon monastery, and sometimes brought his little sisters to visit him.

One time, his little sister named Kunzang Choedon had come to the monastery to visit, and she was happily watching her brother playing with the other young monks and two other tulkus during their break from studies. They were running around playing hide-and-seek and Garchen Rinpoche was holding onto a large yogurt pot. The other two tulkus tried to snatch the pot away from his hands. He began to run and run, and then all of a sudden, he made a quick jump all the way up to the roof! It was impossible for any normal person to jump that high!

Many people in the monastery saw this and were in complete shock. Little Kunzang Choedon didn't know anything about supernatural powers. She was too young. She just thought,

“Ah, my brother is so strong! He can jump so high up to the roof!”

When Garchen Rinpoche's mother went back to Dong-go drong to take care of his younger brothers and sisters, he missed her very much. He missed her delicious food, he missed her protective presence when his father was angry, but most of all he missed the constant love and kindness she had for him no matter what he did or didn't do.

One time, his mother went away for a long time. He missed her so terribly much. One day he covered his eyes with his hands, thinking about his mother. Suddenly he could see her so vividly in front of his eyes. He could see the sun shining brightly on the roof of his house in Dong-go drong, his cheerful mother going here and there in the village visiting her friends and relatives, the flowing chuba she wore on that day, the golden colored threads on her colorfully striped apron, her braided hair. The vision was so clear it was like seeing his mother right before his eyes.

But then he thought of how angry his father would be if he knew what he was doing with his clairvoyant power. So he dropped his hands from his eyes and the vision disappeared. He was so sad and lonely he began to cry.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did people believe that the young Garchen Rinpoche had psychic powers? (he had them in his previous incarnation, and they heard from others that he had powers)
2. Why was his father so upset with him when he told a man that he would die soon? (the man would be frightened, and would die with fear in his mind)

3. What was another way that young Garchen Rinpoche could make predictions? (from his dreams)
4. Why did his father not want him to write spiritual texts? (so he would continue to study the texts of great spiritual masters)
5. What did his little sister see Garchen do when she saw him playing outside with the other monks? (he jumped very high onto the roof)

DISCUSSION – POWER AND WISDOM:

“...[W]e have to purify our mind; if we follow thoughts of desire and aversion, our love, kindness and compassion vanish.” Garchen Rinpoche, Quote 44.

“When you give rise to a wish to help others, your wisdom will increase. Conversely, when you maintain mindful awareness, your wish to benefit others will increase.” Garchen Rinpoche, Quote 37.

“Without compassion, you will never understand the nature of mind...If you give rise to compassion, then you will understand the nature of mind very easily.” Garchen Rinpoche, Quote 34.

“It is very important to recognize each and every subtle arising of jealousy and pride. This requires a great deal of diligence in mindfulness, as these emotions in particular are very difficult to identify. Whenever such a thought arises you must apply a method to abandon it.” Garchen Rinpoche, Quote 6.

Why do you think Garchen Rinpoche’s father didn’t like him using his clairvoyant powers? Because he was young and might not use them correctly.

How would someone not use psychic powers correctly?

He might use them for selfish purposes, to get money or things that he wants.

Or he might show off his powers.

He might say something that would scare or upset the person, like when Garchen Rinpoche saw the dying man.

He might be wrong, like when Garchen Rinpoche predicted that the baby would be a girl.

Why is it bad to use powers to get things that you want?

When you use powers to get what *you* want, then you forget to help others, you forget to be loving and compassionate. You become selfish.

When you use powers for people to pay you money, then you might be tempted to focus on getting the money and forget the harm it might do to others.

Some people might use their powers to help people do wrong things, hurting others.

You must have wisdom to know when you might be helping someone do wrong things.

There are many movies that show what happens when someone gets special powers and uses them to help others do something that turns out to be evil – because they didn’t have the wisdom to know it might lead to evil.

Why do you think it might be wrong for little Garchen Rinpoche to use his clairvoyant power to see his mother when he missed her?

Because he was using his power for his own desires. That might lead to using powers to do what you want, and then you want more and more, so you become full of desires.

Why is it bad to show your powers to others?

It can make you get a big ego, and you can become arrogant.

If you let others see your powers, you should be aware of whether you are having proud or egoistic thoughts, and get rid of those thoughts.

So, before letting others see your powers, you have to learn to have mindful awareness of your thoughts and feelings, and to know how to change bad thoughts into good ones.

Why is it bad to scare or upset someone? It's their problem if they are scared, isn't it?

No, it's not compassionate.

Also, you can really hurt them by upsetting or scaring them, even if you didn't intend to.

You don't know what they might do. And you don't know how to stop them from harming themselves or others.

So before you say something that might scare or upset them, you have to know how to prevent them from getting too scared or upset.

You have to have the wisdom to know what might actually upset someone, and how to calm them.

Like in the story, Garchen Rinpoche's father told him that he shouldn't tell something frightening unless he can teach the person how not to be frightened.

So we learn that when you have special power, you have special responsibility.

You must have wisdom to be able to protect yourself and others from harm or wrongdoing.

How do we develop wisdom?

By developing more and more compassion, wanting to help others be happy and peaceful.

That makes us less selfish.

When we really have compassion even for people we don't know, and those who annoy us, who hurt us, and who do bad things, we understand others more.

When we are not selfish, always trying to get what we want, then we can be more mindful.

When we have mindful awareness, we understand our own mind.

Understanding the mind is wisdom.

PRACTICE THIS WEEK: Think of the talents that you have – your “powers“ – such as in art, crafts, dance, yoga, music, a sport, in writing, math or other subject in school, making friends, leadership, speaking, meditation, mindfulness, etc.

Then, think about how you might be able to use your talent to help someone else – a brother, sister, friend, cousin, neighbor, classmate, or teammate. For example, can you think of a way that you can teach or show someone else how to perform that talent, or guide them how to do it better?

Next, envision how it can make that person happy by learning from you.

And, envision how you will not abuse your power – you won't show off or appear egoistic, and you won't hurt them in any way, or make them feel inadequate.

Finally, put your thoughts into action – go and actually teach or guide someone!

ACTIVITY: Word search – find and circle the following words, which may be upside down backward, or diagonal. One word appears in two places!

Wisdom

Power

Tulku

Arrogance

Ego

Compassion

Mindful

Kunzang

Responsible

Rinpoche

E T R A T U Y A K M C

F G P R O K S M U O N

C I O R N L H G N D J

M U W O P U K A Z S O

O G E G I T A J A I P

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