

CHAPTER VII

THE PERSONAL GUIDANCE BY THE *GURU*

Telling of the Fruits of Jetsün's Meditation and Study; of Marpa's Last Journey to India; of Jetsün's Prophetic Dream and its Interpretation by Marpa; and of Marpa's special charge to each of his Four Chief Disciples.

RECHUNG then asked, 'Master, didst thou set off at once to the wild solitudes after receiving the Truths, or didst thou continue to live with thy *Guru*?'

And Jetsün made reply, 'My *Guru* commanded that I should continue there, saying that he would supply me with food and other necessities, which he did most liberally; and I retired to meditate in a rock-cave called Lhobrak-Tak-nya, with an ample supply of provisions. There I used to sit in a rigid posture, with a lighted lamp on my head, without moving till the light went out, were it night or day. Eleven months went by. Then my *Guru* and his lady came to see me, bringing food for the purpose of holding a religious feast. The *Guru* said, "My son, it is very creditable that thou shouldst be able to meditate for eleven months, without the [meditation] cushion losing warmth. Now thou mayst pull down the wall [enclosing thee], and come to thine old father for a little rest, as well as to recount to me what thou hast experienced."

'I did not much care about relaxing my meditation, but, seeing that my *Guru* had thus commanded, I was bound to go. I proceeded to demolish the wall, though it seemed to be a pity to have to do so, and was delaying a little. Thereupon, the *Guru's* lady came up, and asked me, "Son, art thou coming?" "I feel reluctant to pull down the wall," I answered. She replied, "Oh, never mind that. Thou knowest that the Profound Mystic Omens are very important. Besides, the Lāma's temper is quite short; and should there occur any bad omens through this delay, it will never do. So I will help thee to pull down the wall and to come out quickly." With that she pulled it down;¹ and I went out feeling altogether lost.

¹ The wall by which Milarepa was enclosed in his place of meditation was

'My *Guru* said, "While we two, father and son, shall be occupied in some rituals connected with this Meditation, do thou, Damema, prepare food." Then, while we were eating the meal, he asked, "My son, what beliefs or convictions hast thou arrived at regarding these Truths; what experiences, what insight, and what understanding hast thou obtained?" And he added, "Take thy time and recount them to me."

'Upon this, with deep and sincere humility, I knelt, and joining the palms of my hands, with tears in mine eyes, extemporaneously sang to my *Guru* a hymn of praise, offering him the sevenfold worship—as a prelude to submitting the narrative of mine experiences and convictions:

1

"To the impure eyes of them Thou seekest to liberate,
Thou manifestest Thyself in a variety of shapes;
But to those of Thy followers who have been purified,
Thou, Lord, appearest as a Perfected Being; obeisance to
Thee.

2

"With Thy Brahma-like voice, endowed with the sixty vocal
perfections,
Thou preachest the Holy Truths to each in his own speech,
Complete in their eighty-four thousand subjects;
Obeisance to Thy Word, audible yet inseparable from the
Voidness.

3

"In the Heavenly Radiance of *Dharma-Kāya* Mind,¹
There existeth not shadow of thing or concept,
Yet It prevadeth all objects of knowledge;
Obeisance to the Immutable, Eternal Mind.

4

"In the Holy Palace of the Pure and Spiritual Realms,
Thou Person illusory, yet changeless and selfless,
Thou Mother Divine of Buddhas, past, present, and future,
O Great Mother Damema, to Thy Feet I bow down.

a loose structure made of rough stones held together with mud, and therefore not difficult to pull down.

¹ See p. 36^b.

5

“[O *Guru*], to Thy children spiritual,
To Thy disciples who Thy word obey,
To each, with all his followers,
Obeisance humble and sincere I make.

6

“Whate’er there be, in all the systems of the many worlds,
To serve as offerings for the rites divine,
I offer unto Thee, along with mine own fleshly form ;
Of all my sins, may I be freed and purified.

7

“In merits earned by others, I rejoice ;
So set the Wheel of Truth in motion full, I pray ;
Until the Whirling Pool of Being emptied be,
Do not, O Noble *Guru*, from the world depart.

“I dedicate all merit from this Hymn,
Unto the Cause of Universal Good.”

‘Having, as a prelude, sung this hymn of seven stanzas, I then continued: “Inseparable from Dorje-Chang¹ Himself art thou, my *Guru*, with thy consort, and thine offspring. In virtue of thy fair and meritorious deeds, and of the power of the waves of grace proceeding from thy boundless generosity, and of thy kindness beyond repayment, I, thy vassal, have imbibed a little knowledge, in the sphere of understanding, which I now beg to lay before thee. Out of the unchanging State of Quiescence of Eternal Truth, be pleased to listen unto me for a little while.

“I have understood this body of mine to be the product of Ignorance, as set forth in the Twelve *Nidānas*,² composed of

¹ Or, Skt. *Vajra-Dhara* ; see pp. 10, 39^b.

² These are the twelve interconnected causes, as taught by Buddhism, which keep the Wheel of Birth and Death revolving. First there are the Past Causes : (1) *Avidyā* (Ignorance), due to non-realization that *sangsaric* existence—in worlds, hells, and even in heavens—is illusory and undesirable, that the One Reality is beyond all conditioned states of being, beyond the realm of things, of sensation, beyond Nature ; that it is the Unbecome, Unborn, Unmade, Unformed—*Nirvāṇa* ; (2) *Saṅskāra* (Mental Activity), arising from the Ignorance. Then come their Present Effects : (3) *Vijñāna* (Mundane Consciousness) within



THE SUPREME *GURU*
THE ĀDI-BUDDHA VAJRA-DHARA

Described on pages xxvii–xxviii, 8–10

flesh and blood, lit up by the perceptive power of consciousness. To those fortunate ones who long for Emancipation, it may be the great vessel by means of which they may procure Freedom and Endowments; but to those unfortunate ones, who only sin, it may be the guide to the lower and miserable states of existence. This, our life, is the boundary-mark whence one may take an upward or downward path. Our present time is a most precious time, wherein each of us must decide, in one way or the other, for lasting good or lasting ill. I have understood this to be the chief end of our present term of life. Here, again, by holding on to Thee, O powerful Lord and Saviour of sentient beings like myself, I hope to cross over this Ocean of Worldly Existence, the source of all pains and

the *Sangsāra*; (4) *Nāma-Rūpa* (Name and Form) concomitant with *sangsāric* existence; (5) *Ṣaḍāyatana* (Sixfold Organ) of the *sangsāric* body, leading to (6) *Sparsha* (Contact) and (7) *Vedanā* (Sensation). These are linked with Present Causes: (8) *Trishṇā* (Desire) for *sangsāric* sensation; (9) *Upādāna* (clinging) to *sangsāric* sensation; and (10) *Bhāva* (*Sangsāric* existence itself). Finally, there result the Future Effects of these ten *nidānas*: (11) *Jāti* (Birth); and (12) *Jarā-maraṇa* (Old Age and Death). This is one aspect of the Twelve *Nidānas*, or Twelve Links of the Chain of Causal Nexus. (Cf. The Earl of Ronaldshay, *Lands of the Thunderbolt*, London, 1923, pp. 53-6.) Another aspect, derived from the pictorial Wheel of Life, as found in Tibetan monastic art, may be outlined as follows: (1) *Avidyā* (Unconscious Will), as in the state of passing from death to rebirth; (2) *Saṅgskāra* (Conformations), as in the womb-state, preceding birth; (3) *Vijñāna* (Consciousness), at birth; (4) *Nāma-Rūpa* (Self-Consciousness), as personality develops and makes distinction between self and others, by name (*Nāma*) and form (*Rūpa*); (5) *Ṣaḍāyatana* (Sense-Surfaces and Understanding) in the outside world, as developed in the growing child; (6) *Sparsha* (Contact), the exercise by the youth of the sense organs; (7) *Vedanā* (Feeling), the resultant mental and physical sensations experienced; (8) *Trishṇā* (Desire), developed as a result of the sensations thus experienced; (9) *Upādāna* (Indulgence) of the desire, leading to clinging and greed and desire of an heir to inherit worldly possessions; (10) *Bhāva* (Fuller Life), in mature and married life, with means of obtaining an heir; (11) *Jāti* (Birth) of heir; (12) *Jarā-maraṇa* (Decay and Death) as the Cycle of Life completes itself. Thence the Wheel turns until out of death there come another rebirth, through *Avidyā*, the first of the *Nidānas*. (Cf. L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, London, 1895, p. 110.)

These two aspects are complementary to one another, and both are here given in order to help the student to grasp the inner significance of one of the most essential doctrines of all Schools of Buddhism. It is by treading the Noble Eightfold Path (as described on p. 140², following) that the Chain of Enslavement to the *Sangsāra*, to Nature, is broken, and the Slave set free in *Nirvāṇic* Bliss, all *karmic* necessity for further birth and death forever ended. And it is this Supreme Goal which Milarepa is believed to have won.

griefs, so difficult to escape from. But to be able to do so, it is first of all necessary for me to take refuge in the Precious Trinity,¹ and to observe and adopt in a sincere spirit the rules prescribed. In this, too, I see the *Guru* to be the main source and embodiment of all good and happiness that can accrue to me.

“Therefore do I realize the supreme necessity of obeying the *Guru's* commands and behests, and keeping my faith in him unsullied and staunch. After such realization, then deep meditation on the difficulty of obtaining the precious boon of a free and well-endowed human birth, on the uncertainty of the exact moment of death, on the certain effect of one's actions, and on the miseries of *sang-sāric* being, cannot fail to compel one to desire freedom and emancipation from all *sang-sāric* existence; and to obtain this, one must cleave to the staff of the Noble Eightfold Path,² by which only may a sentient being obtain that emancipation. Then, from the level of this Path, one must pass on, by degrees, to the Higher Paths, all the while observing one's vows as carefully as if they were one's own eyes, rebuilding or mending them should they become in the least impaired. I have understood that one who aimeth at his individual peace and happiness adopteth the Lower Path (the *Hinayāna*). But he, who from the very start, devoteth the merit of his love and compassion to the cause of others, I understand belongeth to the Higher Path (the *Mahā-yāna*). To leave the Lower Path and to enter upon the Higher Path, it is necessary to gain a clear view of the goal of one's aspirations, as set forth by the unexcelled Immutable Path (the *Vajra-Yāna*).

“Again, to gain a clear view of the Final Goal, it is essential to have a perfectly well-accomplished *Guru*, who knoweth every branch of the four kinds of initiatory rites without the slightest misunderstanding or doubt regarding them;

¹ Namely, the *Buddha*, the *Dharma* (or Doctrine), the *Saṅgha* (or Priesthood).

² This is the *Bodhi* Path, as taught by the Enlightened One. It may be verbally described as (1) Right Belief, or Right Seeing; (2) Right Aims, or Right Aspiring; (3) Right Speech; (4) Right Actions; (5) Right Means of Livelihood, or Right Living; (6) Right Endeavouring; (7) Right Mindfulness, or Right Remembering; and (8) Right Meditation.

he alone can make the Final Goal thoroughly explicit to a *shishya*. The ceremony of initiation conferreth the power of mastering abstruse and deep thoughts regarding the Final Goal. In meditating on the Final Goal, step by step, one hath to put forth all one's energies, both of grammatical and logical acumen; as well as, through moral and mental reasoning and internal search, to discover the non-existence of the personal Ego and, therefore, the fallacy of the popular idea that it existeth.¹ In realizing the non-existence of the personal Ego, the mind must be kept in quiescence. On being enabled, by various methods, to put the mind in that state as a result of a variety of causes, all [thoughts, ideas, and cognitions] cease, and the mind passeth from consciousness [of objects] into a state of perfect tranquillity, so that days, months, and years may pass without the person himself perceiving it; thus the passing of time hath to be marked for him by others. This state is called *Shi-nay* (Tranquil Rest). By not submitting oneself to the state of total oblivion and unconsciousness [of objects], but by exerting one's intellect or faculty of consciousness in this state, one gaineth the clear ecstatic state of quiescent consciousness.

“Although there be this state, which may be called a state of superconsciousness (*Lhag-tong*), nevertheless, individuals, or ego-entities, so long as they are such, are incapable of experiencing it. I believe that it is only experienced when one hath gained the first [superhuman] state [on the Path to Buddhahood]. Thus, by thought-process and visualization, one treadeth the Path. The visions of the forms of the Deities upon which one meditateth are merely the signs attending perseverance in meditation. They have no intrinsic worth or value in themselves.²

¹ “Five things there are,” said a sage in India, “namely, Being, Light, Bliss, Name, and Form. The first three are of the Supreme, the other two are of the [material] world.”—Sj. Atal Bihari Ghosh.

² The objective forms of deities—like the illusory visualizations produced by practices of meditation upon them and frequently outwardly projected as hallucinatory images—are, in the last analysis of the Enlightened Mind, non-existent, being no more real than the objective forms of human beings or of any other objects of Nature. In the *Bardo Thödol* (see the Sixth Day) it is said, ‘The deities . . . exist from eternity within the faculties of thine own

“To sum up, a vivid state of mental quiescence, accompanied by energy, and a keen power of analysis, by a clear and inquisitive intellect, are indispensable requirements; like the lowest rungs of a ladder, they are absolutely necessary to enable one to ascend. But in the process of meditating on this state of mental quiescence (*Shi-nay*), by mental concentration, either on forms and shapes, or on shapeless and formless things, the very first effort must be made in a compassionate mood, with the aim of dedicating the merit of one's efforts to the Universal Good. Secondly, the goal of one's aspirations must be well defined and clear, soaring into the regions transcending thought. Finally, there is need of mentally praying and wishing for blessings on others so earnestly that one's mind-processes also transcend thought. These, I understand, to be the highest of all Paths.

“Then, again, as the mere name of food doth not satisfy the appetite of a hungry person, but he must eat food, so, also, a man who would learn about the Voidness¹ [of Thought] must meditate so as to realize it, and not merely learn its definition. Moreover, to obtain the knowledge of the state of superconsciousness (*Lhag-tong*), one must practise and accustom oneself to the mechanical attainment of the recurrence of the above practices without intermission. In short, habituation to

intellect.' That is, they so exist only when man is regarded as the microcosm of the macrocosm. Likewise, the *Dēmchog Tantra*, into which Milarepa has been initiated, says that the '*Devatās* are but symbols representing the various things which occur on the Path, such as the helpful impulses and the stages attained by their means'; and that 'should doubts arise as to the divinity of these *Devatās*, one should say "the *Dākinī* is only the recollection of the body"', and remember that the Deities constitute the Path'. (Cf. A. Avalon, *Tantrik Texts*, London, 1919, vol. vii. 41.)

¹ Text: *Tong-pa-nyid*: Skt. *Shūnyatā*, here meaning Voidness [of Thought], with reference to a transcendental or *Nirvāṇic* state of unmodified or primordial consciousness. As in Patanjali's definition of *Yoga* (in his *Yoga Aphorisms* i, 2), as 'the suppression of the transformations of the thinking principle' or, as otherwise translated, as 'the restraint of mental modifications', this Voidness [of Thought] is not the voidness of nothingness, but a state of supramundane mind only capable of being known—as Milarepa explains—by the Perfected *Yogi* who has realized it. It is the indescribable state wherein the limited personal consciousness becomes merged, but not lost, in the unlimited cosmic All-Consciousness—like a raindrop merged in an infinite ocean, or like the light of a lamp merged in the light of the sun.

the contemplation of Voidness, of Equilibrium, of the Indescribable, and of the Incognizable, forms the four different stages of the Four Degrees of Initiation,—graduated steps in the ultimate goal of the mystic *Vajra-Yāna* [or Immutable Path]. To understand these thoroughly, one must sacrifice bodily ease and all luxuriousness, and, with this in mind, face and surmount every obstacle, being ever willing to sacrifice life itself, and prepared for every possible contingency.

“As for myself, I have not the means to recompense thee, my *Guru* and the Reverend Mother,—my benefactors; your loving kindness is beyond my power to repay by any offer of worldly wealth or riches. So I will repay you by a lifelong devotion to meditation, and I will complete my final study of your Teachings in the 'Og-min Heaven.¹

“To my *Guru*, the Great Dorje-Chang,
To Damema, the Mother of all Buddhas,
And to all Princes Royal, the *Avatāras*,
I make as offering, to Their ears, this essence of my learning
gleaned.

“If there be heresy or error in my speech,
I pray that They will kindly pardon it,
And set me then upon the Righteous Path.

“Lord, from the sun-orb of Thy Grace,
The radiant Rays of Light have shone,
And opened wide the petals of the Lotus of my Heart,
So that it breatheth forth the fragrance born of Knowledge,
For which I am for ever bounden unto Thee;
So will I worship Thee by constant meditation.

“Vouchsafe to bless me in mine efforts,
That good may come to every sentient being.
Lastly, I ask forgiveness, too, for any lavishness of words.”

‘My *Guru* was delighted, and said, “My son, I had ex-

¹ This, the Heaven of the Ādi-Buddha, is the last outpost of the *Sangsāra* (i. e. the Universe of Nature). Within the 'Og-min Heaven, as the text suggests, it is possible, as it is on Earth, to realize *Nirvāṇa*, and thus escape the *Sangsāra* wholly, and for ever. (See p. 44¹, above.)

pected much from thee; my expectations have been fulfilled." Next the lady said, "I knew that my son had the will and intellect to succeed." Both were highly gratified, and we conversed on religious topics for a long time. Then my *Guru* and his lady took leave of me, and I resumed my meditations in the close retreat.

'About this time, my *Guru*, being on a pastoral tour in the North Uru villages, was performing a religious ceremony in one Marpa Golay's house when he had a vision. In it the *Dākinīs* appeared, and reminded him of some enigmatical hints of his *Guru* Naropa, which, when given, he had not understood; and these the *Dākinīs* interpreted and explained to him. The outcome of this led him to go to India to see Naropa.

'Then, one night, some days after my *Guru* had returned to Wheat Valley, I dreamt that a woman of somewhat dark blue colour, dressed in silks and beautifully adorned with the six bone ornaments, having eyebrows and eyelashes of a golden hue, appeared to me, and said, "Son, by long continued application to meditation thou hast obtained the Truths of the Great Symbol,¹ which will enable thee to attain *Nirvāna*. Thou hast also obtained the Six Doctrines.² But thou lackest

¹ Tib. *Phyag-rgya-ch'en-po* (pron. *Chag-gya-ch'en-po*): Skt. *Mahā-Mudrā*: 'Great Symbol'. This is one of the chief systems of *yogic* meditation of the Kargyütpa School. Judging from an English translation of a text of this *Yoga*, which the Editor and the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup worked out together, in Gangtok, Sikkim, it is a system developed under Tibetan influences, but essentially Indian by origin.

To an Indian *yogī*, *Mahā-Mudrā* denotes a *yogic* posture, but here, in this Tibetan sense, a state attained by *yoga* practices, whereby, as the text of *The Great Symbol* explains, 'one obtaineth the highest boon of The Great Symbol, . . . *Nirvāna*'.

² Tib. *Chos-drug* (pron. *Cho-dug*): 'Six Doctrines (or Truths)'. This, like the *Great Symbol*, is a treatise expounding the practical application of various *Yogas*, more or less of Indian origin. An old block-print copy of the Tibetan text of the *Six Doctrines*, with English translation by the late Lāma Kazi Dawa-Samdup and the Editor, gives the Six Doctrines as follows: (1) *Gtum-mo* (pron. *Tum-mo*): 'Vital Warmth (or Psychic Heat)', the acquisition of which is necessary for the sake of physical comfort in Tibet and, also, as a driving force for the devotee seeking spiritual development; (2) *Sgyu-lūs* (pron. *Gyu-lū*): 'Illusory Body', a teaching whereby the *yogī* realizes that his own body and all objects of Nature, being *sangsāric*, are illusory; (3) *Rmi-lam* (pron. *Mi-lam*): 'Dreams',

the precious teaching of the *Drong-jug*¹ by which thou mayst attain Buddhahood in an instant; and this thou must procure."

'I thought over the dream, and concluded that the woman was a *Dākinī*, since she had all the appearance of one. Nevertheless, I was doubtful whether the vision was an intimation from the *Dākinīs* of some coming event or a temptation from *Mārā*.² Anyway, I was firmly convinced that my *Guru*, the Embodiment of the Buddhas, past, present, and future, would certainly be able to tell me, since there could be nothing which he did not know. Especially as regarded knowledge, I knew that his understanding embraced its whole extent, from the Sacred Truths above-mentioned [whereby *Nirvāna* is obtained] to the science of patching broken earthenware. And if he took it to be a premonitory revelation, I should have to obtain the *Drong-jug*. So I pulled down the partition, plastered together with mud, and went to my *Guru*. He seemed shocked, and said, "Why hast thou come, instead of remaining in close retreat? Thou runnest the risk of incurring some mishap." I informed him of my dream and said I wanted to be assured whether it was a revelation or a temptation; if the former, I begged that he should bestow on me the revealed science for which I had come. He sat in silence for some time, and then said, "Yes, that was a revelation from the *Dākinīs*. When I was about to return from India, my *Guru*, the great

a teaching whereby the *yogī* realizes that even as dreams are illusory so are all *sangsāric* experiences, in the waking state and in the sleeping state equally; (4) *Hod-gsal* (pron. *Öd-sal*): 'Clear Light', defined, in the text, as follows: 'It hath been said that the unmodified, phenomena-transcending mind (or mind in the *yogic* state of non-thought)—which is the Thatness of all things and inseparable from the Voidness, the Ultimate—while experiencing the thought-transcending Great Bliss [of Ecstatic Illumination] is the Clear Light'; (5) *Bar-do*: 'Intermediate State' [between death and rebirth], which teaches the *yogī* how to traverse death and rebirth without break of consciousness; and (6) *Hpho-va* (pron. *Pho-wa*): 'Transference', the science of voluntarily transferring, from body to body or from place to place, the principle of consciousness. Cf. pp. 154-6.

¹ This, too, is a *yogic* treatise, but the Editor has not made a study of it.

² *Mārā* is here the Evil One, the Devil-Tempter of Buddhism. As the Devil tempted the Christ ('The Anointed One') in the Wilderness, so *Mārā* tempted the Buddha ('The Enlightened One') under the Bo-Tree at Budh-Gaya, when He was attaining Enlightenment.

