

In this excerpt from the early 1950's Rinpoche is travelling around the Kongpo region in South-eastern Tibet with a monk companion. They approach the gates of a large house in order to request food and shelter.....



Dob Dob in Lhasa.
Early 20th Century

The main gate opened a little and out came a burly intimidating monk. As we got closer the smell of beer wafted from him. He was one of those monks known as *dobdob* from Lhasa's three main monasteries, Sera, Drepung and Ganden. These were in central Tibet, about fifteen days' journey from Kongpo, so it was impossible that any *dobdob* would be in that area. At that time there was no means of transport such as cars, trains or planes, and, no cause for this monk to be there.

I thought to myself, 'A *dobdob*? There's no reason for him to be here in this remote place' so I asked him, "Hey, where did you come from?"

"I am none other than Prati Ngagchang" he replied.

"Prati Ngagchang!" I exclaimed, "He passed away a long time ago. He was a contemporary of the great tantric Nyingma Terton, Rigdzin Jatson Nyingpo, also known as the Yogi Hungnag Mebar. I have some of his relics which I keep with me as blessings". Then the *dobdob* said "You are also one of Guru Padmasambhava's great Terton, for that reason, from Ngayab Ling you were given the name Kunzang Dechen Lingpa. Don't you remember?"

"I am known as Lhodrak Terton, you may have heard that. However, with the exception of one or two people, Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, also known as Drodul Lingpa, has not told this name to anyone. You say that I am a Terton, but I have nothing to reveal"

Now that *dobdob* was extremely intoxicated and really stank of beer. From within the folds of his robes he drunkenly took out a big yak horn filled with tobacco snuff. "Want a drag?" he offered. Then I became very suspicious of this man. I thought, 'it's really weird the way he looks and reeks of beer. Maybe it is just a manifestation of gods and demons'.

"I am a practitioner of the Nyingma faith" I replied. "I cannot take snuff. Guru Padmasambhava has said that it is an extremely grave offense." To this, the *dobdob* countered, "To a great master who has realized the intrinsic nature of reality, there is no good or bad, this is Dri Dorje ma (vajra scent goddess) is it not?" He crooked his thumb, wrapped his index finger around it, poured in the snuff and snorted. Then, forming the letters of the alphabet with his body, he began to sing melodiously. Into the song he integrated the first syllables of the alphabet, Ka Kha Ga Nga - and also integrated my name, Kunzang Dechen Lingpa...

"In the perfect state of self liberation, the primordially pure natural condition;

Ever- excellent supreme bliss of luminous emptiness,

Free from beginning or end.

By perfecting this great path, where ever you dwell,

You are never apart from Ngayab Ling."

When I heard that I got kind of a special experience and felt compelled to respond in kind. So I sang back with the subsequent syllables of the Tibetan alphabet integrating them into my own song...

“Monk, you talk too much!

I don't know from where you came.

I do not possess fine goods,

But to benefit sentient beings is paramount, and that is my way of life.”

“You’re lying” he said “From Ngayab Ling Guru Padmasambhava prophesied that you will become a great Tertön and, that I should help and protect you as much as I am able”.

Now at that time it was autumn, and the *dobdob* went on to say, “next spring in the fourth month, on the fifteenth day of the waxing moon, you will meet a special sixteen year old girl. She is a terma consort who is a unified emanation of Yeshe Tsogyal and Yangchenma. In order to practice the swift path, it is essential to make an auspicious connection with her. If that connection is formed, then, behind Namcha Barwa Mountain you will come to a valley shaped like a *melong* (Tibetan divination mirror). In the centre of that there is a rock shaped like a die. On the front is the letter HUNG written with blood from the nose of Vairotsana. To the protector spirits of this place you should make smoke offering, drink offerings and a small red *torma*. Then, if you dig (at the terma door) with a steel chisel, inside you will find a guide to Pemako, lots of good advice and, most importantly, a list of the innumerable treasures you will reveal. Go there, take them and benefit sentient beings!”

As soon as he had said this he returned inside and the main gate closed. Then, after a little while, the lady of that house came out carrying a bag of wheat and some beer for us. As for my monk companion, it seemed that this *dobdob* was invisible to him because

he asked me “Rinpoche, who were you just talking to?” I thought to myself, ‘I wonder whether this Prati Ngagchang is my own dharma protector?’

(Next Spring) on the eleventh day of Saga Dawa (fourth month), I returned to Lower Kongpo. It was on the fifteenth day at about three o’ clock when I arrived at the main gate of a wealthy land-owner’s house. There I saw a young girl emerge from a store house carrying flour, butter and beer offerings and enter into the kitchen. As I got nearer to the house, the girl came out.

“Excuse me?” I asked, “I need a place to stay tonight?”

“ Yes, you can stay here in our shrine room” the girl replied.

After I had rested a little while, she came to me and said “My father has been ill for a very long time, will you perform a long life empowerment and puja for him?”

Due to that prophecy from before, I was quite taken aback. Realizing that an auspicious connection was forming, I said that I would. So I stayed there for about three days and did the long life puja. While I was sitting there reciting the rituals, the girl would come around with food and tea for me and my monk companion. Since I had previously received a prediction that I would meet a girl around this time, I thought, ‘well, it must be her’ so I asked if she practiced Dharma.

“I think to myself that by any means I must practice Dharma” she replied. “However, both my parents have grown old and have no son. I am their only helper, so until now I have been left behind.”

I said “If you wish to practice Dharma, will you come with me?”

“If Rinpoche leads, surely I will follow” she said.

I told the girl that I should consult with her parents. Then, when I met her mother, she told me her daughter's background and why she was so special. She said, "A long time ago, in the winter, on the tenth day of the tenth month, when this girl was born, peach blossom of all different colours flowered in the trees. When she was three years old, she became sick so we requested a divination from Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche. He said "This girl is of noble character" and told us to recite one million Vajra Guru Mantras. So we did as he advised." Then, the mother said "However, we have no other child. She is our only helper. There is no way to offer her to you. If you stay here and become the girl's husband, then this would be acceptable".



Nam La. 'The sky pass'. Taken in 1925 by F. Kingdon Ward.

At that time I was quite young; of course, it would be fine to become the girl's husband, but I didn't want to stay there permanently. Later (in my life), when I discussed this with the Queen Mother of Bhutan she said to me, "Well, if you had just become her husband and moved in, you could have stayed one month and then taken her away with you. Why didn't you do that?" But I just didn't think like that.

I thought there was no other alternative but to leave her behind. So, I left and decided to travel on around the left side of Namcha Barwa Mountain where there is a pass called Nam la. It was here that I crossed over into Pemako.

On the way down I came to a beautiful valley and rested there. The next day, when I went down a little way to a lower valley; I saw that it was the place that the strange monk had prophesied. It looked exactly as he described; except he had told me it was behind Namcha Barwa Mountain, but actually it was behind that pass called Nam la.

There was a waterfall that resembled two hands cupped together and a round meadow shaped like a mirror.



A glacial valley in Pemako. Keith Rushforth,2001.

In the centre of that I saw a die shaped rock and on its east side it was marked with a red HUNG. However, because the auspicious circumstance of taking that girl as a consort had been lost, I couldn't reveal the earth treasures I was supposed to reveal. There was nothing to be done. What was done was done. Accepting this and making aspiration prayers, I just let it be and left.

Later, when I thought about this whole story, I understood that this strange monk was not actually a monk. He was a manifestation of the protector of those treasures. In order to reveal earth treasures, as taught by Guru Rinpoche, it is essential to convene the auspicious circumstances. It depends entirely on fulfilling propitious connections as well as on the merit of the beings. But it wasn't possible for me to reveal earth treasures because of that lost connection.

Since then, by close investigation of favourable portents, some mind treasure has descended to a small degree; I have sown these seeds for the sake of the teachings. Up until this time, I lived the life of a wandering beggar, meeting and learning from great spiritual masters, and since I have remained practicing the Dharma....