**Letter to Indestructible Goodness**By Acharya Isaac Wostrel-Rubin

*Dear Indestructible Goodness,*

*In light of the situation of sentient beings connected to Shambhala during the unfolding of the circumstances that caused the lineage to decline in some of our hearts, with a heavy heart and the intention to return in the future with the capacity to benefit sentient beings through untangling some of the devious institutional, cultural, and personal demons we all generate(d) and submit to, I left. Now, I present this Chapter Twenty One of Shambhala: Sacred Path of the Warrior by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche to remind those of us who share this special connection how our hearts were originally touched by these teachings and whatever teachings we have connected with, because in this book Trungpa Rinpoche is discussing the radical idea of a society built to awaken itself in perpetuity, irrespective of beings’ priors. What an amazing vision! Unfortunately, it has truly declined as an outer manifestation. So sad! What can be done? To the best of my ability, I have tried to distill Trungpa Rinpoche’s incredible bodhichitta vision and heart into my entire being and resolve myself in meditation. When I awoke to the cobweb-shit of my own cocoon, I was surprised when, delighting in the freshness of my experience, my cocoon suddenly collapsed and revealed the eternal morning of Shambhala, the vision of the Great Eastern Sun. My mind became the Imperial Rigden and the lineage radiated blessing phenomena that filled up the entire field of my presence with the power of the four dignities and the ultimate excellent windhorse of the Universal Monarch, the Master Warrior, spontaneously present as myriad gifts of basic goodness for all sentient beings – how delightful! In the visionary intent of the Fearless Heroic Master Warriors of All-Time, I humbly confess all my faults and misdeeds as well as any mistakes in putting myself forth as the torma. The only reason is because it truly seems like I’m the only one who can do this for us - I take responsibility for that and for the grandiose idea that a sentient being can do it - that we can do it together - that is, achieve the wisdom intent. From the bottom of my heart, I promise I will never abandon or deceive any of you, whose names are Indestructible Goodness, and I extend the deepest and warmest invitation to practice your path according to the Great Anarchocryptowisdomist Mandala!*

*This letter is sealed with love by my intention and my bodhisattva name given in the tradition of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, Lu-Me Ser Nying (Guileless Gold Heart) bestowed by Drukthuk Thaye, and my Shambhala name, Good Gentle Sword bestowed by Miyowa Rigpa. These names have profound meanings. Contemplate them and you will see - I have not deceived you, while gently cutting my cocoon to expose my gold heart’s blood to you! Ki Ki So So Lha Gyal Lo! In this, have confidence.*

*PS: Charlatans, people of little confidence, and destitute believers in the false refuge of the Setting Sun view of vacillation between the two extremes of Grasper and Grasped, in other words, those who fall prey to the thieves of wrong views - your trials are welcomed in the Grand Universal Arena, the Proving Grounds of Warriorship! Beware and enter with caution: it is quite easy to battle a raging demon, but whatever will you do when you find yourself armored to the teeth in the proving grounds, alone being laughed at by the crowd of your own hopes and fears?*

*If you understand this, you are a Child of Ever-Excellent Basic Goodness, so come out and play!*

TWENTY-ONE

THE SHAMBHALA LINEAGE

The idea of lineage in the Shambhala teachings relates to one’s connection with primordial wisdom. That wisdom is accessible and extremely simple, but also vast and profound. Making the journey of warriorship depends first of all on your personal realization of genuineness and basic goodness. However, in order to continue the journey, in order to tread the path of the four dignities and achieve authentic presence, it is necessary to have a guide—a master warrior to show you the way. Ultimately, giving up selfishness, or ego, is possible only if you have a living, human example—someone who has already done so and therefore makes it possible for you to do the same. In this chapter, we are going to discuss the notion of lineage in the Shambhala teachings, that is, how the complete realization of sanity can be handed down to a human being in the Shambhala world so that he or she can embody that sanity and promote its attainment in others. So in this chapter we are going to consider the qualities of the master warrior and how they are transmitted, both to and by the warrior. Fundamentally, the notion of lineage in the Shambhala teachings is connected with how the wisdom of the cosmic mirror, which we discussed in part 2, is transmitted and continued in human life, human existence.

To review briefly, the quality of the cosmic mirror is that it is unconditioned, vast open space. It is an eternal and completely open space, space beyond question. In the realm of the cosmic mirror, your mind extends its vision completely, beyond doubt. Before thoughts, before the thinking process takes place, there is the accommodation of the cosmic mirror, which has no boundary—no center and no fringe. As we discussed, the way to experience this space is through the sitting practice of meditation. As we discussed in chapter 12, “Discovering Magic,” experiencing the realm of the cosmic mirror gives rise to wisdom—the wisdom of vast and deep perception, beyond conflict, which is called drala. There are various levels of experiencing drala. The primordial or ultimate level of drala is experiencing directly the wisdom of the cosmic mirror. When you experience that wisdom, then you are contacting the origin of the Shambhala lineage, the source of wisdom. In the first chapter of this book we discussed the myths surrounding the historical kingdom of Shambhala and the Shambhala rulers. As we discussed there, some people believe that this kingdom still lies hidden somewhere on earth, while others see the kingdom as a metaphor or even believe that it ascended to the heavens at some point. But according to the way in which we have been discussing the Shambhala teachings, the source of these teachings—or, we could say, the kingdom of Shambhala itself—is not some mysterious heavenly realm. It is the realm of the cosmic mirror, the primordial realm that is always available to human beings if they relax and expand their minds. From this point of view, the imperial rulers of Shambhala, who are called the Rigden kings, are the inhabitants of the cosmic mirror. They are the primordial manifestation of the wisdom of vast mind, the ultimate wisdom of drala. Therefore, they are referred to as ultimate drala.

Ultimate drala has three characteristics. First, it is primordial, which, as we have discussed, is not going back to the Stone Age or something prehistoric, but it is going one step beyond or before we ever think of anything at all. That is the state of being of the Rigden kings who occupy the cosmic mirror as their kingdom. The second quality is unchangingness. There are no second thoughts in the realm of the Rigden kings. Second thought refers to flickering mind, not having confidence in the purity of your perception, so that your mind wavers and hesitates. Here there are no second thoughts. It is an unchanging realm, completely unchanging. The third quality of ultimate drala is bravery. Bravery means you are not giving in even to any potential doubts; in fact, there is no room for any doubts whatsoever in this realm.

So, when you contact the wisdom of the cosmic mirror, you are meeting the ultimate dralas, the Rigden kings of Shambhala. Their vast vision lies behind all the activities of humanity, in the open, unconditioned space of mind itself. In that way, they watch over and protect human affairs, so to speak. However, this is quite different from the notion that the Rigdens are living on some celestial plane, from which they look down at the earth. Once you have made a connection to ultimate drala, it is possible for the primordial wisdom and vision of the Rigden kings to be passed down to the level of human perception. As we discussed in chapter 12, the vastness of perception can be captured in simplicity, a single perception, on the spot. When we allow vastness to enter our perception, then it becomes drala; it becomes brilliant and luminous—magical. When we have this experience, then we are meeting what are called the inner dralas.

The inner dralas are empowered by the wisdom of the cosmic mirror, the Rigdens, to manifest brilliance and elegance in this phenomenal world. The inner dralas are divided into the mother and father lineages. The mother lineage represents gentleness, and the father lineage represents fearlessness. Gentleness and fearlessness are the first two qualities of inner drala. When someone is actually able to dwell in the world of brilliance and freedom from accepting and rejecting, the world of experiencing drala in all phenomena, then he or she automatically experiences tremendous gentleness and fearlessness in that space. The third quality of inner drala is intelligence, or discriminating awareness, which binds together gentleness and fearlessness. With discriminating awareness, gentleness is not ordinary gentleness, but it becomes the experience of sacred world. And fearlessness goes beyond bravado to manifest elegance and richness in a person’s life. So the basic sharpness of awareness binds gentleness and fearlessness to create the warrior’s world of vast but appreciative perception. Finally, the wisdom of ultimate and inner drala can be transmitted to a living human being. In other words, by realizing completely the cosmic mirror principle of unconditionality and by invoking that principle utterly in the brilliant perception of reality, a human being can become living drala—living magic. That is how one joins the lineage of Shambhala warriors and becomes a master warrior—not just by invoking but by embodying drala.

So the master warrior embodies the outer drala principle. The basic quality of the master warrior is that his presence evokes the experience of the cosmic mirror and the magic of perception in others. That is, his very being transcends duality on the spot, and thus he is said to have complete authentic presence. When the warrior students experience this overwhelming genuineness, it allows them and provokes them to go beyond their own selfishness, beyond ego, in an instant. This, I think, is a rather difficult concept to grasp, so perhaps we should talk in greater depth about the qualities of the master warrior so that this becomes more clear. To begin with, the birth of the master warrior takes place in the realm of the cosmic mirror, where there is no beginning or end—there is simply a state of vastness. Her realization, or her state of being, is not purely the result of training or philosophy. Rather, she has relaxed completely into the unconditional purity of the cosmic mirror. Therefore, she has experienced unconditional wakefulness, free from ego. Because she always has access to that unconditioned space, she is never subject to the confusion or sleepiness of selfishness, at all. She is totally awake. And thus, also, the energy of the master warrior is always connected with ultimate drala, the vast vision of the Rigden kings. So she is free from confusion.

Secondly, because the master warrior has completely identified himself with the lineage of wisdom of the Rigden kings, he begins to develop great tenderness, great compassion, which is witnessing basic goodness in all beings. When the master warrior views the world around him, he knows that all human beings possess basic goodness and that they are entitled to realize the principle of their own genuineness, at least. And beyond that, they have the possibility to give birth to the universal monarch in themselves. Therefore, great generosity and great compassion take place in the mind of the master warrior. She finds that the Great Eastern Sun has entered her heart completely, so completely that she actually manifests the brilliance of the Great Eastern Sun, extending its light rays to sentient beings who suffer in the twilight of the setting sun. The master warrior sees the complete path of warriorship, and she is able to extend that path, provide that path, to warrior students—to any human being who longs to fulfill his or her precious human birth.

Finally, the master warrior, out of his great compassion for human beings, is able to join heaven and earth. That is to say, the ideals of human beings and the ground where human beings stand can be joined together by the power of the master warrior. Then heaven and earth begin to dance with each other, and human beings feel that there is no quarrel about who possesses the best part of heaven or the worst part of earth. In order to join heaven and earth, you need confidence and trust in yourself. But then beyond that, in joining heaven and earth, you have to go beyond selfishness. You have to be without selfishness. If someone thinks, “Now I have it? Ha, ha!” that doesn’t work. Joining heaven and earth happens only if you go beyond an egoistic attitude. No one can join heaven and earth together if he is selfish, because then he has neither heaven nor earth. He is stuck instead in a plastic realm, an artificial realm, which is horrific. Joining heaven and earth comes only from being beyond desire—beyond your selfish needs. It comes from passionlessness, transcending desire. If the master warrior were drunk on her own authentic presence, then it would be disastrous. Therefore, the master warrior is very humble, extremely humble. Her humbleness comes from working with others. When you work with others, you realize the need to be patient, to give space and time to others to develop their own understanding of goodness and of warriorship.

If you are frantic and try to push basic goodness onto others, then nothing happens except further chaos. Knowing that, you become extremely humble and patient in working with others. You let things assume their own shape in their own time. So patience is extending gentleness and faith to others all the time. You never lose faith in their basic goodness, in their ability to actualize nowness and sacredness, in their ability to become warriors in the world. The master warrior guides his students with patience, and he also provides gentleness—being without aggression. Then he also guides his students by being true—being stable and solid. If truth were like a fluttering flag in the wind, you would never know which side you were looking at. So the idea here is that being true is being solid and completely stable, like a mountain. You can rely on the sanity of the master warrior; it never wavers. He is completely genuine. Because there is no fear in the master warrior’s own state of mind or in her physical being, the process of helping others takes place constantly. The mind of the master warrior is thoroughly free from laziness. In extending herself fearlessly to others, the master warrior expresses intense interest in the activities of her students—from the level of what they have for dinner up to the level of their state of mind, whether they are happy or sad, joyful or depressed. So mutual humor and appreciation can take place naturally between the master warrior and the warrior students. But most important, in every activity of his life, in every action he takes, there is always magic—always.

In whatever he does, the master warrior of Shambhala guides the minds of his students into the visionary mind of the Rigden kings, the space of the cosmic mirror. He constantly challenges his students to step beyond themselves, to step out into the vast and brilliant world of reality in which he abides. The challenge that he provides is not so much that he is always setting hurdles for his students or egging them on. Rather, his authentic presence is a constant challenge to be genuine and true. Altogether then, the idea of lineage in the Shambhala teachings relates to one’s connection with primordial wisdom. That wisdom is accessible and extremely simple, but also vast and profound. The way to despotism and corruption lies in clinging to concepts, without access to a pure realm in which hope and fear are unknown.

In the realm of the cosmic mirror, clinging to concept and doubt has never been heard of, and those who have proclaimed the true goodness, the innate primordial goodness, of human beings, have always had access to this realm, in some form. Over the centuries, there have been many who have sought the ultimate good and have tried to share it with their fellow human beings. To realize it requires immaculate discipline and unflinching conviction. Those who have been fearless in their search and fearless in their proclamation belong to the lineage of master warriors, whatever their religion, philosophy, or creed. What distinguishes such leaders of humanity and guardians of human wisdom is their fearless expression of gentleness and genuineness—on behalf of all sentient beings. We should venerate their example and acknowledge the path that they have laid for us. They are the fathers and mothers of Shambhala, who make it possible, in the midst of this degraded age, to contemplate enlightened society.

*Excerpted from Trungpa, Chögyam. Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior (Shambhala Classics). Shambhala. Kindle Edition.*

*PSS: Warrior student, do you recognize your mother’s love? Do you recognize your father’s encouragement and support? Come, come! I will show you the way to the pure land of the cosmic mirror of your own heart — the way home.*