Hi Isaac,

Your letter started out in one direction and ended in a very different one.

I think you are just frustrated by all the negativity in Samsara.

The problem is, it’s samsara, so it’s not going to go well no matter how enlightened any one of us is. One of the reasons VCTR gave for the Kasung – noting that I was never a Kasung so I did not receive those teachings directly – was just as you say, because there was no such army in Tibet. However, the Vidyadhara hasn’t been around for a long time.

All or nearly all of the dorje kasung are just students on the path and are primarily working with non-aggression.

Gesar is the example we look to, as a progenitor of our lineage. But reading his life is pretty cryptic. I don’t ever get “example” from it.

In the time, 5 years ago, when Shambhala was going through enormous destructive chaos, it really was terrifying – there was nowhere to hide from enemy fire. If you said anything, poked your head up, it was immediately blown off. And often if you laid low, someone came and found you and blew your head off – usually an old friend. So, I honestly don’t have any answers on that front.

It was not fun. Maybe not as treacherous as Ukraine or Israel/Gaza, but terrifying just the same.

The theories are all great. Samsara is not playing that game.

\*\*\*

I have laid low for a while because I had some things to discuss with you and not exactly sure how to do so, but I am going to write a few things here, taking the invitation from your reaching out.   
  
Firstly, I’m sorry I did not see your writing “The Future Buddha” when you sent it. It arrived the day before my trip to Nepal, and I must have opened the email and not saved it as new, so it just disappeared into the inbox haze.

I felt you took this as a slight, but it was just that I missed it entirely. My genuine apology for that. When you reminded me a few weeks later and I had no memory of it, I could tell that you were hurt and-or irritated.

Once I started to read it I had difficulty which I think is because of your poetic-ness, which you refer to below. I found it to be too heady for me, and could not get to the actual teachings. I am neither a poet nor someone who connects through poetry.

Vajra family. I prefer straightforward writing.

On top of which I do not read dharma unless I am studying for something or reading specifically about a practice I am doing.

I read novels, literature. I have dozens of books on my shelf that I aspire to read, so I am not the person to ask to read extra dharma things.

A couple of people have asked me to read their pre-publication manuscripts and I embarrassedly have to tell them I can’t. So, the Future Buddha hit the brick wall of my density.

All this brought something up though about our relationship, which I would like to address and if you like, we can talk about it on zoom or on a phone call. Most of the people I connect with in the way we do are coming to me for path guidance. That is where our relationship began but not where it has been for some time. So I often don’t know what our relationship is.

I appreciate that you come to me, and that we talk, but I am not clear *why* you come to me.

1. Because you are both highly experienced and not full of shit and you would prefer to have direct conversations.

Further, I am often confused by your relationship with your teacher and where you see yourself in that mandala.

Yes. That is because I do not share this experience, since it is highly likely not to be received well. Here it is:  
  
My teacher’s name is Ngakpa Karma Yeshe Namgyal. His teacher is Karma Thinley Rinpoche IV. He was given the titles of Ngakchang and Rinpoche. Ngakchang means Secret Holder or essentially Ngakpa Master. He is called Rinpoche because he was recognized as an incarnation of a lama with merit (lineage friend), from the area of Golok.

Here are the issues that come up, which I am presenting because I really do not quite understand and only after, um, not-reading your book did the issues come front of mind: I have been practicing for over 50 years and I am an advanced practitioner and I know how that came about.

You have been practicing a much shorter time but see yourself as a very advanced practitioner, and you may be, but it is not what I have ever seen before.

At some point in the last couple of years you referred to yourself as an Acharya and you said that your teacher (whose name I don’t recall and would like to know) asked you to write a book of His teachings.

But my sense was that the book you wrote were your teachings.. or at least very much in your own voice.

And at other times I think or felt that you saw yourself as having exceeded your teacher – I think you said this at one point in the last year or so.

In my experience the path of Vajrayana is very much about devotion, a heart journey, and submission to the teacher. Naropa to Tilopa. Marpa to Naropa. Mila to Marpa. Gampopa to Mila. Losing all your ground. For me, that is the path. The blessings only flow down. This is a core understanding in my journey.

I have not heard you express that with your teacher.

So, I stayed away these last few months because

a) it is difficult to address these things and I am probably a coward, but

b) I am always very busy and this summer was extremely busy – away more than I was home and with houseguests in between -- until the last 3 weeks.

But we have worked and communicated together for quite a number of years, and we did vows together so there is a strong karmic connection, presumably lifetimes.

So I would like to talk about these things if you’re willing.

I hope it is alright that I’ve written these direct thoughts. I have held them for a while and in fact, thought of you just a night or two before receiving your letter.

Sending all my love,

Eric

In case you don't believe me about the notion that this is part of what's supposed to happen, I will write this short story of when I was last with Tulku Shadpa.

Obviously paraphrasing and writing from memory:

"Shadpa-la, do you meditate?"

"Yes, of course."

"Ok. What kind? Thogal, right?"

"Sometimes. I know it. I have done it. But I like to sit in Mahamudra instead, because there are no visions. Visions do not make much sense, okay? Easy to get confused."

"Great. So you have visions. They are confusing because they make everyone think they're becoming mahasiddhas or something. What happens in your visions?"

"I don't think I should say. It's not correct to talk about them unless you are a teacher."

"What if I describe to you what your visions are like, then you would have to say that I know where you are, then it's not breaking samaya."

"Yes, that is okay."

"So you have visions but they are confusing. This means you likely see Buddhas a little bit but you do not fully 'go' to the purelands and receive empowerment there directly from the Buddhas you see in visions? So then your experience is something like this: You begin to meditate and see lights moving. The lights converge as a single point. The point becomes a disc. The disc expands. In this disc, you see something, shapes, lattice, diamond (vajra chains), then those expand and inside those you see fine lines - very fine lines (strands), and then inside that maybe Buddhas, maybe dakinis, maybe wrathful, maybe peaceful, it doesn't matter. You see something like that, but you do not go directly to them, and they do not come to you."

"Yes, it can be like that sometimes."

"But you have not collapsed the idea of these external Buddhas and the notion that you have to go there, because you have never been, so you can't know where it is and what it is really like. Right?"

"I wonder about that, okay? The teachings say tulkus can go to different Buddhafields, yet I am recognized as Tulku Rinpoche and I have only ever been to different places on Earth with different Lamas teaching various empowerments and asking me to see them as Buddhas. I'm also a Lama so I know these texts [empowerment texts]. Sometimes I think it's like a small world and a big mind. What do you think about that?"

"Well, Shadpa-la, I think if you just stop thinking about it and meditate with me, you will be pleasantly surprised to see that I am actually not lying to you but speaking directly from my experience, about that."

"Ok. So you are a thogal master, then. This is a big claim you should probably not make. Show me."

"Yes, Shadpa-la, I'm very sorry for saying crazy things and I appreciate your patience with me, to teach me. In my experience, it's very simple. When I am looking, you see, all these lights come up... and then in the lights there are mandalas within mandalas and so on. It is key that before this happens, the lights have to be in some kind of arrangement like this where it's like a dot in your vision, but there are 4 circles and in the middle is the Buddha family light, which is white. So, it's where you see there are the 4 colored lights and the white light is not really there. It's missing from the mandala. That is required, first. You know this, right?"

"This is a good point. It is really like that, even though we say 5 lights. It is never the case that we see them externally like that. Go on."

"Right. Only in delusional, made-up experiences would it be like that. That's part of the code."

"Yes, yes."

"Some people claim these kinds of things. So there's a code. So it can be known when people know or not."

"Yes."

"But I'm telling you because it is happening now. It is happening for me. Is it happening for you?"

"I don't know."

"Okay, come on Shadpa-la, just meditate! And as they expand, you can see: there is this Buddha family and that Buddha family and the retinue and so on, depending on your karma and stage of the path, because the empowerments have to occur by your karma, not by a book's stages, which are from another person's karma. They do not occur in any specific order, because it depends on how you are thinking. It depends on your karma."

"Yes."

"Okay. So you see right now?"

"Yes. I see it right now, like you describe it."

"Okay. So, if you stop looking at the lights expecting to see Buddhas and see the lights I am actually referring to and the Buddhas there, then Buddha light is right there, at the center of the mandala. Like this." (I pointed directly at him).

He burst out laughing.

"This is correct. Wow. I was not expecting this. But if you know like that, then why do you meditate?"

"You said that you meditate, Shadpa-la! I don't even know what that means, but I tried to help you from where you were at."

"(Laughs) We had a misunderstanding. I don't meditate. These things are very political."

"Yes. Do you think there is any such thing as Rinpoche and Tulku?"

"No."

"But you are one."

"That's what they say."

"That's true. But if you do not use that to do Maya-yoga, then doesn't that make Rinpoches and Tulkus \*not\* exist? And if you do good Maya-yoga, then doesn't that make them \*exist\* for the people on the path?"

"What is Maya-yoga?"

"Maya-yoga is like bonding the protectors and so on. I made that sense of the word, I think, sorry. Illusion-practice. I know Longchenpa uses it differently, to talk about the path. I use it to talk about the activity of those on the path."

"I see. This is true. But very few Tulkus and Rinpoches have this view. Most are spoiled. Even the ones who are very high Rinpoches have been spoiled and do not understand. This could be my wrong view. Don't be mad. I am crazy. I think crazy things, okay? Don't think of me like a teacher. I am just a yogi."

"Yes, Shadpa-la. I think I have wrong views, too, because I can't figure out how to make money except by giving Dzambhala teachings. Maybe I need to do Maya-yoga."

"(laughs) Sometimes it is like that. This has been fun [lunch etc we had]. You are a real teacher. This is surprising. Honestly, I did not think it would be true. Your understanding is very high. You should be careful around Tibetans. You should also be careful about Rinpoches. We have to say what helps. Don't hurt anyone."