

AN EPISTOLARY FICTION IN RESPONSE

From Facebook, 2021.

To Jurmi Chhowing's LETTER FROM AP GENYEN OF THIMPHU. One must read the fabulous letter first on this page <https://www.facebook.com/YallammaKhenno>) also reproduced here. [Ap Genyen Is Still Leaving The Lhakhang | Old Notes, Fresh Lockdowns](#)

The Lotus Light Palace
Copper Coloured Mountain
Chamara Island
Southwest Indian Ocean
10th Day of 11th Lunar Month

My dear Dorji Dradul,

Your message, which I assume you posted a while ago, arrived here only yesterday. The mountainous road in Thimphu, I hear, is getting clogged due to unprecedented proliferation of iron horses. My dakini astral delivery has also been hampered due to the heavy haze and pollution of the airspace by the diabolic substance - tamkhu - which I hear the leaders are distributing. It breaks my heart that my beloved land has taken such a wretched recourse. Being committed to my promise to respond to any call at lightning speed, I am sending you this quick response with a fervent hope that you will retract your application for indefinite leave, reinvigorate your Bodhisattva resolve, and rise to the occasion. Your people need your compassion and protection today more than ever before. The Jambuland is at the peak of its Kaliyuga and is today stricken with a pandemic, which humanity brought upon itself through the insatiable greed and irresponsible actions you lament in your letter. Just a few days ago, someone seeking your blessings and benefaction has brought the deadly pandemic to your doorsteps. This is no time for holiday or leave. In over a thousand years of your lordship, your subjects were perhaps never before so petrified and put under lockdown twice in a year. The welfare of your people is at a tipping point as is the survival of the earth as a whole.

With all my support and blessings, I advise you to persevere and not lose hope. Forgive those who come to you with petty requests for they do not know what they are doing. You are a scion of the noble tsen family, and the 'tsen' title denotes 'being firm'. Believe in your esteemed ancestry, which consists of glorious Lokeshvara, Umadevi, Mahakala, Yakshavala, Tramigma, and your indomitable parents Begtse and Dhongmarma. Harness your natural strengths of courage, valiance and tenacity. Childish demands from your subjects are only a passing irritation if you can recall the horrendous condition in which you and your sister were born out of eggs of coral and hide in the desolate and frightful place of Zangthang Marpo. The barren red cliffs rose to the zenith. Vultures and owls swooped on the top, the red hot sea of blood boiled at the base, and wild beasts preyed in-between. You flourished with fortitude in such inhospitable land. Then, soon after you started life along with your gang, do you remember the terror the horse-headed Hayagriva and wrathful Krodakali created to tame your hordes and wake you up from your peaceful dharmakaya quiescence? The reverberation of their thundering boom "Om Padmakroda Hayagriva Hulu Hulu Hung Phat" almost shattered the entire existence. The thunder turned into music for your ears and you have relentlessly embodied Hayagriva's mission of compassion since then. The requests and appeals for cars, cases, and courtship which tire you today are mere whimpers.

So, do not lose heart, my son. Unleash your innate Buddha-nature and reinforce your Bodhisattva vow to cherish all sentient beings as a mother would her only child, or should I say father because your subjects so affectionately call you 'pAp'. Your pledge to me at Yanglesho or to Jamyang Kuenga or Ngawang Namgyal in the upper reaches of Thimphu are minor footnotes to the great stories of your heroism and sacrifice. Don't let the vanity, vile character, or hypocrisy of some devotees dampen your spirit. You are born an invincible power, blazing with splendour, armoured in rhino hide and armed with a celestial spear and lasso. The hair on your skin is as stiff as thorns and your breath can cause a storm. How you brought fire (me len) puts to shame the act of that Greek titan Prometheus who stole fire from the gods. Don't you ever have a sliver of doubt about your capacity to cope!

The world today is increasingly getting submerged in the tide of degenerate deeds. Life is filled with evil temptations and materialist trappings. This thing called consumerism, which you mention, is a snare. People are strangling themselves with it. Time has changed, they say, but it is people who have changed. As you see often yourself, people trade character for cars, happiness for hype, principles for power, and peace of mind for a piece of property. Great beings are resigning to reclusive life and the haughty hold the high posts. Even I, Padma, feel helpless like a handicapped mother watching her only child wash away by treacherous currents. Yet, this calls for more compassion just as our Teacher himself took personal ownership of this degenerate age which other Buddhas disowned.

I know what you mean by Prado. I have been invited on many maiden journeys in these yanas. They are comfy and powerful compared even to my beautiful Balaha. It is a shame that this beautiful beast of burden is within the reach of only a few. You should advise your subjects to have more of these instead of the cheap and frangible Marutis which are not made for the rugged mountains. It makes no sense to levy more tax on a quality yana and allow the cheap ones to flood the road. Following the Mahayana ethos, I always recommend the supreme vehicle, and you should suggest to the leaders who visit you regularly that all households be given the benefit to avail the supreme vehicle instead of privileging only those in power.

The Dalda thing is a true menace. Yet, you should be pleased that they bring it to you and allow you to burn it at your own convenience. People create billows of smoke in my name and treat me to a foul repast of suffocating smoke and heat as they burn heaps of butter, food and plants. I have long warned of the overt conflation of Buddhist practices with worldly Bonpo rituals and orchestration. Sadly, those who claim to be my students perpetuate such malpractices. Even the tshog feasts, to which I am invited as the chief guest, are piles of imported junk, and rarely include a proper course, let alone a full sumptuous meal. Such rituals have become platforms for people to flaunt their wealth and vanity in the name of spirituality. They create preposterous images of me but do not read even a single advice I gave. They worship the messenger but disregard the message. They flatter the person but flout the principle. Little do they care that the real Guru lives and breathes in the message, the principle, and the adamant truth. There is little left of the true dharma the Blessed One has bequeathed.

Much more worrying than these acts of self-aggrandisement and ostentation are the vices which thrive in the shadows. I am sure you and Genyen Dhomtshangpa of Changangkha, as guardians of the expanding capital city, are acutely aware of them. The sacred human body, taught to be rare and precious by the Lord, is now seen as a disposable vessel of pain and pleasure. People seek excursions in diabolic substances; liquor in the name of welfare flows in the innumerable taverns. Husbands throw their savings at dingy drayangs while wives squander them over ruinous cards. These pestilent practices will gnaw the nation from within.

The democracy matter, you must understand, is a good thing. The Blessed One in his days started a system of making common decisions through consensual agreement and votes. It

is a wonderful way to honour the collective wisdom and a practice that underscores the importance of human freedom and liberation. Yet, the partisan approach perhaps is a nuisance for you if they come begging for votes and victory. They may pamper you, bribe you, flatter you, or even blackmail you and your followers. Remain steadfast, Gyogje Tsel, and do not waver from the Buddha's cause and my bidding to work for truth, freedom and enlightenment. Clamp down needless vitriol, malice and sinister schemes. I have given my advice to the kings, ministers and leaders in the 8th century and repeated them through many emissaries in the subsequent centuries. You may refer them to those advice although I don't have high hopes that they will read, let alone heed.

Use everything in your power to bring justice and peace in your land. If some unruly beings cannot be controlled through peaceful means, show some force, and deploy your tsen troops: the red ging emanating from your body, the brown ging from your speech, the dark ging from your mind, the hundred white tsen followers in the east, hundred blue tsen in the south, the hundred red tsen in the west, the sixty yellow tsen in the north, and the innumerable tsen followers of the sky, earth, water, fire, air, mountains, cliffs, forests, meadows, lakes and rivers. They work at your noble behest. Punish those who obstruct the works of charity and justice, those who desecrate the sacred sites with theft and garbage, those who exploit the lowly beings, those who undermine the works of my heart sons, those who hinder self-determination of the Drukpas, and those who attempt to bring ruin to the land and people under your care. Trample their egos, devour their pride, pulverise their power, and demolish their evil designs through your ruthless compassion.

In these challenging times, public safety is of paramount importance. Discipline those who disregard common good; mete out punishment if they do others harm. But always remember, lest you forget in the state of sublime rage, that you are a father to them all, whether visible or invisible, weak or strong, men or women.

I accept the use of the ingenious Gentalk for your subjects under one condition. I am sure one of your subjects will come up with an easy and smart Gentalk through which devotees can even consult you remotely. Gentalk is permissible as long as they do not become dependent on it. Dependency, the Sage proclaimed, is suffering. Keep Gentalk as a tool and a placebo but never let it replace the real thing. Genyen, humans are becoming slaves of machines. These new machines are making the humans restless and impatient. They seek instant gratification and stress themselves out when they don't get what they want. They bicker a lot and lose sleep. Beside the effect on their watery eyes, these new gadgets are sending their mental health down the drain. So, beware as your subjects become enamoured with the new technology. There is a greater need for good old mindfulness. Nothing could be more effective than the clairvoyance, calmness and cosmic presence we have gained through our hard work of inner cultivation.

I must now go on my monthly visit to Tibet.

With blessings

Lotus Born Raksha Thotreng Tsel

(From the open sphere of Lord Padma, transcribed by a secretarial scribe. Photo of Thotreng Tsel from Gangteng)

PS. Some naughty rakshas have escaped from Chamara; they may be the ones rustling cattle for meat.

Ap Genyen Is Still Leaving The Lhaxhang | Old Notes, Fresh Lockdowns

To,
Guru Rinpoche,
Copper-Colored Mountain of Glory,
Land of Rakshas.
Era: Kali Yuga.
Subject: Leave of Absence.
Namo!

My All Conquering Vajra Master, before I get down to the worldly details regarding this requisition for an indefinite Leave of Absence, I apologize for the intrusion into the transcendent work with which you are engaged in the Land of Rakshas. I'm certain the Rakshas are being tamed.

But over here I've to confess that I can't handle it anymore. It's not lack of faith - just the monotony of granting 'stuff'. I've had more than a thousand years working with the Human Realm and I've always been fine with the changing times of the differing ages but now the matter has really come to both head and heart. And revealed itself in the magnifying face of the last decade with the strange invocation of what the Bhutanese have been calling Consumerism, Globalization, Privatization, Modernization and Democracy - foreign imports of capitalistic tendencies basically characterized by the Kleshas.

Again, I was doing quite well with the way things were: granting a cow here, a rain there and in-between, the odd harvest or two. But increasingly, things are getting out of hand. Today, matters of spirituality have nosedived to this desirous urgency for all things quantifiable. Granting wishes has become both a burden and a bore. And the want is at its apex.

Just the other day I granted the 999th Prado, and I was being selective, as it came from an honest businessman who wanted it so he could pick up hitchhikers stranded along his many busy routes. By the way - a Prado is a new kind of 'Khorlo' that runs on four fat rubber wheels with a spare to spare. People literally enjoy being in and driving this new 'Wheel of Life'. They slave and even rob to own the beast. And once this beastly Yana has been granted, they come back asking for Safe Passages, Spare Tyres and most recently, prayers for a decrease in the price of fuel (a foul gas that propels the medium).

This is besides other wants such as the third new wife, protection of the seventh newborn, a winning lottery, high marks for passing school and college examinations, scholarships abroad (to the Land of the Heathen), higher promotions, expanding businesses, new ventures, and the bloody victory in every archery match. And good old Health, Longevity and Prosperity. But most recently, it's been Electoral Votes (where the majority decides over the minority that will rule them for a period of five years). I'm fed up.

The last couple of months were all about four Tshogpas (a Tshogpa consists of a group of individuals chosen from 47 nooks and crannies and their backers) banging on my doors and windows. Thankfully the four have come down to two. My good ear is still ringing with one known as the DNT and my bad ear with the other called the DPT (I say that with gratitude to the Great Shabdrung's slap because it has helped to halve the increasing wish-lists). This tshogpa thing is related to that democratic thing. They do this every five years. And in between, I've to pretend to grant more wishes for more Prados, Promotions, Stocks and Ventures; yet more Journeys, Arrivals and Destinations.

It never ends. I'm at the end of my tether. Plus I'm tired of the chemical Dalda, the suffocating Incense and the plastic Biscuit. And what gets my remaining goats, sheep, chickens, ponies and dogs in the yard, is that they also do that in your name. And in the

name of Contentment (which they have begun calling Self-Reliance). How they hope to merge increasing Needs and Wants with Self-Reliance is beyond me because did you also not teach them that Desire is the Root of Dissatisfaction?

So, below the rock, I've had time to contemplate (for which I'm indebted to Master Jamyang). And I believe that a simple Leave of Absence might do everybody the world of good - including myself. Also - lately - I've been seeing my Pangrizampa Tsomen in my dreams. Over the centuries, I've always kept apart my duty from my sentimentality, but now (maybe time is finally catching up) I long for my mermaid. And the fact that we live in the same neighborhood has been torturous and tempting.

I guess I'm caving in but I know your adamant mind will understand.

And even if I'm granted a Leave of Absence I've thought about some of the curious gadgets the faithful bring whenever they visit which could solve the dilemma of my absence. They use these gadgets with applications that enable instant communication (like Visualizations). I thought about it as I do not want to abandon my responsibility completely, particularly to the genuinely faithful, so I've devised a solution. The apps are called WeChat, Messenger and Skype (besides many others) and these days almost every lama, patron, monk and devotee sets up their own applications to stay in contact (a new sort of Dependent-Origination).

Although I may be absent in the lhakhang, I'll be present online in an app called GenTalk. I'm sorry if I sound flippant, but managing the greedy wishes of a fattening flock hungry for all the illusory things of this world is taking its toll. And the majority asks for things they do not even need; with money they do not even have. The die has been pounded so hard my number is up.

My Adamantine Guru - what to do? I remember back in Yanglaysho how you bound me with the Dharmic Oath to protect and serve the wishes of the people but always in accord with the Dharma. And how grateful I was! It was such a giving position. I loved the job. It also freed me from the jungles of my own emotions. I also recall how strongly and purposefully the Shabdrung reminded me of my duties with the sacred slap. I never had a moment's suspicion that all those kneeling and prostrating before me were doing so in the name of the Dharma. But now I'm beginning to doubt the motivation of every one who claims to come in your name.

The people's aspirations are so far away from your teachings that it is hard to know what is and what isn't. I feel short-changed.

I rest my case, hoping you'll grant this boon (or show me an alternative remedy).

Yours faithfully,

Ap Genyen Jagpa Melan Dorji Dradul,
Dechenphu, Thimphu,
Druk Yul.

(Sealed With Samaya)

PS: This was voluntary. I'm not aware of the feelings of Ap Jowo, Ap Chundu, Ap Radrap or any other Neps; but I'm certain they are in a similar predicament.

(It looks like the blessed ones sit atop and it looks like the sinful ones grope below

The lines form fast and furious so I better stop and take it slow

I went to see the deity but he wasn't home; when we got outside I saw him sitting like Michelangelo's dome

He'd taken the body of an ox - a very handsome bovine; I guess Ap Genyen has style, a style that's very alpine

It's been a while since I last visited; heck - I even wrote a letter on his behalf, but Guru Rinpoche doesn't give holidays, especially if you've to look after the calves

His setting has changed, now there's more space; I saw it in his eyes, as he chewed his cud and enjoyed the sunshine, the pine trees and the shade

Thanks, Ap Genyen, for giving us the confidence to be ourselves; enjoy your patches of green, along with our offerings of butter lamps, dice and games)