

Alex Tenchov

*Martyn
and Amusing
Astrology*

We become what we think

Alex Tenchoy

**Martyn and amusing astrology.
We become what we think**

«Издательские решения»

Tenchoy A.

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It is very important to generate a good attitude, a good heart, as much as possible.
From this, happiness in both the short term and the long term for both yourself and
others will come. Dalai Lama XVI

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Содержание

Martyn and amusing astrology	6
A monument	8
Brave Kathryn and Yetis	10
Ever burning flame 1	13
A test of Tengon's2 will	18
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	20

Martyn and amusing astrology We become what we think

Alex Tenchoy

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Martyn and amusing astrology

Do not be afraid of beasts, but friends – as the beast will wound your body, but a friend will wound your soul.
Buddha

When I was in the U.K. at Martyn's home for a holiday, Martyn took me sightseeing, as a good host should. We went to Stonehenge in Martyn's car.

There, a guide told us the history of Stonehenge. He said that the Druids built it in such a way that they could, by counting, define on which days the summer and winter solstices were to occur. It helped them in farming. We liked the atmosphere and the environment there, so we decided to go there once again at night. We stayed in a nearby hotel especially for that purpose. At midnight, we arrived at Stonehenge and began to imagine how the ancient Druids would have prayed there. It was a beautiful full moon night.

Just then a real horror began! First of all, some large flying bodies that looked like flying witches darkened the moon. I regretted coming there and the fact that I didn't ask the guide when the nearest witch's Sabbath was going to happen. Those black shadows came noiselessly and circled in front of us. Then we could see they were only big bats! We laughed at our cowardice until we saw that a strange procession was coming slowly toward us from behind Stonehenge. There were a dozen figures. Each one wore a long white robe and a hood that covered his head. They might have been the spirits of dead astronomers and it was incredible to see black holes inside their hoods! We could do only one thing-hide. The ghostly Druids stood in the center of the stone circle and began to perform incomprehensible rituals.

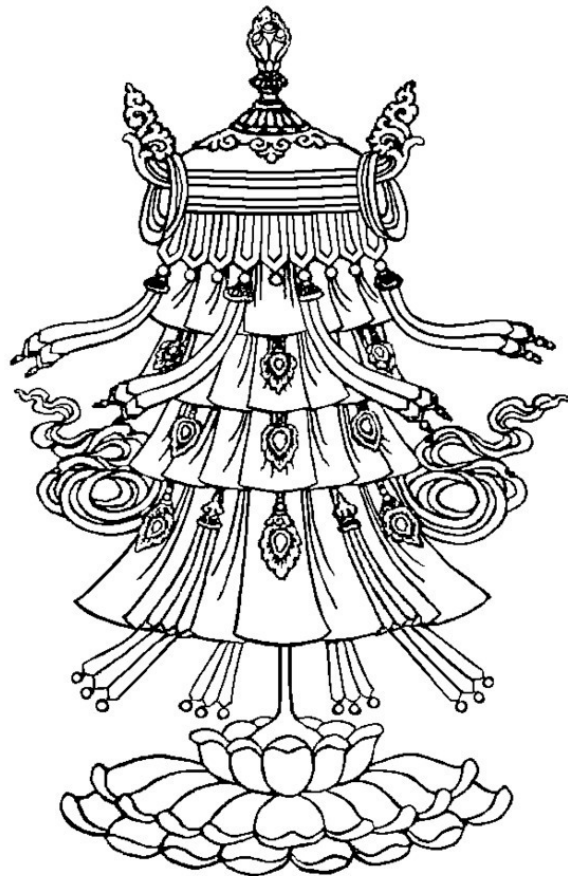
We held our breath while watching such strange things. But at that moment I dropped my torch and it started rolling on the ground making a loud noise. Those ghostly Druids quickly caught us and tied us to a rock. As they surrounded us with dry firewood, we had no doubt about their plans. When some of them came up to us with fire, I saw all my life passing before my eyes like a movie. I prayed for a painless death. Next I heard an inhuman scream, which pierced my skull, and suddenly I realized that it was I who had produced it. Only the silent night answered. Yet the stone-giants were watching it all from their massive heights.

The Druid leader wanted to make the killing official, so before lighting the fire, he asked our names and birthplaces in an ancient language, which was difficult to understand. We answered with hesitation. I didn't seem to attract much of their attention, but the fact that Martyn was from Wales excited that ghostly crowd. Next, the head Druid asked Martyn his family name. "Oakey", he answered and an emotional storm surged through the crowd upon finding out that Martyn was a part of their sacred clan. Then the leader restored silence by waving a sleeve of his robe and said, "Everyone who sees this secret ritual must die, even if he is a descendant of our sacred clan". Martyn very quietly asked, "Please let us know what we have seen because after all, you are going to kill us and it won't harm anybody if we would know". The leader answered, "Every two months, we astronomers, Welshmen's spirits from ancient times, gather here as we did when we were alive, to define the dates for the lunar and solar eclipses. This great accomplishment gives us a true forecasters authority!" Martyn was surprised, saying, "Why? Everybody knows how to find the dates of eclipses for this decade, even children". The leader got angry, and said, "You brazen liar", and then he added, "Fine, then let him try to tell us the dates for the nearest solar and lunar eclipses and then we will compare them with our readings".

I realized that we were in a dangerous situation because although we could find the date for the nearest eclipse in any almanac in the daytime, being there in Stonehenge in the middle of the night without having any almanac with us, had us trapped. "If you want to hear our predictions, you must

untie my hands,” said Martyn. They weren’t too enthusiastic about doing that, but reluctantly they cut the old ropes from Martyn’s wrists. Then Martyn pulled out of his pocket a daily almanac for amateurs, which he had put there by chance, when we were at our hotel. How could I have forgotten about it? Martyn leafed through it and told them the times of the next solar and lunar eclipses. The oldest person among them was hunch-backed and short. He began to count by looking at knots in a rope, which was tied to his belt. “Both dates are right!” he said. They all cried out in surprise and distress. They were overcome by sadness. “If it’s not a secret anymore, there is no need for us to remain its keepers,” the leader said and disappeared in the night sky like a rainbow. The others followed him.

As for us, we didn’t need much time to leave that mysterious place. After this happened, Martyn wrote a scientific dissertation on the founders of Stonehenge and their purpose for building it. He passed his doctorate in history and pale-astronomy and won the prestigious Longman/History Today prize “For an outstanding first book by a scholar in the field of history”. Indisputably, his sacred clan’s spirits were very happy for his luck and certainly, so were I!



A monument

It is ridiculous to think that somebody else can make you happy or unhappy.
Buddha

Many different things happen in our lives, sometimes very funny. One of these things happened in a small town in Holland. The town's residents really liked their fresh soft cheese. A factory made it but two different farms supplied the milk. They had the same number of excellent Dutch cows with creamy milk. These competing farms agreed that the one that produced more milk each day had better cows, so that farm would supply the milk for the cheese, or that the farmer's name would be put on the cheese's packing.

The whole town became divided into parts; every one preferred one or other farm's cheese. If the favorite cheese had been selling, its fans were happy and gloated over other farm's cheese. Sometimes some married couples supported different groups. Life in the town came to revolve around the cheese. The most important news in the morning was which cheese had been sold. The town had the highest consumption of cheese in the world and had more cheese shops than any other town. The cheese became renowned throughout the world. Everything was fine until one of the farms suggested the rules to be changed. The cheese was to be made from the milk of the farm, which produced less milk. The other farm agreed. What do you think happened the next morning? Not even one piece of fresh cheese appeared in the town's shops. The cheese factory stopped working because fresh milk never came in. The farms produced not even one glass of milk; the cows got sick, as they were not milked. The town was gripped by panic and people lost their living and became unemployed, and came out into the streets protesting and demanding that the local authorities find a way out of the crisis. The town's Mayor put pressure on the owners of the farms, but he was not successful and was so ashamed that he had to resign. Neither persuasion nor orders could make the obstinate farm-owners change their minds. The owners were adamant in their convictions that the cows of their opponents were better and that they would not give up their positions.

The Prime Minister of Holland, Herr Kok offered some cheese from the government store but no one would eat this cheese. Neighboring area residents attempted a charity scheme, and went out to gather milk but this cheese was not so good. High school children went on hunger strikes to try to force the owners to start producing milk again. But even this didn't change the owners' minds. The crisis reached international level and a delegation arrived from UN but their reasoning was of no help. The European Union became very concerned about the stability of food production in Europe, they tried to bribe the owners but with no success. After a week, it seemed that no one could unravel this Gordian knot.

At the same time, by chance, in this town, there was a young girl called Kristel, who was born in Holland. At this time was visiting her motherland from the State of Karnataka, South India where she was an English teacher to the Tibetan Monks in Drepung Gomang Monastery. She quickly understood the situation because in her free time she had studied the Tibetan language and Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy, which by its logic provided such dilemmas. She said, "It's simple". And then she gave a three-word phrase to the farm-owners that followed her advice and were able to resolve the problem. The cows of which farm produced less milk brought success to their owner.

What was the mysterious phrase, thanks to which the town's inhabitants were finally able to resume making the precious cheese? Out of gratitude and in Kristel's honor the inhabitants of the town installed a monument representing the attributes of the Buddha of Wisdom, under which the delegation from the UN carved the words uttered by Kristel. If you want to know that phrase you should begin to study Buddhist logic or visit the town. If you come to the town, the residents will

show you this important monument, which is in the center of the town and you will be able to read that phrase and of course try the best cheese in the world.

If you can't visit the town or study Buddhist logic I would like to tell you that the words are "exchange the cows". When the farm-owners followed this advice then each farm endeavored to produce more milk because that way their own cows producing less milk would of course, make them the winner.



Brave Kathryn and Yetis

A good friend who points out mistakes and imperfections and rebukes evil is to be respected as if he reveals a secret of hidden treasure.

Buddha

You all, of course, know very well about Joan of Arc. You think girls as brave as she aren't around now. You are wrong! I met one last year. I was in Tibet in the students group, which went for a pilgrimage around the famous places. We were 24 students from different countries. Among them was Kathryn from Colorado. We had good equipment and went in six jeeps, "Landcruisers". We began our journey from Lhasa, the capital of the top of the world. First of all, we decided to go to the Great Kailash. If you were to go to Tibet, you would see how beautiful the surrounding mountains are and how the white summits disappear in the clouds. Our driver was Tenzin, a local, who joked a lot and every morning prayed to his Bonpo Gods. Suzan, an American student also went with us. We circled clockwise, as is the Buddhist custom around Great Kailash and took many photos. Then we started to go back to Lhasa, just then our driver suddenly said, "If you would like, we can see the UFO, which crashed ten years ago and fell from the sky onto a yak's pasture". It was a nice chance for Kathryn to win 100 thousand dollars for the best photo of the year in National Geographic. We decided to make a detour and went to see this strange object. Kathryn had her camera, a Nikon (N90S), which she borrowed from her university, but she wanted to buy her own, made by Leica. It was very expensive. She also wanted to travel around the world and see everything with her own eyes and take photos. Those two dreams could come true if she won the prize. After a full day went by on a bad road, we arrived and only saw fragments of the space ship, Apollo so we were definitely disappointed. But our bad luck didn't finish there. Our jeep broke down and we had to go on foot to the yak's pasture hoping to meet herdsmen from Tenzin's motherland. It took 5 days. We packed only very important things: water and food for two day, hoping to find the rest on the way. Kathryn took her camera and films. Suzan took her liking coffee. Then Tenzin confidently led us the direct way. At first it was wonderful going on Tibet's green grass, we saw White Lipped and Musk deer. An amusing Mouse Hare went across the path on funny fat feet and the entire world seemed beautiful and charming. We could only envy Tenzin's compatriots who were from the Shungpa Matsen Tribe, how they lived in this amazing place. It was probably unique in the world. We didn't worry until we finished our food. After that, we decided to try to eat roots, but we couldn't. We started to hallucinate because we went for a few days without enough rest and breathed clean air, and we went for 2 days without any food. First we saw under the mountain a big owl with a snake in its beak, and then we saw a big snake with horns standing in a lake. When the fourth day was finished we went by a beaten track and saw a spring with cold water and we began to drink.

Suddenly, behind us somebody shouted with a horrible cry. We stood up and could see a big shaggy animal that looked like a big monkey but it didn't have any tail and had a flat face.

That monster tracked us but a tree fell on his foot and trapped it. It tried to release himself using his very muscular hands but he couldn't. Tenzin said, "That is Mirgod-Tibetan Yeti. He is intelligent and he is very dangerous for people, so we must escape". When we saw this mix of man and monkey his cry became a plaintive squeal and he stopped trying to escape. Kathryn suddenly grabbed a wood lever and started to pick lift up one end of the tree. Then Kathryn and the snowman slowly began to move the tree and released his leg. We were afraid for Kathryn, because he had big white teeth and they probably were very sharp, but then he jumped behind a big rock and disappeared. We didn't want to try our luck, so we went far away and remembered the snowman with disappointment, because we forgot to take photos. The next night passed quietly. We made a campfire and stood guard in turns with a wooden cudgel.

The following day we continued along. In the afternoon we rested. We were very tired so we fell down and slept hungry. When we woke up we couldn't find Kathryn and her camera, so we thought she had gone to take photos. After an hour of waiting we saw her coming with a torn shirt. We asked, "What happened?" She said this morning she noticed a Yeti following us and when we slept she went after him. He was absolutely peaceful and she made friends with him, so she named him Ben. Then she invited him to come with her to the camp but he refused by signs and sounds. She tended to his leg and bandaged it with her shirt. We didn't believe her and thought she again had had a hallucination, so we decided to look after her carefully. But a great disappointment awaited us in the empty house on the yak's pasture; it had been abandoned about one month before. Tenzin said, "The way to my home directly through the ravine is only a one day-walk, but this path isn't used because a big Yeti, much bigger and worse than the one we saw before, lives there. He attacks the passing nomads and kills them. A few hunters have tried to kill him but none came back alive. When we asked a Bonpo priest, 'What should we do?' he answered, 'Only a foreign girl with brown eyes and a birth-mark under her right eye can liberate the ravine from the demon'. So now we use the mountain road and must walk for a whole week". It was a hopeless situation because we didn't have any food for a long way. We looked for a long time at our friend's eyes and waited until someone could find a way out. Then Tenzin unexpectedly said, "Yes it is she, she!" and pointed at Kathryn's birthmark, "It's exactly she, the girl our priest saw". Kathryn was categorically against it. Suzan and I refrained from that debate because we only wondered if that could help us. After a long time, Tenzin persuaded Kathryn that the short path through the ravine was the only right way out. We set off for the ravine immediately.

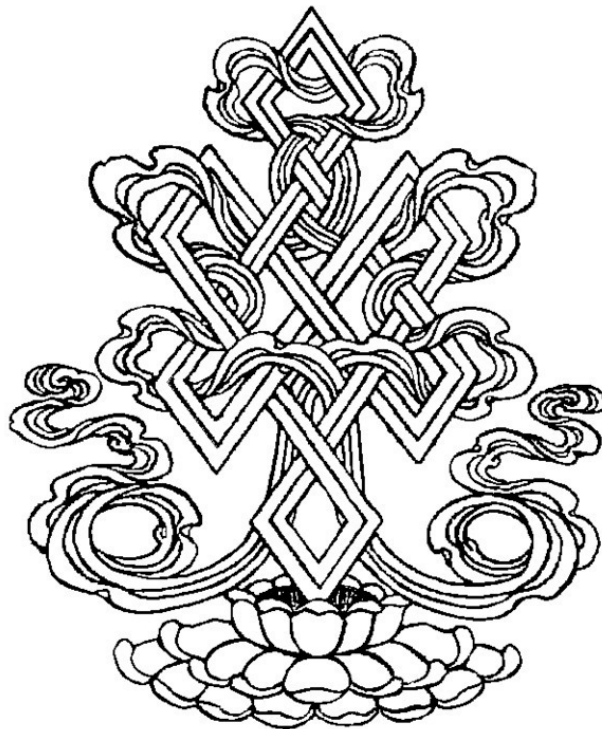
When we got nearer to the ravine, we could see many animal and human bones. Then we heard something like a dragon's bellow. We couldn't imagine how big the animal was that could roar like that. When the path became unsafe, we decided to stop. We looked at Kathryn, but what could she, that fragile, weaponless girl, do against this monster? Our choice seemed more and more hopeless, but Kathryn was brave and said, "I want to go nearer and see everything". We had no choice other than to follow her. On the path we saw a big tree to show which part was owned by the Yeti, and we saw clawmarks at the level of around 3,5 meters. We came near to the Yeti's cave behind the rocks. We decided to look at the cave's exit and didn't have to wait for long before he appeared clumsily on his back paws, his long hands reaching to his knees and his height was about 3 meters. He looked like a mix of a very big bear and man. All his body was hairy except for his face and palms. He probably was going to hunt but he suddenly stood and began to smell the air, then growled and ran in our direction. With horror we ran away. After we had run far enough away, we discovered that Kathryn was absent. We waited, hoping for her return. I didn't think of ourselves as cowards, but none wanted to go back and look for our friend. We waited the whole night, having horrible dreams, sometimes sharply waking up with fear, as if the monster still pursued us. In the morning Kathryn still hadn't come and we had less hope of seeing her. In the afternoon, we again heard a roar and another strange roar was repeated louder. This roaring didn't stop and unseen rivals shouted in turns. The atmosphere around us became hot and we felt something very important was happening, probably connected with our destiny. Then one voice only could be heard and there was only one victor.

Then arrived a smug and smiling Kathryn. We were confused by her story about her adventures since yesterday. When she escaped with us she appeared to have run the wrong way and came to a cul-de-sac where she couldn't find an exit. She wandered around in that big labyrinth between the rocks until her friend Ben came and he led her out of the trap. Then she decided to explain to him that we needed to go through the ravine but the big Yeti wouldn't allow us. He understood everything and began to contemplate, finally thinking of how to deceive a stronger enemy.

First of all, in the morning they went to a tree and Ben, who was light and quick, climbed in to a tree which his enemy wasn't able to do and made a mark higher than the big Yeti's mark. In Yeti's language, it was someone taller, wanting to fight and invade his place. Then at the opening of the ravine, they climbed under a big and safe rock, from where they started to invite our enemy to the

duel. Because of a strong echo it was difficult to define how big the new Yeti was. On being called, the big Yeti immediately replied and was going to fight but when he went past the big tree he saw Ben's sign. Then he probably thought to himself that the enemy was bigger than he, and so must be stronger. Not confident of his own strength and discouraged, he believed Ben's fraud and escaped before the fight. He disgracefully disappeared, leaving his best hunting place. We then very easily persuaded Ben to allow us to go through the ravine and also to allow Tenzin's compatriots to go with their yaks. That news made Tenzin very happy. Thus the road was free and we went along as real winners. At the end of the ravine Ben came to say goodbye. He stood behind us, lonely and courageous. He watched us with a melancholic air because we were going away. Kathryn couldn't help herself and took Ben's photo.

We were glad for Ben and his resourceful heroine Kathryn, who was like Joan of Arc. Tenzin's compatriots made a big wonderful three-day celebration for the liberation of the shorter road and certainly the queen of the ball was Kathryn. After arriving home Kathryn refused to show Ben's photo because she was worried about the Tibetan Yeti's peace, so David Allen Harvey with his photo of White Horses won the prize for the best photo. Do you think it was a very brave and selfless deed? If you want to see that photo and promise you won't say anything about it you can get in touch with the photo's owner by phone at (505) 8211404.



Ever burning flame¹ **Whatever joy there is in the world**

*All came's from desiring others to be happy
And whatever suffering there is in this World.
All came's from wishing for one's own happiness.
What need to say much more?
The Childish work for their own benefit,
The Buddha work for the benefit of others,
Just look at the difference between them.
Shantideva.*

They say that in the twilight of her life Mother Teresa worried and prayed much for her work not to be interrupted after her death. Indeed, the Lord heard her unselfish prayers and that pure benevolent work that she had been doing all her life, found its followers. One of them was Ama Chela². Like Mother Teresa, she was endowed with a warm compassionate heart and was able to devote herself whole-heartedly to serving and helping others. Definitely the torch of charity, which had always been a light-house for the destitute, suffering and sick people and for all those who felt desperate and lost—that rare torch of charity had been passed on to a firm and reliable hand. As Mother Teresa considered all living beings to be her children and bestowed her love upon people without making any distinction between them, so did Ama Chela, treating everyone as her brother and sister.

EVER BURNING FLAME¹ – Mother Theresa was an incredible beacon of warmth for all people, particularly those suffering from neglect, hunger and spiritual poverty.

Ama Chela² – The story of Ama Chela is an incredible one. She was born in Alaska, the daughter of a Russian émigré and Sanskrit scholar who escaped during the Russian Revolution of 1917.

And it was not merely accidental that she was called Ama. In Tibetan language “Ama” means “mother” and she was called so by the grateful Tibetan refugees, who had been supported by her after fleeing from Tibet, occupied by Chinese communists. Sometimes these refugees arrived in India frost-bitten and sick, having been starved for a long period of time and having no means of supporting themselves. Ama Chela collected financial means to improve living conditions in the monasteries, and the list of her benevolent deeds is endless, but I would like to tell you about one particular case, which took place in India. This act of compassion has showed us that not a social position nor a belief, matter to Ama Chela when somebody is in need of help. Ama Chela came to India with the purpose of providing financial charity for the TB hospital in Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka State.

She was still in Bombay, and having all settled of her affairs, she bought an air-ticket to Bangalore and decided to take an evening walk along the streets of the city. The old part of Bombay was not as noisy and polluted as the new part. Luckily, Ama Chela didn't need a translator because she could speak Hindi as well as she spoke English.

While she was walking, suddenly a small thin boy with startled eyes ran up to her and began to plead with her anxiously: “Sister, save me, hide me!” He didn't look like a thief or a criminal, although he was dressed like a beggar. Being accustomed to feel with her heart whenever people needed help, Ama Chela understood that this boy really did need help. First of all, she tried to console him, but the boy was very frightened and apparently feared that someone was chasing him. She

¹ Mother Theresa was an incredible beacon of warmth for all people, particularly those suffering from neglect, hunger and spiritual poverty. Ama Chela² – The story of Ama Chela is an incredible one. She was born in Alaska, the daughter of a Russian émigré and Sanskrit scholar who escaped during the Russian Revolution of 1917.

brought the boy into her hotel room, gave him a glass of water to drink and let him come back to himself. His name was Baja. Trying to find out what was the matter with him, she heard this heart-chilling story. Baja was a real child of Bombay slums. He didn't remember his parents and didn't have any home. He grew up in the streets of the city together with other homeless beggars and was quite contented with his life because he didn't know that life could be something different or better. He lived enraptured by his freedom as much as any child would be. Having a mischievous nature, he was carefree, liking impermanence and good food. He enjoyed whistling new movie tunes while tapping his bare feet on the ground and sometimes attracted passers-by with his innocent performances. But those golden times of his childhood were interrupted one day, when he was forced to work for a master. At that time, he was ten years old. Since then, he had been compelled to spend all his days in the street begging and had to give all the money collected during the day to his master, like the other beggars did. In spite of sleeping sometimes in the street and having no food, Baja was very pious and never forgot to worship his gods. He was a vegetarian and nobody could ever force him to eat even a small piece of meat. Passing by numbers of temples every day he always folded his hands and humbly bowed his head in respect to the deity of the temple, whom he considered to be his only protectors in this world. Baja's master was a very imperious and cruel man. With some money collected by the boy, he provided for him a scanty meal, consisting of a piece of bread with lentil soup and lodging. Each member of this odd family was under the master's control. Nobody could afford to get sick or to have a day-off.

There were many cripples and lepers among them, which called upon the compassion of passers-by. Baja wasn't physically handicapped, so getting some money from people wasn't too easy for him unless he used his clever mind and the inborn gift of his pitiful voice. He was always afraid that one day he wouldn't be able to get anything and thought of putting some money aside for a day like that, but the master was very perspicacious and the boy couldn't manage to hide anything. Once when he brought only a pittance, he was brutally beaten up. After that he began to think about escape, but he was convinced that the master had very long arms and hired a gang of young men with the eyes of hungry wolves who, at the slightest word from the master, were ready to tear anyone into pieces. The fact that the master had connections with the police and the government became obvious to Baja, when two other beggars tried to escape to the neighboring state. The police looked for them through the media and quite soon they were caught, handcuffed and brought back to the master. They were given a lesson which was meant for the rest of the beggars as well: these two were tied up and put into a pit full of poisonous snakes, where they died in pain and with curses on their lips. The display of this torture made a strong impact on Baja's consciousness and his fear grew stranger. And then one day, his worst nightmares came true—he appeared in front of the master empty-handed. On that day Baja's luck betrayed him. The Master got furious and began to shout at him: “Bastard! You've got so completely overfed that nobody wants to give you anything! And that's because of my kindness! It's time for me to correct my fault”.

After that, Baja was tied up and taken to be left at the feet of the statue of Kali Durga on the statue of the morning they would cut off his fingers and an ear to offer to the goddess. Undoubtedly, after that Baja would be a cripple and would succeed in begging. Baja was terrified to the core of his being and began to think desperately of a way to get his tied hands out from under his body, bringing them to the front and then gnawing on the rope with his teeth, severing the knots keeping him down. Then he also untied his feet and escaped. Without having any clear idea as to where to go, he was just running away. And while running, he realized that his escape would not last long, unless somebody helped him to hide properly. Thus Baja appeared in the rich area of Bombay where there were many luxury hotels, and wandering the entire place, he was contemplating his destiny and bad luck to be born and live in the inhuman conditions, which had brought him to this terrible situation. He thought that if he was born in a foreign country he would never have had to live this kind of life. At that moment the whistling of a policeman interrupted his thinking and he realized that it was time for

him to hide. It seemed that the long arm of the master was stretching out to catch him. Terrified he ran up to the first passer by and began to plead for help. Secretly in his heart calling upon all his gods and protectors, he met with Ama Chela. When some people come across the needs of others, they are ready to devote much more of their energy and make more effort than they do when they have to solve their own problems. Ama Chela was such a person. Without hesitation she decided immediately to get the boy out of the country, but how? The easiest way would be by sea. But Baja didn't have any documents to identify his person. Thinking over this, she sent Baja to take a shower, then fed him well and put him into bed.

The next day, she first of all cancelled her air-ticket and bought a ticket for a ship. The soonest ship going to America was on Sunday, in three days. Later that day, she went to the super-market and bought new clothes for Baja. After that, she took him to the hairdresser for a haircut. His hair cut and dressed neatly, Baja couldn't recognize himself when he stood in the hotel room looking in the mirror for a long time. His eyes filled with tears. His heart was full of gratitude. Ama Chela, looking at the boy, felt incredibly sorry for him, who had never known a mother's love or affection before in his life. At that moment she clearly understood that it was her duty now to take care of him and try to give him that love of which he had been deprived since early childhood. But this was not the only problem she had to solve.

The next day, Baja's photo appeared on local TV and the police announced that they were looking for a criminal who had stolen some expensive jewelry from the house of some important person. It was a lie made up by Baja's master to get him back. Ama Chela understood that now they had to be very careful and had to invent a very clever way to bring Baja on board. She bought a trunk, made holes in its sides for Baja to get some air to breathe, then she asked the boy to try to fit himself into the trunk. Rolled up inside the trunk, Baja said that it was comfortable enough for him to stay there all the time, that the trunk was a better home for him than any other he'd had, and that he would rather die than the police find him. Ama Chela realized quite what kind of responsibility she had assumed. She knew also that at the customs they used dogs, trained to smell drugs, and these dogs could smell Baja as well. The only way to ward off the dogs was to use some strong perfume. And Ama Chela knew what she needed for that purpose. She ran to the market and bought some musk. It was pretty expensive as a gram of musk is about the same price as a gram of gold. Then she anointed the trunk with it. Having tied a scarf around his face to protect himself from the strong smell, Baja fitted himself into the trunk and they took off for the port. Approaching the quay, Ama Chela felt her heart pounding violently but she didn't let any doubt sway her as she confidently came up to the customs check-post.

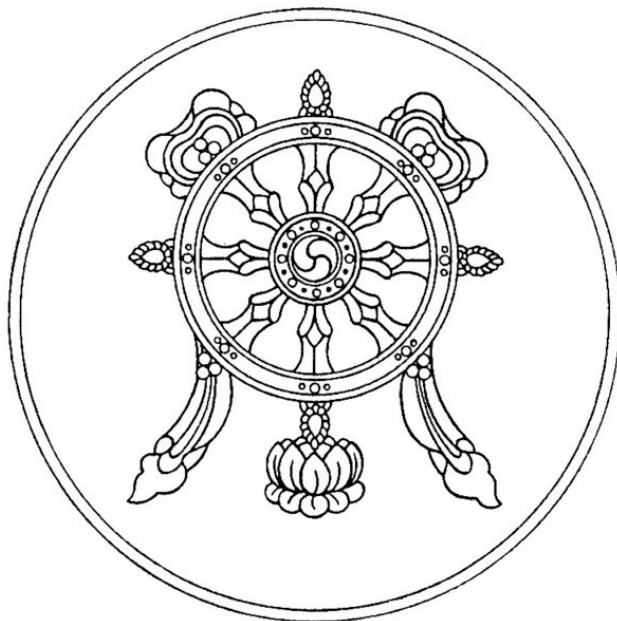
The customs officer was a young woman with a scatter-brained look, who had a garland of yellow flowers around her neck. She gave Ama Chela an affable welcoming smile, put a stamp in her passport and wished her a pleasant journey. Everything suggested a lucky outcome as the police dogs took a smell at the trunk, sniffed a few times and moved further. As Ama Chela preceded through the customs check post another officer, who appeared to be quite thorough, stopped her, and looking through her declaration, asked if she had any weapons, drugs or jewelry with her. Finally, Ama Chela's huge trunk attracted his attention and he asked about its contents. She looked at him directly, without blinking and said that there were religious scriptures and books on yoga in the trunk. The customs officer nodded approvingly and putting another stamp in her passport asked her to open the trunk. It was the time for Ama Chela to use her gift of playing an actress. Without any hesitation she said: "You see, actually this trunk belongs to one of my friends. No doubt, you'll recognize him in this photo!" Then she took the photo out of her pocket and showed it to the customs officer. The face of the custom officer grew long. He was astounded when he saw in the photo Ama Chela standing next to the President of India. It was obvious that he recognized the president in the photo. On the back of the picture there was a telephone number and a bold signature. Ama Chela took out

her mobile telephone and dialed the number. After a few short signals, she could hear a pleasant woman's voice, saying:

“Hello!” “I would like to speak to Mr. President, please.” She said. If the custom officer hadn't been so excited and uneasy, he would have been able to hear a naughty tone in Ama Chela's voice, but he was too shocked. After some time she greeted someone on the phone and began to explain what was happening to her at the customs. At the end of her speech, she pronounced the name of the poor customs officer, which she learnt from the card pinned to his uniform. Then she handed him the receiver. Being already frightened out of his wits and stunned, the customs officer waved both his hands, showing that he wouldn't be able to utter a word. Ama Chela cast a fiery look at him, then bid farewell to the president on the phone and asked the officer if she could proceed to the ship. The officer was still paralyzed and speechless. Ama Chela took her trunk and rolled it further. Nobody stopped her anymore. Thus Ama Chela and Baja appeared on the ship, and were surrounded by the pleasant and welcoming atmosphere there. At last they got into their cabin and Ama Chela could release Baja from the temporary confinement. Tears of joy were rolling down her cheeks when she was kissing Baja's head, overwhelmed with happiness. Finally they could relax. Their plan had been carried out, and they had succeeded. Now, I would like to give some explanations as to the photo and the address on the back of it. This photo had been made last year at the official reception in the American Embassy in Delhi. At that time, Ama Chela couldn't know that this picture would serve her such a favour in the future. Later, on the back of this photo, she wrote down the address of her good friend from the Ministry, who strikingly resembled the president. Due to this resemblance, Ama Chela intimately called her friend “president”. When she called her friend from the customs check-post, first she talked to his niece, who also was Ama Chela's good friend. The girl immediately recognized her and called her uncle. Thus Ama Chela tricked the custom officer, using her picture with the president and her acquaintance from the Ministry. So Ama Chela and Baja were sailing safely, comfortably and happily! For the first time in his life Baja could enjoy as much ice cream as he was able to eat, and that was ten portions a day! Because of this, Ama Chela, who was providing the ice cream for him, was called a sweet-eater among her new acquaintances on the ship.

Soon they reached the shores of America and while the ship was entering the harbour, Baja saw the Statue of Liberty with his own eyes. Perhaps was his good karma or perhaps it was Ama Chela's unselfish intentions and immense compassion that helped them to overcome difficulties and finish up Baja's troubles, but since then Baja's heart has been filled with a new hope for a happy future. America became the Promised Land for him and became his second Motherland. First Ama Chela helped him to get a refugee card and later he got an American citizenship. He graduated from college and entered the Academy of Cinematography. Later he became a talented film-director and was famous in Hollywood. After his film about Queen Elizabeth he became a world-renowned film-director and a very rich man. But he never forgot his early years that he spent in the streets of Bombay. He regularly gave donations to the poor and homeless, to all those in need, thus hoping not to be reborn as a beggar in his future lives.

I would like you, readers, to tell me honestly, from the bottom of your hearts. Are there many people among us who would be ready to assume the needs and troubles of someone completely unknown to them, without considering their our expenses, waste of precious time, inconveniences, psychological and moral difficulties on account of actions carried out against the law? Are there many people like Ama Chela?



A test of Tengon's² will

*Phat! Loudly I blow the tibial Ganling³
And whirl in Dharmadhatu's⁴ dance of emptiness
I'm the Lord of Tantra⁵ searching the fearlessness.
amsara⁶ and Nirvana⁷ merge in my consciousness.*

This is a story about the famous Yogi, the monk Tengon, who was a great master of Chod⁸ practice. Of course, not at once did he become a Chod master; for Tengon, the way to perfection was not easy. Although now old and young people know about the famous feats of Tengon, there was a time when nobody had heard of him. He was the second son of shepherds in Aga and according to tradition, he was sent to a master of Chod, Shining Chogyalsten⁹, to study. Tengon's teacher used a big Damaru¹⁰ during his practice, and when the weights tied to the sides of the drum beat the taut snake skin, sparks would appear. Nobody could explain this wonderful phenomenon. People said that it was a blessing from the radiant Guru¹¹ Padmasamhava¹², which Tengon's teacher had received after spending 30-years as an ascetic, in retreat. Once Guru Chogyalsten gave Tengon an order to practice on the shore of the Aga¹³ river. It was a special retreat to test his endurance, during which he would chant without pause for food, drink or other needs for 3 days. Like all future warriors, he would be tested by demons who would attempt to harm him during any rest or meal.

Three days before the full moon, the test of young Tengon began. By the full moon he would be primed to destroy any personal impurities. He sat on the shore of the beautiful Aga river which flowed with emerald-pure water and was lined by curving banks as graceful in harmony as a Dakinie¹⁴ goddess.

The divination dice predicted success: the beginning of his retreat coincided with the day of Pelginyam¹⁵, a day good for any undertaking; and he felt young, full of energy for great deeds. He was determined to achieve Siddhi¹⁶, in order to help all the people on the earth. To sit on green soft

² Tengon is a monk who is named after Tenzin Gombo, protector of the Dharma.

³ Ganling is a type of traditional Tibetan horn made from a tibia.

⁴ Dharmadhatu, ultimate sphere, totality of being, total field of events and meanings, the sphere of Dharma, field of all events and meanings, reality field, element of [superior] qualities, dharmadhatu, realm of dharmas, {chos khams}; the dimension of all existence; the expanse of All That Is; the sphere of Dharma, expanse of all events, absolute expanse.

⁵ Tantra. The Vajrayana teachings given by the Buddha in his sambhogakaya form. The real sense of tantra is 'continuity, the innate buddha nature, which is known as the tantra of the expressed meaning. The general sense of tantra is the extraordinary tantric scriptures also known as the tantra of the expressing words. Can also refer to all the resultant teachings of Vajrayana as a whole.

⁶ Samsara. "Cyclic existence," 'vicious circle' or 'round' of birth and death and rebirth within the six realms of existence, characterized by suffering, impermanence, and ignorance. The state of ordinary sentient beings fettered by ignorance and dualistic perception, karma and disturbing emotions. Ordinary reality, an endless cycle of frustration and suffering generated as the result of karma.

⁷ Nirvana, transcendence of sorrow, nirvana, having been delivered from pain, nirvana, [gone beyond misery] transcendence, to pass into nirvana, passed into nirvana. Buddhahood.

⁸ Chod is a sacred meditative practice dedicated to ending attachment.

⁹ Chogyalsten is a Tibetan name which means Dharma's flag.

¹⁰ Damaru is a hand drum used during ceremonial offerings.

¹¹ Guru is a Sanskrit term for teacher.

¹² Padmasamhava was an Indian yogi who brought the practice of Yoga to Tibet and later became a Tibetan god.

¹³ The Aga is a river in Buraytia, Siberia, which lies in Eastern Russia.

¹⁴ DAKINI. 1) Spiritual beings who fulfill the enlightened activities; female tantric deities who protect and serve the Buddhist doctrine and practitioners. Also one of the "Three Roots." 2) Female enlightened practitioner of Vajrayana.

¹⁵ Pelginyam is an auspicious day for renewal.

¹⁶ Siddhi is a state in which supernatural powers are obtained.

grass was a pleasure, with which any skillful carpet manufacturer could not compete and certainly, one could not produce such a natural scent. A light wind refreshed Tengon and carried away his melodious prayer. The sun shone cheerfully in the endless blue sky, and millions of beams were reflected as gold patches of light on the surface of the water. The first day passed easily, and Tengon thought that this task seemed a mere trifle. He was full of pride “I’m so formidable, my mere appearance here has dispersed all the local spirits” – he thought. With a frown and a haughty gaze, Tengon imagined himself all-powerful. Only one thing annoyed him, that his Teacher-Guru did not see him as the “Incomparable Tengon”, at the peak of his greatness and power.

After draining his energy through daydreaming, by the end of the second day, he began to wear down. Now he felt thirsty and wished to sleep. He wondered why he should burden himself with any such paltry practice if he were so powerful. He only needed to find a way to explain his invincibility to his Teacher.

Such were his confused ramblings and by the end of the second night, Tengon’s speech was unclear. He had begun to hallucinate; he imagined that all the harmful spirits of the earth were united against him, and surrounded him from different directions, desiring to tear him to pieces. Tengon shook his head, trying drive them off so that he would not be conquered by somnolence. Tengon dreamed of a time when, upon finishing this retreat, he would sleep the whole day, even three whole days. The opportunity to sleep for some hours, accessible practically to everyone, seemed to him to be the greatest happiness. He began to count the time until the end of his retreat. But it stubbornly did not pass quickly. It seemed as though time had paused and the retreat continued endlessly.

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