

## ***Advice from Me to Myself***

PALTRÜL RINPOCHE\*

You who enjoy the union of bliss and emptiness  
Seated motionless on the lunar disc  
Above a beautiful hundred-petaled flower  
Radiant with white light,  
I pay homage to you the divine guru, Vajrasattva.

Listen, Abushri,  
You miserable, daydreaming fool,  
You remember how delusions  
Confused you in the past?  
Watch out for delusions in the present,  
And don't lead a hypocritical life.

Stop unnecessary speculations.  
You've made hundreds of plans  
Which never came off  
And only led to disappointment.  
Unfinished acts are like  
The overlapping action of the waves.  
Stay alone and stop  
Making your own head spin.

You've studied hundreds of philosophies  
Without grasping any of them.  
What's the point of further study?  
You've studied without remembering  
Anything when you needed it.  
What's the point of contemplation?  
Forget about your "meditation"!   
It doesn't seem to be  
The cure for conflicting emotions.

You may have recited the set number of mantras  
But you still haven't mastered the concrete visualizations.  
You may have mastered the concrete visualizations  
But you still haven't loosened the grip of duality.

You may have subdued apparent evils  
But you still haven't tamed your ego.

Forget your set periods of meditation  
And following an obsessive schedule.  
High and clear but not letting go,  
Low and steady but lacking clarity,  
Penetrating insight but only stabbing—  
That's your meditation!

Forget the stare of concentration  
And the tethered mind.  
Lectures sound interesting  
But they don't help your mind.  
The logical mind seems sharp  
But it's really the seed of confusion.  
Oral instruction sounds very profound  
But it doesn't help if it isn't practiced.  
Forget about browsing through books  
Which causes distraction and eyestrain.

You bang your antique prayer drum,  
But, just for the novelty of playing (with) it.  
You offer up your body,  
But in fact you're still attached to it.  
You play clear-sounding cymbals  
But your mind is heavy and dull.  
Forget about these tricks,  
Attractive though they are.

Your disciples seem to be studying  
But they never follow through;  
One day there's a glimmer of understanding,  
But the next day it has gone.  
They learn one thing out of a hundred  
But they don't retain even that.  
Forget these apparently fervent disciples!

One's closest friend is full of love  
Today and indifferent tomorrow.

He is humble one minute and proud the next.  
The more one loves him the more distant he becomes.  
Forget the dear friend who smiles  
Because the friendship is still a novelty!

Your girlfriend puts on a smiling face  
But who knows what she really feels?  
For one night of pleasure it's nine months of heartache.  
You can spend a month trying to bed her and still not succeed.  
It's really not worth all the scandal and gossip,  
So forget about her.

Never-ending chatter stirs up likes and dislikes.  
It may be amusing and enjoyable  
But it's merely imitating the faults of others.  
The listeners seem receptive  
But they may be critical at heart.  
It only gives you a dry throat  
So forget about idle talk!

Preaching without firsthand experience  
Of the subject is like dancing on books.  
The audience may seem willing to listen  
But they're not really interested at all.  
If you do not practice what you preach  
You'll be ashamed of it sooner or later,  
So forget about hollow rhetoric!

When you haven't any books  
You feel the need for them;  
When you have them you don't.  
It's only a few pages  
But to copy them is endless.  
All the books in the world  
Would give you no satisfaction,  
So forget about copying—  
Unless you get a fee for it!

One day you're relaxed,  
The next you are tense.

You will never be happy  
If you're swayed by people's moods.  
Sometimes they are pleasant  
But maybe not when you need them  
And you might be disappointed.  
So forget about politeness and flattery!

Political and religious activities  
Are only for gentlemen.  
That's not for you, my dear boy.  
Remember the example of an old cow:  
She's content to sleep in a barn.  
You have to eat, sleep, and shit—  
That's unavoidable—anything  
Beyond that is none of your business.  
Do what you have to do  
And keep yourself to yourself.

You're as low as the lowest  
So you ought to be humble.  
There's a whole hierarchy above you  
So stop being proud.  
You shouldn't have too many close associates  
Because differences would surely arise.  
Since you're not involved  
In religious and political activities  
Don't make demands on yourself.  
Give up everything, that's the point!

This teaching is given by Yogi Tri-me Lodrö from his own experience to his dear friend Abushri.\*\*  
Do practice it, although there is nothing to practice. Give up everything—that's the whole point.  
Don't get angry with yourself even if you can't practice the dharma.

\* Paltrül Rinpoche, who wrote the poem addressed to Abushri, lived at the end of the nineteenth century. He was a renowned Nyingma teacher, particularly interested in bringing the philosophy and practice of meditation together. He refused to live in an institutionalized monastery and became a great traveler.

\*\* Patrül Rinpoche himself is both Yogi Tri-me Lodrö and Abushri; he is quite frankly talking to himself in this poem.—Ed.