

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME ONE

The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa brings together in eight volumes the writings of one of the first and most influential Tibetan teachers to present Buddhism in the West. From his arrival in England in 1963 until his death in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Chögyam Trungpa (1939–1987)¹ was the author of thirteen books. Of these, ten appear in full in this collection. His translations of major Buddhist texts (*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, *The Rain of Wisdom*, and *The Life of Marpa*) have been omitted, but his introductions and other unique contributions to those publications are included.

Since his death, another thirteen books have been compiled from his lectures and poetry and published by Shambhala Publications. All of them appear in this compendium, although some illustrative material has of necessity been omitted. Vajradhatu Publications, the small press started by Chögyam Trungpa's Buddhist organization, has published four books for a general audience, which will also be found in *The Collected Works*. (That press has also produced several dozen edited transcripts and a number of limited editions, which are not reprinted in this series.) Additionally, more than seventy articles from many sources are

1. There has been some confusion about Chögyam Trungpa's precise date of birth. *Born in Tibet* gives it as the full-moon day of the first month of the Earth Hare year, 1939. Other autobiographical sources, including an important doha (song) that he wrote in Tibet, suggest that he was born in the year of the Iron Dragon, 1940. Later in his life, he himself considered this to be his birth year. However, since *Born in Tibet* is included in Volume One of *The Collected Works*, I have given 1939 as his birth year in this introduction.

included, along with poetry published by two small Canadian presses, Trident Publications and Windhorse, as well as several published interviews and forewords, prefaces, and introductions to books by other authors.

This extensive body of work illustrates that Trungpa Rinpoche² was a remarkably prolific teacher whose writings continue to attract great interest. With plans being made for many more publications based on the recordings and transcripts of his many hundreds of seminars, as well as on his poetry and writings, it seems that his prodigious activity in bringing the buddhadharma, the teachings of the Buddha, to the West will continue to flourish for many years to come.

In arranging the material for the eight volumes of *The Collected Works*, a decision was made to arrange the volumes thematically rather than chronologically. In part, this was because of the diverse nature of Chögyam Trungpa's literary endeavors. In addition to his books on the practice of meditation and the Buddhist path, five volumes and several broadsides of his poetry have been published, as well as three books on art and the artistic process. Two books on the Shambhala path of enlightened warriorship have also been produced. He also wrote a number of articles on Western psychology, along with short pieces on themes such as feminine energy and spiritual gardening. If all of these writings were organized in *The Collected Works* purely by year of publication, some rather strange juxtapositions would result. Moreover, the fecund connections among works on a similar theme would be much less apparent.

Another reason for the thematic organization is that Trungpa Rinpoche's posthumous volumes contain material from both very early seminars in North America and much later lectures. So chronology of publication would be a misleading organizing principle.

That said, Volume One, which contains his early writings in Great Britain, is the exception to the rule. The style of those works differs radically from the voice that emerged when he began to teach, and to be published, in North America. It thus seemed both useful and appropriate to group together the writings from England.

Chögyam Trungpa's first book, *Born in Tibet*, was published by

2. *Rinpoche*, which literally means "precious one," is a respectful title for a Tibetan teacher.

George Allen & Unwin in 1966, approximately three years after he came from India to Oxford on a Spalding scholarship. There are no known writings of his from India, evidently because no writings were produced, saved, or passed on to Western students. He was twenty years old when he arrived in India in January of 1960, having traveled on foot and horseback over the Himalayas from eastern Tibet to escape the communist Chinese, a journey that lasted ten months. That odyssey is in part the subject matter of *Born in Tibet*.

In India he began his study of the English language, learning a great deal from Freda Bedi, an Englishwoman who later became a Buddhist nun under the name Sister Kenchog Palmo. Mrs. Bedi was very active in helping the Tibetan refugees and had started the Young Lamas Home School in Delhi, assisted by Trungpa Rinpoche, who was appointed spiritual adviser to the school. While in India, he was also tutored in English by John Driver, who later was of great assistance in his studies of Western literature, religion, and philosophy at Oxford. Trungpa Rinpoche had been first exposed to Western poetry in India, initially through a chance encounter with a Japanese haiku translated in a magazine he was reading to improve his English, and later by hearing the work of T. S. Eliot and other English poets at a reading sponsored by an American women's club in New Delhi.³ Rinpoche had also made the acquaintance of the American poets Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky in India when they visited the Young Lamas Home School.⁴

Although he was an avid student of the language, Chögyam Trungpa's English was still rudimentary when he sailed for England. More than that, his understanding of Western thought and culture was limited. He went to England because he wanted to teach Buddhism in the West, but in order to do so, he first needed to educate himself in Western ways.

The earliest published writing included in Volume One of *The Collected Works* is a brief article entitled "Om Mani Padme Hum Hrih,"

3. See *First Thought Best Thought*, preface, p. xix.

4. Neither Rinpoche nor Ginsberg seemed to remember this brief meeting when they next encountered one another in the 1970s in New York. Ginsberg only realized that he had met Chögyam Trungpa in India after the latter's death. When Ginsberg examined a photograph taken during his visit to the Young Lamas School, he saw that the lama who showed him around the school was none other than Trungpa Rinpoche, who had been one of his most important Buddhist teachers from the 1970s on.

which appeared in the August 1963 issue of *The Middle Way*, the journal of the Buddhist Society in England.⁵ That was followed by “Taking Refuge” in the November 1963 issue. In that issue of the magazine, there is also a photograph of Trungpa Rinpoche with the Western Buddhist scholar Marco Pallis (who wrote the foreword to *Born in Tibet*) and the Parsi author and scholar of religion Phiroz Mehta, as well as two other Tibetan lamas, Akong Rinpoche and Rechung Rinpoche. The caption says that the photo was taken at the Buddhist Society Summer School in 1963. This must have been only months after Chögyam Trungpa’s arrival in England. Both of these early articles are well written, but the language and the style in which they present the Buddhist teachings are dramatically different from the way Trungpa Rinpoche expressed himself even a few years later. It’s very likely that Trungpa Rinpoche had extensive help with the editing and wording of these pieces, since his fluency in English was quite limited at this point. Although the articles show flashes of his brilliant intellect, in general the depth and luminous quality of his teachings are quite veiled in these earliest pieces from *The Middle Way*. It’s clear that he didn’t yet have the grasp of the language to convey the subtle and unique understanding that distinguished his teachings. In contrasting these articles with the pieces published by *The Middle Way* five years later, in 1968, one sees just how much Trungpa Rinpoche had immersed himself in Western thought in the intervening time. In the later articles he makes references to concepts from Western philosophy and literature, and his grasp of the language has clearly grown exponentially.

However, it was not just knowledge of the English language or of Western thought that Chögyam Trungpa needed in order to teach in the West. He was not interested purely in presenting an overview of Buddhism to Westerners, nor did he simply want to give basic instruction in meditation or provide some outward affinity with tantric practices such as visualization and mantra repetition. He was heir to a spiritual heritage

5. The version of this article that appears in *The Collected Works* is based on the article that appeared in *The Middle Way* as well as on material from another manuscript that was discovered in Chögyam Trungpa’s papers housed in the Shambhala Archives. This early typed version of the article included a few significant additions to the discussion, which for some reason were omitted from the text as published in *The Middle Way*. More notably, the earlier manuscript includes a chart that outlines the relationship of the mantra OM MANI PADME HUM to overcoming various obstacles and attaining the wisdom of the five buddha families. This chart has been included with the article in Volume One of *The Collected Works*. It is the first time the chart has been published.

of extraordinary depth and power, and it was the innermost teachings of his lineage that he wanted to transmit to his students in the West. To do this, he had to get inside the minds and hearts of Westerners; he had to know us from the inside out if he was to speak to us from that dimension. In the process, he faced many obstacles.

Even among the most realized Tibetan teachers, there were few—particularly at that time—who trusted Western students completely or thought them capable of understanding and putting into practice the deepest, most essential truths of the buddhadharma. Trungpa Rinpoche did have this faith, this trust in the Western mind. One sees this trust emerge from the very early days, in his first book published in England, *Born in Tibet*, an autobiography recounting his early life and training in Tibet and the dramatic story of his arduous escape. One can read this book on a simple level, skimming the surface of outer events; but a deeper reading reveals the author's desire, even this early on, to share intimate details of his inner experience. For example, he describes his relationship with his main teacher, Jamgön Kongtrul of Sechen, and the significance of their meetings, in a way that goes far beyond a superficial telling. It is as if he invites the reader into the room with him when he is with his teacher and also, throughout the book, allows the reader to know his thoughts and emotions, including pain and doubt. He thus seems to have displayed a remarkable openness, considering how guarded most of his Tibetan colleagues were with their Western students. At the same time, he was not oblivious to a strong tendency among some Westerners, especially during this era in England, to view Eastern “gurus” with a mixture of awe and paternalism, treating them almost like spiritually advanced children who were unable to cope with the complexities of modern life. Yet he was able to steer confidently between the dualistic extremes of naive trustfulness and excessive reserve.

His ability to see all sides of Westerners' reaction to their early encounters with Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhists is beautifully reflected in the first epilogue to *Born in Tibet*, which Chögyam Trungpa added to the Penguin paperback edition published in 1971, a year after he had left England for America. Of his experience in England, he wrote, “It was also the first time I had been the object of that fascination which is noncommunicative and nonrelating, of being seen as an example of a species rather than as an individual: ‘Let’s go see the lamas at Oxford.’ . . . [On the other hand] one particularly beautiful thing to hear in Eng-

land was Western Buddhists giving talks on the dharma. It was so refreshing to see that the teachings could be presented in the local language. . . . At the same time it was an uplifting experience to see such interest in the actual practice of meditation. . . .”⁶

To be sure, there were many of his Tibetan colleagues, his English friends, and his Western students who were nothing like the negative descriptions above. Or in many cases they were simply manifesting natural reticence, an inclination to be shy and reserved with people one doesn't know well. In this case, the reticence involved whole cultures that had no intimacy with one another. So one hesitates to mention these tendencies, because they can be narrow and misleading characterizations. Yet it seems necessary to point to exactly these sorts of difficulties that he encountered in England, in order to understand the depth of his compassion, the breadth of his transformation, and his courage in leaving behind many of the trappings of his culture and many aspects of the monastic lifestyle that he dearly loved.

Indeed, no amount of formal education or study of the English language was going to make him an insider. He might get a front-row seat by working hard at his studies, but he was never going to be one of the players on the stage. More and more he came to realize this, and more and more he stepped outside the polite bounds of both Tibetan and English proper society in order to have real contact with the hearts and minds of the people he encountered. In many of his early talks, both in England and in the first few years in America, he spoke about the value and meaning of communication. It was not an abstract topic for him. He spent much of his effort during his early years in the West finding a genuine way to open to others and to invite them to open up to him. At the same time that he was working to overcome their tendencies to hold back, he had to work against his own.

He spoke a number of times about the crisis that he reached in this endeavor. In Volume One of *The Collected Works*, this discussion is found

6. From the epilogue to the Penguin edition of *Born in Tibet*, © 1971 by Penguin Books, Inc. See pp. 280, 281 of Volume One of *The Collected Works*. Until the publication of *The Collected Works*, this epilogue was out of print for many years. It contains revealing information about the time that Chögyam Trungpa spent in England, as well as a powerful discussion of his ongoing spiritual relationship with his Tibetan gurus after he left Tibet. Although he never saw his main teachers again, they continued to provide inspiration for his journey in the West.

in *Born in Tibet* in both the 1971 epilogue to the Penguin edition and the 1977 epilogue, “Planting Dharma in the West,” which Trungpa Rinpoche composed for the Shambhala Publications edition of the book, which appeared ten years after its first publication. This spiritual crisis came to a head over several years. Rinpoche describes a kind of mental “breakthrough” that occurred in 1968 when he undertook a retreat at Taktsang in Bhutan, a cave where Padmasambhava, the great teacher who helped to bring the buddhadharma to Tibet, had manifested in a powerful, wrathful form. During his retreat, Chögyam Trungpa composed—or, more accurately, received—*The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, a text concerned with overcoming the obstacles of physical, psychological, and spiritual materialism that plague the modern world. This text is considered “mind terma,” a “treasure” text planted by Padmasambhava in the realm of space, from which it could be awakened or retrieved as a kind of revelation or vision many generations later, and thus passed on directly to practitioners in the future dark age. The text is concerned with how individuals can free themselves from the knots of materialism to connect with the power of genuine wisdom. It is a guide to individual liberation, which can then be harnessed to help a greater world. For its author, or its “discoverer,” it was certainly a personal awakening. As he writes in the 1977 epilogue, “The message that I had received from my supplication was that one must try to expose spiritual materialism and all its trappings, otherwise true spirituality could not develop. I began to realize that I would have to take daring steps in my life” (p. 264).

He returned from Bhutan to Great Britain, where in spite of the inner discoveries he had made, he found that outwardly he was still hesitant to jump in fully. A few months later, in early 1969, he was severely injured in a car accident, from which he emerged paralyzed on the left side. However, he took the accident as good news, a breakthrough: “In spite of the pain, my mind was very clear; there was a strong sense of communication—finally the real message had got through—and I felt a sense of relief and even humor. . . . I realized that I could no longer attempt to preserve any privacy for myself, any special identity or legitimacy. I should not hide behind the robes of a monk, creating an impression of inscrutability, which, for me, turned out to be only an obstacle. With a sense of further involving myself with the sangha, I determined to give up my monastic vows. More than ever, I felt myself given over to serving the cause of Buddhism” (pp. 264–65).

In “Things Get Very Clear When You’re Cornered,” a 1976 interview in *The Laughing Man* magazine, Chögyam Trungpa talks about the dilemmas faced by Tibetan teachers and his own personal challenge in teaching in the West, as well as the message of his accident:

Tibetans generally have to break through the cultural fascinations and mechanized world of the twentieth century. Many Tibetans either hold back completely or try to be extraordinarily cautious, not communicating anything at all. Sometimes they just pay lip-service to the modern world, making an ingratiating diplomatic approach to the West. The other temptation is to regard the new culture as a big joke and to play the game in terms of a conception of Western eccentricities. So we have to break through all of that. I found within myself a need for more compassion for Western students. We don’t need to create impossible images but to speak to them directly, to present the teachings in eye-level situations. I was doing the same kind of thing that I just described, and a very strong message got through to me [after my accident]: ‘You have to come down from your high horse and live with them as individuals!’ So the first step is to talk with people. After we make friends with students they can begin to appreciate our existence and the quality of the teachings.⁷

A few months after having renounced his monastic vows, in an even more radical move, on January 3, 1970, Trungpa Rinpoche married. His bride, Diana Judith Pybus, was a young woman of sixteen at the time. Three months after they married and within a year of his accident, he and Diana left England for North America.

These events of 1968 to 1970 show an enormous shift in Chögyam Trungpa’s outer manifestation. The writings that make up Volume One of *The Collected Works* are a window into the inner world of this extraordinary man, both before and during this transformation. For his manifestation after these changes, we have another seven volumes to peruse!

Diana Mukpo, the author’s wife, remarked on how much his outer being changed following his accident. She first met him during a seminar he was giving in London at the Buddhist Society in early 1969. Trungpa Rinpoche had just recently returned from Bhutan, where he had re-

7. For the full text of this interview, see Volume Four of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa*.

ceived the sadhana. It was before the accident. Diana requested a personal interview with him, which she describes as follows: “During the interview, Rinpoche was incredibly sweet. . . . To me he seemed to be a very pure being: so kind, so pure, so sharp. During the interview, I had the sense that he was touching my mind with his. There was absolutely no barrier in our communication. Whomever he worked with, he was in love with the other person’s mind. I felt that he had no personal agenda except to be kind and helpful.”⁸

The next time she saw him was in the fall of 1969, when she hitchhiked to Samye Ling, Rinpoche’s meditation center in Scotland. She writes:

The first evening I was at Samye-Ling, Rinpoche came by to have dinner with the other Tibetans who lived at Samye-Ling. After dinner, as he was leaving . . . I saw him outside getting ready to depart. He was no longer wearing monk’s robes, but instead he had on a layman’s chuba, or robe, and he was walking slowly in a laboured way with the aid of a walker. I realized that he was quite crippled from the accident. I managed to get close to him. . . . Although I only saw Rinpoche that evening for a few minutes, in that short period of time, I realized that he was a completely different person than he had been before his accident. Of course, he looked quite different physically because he was paralysed on one side and had obviously been through a lot. But that wasn’t it. It wasn’t just his physical being that had changed. He had a very different manifestation now, which I found fascinating. Before the accident, he had been a youthful Tibetan monk, so pure and light. Now he was much more heavy and solid, and there was a sort of old dog or well-processed feeling about him. He seemed much older, and he had an unfathomable quality that I hadn’t experienced before. He was transformed.”⁹

That purity and lightness, which others who knew Trungpa Rinpoche during this time have also noted, are reflected in the quality and style of *Born in Tibet*, as well as in the articles published in *The Middle Way*. This light touch is also apparent in Chögyam Trungpa’s first book on the Bud-

8. From “Mukpo,” an unpublished memoir by Diana J. Mukpo with Carolyn Rose Gimian.

9. *Ibid.*

dhist path, *Meditation in Action*, which was based on talks he gave at Samye-Ling beginning in 1967. There are indeed a sweetness and a gentleness that pervade these early works. While not abandoned later, these qualities became colored by a deeper range of emotions and a different vocabulary in America.

The third book that is included in Volume One, *Mudra*, was not in fact published until 1972, several years after Chögyam Trungpa came to North America. However, it has been included in Volume One because the core writings in *Mudra* are poems composed in England in the 1960s. (The translation of a poem that the author wrote in the Valley of Mystery in Tibet in 1959 also appears here.) There are several poems from 1965, in a section called “Songs”; the remaining verses are all from 1969, several from before the author’s accident, the remainder following it. Together they give us another picture of this period: the voice of the poet, which for Trungpa Rinpoche was always a highly personal voice, much more so than the tone of his lectures.

Up to this point, the discussion has been of how one can read these early works for signs of the author’s personal growth and development. In many schools of Buddhism, the teacher’s life is taken as an important object of study and contemplation. For it is assumed that the life of a great teacher is a life that contains many lessons. A teacher’s life is teaching by example.

However, *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa* is not the author’s spiritual biography, and in general it is not the editor’s intent to discuss themes from Rinpoche’s personal life in the introduction to each of the volumes. Yet it seemed that for this first volume it was worth making an exception and including in this commentary some important biographical themes, especially since the author’s only *autobiography*, *Born in Tibet*, is included here. However, the teachings from this early period can primarily be enjoyed as good reading and for the good dharma that they expound.

When *Born in Tibet* was published in 1966, it was among the very earliest Tibetan autobiographies and accounts of life in Tibet told by a Tibetan in English. It was also one of the first descriptions of the communist occupation of that country recounted firsthand by a Tibetan. There are few works, even today, from which one can learn as much about the traditional upbringing and training of an incarnate teacher in Tibet. It owes its genesis very much to its English editor, Esmé Cramer

Roberts. Chögyam Trungpa and Mrs. Roberts were introduced through mutual acquaintances at the Buddhist Society in Oxford. In his foreword to the book, Marco Pallis thanks Mrs. Roberts for “her encouragement in the first place,” without which, he notes, “the work might never have been begun.” Mrs. Roberts and Trungpa Rinpoche worked on the book together for more than two years.

Born in Tibet was written at a time when Chögyam Trungpa’s command of English was still very much a work in progress. Understandably, the language and the style employed in the book were heavily influenced by Mrs. Roberts’s own skills with the English language. It is fortunate for the reader that she was such a sensitive editor; much of the charm of the phraseology of *Born in Tibet*, as well as its literacy, were undoubtedly her contributions.

Marco Pallis also notes that Mrs. Roberts tried very hard to preserve the flavor of the author’s thoughts. As he puts it, “she wisely did not try and tamper with a characteristically Tibetan mode of expression.” Without knowing exactly what he meant by this, it is still clear that Chögyam Trungpa himself, not his editor, determined the basic content and structure of the book. Mrs. Roberts was the first of many book editors he worked with. And while all of these made their imprint on his printed words, none of them—starting with this first venture—overrode the strength of his vision and his ability to communicate that.

There is some evidence that Mrs. Roberts sometimes did not understand all the details of the stories Trungpa Rinpoche told her. A number of years later, when he gave several seminars on the lineage of the Trungpa tulkus (incarnate lamas) and on his teacher Jamgön Kongtrul, there were small but notable discrepancies in his description of various events. That said, *Born in Tibet* is a book that he was proud of, and he was immensely grateful to Esmé Cramer Roberts for having helped him to write it.

Richard Arthure, the editor of *Meditation in Action*, shared the following information about Mrs. Roberts:

I never met Mrs. Cramer Roberts, to whom the Vidyadhara [Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche] dictated the accounts of his early life that are recorded in *Born in Tibet*. But Rinpoche did tell me a couple of things about working with her. . . . He used to go over to her house in Oxford for afternoon tea and recount the stories of his life in Tibet,

which she would write down. With a certain amusement, Rinpoche commented that Mrs. Cramer Roberts was an elderly and rather genteel English lady and that she completely omitted from the book certain episodes that she considered improper and not suitable for publication. She died shortly after the book appeared and, according to Rinpoche, such was her fascination with Tibet and Tibetans that she took rebirth in the Tibetan exile community in India.¹⁰

In 1977 Chögyam Trungpa added the epilogue “Planting the Dharma in the West” to *Born in Tibet*. It described his life from the time he arrived in India in 1960 until 1976, when he wrote the epilogue in Land O’Lakes, Wisconsin, at the Vajradhatu Seminary. The epilogue was edited by David I. Rome, Rinpoche’s private secretary and the editor of *First Thought Best Thought* and *Timely Rain*. In 1985 Rinpoche began work on a second epilogue to the book, which I was asked to edit. In preparation for our editorial meetings on this project, I put together a chronology of events from 1976 to 1985 to be included in the second epilogue and met several times with Trungpa Rinpoche to begin working with him on this project. However, he decided to postpone our work, and the final epilogue to *Born in Tibet* was never completed.

At the time that *Born in Tibet* was published, it may have struck most of its readers as an exotic tale of a faraway land, a fascinating story but one with little direct application to their lives. In a way that was characteristic of how he taught altogether, its author saw his audience for this book in the broadest possible terms. He wrote *Born in Tibet*, not just for the reading public in the 1960s, but for those of us who read it now and will read it for years to come. In 1966 in England there were probably only a handful or two of people practicing the more advanced aspects of Tibetan Buddhism, and most of those had only a marginal idea of what they were doing. Yet he included detailed information about many aspects of Tibetan Buddhism that were esoteric at the time but which are now well understood by Western practitioners.

Beyond that, as far as the communist occupation and his escape are concerned, the author narrated the outer events in *Born in Tibet* in such a way that the reader can enter very directly into this time of uncertainty and chaos and can experience what it was like not to know if your world

10. Letter from Richard Arthure to Carolyn Rose Gimian, December 2001.

was about to be destroyed; not to know if you should go or stay; not to know if the invaders were friends, neutral, or enemies; not to know if one should take the left or the right fork in the road, one of which would lead to freedom, the other to capture—not to know but to have to choose over and over again. The drama and the tension in *Born in Tibet* make this compelling to read; it still speaks to the ambiguity of human experience, in which the choices we make may be of great consequence, even when the way ahead is murky.

Born in Tibet was also significant because, for a very long time, it appeared to be the only available record of Trungpa Rinpoche's early life and his teachings in Tibet. It is now known that he composed over a thousand pages of writings while in Tibet and that, as a young tulku, he had already found several important terms. These were left behind when he fled the country, as was the history of the kingdom of Shambhala that he was writing during his escape. According to one story, he left it hidden near a high pass in the Himalayas. Until recently, all of these materials were believed to have been lost, destroyed during the communist Chinese invasion of the country.

Although he received occasional letters and news from Tibet, Trungpa Rinpoche was never able to return there. It was only after his death that a connection to Surmang Dütsi 'Tel, his main monastery, was reestablished by the Western sangha. One of Trungpa Rinpoche's students, Lee Weingrad, traveled to the monastery in September 1987, five months after Rinpoche's death, and has led many groups of Westerners there in subsequent years. Rinpoche's eldest son, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, then led an official delegation to Surmang in the summer of 2001. During his visit, the Sakyong was given nearly four hundred pages of texts that Trungpa Rinpoche composed before leaving Tibet. Mipham Rinpoche received this material from Trungpa Rinpoche's nephew, Karma Senge Rinpoche—who, in the aftermath of the communist occupation, traveled around the Surmang area gathering everything he could find of Trungpa Rinpoche's writings to preserve these texts for future practitioners. In time, much of this material will be translated and made available to English-language readers.

The second volume that is included in Volume One of *The Collected Works* is *Meditation in Action*, which was published in 1969 by Vincent Stuart and John M. Watkins. The material in the book dates from talks given at Samye Ling Meditation Center in Eskdalemuir, Scotland, by

Rinpoche in 1967 and 1968, before his transformative vision at Taktsang. There is a simplicity and a purity of thought that have made this little book an enduring classic on meditation and the path of the bodhisattva. This is the first book based on transcripts of audio recordings of the author's lectures. The great majority of his subsequent publications have been based on transcripts of lectures, his poetry being of course the major exception. That he—and other important Buddhist lineage holders—came to the West at a time when the technology existed to easily record the human voice was an accident, but an extremely fortuitous coincidence. The teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha were remembered and written down by his major disciples, and that tradition of students passing on the words of their teachers from memory was a main vehicle for the transmission of the Buddhist teachings for many centuries. At the time that the historical Buddha lived, the culture was much more attuned to that kind of oral transmission. Had the preservation of Chögyam Trungpa's dharma teachings relied purely on the memory of his Western students, I think it is fair to say that a great number of the teachings would have been lost or strangely altered. So we can be grateful that the arrival in the West of so many great Buddhist masters coincided with a technology uniquely suited to preserve their words.

For the transcription and editing of *Meditation in Action*, thanks are due to its editor Richard Arthure and other English students of Rinpoche's who worked on the manuscript. Richard was with Rinpoche when he composed *The Sadhana of Mahamudra* at Takstang in Bhutan and worked closely with Rinpoche on the translation of that text.¹¹ Of the genesis of *Meditation in Action*, Richard tells us:

The idea of putting together a book, based on talks given by Rinpoche mostly in 1967, arose in conversation between the Vidyadhara and myself, probably early in 1968. I thought it would help in making more people aware of what an extraordinary teacher Rinpoche was and, in particular, that it would draw more people to the Dharma and to Samye-Ling. I selected the material and set about transcribing and editing the talks that I thought would hang together to make up

11. A section of the sadhana appears in Volume Five of *The Collected Works*, along with an article about the meaning of the sadhana, "Space and Energy," reprinted from *The Shambhala Sun* magazine.

a book. It was solitary and labor-intensive work. For transcribing, I had an old reel-to-reel tape recorder and the first draft was written out by hand and then typed double-spaced on a Hermes typewriter. The challenge was to transform Rinpoche's spoken words into clear and elegant English prose. Even then, he had a fairly extensive and ever-growing vocabulary in English, but his sentence construction and grammar were rather sketchy and unorthodox. . . .

I worked on the book for about four months in the Spring of 1968 in between bouts of intensive ngöndro practice.¹² I wanted to finish both before Rinpoche and I left for India and Bhutan, which was late June or early July of 1968. I had no idea what the title of the book would be until after the manuscript was finished. I remember there was some discussion as to whether it should be *Meditation and Action* or *Meditation in Action*. In retrospect, it seems self-evident that *Meditation in Action* is a much better title, but it wasn't quite so obvious then as it is now with hindsight. Robert Bly happened to be visiting Samye-Ling at the time that I was putting together the final typescript. He very kindly reviewed it and suggested a handful of minor changes, mostly in the matter of punctuation. . . . The corrected proofs were sent to Stuart and Watkins only days before [Rinpoche and I departed] . . . for India, and so it happened that the book came out in England when both of us were thousands of miles away.¹³

Although *Meditation in Action* differs from most of Trungpa Rinpoche's later works in its style, being from the period before he met the energy of Padmasambhava, "the Great Wrathful One," in Bhutan, it already demonstrates a particular gift that made him uniquely suited to present the buddhadharma in the West. In an early unpublished diary, which he wrote in England in 1966 to 1968, he himself delineates this quality: "In particular, my own situation is due to the fact that no one [else] could understand everything all together—both worldly and spiritual views and how to live one's life. This is not to say that I am more skilled, more learned, and more experienced in the dharma. There are many people who are more learned than I and more elevated in their wisdom. However, I have never made a separation between the spiritual

12. The practices preliminary to receiving abhisheka, or vajrayana empowerment. See the introduction to Volume Five of *The Collected Works* for a discussion of ngöndro.

13. Letter from Richard Arthure to Carolyn Rose Gimian, December 2001.

and the worldly. If you understand the ultimate aspect of the dharma, this is the ultimate aspect of the world. And if you should cultivate the ultimate aspect of the world, this should be in harmony with the dharma. I am alone in presenting the tradition of thinking this way.”¹⁴

This ability to seamlessly bring together spiritual and temporal experiences and to point to the sacredness in our experiences in everyday life is one of the aspects of Chögyam Trungpa’s exposition of the dharma that made him so accessible and so helpful to Western practitioners. *Meditation in Action* already shows this understanding to be well developed, which is one reason that it has remained popular more than thirty years after it was published.

Another auspicious juncture that coincided with the appearance of *Meditation in Action* was that, through the book’s publication, Trungpa Rinpoche made the acquaintance of Samuel Bercholz and Shambhala Publications. Vincent Stuart, of Stuart and Watkins who published the book in England, was, in addition to being an English publisher of some note, a student of the teachings of Gurdjieff. He and Sam Bercholz got to know each other through mutual interests in things literary and spiritual, and through Vincent, Sam came into contact with the work of Chögyam Trungpa. In 1969 Sam, then in his early twenties, and a friend, Michael Fagan, decided to start a company dedicated to publishing works on spirituality from the world’s great religious traditions. Their first acquisition was the rights to *Meditation in Action* for the American market. As Sam Bercholz tells us: “*Meditation in Action* was originated by Vincent Stuart at Stuart and Watkins, and co-published simultaneously in the United States by Shambhala as its first published title. Shambhala took a 1,000-copy run-on of the British edition of 1,000 copies.”¹⁵

Sam was familiar with some of the stories about an enlightened kingdom called Shambhala, hidden away in the Himalayas, and he was attracted to the ideals of this enlightened society, so he decided to name his company Shambhala Publications. When Trungpa Rinpoche found out the name of the American company that had acquired the rights to his book, he was intrigued. He himself had a strong connection to the Buddhist teachings connected with Shambhala and had, as noted above,

14. From “Chogyam’s Diary,” unpublished manuscript. Translated from the Tibetan by John Rockwell. Used by permission of Diana J. Mukpo.

15. E-mail communication from Samuel Bercholz to Carolyn Gimian, January 1, 2002.

been writing a spiritual history of this kingdom when he was traveling out of Tibet. When he arrived in North America in 1970, among the first people he contacted were Sam Bercholz and his wife, Hazel, who along with Michael and Joann Fagan helped host his first teaching tour in California. All four of them became Rinpoche's students. Michael left the publishing company several years later; Sam remains the Editor-in-Chief of Shambhala Publications, which has been the main publisher for the writings of Chögyam Trungpa in the United States for more than thirty years now. He became one of Rinpoche's close disciples and has continued, not only to publish his work, but to propagate his teachings through his own lectures and seminars.

Mudra, the third book in Volume One, was the first book by Chögyam Trungpa for which Shambhala Publications was the original publisher. It was also the first of his books edited by Michael H. Kohn, also known as Sherab Chödzin, who has worked on many books by Chögyam Trungpa since that time. In addition to the poetry mentioned above, there are two translations of texts on the practice of dzogchen, or maha ati, as Trungpa Rinpoche preferred to call it. Richard Arthure worked on shaping the English versions of these two texts. An essay on the Buddhist path entitled "The Way of the Buddha" is also included in *Mudra*. It was first published in *Garuda I*, a small in-house magazine started by Rinpoche's American students. (A version of the same article appeared in the magazine *Chakra: A Journal of Tantra and Yoga*.) There are several accounts of the history of this article. According to Richard Arthure: "It's my recollection, though I can't be one hundred percent sure, that the first time Rinpoche presented an outline of the path in terms of the nine yanas [stages] was in April 1971 at a month-long retreat in a log cabin near Phelps, Wisconsin. Tania [Leontov] and I attended this retreat with Trungpa Rinpoche. There were no other visitors. . . . During this retreat Rinpoche dictated a fairly long and detailed account of the entire nine-yana path, and 'The Way of the Buddha' essay may have been a condensed version of that." John Baker separately informed me that Rinpoche dictated "The Way of the Buddha" to him and Marvin Casper, in connection with their work as editors on *Garuda I*. John writes:

I'll mention one other major piece of editing that I participated in: the first *Garuda*, and especially the article "The Way of the Buddha,"

which I have always felt is quite amazing. Rinpoche had not been teaching the Vajrayana yet when he dictated this article to us, sitting at a kitchen table in his house in Four Mile Canyon in Boulder. He was battling spiritual materialism in America, with the emphasis on cynicism, not going on “trips,” [and the development of] the proper relationship with the teacher and toward the teachings. So when he dictated this extraordinary article (he spoke, I wrote down his words, Marvin and I questioning and editing as he went), I was somewhat stunned and asked him if it was all right, did he really want suddenly to start giving out information on tantra, especially such shocking and esoteric information. He giggled and said that, if people read it and were seduced into coming to him hoping for exotic and magical teachings, it would be all right because we would just make them sit. I can see him laughing about it at the Formica table, looking at me.

One other extraordinary moment which occurred during the creation of that piece: after he had finished, he said of Maha Ati that the experience of the end of the path, the last evolution of enlightenment, is lonely, “like a lone wolf, standing on a ridge in the moonlight, howling at the moon.” That image for the end of the path has stayed with me all these years.¹⁶

These two accounts may complement each other. It is possible that Rinpoche began shaping the ideas while in retreat, that he then dictated the article for inclusion in *Garuda*, and that from there it was reedited for inclusion in *Mudra*.

Finally, ink paintings by Tomikichiro Tokuriki, of the Ox-Herding Pictures—a well-known Zen representation of mind training—are reproduced in *Mudra* with Chögyam Trungpa’s commentary, which John Baker also had a hand in preparing. Rinpoche also relates these drawings to the nine yantras in Tibetan Buddhism. Trungpa Rinpoche concludes that “the final realization of Zen automatically leads to the wisdom of Maha Ati,” which is the highest achievement on the path according to Tibetan tradition.

Already, in *Mudra*, his modest entrance into American book publishing, Rinpoche stands out as both an ecumenical figure and an iconoclast. Surely, he is the first Buddhist teacher to correlate Zen and Tibetan Bud-

16. E-mail communication from John Baker to Carolyn Rose Gimian, February 17, 2002.

dhism in this way. In June 1970 when he visited California, Rinpoche made a very pivotal connection with the founder of Zen Center San Francisco, Shunryu Suzuki Roshi. The two teachers, by all accounts, had a profound meeting of minds. Rinpoche and Roshi started making great plans to do things together, but these did not mature, as Roshi was diagnosed with liver cancer soon after they met and died in December 1971.¹⁷ Nevertheless, Rinpoche's respect for the Zen tradition was immense. Some of the emphasis that he put on the sitting practice of meditation, which became one of the trademarks of his teaching in America, grew out of his respect for the practice environment created by Suzuki Roshi. During Rinpoche's lifetime, Roshi's picture was always on the Buddhist shrines in Rinpoche's Buddhist centers.

There is one other notable fact about *Mudra*: Chögyam Trungpa's use of the term "egolessness" on page 411 is noted in the second edition of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, under the entry for the word *ego*. Trungpa Rinpoche, one can be sure, would have been delighted that he was quoted in the OED, a book that he treated with the greatest respect and regarded as *the* authority on the English language. Beyond that, this mention in the OED is an indication of the great and groundbreaking effect he had on the terminology adopted by Buddhism in the West in the twentieth century, of which there will be more said in the introductions to other volumes of *The Collected Works*.

Of the articles originally published in *The Middle Way* that are included in Volume One, a little has been said above, about how they show the development of Trungpa Rinpoche's grasp of Western language and thought. They include many teachings on compassion and the practice of the bodhisattva path, including a discussion of the six paramitas, the subject that also forms the foundation of *Meditation in Action*. Two articles on the history of Buddhism in Tibet contain unique information not duplicated in any other writings by Chögyam Trungpa.

Additionally, three other articles are included in Volume One of *The Collected Works*. "The Way of Maha Ati" is an exposition of some of the teachings of dzogchen or atiyoga, the most advanced stage of practice in the nine yanas of Tibetan Buddhism. The article contains the earliest

17. For an account of and commentary on their meetings, see David Chadwick, *Crooked Cucumber: The Life and Zen Teaching of Shunryu Suzuki* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell, 2000), pp. 373–75.

meditation instruction by Trungpa Rinpoche ever to appear in print. It is notable that this instruction is similar to the meditation instructions that he gave to his beginning, as well as advanced, students in North America, throughout most of his seventeen years teaching there. Michael Hookham, the editor of this piece (who now uses his dharma name, Rigdzin Shikpo), provided the following information on the genesis of this article and the confusion that arose with its original publication:

Trungpa Rinpoche gave the Maha-Ati teachings in this text directly to me from his personal inspiration; they weren't translated from Tibetan, but emerged from his insight, based, I'm sure, on traditional Dzogchen upadesa [instruction or teaching]. I wrote them down over a period of time with Rinpoche's guidance and encouragement, linking them together using his terminology. The text was probably completed in 1968 at Biddulph Old Hall, shortly before Rinpoche left for India. Some time later the text was translated into Tibetan so that Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche could check what was said; as far as I know he approved. Thus there seems to have been a textual translation involved, but remarkably it was from English into Tibetan!

After Rinpoche left Britain, some copies of the text found their way into hands other than those of his students. It was published in part by Dr. John Crook in his *The Yogins of Ladakh* and more completely in Chime Yungdung's magazine *Vajra*. This latter version was photocopied and circulated within Vajradhatu [the main organization founded by Trungpa Rinpoche in the United States]. Unfortunately the text was incorrectly described in *Vajra* as a translation made by Rinpoche and me; there was also confusion in places between the main text and the interleaved commentary and the title was changed to "Maha-Ati."

Alone this might not have mattered too much, but in the *Shambhala Sun* of September 1998 and subsequently in the *Shambhala Sun* website up to the present day, a new version of the text appeared, full of arbitrary, idiosyncratic editorial changes. The *Vajra* version with its errors was used as the basis for this . . . revision.

Rinpoche referred to the original text as self-secret, so it's probably suitable for a wider distribution than most Vajrayana texts, but I feel it's important to keep to Rinpoche's intention as closely as we

can. . . . It may help matters if the original text is published, so I have attached it to this e-mail.¹⁸

For *The Collected Works* Rigdzin Shikpo has provided the authoritative and original edition of this text. Its editor continues to live in Oxford, where he and Rinpoche originally met. He was one of Trungpa Rinpoche's early students in England and continued to study with him until Rinpoche's death. He was one of the first truly scholarly students that Rinpoche worked with, and he took voluminous notes on their conversations about many aspects of Buddhist doctrine and practice, particularly focused on the ati teachings. With encouragement from his teachers, he later founded the Longchen Foundation as a vehicle to further the study and practice of this tradition, and he continues to teach in England. Another article that he and Chögyam Trungpa worked on together, on teachings related to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, appears in Volume Six of *The Collected Works*.

The next offering in Volume One is "The Meditation of Guru Rinpoche," which was published in *Chakra: A Journal of Tantra and Yoga* in 1971. This short practice text is identified in *Chakra* as a translation of a Tibetan sadhana by "Ven. Lama Trungpa Tulku." Rigdzin Shikpo, the editor of "The Way of Maha Ati," has also shed some light on the probable history of this text: ". . . the book *Diamond Light* contained the first version of the text Rinpoche called the *Guru Sadhana* (an Ati Guru Yoga of Guru Rinpoche). As far as I can tell, this must be the text you mean. Rinpoche created it from two Tibetan texts that he said were from the Longchen Nyingthik. I searched the Longchen Nyingthik for them, but with no success. It may be that the texts came from the Nyingthik Yabzhi. In any case, Rinpoche weaved the two texts together and translated the result into English in Oxford in 1965 or 1966, with the help of John Blackwood, a resident of Oxford who died in Egypt some years ago. In 1967 or 1968, probably at Biddulph Old Hall, Rinpoche and I retranslated the text into English with more Sanskrit and Dharma terminology and Rinpoche created a commentary for it."¹⁹ Apparently, the short text that

18. E-mail and attachment from Rigdzin Shikpo to Carolyn Rose Gimian, February 10, 2002.

19. Ibid. The *Longchen Nyingthik* is a collection of writings—or termas, received teachings—by the famed Nyingma teacher Jigme Lingpa. The *Nyingthik Yabzhi*, mentioned in the next sentence, is a well-known and important collection of four dzogchen texts compiled by Longchen Rabjampa.

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME ONE

appears in Volume One of *The Collected Works* is part of a much larger undertaking.

An article entitled “The New Age,” which first appeared in the *International Times (IT)* magazine in 1969, completes Volume One. *IT* was, according to Richard Arthure, “a popular underground paper in the ’60s and ’70s . . . published weekly in London.” The article contains many intriguing ideas about society and politics, topics that continued to interest Chögyam Trungpa throughout his life. “The New Age” may be the first recorded germ of the Shambhala teachings, in English, that he concentrated on so much in the last ten years of his life.

Altogether, Volume One of *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa* contains a varied and vibrant group of teachings. The pace of change in modern society is such that something written thirty years ago now may seem already almost archaic. These early writings of Chögyam Trungpa, however, are not just of interest as historical artifacts, for they convey timeless, always up-to-date wisdom. There is much to recommend the writings from these early years, and this editor hopes that they will continue to enlighten readers for many generations. At the same time, the contents of Volume One set the stage for the extraordinary pageant of dharma that lies ahead in future volumes.

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