

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME EIGHT

THE *CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY* lists as one of the primary definitions of a statesman, a “sagacious, far-sighted, practical politician.” While Chögyam Trungpa would probably not have been pleased to be called a politician, I believe that he would have been proud to be seen as a sagacious, far-sighted, and practical statesman. It is to those teachings in which he addresses himself to great matters of state, matters of culture and society, that we turn in Volume Eight. Many of these teachings fall under the broad umbrella of Shambhala vision or the Shambhala teachings, on which he focused from 1976 until his death in 1987. However, several earlier discussions of politics and political consciousness are also included here, as well as a very early and unusual article on warriorship and the martial arts.

In referring to matters of state, which is my use of the phrase, not his, the reference is to teachings that connect individual development or realization with the betterment of society as a whole. The Shambhala teachings are not nationalistic in that they do not promote the primacy of any particular nation-state. They are, instead, based on promoting the vision and the wisdom of the Kingdom of Shambhala, a society—perhaps mythical—in Central Asia, which is viewed as a model for enlightened society. The Shambhala tradition is associated with the *Kalachakra Tantra*, which Shakyamuni Buddha is said to have proclaimed in Shambhala. The Kingdom of Shambhala, according to some legends, ascended into a higher realm at some point in the past. Since the entire populace was enlightened, there was no further reason for the kingdom to exist on earth. However, it is said that Shambhala might reappear on the earth

at a time when its wisdom is needed. Chögyam Trungpa himself often emphasized a more symbolic, psychological and spiritual interpretation of the story, saying that “there has long been a tradition that regards the Kingdom of Shambhala, not as an external place, but as the ground or root of wakefulness and sanity that exists as a potential within every human being” (p. 19). In both *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* and *Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala*, his major books on the Shambhala teachings, he makes the point that it is unnecessary to determine whether Shambhala actually existed. The point, he says, is to “appreciate and emulate the ideal of an enlightened society that it represents” (ibid.). In the introduction to *Shambhala*, Rinpoche says that his presentation of the Shambhala teachings “does not reveal any of the secrets from the Buddhist tantric tradition of Shambhala teachings, nor does it present the philosophy of the Kalacakra.” Rather, he says, “this book shows how to refine one’s life and how to propagate the true meaning of warriorship” (p. 11).

Trungpa Rinpoche often used the image of the Shambhala Kingdom to talk about a broad and inclusive view, an ecumenical approach to spirituality that appreciates traditions of human wisdom and warriorship from around the world. In *Great Eastern Sun*, he wrote:

Shambhala vision applies to people of any faith, not just people who believe in Buddhism. Anyone can benefit from the . . . Shambhala vision, without its undermining their faith or their relationship with their minister, their priest, their bishop, their pope, whatever religious leaders they may follow. The Shambhala vision does not distinguish a Buddhist from a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu. That’s why we called it the Shambhala *Kingdom*. A kingdom should have lots of different spiritual disciplines in it. (p. 277)

In at least one talk, “Fully Human,” given at the Naropa Institute in 1978, he connects this ecumenical approach to a historical discussion of the Kingdom of Shambhala. Here, he speaks of the kingdom as having had an actual historical existence on the earth:

The Shambhala principle is our way of life. Shambhala [itself] is the Central Asian kingdom that developed in the [intersection of the] countries of the Middle East, Russia, China and Tibet altogether. The

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basic idea of Shambhala vision as that of a sane society developed out of that culture, and we are trying to emulate that vision. That particular system broke down into the Taoist tradition [in China] and the Bön tradition of Tibet, the Islamic tradition of the Middle East, and whatever tradition Russia might have. It has broken into various factions. . . . Shambhala is a Central Asian culture, which is neither Aryan nor Mongolian. It is a unified tradition, one which we have long forgotten altogether. (pp. 386–387)

In this lecture, he also talks about the Shambhala tradition connecting with “the culture of the American Indians and the Eskimos, or with the Aztec and South American traditions” and says that in general “this earth—our earth, this earth, the planet earth—has very big blotches of good warriorship happening, and we are trying to bring those principles together, including the European Christian tradition of warriorship.” He looked for ways to connect the Shambhala path with other great spiritual traditions of warriorship throughout the world, while respecting the integrity of each tradition and not seeking to merge them all into an eclectic vision.

The image of the warrior was one he felt would be helpful and appropriate for this age. He himself had been through a tumultuous upheaval in Tibet, seeing his culture and many of the things he held most dear in life irreparably damaged or destroyed. Even before coming to America, he was painfully aware of materialism and the corruption of the times. *The Sadhana of Mahamudra*, a text he “discovered”¹ in Bhutan in 1968, says:

Living, as I do, in the dark age,
I am calling upon you, because I am trapped
In this prison, without refuge or protector.
The age of the three poisons has dawned
And the three lords of materialism have seized power.

1. In Tibet, there is a well-documented tradition of teachers discovering or “receiving” texts that are believed to have been buried (some of them in the realm of space) by Padmasambhava, who is regarded as the father of Buddhism in Tibet. Teachers who find what Padmasambhava left hidden for the beings of future ages, which may be ritual objects or physical texts hidden in rocks, lakes, and other locations, are referred to as tertöns (literally “treasure discoverers or revealers”), and the materials they find are known as terma. Chögyam Trungpa was already known as a tertön in Tibet since the age of around six, when he began to discover such treasures.

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The dharma is used for personal gain
And the river of materialism has burst its banks.
The materialistic outlook dominates everywhere
And the mind is intoxicated with worldly concerns.²

At the same time, while he had experienced many negative aspects of materialism in the modern age, his presentation of the Shambhala teachings was anything but pessimistic. The image of the warrior is brave and heroic. Shambhala vision is an affirmation and a celebration of human life, suggesting that in the midst of great chaos and confusion, the warrior is one who can appreciate and promote the goodness of human existence. Not being afraid of who he or she is, the warrior is fearless and confident and utterly devoid of aggression.

When Trungpa Rinopche was leaving Tibet in 1959, he was writing a text about Shambhala, which he left buried somewhere along the way. In India, when doing a divination practice for which he was well known, it's reported that he often saw visions of the Kingdom of Shambhala in a mirror into which he gazed.³ In England, he also was working on a Tibetan manuscript about Shambhala. But it was only after six years in America that he began to present these teachings formally. By that point, he had gathered around him a community of more than a thousand dedicated students, most of whom had been practicing meditation for some years and were now also beginning their study and practice of vajrayana Buddhism. The Naropa Institute was flourishing. It might have been a time to take a break and relax. For Rinpoche, it was a time to expand.

In the fall of 1976, Chögyam Trungpa was presenting advanced teachings to senior Buddhist practitioners at the Vajradhatu Seminary, which was held over a three-month period in the King's Gate Hotel in Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin. His residence at the time was a tiny two-bedroom trailer overlooking a frozen lake about ten minutes from the hotel. He and one attendant were living there. Just at the point where Rinpoche

2. From *The Sadhana of Mahamudra: Which Quells the Mighty Warring of the Three Lords of Materialism and Brings Realization of the Ocean of Siddhas of the Practice Lineage*. See Volume Five for an excerpt from this text and Chögyam Trungpa's teachings on it.

3. See the Editor's Preface in *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*.

was making the transition in his talks from hinayana and mahayana material to the presentation of vajrayana Buddhism, a Shambhala terma text appeared in his mind, the first to come to him in North America. It appeared first as the stroke of Ashe in his mind, which is a primordial symbol representing the heart of warriorship. Then, a few days later, *The Golden Sun of the Great East*, the first terma text itself, arose.⁴

Within days after receiving the first terma, Rinpoche moved into quarters in the hotel, a suite of rooms from which he conducted most of the remainder of the Seminary. He would occasionally return to his little trailer, but the expanded environment at the hotel became his main base of operations. He gave ten talks during the final section of Seminary, a number of which wove the Shambhala teachings into his presentations of vajrayana. It might seem coincidental that he moved his residence at this time, but in fact it was related to how he transformed his personal life at the same time as he began to present the Shambhala teachings. Earlier in the year, he had experimented with expanding his personal household to include a large number of servers, attendants, and other staff—all of whom were his students. His quarters in the hotel at Seminary also allowed him to have an expanded household, with many people involved in the most intimate aspects of his daily life. The situation allowed him to hold court, so to speak. In December, he returned to Boulder and moved into a house recently purchased for him, which was known as the Kalapa Court—Kalapa being the name of the capital of Shambhala. At the Court, he had many people around him all of the time. This left him with virtually no privacy, which was certainly not a “luxury” in the normal sense of the word. However, the constant flux of people coming and going seemed fine with him. From the moment he woke up in the morning until he went to sleep at night, his house was filled with people who were all there, essentially, not so much to serve him as to be with him. If you looked at what it was like for him, everything and yet nothing had really changed. He continued to conduct his life with great simplicity and tremendous attention to detail. He remained both as gentle and as energetic as he had always been, humorous and relaxed amid the tremendous bustling chaos that he invited into his home. His wife, Diana Mukpo, commented on this aspect of their life together:

4. In years to come, Trungpa Rinpoche would often refer to this as the “root” text.

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It was sometimes difficult being married to Rinpoche, because we never had any personal space at all. I mean none. I could wake up in the middle of the night, and he'd be talking to someone in the bedroom. This went on for years and years. For me, an ordinary mortal, it was very difficult sometimes. I would walk down to my kitchen in the morning, and there would be five people there. However, he never got irritated. He was never irritated; he always welcomed the situation so much, and that wasn't forced. That was the amazing thing about him: he was so much the embodiment of the teachings and the embodiment of the discipline. He felt so much pleasure and so much appreciation in working with other people. He embodied meditation in action. His particular internal discipline of being willing to work with other people all the time—when he was eating, sleeping, waking—that discipline was always there for him.⁵

Volume Seven of *The Collected Works* includes discussion of how Rinpoche organized large groups of people to work with him on various artistic enterprises and installations. Earlier volumes document how he was the center of a “scene” almost from the moment he set foot in America. With the establishment of his residence as the Kalapa Court, the “group work” simply became more intimate, focused, and non-stop. It allowed him to work with many more students in greater proximity and intimacy. Rinpoche had often said that enlightenment begins with the kitchen sink. At the Kalapa Court, taking care of the sink, the stove, the silverware, and the living room rug were all literally subjects of discussion. For some of his closest students, the Court became their home as well. In the summer of 1976, when Rinpoche was first implementing court-style living, he invited his private secretary, David Rome, to live in the house. When Chögyam Trungpa moved into the Kalapa Court in December, it was not only the home for him and his family, but he invited the Vajra Regent (his dharma heir) and his family to live there as well. The Court provided a way in which students became part of creating a society and a culture every day, very directly, in all the details of life.

As part of his own upbringing in Tibet, Rinpoche had been taught that personally serving one's teacher is one of the best ways to facilitate

5. Diana Mukpo, “Protecting the Mind,” talk given in Halifax, Nova Scotia, June 2002.

attainment of a real understanding of the dharma. Being close to the teacher in this way is an excellent opportunity to have one's ego-oriented schemes punctured. As well, the example that the teacher sets is magnified by close everyday contact with him or her. Historically, the Trungpa lineage was based on this model of a close connection between teacher and student. In fact, *trungpa* means one who serves or is close to the teacher. So by implementing a way to incorporate service to the teacher as part of one's meditation in action, Rinpoche actually was adapting a traditional model—with a slightly different twist.

At the Court, Chögyam Trungpa didn't simply use servants to serve him meals or clean his house. He worked along with everyone to create an uplifted environment into which everyone was invited. One might be serving on one night and coming back the next night as a guest. In a talk to some of those who served at the Court, Trungpa Rinpoche said:

As far as we [my wife and I] are concerned, even when we are at home, we don't take time off at all. We are constantly working. From the moment when we wake up to when we go to sleep, there is always a working basis, working with others, being involved in working with you people, working with the community at large, and working with ourselves. We don't regard this place [the Kalapa Court] as a place to flop or relax. As far as we are concerned, being at home is also discipline for us. . . .

The traditional concept of a palace or court, from a fairy tale point of view, is that everything is heavenly; everything is sweet, wonderful, and rich. There are always beautiful things on display, sweet music is always heard, there are nice, sweet things to eat, and in this comfortable environment the kings and queens indulge themselves. The real evidence of the past and the present is that court situations are not like that. Even if there was such a situation, it was short lived. When the ruling people, kings or queens, begin to indulge in their pleasure, the result is quite obvious. They begin to neglect their subjects, the rulers feel stupid and uninspired, and many of them get very bored.

We are trying to create a different kind of court situation altogether, which is very important. To make that possible, your participation is wonderful, and your help is needed very much. It is a question of helping each other: us helping you and you helping us.

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So it's teamwork, in that way. The purpose of the Court is to manifest and realize the notion of enlightened society. Obviously there will be a lot of challenges for you. You need a good attention span, good memory, a good eye for details, and coordination of mind and body together. These qualities are not foreign to you, since you are Buddhist practitioners. We emphasize mindfulness in situations, and awareness follows naturally in what we are doing.⁶

The change in Rinpoche's lifestyle signaled a marked transition within the community altogether. As the early Buddhist era gave way to the Shambhala era, which spanned the last ten years of his life (1976–1987), not only did Rinpoche change the way that he lived, but his students also made radical changes in their appearance and lifestyle. Long-haired, counterculture dishevelment gave way to business suits and chic professional dress. Many students changed their occupations, going into business or becoming professionals, whether in medicine, psychology, education, art, administration, or one of many other fields. People settled down and had families, bought homes, and became involved in community service.

On one hand, the changes in the community were simply a reflection of what was happening on a larger scale in American society: the counterculture of the 1960s and '70s was reintegrating with the mainstream. In many respects, Rinpoche was attuned to these larger patterns in American society and merely pushed the point a little earlier with his students. Most of them donned their first suit or conservative dress for the first visit of His Holiness the Karmapa in 1974, and after that, the suit and dress or pantsuit became the fashion of choice for Rinpoche's lectures and for weddings, parties, and other social events. But changes in how one lived were about more than conformity with the dominant milieu within the society. Rinpoche was training his students to be awake. The reference points for how to wake up changed over the years, but the goal and his intense dedication to it never faltered. When an environment became too comfortable for people and they could take it for granted, the rug was sure to be pulled out soon. When Rinpoche came

6. From Chögyam Trungpa, *True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung*, chap. 12, "The Kalapa Court: Being at Home Is Also Discipline," forthcoming from Trident Publications.

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to America in the early '70s, there was an aliveness and an edge to the counterculture he entered, which he thrived on. When that culture was losing its vibrancy and was becoming a caricature of itself—a kind of hippie establishment or some kind of comfortable counterculture nest—he introduced a new culture: the Shambhala world. Within that world, waking up, not comfort, was still the point. In his last years, he shook things up again, by inviting his students to move to Nova Scotia, where he thought that both the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings would thrive. He relocated the headquarters of Vajradhatu, his international organization, there, and he himself made the move just months before his death. In the years following, hundreds of his students left the stability and familiarity of their lives elsewhere to start over in Nova Scotia.

Returning to 1976, having launched the Kalapa Court and the beginning of the Shambhala era, Rinpoche, never one to stand still for long, left Boulder a few months later, early in 1977, and went into a year's retreat in Charlemont, Massachusetts. He kept in touch with what was going on in Boulder and his other centers, but he stayed out of the day-to-day business. He left his newly appointed Regent at the center of the Shambhala mandala, living in the Kalapa Court, and left his students to figure out what all this meant in his absence. While he was away, he worked on revising a commentary to the first Shambhala text he had received, he wrote another book on Shambhala principles, and he designed many elements of the Shambhala world, including flags, banners, and medals for exemplary service.

While in retreat, Rinpoche also asked a group of about fifty senior students to initiate Shambhala Training, a program to present the Shambhala teachings on warriorship and to introduce meditation to a large, nonsectarian audience. A few years ago, I was asked to write a short memoir about this period. These were my reminiscences of this time:

Our teacher decided to make 1977 his year of retreat, to see how we would do in his absence. While he was away on retreat, living in an old farmhouse in Charlemont, Massachusetts, and receiving frequent updates . . . he asked a group of students to initiate Shambhala Training, a secular approach to meditation designed to bring the Shambhala teachings—which he had begun presenting to us in 1976—on warriorship, basic goodness, and Great Eastern Sun vision to a whole

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new audience. In essence, he challenged us to present what we had learned from him and from the practice of meditation in a fresh and dynamic fashion. He was also challenging us to let go of some of our Buddhist chauvinism and to reach beyond our comfortable reference points in order to help others.

At that time, a lot of Buddhist and vajrayana jargon had caught on with Rinpoche's Buddhist students. We talked about becoming bodhisattvas, developing maitri and karuna, practicing shamatha and vipashyana, experiencing mahamudra, maha ati, sampannakrama, and you-name-it Sanskritisms. If we were asked why we practiced or what Buddhism was about, a stream of foreign words often issued forth from our lips. And we were full of ourselves, sure that we were the best of the best of the new American breed of Buddhists. In some ways, we were! We were riding on the coattails of a man who cut a powerful swath through the American continent. He spoke amazing English; we mimicked and often spoke pidgin Sanskrit or fractured phrases that we didn't fully understand. He exuded brilliant confidence; we puffed up and often exuded hot air. I'm poking fun here, but I don't mean to belittle the students—rather I'm trying to clarify why it was so helpful and powerful *to us* for Rinpoche to introduce Shambhala Training, forcing us to speak English and to speak it from the heart.

About fifty of us living in Boulder, Colorado, were selected as potential directors for Shambhala Training. Twice a week we met to rehearse talks and discuss strategy. We were told by our fellow student-leaders to be as overwhelming as possible and to belt out the reasons why the Shambhala teachings would be great for everyone to embrace. We talked a lot about confidence and dignity, and dignity and confidence . . . at a fevered loud pitch. Then, after weeks of practicing, . . . we launched actual weekend programs.

Rinpoche got reports. They were not good. After a few months of floundering and bluster, punctuated by occasional brilliance and true heart, we received a letter from retreat. To my mind, it still contains some of the best advice on teaching—and on being—that I've ever received. He punctured us and left us soft and vulnerable, ready to hear the authentic Shambhala teachings. In my experience, this letter marked the *real* beginning of the Shambhala training. He wrote:

. . . People have been told to create Shambhala Training but instead they are just groping about and mimicking Shambhala

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Training. . . . As we know, the term “confidence” doesn’t mean anything if we can’t be sane in accordance with the buddhist doctrine. . . . We should pause for a moment and think about how fortunate we are to have the opportunity to bring about the Great Eastern Sun vision. We shouldn’t constantly worry about our presentation of Shambhala Training. First we should appreciate how fortunate we ourselves are; then we will have something to say, some message to proclaim to the world. . . .

Shambhala Training can become a very powerful landmark in history only if we have a message to proclaim—and so far we don’t have any message. All that we have said is that we are going to be secular rather than spiritual. This is a weak point which will cause us to cultivate jerks, artificial people who don’t want to sit, who instead want to proclaim their personalities and say that they have ultimate confidence because their ambition to be powerful and sybaritic people is accommodated by their pseudo-spirituality. . . . Buddhism going secular is the best possible news for those people who just want to indulge themselves. . . .

We have to develop wholesomeness in the Shambhala Training administration, and our people have to be genuine—otherwise there will be no possibility of creating an enlightened society. Genuine means being without deception and without aggression. Genuine individuals do not build up their own personality cults, but are purely dedicated to their own mutual sanity.⁷

It seemed particularly appropriate to include an excerpt in the introduction to Volume Eight from something written in such a frank manner by Chögyam Trungpa. In the introduction to the last volume, I mentioned that Trungpa Rinpoche loved the smile of reality, and that beyond that, he showed that this smile has teeth. One cannot miss this quality in the excerpt from his letter concerning the early problems with Shambhala Training. He meant business; with Shambhala Training he wanted to do something genuine and far-reaching, and not something superficial, puffed up—or timid. Obviously, these words were written to have a big effect. They stopped people in their tracks and made them think twice about what they were doing. He created a huge gap in people’s

7. From an unpublished letter by Chögyam Trungpa to Joshua Zim, 1977. Used by permission.

minds, which provided the space, when he returned from retreat, to proclaim further teachings and to demonstrate the approach that he wanted his students to take when they themselves taught.

Although there were significant problems with how the programs were conducted in his absence, quite a lot of groundwork had been accomplished during Rinpoche's retreat, in terms of the form and format of the Shambhala Training program. The structure of Shambhala Training had been established as a five-level program that explored the principles of warriorship and Shambhala vision within the context of weekend meditation intensives. The structure of each weekend mixed the practice of meditation with talks by a director, discussion groups, and individual interviews. This structure remains the foundation of Shambhala Training today.

When Rinpoche came out of retreat in late 1977, he began working closely with the program and the student-directors, giving a series of talks to the directors that demonstrated the genuineness that he found lacking in their efforts during his absence. People were soft and receptive to these teachings, having been somewhat shocked, in a positive sense, by his communication from retreat. Trungpa Rinpoche worked with the chief administrators and senior teachers in Shambhala Training to develop a threefold logic for each weekend of the program. These logics for levels One through Five, which Chögyam Trungpa set forth in early 1978, have remained intact and virtually unchanged for the last twenty-five years. There have been occasional movements to revamp the curriculum, but none of them have succeeded in dislodging the threefold logics that make up the core of the Shambhala Training curriculum.⁸ In

8. The fivefold logic of Shambhala Training developed by Chögyam Trungpa can be seen as the core of a deep level of empowerment, or transmission, which he gave to the program. In my experience, the application of these logics is related to the ability of the program to come alive for participants. In 1993, I was involved in a review of the curriculum of Shambhala Training. At that time, a proposal was made to revamp the levels and to make significant changes in the threefold logic of the programs. An excerpt from a letter I wrote to one of the main architects of this plan argues: "We have had Levels One to Five [of Shambhala Training] since the beginning, and the last time we tinkered with them, I believe that it was to go back to the pure threefold logics of each level given to us by the Dorje Dradül [Chögyam Trungpa] himself—not any doctored or later versions. I have always thought that one of the greatest strengths of Shambhala Training has been the unchanging quality of the undergraduate program. Unchanging here is not a bad word; it does not mean out of date, neither does it mean inflexible or out of touch. I use *unchanging* here in the sense of *vajra*: adamant truth, which I think those five little logics actually contain."

addition to the five levels, Rinpoche also developed a program of more advanced study for his own instructors and later for students who completed the core curriculum. In the summers of 1978 and '79, he invited directors of Shambhala Training from around North America to come to Boulder for conferences in which he presented further talks on the Shambhala teachings and how to present them to others.⁹

In the year following his retreat, Rinpoche took many bold steps. A few months after returning, he received the second Shambhala terma text, *The Letter of the Black Ashe*, parts of which are quoted in *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. In the summer of 1978, he convened the first Magyal Pomra Encampment at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, a gathering of members of the Dorje Kasung, or Vajra Command Protectors, known in the early days as the Vajra Guards. This group came into existence in 1974 to provide security and service for the visit of His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa to America. The Vajra Guards did provide excellent service to His Holiness, but even from the inception of this organization, the point of it was not purely to provide a convenient service to VIPs. Rather, it was established by Chögyam Trungpa to provide another vehicle for meditation-in-action practice among his students. As he said in an address to the Vajra Guards:

If practice is not regarded as your own genuine practice connected with your own upbringing, you are bound to fail, because there is superficiality involved. When you begin to regard the whole Kasung experience as part of your upbringing, part of your heart's blood, part of your general demeanor altogether, then your Kasung discipline will be the same as monastic discipline. . . . The tradition of the Kasung, the protector of the command, is the same as the monastic tradition. You should be honored to be a part of this, and I am tremendously honored that you are with us.¹⁰

After His Holiness's departure, rather than disbanding, the Guards continued. They provided service to Trungpa Rinpoche and other teachers,

9. For additional information on Chögyam Trungpa's creation of the Shambhala Training program, see Fabrice Midal, *Trungpa*, chap. 11 (English edition forthcoming 2004 from Shambhala Publications under the title *Chögyam Trungpa*).

10. From *True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung*, forthcoming from Trident Publications.

and they also provided basic security for the Buddhist and Shambhala communities and created the proper environment by setting a tone at community functions. Even in this “outer” realm of their activity, there was always a practice element to the Kasung:

As Vajra Guards we shouldn’t think of ourselves as convenient bus-boys, who pick people up from the airport and do our duty at a servant level. . . . Your duty is much greater than that. Your duty is to uplift and to expand the vision of the atmosphere that is created in a proper teaching situation. . . . The real role of the Dorje Kasung is to provide tremendous accommodation and hospitality and to create the atmosphere for the teachings to be presented. If we don’t have the Kasung, we can’t teach dharma properly because there’s no atmosphere created. . . . When the dharma is presented, there is always a gatekeeper to ward people off or invite them in, bring them in. That has always been the tradition. So what we are doing is not a modern version of anything at all. What we are doing is actualizing that tradition. . . . During Milarepa’s time, when *he* taught the dharma, people came in properly. They were invited in, and there was a ring of protection around them all the time. Then the dharma could be presented properly. If someone wanted to come in, they had to prostrate and then sit at the fringe of the protection ring. If they didn’t want to hear the teachings, if they weren’t listening, they were asked to leave. That’s very traditional, absolutely traditional.¹¹

Trungpa Rinpoche found that the practice of Kasungship was excellent practical training in warriorship. At his birthday party sponsored by the Dorje Kasung in 1983, Rinpoche said:

Thank you very much to the Dorje Kasung. We are not acting. . . . We are actualizing the warrior tradition, so that it can be continued. . . . Obviously, you must know that continuing to practice and promote warriorship does not mean continuing warfare. In order to subjugate confusion and continue the tradition of the warrior lineage, we have to continue to protect the dharma. So you have to continue as Kasung. *Ka* means “command,” command in the sense of tradition and faith and a sense of worshipping the lineage, the tradi-

11. Ibid.

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tion and the practice of the lineage altogether. *Sung* means “protection,” or protecting that particular endeavor, that particular connection and commitment to the lineage. Protection also means that one has to stop being an egomaniac; one must learn to destroy ego’s endeavor to conquer the whole world.¹²

In spite of its roots in the practice of meditation and the Shambhala training of the warrior, the Dorje Kasung was one of the most controversial parts of Chögyam Trungpa’s teaching, in part because the Kasung adopted uniforms and other aspects of military discipline, such as saluting and drill practice. There was a great deal of misunderstanding of the role and training of the guards. In fact, the training is focused on how to overcome obstacles with gentleness and confidence rather than with aggression. It’s only now that some of the teachings that Rinpoche gave to this group are being edited into a book, for distribution within the Shambhala community. This is the two-volume compendium that has been quoted above in the discussion of the Vajra Guard. *True Command: The Teachings of the Dorje Kasung*, the first volume of this work, is due out in 2004. The talk on the Kalapa Court quoted earlier is also from that volume. Hopefully, a book of these teachings will eventually be edited and published for a broad audience. Especially for the difficult times we live in, where obstacles abound and where bravery and overcoming fear are more than metaphors for how to live, these teachings seem helpful advice on how to conduct oneself as a warrior without anger.

In the fall of 1978, Chögyam Trungpa convened the first Kalapa Assembly for his most senior students. Between October 7 and November 2, 1978, approximately one hundred students from North America and Europe attended one of two two-week sessions that made up the first assembly. In this environment, Rinpoche presented many new Shambhala teachings, and students came together to practice and study the Shambhala teachings and also to create a good Shambhala society, in a dignified and elegant environment. During this brief period, Rinpoche presented sixteen lectures, which contain some of his most profound and poignant teachings on the way of the warrior. Just weeks prior to the beginning of the Assembly, Rinpoche received a third terma text, *The Letter of the Golden Key*, and he lectured on the themes from this text as

12. Ibid.

well as many other points from the Shambhala teachings. Excerpts from a few of his talks at the Kalapa Assembly were edited for inclusion in *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. Many more of them are studied in advanced levels of the Shambhala Training program.

Both the Magyal Pomra Encampment and the Kalapa Assembly became annual affairs that have continued up to the present day. They have remained important training grounds in the presentation of the Shambhala teachings. Throughout the remainder of his life, Chögyam Trungpa used both of these gatherings as places where he introduced important and seminal teachings on the conduct of warriorship and the creation of enlightened society.

The last section of *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* is entitled “Authentic Presence.” It begins by quoting the following lines from a Shambhala text: “For the dignified Shambhala person / An unwaning authentic presence dawns” (p. 123). Trungpa Rinpoche says, “When you meet a person who has inner authentic presence, you find he has an overwhelming genuineness, which might be somewhat frightening because it is so true and honest and real. You experience a sense of command radiating from the person of inner authentic presence. . . . The person with inner authentic presence has worked on himself and made a thorough and proper journey. He has earned authentic presence by letting go, and by giving up personal comfort and fixed mind” (p. 130).

This description certainly provides a portrait of Chögyam Trungpa himself. To a large extent it also describes, at times, the heightened environment and experience of being at the Kalapa Assembly. In the introduction to Volume Three of *The Collected Works*, I sought to evoke the scene that surrounded a talk by Chögyam Trungpa in the early 1970s. The contrast is quite great between that display of joyous hippiedom, long hair, and paisley, and the formal atmosphere at an evening gathering at the Kalapa Assembly less than a decade later. Formal and ceremonial occasions at the assemblies and other Shambhala gatherings often provoked a great deal of brilliance and power radiating from the environment—so much so that it could be overwhelming. This was in large part because Rinpoche himself was radiating so powerfully in those environments, lighting up whatever was around him.

I remember arriving a few days late to the second assembly, which was held at a hotel in Big Sky, Montana. Almost from the moment I set foot there, I began hearing about the extraordinary talk that Rinpoche

had given the night before, titled “Nowness.”¹³ That evening there was a party to celebrate the birthday of Diana Mukpo. I rushed to my room and changed out of my casual traveling clothes into a long dress, added white gloves and my nicest earrings and necklace, found my best shoes, put up my hair, and headed downstairs to the reception. Everyone was arriving dressed in their best formal wear: ladies in ballgowns, men in tuxedos, Dorje Kasung in dress uniforms. After a time of milling around, there was a formal entrance parade into the huge and brilliantly lit ballroom, headed up by Rinpoche and members of his family. Rinpoche was in his black dress uniform with gold braid, peaked cap, and medals adorning his sash and chest. Diana Mukpo wore a long turquoise evening gown, a gorgeous gold necklace designed by her husband, and a small tiara inset with diamonds. She also had a sash with several gold and enamel medals on it. Rinpoche and his wife took their places on the stage, and then senior teachers and officials paraded in, presenting a bow to Rinpoche and his family. In the background Handel’s *Water Music* filled the air as each of the guests came forward to present themselves with a bow or a curtsy. If one can imagine an event that combines a formal array at the English or French court with the great courts of China or Japan, one might have a visualization of the scene. The walls were hung with Shambhala banners designed by Rinpoche, and on either side of the platform where he and Diana Mukpo were seated, Shambhala flags were held in place by members of the Kasung in their uniforms. Indeed, it seemed that we were in the Kingdom of Shambhala itself.

As the evening progressed, there was music and waltzing, as well as the cutting of a birthday cake decorated with the Shambhala emblems for the four dignities of the warrior—the tiger, lion, garuda, and dragon. Champagne toasts were made, and Rinpoche himself made impassioned birthday remarks dedicated to Diana and to his students, punctuated by his opening and snapping shut a Japanese white fan with a large red dot in its center.

I remember that, at one point, standing along the side of the dance floor watching couples whirl past, I became quite faint and had to find my seat. I spoke with a number of others who had the same experience. The atmosphere was so strong, so brilliant, with no hidden corners, no place to rest one’s mind except in a very big and luminous space. That

13. Excerpts from this talk were edited into the chapter by that name in *Shambhala*.

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would be the only way I can think to describe it. If I had to explain what was really going on, I would say that it had little to do with the bourgeois or extravagant celebration of a birthday. The description of the outer trappings doesn't do justice to what one felt in that environment. Yet this occasion had everything to do with dressing up to show one's authentic self to the world, presenting oneself to the center of the mandala, dancing in the space created by someone who exemplified authentic and splendid presence. Other gatherings at the Kalapa Assembly—particularly when people gathered to practice in the shrine room or to hear a talk—sometimes felt like great samurai or other warrior clans convening: the room vibrated with power and a sense of enormous dignity.

This was in spite of the fact that all of us were largely rather unprocessed people, not “realized” or fully accomplished warriors at all. But Chögyam Trungpa had the extraordinary gift to be able to bring people into a mythic dimension of their lives, for moments at least. You didn't ever feel that you were living a fantasy with him; but sometimes you felt that reality was so sparkling and remarkable that it was hard to bear and impossible to verbalize. This, I think, was often the case in the gatherings of the Shambhala warrior students that he conducted at the Magyal Pomra Encampments and at the Kalapa Assemblies, and at many smaller gatherings at the Kalapa Court. This feeling of overwhelming brilliance and genuineness also characterized the atmosphere when Rinpoche presented Shambhala Training to relatively new practitioners in Level Five.¹⁴ It was at Level Five, the culmination of the Sacred Path program in Shambhala Training, that many students first met Chögyam Trungpa.¹⁵ In all of these situations, Chögyam Trungpa was trying to show us—any sentient beings who were willing to look—what an enlightened society, a truly enlightened society, might *feel* like, imprinting that feeling in our hearts, in our bones, in our minds, so that years and generations after he was gone—if we remembered and if we passed on what we were given—that imprint could be summoned up to guide those in the future

14. Chögyam Trungpa also taught more advanced levels of Shambhala Training, and here too, the atmosphere was unmistakably radiant.

15. Even today, Level Five is still regarded as the level where a student can first meet Trungpa Rinpoche's mind. I am grateful to Fabrice Midal for pointing out the importance of Level Five for students today, when he reviewed this manuscript for me.

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searching for a real and genuine existence in the midst of a degraded and dark time.

From this fruitional viewpoint, we turn now to look more closely at the teachings themselves that are presented in Volume Eight of *The Collected Works*. The other side of this potential glorious existence that Chögyam Trungpa showed so many people was his insistence on discipline and the *path* of warriorship, not just its fruition. This was certainly part of the message in the letter he sent to his students from retreat in 1977. It was also a message that he proclaimed over and over again whenever he taught. He made it clear that it's not possible to fake the attainment of these teachings and that glorifying or inflating one's ego is not the point of the teachings—whether Buddhist or Shambhala. As Rinpoche himself said in “Basic Goodness,” which was the first public talk ever given in Shambhala Training: “The good news of Shambhala is very fantastic, extraordinary—while the good news of myself, Chögyam Trungpa, being here in Boulder, Colorado, is not all that fantastic. Chögyam Trungpa is just another guy. So what Trungpa has to say is more important than who Trungpa is.”

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior was Chögyam Trungpa's first major presentation of the Shambhala teachings to the reading public and the only book on the Shambhala path issued during his lifetime. *Shambhala* was published in 1984. For some time, Rinpoche postponed the editing and publication of a book of his own teachings on Shambhala. He was asked to write such a book many times, beginning in 1978, but he said that he wanted to wait until one of his students had written an introductory book on the Shambhala path for the general public. There were several attempts, but none succeeded, and finally, in 1982, I asked Rinpoche if he would reconsider.¹⁶ Somewhat reluctantly he did, and I spent the next eighteen months working with him on the manuscript. Rinpoche gave me some specific guidelines for selecting and editing material for the book. He said a number of times that the approach should be “pithy,” and he suggested that I review all of the Shambhala Training talks he had given, as well as a long seminar that he taught on

16. At this time, I was newly appointed as the editor in chief of Vajradhatu Publications. Previously, I had worked at Shambhala Publications as an in-house editor for about five years. With my training and background as a trade book editor, I was very interested in working on books for the general public when I came to Vajradhatu.

the Shambhala teachings at Naropa Institute in the summer of 1979.¹⁷ In the end, the book largely was based on these materials as well as on various advanced seminars that Chögyam Trungpa offered to his senior Buddhist and Shambhala students. As the manuscript progressed, Rinpoche reviewed it a number of times, but in between our meetings he gave me a great deal of space and freedom to choose material. I remember spending an entire afternoon reviewing the final manuscript with him. I read most of it aloud to him. In general, he was pleased with the final product. However, he made some changes as well. I remember in particular that he questioned a reference to the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, as an example of the heaven, earth, and man principles. He asked me, “Did I say that?” To which I replied, “No, sir, I added that example.” He then told me to take it out and replace it with something else. “We can’t be too eclectic,” he commented.

Unlike some of his other books that follow the logic of specific seminars he taught, the structure of *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior* was based on the logic of the Shambhala Training levels, as well as on the logics of the Shambhala teachings that were presented to the directors of Shambhala Training and at Kalapa Assembly. This was in keeping with the instructions that Rinpoche gave me about how to put the book together from his talks. Most of the logic of the book was developed before specific material was selected and independent of the existing material. Generally, I found that Rinpoche had already given the talks that were needed for different sections of the book, although in many cases, I combined a number of talks to make one chapter of the book.

Sometimes, material appeared fortuitously when it was needed. For example, I had a difficult time finding the right material on meditation practice. Of course, Rinpoche had given hundreds of talks on the sitting practice of meditation, but many of them were presented in a Buddhist context. He had often left the description of meditation for his senior students to present in Shambhala Training. At the same time that I was working on this book, in my role as the editor in chief of Vajradhatu Publications, I was responsible for overseeing the editing and transcription of many other talks and seminars given to the Buddhist community.

17. This was co-taught by the Vajra Regent, Ösel Tendzin. Rinpoche would teach one night; the Regent the next. Rinpoche and the Regent taught a number of such seminars, both at Naropa and in various meditation centers around North America.

One day at the office, the transcript of a public talk that Chögyam Trungpa had given recently at the Town Hall in Barnet, Vermont, arrived in the mail. I was skimming through it before putting it in a pile of materials to be filed. Lo and behold, here was the very talk on meditation that I was seeking. In this lecture, Rinpoche presented meditation from the point of view of basic goodness and warriorship. This transcript provided the basis and the structure for chapter 2 of *Shambhala*, “Discovering Basic Goodness.”¹⁸

Rinpoche also dictated original material for several chapters. For the opening chapter, he consulted a Tibetan text by the great scholar-practitioner Mipham Rinpoche. He read the text in Tibetan and provided me with a word-by-word translation of a section that gives a description of the location and appearance of the Shambhala kingdom and its capital, Kalapa. He also dictated his foreword to the book and major sections of the chapter “Authentic Presence.” This chapter includes a detailed description of stages of warriorship, which are called the four dignities of the Shambhala Warrior: meek, perky, outrageous, and inscrutable. During his year-long 1977 retreat at Charlemont, Massachusetts, Rinpoche had written an article entitled “Inscrutability,” which was adapted for the section “The Warrior of Inscrutable,” part of the “Authentic Presence” chapter. It’s a wonderful piece on the most advanced stages of warriorship, which are characterized by the inscrutable and fearless attainment of the dragon warrior of Shambhala. To match the style and depth of this piece, Trungpa Rinpoche agreed to dictate material on the warriors of meek, perky, and outrageous. We had a meeting for this purpose at the 1983 Vajradhatu Seminary held in Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania. Before he dictated the material, I was able to ask him a number of questions about the manuscript. We had a fairly lengthy discussion of what the title for the book should be. Rinpoche suggested “The Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala.” We adopted that as a tentative title for a time, but eventually—pretty much at the last minute—we changed it to *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*. The abandoned title ended up being used fifteen years later as the perfect title for his second book on the Shambhala teachings, published posthumously.

18. Additional material for that chapter came from a talk at the Vajradhatu Seminary and from remarks made by Rinpoche during his presentations of Level Five of Shambhala Training.

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One of the questions I asked Chögyam Trungpa in our meeting at Seminary was “What is the relationship between the four dignities and the drala principle?” (For this discussion to make sense to the readers, they will need to be familiar with these two concepts as they are discussed in *Shambhala*.) I thought he would give some conceptual answer about stages on the warrior’s path or something like that. Instead, he said, very intensely but straightforwardly, “Well, that’s how you become one of them.” A little bit of questioning clarified that he was saying that, by following the path of the four dignities, a student warrior can become a drala, the embodiment of power and magic in the Shambhala world.

I had a tape running to record our conversation, and a number of other people were also at this meeting. This was lucky, because when people heard what he had said, they expressed shock. “No, he didn’t say *that*, did he?” But he had said that. This one line turned out to be the key to editing the last chapter of the book, “The Shambhala Lineage,” which had been giving me a great deal of trouble.

Back in Boulder, a month or so later, one Friday evening, Rinpoche was giving the opening Shambhala Training talk in a weekend program of the Shambhala Education Program. It was a fairly advanced level of study. Rather than attending the talk, I stayed home to work on the last chapter of *Shambhala*, as I was under a strict deadline to get the manuscript to the publisher. I felt really stuck. That night, I was mulling over what he had said in our meeting at Seminary. I kept going over the discussion. I remember that I took a long bath and washed my hair. For some reason, I took a lot of baths and showers while I was working on this book, sometimes several times a day. Something about the water often provoked an insight for me. I don’t know why. In any case, I remember that I was standing in the bathroom, combing my wet hair, when I had a real “aha!” moment. Someone who was interested in the book had asked me if there was going to be anything in it about the Three Courts, which are somewhat like the three kayas in the Buddhist tradition. All of a sudden something clicked, and I remember thinking very loudly, “That’s it! That’s it. The Three Courts! That’s it.” I just about started dancing around the room. I knew then that I needed to reread the talk that Rinpoche had given at the 1978 Kalapa Assembly on the Sakyong principle, or the principle of rulership, both as it is embodied in human form in the Shambhala world and in its relationship to

other, more “cosmic” levels of ruling and command. In that talk, I found most of the material that I needed for the last chapter of the book.

Interestingly enough, later, when I saw the transcript of the talk that Trungpa Rinpoche had given that night, it was about many of the same topics that came up in my mind as I was combing my hair at home. So I could have found the material for the last chapter by going to his talk or by staying home! Throughout the period that I worked on *Shambhala*, I always felt that Chögyam Trungpa was extremely accessible and involved. Whether or not he was there in person, he always seemed to be right there. I felt that he was extraordinarily generous in giving me the opportunity to work on the book and that he was also generous in helping me, in person and in spirit, as the book took shape.

The last instruction that Rinpoche gave me about the book was that I should be sure to give the manuscript to a number of non-Buddhist readers and that I should try to solicit feedback from people who had never meditated. I did find a number of such readers, and their feedback was both encouraging—most of them loved the book—and critically helpful. They could pinpoint precisely where the material was confusing, boring, or missing the point. Many small but important revisions came out of these comments.

Shortly before the book was published, after it was already at the typesetter’s, there was a brief crisis of confidence. One of Rinpoche’s senior students read the book at that point and phoned Shambhala in a panic, saying that the book went too far, that it had outrageous material in it, and that we should pull it back and reedit it.¹⁹ I received a call from my editor to give me this feedback. I have to say that I was anything but receptive to these suggestions, coming so late in the process. Eventually, however, we agreed on a few minor changes and proceeded with the publication of the book. Shambhala Publications, however, did cut the initial print run by several thousand copies because they were a bit worried about whether the book would be well received.

In retrospect, twenty years and half a million copies in twelve languages later, these fears seem amusing, but at the time, they were disconcerting. It probably should have come as no surprise that a book

19. I had given the manuscript to many senior students of Trungpa Rinpoche’s and had already incorporated their feedback at this point. However, this was someone who was inadvertently overlooked but very motivated to read the manuscript.

about warriorship and overcoming doubt, fear, and obstacles in one's life would involve an obstacle like this in its own process of being born.

Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior is divided into three sections. In the first, "How to Be a Warrior," Chögyam Trungpa laid out many of the themes and the principles of the Shambhala teachings, which also guided and inspired his later presentations in other contexts, such as dharma art. The contrast between Great Eastern Sun vision and setting-sun vision is a fundamental theme. The setting sun represents the depressed and degraded aspects of human existence, which lead to an aggressive and materialistic outlook. This is contrasted with the vision of the Great Eastern Sun, which is based on human wakefulness and the celebration of life, rather than on the fear of death that dominates the setting-sun outlook. The basis of the Shambhala view is recognizing the inherent goodness of human beings, the goodness of our experience and of the world around us. Such goodness is unconditioned and undiluted. It is like the all-pervasive light of the sun, which can be temporarily covered by clouds but never fundamentally dimmed. The way of the warrior is based on connecting with the ground of basic goodness. This is accomplished through the sitting practice of meditation, as well as by paying attention to the details of one's life, through training in mindfulness and awareness. The practice of meditation and the application of mindful delight lead to the synchronization of the warrior's body and mind, which gives rise to a relaxed confidence. A kind of joyful sadness is the warrior's constant companion. He or she recognizes that aloneness is a friend and that fear is the starting point for fearlessness. The quality of all these teachings is that they are direct, heartfelt, and authentic.

The second section of the book, "Sacredness: The Warrior's World," helps to connect the individual path of warriorship with the larger view of how to transform one's world, how to help others, and ultimately how to contribute to an enlightened society. Rinpoche speaks of magic here, by which he means the utter aliveness of ordinary perception that can connect us to the inherent sacredness of our experience. He speaks of natural hierarchy, exemplified by the four seasons, as the basis for understanding how to rule our world and how to connect with genuine leadership. The final section of the book, "Authentic Presence," which I have already touched on, gives us a view of the Shambhala lineage—in its most primordial as well as human forms—and introduces us to the universal monarch. Here, in contrast to the conventional view, the mon-

arch is a human being so tender and stripped of pretense that it is as though he or she is utterly naked, even without skin.

As I have said, *Shambhala* found a wide readership. The talks on which it is based were given with such simplicity, such directness, and so much love that it would be hard to imagine they would not have reached a broad audience. Even today, almost twenty years after its publication, the book remains a classic, one that continues to inspire.

Great Eastern Sun: The Wisdom of Shambhala, published posthumously in 1999, on the cusp of the millennium, covers much of the same ground, with the addition of a playful primordial dot—or focal point of wakefulness—that pops up throughout the book, presenting the possibility of a first fresh thought at any moment. *Great Eastern Sun*, based almost entirely on the Level Five talks given by Trungpa Rinpoche within Shambhala Training, is organized around three fundamental themes from the Shambhala teachings: trust, renunciation, and letting go, which are interwoven in the many chapters of the book. Trust here is trusting in oneself and also trust in the unconditional nature of goodness. Renunciation involves giving up self-centered notions of privacy and learning how to step beyond our depression. Letting go is about the principle of daring, letting go of self-deception and discovering how to invoke uplifted energy. *Great Eastern Sun* celebrates and invokes the sense of genuine being that underlies all experience. At the same time that it provokes us to action, it encourages us to relax, especially in this speedy world of ours, and to give ourselves a break, give ourselves time to be, without agendas. Overall, the Shambhala teachings present a view of life as sacred existence. They show Chögyam Trungpa’s brilliance in joining together the biggest and the smallest moments in life: showing us how the transformation of society is related to the kitchen sink.

The articles appended in Volume Eight both echo and embellish the themes presented in these two books. “Basic Goodness” gives us the first good dot of Chögyam Trungpa’s presentation of the Shambhala teachings. It is an edited version of the first public talk that he gave on Shambhala warriorship. It evokes and explains the meaning of basic goodness, and it exhorts us to pay attention to how we live each moment, so that it becomes the expression of warriorship. “Fully Human: Introduction to the Principles of Shambhala Vision” is based on the first talk of the long seminar at Naropa in the summer of 1979, given in tandem with the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin. As mentioned above, many of these talks

were edited for inclusion in *Shambhala*. In this article, Rinpoche gives us a detailed explanation of both Great Eastern Sun and setting-sun vision.

“The Shambhala World,” the next article in Volume Eight, is a lightly edited version of a public talk given in San Francisco in 1982. Here Trungpa Rinpoche states his emphatic belief that nuclear holocaust is not going to take place. He predicts that human life will continue for at least one thousand years more and advises people that “I’m afraid that we’re going to have to lead lives which are very boring.” He also reiterates the concepts of basic goodness and the bravery of the warrior, and connects the meaning of enlightened society with realizing our basic goodness and applying it to help others.

Next are three articles that deal with the principles of warriorship, fear, and fearlessness. “Conquering Fear” was edited from a three-talk seminar to directors in the Shambhala Training program presented in 1979. It contains provocative material on how to work with real enemies in the world outside and also discusses the discipline of warriorship in terms of its ground, path, and fruition, and how, at every stage, the warrior is working with the interplay of fear and fearlessness, cowardice and bravery. This article was published in the *Shambhala Sun* magazine in 2002. Next is Chögyam Trungpa’s foreword to Alexandra David-Néel’s book *The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling*, which presents epic stories of the great Tibetan warrior king. Both *Shambhala* and *Great Eastern Sun* are dedicated to Gesar, who represents the ideal of fearless and gentle warriorship that can conquer the world. In his essay, Rinpoche presents the principles of warriorship that are reflected in Gesar’s life. “The Martial Arts and the Art of War” is a previously unpublished article, written by Rinpoche in England in the 1960s, which emerged from the files in the Shambhala Archives while I was gathering material for *The Collected Works*. It connects the development of fearlessness and warriorship with overcoming ego, understanding nonviolence as the principle of the martial arts, and the application of that mentality in the Tibetan monastic discipline of debate. It is one of the earliest presentations of Trungpa Rinpoche’s thinking on the place of warriorship in the Buddhist teachings.

An excerpt from another early writing, “Political Consciousness,” is a translation of a fragment of a treatise on politics that Rinpoche began writing in Tibetan while on a month-long retreat in 1972. The manuscript was never completed. This excerpt shows how Chögyam Trungpa was working to connect the worldly aspect of politics with spiritual

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awareness and development. As he says, “If one asks what politics is, it would be correct to say that it is the ability of all reflections of political situations to arise in the mirror of discriminating awareness at once. It could be described as the ability to look joyfully in the mirror of mind with a relaxed mind free from fearful projections and doubt.” “A Buddhist Approach to Politics” is an interview conducted in 1976 by the staff of the *Shambhala Review of Books and Ideas*, a little magazine produced for a number of years by Shambhala Publications. Here, just months before the Shambhala teachings exploded onto the scene, Rinpoche talks about the importance of taking more responsibility for what is happening in society: “People involved with a spiritual discipline have a tendency to want nothing to do with their ordinary life; they regard politics as something secular and undesirable, dirty or something. So, to begin with, if a person came with a sense of responsibility to society, that would be a Buddhist approach to politics and also to the social side of life, which is the same, in a sense.” Rinpoche’s discussion of politics here is down to earth and practical, dealing with such questions as whether a Buddhist should vote in the presidential elections. This is followed by “Pragmatism and Practice,” an interview with Chögyam Trungpa conducted on May 7, 1985, one of the last interviews that he ever gave. Rinpoche talks about some of the issues that he worked with and thought about during a year-long retreat in 1984. During this time, he was in part concerned with how the principles of Shambhala vision could pragmatically manifest in the various activities within the Buddhist community and more fundamentally in the world at large.

From his earliest years in the West, political awareness was part of Chögyam Trungpa’s sensibilities. Volume One of *The Collected Works* includes “The New Age,” an article published in 1969 in the English publication *International Times*. Here Rinpoche focuses on the need for genuine communication among people, as a means to begin to work with the alienation that has arisen in modern society as a result of mechanization and modernization. As he writes:

. . . with the structure of all countries being Americanized, with things developing as they are—vast machinery, vast organization which transcends the individual mind so that they can only be grasped in terms of computers—the whole thing has grown so big that to some people it is very frightening. . . . Living in such a world,

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we really have to be practical, for we cannot afford to divide society up into those who practice meditation and those who are workers, those who work in the factories and those who are intellectuals. . . . We can't afford to anymore—the world is too small. . . . We have arrived in an age where the study of the great wisdom of the world, religion, and tradition, however important they are, is not enough. There is one more urgent thing we have to do. We must create a structure which allows a real communication. . . . We have to see that the answer is not one of spirituality alone any more than it is one of politics alone.

Once again, it seems that his understanding of the forces at work within society was quite advanced and that he anticipated many of the conundrums of the current era. He had the ability, from those early times, to connect individual experience with larger realities, without naively reducing social and political forces to a lowest common denominator in which there is a simplistic answer to everything, such as solving all the world's problems through meditation or prayer. Rinpoche's approach to politics, while affirming the individual's duty to society, was a much more sophisticated approach.

Rinpoche conducted the first Vajradhatu Seminary in 1973. At the conclusion of this three-month advanced training session, students were eligible to request transmission to begin the intensive practice of vajrayana or tantric Buddhism. So this was a very important program for senior students to attend, if they wished to go forward in their practice and study of Buddhism. During the study sections of each seminary, Chögyam Trungpa would give a lecture almost every evening. During the day, students took a number of other courses and had time to practice meditation and study. Starting with the second seminary in 1974, Rinpoche invited a close senior student at each seminary to teach a required course entitled "Vajra Politics." Rinpoche generally worked closely with the instructor on the material to be presented. The course was based on the premise that human goodness is the ground of a vajra approach to politics. From that view, the course turned to a consideration of how change in culture and society can be brought about without aggression. Beginning with the 1979 Seminary, the vajra politics course was replaced by a course on Shambhala culture, which likewise was required for all students.²⁰

20. Larry Mermelstein pointed out to me that in 1978, the last time that the "Vajra Politics" course was taught, Karl Springer, the instructor and a member of the Board of

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Trungpa Rinpoche also used the administrative aspect of running his meditation centers and other enterprises as an opportunity to work with building political consciousness and sophistication in his students. As time went on, in connection with the development of the Shambhala teachings, he began to organize Vajradhatu, the umbrella organization for all the meditation centers he established, more like a government than a church or a nonprofit corporation. For example, he appointed senior students to run the major centers outside of Boulder. These people were referred to as Ambassadors (for larger centers) and Emissaries (for smaller groups), and in many respects he approached working with them like having career diplomats in a foreign service. The directors of Vajradhatu were each responsible for a department, and among these departments were the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Internal Affairs, names more reminiscent of government than religion or business. In fact, in later years, Rinpoche referred to the Board of Directors as the Cabinet. Some might think that he simply had delusions of grandeur. In fact, he transformed the normally pedestrian conduct of administration, sparking his students' interest in working with the much larger and more potent arenas of governance and politics.

He also saw the visits of spiritual teachers, beginning with the visit of His Holiness the Karmapa in 1974, as a training ground for working with political situations in the world outside. In 1980, during his third visit to North America, His Holiness toured the U.S. Capitol and was hosted as a dignitary at a luncheon with Senators and Representatives, which Rinpoche also attended. Over the years, he worked very closely with his students to be sure they learned about protocol and how to conduct themselves in situations like this. In 1979, when His Holiness the Dalai Lama made his first visit to the United States, members of the Dorje Kasung provided security for the tour, and members of the External Affairs Department of Vajradhatu traveled with His Holiness's party, helping to arrange his schedule and various appointments, talks, and meetings. The Dorje Kasung worked with the mayors' offices and the police departments in all the major cities in the United States that His Holiness visited, and the members of External Affairs worked with offi-

Directors of Vajradhatu, presented the topic in "a tour-de-force . . . the real beginning of articulating a Shambhala view [of politics]." Larry Mermelstein, note to Carolyn Rose Gimian, December 2002. See also the discussion of Karl Springer's role in the political development of Vajradhatu, which follows.

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cials on a number of levels of government, including officials from the State Department, in planning the visit. The visits of many other Tibetan Buddhist teachers to America were handled by the Dorje Kasung and External Affairs working together, and the two also began to coordinate some of Trungpa Rinpoche's visits, both within North America and beyond, when he traveled to Europe and Asia.

In the last few years of his life, Chögyam Trungpa worked with the director of External Affairs, Karl Springer, on several projects that took this interest in politics to a new level. For example, there were plans for Vajradhatu to work with the Nepalese government and the United Nations on the restoration of Lumbini, the Buddha's birthplace in Nepal. The Lumbini Project was never completed, and political involvement on that level faded as a major focus of the organization after Rinpoche's death. However, many students trained in this area have applied the skills they learned from this work in their subsequent endeavors outside of the organization proper.

In the next two articles included in Volume Eight, "Natural Hierarchy" and "Conquering Comfort," Rinpoche talks further about the intimate relationship between the individual realization of sanity and its manifestation in the structure of our world. Beyond that, he looks at the principle of rulership, or leadership, both as it relates to individual command and to conquering obstacles. Finally, he talks about what it is like to have the king's view of reality—which is not just being in the presence of a great ruler but means unlocking the power of one's own primordial sanity:

. . . Entering into a king's domain, you also sense that there are no thoughts. There is no subconscious gossip. . . . Your mind is completely cut, short-circuited . . . you have nothing to say, which is the mark that the ayatanas [sense consciousness] are controlled in the presence of a king, an enlightened ruler. Sometimes the question is answered by itself. The question is the answer automatically. We are talking about that kind of sacred world.

When the four maras are conquered, either by practice or by being in the presence of sacred world, then you develop sacred outlook automatically and you discover what is known as nirvana, freedom, liberation.

Everything is back to square one, which is basic goodness. ("Conquering Comfort," p. 442)

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The notion of the king's view and the importance of ruling your life comes up many times in the Shambhala teachings. It is one of the teachings that relates to the extraordinary environments that Chögyam Trungpa was able to create for people, as exemplified by the overwhelming richness and sacredness, described earlier in this introduction, that vibrated in the ballrooms and meditation halls of the Kalapa Assembly. Eido Roshi, in "True Man without Rank," an article in *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly*, suggests that

Trungpa Rinpoche . . . was a man who was born like a king. It was natural for him. When he would hold out his hand, someone would immediately come and offer a cigarette. If I were him, I would say, "Oh, thank you." I am not a king, so I would say, "Oh, thank you very much." For him, another would come with a light, another with an ashtray. He made others happy by allowing them to serve him.²¹

Indeed, Roshi is correct in saying that many of Rinpoche's students found it fulfilling to serve him—not in the sense of humbling themselves, but actually in the sense of fulfilling themselves through service and experiencing an expanded sense of awareness and space. This is because Chögyam Trungpa did not hoard the king's view. Instead, he shared this sacred view with everyone in his environment. Around him, you could feel the space of vastness. However, in the Shambhala teachings, king's view is not just or even primarily a description of your experience of someone else's mind. It applies to oneself personally. In that regard, it is one of the main metaphors that Rinpoche used to describe the quality of command that first arises in the student warrior's practice of meditation and then is extended to situations throughout life.

Rinpoche believed that all beings had the potential to be the kings and queens of their own existence. This sense of rulership is not marked by pleasure, particularly, but rather by duty and by a tremendous connection with and empathy for all beings. As he writes in *Shambhala*:

When you walk into this world of reality, the greater or cosmic world, you will find the way to rule your world—but at the same time, you will also find a deep sense of aloneness. It is possible that

21. *Buddhadharma: The Practitioner's Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 57.

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this world could become a palace of a kingdom to you, but as its king or queen, you will be a monarch with a broken heart. . . . It is the way to be a decent human being—and beyond that, a glorious human being who can help others. (pp. 114–115)

The next article included in Volume Eight, “The Seven Treasures of the Universal Monarch,” gives us a more mythical view of the world of the Shambhala monarch. A small fragment composed at an unknown date by Chögyam Trungpa, this little gem describes the attributes of the world of the universal monarch. For a commentary on how these treasures, or riches, of the monarch can be cultivated as qualities leading to a good human life for all of us, see the chapter “How to Rule” in *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*.

Earlier, the introduction touched on the political structures that Rinpoche created as part of the Shambhala world in which he taught. One of the last such ventures was the establishment of a kind of embryonic legislature or parliament as a structure for governance within his community, which was called the delek system. *Delek* is a Tibetan word that means “auspicious happiness.” It was used by Chögyam Trungpa to refer to creating a system of governance that fosters peace and goodness. Rinpoche suggested that people should organize themselves into deleks, or groups, consisting of about twenty or thirty families, based on the neighborhoods in which they lived. Each neighborhood or small group would be a delek and its members, the delekpas.²² Each delek would elect a leader, the dekyong—the “protector of happiness,” by a process of consensus for which Rinpoche coined the phrase “spontaneous insight.” The dekyongs were then organized into the Dekyong Council, which would meet and make decisions affecting their deleks and make recommendations to the administration of Vajradhatu about larger issues. This structure, in somewhat modified form, continues today.

The idea of organizing people to form a nascent parliamentary structure in this manner was first discussed by Rinpoche with some students in 1968, while he was in Bhutan (where he received *The Sadhana of*

22. One’s primary delek would be located in the town where one lives, but one might also be part of a delek at the Seminary, Kalapa Assembly, or other residential practice and study programs. According to a 1981 article in the *Vajradhatu Sun*, the first time that Rinpoche introduced the delek system was actually at the 1981 Kalapa Assembly.

Mahamudra mentioned earlier in the introduction). The approach of the delek system is to include everyone in the decision-making process. It recognizes that being practically engaged in politics and decision making is a fundamental *practice* for everyone in the Shambhala world. It's not just something that a few leaders or administrators do. Rather, all of us have a duty to involve ourselves in our communities. As Buddhist and Shambhala practitioners, we need to learn to apply what we have learned about goodness, loving-kindness, and helping others, by learning how to cooperate and create harmony on a practical level. As he wrote in a letter to the community about the delek system in 1984: "In Buddhism, usually the guru's word is regarded as command and followed faithfully, but at the same time the councils of the sangha play an important part in maintaining institutions and organizations. . . . All members of the deleks, not just the dekyongs, should understand the importance of cultivating a strong neighborhood identity and a commitment to working together as a group with a sense of mutual purpose, cooperating and caring. The deleks should take it as their role to sort out many kinds of issues—spiritual, social and economic—and to deal with various difficulties and details by themselves. They should understand that their contribution to our work is important and, in fact, essential."²³

The initiation of the delek system was also related to the Shambhala idea that everyone has the germ of king or queenship, the power of leadership, within him- or herself. As Rinpoche wrote to the community: ". . . the delek system is a most important vehicle for strengthening ourselves as a sangha and for overcoming difficulties we have had in the past. All of you should regard yourselves in some sense as 'elders' of the sangha and have confidence that the significance of the delek system and the health of the sangha is in your hands."²⁴ At the same time, the delek system was not proposed as a form of pure democracy, since Rinpoche upheld the importance of hierarchy in human as well as natural affairs. But he felt that there needed to be a balance between what is dictated from above and what arises from below. When he administered the oath of office to the first dekyongs, he made these remarks:

The delek system cuts down the extraordinary hypocrisy of dictatorship, as well as the idea of too much democracy. It brings us a middle

23. "Vajracarya Addresses Delegs," *Vajradhatu Sun* (February/March 1982).

24. *Ibid.*

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path, which is somewhat democratic. Your individual contributions could become very positive and excellent through the delek system, and the dictatorial aspect of society could be cut down. Our notion of hierarchy is more like a flower than a lid. It is more like a waterfall than a volcano. Hierarchy can help people organize their lives in such a way that they can contribute individually—every one of them. You as dekyongs have the possibility of uplifting people. You have the possibility of bringing people up and cheering people up genuinely.²⁵

Volume Eight ends with the article “Realizing Enlightened Society,” in which indeed we are brought full circle, back to square one. In this three-part article, based on talks given by Chögyam Trungpa in his last public seminar, in 1986, the unity of Buddhism and the Shambhala teachings is affirmed. They are not, in fact, two distinct streams of thought but two sides of the same coin. “It is my greatest privilege to proclaim the inseparability of the Shambhala approach and buddhadharma,” he said in his opening talk of this seminar.

This was not saying that the Shambhala path of secular warriorship should now be merged into the Buddhist path. It was rather saying that the teachings on basic sanity and compassion of the Buddhist tradition are indivisible from the teachings on warriorship and sacred world of the Shambhala tradition. More fundamentally, he was saying that it is not possible to separate out one’s personal path of realization from the larger need to create a good and sane society in which we all can live.

In Tibet, Rinpoche had witnessed how spirituality can be attacked and suppressed so that the practice of any spiritual discipline becomes impossible. There have been many such times and places, in the past and present, and one imagines there will be more in the future. In his last seminar, many people asked, “Is Shambhala the ground or is Buddhism the ground?” At different times, he said different things. From the point of view of the most basic and profound realization of mind, he often talked about Buddhism as the ground on which the Shambhala tradition would flourish. But from the point of view of providing an actual, societal container, he also talked about Shambhala as the support for the Buddhist teachings. More fundamentally, he was saying that there has to be a basic container, which is culture and society, to contain the teach-

25. *Vajradhatu Sun* (August /September 1982).

ings of sanity and spirituality and to provide a place where they can expand and grow. We have to begin with ourselves, with our own practice, our own perception, our own sanity and loving-kindness. But if we ignore the larger situation of the world we live in, if we do not accept the burden of warriorship, we may find ourselves unable to practice, unable to express our fundamental sanity.

As Chögyam Trungpa looked into the future, he saw that the world was in need of tremendous help. Did he wonder: Will Buddhism have a home? Will spirituality have a home? Will sanity have a home? Might we wonder those things ourselves?

In the opening chapter of *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*, he wrote: “Within our lifetime there will be great problems in the world, but let us make sure that within our lifetime no disasters happen. We can prevent them. It is up to us. We can save the world from destruction, to begin with. That is why Shambhala vision exists. It is a centuries-old idea: by serving the world, we can save it. But saving the world is not enough. We have to work to build an enlightened human society as well” (p. 24).

That aspiration remains as up to date and applicable now as the moment it was first said. In his role within the Shambhala world, Chögyam Trungpa was also known as the vajra (indestructible) warrior, the Dorje Dradül.²⁶ By some standards, he was an outrageous human being. He was at times unreasonable, occasionally wrathful, and always unbelievably stubborn in his adherence to promoting true wakefulness. He was, in that regard, traditional: like the Wrathful Wild Guru, Padmasambhava, who brought Buddhism to Tibet; like the Zen Patriarch, Dharma Bodhi, who brought Buddhism to Japan. It took his “wild” energy to bring the teachings of Tibetan Buddhism into the forefront of consciousness on the American continent. It will take the efforts of many thousands of us to ensure that this legacy is not wasted or diluted.

From *The Collected Works of Chögyam Trungpa* one can see just how fathomless Trungpa Rinpoche’s mind was and how vast was his vision. Yet he always believed that the largest truths in life, the most vast and profound insights, came down to a single point, a single breath, a single moment of sanity in the conduct of everyday life. With that in mind, it is not so difficult to take up the challenge that he left us.

26. In Tibetan, *dradül* literally means “enemy subduer.”

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Rinpoche carried the wisdom of his tradition out of Tibet. He brought with him the victory banner of the Buddhist teachings, from the high plains and mountains of his homeland. As he wrote in *Great Eastern Sun*:

Tibet is a lost country, at this point. The Chinese have occupied my country, and they are torturing my people. It is quite horrific. . . . We Tibetans were unable to avoid that situation. Nonetheless, the Tibetan wisdom has escaped. It has been brought out of Tibet. It has something to say, something to offer. It gives us dignity as Tibetans.
(p. 195)

When Chögyam Trungpa proclaimed that wisdom in the West, he was unfurling the banner of victory on a new continent. When we ourselves proclaim that wisdom, we are planting this banner firmly in our soil. Yet simultaneously, we honor the birthplace of such profound wisdom, its roots in the Asian continent. As we shout the warrior's cry, Ki Ki So So, we help to bring the world full circle, uniting us all, East and West. For sanity is the birthright of human beings, the primordial inheritance of all. The Shambhala teachings are Trungpa Rinpoche's precious gift to this generation and to the future of the world. May they guide, inspire, and protect us. May they help us to promote enlightened society by following the sacred path of the warrior, for the benefit of all sentient beings.

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