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So as I was reflecting on this first point, which is that the Regent demonstrated characteristics of the fruition, I was reflecting on a very difficult thing to talk about, which I've talked about before but it's often skipped over, it has to do with the meaning, or, the meaning and the intention behind the stupa. And I can honestly speak from my own direct experience, which, quite frankly, 21 years later I'm still processing, which is to say I was intimately involved with the process of the Regent's death. I was one of his two primary attendants, meaning I spent 24 hours with him and then 24 hours recovering. Alternating, you know, one day on, one day off, one day on, one day off, for, that went on for about three and a half months. And so the process of, you know, being with all of the little fluctuating changes, observing how he related to them, talking to him about what was going on, listening to both his conscious and unconscious speech that started to occur, especially as the death process unfolded, was a very intimate process and completely extraordinary.

The process of dying, as you know, from a traditional point of view, is the process of the elements, the four or five great elements, depending on the system you're looking at of earth, water, fire, wind, space, beginning to dissolve, one into the other from gross to subtle to more subtle, etc. And the process of this happening with the HIV virus and the various ways in which the Regent's immune system was breaking down and the way in which his organ system started to break down and the way in which he started to die was something that went on over a long period of time. But then in the last three years of his, three months of his life, became very condensed. And in the last period of that we were up in San Francisco and his symptoms went from being just a slight cough and an irritation in his lungs, to being full-blown pneumonia.

At that time before the medications which are currently available for HIV, one of the primary ways in which people with the virus died was through a disease called pneumocystis pneumonia and the immune system would be so compromised that the lungs in particular would get hit with this particular type of pneumonia and then the death process would accelerate quite rapidly. This is what happened to the Vajra Regent. In fact, they brought him down to the area of the hospital where they test or culture various aspects of the lung. They did a culture of the lung and the procedure itself [snaps fingers] precipitated the pneumonia becoming much worse very quickly. And so the Regent went from, you know, let's say, day one in the evening, knowing that this was going to happen the next morning, and he asked me to go to his favorite restaurant in Japantown and get him a broiled salmon and some vegetables and white rice and he wanted to watch a Cary Grant movie that evening in the hospital.

So I went and, we knew what time the Cary Grant movie was going to come on, we didn't have choice of VCR or disc, we had to plan it out in relation to the TV schedule. And he ate, you know. And I tried to bring to his attention all of the things that a man named Carl Springer was telling me that I should try and talk about with him if there was any time. These were very practical things about the future of Vajradhatu,

various legal, financial, spiritual issues that needed to be decided. And so I had a list that I kept in my pocket, and when I thought there was a gap in his sort of ongoing enjoyment of life and that there was some maybe opening, I would try and, you know, slip something in. So I thought this would be an ideal moment, because I could tell him, you know, he would be going down and getting his test in the morning and, you know, how much can you really get into a Cary Grant movie was my perspective at the time [laughter]. You know? That he would get bored with it and then there would be an opportunity to talk. And, as usual, I was wrong. That mudra Joseph demonstrated the other day, this [waves hand by head] heard that one before, you know. That was sort of the relationship he made with me that evening, he sort of went well, put the salmon on the plate, get the rice, leave me alone kid. Sit in the corner, watch the Cary Grant movie, that's it, I don't really want to talk.

And yet, I knew something was going on, that this was not, probably not going to go that well. The doctors were, they couldn't even, they couldn't be optimistic anymore. They couldn't try and be positive, they were just blunt. Not so much with him, but with us. So the next morning the procedure happened and the process sped up quite a bit. And it was the first time that I was able to really experience the Regent out of control. After this procedure he came back to his room and very quickly his breathing became extremely labored. He was hyperventilating. He was unable to control his bodily functions and unable to really communicate that accurately. Of course gave him oxygen and tried to remedy the immediate issues with various drugs that the Western docs have at their disposal to quickly stop symptoms. They didn't, none of those things worked that well. They mediated it a little bit, but basically from that moment till the moment of his death which was about eight days later, every effort, every attempt that could be made within the current understanding that was available in (nineteen eighty nine) to the Western medical establishment to intervene in a situation like this was made. They put him in a medical coma, they gave him every type of drug that you could receive to reverse the situation, every antibiotic they knew to try and get rid of pneumonia. But basically it was over. There was, a dissolve was beginning.

And the turning point occurred when Jamgon Kongtrul came with someone named Khenpo Karthar from New York, the seat of the Karmapa in New York, Woodstock, New York. And they performed a vajrakilaya empowerment and any sense of struggle or resistance to the process stopped at that point. The preceding days, in particular the 24 hours after that procedure, that initial procedure to diagnose whether it was pneumocystis pneumonia or not, had been a very, very challenging, very difficult and both Joseph and I were, I was on for the first 24, you were on the first 24 I think, and I was on the next 24 when things got really bad before he was put into a medical coma. And then this empowerment occurred and Jamgon Kongtrul had given him a series of pointing out instructions, or mind-nature introduction instructions, whispered them in his ear as part of the empowerment. For those of you who just went through the empowerment process, the fourth empowerment instructions. And, you know, he made a point of reminding, very vividly reminding the Vajra Regent he was dying. And he had told him what to do, reminded him to meditate on Trungpa Rinpoche and the sixteenth Karmapa. Reminded him of his nature being empty, luminous awareness. Reminded him, over and over again, after that time.

Then, it was very obvious that whatever was going on physically there was a deeper level of relaxation, a deeper ease, a deeper openness that was reflected in the space. And then, you know, death came. I won't go into the details of that. After his death we were all very surprised that there was so much positive energy available. There was so much love and devotion and support. And there were two Tibetan Lamas; Lama Lodru, who still lives in San Francisco in the Haight Ashbury district, one of Kalu Rinpoche's students, very long time teacher on the Western vajrayana dharma scene. And someone named Lama Dudjom Dorjee. They arrived very quickly after the Regent died and were extremely helpful and one-pointed about how to relate to the Regent's body. We were given space by the hospital staff to do basically whatever we wanted for a period of time. And, you know, one of the instructions we were given was to wash the body, place various traditional seed syllables on the points of the body that relate to where the prana, or where the mind can leak out unskillfully. And we were instructed to put the Regent's legs in full lotus. To rub oil on his body and to put him in *samadhi*, put him in the traditional position of meditation in our tradition.

And then we brought him to the San Francisco Dharmadatu, which was in the Mission District. And began what for me was an incredibly miraculous three-day process of relating to the Regent as Buddha. He, or that, manifested beautifully. There were no preservatives or Western tools used to preserve his corpse. There were no props. The only slight prop was that we sewed the back of his *chuba* to the throne that he was seated on. And then he managed, or that managed to stay in a state of meditation for a little more than fifty hours. To the point where, and during that time, many Buddhist practitioners from our tradition, also other traditions, came, did various practices, some traditional *pujas*, some non-traditional. Many people came and just sat. Many people came and offered something, flowers or money or food or something. There was a continuous process of relating to him. And because of my position, Lama Lodru charged me with kind of taking responsibility for continuing to relate to the Regent. And I've told these stories before but they're, to me this is what needs to be reflected on today is this, that this relationship we make to the vajrayana teacher and to the vajrayana tradition is way beyond what we think it is at first. And the implications and the skillful means are constantly going back and forth between outer forms and then the internalization of the inner meaning.

Anyway, he was encouraging me to continuously tell the Regent what was going on. To talk to him, basically, during the *samadhi* period at crucial moments. Beginning of the day, end of the day. To supplicate him to remain in *samadhi* for the benefit of others. To tell him the beginning, middle, end of the day. All these sorts of things. And, you know, all these years later I realize, you know, basically Lama Lodru was telling me how to do guru yoga. He was teaching me how to literally transcend the concept of the guru being dead or alive, which was the first principle we talked about a couple days ago. That the essence of our mahayana vajrayana confidence is that the guru's mind never dies. The internalization of that understanding is what animates your vajrayana practice.

But after many hours of this Lama Lodru finally looked at me and he said, ok, it's enough, it's gone on too long. This is unbelievable. He and Lama Dudjom Dorjee were, they were starting to get a little bit, in our language, freaked out. They were like, you know, how's he doing this? And they both became more and more confident that the qualities that the Regent was manifesting in his state were the authentic qualities of

realization that are described in all of the texts that tell you what to do in relation to a realized master when they die. In particular, and this is something that I can confirm because Lama Lodru invited me to do it with him over and over again, was the process of feeling the heart of the Regent at various stages of this process. It continued to be warm. And someone like Corinne, perhaps you can attest, or maybe not, I don't know how much time you spent with dead bodies, but at a certain point it becomes cold, right? Even the heart area. Warm a full two days after he died. His heart center was warm. His complexion was quite good. As I think I put it somewhere, you know, he still looked better than most of the people in the room [laughter]. He still was, you know, more handsome and had a kind of better look than many of the broken-down Buddhists who were coming to pay respects to him. That that's another issue, I guess. Perhaps it's just an issue of my sacred outlook, I don't know.

Then Lama Lodru said so now you should supplicate him to come out of the samadhi because we need to move this whole process along. So I did three half prostrations, or maybe full, I forget, and told the Regent what was going on, asked him to come out of samadhi and within about 45 minutes the first sign of the teacher leaving samadhi is that fluids begin to come out of their various orifices. So fluid, blood and liquid, clear liquid started to come out of his ears and flow out of his nose. Lama Lodru said [snaps fingers] ok, that's it. Stop this process, take him out of this position he's been in and then we had to transport him to what was then Rocky Mountain Dharma center and begin another process. And I had to put him in a casket, put, again there was no preservatives used at all. We had the support of a local mortuary to do this, to get various papers to bring him out to Colorado. And then we had to relate to getting him up to Rocky Mountain Dharma center and preparing to do a formal cremation ceremony where, for the first time on that property we were going to literally burn the corpse, the, what's the term, *kudom*? We went to burn the form emanation that was still remaining and do it in a ritualized manner so we had to get all that together. In the meantime the Regent was on, literally on a bed of dry ice so he would remain cold enough or preserved enough to, that we could continue relating to him.

So this is what I was reflecting on specifically this morning. I was remembering, again Lama Lodru was giving advice. This advice was even more elaborate than the first advice in terms of what we were to do with the body. We had to wash it again, get it out of the casket and into a warmer environment and then rub oil and ghee all over the body. Again, instead of drawing the seed syllables, we had to put the seed syllables on pieces of paper and then put those pieces of paper in these various *nadi* points or *marma* or vital points on the body. And then put certain sacred objects on his chakra centers. We had to decide which things to include, which aspects of his personal belongings to include in this whole situation. And then finally put robes around him.

And the one little difficulty was that his joints were frozen, like frozen frozen. Like frozen through as a result of being on the dry ice for a couple days. So we had to solve this problem of how to get his legs in full lotus. Luckily I had been a yoga teacher, gone through one of the first Iyengar yoga teacher training courses ever in California, and I knew how to get a stiff person into full lotus [laughter] even if they weren't fully willing [laughter]. So in this case, again, I kept talking to the Vajra Regent, told him what we were going to do, what I was going to do. None of the other people could quite believe it 'cause you literally, his joints were extremely... So I started massaging the joints and the

way to do it is you keep the person on their back and then you bend the legs up for a while until the joints start to loosen. And then instead of trying to get them into full Lotus in a seated position, you put them into full lotus when they're laying back on their back, right. And I got the first leg in and then the process of getting the second leg in, his, the knee broke slightly and the skin opened and yet [snaps fingers] boom, the leg went right into full lotus. And then they used a belt and some cloth to tie around both sides of his legs and then he was, we sat him up and tied another belt around his back, underneath the knees and he was locked in full lotus, and he looked great. He was kind of ready to go, you know?

And then we put the robes on him and then we proceeded with this process that was given to us and we performed the preliminary rituals and then the flame went up and then he went in and then I remember watching as the fabric and outer aspect of his body caught fire and then the fire and his body merged. It was like a fire in the form of his body for a while and then it was just fire as the different structural aspects of his body collapsed into the fire. And it was an amazing contemplation to go through the fire puja in such close proximity and having had such an intimate and close relationship to his body. To be able to go from being this very, very intimate and personal relationship to handling and serving his body to then watching it consciously dissolve, you know, in terms of the fire.

And then there was the manifestation of what, in the traditional literature, would be called miracles or signs. Which is to say, there were these two spectacular rainbows that occurred. And some people argue of course well, they happen all the time at Shambhala, Rocky Mountain Dharma Center. But they seemed to occur sort of right at the right time. Then right as I recall there was a double rainbow as well, right? It was quite vivid and what can you say when things like that happen? You can't logically or rationally prove anything, but at the same time if you're open environmentally to what's going on then clearly there's some kind of a click that the mind of the teacher, the mind of the lineage is bigger than just what we can see.

And then the next day, you know, there was the process of going through the relics that were left after the fire finally burned off. And some of the more significant relics are in that box that's on the shrine. Specifically there was a gout or an amulet that Trungpa Rinpoche had given him and in that amulet was a tooth of Trungpa Rinpoche's as well as some of Trungpa Rinpoche's clothing. And interestingly that survived the fire intact. That Trungpa Rinpoche's tooth not only went through Trungpa Rinpoche's cremation, but it went through the Vajra Regent's cremation and nothing happened to it. The gout, you know, went from being silver to being kind of blackish silver, but it was basically intact and you can look at it, it's still in there, in that little box up on the shrine. And then, many of the other relics were then used to create the internal sacred architecture of that stupa. And many of them went into helping to create the internal sacred architecture that was going to be built, and is built, but is not, doesn't have an official status at what's now Shambhala Mountain Center. The process of using the relics from the Regent in the process of making *tsa tsas* went into that stupa. And, you know, there it is, you know, a representation of the enlightened body, speech and mind of the Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin. The wisdom manifestation of his body, speech and mind in union with the lineage of realization that comes through our Kagyu tradition of realization.