

## Excerpt from

### HOW I MET THE VAJRA MASTER

*A letter from Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin to the participants  
at the 1980 Vajradhatu Seminary*

“I have something to ask you,” he said. “Do you know what it is-,”  
I was slightly dumbfounded and made some vague stab at it. “Well, you want to send  
Ken somewhere and keep me here in Vermont.”

“Well, somewhat,” he said, and laughed. “This is slightly embarrassing, somewhat like  
proposing marriage. Can you guess?”

My mind was blank. “No,” I said.

“Then I’ll tell you. I want you to be my Gampopa, my successor.”

I was utterly shocked. “Me? Are you sure?”

“Quite sure. Do you accept?”

“Yes,” I said.

“Just like that?” he said.

“Just like that,” I said.

“Good. From now on there is no turning back. If you do, you will be destroyed by the  
dakas, dakinis, and dharmapalas.”

The Vidyadhara talked about his eventual death. I made some feeble remarks about  
how awful that would be, and he laughed. “For me that is no problem at all,” he said.

When I was about to leave, he beckoned me closer and gave me a copy of Gampopa’s  
*Jewel Ornament of Liberation*, which he had inscribed, “To my son, with love for

Kagyü family. “He placed the traditional white scarf around my neck and told me not to take it off until I got home. He cautioned me to keep what he had said secret, except from my wife and Ken and Helen Green. Then he said, “Come back tomorrow and tell me your dreams,” and I left.

I came down the stairs with eyes wide open and the scarf around my neck. All I could say to my wife, or to Ken and Helen and Chuck Lief, who was driving us home, was “Let’s go. “I didn’t say a word all the way back to Kirby, and they didn’t say a word to me. I was stunned. That night I told my wife and Ken and Helen what had happened. I could hardly sleep. Each time I fell asleep, I dreamt I was dreaming and woke up. This continued well into the early morning, when I fell into a deep sleep. At that time I dreamt that I awoke in the same house in Kirby and heard the voices of my friends and relatives of the past and present all congregated in the kitchen downstairs. I walked down the stairs and said that I was hungry and wanted an egg. At that point all my friends and relatives protested, saying I couldn’t have an egg. And I said, “Of course I can,” and proceeded to swallow an egg whole. Then I woke up from my dream.

The next day I told the Vidyadhara my dream, and he said, “That is good. The egg symbolizes the unborn wisdom within, like the garuda’s egg. When it hatches, the garuda is fully formed.”

After that day, the Vidyadhara made no reference to what had happened between us for nearly six months. I went through a period of elation, pride, fear, doubt, and bewilderment. I would say to my wife, “He must have made a mistake.” I would say to myself, “He does this to his students just to test them.” I would think, “This is absurd. I have no qualifications to join that lineage.” When I thought of Telo, Naro, Marpa, and Mila, I felt like a fool. In fact, I didn’t know which way to go. The Vidyadhara said nothing further, and no one else knew except the people I have mentioned. I tried to keep myself to myself. At the same time, I could not forget what had happened. It seemed as if life had become a dream of that particular evening.