

Vajra Regent Ösel Tendzin
Barbecue Toast
Shantigar, Ojai, California

I don't know if anyone has anything to toast with, but let's pretend. Let's pretend, if you do, you do.

We owe this incredible debt to Trungpa Rinpoche for his fierce kindness and his compassionate humor. He never did a better job, as far as I can tell, as leaving us with such a tremendous mess - Leaving me on my own in a way that I knew was unavoidable, but tried to avoid for a long time. But, it seems like the most important thing is to recognize that you are on your own, and the guru can only take you so far, can bring you to the abyss, so to speak, the edge of the cliff. And at that point, as Tilopa said to Naropa, if I had a student he'd jump off, right now. Naropa thinking, he must mean me, jumped. Well, it's not always the case that he does mean you. But even if you jump and break all your bones and make a mess, that's an opportunity for the guru to point out that you are somewhat self-involved (laughs).

I find that to be the case with my own life, and I remember when Rinpoche was telling me, when he was a student in Sechen he was treated like a king. He was Jamgon Kontrul's great son and young man, what, in his teens? And he was sort of like, the chosen one, a lot was riding on him and all this stuff. And he got a little puffed up. He was nervous that he would be found out. He was thinking a lot about himself. And He was cornered by his teacher, Khenpo Gangshar, by this method of embarrassing him in front of the entire assembly of monks, 500 or more monks. And Rinpoche told me it was the most horrifying, embarrassing situation, to be the important person, and to be put on the spot in a very gruff and forceful way. But he learned a lot from it. He must have, because he told me the story.

We owe that to him, that he was kind enough to let hang ourselves, and let us be put on the spot. I've never met a teacher who had that kind of far-reaching compassion. Usually they save you. You may go down for the third time, but some way or another they grab your hand. I'm not saying he'd let you drown - but I'm saying he would (laughs), if he felt that that would be the best way, whether in this life or in future lives, to attain enlightenment for you, drown you do then. Yeah. There a lot of things that have been said, what he said about me, what he said about this, what he said about that. But none of that really means anything. What really means anything is if you personally can attain enlightenment, individually, for the benefit of others. That's all that means anything, because that's the goal and that's what the guru had in mind - unless he had in mind just to use you as a doormat, have some fun for himself, which anybody who knew Rinpoche and saw how he lived knew that wasn't the case.

So for his great compassion we should be eternally grateful, and you should always keep some aspect of guru yoga happening, all the time, throughout the year. It's the most direct method to get in touch with that kind of rugged compassion.

So to him, to the Dorje Dradul, the Dharmarajah, the first warrior, the warrior of warriors, the Sakyong, the great siddha, the tertön – everything – to the Vidyadhara.