

Tulku Tales from India: Changing Patterns of Reincarnation

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Preface

I have always had experiences. Like birth, for instance. The woman next to my mother in the army hospital screamed herself to death in unsuccessful childbirth, and being born into such insanity, I decided there must be some terrible mistake, so I stopped breathing. An attentive little nun noticed and rushed me into an oxygen tent, foiling my hopes for an easy return. And although I don't remember clearly, I think God said, "Oh, no you don't, get back there and get busy." So I did. From childhood on, then, there were 'experiences': fairies and elves, conversing birds, spirit animal friends and mermaids. And now it's getting even more complicated.

I was never one of those scientific, materialistically-minded folk who can proudly say, "I was a straight arrow. Dead to the spiritual world. Just a real regular guy or gal (as the case may be.) Until . . ." and then go on to tell of their great awakening, the opening of the heavens, talking to God and Angels, or whatever their particular 'experience' was. No, that's not me. I have always been prone to STEs (Spiritually Transforming Experiences.) By normal standards, I always was a little flaky, woo woo, loosely wound or whatever euphemism you find appropriate to describe one who came into this world with cracks in her facade, through which other worlds, past life memories, spirit beings, and that incredible iridescent blue light streamed in, sometimes accompanied, if sex was involved, by ecstatically divine celestial music. (But that's another story.)

So, as I was saying, there were these experiences. I had them and then sometimes even years later, I understood them. A certain amount of trust was built up in the process and in the interims. Most of the times, I just did what was needed in the moment, and only later, did I see the bigger picture, or perceive the intricate patterns of karma and destiny. Actually, most of my daily life looked pretty uneventful; you know, washing dishes, raising children, cleaning house, reading, writing, working, sewing, singing, dancing; you know: living. It was the illusive, invisible light, music, fragrances, thoughts and feelings that wove the myriad realities into one below the threshold of waking consciousness, that was my rock-bottom ground of existence. But nobody knew as most of it was not physically observable.

I do have a scientific and mechanical bent, as proved by my SAT scores back in high school, in 'ought six'. So after rearing my children (as a single mother, pretty much, for 15 years) and my youngest was 14 years old, I went back to college. I love reading and study,

and pouring over anthologies of poetry; and I find research to be fascinating, especially when I like my subject. So at the Evergreen State College, right there in Olympia, Washington, I was able to delve into what really interests me, which turns out to be life, death, birth, infinity, karma and reincarnation, and, the human capacity for awareness of the spiritual worlds behind every facet of life, and the experiences thereof.

This story tells of my first “Major Mission” through the cracks between the worlds and in multi-dimensional time/space; should I choose to accept the assignment – which I did. It just happens to incorporate all of my favorite subjects. So, Gentle Reader, just let loose, go with the flow, and enjoy. And remember, truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

P.S. A final confession: punctuation is the bane of my literary existence.

PP.S. On Monday, November 29, 2010, I visited the Portland Diamond Way Buddhist Center for a blessing of their building and a luncheon. Lama Ole Nydhal, the principle American Lama was presiding. A number of years before, I had sent him a draft of the book, and we had a brief discussion at the San Francisco center. I was not ready to publish at that time, so the conversation just rambled around India and Kalimpong. This time in Portland, I had a specific goal. After the luncheon, he and I sat and talked, and at 2:00 he said, to conclude the conversation, “Yes, great. Finish the book. Publish, with blessings.” I am profoundly grateful for his approval and blessing.

Chapter 1 – How It All Began

It began a long, long, time ago. When, I don't even know: somewhere in the forgotten mists of perhaps even antediluvian times. Anyway, it all caught up with me a few years ago, or at least, that's when I can chart it from. The trail of unfolding karma stretches away forever, behind up at least. I think the future is different, or has the potential for a new way of being, a new way of playing the game of life. I hope so anyway. Well, the upshot of all this is: I must simply make a decision as to where it began for the purposes of the telling.

The first conscious connection came that day in the garden of the Pumpkin Hollow Waldorf School in the Berkshire Hills in Massachusetts. It was Michaelmas – September 29 – the day commemorating the overcoming of the dragon of darkness and doubt, by St Michael. That is the day in which the forces of decay and dissolution; of going to sleep and composting the mind and will through yet another long winter; like seeds or bears, wrapped in the deep somnambulence of earthly hibernation, or of following nature down the path into Hades, into the black underground and rotting away: the cadaverous mind and moldy consciousness like the inchoate plants and the vegetating beasts; begin their dominance. That is Michaelmas, when the choice is offered: to curl up and sleep; or to wrest consciousness away from the inertia of earth and lift the soul up my it's bootstraps or love handles or whatever wonder or awe the diamantine stars inspire. Look up! Awaken! The stars are falling to earth to prick

awake the sentient soul, that it might keep the vigil through the night of the year and see the midnight sun, the light that shines in darkness.

That day was an auspicious day; an Indian summer day with feathery lavender Michaelmas daisies like sprinkled stars, and zinnias and mums aflame like the maple leaves. I was sitting in the school garden listening to the classes singing and reciting morning verses: To Wonder at Beauty, and Guarded from Harm, the young voices invoking wisdom in the just barely misty morning light. I was talking to Christian Alexander.

Now, it must be understood that Christian, my son, had been dead the past two years. SIDS had taken my baby on the most blessed day of his short life – the first year anniversary of his christening. We were going to his Godmother's house for a festive dinner celebration after his nap, but he never woke up. His baby body had been cremated and his ashes strewn in the high meadow by the rock wall where the sculpted stone was placed in remembrance. Many times in those two years I sat and cried, sang the old songs for him, spoke with God and his Angels and been comforted by his innocent spirit. I wept huge pearls, paving the streets of the New Jerusalem, wrote poems of heartbroken mother-love, asked guidance for my living children, and drained my soul of rancor and bitterness, until at last, I felt only peace and a longing for Christian to come again. Of course he would reincarnate through me and we would fulfill his destiny this time, I thought to myself. I'm on this side, and could only define destiny in terms of living. Life not death, is the purpose of existence, I reasoned. He would come again in about three years, I was sure.

So in the garden on that Michaelmas day, only two years later, I said to Christian's soul, "Dear One, come now. Life is stable and reasonably happy. Your sisters are growing beautifully and they would love to see you again. Come, NOW, please." And Christian answered, saying, "Beloved Mother, I won't be coming for a long time. I have work to do here, on this side. I am here for you and my father and my sisters. You need an advocate in the spiritual world and when you are ready, we can work together." The truth of his words resonated within my aching hear. So, mother that I am, having already three daughters, and feeling 'the call', made an offer into the spiritual world, "If there is anyone there for whom I would be a good mother; who is ready, willing, and able to become a child of mine at this time; for whom I can offer a proper upbringing and education, and who would appreciate three loving sisters and a fine father; then I offer myself as an opportunity to incarnate." Christian smiled and all was silent.

As it happened, of course, I conceived that very night. The astonishing thing, in retrospect, was that I did not know it t the time. I had always know the lovemaking that seeded the children in me. Mariko's time on the tabletop at the elegantly simple hall where I taught Tai Chi Chuan. Peter and I had stopped after an evening of dinner and the movie, Cabaret, which touched both of us deeply – Peter being Jewish now, and my last life having ended at Auschwitz. We shared a tender deep passion, aching with sorrow and compassion for the intense 'vagaries' of life. So many emotions were swirling and our souls seethed with pain, joy, anger, helplessness and passion – everything all mixed up together. Making love

was the only possible commensurate expression of the intensity to right our world. We created a beautiful baby to house the passionate soul I called 'Nefertiti', since at first, she looked so like the bas relief on Anknaton's throne. As she grew, she became herself: Mariko. Peter's and my time together came to an amiable end when Mariko was only two.

Then David and I were partners for a couple of rocky years and Johanna D'aria Rose was conceived in the eye of the cyclone. While traveling up the wild Oregonian coast, we stopped to spend the night with friends, who left us their house, saying, "Enjoy yourselves!" So we did, in their big bed, with Buddhas, candles, flowers, and crystals all around and glowing stars on the ceiling. I felt the soul of Rosie come near, delighting with us, too.

Christian Alexander's time was so strong, we made love many times that night. "Once is enough," I said, "but don't stop." I already knew after the first time that another child was destined our way. And Athena's night of sweetness! So I had always known.

But this! This was a complete surprise. Within a week, I became very ill. I couldn't bear light, I couldn't walk and had to crawl to the bathroom. I ached everywhere and whole parts of my body become numb and senseless. Soon enough, it obviously wasn't the flu, but something more awful. So finally going to the doctor, a keenly-perceptive, medically intuitive Dutch woman, I was told that I was pregnant. Oh, my God' who or what had taken up my offer for incarnation? Whoever it was, was pushing my etheric body right out of my physical body. Hence the numbness – large patches of arms and legs going to sleep – tingling faintly away to no sensation at all. The doctor prescribed subcutaneous shots of Aurum – homeopathic dilutions of gold, to reattach the etheric forces to the material body, and strengthen my ego-consciousness so that I could remain awake in my body.

Immediately, I began to feel better and although still weak, I meditated for an hour or two each night. On the third day, a being burst into my quiet prayer, demanding that I stop what I was doing. He wanted to be born in his own fashion; he wanted to rearrange the energy to suite himself so we began to argue and wrestle. I told him that if we couldn't work together and co-operate, then we would both die. He had to respect me as his mother. He sneered, but after a day of struggle, I was so weak that it was apparent I would die and his plans cut short, so he ceased. When the energy had calmed to the point of conversation I asked why he had come to me. He replied, "to get the light." In the spiritual world since his last death in America a short time before, he had perceived a different quality of light, a fascinating, powerful new emanation that he had never seen before. He was a tulku, a re-incarnated lama of many lifetimes; powerful, charismatic, and ruthless in wielding his energy and personal power. He wanted the power and force of the new light to add to his repertoire. "Why me?" "Because you, foolish woman, can speak into the spiritual world and have discourse with those in the Bardos." "So now what?" He glared at me unforgivingly for having thwarted him.

"I can take you to that light," I said, and in an uneasy truce, we journeyed to the chapel in my soul. For many years, I have retired inwardly to this beautiful space in my souls where

deep purple walls shift and modulate, and a living portrait of the Christ is poised behind the altar, adorned with flowers and candles. As soon as we entered the sanctuary, D.G. or Dorje, as I called him, breathed a deep sigh and I felt him relax. His energies began to calm and he went into a state of vastly peaceful meditations. For many days thereafter, Christ came to serve at the altar. Every evening as I meditated, Dorje brought the symbols of his religion and laid them on the altar, where Christ transformed them. In the transformation, knowledge of the metamorphosis of human evolution from the long past into the future was imparted. A bowl of barley became a sheaf of wheat; the double dorje, the fish; a tanka of the Buddha transmogrified into the Last Supper. It was not a loss, not a co-opting of the ancient symbols, but a metamorphosis, a synergistic transformation of the ancient mysteries into the new and cosmic levels of initiation appropriate for our times. The new light in the spiritual world is the light of cosmic Christ consciousness, the wisdom of the etheric Christ.

With the transformation of each symbol, D.G. was initiated into the new mysteries, the wisdom of the human, earthly and universal ramifications of the Deeds of Christ. Christ, the Solar Logos, the divine Kyriotete, is the being who entered, (we can even say 'walked in' to) the body of Jesus the man at the Baptism by John in the Jordan, and lived in human form for three years. Three years of ever more deeply penetrating physical materiality with cosmic wisdom, until at last on the cross 'it was finished'. He had penetrated to the marrow of the bones, and was prepared to face the final challenge: the transfiguration of Death into a gateway to spiritualize matter and ascend consciously into higher dimensions. The exchanging of the symbols of Tibetan Buddhism for esoteric Christian symbology was an initiation for Dorje, administered by Christ, himself.

When all the symbols had been exchanged, D.G. lay upon the altar as if dead for three nights. Christian, my son stood at his head and an ancient wrinkled Tibetan watched at his feet. I simply sat in peaceful meditation for those three nights and kept vigil over the body on the table. During this time, Christ took D.G.'s soul on a journey far into the spiritual world to create personal karma, individual lessons. In all his former incarnations, D.G. had taken on the karma and destiny of his sect, and as an enlightened man had very little personal karma to deal with. For many incarnations he had retained his etheric body intact, accumulating the wisdom of centuries. Keeping the etheric body contained beyond three days after death is an incredible feat because for most human beings, the personal etheric is absorbed into the etheric field of the earth after that time. It is exceedingly difficult to maintain conscious control of the etheric body, whose natural tendency is to expand, rise, and dissolve. The next incarnation must occur very quickly to keep the etheric body intact. D.G. Had extensive knowledge of the properties of the spiritual worlds, and a powerful will, all of which had been supported by ceremonies and rituals of his lineage. He had penetrating clairvoyant abilities, and had always predicted the time and place of his next incarnation. However, maintaining the complete etheric body, which holds the memory of the life on earth is done at the expense of evolutionary karma. It creates collective, cumulative knowledge, rather than

learned and synergized wisdom such as naturally occurs in the complete journey of the souls between death and rebirth.

Since the turning point of time, Christ's deed on Golgotha, the moment when the Solar Logos consciousness penetrated the physical earth and transformed death into spiritual life, the usual journey of the human soul after death, takes years. 'Purgatory', also called 'kamaloka' (Sanskrit for "world of desires"), lasts as long as one has slept in life, and is a time of experiencing everything one gave to others, either sorrow or joy, pain or pleasure. One experiences the receiving side of one's delivered deeds. Now one is aware not only of what was done, but left undone; not only what was given but how it felt to receive it. The kamaloka dimension takes place in the spiritual sphere of the moon.

The soul then begins the journey through the planets. In each planet, the soul is greeted by the beings of the hierarchy that reside there and they receive the fruits of deeds done in their sphere. Venus receives love deeds; Mars, acts of valor, courage or cowardice; Jupiter, the distilled deeds of philanthropy, or greed. The spiritual counterpart of our deeds and feelings are left to be resolved in each planetary sphere, so the soul is freed and moves on increasingly unencumbered by earthly residue. The soul lightens in each encounter, until, passing through Saturn and the outer planets, it moves out into the stars to its original home in the galactic center. Perhaps that is why star-gazing nurtures the soul. We have experienced many galaxies since our souls began.

At the midnight hour of existence, far out in stellar realms, the soul turns again towards earth. Earth's siren song is planted deep within us and we gladly answer her call from a zillion miles away. Again the soul stops when passing back down through the planets and picks up the transformed past as karmic qualities for the next life. The astrological chart is a graphic image of the virtues and vices, trines and squares of the potential lessons to be mastered this time around. D.G. had never had such a complete experience in the spiritual world. He had been caught in a round of near-instantaneous reincarnations, maintaining the memories, wisdom and abilities of the previous lifetimes. Each time he added to his store of knowledge, but there was no transformation, no gathering new star-wisdom or major evolutionary impulses. Now Christ took his soul into the spirit world, through the planets, and together they chose a personal destiny which would give him the experiences of a normal human being, so he could understand life from the ordinary as well as the extraordinary, occult vantage point.

After three days and nights, as I sat meditating, D.G. arose from the altar, completely transformed, his face radiant and glowing with a golden halo. Making a gesture linking heaven and earth, he said, "Christ in me." I replied, "and may He fill thy spirit." These words are the call and response in the Act of Consecration of Man, the service in the Christian Community Church which is devoted to the Renewal of the Sacraments, which makes conscious, the relationship of the divine to evolving humanity. We embraced in love and

respect. In a moment, he turned to a cradle beside the altar that held a baby, himself - to - be, and picking it up, held the child tenderly, with great awe and reverence. Always before, he had no real understanding of the path of normal humankind, little respect for women and no time for children. Now he radiated compassion. He turned to thank me, and still holding the baby, he disappeared. My heart was at ease and my soul at peace. Physically I was healing and felt that I would soon be back to my normal self.

However, weeks later, I was aware that my pregnancy was in difficulty. I was no longer getting bigger and I didn't feel any movement or energy inside of me. Finally, I went again to the doctor and verified that there had been a fetal demise, and so had to have a medically indicated abortion. I was sad but felt the soul had accomplished its mission, meeting Christ and finding the light, so ultimately, I was satisfied with the whole experience and glad to have been of service.

Chapter 2 – The Call

Life then, went on in its usual complicated way. David and I raised our three daughters, loved, laughed, cried, worked - lived.

A few months later, as my health was returning, I said to David, "I feel he is incarnating among his own people and will be able to bring the 'light' of the new mysteries and the evolved wisdom to them. What if we were to travel some day and meet him? Wouldn't that be wonderful." Then for two years, I thought no more about it.

Two years later I began to have vague feelings of unrest. Something was pulling at me from half way around the world. In my meditations, I began to see a young Tibetan or Sherpa child who was ill or handicapped or wounded, and I yearned to go to comfort him. I knew that D.G. was having trouble adjusting to this incarnation. In all his previous lives, he had been 'found' as a child and brought to the temple, where he was well educated, adored and revered. He had lived in comparative ease and luxury, surrounded by other highly evolved and cultured tulkus and lamas. Now he was experiencing the life of a common human, fraught with pain and disease. The light of Buddhism for the common man can be pale. He was struggling with life, trying to keep his gifts from the past and exist as a little unknown child in a lonely village. He was suffering physically and spiritually.

I knew I had to go to help him. I thought baptism would help. In the Christian Community, baptism is a ceremonial welcoming of the child into life on earth and into the presence of Christ in the community. I felt D.G. needed to be assured that he hadn't left the light behind in the spirit world when he came to be born. He needed to know that when two or more are gathered in love, there is the Christ light in the midst of them. So I must go to India, find him and baptize him. I needed a reason to be there – some outer task or purpose that would lead me to the right place at the right time. Conveniently, at that very moment, I received a brochure for "Permaculture in the Third World", a conference to be held on

Whidby Island in the Pacific northwest. It was like a call from 'home', the West of open consciousness and open spaces, rugged mountains and the labyrinthian waterways of Puget Sound. It was the nudge I needed to return. So, packing the best and selling the rest, I flew with the three little girls to Portland, Oregon, and we were gathered up by my mother and father, to visit with them for awhile before the conference. David stayed East, to finish his work before coming out to join us.

The Permaculture course was an excellent introduction to the integrity of 'third world' nations. I met people who had lived all over the globe, working with grassroots organizations that honored the indigenous peoples' way of life and sought to remedy the ravages of contemporary culture and restore harmony and balance in life. I met Dorothy Craig, a little 'tree-spirit-being' who was working for "Children of the Green Earth." I hadn't told anyone besides David the story of the inner adventures I had been having all these years, but the easy deep connection with Dorothy prompted me to tell her the whole saga one late afternoon as we swung on the porch. She was fascinated and when I concluded with my need to go India to baptize the child, she said she wished me luck and that she would send loving, supportive thoughts and energy to me on my travels.

The idea gestated in her fertile imagination and being of an allegorical frame of mind, she decided to join me in the adventure. She saw me as some kind of benign, slightly deluded Don Quixote, tilting at Tibetan Buddhist windmills and herself as the faithful, supporting Sancho Panza. Without understanding it, she sensed the possibility of playing a bit -part in a significant cosmic drama, and she liked the idea. I seemed to be an easy-going companion and besides, she could write the whole trip off on her taxes because she would be traveling for "Children of the Green Earth".

Six months later, Dorothy and I heavily laden with baggage, a rough itinerary, and a list of 80 connections for tree-planting partnerships, got on the plane at SeaTac amidst tearful good-byes to my family and flew off to India.

Ah, India. We got off the plane at midnight in Madras and as we disembarked down the rickety stairs, we walked into a wall of hot humid air, fragrant with urine, jasmine and exhaust fumes. (No problem.) There we were in India, with lots of wonderful tree people and eco-organizations to visit and only one Tibetan connection. I felt hesitant about going to the established Buddhist community because every time I had meditated and visioned myself in a temple or near a lama, tigers would spring at me from behind and I would call on Archangel Michael to protect my back. I did not feel I would be welcomed or that I could talk to any Buddhists about my story. Rather, I felt I should just find the child, baptize him and return home; that when the child grew up, he could bring about whatever changes were necessary in a natural way, as one within the system. I did not feel it was my place to tell anyone or try to change anyone's beliefs. So I did not even plan to go to Dharamsala. I wanted to travel in the north to find him and then go home.

Chapter 3 – Arrival in South India

Ah, India. We got off the plane at midnight in Madras and as we disembarked down the rickety stairs, we walked into a wall of hot humid air, fragrant with urine, jasmine and exhaust fumes. (No problem.) This is an all-around Indian phrase that can be and is applied to every single human experience. It is usually accompanied by a wagging motion of the head which further dissociated reality and creates the illusion that everything is just fine (which it may or may not be.) So there we were in India, with lots of wonderful tree people and eco-organizations to visit and only one Tibetan connection. I felt hesitant about going to the established Buddhist community because, for months, every time I had meditated back home, and had visioned myself in a temple or near a lama, tigers would spring at me from behind and I would have to call on Archangel Michael to protect my back. I did not feel I would be welcomed or that I could talk to any Buddhists about my story. Rather, I felt I should just find the child, baptize him and return home, so that when the child grew up, he could bring about whatever changes were necessary in a natural way, as one within the system. I did not feel it was my place to enlighten anyone or try to change anyone's beliefs. So I did not even plan to go to Dharamsala. I wanted to travel in the north to find him and then go home.

India undid me. I sprang a leak; tears simply flowed down my cheeks for the first few days. (No problem.) I meditated as the sun rose and wept for the beauty. We walked the streets or rode in bicycle or auto rickshaw and I wept for the beauty and pain of all the faces. Everywhere was the open wound of human existence. (No problem.) Extremes of every polarity were magnified in the blazing sun, in the thick, perfumed rose glow of dawn or dusk, or in the humid twinkling night.

Our plan was to travel in the South, visiting “tree people” and establishing partnerships between Indian and American schools and organizations. Hopefully, we would also be contacting a few Anthroposophical friends. Then we would head up North to wherever the child was, do the deed, and then come home. (No problem.) It was, unfortunately, not yet quite clear where he was or in what circumstances. I had my visions and feelings and precious little else. (No problem?)

From Madras we traveled south to Mahablipuram, and arrived in Pondicherry on January 25, Christian's birthday, and India's Republic Day. Pondi was a French protectorate till the '50s and is a vigorous blend of East and West. Well, maybe not a blend exactly, but a stunning opportunity for comparison and an exercise in opposites – for example there is the neat Episcopal church right next door to the Shivite Gateway, laden with the pantheon of the Gods riding elephants, monkeys, phoenixes, snakes and fabulous unknown creatures who are all climbing what might be “Jacob's Ladder.” The center of the old city was decked in little lights, dripping gracefully but erratically for the trees or illuminating grand patterns of

whirling curlicues and multi-hued windmills. Dor and I felt like visiting royalty, pretending that the luminous splendors were for us, being an innocent enough illusion.

We had learned a hard but good lesson in Mahabilipuram. We had each been taken in by a “guide” who, playing on our sympathies and noble but unrealistic ideals, had been encouraged to buy excessively expensive little statues. It might have been OK if I had really liked mine, but I didn't and it seemed to grow heavier by the minute and I felt like it was burning a hole through my heart. So, I gave it away as a gift and felt much better. I learned that my ideals could be taken advantage of and began to see delusion everywhere. I came to understand India's (No problem.) reality. So, having loosened my hold on an inalienable, inviolable reality, I was now free to accept the rest of India on her own terms. I was, however, still weeping silently and copiously.

We checked into the Shri Aurobindo ashram and had dinner at the trough (our name for the ubiquitous metal plates) and then found a hotel just off the beach. Late next morning, Dorothy went off with a new friend to Auroville, a spiritual community and village rehabilitation project extraordinaire. I went to the ashram to spend a quiet day in meditation and reading. While in the library, the book I was reading suddenly blurred before my gaze, and as I closed my eyes and opened them on the other side, I saw myself weeping beside a pool of tears, overflowing through a break in the wall. The salty water was splashing away through the palm trees. A funny little wizened old man with wild hair, wearing only an old white dhoti wrapped around his loins, came to me cackling with laughter. "Here," he said, "no problem," and taking a handful of mud he mended the wall and staunched the flow of water. I stopped weeping. Now the little stream flowed through a viaduct and placidly along the stream-bed winding away through the trees. I made a garden in my heart with roses over the pool and lilies all around. The waters flow for healing, now and I, too, can flow freely, the Mater Doloroso behind me.

I thanked the old man. Giving me a toothless grin, he pointed a bony finger to a grove of palms. I followed the little stream as it meandered and came upon a circle of people having a party. I was Christian's birthday party. After the festivities, cake and song, Christian, Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo, and I, with the whole party of dignified men, played ring-around-the-rosy; and laughed and laughed. Buddha and Zoroaster, Lao Tsu and Rumi, Mohammed and Christ were all in stitches. It was a fulfillment of the prophecy in the story I had written shortly after Christian's death so many years before.

Christian Alexander's Death

The baby had died – peacefully, irrevocable, though in the first shock, the intense prayer sprang from the mother's heart, “Oh, please! A miracle! If there is anything, even up to my own dying that could make him breathe again, oh, please, Lord, I'll do it.” But as soon as that human cry was wrenched from her, she saw the grin of the Tempter, and knew that in its awesome reality, this death was divine destiny. After searching for her mistake, her failing, and finding none worthy of such punishment, though there were moments of deepest anguish

and remorse at flaws perceived; her little ego relinquished responsibility, and she was flooded with grace – golden and perfect, and eternal in its embrace; only to be shattered again and again by the memory of the other moments, the pain of loss, the ache of a mother's loneliness. When the burden of consciousness could no longer be borne, sleep brought jeweled memories of Christian's husky little laugh, his sparkling eyes, his rosy adorable ways; and awakening was peaceful. But reality intruded, and sitting by the side of the small, still, white body, longing and sadness reasserted itself. "My baby, my baby," she cried.

And then she saw: his being, recognized in the familiar gentle aura of his bearing, but housed now in his spiritual essence, strength and beauty flowing from him; kneeling on one knee, a noble knight before the Christ, who raised him up and embraced him a brother in the spirit. In an eternal moment her son turned, and drawing a chalice from the heart-fold of his robe, gave her wondering soul a drink. Then turning to his father, whose head was still bowed in sorrow, the child spirit anointed him with oil and grace poured into the father's waiting soul.

The child-spirit gazed at his parents with love and gratitude, and when his mother asked, "why did you come to us?" he answered, "to bring you love." "Then why did you go?" "So you would not forget love." and there was sorrow in him too, not to be cuddled and rocked and sung to in his mother's arms. But imperceptibly shaking his head, he said, "I have much to do here, many tasks to fulfill, and we shall work together when you are ready."

Gently, what she saw faded. Lifetimes of joy and agony were lived overnight. The next day they brought his little body and laid it on the altar of the little chapel of the Christian Community. Time now for the circle of giving to widen, and many came and were blessed. In the purity and absoluteness of the baby's sacrifice, doors of perception were opened to spiritual truth. The very air was snowy with angel's wings, caressing those who cleaned themselves in tears of compassion, and flames of concern, and open wonder at the frozen grace of the moving hand of God, written in the tiny flower bedecked form.

In compassion for the human sorrow, Christ came to the service from the cross. His sides were still faintly bleeding and the hands that touched the bread and tenderly cradled the cup were strained and suffering. In sympathetic understanding – for Christ died also, His mother and family mourned also, before they knew – His sharing in grief and giving of Himself for its alleviation, was a deeply felt precious gift. And the child-spirit drew all assembled close with his new wings of love.

The final funeral service came, and the child-spirit flew a little farther on. Oh, but the music! The young man who had played for the rosy baby for many months, played his last gift with his whole soul. So delicate, stately and intricate, gliding in circles and spirals, danced the music. The mother and her spirit-son danced also with the baby between them: ring-around-the-rosy, each holding one of the baby's chubby hands, weeping together over their mutual loss, yet knowing in the spirit, that one day they would dance again like this: ring-around-the-rosy-shared-treasure-of-one-year-of-life, and laugh.

And so we did, there among the palm trees and flowing water. Christian and I with the 'baby' between us, and all the wise men played the circle game "ring-around-the-rosy," all falling down and jumping up laughing and dancing, dancing and laughing, fulfilling the prophecy.

Later that day, I was allowed to meditate in Sri Aurobindo's private room with a motley assortment of others. As soon as I closed my eyes, the guru greeted me. No longer a toothless, Hindu sadhu in rags, as earlier, he was now wearing long golden robes. He ushered me into a subterranean rock temple where waited the Seven Holy Rishis, the initiators of the major religions of the world. I stood in the center of the circle and each one spoke. Zarathustra said, "May this coming child bring the new light into the old." Buddha said, "May he become the light that many may see." A Zen priest said, "May the peace of the

light illumine peace in the hearts of men." And Rudolf Steiner said, "May the light of wisdom shine into the darkness." I was affirmed in my quest. The spiritual world had blessed the journey. I felt absolute confidence in the outcome of my task.

Sleep was deeper and the days were filled with observant wonder as we continued our travels. The rest of the journey was indeed blessed as we were passed along from hand to hand, from one helpful encounter to the next. We met a Christian minister, E.K. And his wife Joys, who support an orphanage. While staying in their home, (the buses in India come early, late, on time or not at all, which is what happened, so we spent the night with our new friends, we fell in love with their children and the orphaned boys. We walked along the Bay of Bengal together, singing and trying to catch and ride an errant water buffalo, shared a late dinner and then shared their beds. I held little Etta Nina like my own daughter, sang her lullabys and stroked her hair. For weeks after we left them, I heard E.K.'s genuinely loving laughter ringing in my ears. And in the end, Dorothy and I agreed to help support their work, and have for all these years.

We returned to Madras, catching the express bus on its way out of the terminal, both a bit frazzled, to General Jacob and the YMC Boy's Town. We presented the typewriter we had boldly 'smuggled' in and then we were off to the Boy's Town function. One hundred children were sitting and waiting for us, and as we leapt from the chauffeured car, we were necklaced in sandalwood finery, placed in the honored positions, and the festivities began. The various classes presented skits and songs about trees, birds, nature and ecology. Dorothy made a rambling speech about "Children Round the World as Children of the Green Earth." I told the story of Johnny Appleseed and taught them the tree planting these song: "From our Hearts, With our Hands, For the Earth, All the World Together", complete with gestures. It was lovely to be singing with so many earnest, dedicated children. We toured the orphanage and planted jackfruit trees by each dormitory. The little group who followed us and had dug the holes and now watered the trees, happily sang the 'tree planting song' for each one. General Jacob of the Salvation Army is the emperor of the small benign kingdom of the YMCA.

We were in Bangalore, in the back of the train station, hiding from the squall and press, hitching up our packs and girding our loins, as it were, for the next foray into the streets, when I caught a flash of saffron and maroon. Rushing over, I gazed into the calm face of a bald, robed, Tibetan man cloaked in peace. Wittily, I asked, "are you a Buddhist?", to which he laughed. The ice broken, we began to talk of the Dalai Lama's whereabouts, just a veiled bit about my journey, and about him, the Amchoke Rinpoche, head of the Tibetan library in Dharamsala. Now I had not planned to go there, but at one point he said in so kindly a manner, " you must come see me in the library," that I began to accept the idea. And when he said , "what a fine coincidence meeting here," and we both chortled simultaneously, it was decided. But before reaching Dharamsala, however, there was all of India to be traversed.

From Bangalore, we caught the night special to Goa, a seemingly innocent trip

scheduled to arrive in Panjim early the next morning. However, in a garish green bus stop chai-room at 4:00 a.m., we were informed that the bus we were on wasn't going to Goa after all, but to Bombay, another 26 hours away. (No problem.) Mercifully, or so we thought, there was another alternative. A bus employee helped us retrieve our backpacks and sat silently with us for an hour, then loaded us onto the local to the coast. So we jounced our way on hard wooden seats over the western ghats, stopping at every village and by-way. Of course there are no restroom facilities out in the hinterlands, so there was the harrowing moment of nearly missing the departing bus as I peed behind some crumbling ruin of a chai-stall. The roads are narrow and winding, affording ample opportunity for motion-sickness among our fellow passengers, the most afflicted quickly moving over to the window seats to retch violently from the careening vehicle. Something on the top of the bus, agricultural, I hoped was dripping a thin stream of goeey black down my window. Six hours of local transportation later, we arrived bedraggled at the Arabian sea in Goa and "oh, no. NO room at the intended inn. We were aghast until we wandered forlornly out onto the roads and met an acquaintance from the bus; Jenny, an Australian teacher, who took us up some steps and through a courtyard to the loveliest and dirtiest guest house, ever. So safely ensconced in our big, airy room shared with our new friends, we wandered the streets of Panjim, an ex-Portuguese colony. At sunset, we caught the bus to the beach and went swimming in a gold and crimson Arabian Sea, warm as a salty bath.

We were up early next morning to catch the steamer to Bombay, a huge, peeling relic from some former time and glory, that now plies the east coast from Panjim to Bombay. After sailing north for an hour or two she stopped out in the middle of a little harbor and patiently waited as a chunky round dory rowed out from the stragglng wharf of a little outpost village which serves as the departure point for those coming out of the steaming impassible interior. Dorothy and I watched as boat-load after boat-load of women in saris and men in suits carrying briefcases were ferried over to ship-side and scrambled up a makeshift rope ladder affair, to the first deck. Then the boxes were hoisted aboard and we set off again, leaving the little boats bobbing in our wake, their leaf-shaped oars flashing rhythmically in the sun. Our good ship stopped about 3 or 4 times this way.

We had paid the porter who lugged our back-packs on board and spread out our scarves to hold our place on deck, 30 rupees (double the usual price) and only found out later that we were cleverly positioned under an engine vent which blasted us and our neighbors, a honeymooning couple and his best friend, with exhaust fumes and NOISE. We had missed the distribution of mattresses and so resignedly, laid ourselves down to sleep on the metal deck with only a grass beach mat between us and it. About midnight, another little boat from yet another little dockside village disgorged a number of gaily chattering, brightly sariied women, two of whom thought I was a bundle of cloth or something comfortable, and actually sat down on my sleeping body. After disentangling myself, they grudgingly moved over a tad, but there was no longer room to lie down. Dorothy and I moved over to the side of the

deck, but the wind was blowing and I woke up, stiff, sore and achy.

Chapter 4 – Bombay

We arrived in Bombay as the sun was fighting it's way through a deep red haze. We spent only a short time in Bombay, this first time, which is enough. Bombay is a collision of Hollywood tinsel and the Chicago stock yards; Indian-style Wall Street and the most squalid, degrading slums, vast, sprawling and intensely ugly. Overcrowding in every sector is almost unbearable and even the culverts, stacked by the side of the torn-up roads, were temporary homes and full of people, like a human beehive.

We taxied to Victoria Station which looks like some sort of lace trimmed, rococo gargoyle hunkered down amidst the press and flap of little makeshift shops and stalls. Luckily, even though I was still sick (it felt like the lining had been burned off the insides of my lungs), when we and a few other steamer passengers hailed a taxi, I waited till the driver got in and then jumped out, myself, to slam the trunk tight. It was handily left ajar, so that when we came to a certain corner, the cabbies friends/accomplices could have grabbed our packs and luggage from the open trunk and the cabbie could have driven on, pretending not to understand what we were all talking about until it was too late to go back. I had heard of this happening and did not want to become a statistic in this kind of game. And besides, my eyes were open now after the Mahabilipuram incident. And, I felt the difference in the way the local people related among themselves and how they behaved towards foreigners. In the city, it seemed wise to be 'overly' cautious even though the cabbie had said that leaving the trunk open was OK.

When we got to Victoria Station, we settled ourselves into the Tourist Information center, and by turns, made forays out to purchase tickets, try to make phone calls, and to buy some Mr. Pik our favorite Indian soft drink, next to Campa Cola which one couldn't find just anywhere. We sat next to a distraught young English woman who was going mad, and was fascinated by the fact. Dor and I both talked to her, did Reiki and breathing exercises to help calm her down. She said she needed to get to an ashram, but didn't have enough money, so I went and bought her a first class ticket using 50 of our rupees to help her safely and peacefully get back to her haven, but at one moment as Dor and I conferred, she grabbed the ticket, jumped up and ran off, not getting the train, but disappearing into the press of people. She was not there behind her eyes, and was caught in the dark shadow of India. Somewhat bewildered; feeling conned by one of our own, and betrayed by our sympathy; we trained up the Ghats to Pune. I slept in the overhead luggage rack, trying to get well, but it wasn't working.

Dorothy had contacted the Pune "Friends of the Trees," so we were invited to stay in the hilltop garden home of Feroza and Saroj, and were immediately swept up in their dramatic life which included threats from the illegal rot-gut liquor makers on the back side of their hill, and a rebellious servant girl who offered me the sale of her baby. I was just mostly

sick and lay in the downstairs guest-room trying to recover and fend off the daily DDT spraying against the mosquitoes while Dorothy went on adventures looking at village rehabilitation in the outlying areas.

When the time came to leave, Dor had made plans to travel to further villages up North, and I planned to spend 2 days alone in Bombay with friends of friends. So I arrived weak and wobbly at the Rao residence. N.S. Rao is a wealthy, powerful businessman with a vast inter-India “pest management” company, who is active in village rehabilitation, tree-planting and preservation, and modern Hinduism, being a follower of Shri Aurobindo. Barbara, a Jewish German ex-patriot who had suffered during the war was staying at his ‘compound’ and so she and I shared the guest bedroom. That first night, we exchanged stories on the roof. She is a potter and teaches in a school for the workers of a Godrej manufacturing plant on the outskirts of Bombay, the Godrej’s being the ‘Rockefellers’ of India. So the next day, we caught a commuter train along with thousands of workers in crisp, white clothes (how do they do it? The crisp and blinding white part). Before the incoming train had even stopped, Barbara leapt forward, dragging me along, and I’m very grateful that some of the commuters stepped back deferentially and we got inside quickly, because within seconds, the open car was packed, and 10 or 15 young men were hanging on the edges and window ledges on the outside. As the train picked up speed, their shirts and trousers fluttered and flapped wildly, though most of their hair was greased to perfection and although flattened a bit on their foreheads due to the pressure did not stray from the appointed hair-do.

The school was a haven of clean, calm safety at the end of the whirlwind train ride. I am a Waldorf Kindergarten teacher, so I sang songs and then watched the little pink flocks of pre-school children as they sang and danced for me, the strange big visitor from far away. I observed Barbara’s class of high schoolers, so attentive to her demonstration, and then with quiet enjoyment and intent focus, creating beautiful pots of their own. Luckily (a very apropos term in India, covering a variety of good karmic circumstances), we lunched with Sunu Godrej, the “maharani” of the school who arranged for us to join her for the chauffeur driven ride home. I seem to remember that the car was even air conditioned, so we glided coolly through the frantic squalor of Bombay: Bombay, the “Queen’s Necklace,” so called because of the long beaches and light-spangled boulevards along the water on both the eastern and western shores of the city.

We were deposited at the Rao’s front door and when we walked in, the tension was palpable: Lilly “The Terror”, N.S.’s wife was coming home. She had been in Syria, where her family is the power behind the Syrian mafia, and everyone here fears Lilly. I was exhausted and lay down on the bed to rest. She burst in the door, laughing and shouting with her entourage. She took one look at my bags, and me lying there and began shrieking! I am not even sure what language she was shrieking in, but the pitch exacerbated my headache, so I just answered mildly that I was recovering and would be leaving tomorrow. She said, “O.K.,

tomorrow.” and ignored my existence until I was indeed gone the next day. Mercifully, Dorothy was returning to me and the next day N.S. and I drove in his chauffeured car to get her at the train station. We had ascertained her whereabouts after one of those phone calls in which the reception is so poor that it is only by a patient amount of carefully enunciated screaming that anything is understood. “O.K., Dor, you just wait for us in the nice comfortable place where that young lady went crazy.” I heard a feeble little reply, “ Not that station, I’m at the other one.”

Well, that was good to know, and so at length we gathered her up and went to pick up Sarosh Bana from the newspaper office where he worked. Dorothy was in nostalgic heaven. In the press room, people were pounding away on old black typewriters, like she had done for her college newspaper, and fantastic, antiquated machines whirred, hummed and swooshed miles of newsprint along their merry erratic way. We all four went to lunch at the posh and garish Oberoi Towers and had an Indian version of spaghetti and ravioli that no Italian would have ever recognized, although it was delicious.

Mr. Rao was so sorry and apologetic about our not being able to stay at his home and I was so frustrated at never having had a moment to talk to him, that when he finally dropped us at his office so that we could make telephone calls to our next destination, and he went on to a meeting somewhere else, I burst into tears after he drove out of sight. (What is really happening? I’m beginning to lose track with all the conflicting realities jumbling up together like a mad house of cards that is crashing down in slow motion.) I get no relief from trying to make calls in the big board room in his office. His secretary is, I think, sabotaging my connections. Anyway, we cannot reach Varanasi at all. Period. And my attempts to call the ‘Parsi Metaphysical Library’ right here in Bombay, ends badly. I am sprawled on the big table, rolling with hysterical laughter, and screaming “Meyer Master Moos, please”, over and over again like a demented chant into the absolutely silent, unresponsive telephone. Dorothy joins me in my maniacal laughter, and after a while we feel much better. I needed that! It was a nice safe catharsis! (I think I understand the crazy English girl better, now.)

So another car and driver take the soggy, still laughing and hick-upping remains of Dor and I over to the Salvation Army Guest House, and deposit us there safely. However, OH MY GOD, THEY ARE FULL! WE WILL HAVE TO SLEEP ON THE STREET - IN BOMBAY - OH MY GOD!!!! And actually, we were freaking out in a more restrained manner on the street, when a nice young man asked us if we need a room to rent? “Hmmmm, to trust or not to trust?” That is the question. So I tuned into his ‘vibes’ and looked at him closely and feel, “yes, it’s O.K.” So we follow him a block away and when we don’t really like the looks of the first place, he brings us to Mrs. Whalley’s Boarding House, a large, old, rambling, wonderful left-over English Raj sort of place, only 1 block from the water, the Gateway to India and the Taj Intercontinental Hotel: reasonable, sort of clean, hot water and a “throne”(our name for a sit-down toilet.)

After all the stress and kerfuffle of the day, we decided to be real tourists, and went to the 5 star Taj Hotel and mingled with the upper castes and echelons. We saw a humorous and moving classical dance performance of Krishna and the Gopis, and went to sleep, relaxed, safe and nearly mosquito-free. Before we could fly away to Varanasi/Benares, we taxied back to the Rao's to pick up left luggage. N.S. was home for lunch, so happily and in a centered state of mind, I told him the abbreviated version of my task. He understood perfectly, and although he could offer nothing concrete at the moment, he pledged his support should I need anything at any time. I felt a flood of gratitude wash over me, to have an influential friend here, and to be accepted and understood.

Chapter 5 – Varanasi

So we flew from Bombay to Varanasi in an old plane that creaked and rattled and all but flapped its wings to get us air borne. There had been terrorist activity in India's airports recently so the boarding procedures were long, complicated and tedious and included a metal detector body search of each person. Dor was ahead of me and I heard a "clunk", and the police woman demanding, "What is that?" in a frightened tone. "It's my hip bone!" replied Dorothy in a painful little voice. Being rounder and better padded, I passed through with no incident.

The flight was wonderful, the stewardesses lovely in brilliant gold encrusted saris and the food was odd but good. Cole slaw sandwiches is what I would call them and other unknown bits and bowls of green and rose. We left late from Bombay and arrived even later in Benares with a terrible crashing thump, but everyone was all right, and soon we were shuffled into the glaring madness of another airport and flung into the clutches of another wild-eyed taxi driver.

In all the craziness, I'm dropping rupees like long awaited rain into the various hands of porters, urchins and liveried officials. Whether or not that helped to "grease the skids" or not, I do not know, because I really believe, that life flows smoother in India than America. Once again all was well. However, the news was, "the students are rioting and no cabs are allowed into the old city." So our driver took us to a nice noisy hotel by the train station in the old British compound. The Rudhra Hotel; hot and cold taps (but no hot water), phones in every room (but not hooked up). There was a loud all-night party downstairs which echoed through the smooth stone stairwells and there were more mosquitoes per square inch than anywhere in the world! I'm sure! We had insect repellent, but I swear that these particular mosquitoes seemed to consider it an especially delectable seasoning rather than deterrent. In America, the mosquitoes hum and you can hear them and squish them or swat them away when they land, but in India, they are silent marauders of the night. Dor went in to use the "throne" and I heard a bloodcurdling shriek and she ran out of the bathroom, flailing her arms and stamping a wild little hopping dance. It seems that when she innocently enthroned

herself, a million mosquitoes hiding under the toilet and sink attacked her, almost carrying her off. After a sleepless night of mosquito aerobics, we spent the hot morning catching up while the insect population was sequestered in the cool dark places in the bathroom.

We hired a bicycle rickshaw for what turned out to be a long ride into the old city and the Tulsi das Ghat, where we hoped to meet Mahantji who is an eco-partner with an anthroposophical organization devoted to cleaning up the Mother Ganga. Ah, the Ganges is huge here at Varanasi. One can see across, but it is far, far away. The farther shore is only an indistinct line undulating in the heat and haze. "Mahantji is in Kathmandu," but his young son was a gracious host and the turquoise room where we sat and drank chai had smooth, cool floors and the shadows on our faces were green and blue, and bright where the sun threw a golden square through the window. I could have sat there forever, breathing deeply the cool dusty air, listening to the soothing patter of his soft speech and the hum outside the thick walls, sipping chai and eating sugar-syrup soaked gulub jamum (Indian donuts) with a small ornate spoon.

But the young son had other plans for his afternoon and the ghats and temples were calling us. From the dense, serene atmosphere of the house, we stepped out into the heat, feces-perfumed dust, and the blinding light of noon. Varanasi, the Holy City on the banks of the Sacred River Ganges is a good place to die in Hindu theology. Doing so assures the soul of a better rendering of it's karma. The faithful come to spend their last days here, lying on the Ghats, propped up on the wide stone steps leading down 10 or 20 feet to the water and down into the cold brown depths. It was a beautiful day, the sky - blue above us, the temperature - not too hot, the sun- glorious. Everyone seemed happy and at peace.

Along the top of the bank are many temples, ancient to modern. The Monkey Temple of Hanuman was indeed full of monkeys, climbing up the aerial chains and leaping amongst the towers and turrets. Dor had to hold on to her glasses because we were warned that they might play tricks on us and they like bright shiny things. When we bought sandalwood necklaces from a vendor in the courtyard, one little monkey tried to grab them, but he was still too young and wary to come close enough. Then to the modern Tulsi-Manas Temple and later wandering through another old ruin.

Sarnath, the place where Gautama Buddha had given the first discourse after his enlightenment, is only a mile or two outside Benares, so we hired an auto rickshaw and set forth. After the profusion and gaudy magnificence of the Hindu temples, the Buddhist influence is by contrast exceptionally still and spare. The museums and temples were filled with silent throngs and Dorothy and I sat out under a massive Bo tree, a scion of the original in Bodh Gaya.

As dusk was deepening, we wound our way through back alleys to the Tibetan Buddhist Temple. Inside was almost black except for the fluttering candle-light from hundreds of votives. The high walls stretched up into a darkness of many hues, and yellow

eyes and curlicues of gilt flickered intensely for a second or two before retreating back into the shadows. The heavy smell of incense pressed me to my knees and then to the floor. I leaned back against a sculpted pillar, closed my eyes and went deep: so deep and peaceful that I merged with the sleepless night of eternity. Suddenly a basso chanting shook my body, and trembling, I opened my eyes. Before the altar, a huge man was seated, rumbling sacred tones deep inside himself that shook the foundations of the temple as they rolled and rumbled between his teeth, cascaded through his lips and poured down his chin, chest and across the floor. Transfixed, we sat in awe till at last this giant of a man rose ponderously and disappeared between the pillars and the shadows.

We caught the last auto-rickshaw out of Sarnath that night, squeezed in with four other people who didn't want to be stranded there either, and slept deeply, mosquitoes or not.

We awoke before dawn and aroused a sleeping rickshaw- man huddled in the back of his vehicle. The air was cold and damp and we rode towards the river and the soon-to-be-rising sun. The homeless were warming themselves around the garbage fires at various corners and empty lots, heating water for improvised chai, having effectively cleaned the streets of all bits of paper, rags, unclaimed dung and the flotsam and jetsam of the tides of life through the Benares street. Our driver let us off at the walls of the old city. There are no streets here, just dim narrow paths and walkways. We shivered uncertainly, despairing of ever finding the banks of the Ganga through the labyrinths, when from out of the shadows, a young man with gleaming white teeth emerged, asking, "Do you need a guide?" "But, of course." "Come, my 'uncle' has a boat. Would you like to ride down the River?" Prayers answered, we followed him into the intricate maze.

The sun was breaking free of the horizon and drenching the river and ghats with liquid gold and burnished copper incandescence. The steps to the river lived and moved; seething with the dripping bodies and plastered saris of the ablated faithful. Our guide clove a path for us to his 'uncle's' boat, and we pushed out into the flaming Ganges. The faces of the wet ones on the stairs glowed radiant and tranquil, and all ages, all stations of life were here together at this moment to greet the sun. "This is eternity," I thought. Eons ago, I too, washed my face in this river on these steps. Nothing has changed but me. Wisps of mist still rising from the water, we launched our frail leaf-boats carrying candles - the spark of our souls - out into the lazy current - life - and a decomposing cow floated by. India's eternity.

As the heat of the rising sun dissolved the haze and the traffic on the ghats took on a vernacular rhythm, the dhobi wallahs waddled in to work, smacking and kneading the wet clothes on flat rocks. They sang and chatted while stretching the clean saris out flat on the river bank to dry. This is one of India's enduring mysteries. Crisp white clothes and brilliant saris remain white and bright while lying to dry on the stones and scraggly grasses. The 'uncle' rowed us up past the burning ghats - the crematorium steps, but not too close as foreigners and unbelievers should not disturb the mourning. Smoke hung heavy over the

remains of the last smoldering fire and a few dhoti-clad attendants had cloths tied over their noses and mouths. A lone wail soared over the rest of the human chorus. My answering pain was primordial. Eternity, again.

We were returned to the waiting 'nephew' our guide who next offered bargains at the "best silk house in all India." So, again into the pathways and stairs of the old city. In one dark alley, we had to walk single-file and when we stopped in a black courtyard, a chill of fear prickled by back and my hackles rose instinctively. Must we fight or fly? With a grin, he pointed to some steps and at the top, the door was thrown open by an elegant mustachioed gentleman. We were graciously seated on mats, delicious chai was served and two young apprentices began to twirl and drape gold-embroidered silk over our laps and across the cushions. We were swept into a fantastic rainbow world. Turquoise and gold peacocks strutted in radiant silken meadows; purple and gold elephants marched grandly through fabulous cities of golden antiquity; plumes and phoenixes fluttered up from scarlet ashes and flew off the edges of tasseled shawls; Gordian knots tangled unceasingly over multi-colored scarves, and iridescent saris with wide golden borders dazzled our eyes till we cried for mercy. Dorothy loved a midnight blue scarf sprinkled lavishly with tiny many-colored flowers perfectly traced in gold, which when she wrapped it round her shoulders, looked like a mobile Persian miniature. I favored a small piece of luminous turquoise and blue heavily embroidered with roses and an ornate border of lotus. And they accepted credit cards. Supremely happy and clutching our golden treasures to our hearts, we rejoined our guide. Now he suggested that we go to pay our respects to his guru, and in a euphoric mood, we agreed. The guru as not at home when we arrived, but as we turned to leave, there he was. The revered man was not able to pass on any wisdom, however, because his mouth was full of Betel, as he had just stepped out to the local Pan stall. Well, it must be time to go anyway.

So back to the station and we caught the night train to Delhi in our own compartment world for two. Our car was near the back of the train so when we stopped in a station, which was frequently, we heard the din and clatter of hawkers and vendors like faint music from far away. We glided through the limpid night, talking and laughing, massaging and sleeping, all punctuated by the bumping stops every hour or so.

Chapter 6 – The Tibetan Connection

We arrived in Delhi in the early morning, auto-rickshawed to the best guest house listed in the India Survival Kit, got a room, showered and set out to find our one Tibetan connection. All I had was a slip of paper with the name of the place where Rinzing worked on Connaught Circus. (No problem.) We walked in to the Japanese restaurant and were greeted by a pleasant young man with startling cheekbones and beautiful eyes. "I am looking for T.S. Rinzing," I said. With a look of glorious satisfaction, he said, "I am T.S. Rinzing." Coincidences happen like rain in monsoon season here in India. He got off work, took off his waiters

uniform and joined us wearing his own clothes with a sweatshirt that said "Christ" over the heart. Our mutual friend is named Christopher, and Rinzing had the shirt made in his honor, calling him Christ. From that moment we were friends and soon enough, traveling companions.

It was time to get serious about my task. Where were we to go? How was I to accomplish my goal? So I told Rinzing an abbreviated version of the whole story up on the roof that night. He took it quite in stride and said perhaps we should ask a lama he knew. He took a couple of weeks off work, and we started by busing up into the hills to Deradun.

After the long ride from the plain of New Delhi into the foothills, we were so happy to settle into our hotel, although, we went out into the chilly hill-night for supper in a Tibetan restaurant. The walls were brilliant, deep sky blue and we sat on handwoven rugs over pillows, somewhat reclining and ate tupa, noodle soup garnished with fresh cilantro. It was a Tibetan woman who cooked and served, which is very unusual in the Indian culture. I had not seen a woman in business before, except for beggars or bank clerks in the big cities. This woman was open and friendly, joking with Rinzing, and I felt comfortable and at ease in the Tibetan ambiance.

The Lama we were seeking, Sakya Trisin, was near Ponta Sahib, a Tibetan settlement famous for carpet weaving. So the next day after a short local bus ride, we got off in the village and as we pondered how to get further, a jeep headed that way offered us a ride and the three of us piled in on top of the already loaded passengers. Up toward the mountains we sped, each turn in the road offering a more beautiful and vast view than the last. We were dropped off near the settlement and hiked up to the Rinpoche's house. The footpaths meandered between homes, carpet workshops, gardens and lonely stretches of wild grass with leggy azure tufts nodding their blue tufts in the brushing breeze of our passing. Finding the house was like finding hidden treasure. Tucked into the lee of the hills, it was brightly painted and decked with strings of prayer flags, swinging gently in the still air.

None of the phone calls had gotten through, so we arrived unexpected. The Rinpoche's gracious wife served an impromptu lunch while we waited for an interview. Rinzing went first hopefully to explain a little something about the question. Then it was my turn. I did not feel compelled to tell everything, and so the lama said, "you should visit my brother the Dogchen Rinpoche who lives in Seattle." I went away saying to myself, "I came half way around the world to be told the answer was in Seattle? Well, it's obviously not his karma." Dorothy was last and asked what she should do with her life. He said, "Please sign the guest book." End of interviews. So it was clear to me, I have to do it alone. It is my karma.

Back down the hill, we stopped at the incredible painted temple. Years before, when Rinzing was a student here, he had helped to paint the entrance, and the colors were still jewel bright: Malachite, Lapis Lazuli, ruby, topaz, and gold, gold, gold. A golden Buddha, twenty feet high gazed serenely into inner space and all the walls and pillars were sculpted

and freshly painted in rich tones. Dor and I sat in meditation for a time and I had an inward conversation with Christian Alexander and DG which set my heart singing, for they assured me of their guidance and I felt a generous measure of grace fill my heart and mind. So, walking to the settlement through the fields of flowers, breathing fresh mountain air and being serenaded by exotic bird-song was almost too lovely. The sounds from the carpet weaving shops added to the music of the day with the tip-tap-tapping of metal hammers to tamp the rows down tight, and the laughter of the women when we stepped inside to watch. I bought a green dragon on a red field, and Dorothy got a blue "coin" patterned ruglet (a little rug just right for sitting on.)

Upon returning to our little room of wall to wall beds in the Akashdeep Hotel, Dorothy, Rinzing and I meditated, prayed, pendulumed and otherwise divined as best we could what our next steps should be. That night I had a dream of a map of India with the destination of the search clearly marked. To find it, I had to make a gesture, curling my arm and hand around and saying, "here," which, when placed on the map, proved to be in Himachel Pradesh, beyond Simla and the Kulu Valley, along one of the escape routes the Tibetans used when fleeing the Chinese takeover.

Early next morning, I went up onto the roof to greet the sun and do a round of Tai Chi. As I turned and glided in the ecstatic grip of clear no-mind, and my vision expanded to encompass every magnitude, the contour of the surrounding hills unleashed the memories of my past incarnation here: Nataranja!

The Past Life of Nataranja

"I am a fat happy little baby girl, the darling of my father's heart. Ankle bells are jingling on my chubby little legs as I dance for him around the fountain in our courtyard garden – little Nataranja who loves to dance, even at two years old. And I grow, dancing and singing into girlhood and when the time comes, I am sent to the Temple school to learn the womanly arts and to continue sacred dance and sacred song.

In the temple compound are gardens, fountains, glades and pools, and the sunsets are gorgeous from the terrace. I love the teachings: stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. They are wonderful tales about the interactions of Gods with human beings and I long to be one of the fortunate ones. My revered teacher is an old, old man now and we love spending time together. He likes having me sit beside him, and he is my mentor, counseling patience, and the slow ripening of wisdom in time. But I have to leave this beautiful place. I am the oldest girl here now, and I must leave the Temple and am married to a fat merchant.

This overweight, unctuous man is not a Brahman, but of the merchant caste, but he is exceedingly wealthy. I am just one of many wives, his many acquisitions, not even his favorite. Dancing for him is a disgusting, salacious affair, no longer pure joy or a pathway to divine knowing. I want to continue my studies, so a young Brahmin tutor is hired and comes to my quarters. We stroll in the gardens whispering, laughing and philosophizing. On the far side of the fountain, he passionately gripped my hand and pulling me to his chest, kissed me, deep and ardent. Responding passion flamed in my body and we were discovered and betrayed by an envious slave. My pompous husband is furious, his pride compromised, and so, after a series of unspeakable acts done to me locked up in some dark place, I am thrown out of the

house in disgrace, a pariah. My Brahmin lover shut his door in my face, and old friends are afraid of the taint of scandal. My beloved old teacher is dead and I am alone.

So, I disappeared and sank into the unknown, becoming just another destitute, castless woman in a sprawling writhing city on the banks of the river. I am sweeping a wretched stretch of street, scavenging, when a fierce, charismatic man with flashing teeth and bright eyes saunters past. For two more days he passes me by, watching. Then he calls me into a darkened doorway, and we meet. At first, I help his thieving band by sweeping up near where they are going to rob and create diversions. Sometimes I “accidentally” knock a stall down, or push someone who is innocently shopping. I trip those who are trying to catch my friend, with my broom. Pretty soon, I am known too well in town so I join the robber band and my lover, up in the hills, in the caves by the river. The men go into the city to steal and then return to our camp where the fire is burning, food prepared and music and dance beguile the night. My lover is intensely vital, magnificently amorous, and I feel alive, gloriously, passionately, humanly alive for the first time in my life. Every step a dance, every word a song.

Until the day they do not return. I watched, hidden in the hills with the women and children, when other men come from the city. They burned and scattered everything left in the caves. We heard that the men were all killed. My life and love are ashes. After all the bloodshed and sorrow, I age quickly. There is really nothing left for me in life. I crawl along the bottom of society, becoming older, dirtier, more silent, almost dead. At last, I find myself washed up on the shore, huddled around the garbage fire, watching the gleaming light and shadows flicker over the faces of my nameless fellow derelicts making music in the perfumed night. Tabla and improvised drums are pattering frenzied rhythms into the humid air, and I sit there, a haggard, gray-haired, toothless old woman, holding my ragged sari to hide my worn-out body. A young woman begins to dance, and soon two or three others join her.

For so long, dancing has not existed for me, but tonight is different, I can almost feel my lovers arms around me. I hear temple bells ringing in my ears and the tabla pulls my feet into movement. Oh, God, oh, Goddess, I am dancing. An old bag of bones whirling and stamping, dipping and swaying, oblivious to all but the music. In frenzied ecstasy, I dance my life and death; everything I have suffered and enjoyed, all my hopes, dreams and despair. And when the dance is finished, so am I. To the applause and appreciation of the motley circle, kind mostly, watching from around the fire, I walk, wavering into the darkness. Beneath a big tree, near the ghats, in the lapping stillness of the waters edge, I lay my body down.

As I gaze into the leafy canopy, a strange light dawns and my mother, long since gone beckons to me. There are others with her in the golden-red light stretching their arms out lovingly to me. With a gentle joyous shake, I rise up to meet them, and for only a moment, look back at the ragged form lying still and small beneath the tree. Gods and Goddesses throng the sky now, Ganesh, Vishnu, Krishna, Sita, and my mother and father, lovers and friends. I am young again as I float up and up. My family is under the protection of Shiva, the god with hair in a top knot with the crescent moon in it. He is huge, sixty feet tall, and we just come up to his calves. We dart quickly through his legs and see that others are not as fortunate as we and are being crushed beneath his feet as he dances destruction for the wicked. I feel guided by hands pulling me along and surrender to the flow. Beyond the dancing giant, the light is golden and clear and soon I am moving out into midnight-blue space, or perhaps it is water. This is the lotus-land, for everywhere, like stars sprinkled in the sky, lotuses are gleaming. I am given a lotus to sleep in, and I rock gently on the black lake, resting and reviving in the fragrance of the flowers.”

Worlds are colliding now and lifetimes running concurrently, but it's time for breakfast and then packing to leave. But I knew that we must tarry in the hills, just a bit, so we hired an auto-rickshaw, and when I explained what we were looking for, he said, waggling his head, "No problem, You want the "Robber's Cave." So we went. And there along the river, up the nether bank were the caves, where once so long ago, in the morning of the world, I danced; ankle-bells tinkling to the rhythm of tabla and clapping hands, the flagrant adoration of my robber lover fanning my joy to ecstasy. Here were the walls once draped in rich carpet and stolen silk. Here was the river, today, gliding lazily through the red-rock canyon, with the swimming pools carved in the bones of the earth, polished smooth from centuries of monsoon. Yes, here was the place of my passion and my joy, until that bitter end still wailing in some recess of my soul. It's all still there! We left the hills taking only a huge crimson trumpet flower from the waters edge and memories from three thousand years ago to continue toward our next destination, the mystical "Here!"

Before we could travel to the spot, however, we had to take Dorothy up to Rishikesh and over the mountains to Tehri and beyond to meet with Sunderlal Bahaguna, the founder of the Chipko movement to save the trees in the Himalayas. So we bundled into another bus for yet another long ride. From Rishikesh at the foot of the mountains, the road goes switch-backing up the face of the Himalayas into the heights. At one lonely little road-side temple, the conductor got out of the bus, prayed fervently in the shrine for safe passage and brought a sacred coconut back which everyone on the bus shared. It was divinely delicious - and we did make it over the mountain. (No problem,)

In Tehri we were told, by Sunderlal's 'cousin', that he would be at his school in Silyara, or that he would be coming on the next bus to go to said school (no problem.) I was having a difficult time with this side trip. I knew it was very important for Dorothy's work, but my inner visions were becoming very disturbing, and I felt that time was crucial. I kept seeing the child in distress, very ill or perhaps even dying. Two angels were holding the child-spirit close to the body. It was as if he wanted to leave, but the angels kept him incarnated. The little body was still and suffering, and there was blood. I said to Dorothy, "I have had no bad feelings on this whole trip, except for now. Part of me is shrieking inside and I want to run to the little boy as fast as I can." She replied, "There are no mistakes." The truth of her words resonated deep within me and I found trust and even patience, once again.

That night we went to bed hungry. By the time we got into our hotel and out searching for food, everything was closed but one hovel. We tried, but the curry was sooo spicy hot, that neither Dor nor I could swallow even one bite. Walking home in the dark, I was hit in the face with a soccer ball some children were kicking down the street. I was shocked into vulnerability, and a painful, mundane sense of myself. But that night, as I sat in bed meditating in my blue shawl, Dor whispered, "You look like the Madonna." And I felt, for the

second time in my life like the Pieta; sorrowing over my wounded child. In the morning, it was obvious; from here Dor would follow her eco-path, and Rinzing and I would pursue the destiny of the mythical "here!" So we left Dorothy in Tehri, with plans for her to travel out even farther to Silyara to spend a few days at the school, interview Sunderlal, and then meet me in Dharamsala four or five days later.

Chapter 7 – The Turning Point

This was the turning point of the journey. Rinzing and I took the next bus down into the foothills and turned north to find the child. As soon as we set out, it began to sprinkle for the first time on the trip, and the bus had a flat tire. Once we were going again, it began to rain in earnest and by the time we reached the flatlands, the monsoon had hit. The windshield wipers on the bus were a dangerous joke, the thunder of giant drops on the roof was deafening as we joggled along. In a lull of the din, I said to Rinzing, "the elements are speaking about our journey." And Rinzing answered, "yes, and we will go as far as we can and do the best." Again I felt comforted to have such a friend beside me in this ineluctable task. And the unexpectedly violent weather was actually an affirmation. I believe that the child I had carried had a powerful connection to the forces of nature.

You see, my experience was that the child I had carried was the Karmapa, the head Tulku (consciously reincarnating individuality) of the Karma Kagyu sect. His first incarnation, so I was told, occurred one blustery day on the plains of Tibet when his mother was caught in a field during a hail storm. She ate one of the large hail-stones and conceived the first Karmapa. He had been very powerful and created miracles with rain, sun and all the elemental beings. So here we were traveling to find him and the elements began to speak.

This was the beginning of forty-eight hours of travel. We waited in the dead of night in Potankort with a few other weary, scraggly travelers, pushed on to Simla in the snow at dawn, and ran across town to the other bus station. We and the monkeys scampered through the light snow in the pink glow of dawn, then stood warming our hands around the usual early morning garbage fire till we got on the last bus out of Simla to continue deeper into the mountains. It was snowing in the higher altitudes and we all had to push the bus through one pass before dropping down into a sub-tropical valley with bananas growing. Up and down, over and around we drove wildly. I have an awful respect for the mountain bus drivers. The roads are often only one lane with hairpin turns, so the approved method of avoiding a head-on collision is a mighty blasting of the horn around all blind corners, the theory being that a buffer of noise is created which keeps the two vehicles from smashing into one another. (No problem.) Mercifully, it seemed to work. Of course on the one lanes, it's simply a matter of a game of 'chicken' to see who stops and who keeps on going, or perhaps there is a code in Hindi I was not aware of. For one long passage across a sheer rock wall, the road had been blasted out and was covered by an overhang of stone as wide as the road itself.

In Rampur, the summer home of Shiva, we had a short stop, then on to Chora, the last place that I could travel to without a special permit which the government never issues to anyone anyway. From my intuitions and dreams, crystal pendulums and gut feelings, I believed that from Chora we would possibly have to travel by yak or somehow to Rupi, a tiny hamlet a day's journey off the road, across another mountain.

I had always know that I couldn't do this whole 'thing' myself, and from the beginning had sought out people of integrity to keep me and my mission in their prayers and meditations, or for advise on special issues. The woman priest who had assured me that it was right and proper for a lay person to perform a baptism, had carefully instructed me and I carried the little packets of salt and ash with me at all times. And in India, we had been passed from one friendly helpful hand to another; from one fortunate experience to the next. In India, the veil between the worlds is permeable. Gurus and fantastic sadhus throng just beyond the edge of awareness. Ancient history is chuffed up in the golden dust that blankets the ruins and cities, and is taken in with every breath. The darshan (passing glance) of just about everybody on the streets can pierce the heart, awakening posthumous memories which sometimes screech and tear at the fabric of the reality of here and now. So in this multidimensional web of interconnectedness called India, I knew that something would happen. Now especially, the serendipity was needed.

I knew that there had to be some response to me, to us. Someone else needed to recognize intuitively their part in the completion of this adventure; ask us what we needed, offer us a ride, give some word that would lead us on to the next step – something. At every stop I was always greeted by children, curious at the sight of a large foreign women wearing purple and carrying a cumbersome pack and a big pink bag. Everyone wanted to polish their English or at least try it out, or communicate through sign language. We had met many amazing people, had fantastic conversations of all sorts and kinds, and generally shared lots of brief but intimate moments with a wide variety of people, and now again, something had to happen.

As we approached Chora, I could see that the whole village was hanging by threads and stilts onto the side of a snow-dusted ravine. The bus screeched to a halt and we got out, the driver having explained to Rinzing that the last bus back down to civilization would come by here in an hour and a half, or maybe two hours (no problem), but that we had better catch it because there was no place to stay in Chora and there had been a rash of theft and murder here recently.

So we stood on the road and assessed the situation. Not a single person was in sight. Way up the road, a lone figure crossed and re-crossed the pavement as through looking for something, a scroungy dog nested himself in the weeds uphill, and that was all. A few yards away was a street with huts on both sides and lots of fence and junk-barriers around them. Smoke rose hesitatingly from most chimneys, and as we walked along, we could hear

muffled clinking, and low talking inside. No one came to greet us. Nothing happened. Rinzing stuck his head into a house and asked if there was a sick child in the neighborhood, he talked for a bit in Nepalese and was told there were some sherpas up the road, but no one knew of any sick kids, and no one had traveled to Rupi for months. No one invited him in or came out to look. We walked down to the temple hanging over the abyss. No one was there. We knocked on doors, no one answered. Finally, our time was up. We had to get back up to the road and the last bus.

As we waited, I said to Rinzing, "I feel like Abraham when God said, 'kill me a son.' And it wasn't until Abraham had Isaac on the altar and had raised the sacrificial knife, that God said, 'Fine, I really just wanted to see if you would obey me.' Well, I have obeyed. I have done the very best I could. I have prayed, and received and surrendered and done. I have followed the call of the Divine half way across the world and what I thought I needed to do is not it at all. All this time I thought I came to baptize a child, to comfort and assure the spirit that all is well in life, and that it is possible to keep the connection to the divine other-worlds while living in this one. But now I see the child dead. The toddler I watched grow from so far away is no longer on earth. His soul has been released. And I see another baby now." Rinzing said, "I have seen him, too."

The bus came and we went back to Rampur, found a warm hotel, and making love all night, conceived the child we both had visioned. I knew in the morning that I was pregnant. The world was in soft focus around the edges as we sat on the balcony looking out over the rocky river-bed and the Himalaya, snowy and grand. The swinging bridge over the river beckoned us into the gentle morning, so Rinzing and I and our spirit baby wandered through the quiet town (no noisy auto-rickshaws, only walking people and bicycles) I bought a black and white checked shawl, traditional in the Rampur valley. Rinzing asked some children the way to the swinging bridge, and Meena, Veena and little Satpu showed us the children's way through back alleys, a garden or two and down the rocky goat trail. The air was crystal clear and it felt like spring was coming to this mountain valley. The snow was melting up the mountain sides revealing new green.

When we left our Rampur sanctuary, and headed back down on the bus, my outlook completely changed. I had drunk India in through all my senses, avidly, almost voraciously. Now my attention was turned completely inward. Colors lost their brilliance, smells were disagreeable rather than unique, and sounds receded to background noise. There was no doubt about it. I was gravid. The mission was complete, but not as I had expected. (No problem.)

We arrived late in Simla and a Kashmiri porter helped us to a good hotel. The first one we tried would not accept us as they discriminated against racially mixed couples and especially Tibetans. (I still can't believe it!) The Kashmiri was waiting outside when we came out. I was indignantly dismayed, and we were both at a loss because it was now really late.

Being a minority too, the Kashmiri knew what to do and where to go, so guided us through the intricate byways of Simla with the light from his fire-lantern. He carried an old coffee can strung on wire that had a smoldering bit of charcoal in the bottom. By twirling the can, a couple of air holes punched near the bottom fanned the coals to flame, and he could warm his hands or light a cigarette or hunker down around his own little stove. Rinzing and I followed the swinging, glowing light through the darkness to just the right place; warm - against the snowy cold, and cozy - in the basement built into the hillside. Rinzing and the Kashmiri struck up an easy, momentary friendship – compassionate like minds. He disappeared into the night and fetched us ‘samosas’ which we ate, all bundled up in bed before sleep.

The monkeys chattering and scrabbling outside our window woke us up and by the time we ventured into the streets and pathways, the sun was high. We had the day ahead of us since the buses which would take us each our own separate ways didn’t leave until late afternoon. Simla, the summer quarters of the old British Raj, is piled up against very steep hills so most of the streets are endless stairs. Up and down, ducking through the narrow little side streets, we explored – talking, planning and wondering. We found a park at the top of the hill and I did a round of Tai Chi, centering and consecrating my inner self to the right way to accept these new developments. Rinzing and I sat in the sun and I talked about everything, reincarnation, karma, Buddha, Christ, this child, the meaning of evolution, destiny – the works. Dear Rinzing was a bit blown away, so many words (lots, probably which he did not know), so much to ponder. We parted at sunset. Rinzing to Delhi and work and I to go on to Dharamsala with promises to meet there in a few days.

Chapter 8 - Dharamsala

So I was alone in India with hundreds of miles to go before the next known haven. The all night buses stop at various little villages and chai stalls along the way, but I never could get away to pee, (there are no restrooms) because I had to keep the driver in view at all times. There was no pre-ordained time schedule that I could understand, so the bus left whenever the driver got back on and drove away. By 3 in the morning, there were only a few of us passengers still left, so almost everyone stretched out to sleep precariously and fitfully for the last crooked leg of the journey. We arrived in Dharamsala in the morning, and I caught the shuttle bus up to McCloud Ganj, the center of the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile.

I found the Green Hotel and got a lovely room with a view and 2 blankets and there is a warm shower and laundry in the next building over. I napped until mid-afternoon and then set out to find my old friend, the Amchoke Rimpoche at the Library. He welcomed me graciously and we both laughed, thinking of the “coincidence”. We talked round about for a while, somehow I was not ready to tell the whole story, but mentioned bits and pieces. I was embarrassed, to tell the truth about the recent turn of events. I liked being in his presence, though. It felt like home, like old friends meeting after a few years. He suggested that I run

up the hill to the Dalai Lama's secretary in charge of Western Affairs. I did, and ran into the French Buddhist nun who asked me to wait outside. So I sat among the geraniums and filled in the request form. And now I must wait and pray for an audience.

Back down to the Green, turning the massive, ornate prayer wheels as I passed through the center of the little enclave high on the hill. There are lots of Tibetan women shopkeepers here, striding along and talking boisterously with men, which is something I did not observe down in India. Now that I am aware of the Tibetan attitude of gender equality, it explains my sense of comfort and ease when interacting with Tibetans. The cultures are very different - Indian and Tibetan - which makes it especially precious and noble that the Indians have welcomed and given sanctuary to their persecuted neighbors.

The Green Hotel is the only other place, since our arrival at the Broadlands in Madras, that caters to western travelers. I'm hearing English with many accents: British, Australian, Southern U.S., and it's an international soiree at the restaurant for dinner. Dorothy will be joining me tomorrow, so I have time to meet all the motley inmates sharing a destiny moment at the Green Hotel. The Nepali with the turquoise ear-ring is a great cook and they serve an international cuisine here in this little out-of-the-way place: apple pie, and lemon-ginger tea, crepes, Omelets, samosas, curry, tupa and fried rice. Every night is party night at the Green.

The next day I woke up frozen cold! Come to find out, it's the five-blanket season but I only got two because the young woman thought I had a sleeping bag, which I did not. So it's hot lemon-ginger tea for me, and more! Blankets. And I bought the biggest, heaviest, woolliest sweater I could find and I sort of live in it now. It's like a walkable comforter or mobile bedding. Anyway I am warm. While lunching, I received a call from the Dalai Lama's secretary - I have an appointment at 5:30 tonight. So I bought embroidered boots and was measured for some warm pants on the way and arrived in some new finery, and on time to have a veiled conversation with the Dalai Lama's brother because he himself was ill and in seclusion. So, I just rambled aimlessly because I have been having the increasingly strong sense that this whole thing/mission/task/or whatever it could be called, is beyond most human understanding or intervention at this time. So I went back up the hill, wiser and sadder and feeling very alone.

Dor arrived that evening. I came downstairs for dinner and there at the desk was a frail little creature with a monstrous pack on her back. The person under the mound of baggage stumbled backwards like a beetle off-balanced, and I dashed forward to catch 'it', and 'it' was Dorothy. Or rather, what was left of her. She had had wonderful, fabulous adventures, one of which was being sick for days. I helped to de-back-pack her and we immediately went to dinner, as she had lost a little weight while we were separated and at 96 lbs., she didn't really have much she could afford to lose. Our usual table (mine and the other English speakers) was waiting, but someone was sitting in my chair. Dor and I looked down at her (I, miffed as she was in my accustomed place, and when traveling, there is little opportunity for

“habitual” or “accustomed” anything, and that chair represented stability and continuity to me, so I felt put out.) just as she was addressing a letter to “The Abode” in up-state New York. I went immediately (2 seconds or less) from miffed to delighted. The Abode is the Sufi center that Dorothy has visited for years, so here was a Sufi Sister joining us.

Back in our room after dinner, we bundled up in our five blankets each, for a good bout of sharing. At first, she was shocked when she heard my story, and then added that it made sense of the dreams she had while in Silyara. Dorothy is a practical powerhouse and great at conceptualizing, but is not usually a woman of visions, as such. But sick and feverish, convalescing in the mountains at Sunderlal’s ashram, she had hazy dreams and waking visions. She had ‘seen’ a vignette of a wounded little boy with blood flowing from his forehead to mine. And she had recalled the scene in Tehri just before we separated when I was praying and she felt the presence of the Madonna descend upon me. So in retrospect, everything was foreshadowed for her understanding also.

I was still waiting for a call from the Dalai Lama, should he be well and inclined to see me. And the next day Rinzing (a slightly tipsy Rinzing) joined us, I did not receive the call, and we all three kept a low, profile, recovering and catching up, hot showers and laundry. February 22 is Christian Alexander’s death-day, and Rinzing and I went visiting his friends in the Tibetan Children’s Village. We walked through the rhododendron forests around the shoulder of the mountain, and came to the school and settlement tucked into the ravine and spreading out into the mountain meadows. The Tibetan children are so intensely alive and curious and bright-eyed. They were playing games or working in the school yard, sweeping and raking. The scene was a beehive of activity, and when Rinzing and I walked in, dozens came running up, asking questions, joking and laughing. One woman friend had the chubbiest, most benignly serene little baby boy and I was allowed to hold him for a long time, remembering my own chubbiest, most benignly serene little boy of years ago. I was so happy. The Tibetan New Year was coming, so we went to the bakery workshop where a group of good-natured men were frying mountains of “donkey ears,” the traditional New Year's treat.

We decided to head up the mountain, it was such a lovely day. In a meadow just off the path, I did a round of Tai Chi, and Rinzing sat under a rhododendron tree and gazed across the vast valley below, all the way to the Ponga Dam in the misty distance, and watched me out of the corner of his eye. When I sat down beside him, he said, “I can’t move. My knees are melted.” Something of the energy of Tai Chi had penetrated to the marrow of his bones, and we just sat together for a long, content time before going on.

Farther up the mountain track, we discovered Rishi Bhawan a cluster of dilapidated old guest houses, and the only truly peaceful place I experienced in all of India. Once again we sat in tranquil contemplation, surrounded by the mountain stillness, a few bird calls and the far away tinkle of goat bells rising up from the village like bubbles of sound that popped in our ears. On the way home, we stopped at the ‘cathedral’ temple and met a friend of

Rinzing's. We walked up to McCloud Ganj together, stopping at a chai stall, and Rinzing poured the whole story out to his friend, in Tibetan, so I just smiled and nodded when he looked my way. In the end, he offered to help any way he could. So feeling satisfied and excited for the future, (maybe we could buy Rishi Bhawan and have a wonderful guesthouse and conference center, or an import/export company, etc. ambitious etc.), we returned to Dorothy and the Green.

She had lain in bed the whole day recovering, and when we came back home to our cold little room, she had new visions and ideas to share with us. She said that we needed a ceremony to honor our deed, not a baptism as had been planned, but something more like a marriage in the spirit. My heart leapt with gratitude. Oh, yes, yes. This whole inexplicable experience must be marked with honor. This mystifying new complication and unforeseen turn of inexorable events should be sanctified and acknowledged in it's awful holiness. And it was clear where this would take place: Rishi Bhawan. So we planned to return tomorrow, and invite our Sufi friend Maat to be a witness.

When everything was settled, Dor was ready to venture out into the world, so we went to the Kailash Hotel (famous for it's wines, though neither Dor nor I drink) and had a delicious supper. The dining room was a large second-story hall painted the brilliant blue of Tibetan skies, and later with only a few lingering guests, the cooks turned the music up high: way high. There was nothing to do but dance. So Rinzing and I did, gloriously did. They were playing old rock and roll: Cream, and John Mayall, and The Grateful Dead, and we danced the night to total completion.

The next day it was raining and snowing, windy and sunny in quick succession. I dressed for the occasion in borrowed finery: a white hand sewn hippie dress from the Australian friend, my Tibetan boots over leggings and pants (it was cold), my BIG sweater, Dorothy's scarf and I was ready. By noon we were able to walk up the hill in muddy sunshine. As soon as we got settled on the porch of one of the empty houses, and were about to begin speaking, the thunder rolled, lightning sparked through the tumultuous air and huge raindrops splatted down for two or three minutes, then stopped. It cleared up and the sun shone warmly.

Dorothy began, consecrating the union and sanctifying the child-to-be. I spoke the story briefly, so that it was part of the ceremony, assuring myself and all concerned that this was not a personal egoic action, but had its important beginnings in the spiritual world, and that I experienced myself as an instrument of a greater destiny, beyond my self or my personal karma. Then I consecrated the raising of this child-to-be to the Christ within, so that the soul could achieve the tasks chosen for this new life to come. Rinzing then said, "the God knows what is in my heart." At that moment, another loud clap of thunder and lightning rent the sky and hail stones the size of peas pounded down, rolling off the roofs and bouncing in the grass. When it stopped, Rinzing fetched a large hail-stone, and I ate it in memory of the

first incarnation so long ago and honoring the beginning of a new cycle.

Rinzing returned to Delhi, and I traveled on to Dharamsala, where I waited for Dorothy at the Green Hotel. When she arrived we settled down for a good bout of sharing. At first she was shocked when she heard my story, and then added that it made sense of the dreams she had while in Silyara. She had dreamed of a wounded child with blood flowing from his forehead to mine, and the night before we parted in Tehri she had watched me praying and said, "you look like the Madonna." So in retrospect, it was foreshadowed.

Rinzing joined us in a few days, and the two of us went visiting his old friends at the settlement and then we went exploring. We discovered Rishi Bhawan, a cluster of dilapidated old guest houses up the mountain track. It was the only truly peaceful place I experienced in all of India. We sat in silence for a long time, contemplating the future.

The next day Dorothy said we needed a ceremony to honor our deed, not a baptism as had been planned but a marriage in the spirit. We planned to return to Rishi Bhawan and invited the Sufi friend we had met to be a witness. On the appointed day, it was raining and snowing, windy and sunny in quick succession. By noon we were able to walk up the hill in muddy sunshine. As soon as we got settled on the porch of one of the empty houses, and were about to begin speaking, the thunder rolled, lightning sparked through the tumultuous air and huge raindrops splatted down for two or three minutes, then stopped. It cleared up and the sun shone warmly. Dorothy began, consecrating the union and sanctifying the child-to-be. I spoke the story briefly, so that it was part of the ceremony, assuring myself and all concerned that this was not a personal egoic action, but had its important beginnings in the spiritual world, and that I experienced myself as an instrument of a greater destiny, beyond my self or my personal karma. Then I consecrated the raising of this child-to-be to the Christ within, so that the soul could achieve the tasks chosen for this new life to come. Rinzing only said, "the God knows what is in my heart." At that moment, another loud clap of thunder and lightning rent the sky and hail stones the size of peas pounded down, rolling off the roofs and bouncing in the grass. When it stopped, Rinzing fetched a large hail-stone, and I ate it in memory of the first incarnation so long ago and honoring the beginning of a new cycle.

So there was a ceremony; there was a consecration and a commitment and a bridge built between earthly and spiritual consciousness, linking heaven and earth. It was witnessed by human and spiritual beings with refreshments (hail) served by the Elementals. So truly, the India saga came to its own fitting end. It's just a little more complicated than I had ever, even in my wildest moments, imagined. And the story continues, by nature it will go on.

That night Dor turned in early and Rinzing and I drifted out into a warm night. The wind was blowing warm from the south-west and the sky was clear and starry. We roamed the back streets of the settlement, stopping occasionally to chat with a glowing cigarette in the darkness. We stepped into peoples houses for Rinzing's brief exchanges, and ultimately found his friend, a nurse at the Delek hospital, who was on leave to have a baby. Her laughter

was so deep and genuine, and her belly shook so heartily, that I think she will have a very happy baby. So, late, late to bed and a most peaceful sleep.

For our last day in Dharamsala, we all: Dor, Rinzing, Maat, and I went back to the Tibetan Children's Village. We were on a euphoric holiday and it seemed that every word was witty, every view and sight - gorgeous, every connection - heaven sent. Around sunset, we went to the Temple and saw the pilgrims circumambulating the terrace, doing prostrations. Young people and ancient ones, falling to their knees, sliding their hands out in front as they touched their foreheads to the smooth stone floor, swinging their hands back to their sides, and rising up; to take one more step and do the same genuflection again, over and over, for hours at a time. The rhythm was hypnotic, and I entered a trance state with dancing skeletons, fantastic whirling, hopping, be-tasselled creatures and beautiful swaying maidens with dark, sloe eyes, grinning white teeth, and strings of clicking turquoise beads. And then my reverie was shattered by the conch, horns and cacophony of drums. The Black Hat Dance was beginning inside the temple so we stood at the doorway and watched the fantastic whirling, hopping, be-tasselled creature dancing in a huge black hat.

It was dark when we got to the 'Green' for supper, and everything tasted like kerosene. We sent stuff back, it was inedible, but the next servings were as bad. Ah, colliding realities. We left Dharamsala the next day, traveling by bus down to Potancort in the Punjab and then catching the crowded night train to Delhi. Rinzing and I lay in the luggage racks, holding hands across the compartment.

Chapter 9 – The Beginning of the End

Dor and I returned to the Roshan Villa, and Rinzing to his family, home and work. We had a few days to finish up everything we hadn't done yet, and made a pretty heroic try. Buying presents for everybody left on the list, seeing tree planting people, village rehabilitation experts, and university professors. We went into the labyrinthine old town slum to visit the Darga of Hazrat Inayat Khan (the mausoleum of the great Sufi saint), staffed by Dor's Sufi friends in the Hope Project which was an island of sanity in the wonderfully crazy Indian barios.

Rinzing and his friend T. Niyma came with us to dinner and plans were laid for a busy next day. Dorothy set out early with T. Niyma on his motor scooter to do the last odds and ends and I spent a last day with Rinzing. We were all scheduled to meet in the evening at the Darga to hear sacred Quawali music. Dor and T. Niyma never made it but Rinzing and I slipped into the courtyard early, and I meditated while the musicians set up, as it were. As soon as I closed my eyes, Hazrat Inayat Khan was 'in my face', smiling broadly. Oh, he was so beautiful: such liquid glowing eyes, such radiant skin, such beauty, I wept for joy. He said, "Music is a vehicle, ride it to the end. And (pause) every sound is music." Then he suggested

that I sing everyday at sunset. He does, so we could sing together. By that time the harmonium was clearing the air. The sustained monotone smoothed the aural snarls of the day and combed out the auras of everyone present, wiped the sound slate clean and set the stage.

The intricately nuanced singing that followed, transported me. It was a vehicle that carried my soul out into the stars and far-flung galaxies. And my body sitting here on earth, leaning back against the plastered wall of the courtyard which was slowly cooling down after the heat of the day – my body, listening with my ears, suddenly made a quantum leap. Each tone exploded in a different color up and down my spine. The music careened in Eastern intonation and embellishments up and down, round and around and I was a commensurate light show, a twinkling Christmas tree, a feast of lights, inside. I never knew when the concert actually ended, because the colors subsided gradually and by the time Rinzing and I were in the auto-rickshaw headed home, another experience assailed me.

We rode through a mid-night market with gleaming fruit stands and gaudy, cheap jewelry and trinket stalls, when suddenly and totally unexpectedly, the oranges were singing to me a steady “bloop, bloop, bloop in the middle range of F or G. Some long green beans were trilling grace notes up and down the scale and the superlatively red tomatoes toned a perfect sustained high C. A pile of yellow star- fruit- sort - of -things let out piercing, golden yelps, the dark green mottled, knobby jackfruit was grunting in the bass clef, while the last pale wilted bunch of colorless grapes just mumbled discontentedly among themselves. The deep blue and gold embroidered sari of a woman on the arm of a handsome young man, sang me a tender, yearning song. And down the block, the garish billboard advertising the latest Bollywood melodrama did an Indian equivalent of some sort of Broadway musical number – the oranges, purples and flaming reds blaring like a drunken brass ensemble. Then as we drove into the narrow dark neighborhood streets and home, the cacophony subsided, and I waited in the whispering afterglow of that incredible evening till at last all was dark and still, and then I was released into sleep.

We were invited to Rinzing's home for a Tibetan New Year celebration, to meet new friends and eat traditional foods. His wife, Tzering is a sweet and generous woman. She dressed Dorothy in a light green chupa (the classic Tibetan woman's dress) and since I am too big for any Tibetan clothes, she gave me a loose-flowing Indian cocoon wrap of sparkle-threaded crimson. Tzering and Rinzing's beautiful little girl, Denzing, finally warmed up to me, so I played all the baby games with her that I had played with my own children (patty-cake, Walk Around the Garden, etc,) and she loved them. I learned some new cat's cradle maneuvers from a young boy, Dorothy taught everyone a Sufi dance and we played 'trust' games in a close circle, and then “oh, no, it's only rock and roll, but I like it.”

Six of us squeezed into a four person - max auto-rickshaw, and we rattled our way to a dance hall with strobe lights, loud music, lots of smoke, and sweaty dancers. So of course, we

jumped right in, at one point, all locking arms and run-dancing in circles, laughing hysterically.

We were timing this perfectly, so Dor and Rinzing and I rushed back to his house, a quick shower, and Dor and I taxied out to the airport in a flurry of goodbyes. However, Alitalia Airlines of India had way overbooked the flight and since we were only 'on time,' we got bumped to the next day. The airline put us up in a 5-star hotel, and at 4:00 in the morning, I finally got into a hot bath – and woke up hours later, ice cold with the dawn's light. I spent the morning weeping in Dorothy's arms. We called Rinzing and T. Niyma and they were to come for one last dinner here at our elegant hotel. So Dor and I set off to find the elephants.

Riding an elephant was the only thing on our India wish list that we had not yet done, so we figured that we had been given this extra day to do just that. We went to the zoo, but no riding the elephants. We climbed up into the ruins of an old palace, and had a panoramic view of New and Old Delhi. We walked everywhere, saw lots of the city parks and museums, but no elephants. As the sun was getting low, we hailed an auto-rickshaw, and were haggling about the price when I heard a tinkling, or rather clang/chiming of big brass bells, and looking up, there waiting for the traffic light along with the Rajdoots, Jitney buses, auto and bicycle rickshaws, stood the most splendid, bejeweled and painted ELEPHANT. So we let the rickshaw man go and hailed the passing elephant with the help of an amused passer by, who seemed to know what to do.

Ah, we were in wish-fulfilling heaven. The mahout told the elephant to kneel before us, and holding his tail so we could step on it, he motioned Dor and I to ascend. She nimbly scrambled up and I followed suit (just not so nimbly) and we sat in the metal howdah on top, our legs dangling down the elephant's sides, laughing till we cried. Perfect. The local populace laughed with us too, as we swayed down the street, in the thick, sweet, haze of evening, laughing and waving. Then we continued out of town and we stopped laughing and began to worry about missing another plane. Finally, we began to protest, and at last the mahout turned the elephant down a railroad track and stopped. We paid extra baksheesh, 20 rupee notes each, in the elephants probing trunk before we were helped down. But we made it. We literally ran back to civilization, caught a rickshaw and made it back to the hotel for a dinner buffet with Rinzing and T. Niyma, valiant talk of the future, and sad hearts when we flew away.

Chapter 10 – Home Again

So, the India saga had come to its own fitting end. (No problem.) I was returning to my family and my former life. But, I was not the same woman who had left only six weeks ago and I was returning with news I thought might be problematical – true (Big Problem.) Not only that, but the airline had promised to wire my family back home and inform them that I

would be arriving a day later, so they would not worry: but they did not. My beloved daughters and David came from miles away, across Puget sound on the ferry, only to wait in growing alarm for a couple of hours, watching everybody get off the planes from India, except their mother and Dorothy. We were flown into Vancouver the next day and only David was there to pick us up. He was in terrible shape despite my meditations and prayers for him. He is psychically sensitive and had been thrown into inner chaos this whole time. He had never really liked Dorothy so the three of us had an uncommunicative long ride to Seattle.

When David and I had our first moment alone, he said, "I've been faithful, have you?" Not exactly the way I would have brought the subject up, but there we were. He, of course, felt betrayed, not seeing the deeper, spiritual aspects of the situation. I felt abandoned and unsupported. Everything seemed so cold and indifferent. I had fallen from grace. In India, every aspect of life is born, lives and dies in intimate communion with the spiritual worlds: the architecture, music, culture, food, clothing and ornament. All have steeped for centuries in spiritual consciousness. In America, it's different, suffice it to say. In India, although I didn't tell the story to many, each one understood and accepted my reality as being valid. In America, even my husband didn't really understand, and it was a bitter homecoming. My darling daughters were just happy to have their old mom back. There was nothing to be done, but try to assume some sort of normal daily existence again, which we did in an uneasy truce.

We settled in Port Townsend, the last hippie holdout, and a charming little town perched along the bluffs and gentle slopes of a narrow peninsula surrounded by water on three sides. I had morning sickness and was grateful for long walks, fresh air, and beautiful vistas. Dorothy settled back into her work and home in Seattle. Our bond was mutually strong and we needed each other to overcome the culture shock. So she ferried over every week-end to spend time with me and the girls. We had been home about a month when one Sunday, we both had terrible news. Dorothy received a call that her mother had just died in a small plane crash. She was co-piloting with a friend when they failed to gain the proper altitude and crashed into some wires. She died instantly. Dear Dorothy was devastated. Now, I held her as she shook and cried. That same day, I had a miscarriage. It was a day of blood and death.

Now, this miscarriage I could not understand. Everything to this point, I had been able to cognize, understand or otherwise intuit. But this? I could not understand it. Now I felt like Joan of Arc, lead to adventure and victory, the voices loud and strong and then: it suddenly got very quiet. My way was no longer clear, my knowing just shut down. "What does this all mean?" I screamed inside at the silence. However, things at home relaxed a bit, seeing as now neither David nor I need face the consequence of my "spiritual" behavior. But I was so very sad. "What is this all about?" I sobbed into the stillness. What had it all meant? How was D.G., my child, to fulfill the destiny he and Christ had arranged for him? How would the

light be shed and spread? Why had I just gone through alllll that? There was no answer, only an echoing emptiness to which I ultimately surrendered and in which I found the freedom to accept, "What was - has been; what is - is; what will be - will be." I found my psychic footing, regained my inner balance and took up my life and duties once again.

A few days later, in my morning mediation, I realized that I was holding the spirit baby – the plump, happy little baby boy that Rinzing and I had spiritually seen and conceived. The etheric child was still with me. Each day he grew, expanding bigger and bigger, as though he was being blown up like a big balloon. Until finally, a week later, I was holding a baby as big as an elephant. I didn't know what to do with this huge etheric baby, so one morning in meditative desperation, I called to Christian Alexander and said, "Here, you take him. Do something." And I watched as Christian carried the laughing giant baby, as light as air, over to the Christ, who held him gently in his arms until he returned with a sigh to normal size. Christ turned and thanked me, and the baby gave me the most tender, loving smile. My heart burst with love, my vision encompassed all time and space, and I finally understood what had happened.

D.G. had indeed incarnated as a sherpa boy up in a lonely mountain valley, probably somewhere between Chora and Rupi, and lived a normal life which had its share of suffering and pain, because he was slightly handicapped at birth. Now because of this incarnation, he knew intimately what a common human life was like, and he found little comfort in the old, dogmatic forms of religion, as they have hardened into conservative, bureaucratic molds and mindless repetitions, which squeeze the life out of priest and layperson alike. This brief incarnation in India was for him, an object lesson in what needs enlightening. D.G. could not in those circumstances bring the new light of the spirit Christ anywhere, though he learned a lot about darkness, sadness, yearning and pain. Armed with that knowledge, so sorely won, he now needed to go through the life after death journey with the Christ, see the changes that have evolved over time, and learn the appropriate way to resolve personal karma in the spiritual world. He now had the personal karma of his three-year lifetime to work with. That was enough for him to learn the lessons and accrue karma, and then it was time to transcend, die, and move on.

However, if I had not been there in Rampur to take his spirit in conception, he would have been caught on the wheel of unenlightened incarnations, lost all of the accumulated wisdom of his seventeen former incarnations, and reincarnated immediately into another ordinary life in India. I was there, I received the soul again, and since having an immediate incarnation was not his goal, he 'aborted' this possible life (I had the miscarriage) so that he could go with Christ on the journey after death into the planets and stars, and walk the present path of transformation and evolution for that painful little life. In this way, he would experience and understand the total human condition, in life and in death.

For a whole year, every time I looked in to see how D.G. was doing, I perceived him as

a child with Christ, learning about the planetary and cosmic ramifications of His deed on Golgotha of overcoming death, and how the Christ has allied his forces of life and consciousness with Gaia, the seasons, plants, animals, elementals and human evolution. D.G. saw the unfolding of a whole year from the spiritual world, with senses magnified, and intuitive knowledge of the meaning behind all things. Easter was especially moving for Dorje because of his direct relationship with the elemental forces of nature. As he watched the rising sun vivify the revolving earth on Easter morning, he saw the power of the light he had sought so long ago – the light that began our relationship as well – the light of the risen Christ.

Then for a while, things were quiet and my meditations were pleasantly mundane, until one day Dorje came to me during my morning prayers. He was a mature spirit now, not a baby, not a child, but a strong young man dressed in dark blue robes, with a clear and radiant face. He bowed and addressed me respectfully as 'Mother,' and then hand in hand, he led me to a beautiful garden. Siberian irises were blooming near a pool of transparently pure water, the grass was green on the little undulating hills, and we sat on warm, smooth stones and shared.

He resides in the astral world of the Moon sphere, and has a school in this garden for the souls of the dead. There he teaches about the Christ and the new 'light,' to those souls who, because of their beliefs and religious practices, do not move farther into the spirit world but are held close to the earth, getting no further than the moon, the first stop, as it were, in kamaloka. Because of esoteric happenings in the 14th century, Buddha exists in the Mars sphere, working to pacify and gentle the Mars influence on earth life. The souls who remain so close to the earth and reincarnate immediately do not experience the Buddha's energy field as powerfully and completely as they could if the souls were to travel through Mars. In Dorje's school, moon-bound souls have the opportunity to experience the Cosmic Christ and learn about the potential journey of the soul out through the planets and to the stars and galaxies. They then may choose the further journey at the graduation of Dorje's school, or after the next lifetime, they will certainly have the opportunity.

I visit the garden school periodically and a few years ago, on Christian's death day, he and I joined Dorje at the garden pool and had a spiritual picnic. I sat on the living green grass with my two spirit sons, as we reminisced about the journey to India and laughed and laughed, because, in spite of (or because of) all those exploits over all those years, Dorje did achieve his goal. He found the light and it embraced him and now he shows the way to others. I'm glad. It just didn't happen at all like I imagined – or him either, for that matter.

Epilogue

So my life fell apart. David divorced me and I went on to raise the three girls alone.

Dorothy and I came together to rear them and she bought Kindermeadow, a 4 ½ acre rambling, shambling place where we spent many happy years.

It was almost fifteen years later that the call came again, "Something is happening. Find out what is going on." So I did the modern thing, and goggled up "Karmapa" What I found, astonished me greatly. There were two Karmapas – two camps and an insurmountable schism/abyss between the two. I looked at the photos of them both – Thrinly, found by the Sharmapa and his cohort; and Urgen, discovered by Tai Sito and his lamas. And although I had been attracted and sympathetic to Tai Sito, the lineage holder, rather than to the Sharmapa, I felt drawn to Thrinly.

As it happened, in 2000, I was in the last throes of writing my Master's thesis, *Lucid Death: the Journey of the Soul Between Death and Rebirth, from the Esoteric Western and Tibetan Buddhist Points of View*. But the call to India was clear. "Find out what is happening!" So, I decided to travel to India once again to do a last bit of hypnotherapy research for the thesis. My plan was to do sessions with Buddhists and Hindus in the East, with a minimum of Western influence. I traveled to Germany for a time with my daughters. D'aria Rose and Athena were staying in Berlin with Mariko for a few months, so we all were together there. D'aria and I flew to Delhi and planned a month of traveling up to Kalimpong where Thrinly was living. She left as planned in a month, but I stayed on for another 3 months, doing the hypnotherapy sessions and training teachers in Waldorf methods at ten different boarding schools in the hill country of India and Sikkim. And trying to have a decent conversation with the young Karmapa.

The short version of the story is: I did not succeed in talking with the Karmapa in Kalimpong. The Sharmapa and a number of older lamas were on constant guard. He can have no real conversation with anyone. He is too young yet. In time, he will be able to converse as appropriate by his own free will. Perhaps I will return to India to do so. The task has not come to its end yet. Whatever happens, I have had my experiences and accomplished the tasks given to me so far to the best of my ability at the time. Should I be of further service, I await notification.

The following two 'bits' are from my 2002 journals. Dorje is in my daily meditations, but these two entries were crucial to my understanding of the situation from the spiritual world's point of view.

Wednesday, September 18, 2002 – Bellevue , Washington

I meditated at the lake today in the beauty of nature. I posed the question, "How could there be two Karmapas, and how does the one I carried twice, fit in the the picture?" The answer that I received made sense. "Its like in the movie *Little Buddha* where there were three incarnations of one lama. They are all aspects of the original Karmapa and they should be able to work together." That is how it feels to me, too. The Karmapa in Dharamsala is heavy and intense, from the tiny fragment I saw of him in the Maitreya Project video, and he feels very powerful when I envision him. The Diamond Way's Karmapa, who I met in Kalimpong,

is light and bright, and I feel a clarity of mind possible in him. The third aspect/individuality went through the intrauterine experience with me and made the connection to Christ and the new light. He then lived two or three years as a handicapped child in India, and then a short intrauterine few weeks with me again, and now has a school in the spiritual world – in kamaloca. Those three aspects are the willing, the thinking and the feeling. Urgen in Dharamsala personifies the will/action aspect. Thrinly in Kalimpong personifies the thinking aspect. Dorje in the spiritual worlds has had his heart opened by Christ and the new light and can influence the feelings and emotions of the other two from the spiritual worlds. If they three would work together, they would be a powerful force for good. As it is, the two on earth have been the cause of division and death in Buddhism.

That's where I begin to feel the call again and want to run (fly, really) to India and talk to the two young men. Can it happen? Am I the present incarnated being who can mediate between the two living Karmapas and keep the consciousness of the heart strong in the matters that arise? I would like to try. Working together is key. "When two or more are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." said Christ. Dorje could bring that energy in to the interactions of the two incarnated parts of himself, the two Karmapas – should they choose to come together.

Friday, September 27, 2002 – Bellevue, Washington

This final entry describes an experience I had when relating to the Karmapas in the spiritual world. There has been a lot of cleaning and clearing of entities of all sorts and kinds from all levels of the spiritual worlds for a while now. Hopefully, this transformation will make it easier for the human beings involved in the karmapa issue to make better choices and perhaps even mend the breach.

I was lying in the grass when I was called into the spiritual world by Dorje and Christian because, as they said, "a lot is happening right now." And indeed, a lot was happening. The Sharma Rinpoche was there and in a kerfuffle, wanting to know what I have been up to, and what he needs to do about it. I assured him that I have been in hiding and on retreat all this time, so no one really knows the story yet. I am only wanting and ready to do what is right and good and needful. And we must all figure out what that is. Dorje called the other two incarnated Karmapas and Thrinly was there already, just very quietly in the background. Urgen came but looked doubtful and was not sure about this whole thing at all.

We were in a long avenue of seated living statues of all the karmapas – eighteen in all. I started walking down the line, beginning from the first and said to him, "wasn't that wonderful about the hailstones?" and he laughed and said, "Perfect!" He cupped my face in his hands very lovingly and blessed me. As I continued down the line, I stopped and pointed up by the 3rd or 4th, because the little old lama who had stood at Dorje's feet when he lay on the altar so many years ago, was peeking between them. I ran towards him and he played hide- and-seek for a few moments, but really we were very glad to see one another again. Someone said that his name was "Tweak." It's him, all over. I asked who he was and he said,

"I am maybe Mani or Manu, Gompopa or Marpa. Whoever, I am one of the guiding spirits of the Karma Kagyu Lineage."

At that point, a very large figure began to loom up from behind the seated karmapas. I asked, "Who are you?" and he said loudly, "Lord of the Sky!" I asked the spiritual world, "What does he want and what does he do?" and heard, "He is a Dynamis and he does 'power'." Because he was so intense and dark and threatening, I asked him if he was a fallen Dynamis. He said, "Yes, you might say that." He also wants the power of the light. So I said, "If you use the power of the light for selfish purposes, then it becomes the shadow of its former self. Use of the light must be for those you serve – the members of Buddhism and those in your care who are embodied." He doesn't feel that he should serve his body or any who are embodied, even though all the Karma Kagyu Buddhists are like the cells or atoms of his body. Pushing a little harder, I said, "Would you bow to the light?" and a fierce face pressed close to mine and sneered, "I don't bow to my body, light or to anything else."

The seated karmapas all arose and came over to the side of the avenue where I was standing. All this talk of 'light' had aroused their interest because they have been looking for the light all these many incarnations. It was the destiny of the 17th to be born when Christ was able to be seen in the etheric body of the earth. He was the one to 'get' the light. But now that the 17th Karmapa has met the evolutionary force of the Christ-light, he knows that it is within each conscious person.

All the incarnations of the Karmapas said that they were committed to stand with Dorje and the light. Then Dorje and I called on Christ to come and help, and St Michael came striding into the center of the gathering, from the future. The Lord of the Sky glowered and would not accede to St Michael or the light of Christ. The assembled group was asked, "What should happen now?" Everyone was talking for a while and it became clear, that no one wanted the dark Dynamis' influence any longer. I suggested that he be removed from earth and the lower spiritual worlds – etheric and astral – and be brought to a place where he can continue his own higher evolution. Agreement was unanimous. The old contract was broken, invalidated, no longer viable. All vows were rescinded, and there is no need for any further connection. The Lord of the Sky has no real ties to earth and can move onward and upward. The process will continue and be finished by Michaelmas.

Even though I was not able to connect with the Karmapa in life, it is still possible to work together in the spiritual worlds. I'm glad. And, there will be more, I'm sure.

***** The End for Now *****

Biography

Kienda (Betruë) Valbracht, IMA Thanatology, is a Clinical Hypnotherapist and a SIDS mother. The death of her infant son, Christian Alexander, impelled her into an exploration of Death's domain, culminating in her published book: *Lucid Death: Conscious Journeys Beyond the Threshold*, (available from her web site www.cosmicodyssey.info Barnes & Noble, or Amazon.) A number of monographs of the latest adventures in the spiritual worlds are available to download from her web-site, as well as her blog: *Conversations with Edgar Mitchell and the Interstellar Team*.

Kienda is a Spiritual Scientist, safely navigating the spiritual worlds, researching karma and reincarnation, the journey of the soul between death and rebirth, and other spiritually oriented issues. She also facilitates individual Alchemical Hypnotherapy sessions (Facilitated Spiritual Experiences) which are then metamorphosed into practical wisdom for a richer, more effective, conscious life in the present.

For information on talks and workshops:

- ***The Journey of the Soul Between Death and Rebirth**
- ***Reincarnation and Karma**
- ***A Conceptual Matrix of the Cosmos – Humanity's Place in Time and Space**
- ***Meditative Practices Leading to Spiritual Investigation**
- ***The Evolution of Consciousness**
- ***The Extra-Terrestrial Issue**
- ***The Deeds of Christ and the Redemption of Lucifer**
- ***Radiation and the Elemental World**
- ***Transformation of the Reptilian Brain-Stem to the Dragon of Higher Consciousness**

and many others, with which to understand the human condition in the greater design of the evolution of consciousness, both individually and universally,

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