

Kapala Press

Confession Series: No. 3



A SPY IN THE HOUSE OF BUDDHAMIND

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Jampa Dorje



A SPY IN THE HOUSE
OF BUDDHAMIND
Jampa Dorje

Kapala Press 2020 Ellensburg

In the outhouse in Iowa on our family farm
there was a Sears + Roebuck catalog to wispewith
fun to read during the process

check out the ladies' undergarments
and the hand tool department

(oh, that sounds rude!) just whiling away the
TIME... AS... GREAT TAO, the standard of Heaven —

time as "event" time as "flow" time as "smudge"
time as "money" time as "suchness"... THE SAME TIME...

as beatific expression as musical beat as beat flat
by "Beatnik" (a sign of those times)

When the Sears + Roebuck catalog was depleted
it was back to those sorry corn cobs
not much to "read" there — spacetime as "decay"

The movement of returning to practice...
PRAXIS IN CONTRAST TO THEORY

Time as "phase", in the movement of $i \rightarrow tu$

I had my ^{nihilist} nihilist phase = ^{leave it this time}
My response to everyone was
"Goshit in your hat!"
I'm glad I've moved beyond that

I had my eternalist phase =
My response to everyone was
"Repent, or be damned to hell!"
Glad to have evolved here, as well



plan for a perpetual
motion machine

Hoping I'm not stuck in the middle ground
where what goes around comes around
I apologize for my past childishness =
May all beings find happiness, oh, yes!



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"You can bet I won't need your cow to plow just yet"

DISCIPLINE (MORALITY)

Easier to maintain than to rebuild from scratch
Climbing from the base of the mountain
is easier than from a long distance away
The problem seems to be
once you've started the climb
will there be a sherpa to carry the baggage?

AND HOW TO BEGIN?

The first step is the hardest, I've heard
Where does the first step come from?
if from now here, how is it born?
if from somewhere, it's already a done deal
basic Buddhist metaphysics

One thing is for sure
if it's taking a crap
no one can do it for you

Good to have a supply of tissue on hand, for whatever...

I asked for 4 rolls; I got one
I asked for 2 rolls; I got none
I asked for 1 roll; also, none
This is not a poem —
it's a request for toilet paper!
If I ask for 7 rolls
- would I get 3?
basic Buddhist numerology

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

A man sets out to draw the world. As the years go by, he populates a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses, and individuals. A short time before he dies, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines traces the lineaments of his own face.

—Jorge Luis Borges THE MAKER, 1960

Am I serious about confessing? Or is my ego on a fishing expedition into the waters of my subconscious, into the misty air of my musings, into the clear light of unmanifest fire of my ordinary mind, over the rocks of contradiction and into the soil of a good read,—and are these conceptual perambulations up to the bar of Truth? Yes, I answer to myself. If I feel the catharsis of confession, then that is the level of the bar. Perhaps, dear reader, these pitiful acts of purgation cannot be served as nectar on the altar of repentance, but please receive them as dedicated to Truth, if not completely true in themselves.

What you see is what you get,

In this sense, my features

Reflected in a mirror or a cup,

My eyes looking back at you.

A mystery here,

What I give you is the strangeness of my face.

CONTENTS

Life with Machig	55
A Devil Sits under the Ass of Sophia	62
Portraits of Vajrasattva in Yabyum	64
Note to Lawrence	67
"You can bet..." journal poem	68

NOTE TO LAWRENCE

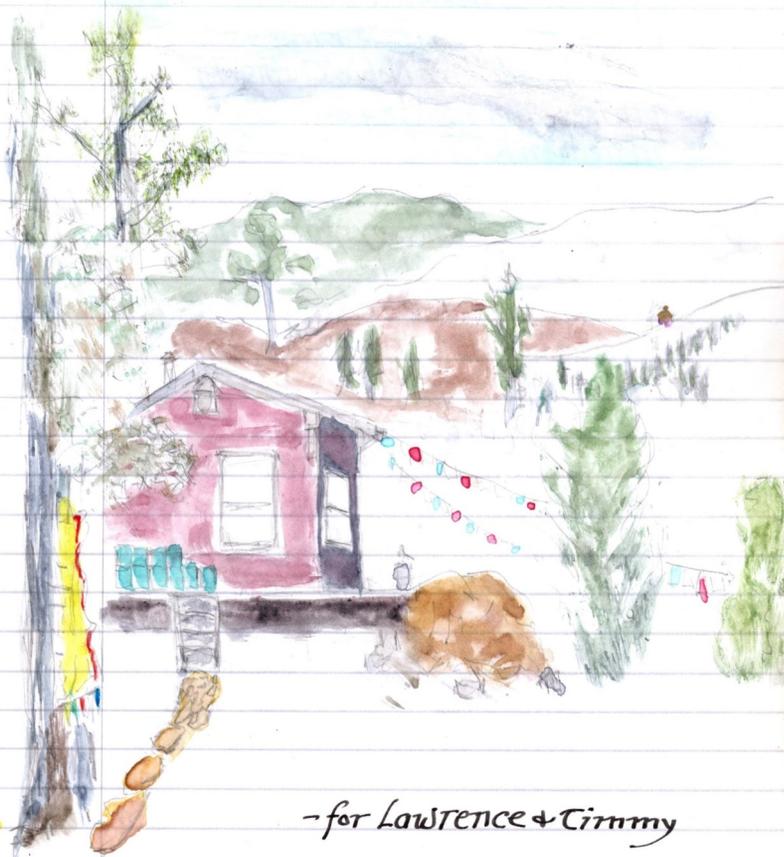
Would it be possible to move the old outhouse or build a new one closer to the cabin? Not likely, I know, this late in the season, but let it be known the hole is reaching full capacity, its "contents" at ground level.

The structure through but hopefully can be done. A future (with a fine Archelucta be near the below the but, of course, will be by the of the and calculations of its driver. ^{clever}



Please put my request on the Tara Mandala retreat cabin agenda, so that my request can be considered before the whirlwind of activity begins next year.

Knock it back with a stick, but an ominous stalagmite of shit is ever-approaching.



-for Lawrence & Timmy

Chinese hermits, a thousand years ago
heard woodchoppers in the valley
below their caves on Cold Mountain

Jampa hears your chainsaws buzz
in the meadow below Luminous Peak
everything else, pretty much the same

LIFE WITH MACHIG

My name is Topabhadra. My friends call me Topa. Suffice it to say I was born in India. Now, I live in Tibet among the red-faced cannibals. I'm married to Machig Labdrön. That's her over there on her meditation rug. She's been in Samhadi for three days.

We were talking about childcare, and she just went off. She's got a knack for deep meditation, always has. When we first met, we'd go for a walk, and we might be talking very seriously about the Dharma, and in mid-sentence she'd halt and get this faraway look in her eyes, and that would be that for our walk. I'd sit down and ^{do} some practice, maybe an hour or two; still no sign of Machig coming around; so, I would leave her and go home — this is what she had instructed me to do.

Kind of wierd, to leave your date standing on a trail — stood up, so to speak — but she would eventually come out of her Samhadi and return home, maybe that night or the next day. She would ^{not} even mention it; she'd pick up the topic of our conversation, as if there'd never been an interruption.

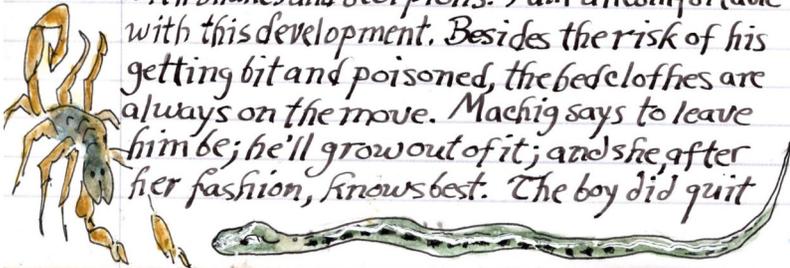
After the children were born — we have three, two boys and a girl — I took it upon myself to be the main caregiver. Machig would nurse them, but I'd do the rest.

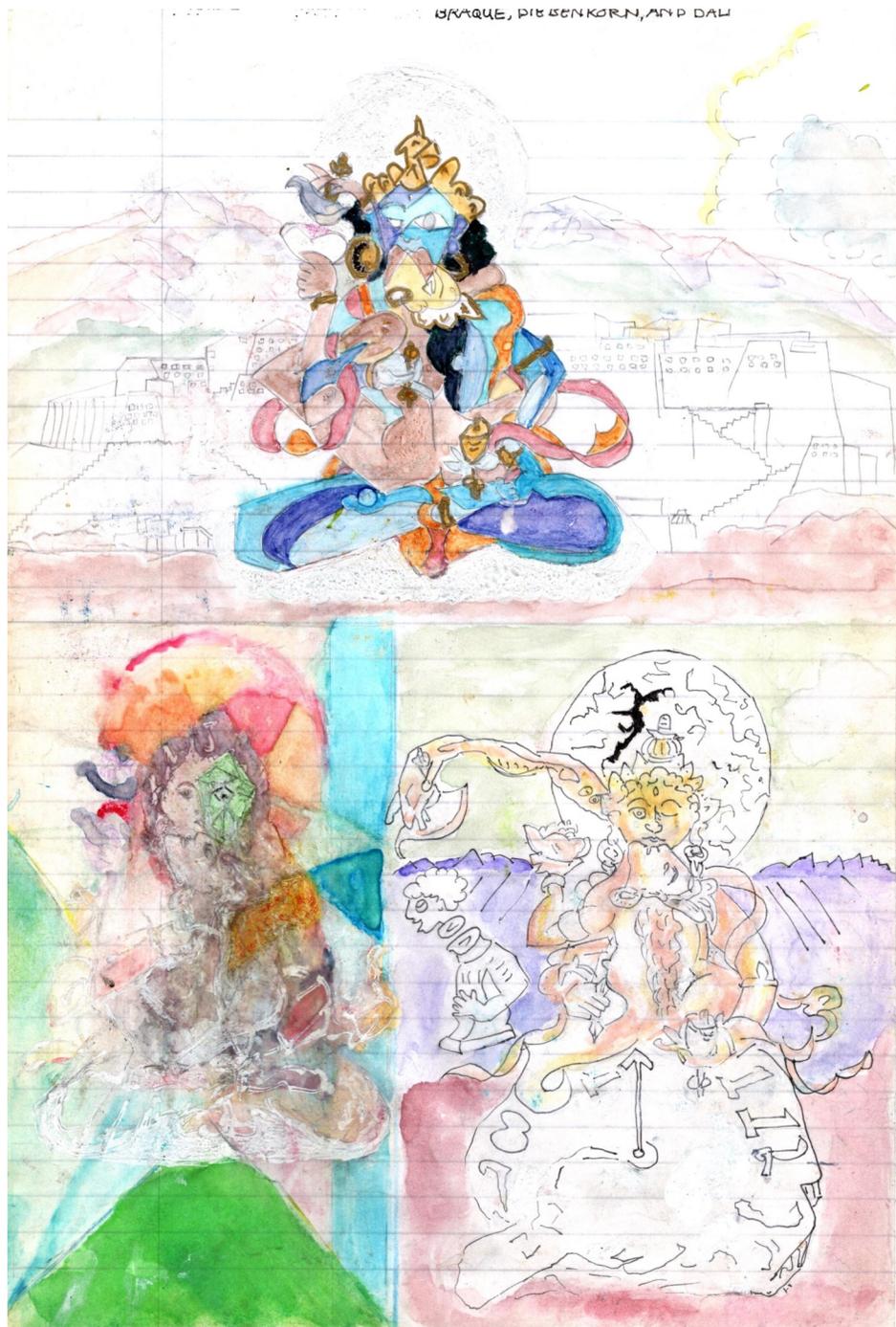
I mean, she might just "take off" and drop the baby, or one of the kids might crawl out the door and fall down a ravine, and Machig would be none the wiser — until she returned; and then she'd say something like, "Have you seen the baby? She was right here." Sure, two days ago. I'm a yogi, myself, and I understand these things; but when you are raising children, there are certain conditions, certain limits. But for Machig, no limits.

My worries about the children have increased as they've gotten older. The other night I walked in on Tanyon, our oldest son, playing dice with a demon. It was only Snarf; he's harmless enough, one of the Gandaharvas, politely known as odor-eaters. However, he's uncouth, and I don't take with gambling because it distorts the workings of cause and effect.

And, today, I saw our daughter, Laduma, being dressed by the Propitious Goddess of Long Life, Tserinma, in a costume of bone ornaments. I asked, "What is that she's wearing?" And the reply, "Oh, it's just a cheap knockoff of an outfit designed by Vajrayogini."

All this is to be expected, I guess, but our second son, Drubsje, has taken to sleeping with snakes and scorpions. I am uncomfortable with this development. Besides the risk of his getting bit and poisoned, the bedclothes are always on the move. Machig says to leave him be; he'll grow out of it; and she, after her fashion, knows best. The boy did quit





pooping in his chuba after Machig made him eat a momo filled with one of his turds.

Machig goes out to charnel grounds at night with the most loathsome and despicable characters and comes home at daybreak. It's bad enough I can smell chang on her breath, but she wants these phantoms to live with us.

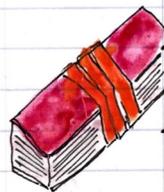
They don't take up any room, really, but they do a half-assed job of keeping up appearances when our human friends stop by to visit. If you walk behind one of these monsters, you can see they are only marginally tucked into the skins they've flayed to create their masks. They've got tentacles sticking out of their sleeves, gills behind their ears, or dangling clusters of nodular growths around their lips.*

Ok, I'm just picking lint. (One of my grandmother's favorite expressions.) This is Machig's work. Sure, there was a time when we had a steady income.

She made good money reading the *Prajna Paramita Sutra* professionally. She had patrons; but once we came together, even though she had permission from her lama, people gossiped about her being a fallen nun. So, we had to move.

Whatever the task at hand, Machig goes at it like she's killing snakes. (Another

* thank you, Borges, for that phrase ("Hakim, the Masked Dyer of Merv"). -J.D.





of my grandmother's expressions and not a very compassionate one. Although she was a devout Buddhist, my grandmother was born in the countryside, and she had a whole repertoire of pithy phrases.) But Machig can control her energy. She is the embodiment of the paramitas and a model of how to apply the eight-fold path. No hardship is too severe for her and no project too daunting.

Before Machig and I were married, she had encountered Padampa Sangye and he recognized her as the Secret Wisdom Prajna Dakini and prophesied her teachings would be as bright as the sun and would help innumerable sentient beings in the times to come. At this point, she was already a debator of the first magnitude, but after her experience with the naga at the waterhole, where she attained egolessness, and the empowerments she received directly from Arya Tara, she was in a class all of her own.



I believe it was Tara who first informed Machig that she and I were destined to "join profound cognition and skillful means." This is the way the Sublime Ma put it. So, here we are, married with three kids and a house full of demons to feed. Not that I mind — no, far from it — it's just that I'm apprehensive Machig will cut out and leave me and the brood and take her teachings to the people of Tibet.

NOTE: In the 11th century, Machig founded a lineage of the spiritual practice called Chöd. Chöd is a charnel ground practice, and the practitioners visualize offering their bodies in a tantric feast to test their understanding of emptiness.

argued that rational investigations of reality cannot yield truth and that causal connections between things are unprovable. Nothing is as it seems. As it says in the Longchen Nyinzhig Ngöndro, "Like moons in water, sights deceive us."

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) pointed out in his Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics, that until we understand how we know, we cannot answer any of the big questions. This follows from Descartes' use of doubt in philosophical inquiry and Hume's skeptical epistemology and hastened the development of modern empiricism and methodologies developed over the last two hundred years.

In the 20th century, the application of language analysis, semiotics, deconstructionism and phenomenology, along with symbolic logic, have fairly reduced the study of philosophy to rubble. In the minute world of Quantum Mechanics and in the vast reaches that are described by the astrophysicists, the known universe is increasingly described in mystical terms.

Will a neurobiologist discover how a synapse functions, so we can finally know how we know what is really real? In the meantime, we wandering sentient beings, in order to transcend suffering and accomplish enlightenment, will remain grateful for the experience, although undemonstrable, of the union of bliss and emptiness.

A DEVIL SITS UNDER THE ASS OF SOPHIA

In Buddhism, the goal is known: to overcome suffering and attain omniscient buddhahood. As buddhanature is inherent, it only needs to be uncovered. The means to this end are found in the 84,000 teachings and in practice.

In the West, with the emphasis on a materialistic-rationalist system of thought, reality must be analyzed by empirical means to determine the truth, and the goals are hypothetical. A short history: (with a little help from Geddes MacGregor's *Dicty Reliquiae Philosophy*)

René Descartes (1596-1650) investigated reality and found all traditional forms of knowledge to be groundless. He doubted everything as a method to ascertain the truth. His famous statement "Cogito, ergo sum," from his *Discourse on Method*, was meant to be a "clear and distinct idea" from which he could prove the existence of God (not the existence of "self"). From the antecedent "I think," the most that can be logically deduced is: "I think" (Cogito, ergo cogito: I think, therefore I think) and "existing" is a leap of imagination. As Padampa Sange remarked, "If you do not destroy grasping by seeing appearances as the nature of consciousness, consciousness will not be realized to lack inherent existence." (Lion of Siddhas, trans. David Molk, p. 223)

David Hume, in his *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*,

"Cut through," that's the term she uses these days. Chöd is the Tibetan word, but I'm not at liberty to go into the details. My real fear is Machig as a liberated woman, independent, and knowing there is no way to contravene providence and the formation of her lineage. Lineage of the teachings is the main driving force.

I'm going to reveal a little personal secret here, if you will allow me to do so. When Machig and I first formed a union, I was unable to maintain my role as yab to her yum. Tantric sex is not easy, especially with a woman as voluptuous as Machig. We were fine, at first. My mystical vajra was in absolute harmony with her serene lotus, and we were united in our ecstatic dance of delight, when I ^{without} ejaculated. She's not called "the torch" ^{reason}.

In the afterglow, I was depressed, but Machig consoled me by saying it was wonderful and that she wanted to create a lineage. I said, "At this rate we'll create a whole soccer team. "What's a soccer team?" she asked, quizzically.

And I knew I was in deep in more than one way. "Oh, it's just an expression we use back home in India," I replied. "Be here, now," she said. That's Machig, always re-introducing you to the nature of your mind.

Machig stays busy with her Chöd. I stay busy trying to make a happy homelife.





Things have quieted down. Machig has put the final touches on her masterpiece, the instrumentalization with the two-sided drum, the bell, and the thigh-bone trumpet. And it sounds great.

The rakshas, yakshas, gyalpos, senmos, maras, tsens, and other characters have returned to their respective abodes, now that they are ordinary demons again and no longer hinderances to Machig's practice. I must say, Tibetans certainly take their spirit world seriously.

As I had foreseen, Machig will take her chöd on the road. To this, I am reconciled; I can see the importance of her mission. I have the children, and they have me. We will be reunited in this lifetime and in those to come; it is, after all, our family lineage.

...

This story was composed at Panyul Langtang, a valley north of Lhasa, 1539 years after the birth of the Omniscient One, the Lion of the Shakya Clan, Gautama, on the 10th day of a new moon in the 3rd month of a Male Wood Serpent Year (1089 CE).

As my grandmother used to say, "Every natural effect has a spiritual cause."*

To this I would add, "Good Fortune to all househusbands of the future!"

◉ Perfect As You Are ◉

*Actually, this is with Blake's line, from Milton. — R.P.

