



**Diamond Mountain
University & Retreat Center
PO Box 190
St. David, AZ 85630
USA**

[The following letter, which was written by Geshe Michael Roach to his major Teachers on his 50th birthday, is now being made available as an open letter to the public.]

16 January, 2003

Dear friend:

As the three-year retreat here at Diamond Mountain enters its final months, we have received the following message from Geshe Michael Roach, which he asked to be relayed to you. He says that perhaps the most significant spiritual realization he can claim from the whole experience is that he has come to see what a big head he had gotten in the years before retreat, due to all the attention of people attending his talks and so on. He has also been confronted with his pride and arrogance, envy and competitive feelings, especially towards his fellow Dharma students and other western Dharma teachers. And he has come to see how badly he failed in working together with others like yourself, and in taking proper care to be open and up-front with everyone — especially his own Teachers — about his activities, their goals, and the personal history behind them.

And so he has asked us to make available a copy of the enclosed letters, which have been sent to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and to each of Geshe Michael's major Tibetan Teachers. They describe a new direction that he will be working on especially after retreat, but most importantly they attempt to explain in a frank, honest way the personal experiences that have led to this juncture, and to Geshe Michael's current practices and path.

The letters are self-explanatory; Geshe Michael would like to share them now almost as an act of confession for his failings in the past; and with the hope that you will forgive them, and the prayer that when this retreat is ended he could have time to meet together and do whatever we can together to help the Dharma in this world.

Sincerely,

Retreat Caretaker Staff
Diamond Mountain Retreat Center



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16 January, 2003

This letter is offered at the feet of the crowning jewel of our world, that highest Lama for all those of us wandering in the cycle of suffering:

With highest respect, I trust o highest lama that Your rainbow body remains well, and that Your far-reaching, enlightened deeds are flowering like the waxing moon.

Today I am writing to make a humble request to You, o highest Lama. In brief it concerns the following. At the present time, in the western countries, there has been a sudden burst of interest in yoga by over twenty million people. These teachings on yoga have been introduced from India, and include the “machine of the body,” breath control, inner capsule practice, and other such high yogic techniques which are so difficult to perform correctly. And western people are practicing them only for the purpose of exercise, or weight reduction, and so on.

Nonetheless, it would seem that the considerable interest shown in these matters would surely indicate that these people are experiencing the ripening of a strong karmic seed for these practices from their past lives. I believe that the current interest in yoga might provide an opportunity to introduce a large number of people to the holy teaching of exchanging oneself and others, and just as a supplement to whatever religious tradition each person may already be following.

As such, I and a number of colleagues have written a small book in English. It explains a little about the “Machine of the Body” presentation from the Six Practices of Naropa, and then goes into greater detail on the main point of the benefits of developing compassion, and how to carry out the practice of *tong-len*: Giving and Taking with the breath. All this is presented according to the tradition passed down through Je Tsongkapa, his spiritual sons, and the lineage of the Dalai Lamas.

One point of my request to You today is to pray that You bestow Your blessing upon this work of ours, as well as upon all our efforts here to help spread the teachings of Lord Buddha in our foreign lands, and most especially upon our attempt to found institutes similar to the Great Three monasteries of Tibet, where ordained persons and laypeople alike can pursue their studies of the Dharma.

Our vision for this is to provide a course of study which covers both the open and the secret teachings through in their entirety. We would use the monastic debater's approach throughout. The open teachings will be based on the Five Great Books, as they are presented in the great monastic textbooks.

The creation stage part of the secret teachings will be based on the Naro Kachu of Vajra Yogini. The completion stage will be based on the Six Practices of Naropa. We hope to restore all of this latter method through the personal advice of our Lamas, and by utilizing texts from Tibet, India, and Mongolia.

But there is also a second part of this request. There is a custom in our countries that, when a new book like this is published, Lamas and other high personages might write a few lines to be placed on the cover of the book, saying things like "This is a well-written book; it will help many people." It is our hope that You, o highest Lama, might be willing to send us just such a few lines.

We have enclosed a sample of how this endorsement might be written. One option would be that, if You find this request to Your liking, then You could simply sign the sample we've printed. Another option is that You could compose an endorsement of a similar type in Your own words. We would be extremely grateful in either case.

I would like to add that I have enclosed some small current, personal news about myself. I feel that it would be best, o highest lama, if You were to read this over before sending us Your letter of endorsement. I have never communicated these details of my personal life in their entirety to anyone in the past, but I feel that now there is some special purpose served by doing so. And at any rate I have reached an age in my life — I have just turned 50 — where I feel less constrained to speak openly about these things.

However all this turns out, we would like to say that, for us foreign Dharma students, the kindness that You o highest Lama have shown us in our lives is beyond all measure. Whether or not You choose to respond to this request of ours, please be assured that we will always continue to serve you o highest Lama in any way at all which You require. Just send us a letter any time that we can provide some service, and we will do our best to help. This is our honor and our commitment.

We offer this letter with a prayer, o highest lama, that you plant your lotus feet firmly upon this Earth of ours for countless eons, and stay with us.

Offered by the American monk, Geshe Lobsang Chunzin (Michael Roach), and his Dharma colleagues on the 17th day of December, 2002.

PS: Copies of this request for assistance have been sent to each of the great lamas whose names are listed below. My own state of mind and ability to express myself being so less than perfect, I want to be sure that You understand that any mistakes in both conduct and writing that You

may find here are entirely my own fault and my own responsibility, and in no way a reflection upon my faultless Lamas and Dharma friends here with me.

Lamas to whom copies have been sent out:

His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama, the great Tenzin Gyatso
The matchless Khensur Rinpoche, Geshe Lobsang Tharchin
Gyalrong Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Ngawang Thekchok
Kongpo Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Jampa Donyo
Gyume Khensur Rinpoche Geshe Trinley Tobgye
Sermey Geshe Thupten Rinchen
Sermey Geshe Lobsang Thardo
Sermey Geshe Thupten Tenzin
Lama Zopa Rinpoche

[The replies from these lamas can be found at www.world-view.org, under the quick link “open letter.” In addition, please see the transcript of the Easter 2003 Quiet Retreat Teachings for a more detailed discussion and explanation of these matters by both Geshe Michael Roach and Worldview teachers.]

I was born in America,
And from the age of sixteen
Up to the present day
Have always been under the care
Of the Diamond Angel, Vajra Yogini.

At the age of twenty,
I travelled to India,
Land of the Aryas, realized beings,
And first met the sages of Tibet.

And then at the age of 22,
Despite the fact that I myself
Had no good qualities at all,
A seed inside of me
Suddenly awakened, a seed
Which was planted by the many efforts
Of the me of my past lives,
And by the infinite blessings
Of my Lama.

And so I saw ultimate reality directly,
And I achieved bodhichitta,
The Wish for Enlightenment:
I entered the gate
To the first level
Of the bodhisattvas.

In the hours after this experience,
I saw that the Four Arya Truths
Were surely true themselves,
And I perceived that the teachings of Lord Buddha
In general, and in particular
Those of Je Tsongkapa,
Were perfectly, absolutely correct.

And so then I became ordained,
And as a means to keep
These teachings from ever
Being lost in our world,
And to spread them further still,
I entered the diamond trade.

But I did so because
It would be a way
Never to forget
What I had seen upon
The Path of Seeing.
For of all the objects
In this lie of reality,
There is only one highest metaphor
For the ultimate reality,
And that is the diamond.

I labored thus for fifteen years,
And with the income
I tried to help preserve
The physical Dharma
By printing books
And storing in computers
Our sacred texts
Of the Kangyur, and Tengyur,
And writings of the Tibetan masters.

I also did as much as I could
To help support Tibetan monks
Of the great monasteries
Relocated in India.

During this time I continued
My studies, and in the end
I was able to achieve
A geshe degree of minor rank.
And then I tried
To bring that task
Of the nectar of deathlessness,
The Five Great Books,
To people in our foreign lands.

I completed, as well as I could,
Many retreats in the tradition
Of the Diamond Queen;
And now for three years
In isolation, in the desert
Here in America,
In a small Mongolian yurt,

I have stayed together
In the great retreat, in the proper way,
With a Lady, who is an emanation
Of the Angel of Diamond, a Messenger;
And I've undertaken the hardships needed
To try to complete the two stages
Of the secret teachings.

So too nowadays
To help to trigger
The final transformation into
The Diamond Sow herself,
I wear my hair
As the Angel Herself does,
And her bracelet
And other accoutrement
Together with my robes.

I know very well
That what I have
Described in these words
Is very difficult to believe.
And yet I call upon the power
Of the truth that emptiness
And the fact that things still work
Are in no way contradictory;
Upon the truth that the teachings
Of Lord Buddha are true;
Upon the truth that the Angel
Herself is true;
And upon the truth,
O my Lama
Of Your kindness —
Highest Lama, may Your heart not be troubled
Highest Lama, may this rather cause You to rejoice
Highest Lama, may You never abandon this yogi/monk;
May You sustain me
Deep within Your heart
Till the very day
That I can achieve
The Union of the Two.

— written 28 years later, on my 50th birthday,
by the American monk Michael Roach