

Celebrating the Life of the Dorje Dradul

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It is hard to believe that it has been 30 years since the Vidyadhara's Parinirvana. The impact of his life was enormous, even though he only spent 47 years on this earth. The impact of his life continues to grow and grow on both a personal and societal level. The day after he died, I tried to wrap my mind around the fact that we continued to walk this earth when he was no longer here. His wisdom still has a profound effect on many, many levels.

This 30-year anniversary is a time to celebrate. During the 17 years that he was here in North America, there was a whirlwind of activity around him. He was the complete stillness in the middle of that whirlwind. Still, in this terrible time, in these dark ages, he is still a shining light. It will stretch beyond our lifetimes to unpack everything that he gave us and because of his generosity and how he devoted his life to taking care of his students and teaching people how to live in a sane and decent way, it is our responsibility to apply and pass on everything that we learned from him. He used to say, "The world needs our help" and that is more true now than ever.

During his lifetime he had a profound impact on just about everyone he came in contact with. On the one hand he was someone different to everyone. I can only speak from the perspective of a wife. Because his mind was so vast, he could meet the minds of others and have full communication and touch their hearts. For most of those people, an impact that they had never experienced before. On the one hand, those who were close to him still yearn for this, but that also transforms into a greater sensitivity and openheartedness.

Those who did not have a chance or the opportunity meet him personally are still impacted by his teachings and that was his goal and his reason for being here, to affect things on a much larger scale. Even though he was a different person for everybody, because his mind was so vast he was able to meet theirs, he was still 100% genuine. He was always who he was and I can speak that way as his wife, that whoever he was as a public person, he also was a private person as well. He was unwaveringly genuine. When we arrived in North America in 1970 we were penniless. He had lost his country. He had lost everything. But what he brought with him was an enormous vision. Those difficulties that we arrived with were never an obstacle for him. He had an enormous vision of what he wanted to offer in bringing the Buddhadharma and the Shambhala teachings to the west. He said that he first had that inspiration when he saw the Tibetan culture falling apart and he thought, "I can do great things with these teachings and I can bring them onto a much larger scale."

As we celebrate his 30 year Parinirvana we have also the ability to view some of his belongings that have been preserved by the Archive. The way he lived his life and conducted his life on a very mundane level, for instance how he wore his uniforms, his different teaching outfits, how he decorated his court, his personal possessions, all of those things were done with tremendous attention to detail. He used to teach in a very expansive way, that he would create an environment where people could learn. As opposed to personally stepping people through their experiences every step of the way, he created amazing and vast environments which are still in

place today, from the Kalapa Court, to the MPE Encampment, to the Dharma centers, it is endless. All of these places not only are containers for the teachings, but the environments themselves are a learning experience, so those of you have the opportunity to view his possessions can really learn and realize that every tiny detail was carefully, carefully directed by him.

The Tibetan community initially thought that he was completely crazy that he was willing to give the highest teachings to the western students, but he always stood firm, that he really believed that the western students had the same capacity to completely realize those teachings and to bring them forward into their lives. Eventually the Tibetan community came along and they began to respect what he did by virtue of how beautifully his students conducted themselves.

So I think this is a time for us to celebrate the fact that we have these precious teachings and to give thanks, gratitude, that he dedicated his life and also to reflect on the fact that on a personal level whether it is our home, our business, however we walk on this earth, where we still are, that we have the responsibility to embody those teachings and to use them for the benefit of others. That is the best way we can repay his generosity.

Trungpa Rinpoche was one of the great instrumental figures in bringing the teachings of the Buddha to the western world and this is a time to celebrate and appreciate that.