

A DHARMA STORY -- THE DRAWING

Since many of you like these stories, here is what I consider a marvelous story.

Many years ago, in the 1980s, I had a dream. It was very vivid. And in that dream I presented my dharma teacher Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche a drawn image or portrait of himself. It was one of those dreams that is magical, somehow more real than waking life. For that reason I felt it was important that this dream be made real and acted out in actual life. After the dream and its imprint in my mind, I began actively to consider how this could happen. I tried on many ideas.

I finally settled on a sketched portrait, but finding an artist good enough was not easy. I only knew of a single such artist, one of the finest draftsman in Michigan, a man named John Felsing who was renowned for his life-like portraits of wildlife, especially birds.

I contacted Felsing and asked to visit him. Then Margaret and I traveled to Lansing where he lived and sat down with him. I explained my dream and what I was hoping he might do. After some discussion, he agreed to do a drawing and I gave him a really nice photo of Khenpo Rinpoche.

Several months went by and I heard nothing. Then one day a large envelope came in the mail. It contained a first sketch of Khenpo Rinpoche. To my dismay, the drawing he sent was a sketch of an elderly oriental gentleman, but not the dynamic rinpoche I knew. This would not do. I got on the phone and carefully explained this to John Felsing and he said that he would try again. To assist him I then sent him some of Rinpoche's dharma teachings and one of his books, a book I also worked on called "Dharma Paths."

Again, several months went by and then one day another large manila envelope showed up in the mail. I hesitated to look inside; and then with baited breath I carefully opened the package. When I did, this time the image was actually of the Khenpo Rinpoche Margaret and I know

and love. Apparently the books and Rinpoche's own teachings helped to communicate the idea of the man himself. I let Felsing know that he could now do the finished drawing. And the ending to this story is remarkable.

When the artist Felsing finished the final drawing he personally called to notify me of that. And as it happened Khenpo Rinpoche, who (of all things) was visiting our dharma center that very day, was about to do an empowerment for our local group that evening.

Felsing did not hesitate a moment, but said he was coming to Big Rapids to see Rinpoche. He jumped into his car, drove through the oncoming night to our center and, when he arrived, he formally asked Rinpoche to give him "refuge." Refuge is a short ceremony that takes place when someone discovers that they have great respect for the dharma, respect not only for the historical Buddha, but also for his teachings (the dharma), and the sangha (those monks and nuns who embody the living teaching). It is a request you make of a teacher. Felsing's request was honored and Rinpoche gave the refuge ceremony, which includes giving those who ask for it a dharma name.

Apparently during the months that John Felsing was working with Rinpoche's image and reading some of the teachings, he was moved by what he learned and had developed a true respect for the dharma. He was inspired to become more actively involved in the dharma and so asked to receive the refuge ceremony. I am struck by how a simple contact with Rinpoche, even at a distance, made such a difference.

[Here is the drawing that the artist John Felsing made of Khenpo Rinpoche]

"As Bodhicitta is so precious,
May those without it now create it,
May those who have it not destroy it,
And may it ever grow and flourish"

For those of you who would like to have access to other free

books, articles, and videos on these topics, here are my links:

[http://traffic.libsyn.com/spiritgrooves/Links to Michael Erlewine-V2.pdf](http://traffic.libsyn.com/spiritgrooves/Links%20to%20Michael%20Erlewine-V2.pdf)

