

SIMHANANDA,

TEACHINGS TOWARDS AWAKENING FROM THE 'LION THAT ROARS'.

Simhananda, a Western spiritual master who has been offering teachings in Québec for over thirty years, has agreed to share some of his wisdom with us. Just like Padmasambhava ⁽¹⁾ and Tsong Khapa ⁽²⁾, he lives in a country that is gripped by cold temperatures for a good part of the year. A warmth radiates from his being that leaves no one indifferent, allowing us to forget the -20°C temperatures that sometimes hold sway outside our homes. Guided by his Tibetan Master, he travels the planet seeking out *termas* ⁽³⁾, which he liberates in order to allow the energy of Padmasambhava to continue its work to benefit the evolution of humanity as a whole.

QUESTION: *You seem well versed in the work and teachings of Padmasambhava, can you tell us what is the nature of your bond?*

REPLY: Padmasambhava is recognized as being an exceptional Master during his time. He liberated the Tibetan people from the darkness that had imprisoned them for centuries. This 'darkness' arose, among other reasons, from the domination by certain negative powers that confined the consciousness of this people through false concepts, to the detriment of its spirituality, thus annihilating any possibility of 'Awakening' or 'Liberation'. Padmasambhava also gave birth to Buddhism in Tibet. His work and its influence are still very evident there in our day. Thanks to the *termas* that he has handed down to us, in the form of his teachings, or if you prefer, the energy imprints of his consciousness, even today he helps humanity in its Awakening, for the common good. As for these *termas*, he has hidden them in various places around the globe, more particularly in Asia. These are the precious tools that help us find our way through certain critical periods, periods that temporarily plunge mankind into darkness. Since then, men have come to learn of these *termas*, and some have learned to liberate a few of them. I was given the mandate to pursue this task.

Q.: *What does this mandate entail?*

R.: I receive information regarding where the *terma* may be found and when it must be liberated. I then travel to this location several days ahead of time in order to prepare myself adequately for this work, which requires lengthy meditations in the presence of certain crystals and the recitation of specific invocations. Then, at the appointed hour, I present myself at the designated place and emit an energy which allows the *terma* to be liberated. A significant increase in energy is thereby generated, which disperses over the surrounding several kilometres, affecting those found in this region, along with others elsewhere, through the planet's etheric currents.

Q.: *What kinds of effects are produced?*

R.: An opening at the level of consciousness which allows divine Light to penetrate into all living things, whether these are in the animal, vegetal, mineral or human domains. However, this penetration of Light sometimes results in forms of inner

distress, since the Light, which by this means opens a channel, can cause an individual temporary discomfort. This Light sometimes helps expel what must be 'cleansed' or 'changed' in the self, and is always accompanied by a teaching, by a vibratory note, allowing for adjustments to be accomplished with energy and harmony.

Q.: You say that you receive precise directions for the liberation of terma: does this information emanate solely from your Tibetan Master?

R.: I work closely with this Master, who guides me in this task. He, in turn, works in perfect cooperation with his Master. In fact, this is a hierarchical chain of mutual assistance, not working towards a personal goal, but a purely altruistic one for humanity's Awakening.

Q.: Why do you call yourself Simhananda? Was this name given to you at birth?

R.: The name Simhananda was given to me by my Master and is thus not my civil name. This name relates to one of my past lives and also embodies certain qualities which characterize me in this present incarnation.

Q.: What are these qualities?

R.: I don't really like talking about myself. Moreover, this subject doesn't especially interest me. I prefer to remain in the shadows and write. My students could tell you more about what I am. I can, however, mention to you that a force guides me, a powerful... energy that has always been part of my life. This energy is transmitted through the sound of my voice, and through my teachings, by means of a certain Presence which inhabits me and promotes a heightening of consciousness.

I take spiritual training very seriously and I believe that man possesses within himself the power to awaken his divine nature. It is a matter of ringing the key notes of his consciousness in order to cause it resonate and thereby awaken this buried part of his self which prevents him from recognizing his true nature. It is up to the individual to awaken, no one else can do it for him.

The name 'Simhananda' signifies, among other meanings, the one who roars. Since my astrological sign is the Lion, my roar can be heard when an individual needs coaxing to shake off the daily torpor caused by his work, and his social and family life. Those who come to me and are willing to work on themselves with honesty and determination change gradually and profoundly. The responsibility for transformation rests with the student, who remains free to choose whether or not to pursue this work in my company. Without this freedom, no real and lasting change is possible.

Q.: What do you mean by freedom?

R.: The freedom of the complete being who surrenders to his Soul's desire, while taking into account the desires of his ego – the ego which often develops a real fear of change. Sooner or later in his evolution, the individual must confront this fear of change, even if, profoundly felt, change is his most heartfelt wish. The instructor – the Master – is available to guide him in his choices, but it is the individual who remains

the sole master of his vessel (after the ego). To him alone falls the task of changing or not. The Master must not and cannot impose in any manner. He observes, roars upon occasion, advises, but never 'imposes'. This is a spiritual law which should never, under any circumstances, be broken. A person is responsible for his karma, although the Master, out of compassion, supports part of the burden. This is why Masters prefer to live in a certain state of isolation in order to conserve a minimum of vital energy. Through their teachings, they take upon themselves a substantial measure of their students' karma and thus expend a great deal of energy. All too often, students are unaware of this concept, as they live essentially centered upon themselves. The desire to evolve remains a desire, and I might add, this is an egotistic desire in the first years of any spiritual training. Man wants to evolve, wants to change in order to feel better and acquire greater control over his personal life. He forgets that his evolution must also be accomplished for the good of all humanity. The future cannot be built single-handed; the group, and humanity as a whole are part of our human family, and we often tend to neglect this fact.

Q.: You speak of teachings and writings, but your name is also associated with 'transformative photography'. Can a simple photograph really transform us?

R.: All too often, we reduce spirituality to a certain philosophy, a certain image or perhaps a certain meditative regimen. However, life itself is a source of profound transformation. In a certain manner, he who composes it does not adopt an appearance of either ordinary or extraordinary. Life simply expresses a Presence which seeks merely to reveal itself. We are all interconnected. All the kingdoms of this World are interconnected. Over the course of time, we have become cognizant of this precious collaboration and have become experts in 'personal marketing' aimed solely at the satisfaction of our needs. We 'forget to forget ourselves' to benefit from all that surrounds us, what can be communicated to us, and what we are. Through the magic of photography, I try to create a moment of stasis in the individual's consciousness, in order to allow for a moment of inner realization or even discovery to engage him. We do not all possess the skill to be profound meditants. But a photograph that is able to touch us particularly can awaken in us, even for a few brief instants, the recognition of this Presence or this Joy that inhabits us all.

Q.: In what way can the human being collaborate with Earth's various kingdoms?

R.: In fact, the human being is called upon to contribute 'creatively' to the evolution of all the kingdoms populating this Earth. He must become a perfect vessel of Light in order to allow it to circulate through him, without obstruction, and be transmitted to all in his environs. He must one day, following many, many lifetimes of work upon himself, become God's servant without any egotistic intent interfering to blot his consciousness. Earth's destiny is to become a sacred planet, and man's is to become an agent of transformation in the service of the Most Great with the ultimate aim being to achieve universal unity.

One must not forget, however, that each kingdom is endowed with its own intelligence and man must be mindful of this intelligence. For this task requires working together; it is not a matter of imposing one power over another. Each kingdom, the work of the Creator, holds within its domain a precious gift. Man, dependent on his destiny, must in the near future, carry the Light to the far reaches of

these kingdoms. Thus an honest exchange and collaboration will arise between the diverse kingdoms in perfect harmony with the Light of the Divine Plan.

Q.: Do you consider yourself a Master?

R.: (Laughs) No, my students consider me that way, but as for me, I see myself more as a catalyst of consciousness, a guide, a spiritual friend who is not afraid to be frank and rattle the lethargic tendencies of the consciousness oppressed by too much external stimulation (television, games, videos, sports, outings, etc...).

Q.: What would you like to say to our readers to help them along their spiritual path?

R.: The answer is simple: be yourself! Do not be afraid to change, to see your life in its true likeness and also to see yourself in your true likeness. This may appear simple on the surface, but make no mistake; few of us accept ourselves as we are.

Spirituality is like physical training; at the outset, we are motivated despite the discomforts that beleaguer us. The most difficult part is to remain disciplined, to continue to work with determination and to have the nerve to persevere despite daily hurdles. Instead of losing weight physically, we lose our illusions, the false concepts that burden us and prevent our spiritual progression. We are predestined to become athletes of the spiritual path, warriors unafraid of their weaknesses and the changes imposed.

The spiritual path is built one step at a time, with each new stirring of consciousness that lights our spirit. All of us, we are all called upon to become better beings, awakened beings who journey on, sometimes through temporary darkness, towards a destiny that will reveal our true nature, which is divine.

- (1) Padmasambhava: 'The lotus-born'; 'The Precious Guru'; a contemporary of the King Trisong Detsen, one of the founders of Tibetan Buddhism (8th Century) where he is venerated as the second Buddha; also considered to be the Protector of Tibet.
- (2) Tsong Khapa: (1357-1419) The incomparable Buddhist scholar known as Je Rinpoche, who helped create the great Gelugpa school of thought in the late 14th century in Tibet; a glorious emanation of Buddha Manjushri; the monasteries of Drepung, Sera, and Ganden were founded through his inspiration, influence and activities.
- (3) Terma: Terma are key Tibetan Buddhist and Bön teachings, which the tradition holds were originally esoterically hidden by various adepts such as Padmasambhava and his consorts in the 8th century for future discovery at auspicious times.