



Under a beech tree in Croizet...

Awakening to Sanity (letter 11)

From now on

Dear friend,

The time has come to give a structure to this “Blue Book” as I call it. From now on I will do my best to write one article per week about a key topic of spiritual practice. To give a structure and reliable basis to these writings I will follow key texts of the Buddhist tradition and try to express those well-tested, reliable teachings of the Buddhist masters in easy to understand terms. Among other texts I will probably rely heavily on the “Jewel Ornament of Liberation”, a traditional text of the Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism written by Gampopa. To this will be joined quotes from Buddha Shakyamuni and other masters. The Jewel Ornament gives a good structure and is highly respected as a book of reference, but it is often misunderstood by readers of today. It will be a good exercise to explain its teachings to a modern public.

Doing this will be a joy to do and therefore I will only write when I feel this joy. I consider writing to be a part of my practice in the very same way as Gendun Rinpoche considered translating the old texts to be a powerful facet of our practice. In fact there is no activity that could not be our practice.

Today’s letter “from now on” marks the point in my life where the decision to write this Blue Book is fully taken. It will communicate my understanding of the helpful teachings of old in the world of today. There is no definite plan to this book; it will unfold on its own – I have complete confidence in that. It will be a journey of deeply integrating my whole being joining deep reflection and meditation to active expression. The driving force behind is the wish to contribute to Healing on this planet. Many people are doing this simultaneously all over this world and in doing so, the “one dharma” that truly encourages healing will emerge.

Complete healing means awakening; it is “Awakening to complete Sanity”. This is how I understand the process of going towards that all-encompassing openness, freedom and understanding that is called Buddhahood. We do not know from direct experience how a

Buddha really is, but awakened ones are described as being completely free of all obscuration, of any feeling or view that could close the heart or narrow the mind. Their realisation is described as the inseparable union of love and wisdom, being completely aware, free of any compulsion, living beyond hopes and fears in an open, flowing presence. That is what I call complete sanity; there is no deeper healing than that.

The inspiration for the Blue Book goes back to a strange experience 25 years ago on our honeymoon trip to California. It happened when sitting on a small mountain peak overlooking the Pacific Ocean after a week of living in nature. I had been meditating and connecting with the deepest inspirations in my life. Beautiful things had already happened during that week like a long, silent encounter with a magnificent white stag. On that last day before returning into civilisation my wife and I had agreed to meet on that mountain. In meditation I connected with the deep wish to clearly know the purpose of my life. Then a kind of vision or strong intuition occurred: Out of the blue sky a blue book with a golden shimmer was given to me. It was given by nobody, and – it was empty. It was not a book to read but one that I was supposed to write. An inner voice clearly told me that it was destined to be a book on healing. I was quite overwhelmed but also deeply inspired with a feeling of truth.

All these years I did not mention this experience to anyone and almost forgot about it. I simply pursued my spiritual practice and trained in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, also translating quite a few texts. However I would never write anything on my own, I simply stuck to the writings of the old masters. Recently this inspiration from years back has surfaced again and that is why I called the website “Awakening to Sanity” and gave it a blue colour which is also the colour of the Buddha of Healing usually represented as blue with a golden shimmer including all colours of the rainbow.

I hope this little explanation helps you to understand the purpose of the Blue Book. Various aspects of my life will come together in the writing: the enthusiasm for deep healing, the love for people, the veneration and gratitude for the Buddhist tradition, and my deep appreciation of other traditions (of which I know of course much less). It will be healing for me and I am confident that it will also stimulate healing in others. With a little smile I have to admit that there is simply no choice; I just have to do it. And you are free not to read it!

My protestant upbringing just now makes me remember the words of Martin Luther when questioned in court. He said something like: “Here I stand and can’t do differently. May God help!” My version would be: “Here I sit and simply have to do it. May the Buddhas be patient and help!” Well, this is just for a laugh; there is no inquisition nowadays and Awakened Ones have no lack of understanding and patience. May they nevertheless have an eye on me and bestow their blessings for this undertaking. May writing and sharing this book not contribute to the growth of confusion but to true healing and Awakening!

With the best wishes for a beautiful day, Tilmann Lhundrup

(corrected by Andy)