

Invitations to Love

Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal

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Appendixes

These appendixes contain, in their entirety, the two love letter correspondences discussed in *Invitations to Love: Literacy, Love Letters, and Social Change in Nepal*, by Laura M. Ahearn. Contextual information about these two courtships and others can be found in the book.

The names of the letter writers, their friends, and their family members have been changed. Words in double quotation marks were written in English by the letter writers. Ellipses that were present in the letters themselves are indicated by a series of six dots. No words from the letters are omitted. The few words that were illegible are labeled as such.



Shila Devi and Vajra Bahadur's Love Letters

Letter #1—Shila to Vajra

2046/10/19

Dear.....[Vajra] Mother's Brother's Son, greetings with remembrances and also.....[love] from miserable.....[Shila]. Mother's Brother's Son, I'm in good health. I wish you good health, too. Today it's only after many days, or shall I say many months, that I find myself writing a few words to you. Perhaps I'll give it to you. Perhaps you'll get angry. As angry as you get, as many mistakes as there are in these a few words written by this miserable one, I request that you unfold all the folds and read this.

Mother's Brother's Son, why did you beg forgiveness from me? What have we done wrong? If you beg forgiveness from me, I can't give you forgiveness. If you want to beg forgiveness, beg me to my face. I won't agree to read the begging for forgiveness on paper.

And again, you said you wouldn't speak to me from now on at the water tap, right? That's okay. But even if, like an elephant, you don't speak, still, if you're going to beg forgiveness, then.....you'll have no other choice but to.....

Mother's Brother's Son, there's one thing, what should I say? The day before yesterday on the way back from Tansen you said, "You're probably annoyed," right? Again, while you were taking me home you also said, "You're probably annoyed," right? Now, what ever was the error that would have made me or the others annoyed?

Mother's Brother's Son, you said, "Above all, I pray to Sri Pashupatinath that you may spend your life in success and happiness/ease [*sukha*]," right? (Is

that right?) Hoping with great enthusiasm that I, this miserable outsider, will live in happiness/ease, I have written these a few words happily/easily. (I had no idea). Again, you said, “If there’s any suffering, I don’t want to attach myself to anyone’s name,” right? Whether you attach yourself or not, I myself will.....[attach myself to you]. Okay, Mother’s Brother’s Son.

I want to say goodbye and end this letter here. Forgive my mistakes or not, but you have to write back. You probably don’t want to, right.....? If you do want to, then.....[write back].

(“bye-bye”)

Shila



Letter #2—Shila to Vajra

2046/11/3

[pictures of flower on left and heart with arrow on right]

By force s/he tries to shake the flower, but the thorns won’t allow it
How pleasant it would be to get married, but conditions, let’s say,
or (our kinship relationship) won’t allow it.

Shree

Dear, dear.....Mother’s Brother’s Son, from unable-to-exist.....let’s
say.....greetings like a never-drying river and many, many more
remembrances than there are stars in the sky.

Dear.....I received the letter that you sent. How very, very happy it made
me, but also a little sad. Now, why did I have to feel sad.....?

Even though the poem above might cause you pain, please don’t feel that
way, okay? Mother’s Brother’s Son, marriage is forever, but it doesn’t seem
very certain. Why are you in such a hurry to marry? Then again, when I say
that you’re in a hurry to marry, will you get angry.....? Well, if you get
angry, you get angry. I say this: I was in favor of waiting about one and a half
to two years to get married, but today as I read your letter about getting
married I felt so.....Why, oh why, do I feel so.....today after reading your
letter? You and I, after courting, will certainly get married, but what will the
other villagers who see it and hear about it say? Of course, there’s nothing to
fear once we’ve both set our hearts on it and both our hearts have agreed—
but what to do? Our kinship relationship makes it extremely difficult. You
said to me, “You’re afraid to love,” but what to do? In response to that, I say
you also have to fear the community a little bit. Then again, if you don’t.....

Of course, as soon as you say love, the community, or some people, view it poorly, but just because some people take this view I wouldn't be afraid, but what to do? Seeing the kinship relationship, one has to be afraid. The kinship relationship could have been anything, but it's this.

It seems to me that your parents must have had such dreams for you. If you fulfill those dreams for them, as many dreams as you fulfill, that's how much they'll approve perhaps. Similarly, my father is dead, but whether you say father, mother, older brother and sister-in-law, grandparents, or whatever—I have just one mother to obey/respect. That mother, now, let's say—how many dreams must she have arranged in her eyes! If I could fulfill those dreams, why, this whole world would become very bright, it seems to me.

Love is like this: some people's love is successful, while others' is unsuccessful. But what to do—life itself is like this. Sometimes sun, sometimes rain.....Mother's Brother's Son, you said to me, "Is this all right, or not? Tell me if it's okay or not." And again, you said to me, "You'll do neither this nor that"! Yes, Mother's Brother's Son—what to do? My heart/mind is so.....but what to do, our kinship relationship.....Let it be. Whatever happens, there'll be no success for this miserable one. There are others more beautiful than I am; how beautiful am I, after all? Marry one of the many who are so much more educated or pretty or beautiful than I am.....How can I.....that sort of.....??.....Whatever—even though my heart is aflutter from missing you, I'll drink my own tears, and as long as I can breathe I'll be forced to survive. Again, if God has written that we'll meet, we'll meet. For today, give me leave.....

The flowers are small; try to water them.

Even if our love breaks apart, try to remember it.

We'll meet again in another letter. With hope, I close here for today. If there are any mistakes, please forgive them. Don't forget. If you do forget, then forget this miserable one.

Bye-bye



Letter #3—Shila to Vajra

Date 046/12/23

[pictures of heart and flower]

Dear, so very dear Mother's Brother's Son, many, many remembrances from this miserable one. *Namaskār* from this miserable one. You look very angry

now. If I opposed you [*hajur*] or somehow caused opposition to you [*hajur*] by saying *namaskār*, then I'd like to be forgiven. Why do you look so.....different to me than before.....? Why is this? I can't understand anything. Why, why, why do memories of you.....keep coming to me? [along left margin]. If you have memories of this ascetic [*bairāgī*] one, then please accept this letter, or else what will I.....[do]? [diagonally upside down across bottom, mostly illegible] Why are you angry? Perhaps by saying *namaskār* and by means of names I caused an injury to your heart. I'm sad about that. Okay, farewell. Bye-bye.



Letter #4—Shila to Vajra

[Undated, but maybe 2047/1/1]

shree

Dear, dear.....friend, (Dear.....friend) Actually, there is nothing to report, except.....Actually, except to say that today I might be going to Kalipar. If I go it'll be at one or two o'clock. I'll arrive back home tomorrow. We'll meet tomorrow.

Do whatever you have to do in order to come to my house tomorrow evening. We'll go together on another day to see the Nepali film. If you go first, I'll.....

I'll meet you on the way to Kalipar. For now,
okay, goodbye. Forgive my mistakes.
Your.....



Letter #5—Shila to Vajra

Date 047/1/1

Hail—Hail—Hail

Dear.....Mother's Brother's Son, from.....on the occasion of New Year's please accept these postcards along with this short letter.....They're only for memory's sake.....In this life, what else, after all, could I give you? Except for letters, I can't give you anything. Rather, my thousands of words have angered

you, right.....? What, after all, can I bring you [*hajur*] to make you happy, right.....? When I opened your letter and looked at it, you said, “I’m not angry; rather, you seem angry at me”—you said, right.....?

In that case, if neither of us is angry, and if both of our heart/minds are fine, then why do we act angrily toward each other, right? In that case, I.....[love] you. And what do you say? Is there.....[love in you for me]? Or what?

[other side]

On the day of (Date 047/1/1)

The year 2047: on the occasion of the new year I want to close this short letter here. I beg leave, hoping to see you again. There’s so much more to write about, but I’m a little unwell, so even though I want to write, I have to say goodbye, but this is nothing—right?.....

Mother’s Brother’s Son, the postcards aren’t beautiful; please don’t laugh at them. I’m a little late in sending you a New Year’s card; please don’t get angry because of that. If you do get angry, I’ll get angry, too. In each letter there are probably thousands of mistakes—remember.....and please forgive them.

Your own beloved

[in a box with flowers around it]

(Shila) bye-bye



Letter #6—Vajra to Shila

Her Holiness Durga—hail hail hail!!!

Date 2047/1/2

My dear, dearest to me in this entire world, my life’s beloved Father’s Sister’s Daughter: continuous remembrances, along with bundles and bundles of love.

I remain healthy, and this insane one wishes you health as well. You went to the trouble to send this insane one New Year’s greetings. I received the card, and my happiness has no boundaries. Similarly, I have also sent you a small card with best wishes from this miserable insane one. I hope that you will accept it as worthy.

This never-improving life’s stream of events comes without a desire to survive, but what should I do? Things don’t happen just because one wants

them to in this life. Compared to living like this, it would probably be better to die. But when will my death come?

What was I yesterday, and what have I become today? Perhaps I know. I offered someone love that was pure, but it's become polluted/defiled. Today it seems to me that it's not good to love anyone. Love is a betrayal, I find.

I beg forgiveness for my mistakes.

I say goodbye.

The insane one who joins/unites with you

Bye-bye



Letter #7—Shila to Vajra

Vajra—Shila—x—*lu* [*māyālu*] Beloved Vajra

2047/1/9

To my beloved, with a heart full of love,.....Mother's Brother's Son, from your unlucky Father's Sister's Dau.....I offer you many remembrances along with affection. Mother's Brother's Son, there's really nothing to write about, except for one thing: the love you have already forgotten—our affection and respect are nothing but notebook pages, right?

Mother's Brother's Son, I liked the New Year's photo and card you sent with the sun's rays on it so very, very much! And those flowers I also liked so much! I also liked that heart-shaped leaf picture you drew; it made me happy. That such an unlucky one as I could receive such a postcard makes me consider my miserable self to be extremely lucky. I liked everything fine, but one thing gave me extreme pain—but you probably know which thing it was that gave me pain. I liked the flowers, I liked the heart-shaped leaf, I liked everything, except for that.....? What did you write in English? I couldn't understand anything. Please, you must explain it?.....If you are troubled, I'll.....?.....

Okay, goodbye again. We'll meet again in another letter. Please excuse the mistakes of this one.....?

Mother's Brother's Son, you invited me to go watch the dancing at the wedding, but I don't know which day you mean. Well, I know, but I don't know which date—if you mean the 10th at the groom's house, then we can't come because we're carrying some loads of wedding gifts and supplies to Kaule.

That miserable, miserable,
miserable, miserable

bye-bye, Mother's Brother's Son, Mother's Brother's Son, Mother's
Brother's Son, Mother's Brother's Son, Mother's Brother's Son [written
sideways across left margin] I remain hopeful that I should receive some
answer from you—I am that miserable beloved, beloved



Letter #8—Shila to Vajra

Date: 20th [month unspecified]

Dear.....friend, hundreds of thousands of remembrances and affections that
will not be forgotten for my entire life. Friend, I am well. I hope for your good
health, too. Friend, there was really nothing to write about, but I'm writing a
few words. Because of my single [i.e., widowed] mother's scoldings, I have
to.....my own desires. It seems I must act as if I've forgotten my own beloved.
This is what I find life is like for this unlucky woman. The main thing [i.e., the
main reason for writing you a letter], friend, is this: today we're probably all
going to my mother's natal home. No matter what, come to meet me this
evening, okay? Please don't take offense. Okay, farewell. This is all for today.

Remembering your.....forgive my mistakes. Even if you don't, that's
okay. By By, friend, friend

Your Shila

Shila

Shila

[on reverse:].....friend, if you have the time, come to visit.....this evening.
Come this evening, and we'll talk.



Letter #9—Vajra to Shila

Date 2047/2/14

Shree, shree, shree

To Mother Kali, hail, hail, hail

Dear, dearer than dear, beloved Father's Sister's Daughter, everlasting
remembrances and continuous emotions of love from this miserable insane

one. I've been managing in whatever fashion to survive until today. I hope you are also well.

There's really nothing special that must be written; this is only for remembrance's sake.

I'm feeling very bad that you saw me walking so angrily. As long as your heart/mind is suffering, my heart/mind also continues to suffer. It could be that I've given you such injury and suffering! First of all, I feel so miserable about all the mistakes I've made and all the injuries you've suffered. Whether I committed those mistakes wittingly or unwittingly, to God [*īswar*] they'll still be mistakes. We humans are only God's servants or pupils; why wouldn't we make mistakes? But not to repeat mistakes we've already made is our main duty. In an extended complaint you said that I showed signs of our love to others, right? You can believe me or not, but I've never shown any of those sorts of things to anyone and will never show them to anyone except you. It could be that someone found some hidden things; for that, who is at fault? Probably I am. I'll try not to make this mistake again.

Another issue: you're angry because you saw me laughing and speaking with your sister-cousin. But when you saw evidence of this the other evening, you said without getting angry, "May your life be successful." No matter how much you dislike me, up through today I still love none other than you. The day before yesterday (Saturday) on the way to the river I certainly made you very angry. It was as if salt and red peppers were rubbed into your wound. I shouldn't have gone there. I made a big mistake in going. Now, because you're angry with me, you've told me never to talk to you again and you say you will also from now on (maybe for your entire life?) never speak to miserable me. Okay, don't speak to this miserable one. But I could never do that because no matter how angry I get I like to laugh and talk. My heart/mind won't allow me to just walk without talking. This miserable one finds that it is written [i.e., fated] for him to receive this treatment. I'll live all alone, having extinguished my heart/mind, gathering up two teardrops as an offering.

Human beings are such that everyone gets angry from time to time. However one gets angry, one also has to know how to get rid of that anger. In a moment's anger if you place such a big punishment on me (the punishment of never speaking again), that's okay. My love is only for you. But your love.....[seems not to be just for me]. Again, you'll probably get angry reading this letter. Whenever I see you, you're always angry. Why, oh why, when I see you walking, looking angry, does my heart get cut into slices?

How can I explain to you, how can I change your anger into happiness if,

when I come near you, some sort of opposition is caused? If you'll be happy away from me, then I'll stay far away from you. I only want to see you happy forever.

Oh, how much there is to write about! If I wrote about everything, perhaps the pages of a notebook wouldn't suffice. In that case, I'll write again in other letters. There are probably many mistakes here; read the mistakes as if they were correct.

To my soul, my lifetime to lifetime love, even if you won't speak to me, I will one more time say goodbye with many, many remembrances and my love's offerings that are like a river that will never dry up.

[diagonally across bottom of page] If there's love in you for me, then answer.....

bye bye

your insane beloved

If you love, then love all at once. If you don't, then undo your spell



Letter #10—Shila to Vajra

To Shree Pashupati Nath—hail hail hail

Date: 047/2/[prob. 14 or 15]

Place: A deserted skull in which
that one's memories are aflutter
from missing you

Dear.....? dearer than dear, dear Mother's Brother's Son, from your ascetic/austere Father's Sister's Dau.....although on the outside I show dislike, on the inside in my heart/mind your miserable.....wants to place so much affection and love.....?

.....Really, really, there is nothing to write about, except whether I should say I feel love for you or I should say I don't feel love for you. I can't give this question an.....[answer]. You said, "If you feel love, then give an answer," right? Okay, I gave an answer. Whether there's love or not, only one's own self knows. I'll say one thing—and if you get angry, you get angry. You said I got angry when you talked with my sister-cousin—that could never happen. Did I say, "May you be successful in that life"? Did I really say, "May you be successful with her".....? That's okay—if you feel desire for my sister-

cousin, then be successful. Why do you always say, “If you want happiness from me, I’ll stay far, far away from you”? Rather, from now on, I won’t do this sort of letter-writing behavior anymore. When I write letters, how full of mistakes they are! I just don’t have the ability. How annoying it must be for you to correct my many incorrect alphabetic letters!

On the way to the river you said I wasn’t talking because I was angry. Did you say that in anger, or what? They said that I said, “From now on I’ll talk to nobody.” But when did you talk to *me*?? All day long I was angry, you said, but on the way home, instead of walking ahead, not one.....[word] did you speak to me. “I’m not going to speak to anyone; I won’t speak,” they said I said, right? Saying that, it felt like a big penalty to you. Well, whatever happened at the river, happened. Let’s leave off talking about the river issue.

Mother’s Brother’s S.....what injury have you done to me? Only that our pure love, fondness, and affection turn out only to be for passing the time. Whatever the villagers say, tell me yourself—do you say, “How many words have I wasted”.....? In that case, I, too, have probably shown you opposition or dislike in all my name-calling. From now on I won’t say a single word. I was just laughing and making jokes, but you got disgusted. Why, at this rate, how long will this life last? What can I call my own in my life? Whatever there was, I would have given all of it away in that manner, but what I have today has all disappeared already. Let’s just say that it’s all become like a dream—all those things became mere dreams on that day. Whatever daydreams I had, they all became mere dreams/fantasies.....Whatever condition I appear to be in on the outside, on the inside my heart.....Love and respect are hidden there. Neither can these feelings be opened up and displayed, nor will they disappear after I die. Sure, sometimes one has to treat one of one’s own people like a stranger, but today you.....? Until today you were my own.....But today what you are, I have no idea. The “you” of that day and the “you” of today are very different. Well, why is that so.....? God knows.....After carrying a heart full of love and respect, I met my own love and was so happy. Even though I’m an orphan because of my father’s death, I wouldn’t have considered myself an orphan until today when one love (you [*timī*]) said, “I’ll stay far, far away,” and I found myself to be a lonely orphan after all.....In this life, after all, whom can I call my own? What is there to live for? To live is a curse now. Today this orphan became a lonely orphan on the inside as well. That’s okay. Whatever there is in life, there is only one.....But as of today you also have become a stranger to me. That’s okay with me. Whatever happens, even though my heart is aflutter from missing you, I’ll drink my own tears by myself and while I still have breath I’ll survive. If God has written it, we’ll meet again. Goodbye for today.....(1)
From time to time if memories of the suffering ascetic/austere one (me)

come to you, if the notebook pages under the pillow are overturned by the storms of the month of *Jeth*, my.....?

[diagonally across the page]

If you have love, then answer!! Bye bye V. B.



Letter #11—Vajra to Shila

[Drawings of flowers and a heart with an arrow through it frame the initial poem.]

Date: 2047/2/24

To Sri Pashupati Nath, hail, hail, hail!

If you became a mountain,

I'd make myself into snow and be with you.

If you became an ocean,

I'd become a river and come to be with you.

[Each word in the following two lines has an outline drawn around it.]

Even though we keep meeting in person, I like to write you letters

Because I like to say that you are my life friend.

To my dear, my life's dearest, dearest love: from your lover who is always, always drowning in your love and remembrances, I send love and remembrances forever that, like a river, can never dry up or break. I am fine and dream that you are, too.

There is nothing to write about in particular, except for your love and remembrances. I hope that, just as an old year is followed by a new year and new conversations and new hopes make old ones into history, so the path of our love will bring with this new year new hopes and the start of new things. Even if we die before the end of eternity, our love will forever be immortal.

If you became a rose,

I'd become a bumblebee and come to you.

If you became the full moon,

I'd become the brightness and be with you.

Now I'll say some things in response to your letter. I wasn't trying to distance myself from you at all. What I actually wanted to say was that I can do anything at the invitation of your pleasure; that's all I said. I didn't say your letter had mistakes, that you don't know how to write, that your alphabetic letters are incorrectly formed. It's another thing entirely to say that

mistakes will happen, no one knows how to write, and some letters will be incorrectly formed. In that, not only you, but I, too, make mistakes, don't know how to do things, and write some words incorrectly. In actuality, no one knows everything. There's just a small amount of difference in what each person knows; some people know a little more, some a little less. No one knows things from birth. One must continue to learn, and then one becomes able to do things. Circumstances allow some to learn and study, others not to. Whose fault is that? It's the fault of nature. You probably know more than I do about some things, and, likewise, I probably know more than you do about others. We must learn from each other. Who's big and who's small? We're all the same.

It seems to me that you're angry with me, or that you thought I intended to injure you somehow. When people love each other, it will be true and pure love. Let the villagers say whatever they want; I don't care about such talk. Because there's nothing new in this world. In the end, death comes to love. No one has already lived life. Certainly, in order to survive in life, a boy needs a girl's help, and a girl needs a boy's. Therefore, in our Dharmashastra Hindu scriptures this is written: a boy and a girl (a man and a woman) are the two wheels on a chariot. If one of a chariot's wheels breaks or is missing, the chariot can't run. In that way, one cannot survive a life alone.

Now comes the subject of acting meanly. First of all, I want to say that I trust that nowhere in the world, certainly, has a lover ever acted meanly toward his/her lover about anything. You haven't acted meanly toward me, and I haven't acted so toward you. Laughter and joking are just laughter and joking. They're not what's called acting meanly. I haven't ever prohibited them or said to you, "Don't speak like this to me." Because of me you say your dreams have become reality. Still, even more, if you have any dreams that have not yet become reality, I'll try to make them so. In that way they'll become reality. Against the suffering delivered to your heart/mind, I'll make manifest my own suffering.

Whatever I felt like yesterday, today I'm the same. I am the same. I loved you yesterday, I love you today also, and I will love you tomorrow. As long as it's no trouble to you. Up till now there has been no trouble. I'd like to ask you about, or to discuss, one more thing. But I'll ask about that thing later when there's time. In your view, I look different you say, but I don't look any different to myself. Kind God might know why.

One thing is making my heart/mind suffer a lot. But I can only fill these two eyes with tears. I can't find a path to explain my own heart/mind to you. Never consider yourself an orphan, or all alone, in that manner; I will always be yours as long as I live. I will always try to make all your dreams come true. Whom do I have, after all, in this life, except you? Today when you called

yourself an orphan and said you were all alone, I felt like crying and feel so now. Doesn't my love for you exist? It felt like you quickly forgot my love today. When you said that, I, too, felt like I had no one. May we never have to separate; it feels like I pray to God for this alone. Do you feel the same way? I hope that God will certainly hear both of us. Of course, no one knows what the future will hold.

Now, I won't write other things. Read my mistakes as correct. Finally, I request leave to say goodbye, drowning in hopes of your contented letter.

"Bye-bye"

Your affectionate loving one

"I'm walking along carrying the tokens of your love.

I'm crying at the memory of you—tears have spilled all over my heart."



Letter #12—Vajra to Shila

"To Pashupatinath, hail hail hail!"

2047/3

Dear, so very dear, beloved.....Father's Sister's Daughter, everlasting remembrances and none other than everlasting tokens of affection from your miserable beloved. Being well myself, I also hope that you are well.

There's really nothing special to write about. What on earth is this thing called love [*māyā-preti*]?? Once one falls into its web, one is ready to do anything at the invitation of one's beloved. Why, oh why, is it that what you say, memories of you, and affection for you are always tormenting me? If I don't see you even for the shortest while, I feel such restlessness! Where should I go to meet her, I think. The moment your likeness appears in my mind, I can't chase it away for even one second. What is this that's happening to me? I don't know. It seems to me today that without you I couldn't survive.

A person's life is not just a life of flowers alone; thorns also exist. One will sometimes have suffering, sometimes happiness. After the night the day will certainly follow. In a person's life, one is not defeated just because one suffers. One must live according to *dharma* [religion/one's duty] as one awaits the light.

As much as we laugh and talk, it seems to me that up till now probably nothing bad has happened, and I'd say that probably nothing bad will happen. Jokes are jokes, laughter is laughter, seriousness is seriousness—that's

all. Because one is human, one has to do all kinds of things—one has to walk, one has to talk. Why wouldn't all kinds of circumstances befall one in whatever group/class? In that way, one has to be able to become part of one's family/race/group. That alone is called a human life. Whoever can mold time and circumstances during one's own lifetime—that alone is the human condition.

These days nothing is impossible in this world. A person can do anything. I offer a prayer today to Shree Pashupatibaba that just as our love develops more and more fully, so too may it grow and develop fully in the future, may it be able to blossom and blossom. I also say today that love is for the purpose of spending one's whole life together forever; I don't say that love is for the purpose of separation.

Never consider yourself unfortunate or miserable. We only have two days to live; we must die and go away one day. For this reason, let's spend our lives joined together, laughing happily, okay? You certainly aren't any less of a person just because you didn't get to attend school. Everything you say has a great influence on me. I'll be extremely fortunate if I find in my life such a courageous life friend as you.

I'll write about other things in another letter. How many things there are to write about here! My notebook pages are almost gone! There are probably many mistakes—read them as if they were correct. You haven't stopped sending letters, but the letters have become less frequent—for that I'm sad. Drowning in hopes of receiving your letter, I say goodbye.

“O.K. By, By”

from your insane one



Letter #13—Vajra to Shila

Shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/3

To Kali's cow, hail hail hail

[surrounded by leaves and a heart with an arrow through it]

A flower keeps blooming in order to give an aroma

Life keeps going on in order to give and receive love

Dear, my wholeheartedly beloved Father's Sister's Daughter, continuous remembrances and emotions of infinite love from your miserable one whose memories of you make him forget himself. I am well and hope that you are also well.

There's nothing special to write about. Because of my love for, and remembrances of, you, I'm applying colored ink onto this white paper by means of a few words. I hope that you will accept this without suffering any pain. This "beloved" [*māyālu*] stuff—who knows what it is?? It feels like it's impossible to live without someone. The moment when memories and love leave is the moment when this body will cease to exist on this earth. Love is attached to one's soul; when a person's body dies, the soul can die, too. It seems to me, though, that our love will always remain immortal and unchanging.

In particular there is one thing to write about: you seem to me different from before, and you seem angry with me for who knows what reason. You hesitate to write in a good, open way about your own things [feelings/thoughts]. You'll probably get even angrier because I said that. How much opposition and sadness you must have suffered! I, too, have suffered from such things. We must advance forward virtuously according to our duty [*dharmā*]. One day, once we've escaped these things, success will be possible. This life—what is it all about? To survive for even two days, I find that all kinds of things happen. Just laughing and speaking with someone will almost certainly lead to love, and it is possible to love only one person. And for me it's none other than you. Our love is not just for the sake of decorating notebook pages. It makes me feel really bad to see you walking along so angrily. The day before yesterday at the water tap when the water was splashing, I didn't speak to you with an unpleasant attitude. I only said as much as I did because when it was time to put your jug under the tap, I thought you might get splashed, but you interpreted my words backward and immediately left angrily. The next day on my way home a happy heart/mind didn't show itself on your face. How awful I felt to see you looking at me with big, angry eyes! You can't really be angry at me without a reason—there must be some reason, right? But I haven't been able to learn it.

But let me not write too much, or you'll get sick of reading this. I beg forgiveness for my mistakes. Have you made a promise not to write any more letters, or what? The day before yesterday while I was ploughing the field for corn, I said that I wouldn't write letters anymore, right? So, I won't put any pressure on you to write any more letters, and I can't hope to receive any more letters. That's okay. But my heart/mind wouldn't obey me when I said I wouldn't write any more letters. You'll probably get sick of reading this—please don't feel bad. Okay, goodbye. If you wish.....

Bye bye

My angry beloved, beloved

Don't go far, far away, my beloved

:- this insane miserable one



Letter #14—Shila to Vajra

[surrounded by leaves]

.....Cousin, what do you.....?

Date: 2047/3/8

Place.....

Time, morning, o'clock

Dear, dear.....Mother's Brother's Son, this ascetic/austere one greets you in this letter, carrying remembrances and extremely much, much, much love—love that is longer than a river, bigger than an ocean, more numerous than the stars in the sky, saltier than salt, and sweeter than sugar. There's really nothing special to write about. My love will not break or die until my life/spirit/soul leaves this world. Mother's Brother's Son, goodbye for today. I'll meet you again soon.

Bye-bye. I wrote this extremely quickly. I beg forgiveness for my mistakes here. I had nothing I absolutely had to write while in this much of a hurry, except that I saw you looking so angry! (1) Please don't leave your own loved or beloved one; the injuries to your heart.....Rather, my request is that you accept those photos that are all in pieces. (2) Even though the river flows, the sand stays put; even though you're far, far away from me, the mark and remembrances of this heart will stay put.....What to do, friend? I find myself living a life that's totally in pieces. How unlucky I am! Okay, goodbye. Your despairing love.....I have lots of memories of you today.....!



Letter #15—Shila to Vajra

Date: 2047/3/26

Place: At.....?

Time: Half past 9 at night,
when, remembering you,
I write this short letter.....?

[Drawing of flowers and leaves surrounds the opening remarks.]

A flower is blooming.
In order to let you smell it, I write
this letter. May our.....? be successful.

And for memory's sake

—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—
 —love—love—love—love—love—love.....?
 glory, glory,, glory,,, hail, hail,,

Dear.....Mother's Brother's Son, from an ascetic or crazy woman, much, much affection and many sweet remembrances.....Mother's Brother's Son, actually, there is nothing special to report; I just wanted to send you remembrances or some things from my heart/mind, or some emotions.....Mother's Brother's Son, why have we started to love and love each other, have such affection for each other? I can't figure out why. Why, oh, why? If I don't see you, this heart/mind of mine starts to worry even more: where will I see you? Where will I meet you? What is that, what is that? I don't know myself.....In this life of seemingly two days' length, it seems to me that one is always asking when and how. It seems that what one says won't necessarily happen.

Sometimes sunshine, sometimes rain; sometimes a river flows, sometimes it dries up. Sometimes laughter, sometimes tears; sometimes suffering, sometimes joy. This is what a person's life is like. Once a person has been born, s/he must do all kinds of things, but even.....? And I.....? Maybe it's because I'm extremely unlucky, I don't know—why is it that really bad things always come to me? Even when I do something well, it turns out badly. If I speak well, it comes out wrong. And to you I speak extremely badly, don't I? You might say that it doesn't seem so to you. But how meanly I have treated you! And while speaking to you, how I have spit upon you! How meanly I have treated you and spoken to you, you probably thought, haven't you.....?

But don't think that way, okay? No, then again, for whatever reason when I say to myself that I won't say it, then just like that, from my mind and mouth.....'s [i.e., your] name comes out. Why is it that when I say I won't say something, it comes out of this mouth of mine anyway? It probably has made you extremely angry, right?

.....Mother's Brother's Son, what is there left to write about? In this life, as far as love goes, I have loved.....As far as love goes, it feels just like I've loved.....If there isn't any love, then our.....How people will laugh, perhaps! No, but I say that this is our love, or else..... May we be successful, I say. What is your wish.....? Of course, even when there are wishes and desires, no one knows anything about the time and circumstances under which they will be fulfilled.

But some people say that if it's their lot in life, whatever it is they'll do it. But it seems to me that it's up to each person's own wishes.....Even without my telling you this, you would be knowledgeable about it.

And again, compared to your letters mine are.....? I'm weaker at everything.

In this life an educated women will live to see the entire world. But I'm like this: I must live like a blind woman.

My life is like this, I find. But why should I write so much? Again, you'll just worry, right? Okay. Whatever else there is here, there are certainly mistakes. Read them as if they were correct. If you find there are many mistakes, please remember your.....and forgive them. We'll meet again in another letter. Why have you quit writing letters? It's because you're angry, right? Okay, goodbye for today. "O.K. By, By"



Letter #16—Shila to Vajra

Date: 2047/3/28

Time: 10:00 at night

There.....? In the place.....?

[This letter was probably sent together with previous (3/26) letter.]

Dear, many.....Dear L.....F.....[i.e., life friend] Mother's Brother's Son, many, many remembrances and affections from me.....Mother's Brother's Son, there isn't really anything to report; I write only because many.....remembrances and memories are tormenting me. What to do.....Mother's Brother's Son? Today I'm going to plant rice with a work party.

Goodbye for today. "O.K. By, By" V. B. "A"

(1) It's raining; the grove of trees makes noise

The monsoon has started; meetings with my own.....have stopped.

(2) Love, you are extremely cruel.....

(3) You'll probably say that "A" [i.e., I] just took a piece of paper from the same notebook that I used to write the 3/26 letter and only changed the date.

(4) The one I wrote before is the one with the flowers drawn on it;

(5) This sheet was empty, so I wrote on it today. "O.K."

[Written across the middle right side of the letter is the following phrase:]

Hoping for a letter, the crazy woman



Letter #17—Vajra to Shila

Shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/4/2

Place: A small room

Time: 10 o'clock at night,
remembering your softness

May Pashupatibaba fulfill our wishes!

Dear, dear beloved.....unbreakable memories and infinite affection from your.....I am well and hope that you are, too.

There's nothing special to write about, except that memories of you keep torturing me so much that I'm scratching a few words onto this page in order to give my heart some peace.

What should I say in particular? The day before yesterday I wasn't able to come to your house—you had invited me to apply henna. That was my mistake; actually, I should have come. But there was a reason I couldn't come, and for that I'm very sad. Because of this I find that you're very angry with me. What to do? Sometimes, who knows why, something happens. I really wanted to come so much. What can I say? If I come by day after day, what will your mother and the others say? That's the only reason why I couldn't come. Because you got angry over this little thing, you won't even talk to me, and when you come to get water at the tap, you move far away to talk, and you won't even look at me. Such is my heart/mind because of this!

In hopes of meeting you, I went off to cut grass instead of harvesting the jute. Even though the others were going, I wouldn't listen and headed in another direction to cut grass. For an hour I waited for you without cutting any grass, but you didn't come. I felt extremely sad. Are you so angry at me that you won't even meet me or talk to me from now on, or what? When we met in the evening, our conversation didn't go very well—how very, very bad I feel! When you show me so much hatred, how bad that makes me feel! Come today, and let's create an understanding that will make our love successful and that will make us never be separated. From tomorrow on, let no person laugh at our love. Just as a tree shakes after the wind blows, so, too, there's nothing to fear just because the villagers and others now know about our love. We've already seen with our own eyes the decrease of this kind of occurrence [i.e., fear of what others will say] around here. In the past, people used to court like this [i.e., fearfully]; nowadays, just because people say, "This or that happened," let us not be required to walk along the path with bowed heads. Let us be ever more open with each other, and let us love each other more and more. Why shouldn't all sorts of circumstances befall us??

But after considering them fully, we'll let them be. If separation becomes necessary, instead we'll leave this world altogether. This will be one of our love's priceless, immortal considerations.

Once our heart/minds have become identical, there's nothing to have to be ashamed about. Tell me, please, when we will make the auspicious time of our union, and by which means we will make it. However you want, come before me, and however and whenever you say, that's how I'll do it.

I'll write about other things in a different letter. I beg forgiveness for my mistakes.

One → It rains, and the forest turns green (while I don't see you)

It's as if moss were growing on my heart/mind

Okay, I'll say goodbye and will await your letter.

Bye-bye—my so dear insane one

From your:—crazy one



Letter #18—Shila to Vajra

[surrounded by flowers]

Dear.....?

Beloved.....?

Date 047/4/8

Dear.....Dear.....Mother's Brother's Son, from miserable me here are affection and remembrances more numerous than the stars in the sky, longer than a river, like a river that will never dry up.

I'm well.....and hope that you are well, too.....Mother's Brother's Son, there's nothing special to write about; it's only because of memories of, and affection for, you that I write this...should I say letter, or should I say "letar" [letter] in English? Mother's Brother's Son, what were you talking about? I'm not angry with you. Again, it's hard to meet these days! What to do.....? Because of conditions at home and having heard the talk of the villagers, who says we can meet? I feel like saying goodbye and leaving this world.

But what to do? A person probably doesn't get to survive just because s/he says, "I will survive," and a person probably doesn't get to die just because s/he says, "I will die." And so, even though I've said, "I'm an unfortunate one; I'll die," I haven't been able to die. How very, very much suffering and sadness, how many thousands of troubles and difficulties, how many thousands of obstacles I've borne! And even though they have burned up this

heart/mind inside me and turned it into ashes and stones, I find that I'm obliged to go on living in this human world.....? Let's see what this human world will be.....I write. If whatever one said became true, I would.....[marry] you today. What to do? It seems to me that whatever one says does not necessarily become true. Perhaps.....or Mother's Brother's Son, you said, "I hope that the time of our union comes quickly," and you asked by what means it should be done. But I say this: however much union/agreement there is between loved ones.....? But I say this: I won't elope, no matter how much the villagers laugh—I won't elope, I say, but what will this miserable karma of mine cause to happen?? Then again, with you.....a wedding? [*wedding* is partly crossed out] And afterward, how would I change my kinship relationship with your mother? This is such a difficult kinship relationship, so difficult. And our mothers'.....? Right.....You said that I was perhaps angry. I feel.....Was it because I didn't answer that letter? I don't know. I don't know anything; you're the knowledgeable one, except that my letters have gotten a little less frequent—what to do? Work at home and free time.....

Okay, goodbye for today. We'll meet again in another letter. I beg forgiveness for my mistakes.

"O.K. By & By"
[diagonally] beloved
your.....



Letter #19—Shila to Vajra

[Undated, except for "1/2/3/4," which could mean it's related to the 047/11/1,2,3,4 letter]

I'm the beloved of your.....

I'm the lover of your.....

You're my lifelong life friend.....Don't go off and leave your own lover, causing injuries to my heart. Rather, accept my request:.....those pieces of the photo.

What to do? I'm a helpless life that has been broken up into pieces. But no matter how many pieces there are, memories of you keep coming to me, memories of that beautiful face, that delicious voice calling, "Shila, Shila," keep coming to me. This is my daydream.....

[no closing]



Letter #20—Vajra to Shila

[Most of letter is written backwards!]

shree, shree, shree

[forwards]

Time:—8 o'clock in the morning (eight)

[backwards]

Date 2047/4/12

“Pashupatibaba hail! Hail!! Hail!!!”

Dear, so very dear beloved.....tokens of everlasting, delicious remembrances and delicious affection from your.....I am well and hope you are also.

There was really no reason to have to write, except for the reason that memories of, and affection for, you torment me so that I can't NOT write. Why, oh why, do memories of you keep tormenting me? Writing a letter doesn't even manage to ease the torment. I'll write about other things later. I'm writing in a hurry now. Only because I thought you might get angry if I didn't write have I written this short letter.

Your—.....

“Bye-bye”—

[forwards] You can read the letters the right way around in a mirror.

Perhaps you'll get angry because I wrote these alphabetic letters backward.

Don't get angry, okay? (I was just showing off!)



Letter #21—Vajra to Shila

Date: 2047/4/15

While remembering you

“Pashupatibaba hail! Hail!! Hail!!!”

Dear, dear beloved.....Father's Sister's Daughter, everlasting and continuous remembrances and boundless tokens of love. Being well myself, I wish you good health.

There's nothing special that must be written about, except that because of love and memories of you I want to say a few words about my heart/mind's emotions.

Even though I want to forget you, I can't forget because every second, all the time, it's the memory of you alone that tortures me. I can't even take care of myself. When will I meet you, see you, I keep thinking. Why this is, I don't know. Perhaps because of love of you, or.....? Now, if I say I won't meet or talk with you, then memories of you become even more numerous, and this heart/mind of mine worries so about meeting you. Even though I put great effort into laughing, I just can't.

In your letter you said, "I won't elope," but I never said to you, let's do that. It seems to me that if anyone challenges us, we shouldn't retreat/run away; rather, after we show that person, s/he will give up. To laugh and to talk is in the nature of human beings. In the face of pure love, any power in the world must go down to defeat in the end, as much love as there is. Another thing: you asked how to change our mothers' kinship relationship. Well, it's not that close a relationship—it's just for the purpose of speaking to each other [*bolne sāino*]. Is our kinship relationship really that close a one? If you look at kinship relationships, from one perspective they're one thing and from another, another thing. A kinship relationship is only for the purposes of speaking. In whatever manner, if the small leaves of a tree die, there are always new ones again. Village kinship relationships are like that. You, I, our mothers, and the villagers have all already changed kinship relationships. Oh, what has already happened around here! What—now that we love each other, can there really be separation? Certainly not, it seems to me. In that case, our union couldn't be.....?

Now, our mothers have probably already found out about our love because just as the wind shakes a thin bamboo tree, so that wind has also reached our mothers, or.....? It's an injustice that one can't hide true things. What I say is, if you have such a thought, and if you can honor/obey your mother, then I, too, can honor/obey my mother. In this world, who is the kind of mother who doesn't want to see her sons' and daughters' wishes and happiness fulfilled? The happiness of the sons and daughters alone is the happiness of the mother. In a life that lasts only for a day or two, if one can't get the things one wishes for, what kind of life is that? What—should I tell my mother.....to speak with your mother.....about our subject/situation.....?

On the one hand you say, let's make our love a success, but on the other hand you do.....I can't understand anything. My life's main direction (thought) was that until my studies were completed, I wouldn't be in favor of getting married. But what should I say—my father wants to arrange my marriage. Up till now I haven't given my mother and father my consent. These days I'm tired of thinking and thinking already, I haven't been able to reach any certainty, I can't even think of anything, what should I do, how

should I do it, how can I make this burning heart/mind peaceful, I can't find anything anywhere except your love, these days what thoughts keep coming to me! Up until today I never used to consider myself alone and unlucky, but these days, who knows why, oh why, but it seems to me that I make myself alone, and there's no one who's as miserable, unlucky, and [one word illegible] as I am. There is no path to satisfy [three words illegible]. My heart/mind is filled up with nothing but sadness. Whichever way I turn there's only hopelessness, only despair. All my life's young dreams are being nipped in the bud. All my dreams are about to become false beliefs. I've already stopped believing in them myself. Just as a hunter's arrow becomes restless when, poor wretched one, it can't make its destroyed desires or its own helpless flight endure, so, too, does anyone who has no destination. Today it's like that for me. What was I yesterday? What am I today? And what will I be tomorrow? That, too, I don't know. But even if I'm all alone, as long as there's one fistful of breath in this body I'll get married only to my own life. I think, "I should go [i.e., marry someone else]," but I can't go. Sometimes I think, "I absolutely will NOT marry, whatever happens; that's what I'm going to do, that's how I feel." But sometimes I think, "I WILL get married in the end, by choosing a life-friend-type of marriage." Whether it happens earlier, later, or much later, the result is the same, or—? I think, we are God's [*īswar*'s] family. Whatever God [*īswar*] gives of God's own share, that's what we should take, that alone should we take, that alone should one carry off, it seems to me.

Finally, may I obtain forgiveness for my mistakes. We'll meet again in another letter. Okay, farewell.

Your—crazy love
"Bye bye" (beloved)



Letter #22—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 047/4/25

"May Pashupatibaba give us both good fortune."

[half the page is taken up with a drawing of a huge heart with an arrow through it; circling the heart are the two lovers' names and "My Life Friend"; flowers surround the heart; inside it is the following poem:]

If a flower doesn't have an aroma even after blooming,
 then what is the meaning/use of the flower.....?
 If two lovers can't be united even after having fallen in love,
 then.....of love?
 Your own beloved
 beloved beloved beloved

Dear, so dearer than dear, beloved Father's Sister's Daughter, with love that is more numerous than the stars in the sky, that is longer than a river, and that, like a river, never dries up, and with such delicious remembrances, from your beloved.....I love you from head to toe!

No matter how much sadness there keeps on being in my heart/mind, I have to say that I'm well, and I hope that your health is also good.

There's really nothing special to write about, except that because of love for, and memories of, you, I write these few words. First of all, listening to your words I was amazed. Either you were hiding something from me or you just said whatever you had heard. You alone know perhaps. Believe me or don't believe me, I still consider you to be mine alone. But you alone know with what kind of glance/perspective you look at me. I have told you the things of my heart/mind without lying. My father has neither scolded nor said anything at all about the subject of you and me. Whatever you heard is entirely false. That can only be the talk of those who are angry at our love. It seems to me that that's just the behavior of enemies who want to see us separated. One must listen to talk, but not all talk can be true. Here if one listened to all the talk, it wouldn't take long until one became crazy. What—does a forest bird talk? No, it doesn't. It's necessary for us to write letters according to the road of truth. Yes, I agree that my father sometimes gets angry. He scolds me, but not about the subject of us. To this day, I still have no knowledge of his ever having scolded about the subject of us. If I have lied, may it be considered a huge sin.

Or does our mother scold you about the subject of us.....?

Still to this day, I can't understand the things of your heart/mind well. If you want to be far, far from me, that's okay; you're welcome to do so. This miserable one will live out a life that will be like a night without a moon. What your opinion is, I don't know. Only if you accept the things of my heart/mind will you find yourself saying, "May our love be successful." I still don't know how our union can occur, and when I sent a letter about the subject of our union, you didn't respond. What it seems like to me is that if we keep talking like this, our union probably can't occur. Whatever will be, that's all right. How our love began—I don't know that, either. One doesn't create love, they say; love creates itself. Perhaps that's what happened. Don't

create love, love has appeared—what to do? These days this world accepts love marriage and doesn't look upon it as trouble—saying which, will we not accept this love? As many things as I write, in the end it's all the same, and again you'll get sick of reading it.

One day you will certainly have to go to someone's [i.e., a husband's] home. I tell you the truth, whether you'll be angry or happy with me. Hearing this talk about marriage is unpleasant. The other day while talking about my marriage, I brought up the subject of you with my father and mother. My father and mother are already content to accept you in a.....manner. But there must be consent from your direction. On this subject, you have nothing to worry about. While I was wondering how to bring up the subject of you, Father and Mother spoke, saying, "If it's not all right for us to say anything to arrange your marriage, then you say something!" I mentioned your name. "If the two of you agree on this, then it's okay. Nothing's better than a marriage by mutual agreement," they said. "In that case, will you [i.e., Shila] come of your own accord or do we have to go discuss the matter with Shila's relatives?" Father and Mother asked. I said nothing in response. Mother said, "Should I go discuss the matter with Shila's mother?" But only because I told her not to right now did she agree not to. So, will your mother agree to our union.....? If I send my mother to discuss our union, you can talk about me with your mother—to make your mother content is your job. I heard that your mother said, "If a boy and my girl like each other and someone comes to request permission to marry her, I'll give it. Their life is theirs alone to live," I heard she said. Here it only has to be your wish. Write or say your own heart/mind's things without shyness. If one seeks to cross a river and one's legs are shaking the river can't be crossed.

These days all this talk about marriage is so, so unpleasant! Why, oh why, does this heart/mind keep slipping and sliding, seeking to meet you and talk with you? In the village also there are rumors that a certain someone is going to marry a certain someone else, and my friends are also talking about our union—I have no idea where they found out about our love. If our union can't be, how will I ever be able to make our separation endure? It seems to me that our separation can't be. You are mine alone, and I am yours alone. Whenever doing anything some obstacles will always arise, but just because those obstacles arise, should we not do it? It will be necessary to complete the work with a lot of effort in order to overcome those obstacles. After beginning any kind of work, it will certainly be completed in the end; it shouldn't be left off in the middle. It must be completed. With any kind of work, what kind of circumstance is it if one talks and talks about it, then leaves it off in the middle without finishing it? Looking at what kind of manner that is, it looks so bad.

Forgive me, okay; you'll probably get sick of reading this, and yet saying and saying this I've written and sent this much! Why, oh why, do I like to write? There are more things to write about, but I'll write again. One thing I must say. You seem to have told my cousin-brother that I'm really angry with your older cousin-brother. Please reveal why I'm supposed to be angry.

Okay, everything else I'll write about in another letter. Forgive my mistakes, okay? These days you've stopped writing letters; maybe you're angry.

Okay, farewell.

"Bye-bye"

My dear beloved

[diagonally across bottom left:] In hopes of a letter from you, your crazy



Letter #23—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 047/5/4

"May Pashupatibaba ensure our well-being for always."

Dear, so dearly beloved.....[Shila] Father's Sister's Daughter, many, many remembrances and continual love-within-love from your beloved. I remain well and hope that you are also well.

There was no real reason to write this letter. I find that you are very angry with me. I'm not angry. Perhaps it's because I didn't stay at the Tij dance the other day?! You alone know, perhaps. Please forgive me. Now I'll agree to anything you say. I'll do whatever you say.

I felt particularly bad this morning. If I had gone by way of the upper path by the front of the shop this morning, I wouldn't have spoken to you. But as soon as you saw me—maybe because you thought you'd have to speak with me—you went by way of the lower path. That's okay. If you don't want to speak because you're angry with me, then I can't.....[do anything about it]. I say again that at some point you will certainly understand whatever I have done to anger you and you'll forgive me. What to do? Sometimes it [i.e., life] even goes like that.

In reckoning a person's life, what is there, after all?? Sometimes there's this, sometimes that. Sometimes sunshine, sometimes shadows.

Why should I write many things? There are probably many mistakes here;

may I obtain forgiveness for them. Finally, having arrived here, I would like permission to stop this racing pen. I'll write about other things in another letter. Okay, I bid you farewell.

Your crazy lover
 Always loving you—
 “Bye-bye”—love—love—love—love—love
 I'll be waiting here for your letter.



Letter #24—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/5/7

Morning, 8 o'clock
 Remembering you

“May Pashupatibaba fulfill our heart/minds' desires.”

Dear, dearer than so very dear, life's most beloved.....always, always remembrances and auspicious love-within-love from.....crazy lover. I am well, and I wish you wellness also.

There was really no special reason to have to write, except for the sake of your love. In particular, I couldn't deliver the thing you told me to deliver yesterday (the envelope); I seem to have forgotten. In the evening when we met, you got angry with me, probably because I didn't deliver that envelope. And another thing—you got very angry when I was speaking meanly. But just as you made a “joke,” I, too, was doing just that. But you got angry. You just get angry at little, little things. Wherever we are, whatever we do, your heart/mind is the same. Let whoever hears anything say anything, but our love will remain love. Sometimes I have no free time because of my work, and obstacles prevent certain desires from becoming fulfilled. So, for this reason I couldn't deliver the envelope for you.

[no closing]



Letter #25—Vajra to Shila

Date: 2047/5/11

Time: 10:00 at night

Place: A lonely little room
with memories of, and
love for, you

“May Pashupatibaba fulfill our heart/minds’ desires!”

Dear, my life’s most priceless/precious life friend, unbreakable remembrances and unending love from your.....It must be said that I’m pretty well, and I wish for your wellness.

There is really no special news; I’m writing a few words only out of my love for, and memories of, you. I hope that you will accept them. In particular, I heard that you are sick. Because of this, my heart/mind can’t find peace. I hope that you will quickly regain your good health and have a long life. Don’t worry about anything. What planets [i.e., fate] must we receive here after all? However we arrived on this Mother Earth, so in the same manner one day must we leave. While surviving here, our lives are only God’s sport.

In particular, tomorrow (today) I’m going to Tansen. If I return quickly, we’ll meet in the evening. I’ll write other things in another letter. This is it for now, okay? May I obtain forgiveness for my mistakes. Okay, I bid you farewell.

“By-By”:—my beloved

From:—your crazy lover

**Letter #26—Vajra to Shila**

shree, shree, shree

“Date” 2047/5/30

Time: 11 o’clock at night

Place:—in bed, in unbreakable
remembrances of you

Pashupatibaba hail! Hail!! Hail!!!

Dear, so very dear, beloved.....many, many remembrances and more love than there is water in the ocean from your.....I am well and hope that you are, too.

There's nothing special to write about; only out of memories and love for you do I write a few words. In particular, the other day I found out that your mother had scolded you. For that I'm nothing other than very sad. What to do? It happened like that. Whatever we did, we did not do it with a bad heart/mind. Oh, what kinds of events occur in life!! Our love has gotten so strong that it's just like finger/toenails and flesh: each helps the other, and they're attached to each other.

Why, oh why, do I feel so, so.....these days? How many strange meetings there are in life! What different kinds of circumstances people have to walk among! But one must indeed walk, and if there's suffering, one must never accept defeat, for after defeat anything can happen. One must never lose one's courage. You must not be afraid of anyone. At any time, at every moment I'm ready to be at your side. Of course, why wouldn't all sorts of obstacles arise? It's true that just as seedlings can't live without water, without you how could I.....? I pray to God [*īswar*] that, if two lovers can't be united, why do they love each other? Let this not happen to anyone. I make a wish to God [*bhaguwān*] for our eternal union. Do you make the same wish? Even if our union can't be, my love will never end. Even if our love is broken off, don't forget this miserable, unlucky, crazy friend of yours.

I'm very sad that I tore up your photo and said whatever I said in that letter I gave you the other day. From human beings there will be errors, but one should also give opportunities to repair those errors. I've already said this: I've certainly never talked or laughed [i.e., flirted] with anyone else but you. But it's like this: if your love exists, then why perhaps do you act like this? [four lines of scratched out words] Any time you can be with me, I can also be with you. And then we can also discuss our wedding day.

There's so much more to talk about that it wouldn't fit on this page. We'll talk about it in detail later. There are probably many mistakes here; for that forgive me, okay?

One more thing: the enclosed postcard isn't good. Still, accept it without taking offense, okay? If what is written here causes you suffering, I beg forgiveness. Just because I tore up your photo postcard, please don't tear this one up, okay?

Okay, farewell

"By-By"—my beloved

beloved, beloved, beloved

life friend, your heart/mind is hurting, perhaps, right?

Always loving you,

your.....

see you again

Please give that envelope to your sister-cousin, okay?



Letter #27—Shila to Vajra

Date: 047/6/12

Time: 10 o'clock at night

Dear, so very...x...dear.....Mother's Brother's Son, from this miserable one best wishes for happiness, much, much love, and delicious, delicious remembrances on the occasion of 2047's Dashain.....There's really nothing to write about, except that it's been a long time since I wrote a letter. There was especially so much, so very much I should have written, but what to do? Because of circumstances, should I say, or what should I say.....? Ever since that day, it's been extremely unpleasant for me.

Why and how to say it, and whether to say it at all, I can't say. I used to be able to, but what shall I do?

I find that the world is like this: how many wishes, how many desires, how many interests, how many hopes there keep on being, but—what to do?—because of conditions and obstacles they get lost by themselves. And yet I find that it's necessary to go on living. You'll probably say, "What kinds of conditions and obstacles are there, after all?" you'll probably say, but—what to do?—it's not possible to cut one's chest open to show the obstacles and conditions that have arisen.

Please give forgiveness for my mistakes here, or, if you won't, then don't. This much for now. We'll meet again in another letter. Farewell for today. Namaste.

Truly, I forgot—I thought your postcard was so very, very beautiful!!

[diagonal on back:] My postcard is very unattractive—don't lose it, okay? [illegible words] In case you want to tear it up, I gave you a single one, so tear it up, okay? I'm very tired. For this reason, there could be thousands of mistakes here. For the mistakes.....? "By, By".....?

[writes Vajra's names thirteen times]



Letter #28—Shila to Vajra

shree, shree, shree, hail, hail, hail

Date: 047/6/15

Place:.....there?.....

Time: 10 o'clock at night

Dear, dearer than dear life's life.....friend, many, many everlasting remembrances and kisses of sweet affection from your dear friend, okay.....?

(Mother's Brother's Son), actually, there's no special thing to report, just remembrances. When I didn't speak to you on the way to Tansen, you probably got angry, didn't you? Then again, I didn't see you [plural] anywhere in the bazaar—why.....? What—did you go to see a film.....? You probably went, and I didn't see you anywhere in the bazaar. Even though I didn't speak to you on the path, I was intending for us to watch the film together, but suddenly I met my cousin-in-law, and she said, "Wait, let's walk together," so we walked together. "Let's go watch the film," I said. "No, let's not watch it. I'm going back to my marital home after I visit my natal home, so for that reason I'm not going to watch it," she said. How could I go alone, I thought? So, I didn't go. I came home with them. Then on the way home my cousin-in-law said, "Let's go by way of my natal home, and I'll then go to my marital home. We'll go together by way of Bir Pokhara, Shila." Then after she put a lot of pressure on me, I came back by way of Bir Pokhara with her. Then, immediately upon returning, Older Brother-Cousin asked, "Shila, where is Vajra Bahadur? Did you see him?" Then I unhappily said, I said, "I didn't see him."

Then Brother said, "What is with Vajra Bahadur? I can't understand anything," Older Brother said. "He seems to be despairing, or something," he said. "We shouldn't have established this youth club, but we did, and after doing so it should only be left off after our ends have been met," he said and got angry. "Vajra has become very, very different these days," he was saying.

What, what have you become?? Is it that love.....has puffed you up so much that you spoil your other connections? Yes, it's good to love, but if you're going to love, are you going to make your own friends so displeased? I, after hearing that talk, well, I.....? Again, you'll think that someone said something.....to me, but that's not so. That someone said such things about me must make you feel so disturbed, perhaps. The other boys have also been saying, "What has Vajra become these days, what??" Hearing this, I find myself feeling disturbed. Hearing, "Vajra has become spoiled," what thoughts came to me! It's probably said, "Vajra is courting someone; for that reason he's become spoiled," and many thoughts came to me. It's good to love, but

hide this, our love, deep inside in the very middle of the heart. And in your outer manner, as many friends as you have, keep the secret of our friendship from those friends. Whatever there might be inside, outside you must act as if we have no relationship. That's my opinion, but will you laughingly let it pass, saying.....? You'll say to me, "What—doesn't your [*tapaiko*] love exist? Don't you have memories? What—what was to me.....? Don't you remember the 'kiss' [English]?" I remember all those things, but even though we love in this way, let's not let it be recognized—that is what I mean.

Oh, how you are! You're just like children who go walking with whoever there is, with whatever kinds of boys, little friends or big friends—with all friends you are so.....? You yourself understand this, perhaps. Of course, you'll probably say that no one has to instruct you, but I'm not instructing you; I've given you a suggestion. No, I haven't given you a suggestion; I've reminded you. I've reminded you of this talk because I felt suffering. How have I felt suffering? Because Older Brother-Cousin and others have said, "Vajra has become different. He doesn't do things completely with us"—and hearing this, I'm.....?

In trying to write only a few things, it's gotten to be a lot. There are probably thousands of mistakes here; read them as if they were correct. Forgive the mistakes. Maybe because I've given you.....you'll get angry. If I angered you or if there are mistakes in the writing here, may I receive forgiveness.

There's nothing to cry about in this talk; you for sure would know this.
"O.K."



Letter #29—Vajra to Shila

Date: 2047/6/23

Unable to break my memories of you

Dear, so very dear.....everlasting, everlasting remembrances and tokens of unbreakable love from this miserable one. I remain well and hope for your good health, too.

First of all, I'm sorry for the "delay" in writing this letter. I liked the postcard with best wishes for a happy Dashain so much! For that, hearty thanks. Opening your letter and looking at it, I came to know everything. In particular, my friends haven't become displeased. There's not even any reason

for them to be so. As much as your Older Brother-Cousin does to ensure the success of our youth club, I've probably done no less. I, too, do not want all the work of our club to be spoiled. Even if I don't appear to be that hard working in my outer manner, in my inner manner, well, I want to see our club progress more quickly than quickly! Whenever anything is begun, one must complete it. I haven't forgotten this. And I won't forget it. Why wouldn't all sorts of problems arise in life? But I've vowed not to be defeated. Life is sometimes suffering, sometimes happiness; suffering and happiness are life. In the end, whatever and however much we do, one day we must certainly leave this world forever. As long as I live, may I be able to treat all my friends the same and take care of every urgency—other than that, I want nothing. That's what it means to live.

While reading your letter, at times I felt happy, and at times I felt sad. Just as you feel bad when you hear someone saying something bad about me, there's no way I wouldn't feel bad upon hearing someone saying something bad about you. Who, after all, feels good upon hearing something bad about one's loved one? That probably makes everyone feel bad. What you said was right. If God [*bhaguwān*] makes a mistake, we human beings exist. So, each one has to remind the other of mistakes. That's how one should live; we should give advice and reminders to each other. Everything must be reciprocal. What's the meaning of life friend? To contemplate together every small or large problem that is bound to arise in life; whatever suffering or happiness occurs, we must tie ourselves to each other. Time is not always consistent; sometimes there's suffering, sometimes happiness.

Just as you have memories of and love for me, so I have just as many memories of and love for you. Just as you probably know better than I do the troubles of your own heart/mind, so, too, do I probably know better than you the troubles of my own heart/mind. So, have we acted so as to show others our love? Certainly not. Why on earth should anyone not know—it has gone from one to another! Just as a tree shakes when the wind blows, so, too, has the news about our love spread like that. When one tries to hide the truth, one never can. Our love is true and always will remain true and immortal. Shila, you know well how long the ribbon of our love has already become. It seems to me that probably no one can break it. These days every villager already knows about our love. So, the villagers say about us things like, "So-and-so and so-and-so are courting; they're going to get married." How much of such talk have you and I already heard!! Look, Shila, in life not everyone is a friend; some friends are actually enemies. We shouldn't make our enemies laugh. We must stop revealing ourselves in their presence. Just because there's suffering today, we must not lose courage.

The other day at Dasaī Purniyā, you really were angry with me. That's

why you said to my younger brother that you wouldn't speak any more to my older sister. Why are you angry with me? I was about to head home, but—what to do?—I had to stay there because I couldn't avoid my friends' scolding. And you saw that. I was only sitting in the corner, providing company to my friends. What—could I ever.....[share] your misfortunes with others? I certainly could not. What—don't I know all about us? Those boys were just teasing me about us. Because I sat with them, you're so angry that you're not talking to me any more. Upon hearing that, I felt so sad! What my heart is like!

You said in your letter that we should act as if we had no relationship, but since everyone around here already knows about us, how can that be?

Now, after having hidden our love in the middle of our hearts, what to do? If two lovers who love each other can't meet to laugh and speak together, then how can this.....work? If we say, "Let's not meet, let's not talk," this heart/mind won't obey. If we don't see each other for even one day, how unpleasant it is! Your likeness comes before my eyes—what to do? If we do meet and speak, the villagers will certainly.....[talk]. Therefore, I say that we should join quickly with each other in a relationship of life friendship, and then no one will be able to say anything. Why should we keep giving the villagers more things to talk about?

Shila, you probably know the saying, "The more talk there is, the more misery there will be." How long a time our love has already lasted! These days people already honor our love a lot. I never want to see our love put into misery. It has already become.....to come get water at the tap. These days when anyone sees me coming they won't say anything to me. They look at me as if they'd never seen me or met me before. How I feel at such times! Shila, if our union can't be, how much more they will laugh! Therefore, let's promise to make a union whatever conditions arise; let's not allow anyone to laugh, okay? If we move the time of our union further and further forward, then our lives will get more and more difficult. Looking at this situation, I wouldn't consider it bad if our union occurred within this month (Asoj), but what do you say? Shila, there's one thing that you may or may not know: I have never talked about you. I'm listening to and respecting your words, and so you must also listen to and respect my words. Of course, I'm not saying that you haven't respected and listened to my words. You might get angry if I said that!

Look, Shila, how much time (how many days) have we been.....like this?!? In the end, one day our union must certainly happen; the villagers mustn't be allowed to.....How the villagers walk around talking about our love! Friends and relatives speak well, but how our enemies seek to do us harm—they want to break, to tear down our love. Shila, we shouldn't allow

anyone to tease us—remember these words well. Some people are singing a song of “will-it-or-won’t-it-be??” In this manner, our love has already begun to rot. Seeing and hearing this, my heart is cut into shreds. I can’t bear this talk any longer. If I’d known it would go like this, I would have proposed a union with you earlier. But you said later. Now when this much time has passed, the villagers have already begun to laugh. If our union happens, then it will be okay, but if it doesn’t happen, then what will the villagers say?? They’ll certainly say later on that so-and-so used to be like this with so-and-so. I know why you say later: if you marry, your mother will suffer, but it’s not correct to say that—one’s own life must also exist. In the end, you must certainly go one day to someone else’s [i.e., a husband’s]—or, rather, your own—home. Look, Shila, that’s why I keep saying these things to you. You can get angry or happy. Just as, “Whenever one sits, one is late; whenever one talks, there’s a lot to say,” so, too, do I have so very much to say. Oh, what kinds of conditions have arisen! It’s urgent that you write well the things of your heart/mind without shyness—what’s to be done, what there is, etc. Now what reason is there for the two of us to be shy with each other, after all?

Every second, every moment passes in your memory. Why, oh why, have I already become really crazy in my love for you? Whenever I sit down to study, memories of you alone come to me, and in my heart/mind various thoughts play. I can’t study like this. Rather, if you would be with me, would I be able to study? How strong I seek to make this heart/mind, but I can’t. Shila, I told you that I’ve talked about you and me with my mother, and Mother accepted our words. The day before yesterday Mother talked about it: “Well, will it be, or won’t it? You don’t have to walk far. If you are courting like that, then it would be fine just to agree to come home together without the parents having to arrange anything. It won’t work to go and request permission. If it’s like this, the villagers will laugh. If you agree to come home together, we’ll do whatever has to be done. If that’s not all right, then we’ll arrange another marriage for you.....” she said. Look, Shila, I had no interest or wish to get married. But what to do?? With conditions as they are at home, I’ve reached this decision. Shila, now let’s not push forward the time of our union very much. In my opinion, now Asoj is just about over, so in this coming Mangsir [two months from now] let’s tie together the ribbon of our union forever and ever with each other, I say. But let it not go later than that. What do you say? If you have a different opinion, then I don’t know anything. People will say, “A white one went, and a black one came; a black one went, and a white one came.” But it’s not like that. Everyone can find a life friend. Having said that, however, one can’t always find one just like one wants. Our life is not like that of an animal. Our life isn’t like an amusing plaything.

Shila, you probably found out a lot of things and are probably getting fed

up reading this letter. Please don't get fed up! Shila, it's useless to survive if we're far, far apart. In the end, our union will certainly occur one day. Because the villagers are laughing, I wanted to join together your, or, rather, our.....this month, but.....what to do??

Shila, I'll say one thing to you, and don't get angry, okay? Look, in life there are so many friends, but not all friends are alike. Some friends are such that they will give their own lives for their friends. And some friends are just companions. Some are selfish: those who only seek to fulfill their own intentions are more numerous, and after their intentions are fulfilled they pay more attention to the friendship. Some friends are like this: after starting a warm friendship, they want to spoil it. That's why one must separate the correct from the incorrect in what a friend says, or, rather, what was correctly said from what was incorrectly said. That's why one must understand well which friends are like what on the inside, whatever they're like in their outer manner. If not, if this can't be understood, then it will be just as if we kicked ourselves with our own feet. So many people are like that: they want to see others torn down, broken. You are probably more knowledgeable than I am about all of this. There was no reason for me to keep going on about it.

Okay, then (beloved). What a lot was written! There are probably a lot of mistakes here; you will certainly forgive them. Look, then, it's a time when it's just not possible to meet, or even if we do meet, it's not possible to talk about the things of our heart/minds. Only occasionally is there any opportunity. This is only one letter; the things of my heart/mind spill over from one to another [i.e., from me to you].

It makes me embarrassed/shy these days to come to your house—I don't know why. But what to do? I will indeed come.

Some lyrics, shall we say, or, rather, songs (competent or incompetent):

1. There are *gamchhanā* in the corners of the handkerchief. Memories of you keep coming to me.
2. Flowers blossom in a long line of baskets. Our union will occur this coming Mangsir.
3. A cow drinking water at the main tap; without you I'll be helpless.
4. I got lost in those mascara-blackened eyes of yours.

For my entire life, I'll remain with you.

Okay, love, now I say farewell. We'll meet in another letter

“Bye-bye,” my dear

beloved, beloved, beloved



Letter #30—Shila to Vajra

Date: 04/7/9 Dear V. B., my hundreds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of remembrances and affections. I am well and hope that you are well.

What should I say in particular? We're going today, the 9th, to Older Sister-Cousin's home. I thought I would tell you by mouth instead of writing you a letter, and I tried very hard to meet you, but you said.....? You didn't appear. It's okay.....? There wasn't anything urgent to write a letter about.....? Then again, if I go to such-and-such a place without saying anything, well.....?

You would get angry, wouldn't you? We're returning tomorrow

You.....?

Okay, farewell.

We'll meet again in detail in a letter.

"Bye bye"

Forgive mistakes.

**Letter #31—Vajra to Shila**

shree, shree, shree

Date: 204/7/12

Pashupatibaba, hail, hail, hail!

Dear, so very dear, beloved.....from your miserable beloved, feelings of unbreakable remembrances, and love that is wider than the sky, longer than a river, more numerous than the stars in the sky, just like a continuously flowing river, saltier than salt, and sweeter than sugar. It must be said that I am well. I hope that you are always, always well.

I find that my life is just a dream. Wherever I go, I remain miserable. I must remain alone. I made a promise to love and to spend my life together with someone, but she doesn't understand the meaning of love, so what can I say? No separation can stop pure love. There was a beloved who helped me survive, a friend for good times and bad—but it feels like she has already left my company. That's okay. She had even made me a promise. But where has that promise gone now? She alone knows, perhaps.

Shila, I can't determine the essence of your talk. You always act as if you're joking, and I can't go forward. I've said to you many times already, "Let's celebrate the moment of our union on the 1st or 2nd of this coming month

Mangsir [mid-November to mid-December 1990],” and you’ve said all right to that. You yourself said we’ll do it in Mangsir; I remember—at whose wedding? Now I’m behaving however I want toward you. Or, rather, events have occurred between us, and I’m acting as if you were my life friend. What—haven’t we plundered everything from each other? Haven’t we acted as if “that one’s mine alone”??

Even if one gets angry sometimes, love for one’s beloved is boundless and cannot die. Just as you get angry sometimes, so do I. Have you already forgotten our love, or what?? If you’ve forgotten, that’s okay because I’m a worthless person. Today I’m nothing but a person who’s leading a customary life, but I don’t know what I’ll do tomorrow. Why, oh why, does my heart/mind suffer so much like this today? I feel so unhappy.

Up till now I haven’t been able to do anything. We’ll see what will happen in the future. What’s written in whose fate? I’m all alone, and my tears keep flowing. Even if something happens in life, it feels like there’s nothing. Only you were a friend with whom I could share joy and suffering, but even you have gone far from me and want to make me a stranger. But that’s nothing. That’s okay. As far from me as you may be, may your heart/mind always be happy. I say I won’t remember, but then why, oh why, do the likenesses of those things, of walking together, of that kiss, of everything, keep arising? I promised Mother that we would marry within this amount of time, but.....

You’ve probably thought that someone (I) has no income: “His friends have already done this and that; how can I marry such a boy and how can I.....?” Right? On this subject you may get angry or not, but I’ll tell you the truth. Yes, I’ve also thought about it. As of now, I have no income. I’m studying. In the future I might or might not have an income, but I’ll do something—I’m eager to do so. Oh, what people have said! There’s a lot of sadness in my heart/mind. When that other man came to request permission to marry you and your mother gave it, at that time I heard that you said, “I won’t marry a soldier in the Nepali Army or an educated man.” Today I remembered that, and I asked myself, “How am I different from that man, after all?” I’m not in the military and have no wish to be, either. It’s just that I’ve studied a bit more than he has, but I haven’t been able to do anything. I find that you wish to marry and spend your life with a soldier in a foreign army, don’t you? Because a soldier in a foreign army can give you the complete ease that you want. What can I give you, after all? I find that money alone is important; or, rather, blind people consider money alone to be everything. But you probably know this. The turmeric crop is never large enough, or, rather, there can’t be any left over. Now, if our own home is bare, empty, how long will the wealth brought in from outside last? If there’s no apple tree in our own home, for how many days will it be possible to buy

apples and eat them? You probably still don't understand. Whenever we go to a foreign country, causing our own sweat to flow, that's for that foreign country, but if we cause that sweat to flow in our own country, or, rather, if we repair our own garden, we make our own home successful. In that way, our home will become strong. Nobody can do anything. If our country (Nepal) were rich, we wouldn't have to be slaves in foreign countries. For this reason, people who are as educated as we are should stay here and work. Even if we suffer today, certainly one day it will be possible to find ease and happiness. If one wants to eat apples, let's not buy them, let's plant a tree. Of course, some people are coerced into going. Let's leave off this whole subject. Forgive me for this worthless bother.

I can't understand your talk. When I said, "Let's do it in Mangsir, okay?" you said all right. Was it out of coercion, or what? I know this much: I have loved with you, and we have loved each other. You yourself know what I'm talking about. If your heart/mind is otherwise, then that's it. If it's the same, if you love truly, then before Mangsir 4th, your and my, or, rather, our, union will occur. Beyond that, I don't know what will happen. Probably you're fed up by this talk of "it-will-be-it-won't-be." For this I'm sorry. If you'll forgive me, forgive me; if not, don't. With caresses.

Your life friend,
 Lonely.....you who gets angry so easily,
 How can I understand your heart/mind?
 "By-By O.K."



Letter #32—Shila to Vajra

Date: 047/7/15

Place: In that same.....place
 Time: 10 o'clock at night, or so, let's say
 That.....? Some things about you and me
 Don't get angry after reading this,
 okay? If you get angry with me,
 I'll.....? Vee. Bee. "V. B."

Shree, shree, shree Pashupatinath, hail, hail, hail. Dear, so very dear.....? life friend, I offer you hundreds of thousands of tokens of affection from your life friend and beloved.

I am well, it must be said, right? I hope and desire that in the same manner you are also well. There are really no special things to write about; I only wanted to meet by letter.

.....? I consider myself to be miserable for having been so slow to write letters. What to do? Life is like this. The time one says is one's own isn't to be. You'll say I've forgotten everything, but that's not so, my own beloved.....? life friend. I'll never forget the moment of our union. Was it because I didn't write that you wrote such a diatribe? Such a harsh diatribe was uncalled for. What should I do, my.....? And what, oh what, is my heart/mind becoming like? Writing about what it has or has not become makes my heart/mind break. At home Mother has already been scolding so much about all kinds of things. The villagers say the same things. How can this life continue if it's like this? I'm, well, if it's like this, then I'll.....from this world forever and ever, or, rather, I'm ready for farewell.

You say, "I find that you are thinking of marrying and spending your life with a foreign soldier," you said. My thoughts haven't gone in that direction at all. If you say that, then I.....? (What—if I married a foreign soldier, would you.....[find] another life friend or love?) That's okay. It's your choice. What can I say, after all? Now you forget the promise that we made. If you don't forget I am ready, or, rather, consent to marry you. I consent, consent, consent! Except that you say the 4th of this Mangsir, you said, but that soon I.....I'd be ready whenever you say, but I.....That is to say, I am such a poor match. I'm a.....? I'm such a poor [i.e., not wealthy] daughter, which you probably already know. "Let's get married," you [*timī*] say; a woman must relinquish her family. I will relinquish my family, but my home's afflicted state makes me a very poor match.

You said, "I can't understand your.....at all. You are always laughing, playing, or joking. I can't understand anything," you say.....right? Yes, I'm always laughing and joking. It seems to me that we should both sit down in private to discuss all the things of our heart/minds, but even though I've looked for time to do so, I can never find time. To spend time discussing things like that—what should I say? I find it extremely difficult to write even a short letter. Saying that I find it difficult will probably make you angry again. You'll perhaps say, "Shila finds it so much trouble to write even a few words." It's not that it's that much trouble. Here it's just that whenever Mother sees me with any paper in my hand, she starts to scold me, saying, "Whose letter? To whom are you going to send it?" I say to myself that I'll write without letting Mother see, but I never find time anywhere in the day. If I begin to write at night, she starts to say, "Put out the light, put it out! To which of your young men are you starting to write a letter??" she starts to say. What to do?

Yes, we made a promise. What—have I already forgotten the promise and

left your company.....? Really, you wrote, “Before the 4th of Mangsir your and my, or, rather, our, union will already have occurred. Beyond that what will happen I don’t know.” What—if our marriage doesn’t happen by Mangsir 4th, are you ready to marry someone else? That’s okay. If you want, marry another much prettier, very educated girl that you like ever so much. Somewhere or other I’ve heard that you’re going to marry someone else. Even if you do, that’s okay.....? I don’t say this because my heart/mind lies; my mother said it. “Vajra is going to get married, it is said. I heard it while I was on my way to another part of the village. Vajra and his father had a big argument, it is said. Vajra’s father said, it is said, ‘You *must* marry the girl we, your mother and father, like,’ he said, it is said,” my mother said. Is it true or not? If it’s not, please laugh and send a response without getting angry. Then again, why did you say, “I’ve told my mother we’re going to get married”.....? You are an educated person, the son of a.....but I.....? Even though I’m the daughter of a poor farmer.....? when it comes to the subject of honor, even this poor farmer’s daughter knows what it is. What your honor is, what my honor is—everyone’s is the same. Now the villagers are all saying about us that we’re courting—oh, how many say that! They don’t only say that we’re courting; how many, many bad things they say, causing us dishonor. Whatever, however much they say, may our love not be thrown away, but let’s get married a little later. If you wish to do so, marry someone else and fulfill your mother and father’s wishes.

One day I’ll find time and an opportunity to invite you to visit me—will you be able to come? Send me news as to whether you’ll be able to or not. Really, it’s nothing—we’ll just talk about the things of our own heart/minds!!!

I thought I’d hide and write a few words, and now there’s a lot. There are probably thousands of mistakes. I’d like forgiveness for the mistakes. We’ll meet in another letter. Farewell for today. Farewell, farewell.

“OK By, By”

Your Shila



Letter #33—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 047/7/17

Place: In that same small room

Time: Began writing at about
9 o'clock at night

May Pashupatibaba cause the well-being of all of us.

Dear, so very dear, beloved life friend, tokens of continuous remembrances and continuous affection from your beloved life friend. Being well, I wish for your wellness.

There really was no reason to have to write a letter, except for memories of, and affection for, you, and to respond to your letter. First of all, neither did I get angry because you didn't send a letter, nor did I pour out a diatribe. I only wrote what I felt and heard in my heart/mind—the troubles of my own heart/mind, let's say. Shila, what did you say about "From this world....."? That the villagers have said such things about us, that we've done such things in front of them—they're our enemies. For this reason we have to leave off appearing together in front of them. If you did that [i.e., if you tried to kill yourself], then everyone would say even more. If anything happened to you, I would also.....drown. What—did we really put together a garland of love just to do that? Certainly not. Everyone loves, a mate exists for everyone. No one can survive life alone. Shila, just as you said, I, too, say let's sit in privacy somewhere and both discuss the things of our own heart/minds, but I just haven't been able to find the time. What to do? Once our hearts and our heart/minds have become one, how could I forget our love or our promise? I could never forget it even if you forgot it. Shila, I'll never break our promise.

Shila, who told you that you're the daughter of a poor person? Just as you are, I am, too. I'm also a farmer's son, just like you. We're not at all different. On the subject of money, sometimes there is money, and sometimes there isn't. It's never the case that those people with money are rich and those without money are poor. Money alone is not everything. It seems to me that the most important thing in the world is heart/mind. If one's heart/mind exists [i.e., if loving, desirous feelings exist], then that alone is everything.

Yes, your mother has certainly scolded you, but don't you ever feel small in your heart/mind because of the scolding. To scold is a mother's obligation. We must one day extinguish the role of our mother and father. Perhaps the step we should take is none other than that. It seems to me that our match can never be separated. If there's anyone who is to be my companion in this

world, it's you alone. And I am yours. To be life friends means to understand each other as companions in good times and bad. Shila, don't get angry, okay, but with what kind of heart did you say, "If you want, marry another much prettier, very educated girl that you like ever so much"?? Yes, I want to marry such a girl. I'm going to marry an extremely pretty, educated girl that I like so very, very much. I have already seen such a girl, have already chosen one. If I told you that one's name, you'd get angry and stop talking to me. Please don't get angry with me, okay. That girl is extremely pretty. As far as I'm concerned, no other girl is more beautiful than that girl in this world, and she also does not have too little education. She has a good, charming, big heart/mind full of laughter and is understanding and courageous. Perhaps you've seen that girl. Her name is written on the beautiful throne of my heart/mind. She reigns there. Now you probably understand who she is. Her name is "Shila Devi." I have placed your name all over my heart. Now let's change the subject. What did you say—"Somewhere or other I heard that you're going to marry someone else." And that I had an argument with my father. All that talk is a lie. If I'm lying to you, may it be considered a big sin for me—Pashupatibaba is my witness. My life might end, but I'll only die after having fulfilled my oath, my promise. You must be my companion. Look, Shila, ever since our enemies became jealous of our love, they have sought to throw it into disarray by doing bad things to distance us from each other. Shila, no matter what people say, we must keep this foremost in our thoughts: I am your companion, and you are mine. Don't walk around with your heart/mind small and full of nails. I have faith that our love will never be torn apart. Shila, I shouldn't write too many things. Oh, how many, many things of the heart/mind there are! Oh, how much love there is, how much! We'll write about that in another letter, or, later, we'll meet and discuss in detail the things of our heart/minds.

There are probably thousands of mistakes in this letter. Please remember your.....and forgive them. Okay, farewell.

"By by"

Your friend in good times and bad
life friend

V. B.



Letter #34—Shila to Vajra

Date: 047/7/18

Place: While you were
inside and I sat outside

Dear—: life friend.....? Tansen was a lot of fun, wasn't it.....? I was laughing and joking, but you got angry. That's okay, even if you got angry. I'm giving you your *teksuṭ*. During the day today, my sister-cousin and I opened its pocket and found lots of money, and she and I ate three rupees' worth of candy. Seeing you get angry really scared me. Even if you do get angry, do so with caresses.

If you wish, remember what I/we said this morning at the *panchāyat* building.

[no closing]

**Letter #35—Shila to Vajra**

Date: 047/7/25

Time: 10:00

[uses *timī* throughout, except in marginal addendum]

Dear.....? angry person.....? Well, if you get so angry,.....? I, well, if fate is like this, then I can't remain in this world. When you left here angry like that, I felt very bad. After you left here, the boys said, "suffering heart/mind," or something or other. You shouldn't have left so angry, but you.....? That's okay. If you're going to get so angry, then I, too, will.....? with you. At some time you said, "I'll never get angry," you said, but today you forgot that very quickly. That's okay. If you're going to get angry, then I'm also going to forget that promise—and our love. "O.K., V. B."

Forever and ever I'll.....with you

[in left margin, written sideways] It wasn't urgent to write a letter immediately, so why did I write a letter immediately? You explain it to yourself. From now on.....? my name.



Letter #36—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/7/26

Pashupatibaba hail, hail, hail

Dear, so very dear, beloved....., everlasting remembrances and affections from this miserable one. Being well, I hope for your wellness.

There really was no special reason to have to write a letter, except for remembrances of you and to write a few words in response to your letter. In particular, what should I say—yesterday I shouldn't have walked away from there in that manner, but I walked away because I'm an angry person. Yes, I said I didn't ever get angry, but once one starts to get angry, anger keeps rising. You also get angry sometimes. Yes, sometimes one will get a lot or a little bit angry for sure. But just because one gets angry, what—does one forget the other's love, then.....? As unpleasant as you felt yesterday when I walked away, I felt even more so upon reading your letter. I felt so bad. Just because I walked away like that yesterday, for such a minor thing, you made it into such a big deal in connection with our lives. I wasn't really angry with you. Nor was I angry that the other boys came. I said, "Let's sing well, dance, have fun," but when everyone clapped any way they wanted, well, I got angry with everyone and walked away. But without giving it even a little bit of thought, you brought talk of our love into the middle of it. Whatever did you write?? "If it's like this, I can't remain in the world like this. I'll forget that promise and our love. Forever and ever I'll.....with you. From now on.....? my name." What—was everything yesterday really about our love? Was that what I was really angry about? Oh, such things I find that you have written! That's okay.

Who else is mine in this world besides you? If you can't remain in this world, then I can't remain, either. How quickly you can forget our promise, our love, over such a minor thing. Shila, what happened to you? You said we could never be separated—I remember where you said it. In that case, why did you invite me on that day, and why did I come? At that time we created an inseparable life/spirit/soul. Have you thought about that time? What—am I never to be allowed to use your name? What—will you forever and ever be far from me? Or did you only write that? That letter of yours made me cry. That's okay, Shila; you forgot our promise, our love, and wrote that.

Your cousin-sister also said that you said, "From now on I'm not going to speak to that one," she said. You alone know that. Also, at the water tap, when asking me to move the water jug, you said, "C'mon, move the water jug!" and left. Oh, how unpleasant I felt! I find that you have so much anger

over that thing. If you weren't angry, you certainly wouldn't have written that.

I was thinking of you as my own friend in good and bad times (life friend). But suddenly today after you said and wrote such things I feel so unpleasant! Oh, what has my own....., or loved one, said? I feel like there's nothing left in this world that's mine. Today my heart is in pieces and is burning up. That's okay, even if I'm alone.

Oh, with what daydreams I had decorated my heart/mind! But.....happened. There's a saying: the daydreams of the poor, the miserable, and the helpless (those without help) will only be daydreams, it is said. What am I, after all? I'm like the wind, a person who has passed the S.L.C. [School Leaving Certificate] but who can't find work and so just hangs around. Useless, angry, crazy, what you said in the field my own heart/mind says to me now; what must others be saying? When this comes into my thoughts, my heart/mind suffers even more. You added a wound on top of a wound. That's okay. I'm a good-for-nothing person. You did right to forget my love and promise.....Marry.....some rich man who earns a lot of money, who never gets angry, who agrees with whatever you say, who isn't just like the wind, who is so very handsome. Because I can't give you anything but suffering. Why, oh why, do such thoughts keep arising today? I can't say what's happening.

My mother and father don't think our union is bad, but your mother thinks our.....is bad, doesn't she? Even if permission were requested [two crossed out, illegible words].....Then again, you say you won't go [i.e., elope just like that]. Fulfill your own wish. If that's your wish [i.e., to be requested in an arranged marriage], what can I say, after all? When you kick me, what am I to do? When you can't be my companion, how can I fulfill my own promise? Instead of your mother's wish, fulfill your own wish. But even if you remain far from me forever and ever, I'll still remember, I, this miserable good-for-nothing. Even if you kill your love forever and ever, may my love for you always remain. That your own wishes may be fulfilled is the desire of this so very miserable one.

Shila, I don't want to.....you by writing more than this to you. Please, remember.....and forgive this angry person who got even angrier and wrote who-knows-what here. If you wish, if you remember our promise, our love, those days of union, then the door of my heart/mind will forever and ever be open to you, and you will be welcome. Don't ever have a small heart/mind. Whatever did you write just because your heart/mind hurt a little bit? Just because I walked away like that, I didn't forget our promise, our love. Shila, what all have I said here to you? Do to me whatever else you want, but don't

say such things. Where can I go to satisfy my heart/mind? To whom can I pour out my own suffering? Even if there's no wealth, there should be heart/mind [i.e., a favorable inclination or desire]. If there's heart/mind [inclination or desire], there will be everything. You are mine, and I am yours. Shila, now you understand, perhaps. I said to myself that I wouldn't write, but I like to write. The letter has gotten this long. There are probably many mistakes. For that, give forgiveness, okay? We'll meet again in another letter.

“By—By:—”

[written sideways in left margin] If you want to be.....from me, then I have nothing. You yourself think about it.



Letter #37—Shila to Vajra

Date: 047/8/5

Place:.....in that same place

Time: 9 o'clock at night

Dear.....? friend, hundreds of thousands of kisses of remembrance and affection from your Shila, dear “V. B.” Really, really, there was nothing to write about, except that remembrances of, and affection for, you keep afflicting me. “V. B.,” it seems like you're angry with me. I was awaiting you, but you didn't come from that.....? place. Thinking that you would come, I had so hoped that I could talk about some urgent things, but you.....? That's okay. All yesterday's hopes for a conversation have turned into despair. Today for sure, okay.....?, if you wish. If you don't wish, I.....?

Okay, farewell—we'll meet again in a letter

“O.K. V. B, By, By”

In case there are mistakes

[unfinished line] (who fucks with his penis)



Letter #38—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/8/12

Time: Started at 9 at night

Place: In that same empty
lonely little room with
cruel remembrances

Bhairavbaba hail, hail, hail

Dear Shila, remembrances and delicious kisses. Being well, I hope for your wellness.

In particular, I'm helplessly miserable because of writing this letter late. Really, there was nothing that had to be written about, but then again, even though I keep telling myself not to write letters, I can't not write. You're probably fed up with reading these letters, aren't you?

[From the following paragraph to the end of the letter, words are seemingly haphazardly underlined or put in large parentheses for emphasis, either by Vajra or by Shila]

In particular, yesterday we were about to leave for home when your younger brother said to me, "Older Sister said to stay, and if you don't stay, she'll never speak to you again, she said," he said. With what hope and delight I stayed! But you.....kicked one of the other boys as soon as you arrived—it would have been better if you had kicked me! I found out that you were so angry! What bad things I find you have thought about me! I find that you've already forgotten everything about our.....That's okay. If your.....really doesn't exist, then I can't even.....If your.....doesn't exist toward me, then do what you like. I was just sitting around playing and joking with your sister-cousin. But you understood it as.....You had said you would come, and so I stayed, thinking, "What time will she come, after all??" But you didn't come, and we left for home. Even sugar becomes bitter if one eats too much of it. You say, "Rina, Rina," to me; what—have I forgotten my.....with you and done something with her?? What business do I have with Rina? Poor Rina—with what blame do you mention her name, and why do you.....? Have you thought about how your heart/mind would be if others, perhaps, took your name and said such things? Rather, you're angry with me, right? So, talk to me! For what reason did you say, "Rina," to me—I want a good answer to that, or else I will be.....

You say things about others, but others are not allowed to say anything about you—you'll get angry for sure. When playing and joking around with you, you take it as if it were the truth. Games and jokes are not always things

to be weighed [i.e., believed]. That isn't good. One shouldn't do whatever people say. If someone says a crow took your ear, are you going to feel for your ear, or run after the crow? People do such lifting-up-and-knocking-down things. No one wants to see good things. Everyone wants to see the things of others knocked down or spoiled. For that reason, Shila, you must think for yourself. One must listen, but one mustn't do whatever others say or whatever is heard. I'm saying this to you as your lover; make up your own mind whether you consider something good or not.

I think about things, but you just wreak havoc.

In the end, why are you angry with me? What things that you've said have I not agreed to? Even though we have made such promises, you think so poorly of me. If you.....with me, you would be so dishonored, wouldn't you? The other day on the way to watch the dance, I dishonored you, didn't I? This dishonor isn't dishonor because you knew everyone so well. What will the others, your acquaintances, say because I lied so meanly to you? They'll say, "You're.....with such a bad boy??" Right? You'll lose your honor. Me, I'm a person without honor. I'm not.

"By-By" S. D.

"Good luck [i.e., luck]"

"I love you. If you don't love me also."

[both their full names and addresses are written in English below]



Letter #39—Shila to Vajra

Date: 2047/8/12

Place: There.....? Time:.....? at night

Dear, dear "V.B.," from.....? hundreds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of remembrances and also affections. Actually, there is nothing major to report; there is only.....? I have given you a small handkerchief as a remembrance. Please don't act meanly to me or laugh at me; what to do? I'm, I'm.....? I can't give you any other remembrances. Just one ugly handkerchief only. (What is my heart/mind's.....? Whatever it's like, please don't laugh.)

—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—x—

(1) I've given you [*timi*] a small handkerchief; please don't laugh. Rather, if you can, please accept a handkerchief more finely woven. If you can't, then I have a request: please don't hate that handkerchief, don't hate it.

(2) Since long ago, I placed you in the corner of my heart. If you can, spread love around in there. If you can't, then I have a request: please don't hate me.

(3) In this small lamp, I am a flickering wick. If you can, add some oil. If you can't, then I have a request: please don't trip over it and put it out, "V. B.!"

(4) I am a flower that has just grown up from being small. Don't hate me. If you can, water me.....? All right, if you can't, then I have a request: please don't hate.....? "V. B.—?"

Okay, goodbye. We'll meet again in another letter. For today, "By, By. O.K."

Your Shila

Please forgive me for my mistakes.

I'm also returning your [*tapāīko*] handkerchief. Show this handkerchief and letter to Ram. I won't get angry. How do you like it? I'll definitely ask you and Ram.

Dear, dear "H. B."

Your "Shid" [attempts to spell her own in English, then crosses it out]



Letter #40—Vajra to Shila

Date: 2047/8/13

Time: At night

Place: In that same place

Memory: Of my love's love

To Pashupatibaba, hail, hail, hail!

Dear, so dear, life friend "Shila," hundreds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of remembrances and hundreds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of tokens of my affection. I am well; I hope for your good health, too.

There's nothing in particular to write about; I write a few words only because of remembrances and dear memories of you.

Shila, why do you love me so much? Your love is really making me insane. It feels like you've cast a spell on me; I don't want to be apart from you even for a moment. What can I give you in case your unlimited love changes, except a little bit of contemptible affection? Instead, I've probably given you suffering and troubles. I've probably turned your hopes into despair. For this reason, I'm very miserable.

"Shila," our love is an ocean, is bigger than an ocean. In that ocean, just two lovers—you and I—are swimming, right?

1. I've received your token of affection, a small handkerchief. I accept it with hundreds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of acceptances. You must trust me—I don't hate you. From lifetime to lifetime, I will keep accompanying you.
2. If you have placed me in the corner of your heart since long ago, then I will spread even more love around. I haven't broken our love. Rather, don't you chase me out of your beautiful heart/mind.
3. If you are a flickering wick in a small lamp, you must make the whole world bright if you can; I'll always, always keep adding oil. If you can't, then don't you create a distrustful light.
4. If you are a flower that has just grown up from being small, then, in the garden of my heart/mind (in my life), then you must first smile then bloom luxuriantly. I'll always, always water you. If you can't, then don't you turn hope into despair.

I've answered your letter, "Shila"; how do you like it? Because I couldn't stop talking about you, I showed Ram your letter. So, you can.....my letter, too. I won't get angry, either. (This letter only.) Okay, goodbye. "By-By."

Dear Shila—Shila—Shila



Letter #41—Shila to Vajra

[picture of flowers with "flower" written in middle, and "V. B." written in English below it; in one of the petals is written "love, love, love, love" in Nepali]

Date: 2047/8/13

Time: Started at . . . ! . . . ? . . . !

Place: In that same . . . ? . . . ! place, in memory
.....? of a particular person

Dear Vee Bee, from your.....? dishonorable Shila, waves of remembrance that are longer even than a river, a union already filled with delicious, delicious, delicious, delicious tokens.....? and there will probably be some things that are not delicious, too; for that forgiveness.....?

I am well. I hope for your good health, too.

There was nothing special to write about, except for a reply to your 8/13 letter. There is nothing that urgent to have to write about, but, who knows

why—I just felt like writing another letter again quickly. Then again, maybe you'll get angry because I sent a reply so very quickly. I worry so much that I read the same letter from you three or four times. Then again, I don't even know how to read, so for that reason I read it three or four times. Why, oh why, is it—please explain, okay?—that you are a person who doesn't worry? Then again, even though you don't worry, don't you get as angry as a black hornet? I get angry as a black hornet; now, do you.....? It seems that it's become "bitter" to you because of my joking, right? I joked to make you.....? but it became bitter to you [*hajur*]. That's okay. Then again, who knows why, when I see you I feel like laughing and joking. As angry as I might be on the outside, in my heart, continuous love and respect for you keep afflicting me. In my external manner, I like to laugh and kid around with you. Get angry or laugh if you want—I laughed and joked as a lover, but you didn't like it, did you? That's okay. If you don't like me, look for a beautiful.....[woman]. Go ahead—speak with those other women; what.....[difference] does it make to me?

If you go to a foreign place or country, could I really go following along after you to discover.....? Yes, you [plural] are males [*purus*], and we are women [*māhilā*] or girls [*nānī*]. We all have to think of ourselves, both of us, both females [*nārī*] and males [*purus*] but females [*nārī*] are the ones who have to think the most. Yes, it's all right [i.e., proper] for son-people [i.e., men, *chhorā mānchhe*], to be with one girl [*keṭī*] today and to be.....? with another girl [*keṭī*] tomorrow. If a man is in one place today and another place tomorrow, it's all right for him to laugh or talk with anyone, but if a girl [*keṭī*] does the same thing, people will start to say, "So-and-so this and that." Yes, girls [*keṭī*] have to think very, very much. And I have to think. When I asked you who Rina was, it became bitter for you. That's okay. Now, upon returning that bitterness, it won't become sweet, will it, Vee Bee? That's okay. Even if it stays bitter, I.....? What's hidden in one moment's thought? I don't know. Inside myself I'm losing my memory, my soul [*ātmā*]. I tell myself to forget that dream, but how can that be possible.....? I tell myself to forget just for a moment, but how can it be possible to forget my own life?? For that reason, inside my memory (behind my mind's veil), my fancies are rising up. Yet if I think for just one moment, so many memories are falling down.

By why are my teardrops falling without my realizing it.....?

Okay, farewell. We'll meet again in another letter—if you wish.

Forgive my mistakes. If you won't, then don't. It would be okay for you not to forgive this dishonorable one.

What—have I said I wouldn't marry you [*timī*]?? You [*timī*] have turned

me upside down with all sorts of talk. That's okay. If you [*timī*] want, I also.....?

Your

Shila

Vee Bee "Bye Bye"



Letter #42—Shila to Vajra

047/8/13 date

[uses *timī* throughout; no salutation]

How long I had waited, hoping to meet you after you wrote that letter! I waited, thinking you all would certainly come, but you.....? That's okay.....? Perhaps you didn't come because you thought I would kick you, huh? Right? That's okay. Mother asked, but.....? You.....? Don't even come to our home. If you do come, you'll have to get kicked by me.....? What should I say now about kicks.....? I'm like.....? I had such hopes that you would come tonight—! After you wrote that urgent letter, I waited, but you didn't appear before my eyes. That's okay. If I really want to see you, then instead I should.....? That's okay. If you pity me, then why do I.....? Right?

A useless one's

Bye-Bye "O.K."

Farewell, farewell

—x—



Letter #43—Shila to Vajra

Date: 047/8/14

Time: 10 o'clock

Dear life friend, hundreds of thousands of kisses of remembrance and affection to you.....? Friend, there's really nothing to write about, except for.....? You only talk jokingly or angrily with me—why?

At some time in the future you'll make me.....? with this kind of talk, right? That's okay. Then again, you have said that I'm a charmer one who

casts spells. What—have I really cast a spell on you? If you don't want to, I'll undo the.....? I have a request for you [*hajur*]: don't call me "charmer" or I'll get angry again because saying that I cast a spell on someone makes the feelings in this.....? heart/mind.....?

The main thing is that tomorrow I'm going to Bhairanthan. Old Grandfather is also going. If he returns home the same day, we'll also return home. If he goes to Tansen, we'll also go to Tansen. What—are you so angry that you'll never speak to me.....? If I go to Tansen from there, will you.....? get angry.....? If we go to Tansen, then come to my house on Sunday no matter what, okay? If you don't come, I'll.....? get angry. I asked Mother whether we should go to Tansen or not. Older Brother said, "Let's go," and Mother said, "That's okay. Go." After all, would I have gone without Mother's permission?? Except that I'm so scared that you'll get angry. Okay, farewell.....? mistakes. "O.K. By By V. B."



Letter #44—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/8/17

Time: In the middle of the day

Place: Alone in an empty little room
(because you're not here)

Remembrance: My dear, dear love

May Pashupatibaba ensure the well-being of all of us

[picture of heart with arrow through it and "beloved" written twice in Nepali around it; flowers and leaves surround the heart]

Dear, so very dear, life friend Shila. Continuous remembrances and delicious kisses. Being well, I hope for your good health also.

Shila, really, there's nothing special to write about, except to write a few words because of memories of, and affection for, you.

Shila, whatever talk occurred yesterday evening was only between you and me. You shouldn't have opened up the talk of us two in front of everyone. Sure, everyone gets angry, but you shouldn't have done that just because you were angry. What did your mother think, perhaps? She probably said some things. Oh, how I am feeling!

Shila, our meetings are so extraordinary. Just as there is sometimes

sunshine and sometimes shade, the days of your and my meetings and unions are extraordinary, aren't they? Sometimes how angry we both are, right? And sometimes what pleasant talk there is. Shila, how pleasant these moments seem to me, in reality! This is making our love deeper.

Shila, no matter what happens, may our love never be broken, and it never will be broken. Whatever the villagers say today about you, about me, or about us, let's make our love a success. My opinion is none other than this. What's your opinion?

Shila, forgive me, okay? I made your soft heart sad by writing some things I don't know about. How cruel I am! Now I feel remorse. Shila, I never want to make you sad, but I've made you very sad. Please forgive me. Shila, I always, always want to see you happy. I always, always want to see you well. Shila, I haven't thought any bad things about you and never will do so. Don't you ever think bad things about me, either. Shila, this is what I feel like: you keep laughing forever, and I'll keep looking at you. I feel like staying just like this. Shila, how much I love you! How can I make this clear? I can't make it clear. Shila, I love you so much, love you so much, that I can't say how much. Seeing you walking around with a sad heart/mind makes me suffer so much—oh, how my heart is! I struggle with myself. However much pain you have, it feels like there's that much pain for me.

Shila, I like your sportive nature very much. Shila, when you walk around sad, I don't get to see those laughing, joking, provocative, sportive habits of yours, and it makes me suffer very much. I always, always like to watch your laughter, joking, and provocation. How happy I am when I get to see that! I remember the times when you were so happy, and it's those times that I was really content. I like to laugh and joke with you like this and to kid around with you.

Shila, complete that which you must do, that which is necessary, or the things that you must take care of. And I will complete the necessities that I must do. Let's share our every happiness and sadness with each other. Your every happiness and sadness is my happiness and sadness; my happiness and sadness is your happiness and sadness.

Shila, we must understand each other's thoughts and feelings. By me means by you, and by you means by me [i.e., what you do, I do, and vice versa]. We must do things only after deliberating with each other. If that happens there will never be bad things between us.

Shila, there are probably many mistakes; remembering this one [i.e., me], forgive them. Okay, farewell.

“By By” my dear Shila, love

Your friend in happiness and sadness

[Vajra's signature]



Letter #45—Vajra to Shila

shree

Date: 2047/9/2

Dear, dear friend Shila, continuous remembrances and affection! Being well, I hope you are also in good health.

There was nothing special to write about, except a few words in remembrance of you. There will certainly be mistakes; for that I beg forgiveness. Shila, sometimes, who knows why, all sorts of things must come up. I want to say all sorts of things, write all sorts of things.

Shila, is it only in my presence that you act loving, and then when I'm not there do you really do whatever you want with others? What—have I done nothing with others girls [*keṭī*] when you're there, and then behind your back done everything with other girls? Even though I've loved [*pyār garera*] you and have kept making promises to you to live together, if I did such a bad thing, then even God [*īswar*] would never pardon me, right? I would have committed a huge sin against you. So, I won't do that and don't even want to. Only laughing and joking can be done—you, too, can do that, but not the other things. If you do, you'll become separate from me. If you.....that sort of thing, then you'll commit a huge sin that even God [*īswar*] won't pardon. You said, "You've been spying on me," but I don't do that to anyone. What—don't you trust me?? Don't I trust you?? Sure, whatever happened before happened—forget it, I say. Now, in the future, let that sort of mistake not happen again. The consequences of that would be bad. Think about these things yourself—you're not a child who is still nursing. You must keep reminding yourself about what kind of behavior must be done with whom. If I hear these kinds of bad things again, it won't be good. If you heard bad things about me, what would your heart/mind be like? You would certainly feel bad. I would feel that way, too. Sure, everyone can make mistakes, but there's a difference between making a mistake knowingly and making a mistake unknowingly. Those who make mistakes should be able to ask for forgiveness, and forgiveness should be able to be given. [three-word sentence crossed out] Shila, if I don't spy on you and find you.....with anyone, and if that's not the case when I'm not there or not spying on you, then do you really ever.....with other boys?? If you do, then do it openly—why do it secretly? Who am I, after all, and why do you fear me? But if it's like that, then it would be best to.....with me. If it's like that, then is that the only outcome of our affection? Think on that subject

yourself—your own honor, our affection, your own *dharma*: what are all these things? Otherwise, if not, if you act that way, then say, “From today on, V.B., I don’t exist for you.” And finally do whatever you want to do. Otherwise, you’ll commit a sin. Otherwise, why do you say, “I absolutely didn’t do those things! I’m afraid because you spy on me. You must appear openly before me.” If you are, if you are a truthful person, if you love only me, then why be afraid, no matter what I do?? If you have that kind of desire for other boys [*keṭā*], then do it—what am I, after all, right? But only do it after separating from me or breaking off our love. I must go on living—unfortunate, miserable, suffering—and weeping, weeping in a helpless life. I’ll never get angry, but please tell me everything fully. Don’t I trust you? If I didn’t trust you, I wouldn’t have.....you. Don’t you trust me? Listening to what you said today, it seemed to me that you didn’t trust me. Right? That’s okay—don’t. We’re human beings; no matter how much [we? I?] think about it, it’s not possible to understand. No matter how many living beings there are in the world, each has its own mate. For example, each bird has its own mate. We see them entwining themselves with each other through every joy or sorrow. Whatever they do, they do with each other, not with others. What a wonderful love theirs is! I also want ours to be that wonderful. In the end, how much nonsense I keep writing! No matter how much I write, nothing happens. It must really have been pleasant for you at the wedding you attended without me. If I’d been there, you probably wouldn’t have been able to talk with others. You probably would have been inconvenienced, right? Whatever—it was really pleasant, wasn’t it? Shila, we can do anything and then lie to each other about it, but even if no one sees us, it’s not possible to lie to God [*īswar*], who will have seen us. Whoever bothers another, that person will not be forgiven by God [*bhaguwān*]. Even if you are not afraid of anyone else, you must be afraid of God [*bhaguwān*]. Okay, Shila, forgive my mistakes. Farewell.

Your.....friend

[Vajra’s signature in English]



Letter #46—Vajra to Shila

shree

Date: 2047/9/4

Dear, dear love, delicious remembrances and affection. Being well, I hope that you are also in good health.

Shila, there's really no special reason to have to write a letter. Again, why, oh why, can't I not write letters?? Shila, you probably already understand. You said, "Whenever I hear such bad things about you, it makes me feel empty. Again, if I hear such talk, I don't consider it good. Similarly, when you hear someone saying such things about me, how empty you must feel!" you said to me at some point in time. Yes, if I heard someone saying bad things about you, how unpleasant, or very empty, it makes me feel! Today I'm feeling empty in that way. Even though I'd said, "May I not have to hear such things about you," I've had to hear them anyway. Whether those things are true or not, I have no idea. You alone know that. [inserted later with a caret:] Or maybe God [*bhaguwān*]. Please understand—I heard the talk; I didn't make it up in my heart/mind. Again, you'll get angry at me for believing things that may or may not be true. Don't get angry with me. Why, oh why, do I keep wanting to discuss these things with you? If you want to know who said them, where, when, what all was said, then I'll tell you openly, openly. [inserted with a caret:] In my own writing. You must also tell me everything without hiding anything. If you hide things, I'll get extremely angry at you. Perhaps I won't speak to you for my entire life. [these and other underlined words may have been underlined by Vajra or Shila.] And our love will be broken forever. Shila, there could never be sin in my heart/mind; whatever I've heard, I say. Even though I can't give you anything else, I've given you a true, pure love. My oath to you: if you don't hide anything from me, I won't get angry with you. Only after hearing everything from you will I be your companion, but don't leave me in darkness, or you will commit a great sin.

Yes, I know what time and circumstances do to people—they make people corrupt and turn them into liars. Shila, what do you understand about yourself? You know, of course, that you are a female [*nārī*] or a daughter-person [*chhorī mānchhe*]. What is a daughter-person's life like? What is the thing called honor? It seems to me that there's no one with whom you are not acquainted! And there's no one who doesn't talk about you. One must make people's acquaintance, but if one knows too many people, I find that that's not good. I know how many, many troubles and anxieties entangle female people [*nārī mānchhe*], though it's not that males [*purus*] don't also experience those entanglements.

Shila, I just can't understand what your thoughts and wishes are. You're not a small child; I don't feel like I have to explain to you. Rather, you must explain to me. Shila, the thing called love can only be done with one person, not with thousands. Yes, I say, it's a different thing to separate after loving someone. But to love another while loving someone else is not a good thing. Then again, "boys" [*keṭā*] means that they are none other than boys [i.e., boys will be boys]. Everyone's heart/mind will never be the same. It's enough for them [i.e., some boys] to get sexual enjoyment [*moj mastī*] from girls. Again, you may think that I'm like that—I am not like that! How to speak to whom, how to walk, to sit—females [*nārī*] have to think a lot about such things. What else can I say? Shila, haven't you thought about your own life? Look, Shila, if one tries to hide the truth, one can never hide it. No matter how much one lies, no matter how much one does anything, one day or other—today, or if not today, then tomorrow; if not tomorrow, then the day after tomorrow—one day everyone will find out for sure. I say this to you: laugh and speak with everyone, but don't do anything immoral with anyone. Then people won't be able to say anything.

My exams have arrived, but my brain has gone bad listening to such things. Then all sorts of things begin to play in my mind even more.

Shila, I don't believe anything that people have said about you. How many enemies there are around us! How many friends are there, after all? Just to knock down a person—what things they say that might or might not be so! But some talk is true, so therefore one must understand what is real (true talk). I, too, want to understand that. Shila, I know that people say good things in front of you and bad things about you behind your back. Do you really do such things?? They say such things, but I can't know anything.

Shila, who were those people who came to your house the other day, and what is your relationship to them? That I want to know. I know that one brother-cousin of yours, and you certainly know what-all he said to me, and God [*bhaguwān*] certainly knows, too. And what-all the villagers say! Before in this village they say you walked around in the bazaar with someone or other, and there was some kind of relationship. I don't understand any of these things.

If your love is true, why do you destroy your life in this manner? You must tell me everything. If not, I can't say what the consequences will be. Why do people go around saying these things?

Shila, whether all those things are true or not, I won't blame you entirely. Today, still, in my eyes you alone are my life friend. But if you leave me behind and go around acting like that with other boys, then, well, I don't know anything else.

Shila, to hear all these things about you has made my heart/mind hurt very much. That's why I wrote this letter.

We'll meet again in another letter. Forgive my mistakes. Okay, farewell.

Your life friend

Vajra Bahadur

"By-By O.K.—see you."



Letter #47—Vajra to Shila

[This is obviously an addendum to another letter, probably the 047/9/4 one.]

(Shila, a few things more): Shila, boys' lives and girls' lives are very different. Whatever a boy does with anyone, it'll be good, it is said, but if a girl does the same thing, it'll be bad, it is said. In life, everyone will find a life friend, but one can't always find someone one loves and likes. Look, you're thinking, "If I don't get married, it's nothing; I'll live like this [i.e., with my natal family] without getting married." But after some time they'll say, "The karma of the daughter who has stayed at her natal home has been lost," and it will be necessary one day for you to go to a stranger's home [her own marital home]. Okay—you'll live without getting married, and as long as your mother survives, everything will be all right, but you also have two younger brothers. They certainly won't live like that [i.e., without getting married]. They will also one day marry and each will have his own wife. That's okay. Your younger brothers won't say anything to you, but if their wives say bad things to you, and if you become a burden to them then how will your heart/mind feel? At that time, the situation could arise when you'd think to yourself, "Where can I go, and with whom, to satisfy my heart/mind?" Think about that, too. You must think not only about that but about many, many things, Shila. So, people say, if one must think one hand ahead of time, then one must think four hands after the fact [equivalent to "a stitch in time saves nine".] Shila, you have no reason to be angry with me, and I have no reason to be angry with you. I'm just reminding you of these things. What, after all, is the point of getting angry? I never get angry, Shila, it's not as easy for a girl to find a boy as it is for a boy to find a girl. Shila, you know how some girls in the village have become old, old without getting married. Before, in their youth, how they used to walk around [i.e., flirt], have fun with boys! You know that behavior. How many girls who are so much younger than you have already gotten married! Shila, I don't want that kind of behavior to exist. We

still have time. Everything must be done at the right time. If it's not done at the right time, one will have to cry. Shila, I've written so much. What else can I say, Shila, after all? You are wiser than I am. Think even more. Shila, it's not right to laugh and joke all the time; sometimes one has to be serious and think.

Well, Shila, that's what I wanted to say. Think about it for yourself. Wishing for forgiveness for my mistakes.....

Your life friend

Vajra Bahadur Last Name In this world only you are mine and I am yours. I spill out the pains of my heart/mind to you only because you are my life friend. You can also spill out your own.....

“By By Ta Ta”



Letter #48—Vajra to Shila

Date: 2047/9/5

Time: At the moment of remembering you

Dear, so very dear Shila, remembrances and delicious kisses, okay?

I am well, and I hope that your health is also good.

There is nothing special to write about, except for a few words in remembrance of, and affection for, you. I want to talk about many things with you, but I can't find the time.

You're angry with me, aren't you? What—have I broken off my love for you? Haven't I agreed with you? Have I forgotten our promises?

I only told you things I had heard, but you're angry with me. That's okay. Shila, look, above us is God [*īswar*]; God alone exercises judgment. People raise others up and knock them down a lot. Perhaps people also walk along talking about us. If something happens, then they tease us even more. Everyone, being human, will get angry a lot or a little. When one is angry, anything might be written, anything might be said. Throughout this heart, love is hidden. Whatever and however much happens, my love and respect for you won't die.

Shila, I'll say one thing—don't get angry, okay? If you feel otherwise [i.e., if you don't love me and don't want to marry me].....then I won't coerce you. Life is like this sometimes: sometimes sunshine, sometimes rain, sometimes laughter, sometimes weeping.

It there's time, let's talk. Until then, this is all. Okay, Shila, farewell,
farewell.

Your good friend

V. B. Last Name

[diagonally across bottom:] Dear-Dear Love-Love-Love Don't get
angry with me, okay? Otherwise.....?

—x—x—



Letter #49—Shila to Vajra

2047/9/5

—x—x—x—x—

Time: 9 o'clock at night

Shree, dear, so very dear, dear.....? V. B., hundreds of thousands and
hundreds of thousands of remembrances and kisses of delicious affection to
you. I am well and wish you good health also.

There was nothing special to write about, except for.....a few words in
remembrance of, and affection for, you. V. B., I have never gotten angry with
you. You say, "Have I really broken off our love? Haven't I agreed with you?
Have I really forgotten our promises?" Are you really breaking off your love
from me? Don't you agree with me? Do you really want to forget our
promises?.....? That's okay. If you.....? then what will I.....? How many,
many more things there are than these, but I can't write about them in this
short letter. I'll write about them in another letter, or we'll talk when we
meet.....? Farewell for today. Forgive my mistakes. Finally, tomorrow I'm
probably going to Tansen; I don't know for sure.....? Perhaps I'll go to stay
overnight. Do you.....? What to do?? My behavior is not good—the
behavior of being acquainted with many people. Whatever others say,
consider that to be the truth—that's my request, V. B. Your friends.....? say
I've had relations with everyone. "O.K. By By."

[on back:] Tomorrow, while I'm in Tansen, your very best friends will say
so many, many bad things about me—that I fooled around, put it [i.e.,
someone's penis] in, took it out, slept with other men, had my photo taken,
and many more things. Whatever they say, that's what you should consider to
be true—never forget that, okay?

Vajra [Last Name]

[Vajra's full address]



Letter #50—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/9/11

Remembrance: With heartbeats of life's
most beloved (Shila)

Time: Started at 9 o'clock at night.....

To Pashupatibaba, hail, hail, hail

Dear, so very dear, dear “Shila,” tokens of everlasting, everlasting remembrances and affection from this one who is more miserable than miserable. As of today I’m still alive, thanks to these heartbeats, living a solitary life. I pray to kind God [*bhaguwān*] that no misfortune may befall you.

Shila, there was really nothing to write about, except for these a few words in remembrance of you. Shila, in anticipation of meeting you, how full of love and respect was this heart of mine, how I arrived with so much keen interest and desire to talk pleasantly and deliciously—how pleasant it will be, I thought. But the exact opposite occurred between you and me.....

The other day on the way to Tansen I was unable to meet you. I arrived at your house at exactly 10 o'clock. I had told you in a letter that I would arrive around 9 or 10 o'clock. I so hoped to meet you that I waited until half-past eleven (11:30), but all my hopes turned into despair when I wasn't able to meet you. Why not?? I have no idea how I even reached Tansen.

Shila, you must really be angry with me. Otherwise,.....You're very different now from what you were before. I can't figure anything out. Yes, I did accuse you of bad behaviors and stigmas, and for that I beg forgiveness. All you ever do is get angry with me. Today, Shila—who knows why?—this heart/mind of mine has become so miserable. Seeing how you avoid me when I go to meet you, I've become.....

Shila, forget all that talk. You want to be far from me, right? That's okay. If you're happy being far away from me, then I can't.....anything. I understand your wish. I've mended my love for a....., but she broke it off. I've lost half my existence.

Shila, your talk and behavior imply that I want to be.....out of pleasure. You talk angrily all the time. Why.....? Do you.....?

Shila, the other day I said in a letter: have I broken off my love with you?

Haven't I agreed with you? Have I forgotten our promises? And you asked me back in a letter: are you breaking off your love from me? Don't you agree with me? Have you forgotten our promises?

Shila, I will never want to break off our love. I will always keep on agreeing with you. And I will never be able to forget our promises. I'll leave you only after dying. Shila, don't you trust me yet? I don't want to betray anyone.

Shila, I can never move the time of our union further away. Say whatever you want. Shila, have I really thought badly of you? What sorts of things are you telling me? If I thought badly of you, why would I want to make you my life friend? Every breath, every moment, I will keep you company. This is what I think—that you are my shadow, and I am your shadow. Shila, in this huge world, our own small world will exist wherever you and I exist. I want us to share your every joy and sorrow and my every joy and sorrow.

Shila, why do you walk around having made your heart/mind so small and miserable? Never walk around like that. Sure, human beings make mistakes, but whatever happens one's own heart/mind should be pure. Shila, you must remind yourself that you yourself have good judgment. I must have unknowingly made your heart/mind suffer. Forgive me.

Shila, whatever the villagers, or everyone, says, may our love never tear apart. May we always be able to spend our lives together.

[words in quotation marks are song lyrics that Vajra outlined letter by letter:]

"I thought of you alone, my bride"—Shila, how do you like this song about a bride? I like it very much.

Shila, this is just a letter, but even when we meet on the path we're not able to speak of the things of our heart/minds. I'll write other things in another letter. Farewell for today, okay? May I receive forgiveness for my mistakes.

Your own beloved life friend
who will always, always love you

Vajra

"By By I Love You."

[pictures of flowering plant in pot and of heart with arrow through it with "beloved" written around it]



Letter #51—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/9/18

[each word in the following verse is outlined letter by letter:]

Excited, I created a small world as I remembered you each moment
 Thinking, I composed many dreams as I remembered you each moment

Time: Started at 12 o'clock at night

Location: That same place

Remembrance: Life Friend Shila's

Dear, dear Shila, delicious remembrances and affection. I am well and hope your health is good also.

Shila, these a few words are especially in remembrance of, and affection for, you. Shila, I was viewing you as my life's friend in joy and sorrow, but you have become the exact opposite of that. Shila, that's okay. You've broken off our love. I couldn't even think of the possibility that you would do this, that you would be so cruel. That's okay. Shila, I've mended my love to you and even promised we would spend our lives together. I wanted to make you my own forever and ever. But I find that you have a different opinion. Shila, I can say nothing of your opinion. Even though your life couldn't be successful with a good-for-nothing like me, this miserable V. B. prays to kind God [*bhaguwān*] that, whoever you want to make your life successful with, you succeed in doing so. God [*bhaguwān*] will fulfill your wish. But you had not wanted to tear up or break off our love. But you have torn it up and broken it off, and what can I.....?

Shila, I have agreed with you at every moment, but you want to push yourself away from me, and that's okay. Push yourself away. With that intention you have broken my heart. Think for yourself with what kind of heart I might be writing all these things. You make light, laugh at my words. Don't have regrets later on if someone asks, "Did this happen or not?" You'll commit a sin if you do have regrets.

I had even talked about you and me with my mother and father, and I told them that we were going to get married, but today in the opinion of my mother and father I have become.....Again, it's nothing. Mother and Father had even accepted the marriage, but you.....Why did you turn the hopes that you saw into despair?

Shila, you surely know how much I desire you, how much I love you. What promises we made! You know all that we did. I had wanted to embrace you as my own life friend forever and ever during the first week of this

coming month of Magh [i.e., in a couple of weeks from now], but you've taken yourself far, far from me. That's okay, Shila. If our union can't happen, then why did you cause your life to be plundered by being/courting with me? I considered you my own, but I find that you have become a stranger.

I don't want to betray anyone in life. Love can never work single-handedly; only mine alone is not enough. Deep, deep inside this heart I find that I must kindle a fire to survive. Even though inside my heart/mind I'm crying, I find that I must laugh on the outside, even though life is nothing, and I'll probably die. Forget this more miserable than miserable one forever if you want. But may the injuries to this heart not.....I wanted to attach our love forever and ever to a strong ribbon of lifelong friendship, but you broke it off in the middle.

Shila, as much as I write, it's still all the same. If that's what you want to do, then I want that, too. Don't say that I've betrayed you—who did the betraying?? You're the one who forgot all those things, right?

Shila, whatever kinds of difficult occurrences, whatever sorts of things, happened in the past in your life, from now on in these days may your life be completely successful and may misfortunes and difficulties not occur. May I always be able to see you happy. Fulfill your mother's wishes. Shila, always make your mother happy. This is V. B.'s desire. Shila, how much suffering I must have given you! For that, please forgive me. If you won't, then don't. Yesterday you probably said to yourself, "He's talking while drunk on beer," but even though I drank some beer, I didn't get drunk. I was talking to you nicely but talked laughingly and jokingly. You'll probably think the same of this letter. Consider it true or just a game, but for me this is no game, no laughing matter, no joke. Shila, now you go wandering all around—go wherever you like, do whatever you like. Fulfill your own wishes and desires because if you.....with me, you wouldn't be able to do those things.

Shila, you've forgotten all our talks and have broken them all off. Now, don't try to entangle yourself with me again. Don't even go to the trouble of trying to write a letter to this crazy V. B. Why.....in vain? You'll just find trouble.

Shila, farewell. If our union is really written [i.e., fated] to be after all, then we'll.....

Cruel, dear, dear Shila

"By By"



Letter #52—Vajra to Shila

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/9/25

May Pashupatibaba fulfill our wishes.

[picture of heart with arrow through it and Vajra's and Shila's names around it]

Time: 9 o'clock in the morning
Remembrance: my most beloved,
dear love, love, love, love

Dear, so very dear, dear Shila, forever and ever my remembrances of you and boundless baskets of affection.

Being well, I also hope for your good health.

Shila, there really wasn't anything that had to be written about, except these few words in remembrance of, and affection for, you. Shila, today I have to take my sister/cousin-in-law to Tansen—she must be carried, they say, because she is so sick. There was talk of a picnic this evening. The other boys will probably all come. This morning there was agreement to do so at the water tap. Perhaps I'll get back at maybe 4 or 5 o'clock. One of the boys told me to make arrangements for that time. We'll meet this evening.

Shila, you can openly write or say your own things. I'll also write mine. I make this prayer to God [*īswar*]: "Oh, God [*īswar*], if you want to cause our separation, then why have you mended our love again? If you feel love and kindness for these miserable lovers, then make our union happen."

Shila, when you cry like that, I also feel like crying. I have a request: that you not cry like that. I can't leave your side; Shila, I will always, always keep you company. Shila, I beg forgiveness for my mistakes. I'll tell you other things in detail when we meet. Okay, farewell from here. Your

[not signed on bottom] Give this envelope to your sister-cousin.



Letter #53—Shila to Vajra

2047/10/.....

Dear, dear.....friend, tokens of unbreakable affection from your.....?

Friend, I am well. I hope that your health is also good.

Friend, in particular, what can I say? I had sent word that I'd be going to

Tansen tomorrow, but because of special work I can't go. For that reason I'm very sad.

What to do? I find that what I say myself doesn't happen [i.e., things don't happen as I want them to]. Instead, as soon as you get this letter, come to my house, and instead we'll go immediately to see the.....movie again, okay? Please don't be angry. If you get angry with me or....., I'll also become.....Okay, friend, farewell for today. I wrote this letter in a hurry; remember your.....and give.....

[diagonally:]

Your.....friend



Letter #54—Shila to Vajra

Date: 047/10/.....? 8

Dear....., many, many delicious remembrances. Especially, in your hopes.....!!!!

Friend, I had so many hopes and desires that you would arrive that I waited for you until 11 o'clock at night, but no one.....was there. Why, V. B.?? Yes, yesterday evening I did say, "Come to my house no matter what. Please don't take offense." But I'm miserable that I myself couldn't arrive home at the time I had said. Yes, I heard that you had come by, they said.

Again, today I took out the cows to graze in the hopes of meeting you there, but absolutely no meeting occurred. I had led the cows out to the pond when I saw you on the steep path going toward the house, and I called out, but you.....? That's okay. How distressed my heart/mind became...! Okay, farewell for today. If you have the wish, we'll meet again. It annoys you to read this short letter, doesn't it, friend? You probably won't forgive my mistakes.

Farewell—Farewell—By—By "V. B."



Letter #55—Shila to Vajra

047/10/20

Time:.....o'clock at night

Location: In that same.....place

Subject: Restless because of you

Dear, dear.....friend. Hundreds of thousands and hundreds of thousands of remembrances to you. I'm pretty well, it must be said. Hoping and desiring that you are also pretty well, I write this letter.

Friend, there was really nothing to write about, except to answer your letter. Friend, you must really be very angry with me, aren't you?.....friend, we were going to go to Tansen, but because I would be alone, I said I wouldn't go. And then Mother said, "In that case, you'll go cut some thatch." Then after some time your younger brother came, and I hurriedly asked, "Where is your older brother going today?" And he said, "Today my older brother is going to Tansen." I became very, very confused. A long time later, after writing a few words, I said, "Give this letter to your brother." And finally, saying, "Here's a letter that my brother wrote," he gave me your letter—after I had already written you a letter! And on the outside of the letter was written, "Shila, as soon as you get this, look at it, okay?" So, hurriedly I read the letter, and in it you wrote, "Whenever I have to go to Tansen, if I don't tell you, you won't speak to me for the rest of your life, and perhaps I'll never get to see you again." What am I to do?? If I were a boy, I would say, "I'm going to Tansen," and just go. But what to do?? Again, what this.....[female] caste says won't happen [i.e., women can't do as they please]. If I had known this morning, I would have gone somehow. I finally found out at 9:30. At that time, how could I go, I said to myself? You go by yourself. May I receive forgiveness for my mistakes. We just aren't able to sit and talk anywhere! You say, "On the way back from the forest you didn't speak to me. Please explain the reason for not talking." Okay, friend, farewell. We'll meet again in another letter.

Your Shila—Shila [Shila's own last name]

[Vajra's full name and address]



Letter #56—Shila to Vajra

Date(s): 2047/11/1,2,3,4

shree—shree—shree hail—hail—hail

Mister shree, dear, dear life friend V. B., from your lonely, miserable, despairing Shila, always and forever remembrances and unbreakable tokens of affection. Friend, being well, I'm writing you this short letter, hoping for your good health. Friend, there was nothing about which I must keep writing letters like this, let me say.....And again, writing letters like this has probably made you angry, right.....? If it makes you feel awkward or bad, I desire forgiveness. Friend, it seems you are going to Pokhara, but you didn't say anything to me about it. Of course, why should you tell me? You didn't say anything, except that you're going to Pokhara. That's what you said, but whether or not you're going to return—about that you said nothing at all to me. For this reason, I feel much suffering.....

The other day I wanted to say, "Let's go to Tansen together," but we couldn't meet so that I could say so. And then later we did meet on the path, but you.....Thinking that you probably went to see a film, I immediately went to the cinema hall, but you.....Returning after the film was over, I heard the news that you had already gone to the bus station, and I hurried there, but I couldn't meet up with you. Probably because you had already gone.....In despair and fed up with myself, I felt so unfortunate! On the way from home we didn't even talk. And we still haven't met. When now will we meet for sure.....? Thinking this, I was in such despair! But then when I saw you at the fabric store I was very happy, but in front of everybody I couldn't ask about all the things my heart/mind kept telling me to ask.....Hoping greatly that I could do so when we reached up top.....Friend.....Everything has turned into despair. Now, where, when will we meet, right.....? Okay, farewell. If you want to, we'll meet again.....

[diagonally:] Your friend, Shila

**Letter #57—Vajra to Shila**

shree, shree, shree

Date: 2047/11/28

Pashupatibaba hail, hail, hail

Dear, my so very dear, Shila, who grieves my heart, many remembrances and unbreakable tokens of affection. Being well, I hope for your good health also.

There was no special reason to have to write a letter, except to write a few words in remembrance of you. Remembering that, please forgive my mistakes, okay? Shila, there's so much to talk about with you, but time is just by chance [i.e., we only get to talk by chance], and we haven't been able to find that kind of time. Shila, you probably remember what I said the other day. I want to tie our deep relationship into a bond that will never break. Shila, the things of the future will happen only in the future. When one is born a daughter-person [i.e., a female], one must go to another's home in marriage. No one likes to leave her natal home. But circumstances are like that. The world already knows about our love—why allow others to say such things without reason? Rather, let's save each other by being each other's true life friend. There were many more things to write about, and of course you have to say something, too. You are wise yourself.

Shila, go to Tansen tomorrow after leaving your house. I'll also go, and we'll.....Shila, tomorrow our.....[i.e., marriage must occur], okay? Okay, farewell.

V. B. [Last Name]



Letter #58—Shila to Vajra

Date: 2047/12/3

My heart's.....friend, boundless love to.....Even before writing some things, I ask for forgiveness. I certainly hope that you [*timi*] will give me forgiveness.

I have been well, it must be said, up until the day on which I write this short letter. I am writing this short letter hoping that your health is also good. If there's anything that makes you feel bad or difficult, I want forgiveness. There really wasn't anything to write about, except to meet by way of a letter. While saying to myself, "Should I write a letter, or not?" I wrote this. Again, you'll [*timi*] say, "Why was it necessary to write if you didn't feel like it?" Right? But it's not like that. I'm writing this because I feel like doing so. But why.....? Seeing you [*tapāī*—and mostly *tapāī* for rest of letter, with the exception of a couple of *timi*'s] so angry made me very scared. Even more than fear, I felt much misery. Perhaps you'll even feel fed up while reading this letter—please read it without feeling fed up. If you really don't feel like reading this, then, instead, return it unread or burn it. Perhaps these pieces of paper of mine will keep on making you angry; if that burden stays with you,

then, instead, you can return this letter to me. Or you can burn it. But for me your.....[letters] have not become obstacles or difficulties.....

The main thing—what should I say?—is that my younger sister-cousin’s wedding was just the other day, and yet you say we should get married before a month has passed. But why do it in the same month, I say? My idea is, rather, that we do it in Baisakh [next month]. Because I’ve said that, you’ll probably get angry.....Why.....? So, people will say, “One month hasn’t even passed since the sister-cousin’s wedding, and they’ve gotten married!” Oh, what more will people say.....? Oh, what an unlucky one I am! The village, the home—they all hate me. I had hoped to find the company of someone in this world, but today it feels like that hope is gone. But who knows what will happen. I can’t figure anything out. Even if I did figure things out, what should I do? After luck/fate [*bhāgya*], or should I say time, plays around with mysteries, what is left, after all?

These days in this world people only say, “Mine, mine!” But I find that nothing is my own. There was someone about whom I said, “I’ll make him my own,” but after one or two things happened, he, too, made himself into a stranger, it seems to me today. But life is okay.

A wedding ceremony won’t last forever. Whether one does it by oneself, or whether Mother and Father do it, a wedding just lasts one moment.....Sure, some people marry twice, it must be said; that certainly occurs, but they do that because they want to. But whatever—a wedding out of one’s own desires, own interest, own wishes just lasts a moment, it seems to me so it doesn’t matter when it takes place. But how does it seem to you? I really don’t know anything about it.

Okay.....friend, this short letter is all for today. If you [*hajur*] wish, we’ll certainly meet.

Your miserable.....?

[using *timī*] (1) Whichever flower your heart settled on, pick that flower and wear it. How do you feel toward me? If seeing me makes you angry, that’s okay. Put up a fence against me.

Farewell, farewell



Letter #59—Vajra to Shila

shree

Date: 2047/12/5

Dear Shila, delicious kisses and tokens of affection. I am well and hope that you are in good health, too.

There really weren't any reasons to have to write a letter, except to scratch out a few words in remembrance of, and affection for, you. Remembering that, you'll certainly forgive my mistakes. Shila, who knows what life is like? Sometimes this, sometimes that. Just as a seedling can die without water, so, too, is life like that—life survives because of someone's love. If someone can't acquire someone else's love in life, that person certainly will not be able to survive. Shila, love means that there is someone who is one's own, someone who can never be a stranger. None of your talk has been difficult for me to hear/read about. Shila, it was probably because I got angry that you said, "Everyone hates me." Well, I don't hate you. How much love there is in this heart of mine for you! I can't pour it out and show it to you because there's so much love throughout this heart that it can never be emptied out. Shila, I am yours alone. I have never been far from you and never will be.

Shila, how people talk about us! No matter what they say, may our love never come to an end, and may our company never be broken off.

Shila, a wedding ceremony won't last forever. It just lasts one moment, whether it happens earlier or later. But whatever happens, one must get married one day, right? Shila, now we must look around us, right? Oh, I don't know anything, either—I'm the same as you. Shila, I had said, "Let's go together to do a *pujā* at the Alam Temple," but, well, I don't know whether I'll get to go or not. Let's see what happens.

No matter how angry I get, in my heart there's love (affection), just as the moon exists when it's hiding. Shila, I'll write other things in another letter. I beg for forgiveness for my mistakes.

Awaiting your letter, your crazy lover, Vajra.

(1) Shila, don't say, "Put up a fence against me by breaking your heart into pieces." May I die without you! This life would be like an earthquake. You alone are the flower my heart has settled on. Dear, trust me—I want to embrace you in order to add adornment to our lives.

Your own love, V. B. "By By"



Letter #60—Shila to Vajra

shree

Date: 047/12/9

Dear.....friend, I'm writing a few words in remembrance of you. From you [hajur].....nothing will be.....

I am well. I hope your health is also good. There was nothing really to write about, except.....only.....I received your letter from your brother-cousin. I was so very, very, extremely happy, but I was also a little hurt. Thinking you would come by my house, how I waited, wanting to meet with you, but you.....That's okay. What can I give to you, after all? Just love.....I can't adorn your life with anything; others have probably done so better than I have. Right? I probably only give you suffering. Sometimes I probably also make you angry.....

Okay, farewell for today. Give.....for my mistakes. We'll meet again in another letter. Farewell.

[diagonally:] Your dear love

“By By V. B.”

**Letter #61—Vajra to Shila**

shree

Date: 2048/1/3

Time: 10 o'clock at night

Location: That same place

Dear Shila, hundreds of thousands of remembrances and hundreds of thousands of affections. I am well and hope that your health is also good.

I beg forgiveness for the mistakes in these bitter or delicious words. Shila, I've already written many words and explained a lot to you. Now I have no more of those kinds of words. Think for yourself why you love. Are you going to conduct your whole life like that, and are you going to spend your whole life with your mother, or with your life friend? Shila, let's not have regrets later on. If a breakup occurs, it would be as if something like a loss of honor had occurred. Instead, since we live in a world like this, it would be better to.....[get married]. Why are you afraid of your mother? It's your life, not

your mother's, you know. One's marriage will be with the person one wishes; one wears the flower that one likes and eats the things that one likes. Marriage can never be because of others' violent coercion. We only live for two days. If one can't spend such a short life with the person one likes, then what kind of life is that? That life is loathesome.

Your mother's wish is to give you in an arranged marriage to a soldier, but I'm no soldier. I don't even like that. A soldier's life is the life of an animal. There's no difference between an animal's life and a soldier's life. Why must anyone have to live for even one day as an animal, right? Whatever one's life is like, may one be able to survive. What—can one only survive if one is a soldier, otherwise not? Let's leave off this talk. You say you won't elope, right? If we could have had such an arranged marriage, that would have been best. Everyone feels like, "Let's do it the best way." Don't I, too, want us to do it the best way possible? But what to do once it [i.e., the situation, the kinship relationship] is like that? It's necessary to elope. There are ten kinds of marriage types. Whatever the circumstances require, that's what must be done, in my opinion. To what extent are you able to think? You must think for yourself. I'm going to be watching how your mind works, how well you can think.

Shila, if your mother had given you to someone else instead of me, I probably would have gone crazy already. It's necessary to keep on making this heart, which has endured so many pains and injuries, laugh. Is this heart small or large? All I know in this world is that you are my own. This V. B. survives because of your limitless love. Will you pick and wear the flower that you like, or the flower that others have chosen? It seems like you are wearing the flower that you like.

Shila, yesterday at the water tap (in the evening), no matter what I said, you didn't say one word. That's okay. If your wedding to me was going to happen for sure, you could have spoken with your mind at ease, but you said nothing.

That's okay, Shila. Today our love, all those promises, have all gone to waste, haven't they? The villagers are really laughing, aren't they? It's your opinion, isn't it, that only you have honor, not I. That's okay. I don't want to hurt your heart/mind. Go marry the boy your mother gives you to, whether you like him or not because after not having married the boy you like, that's what must happen. I was sure I would have your company, but.....[now I'm not sure]. I want to give you one suggestion: don't love anyone any more, or else you'll.....[betray them] just as you did me in the end. If you can't extinguish your love, then why love in vain? To love someone, then to.....[marry] someone else is a curse. Rather, instead of that, it's better not to love at all. Only betrayal [rest of sentence crossed out].

Shila, I am not to blame at all in this. I have not sinned. Whatever I did, I

did so as if you were my own. But you have a different opinion. Shila, it's not possible for you to blame me. May you not cry later on from regret, Shila. One must listen to what everyone says, but people will say this, and people will say that. But one must make up one's mind oneself. One must straighten out one's own world. Shila, I've coerced you a lot on the subject of getting married, haven't I? From now on, for the rest of my life, I won't say anything. Why, oh why, did my heart/mind suffer when you wouldn't do what I said? My heart/mind has begun to fly away. I feel like my heart is about to break. If this heart breaks, it will never again come to life for you. Shila, to walk around making things smell is a curse. Will you really pass your life well with another boy?

Shila, our union must occur before the 10th of this Baisakh [i.e., within a week]. Shila, say whatever you want—if it can't occur by then, then think: it can't occur your whole life. If it can't occur, then let people say whatever they want, and let whatever happens, happen—I'll make up my own mind. Just as a bone can't be put back together again once it has been broken, so, too, once a heart has been broken, or a heart/mind broken, it can also not be put back together again. Write a letter stating clearly what to do and when to do it on the 10th, and that's how we'll do it. [next sentence inserted between the lines:] Shila, this is my final decision. Forgive my mistakes. We'll meet again in another letter.

Your friend who awaits your letter, "V. B."

Vajra [Last Name] who has unbreakable love for you Don't get angry about what I've written because of a suffering heart/mind, okay?



Letter #62—Shila to Vajra

[pictures of flower and heart with arrow through it]

Date: 2048/1/7

Dear, dear.....friend, best wishes for the new year 2048, and with love I am coming to you by way of these notebook pages. I am well and hope that your health is also good. From your dear.....[life] friend, hundreds of thousands of remembrances, hundreds of thousands of smiles, hundreds of thousands of desires for affection.....

There might be thousands of mistakes in this letter; for them I beg forgiveness.....First, I'm sad that I couldn't answer your letters quickly. Since reading your letters I've been so, so.....Don't I carry the same number of

burdens that you do? Aren't I as full of injuries as you are? But what to do? No matter how many injuries there are, on the outside one must give.....[the appearance] of laughter.

Friend, my mother might want to give me in marriage to a soldier or to whomever, but it's my wish [i.e., my marriage is up to me]. I have the desire and wish to marry my own beloved, but you [*timī*—continues throughout this paragraph] have started to talk about various methods. Have I said I wouldn't marry you? That's okay. You want to watch my mind, right? But I can't compete against you with my mind. I'm just an illiterate.....[woman], a person who hasn't had an education. How can I compete with my mind against you, a person who has had that kind of.....[education]. I'm just a.....[woman]. If you're seeking to compete via our minds, then you can do so with someone else who has.....[education]. But that's okay. If you want to do so or think so socially [i.e., instead of intellectually], then I am ready to be yours before the 10th, just as you said. But if you start talking about minds, soldiers, or old women, then I'll.....[get angry] with you. You wanted to say to me, "How many, many women there are who are younger than you who have already gotten married, but you've already become an old woman!" You wanted to say this, right? "You also have to think about the future.....Shila, may you not have regrets later," you said, right.....? But that's okay. Even if I were a youngster, I would probably know my own.....opinions. I also know that one must think ahead of time for the future.....You don't have to explain things to me so much; I'm not a little nursing child! What do you have to keep explaining to me? I'm already an extremely old woman!

Again, you say, "Your mother is thinking of giving you in marriage to some soldier." Don't you consider it difficult to enter my mother's heart/mind.....? I don't like soldiers. If I were going to be married to a soldier, I probably would have married one already, but why didn't it happen? You know why. Who is the soldier, and where he is from—you know that, too. You have full knowledge. But why didn't a marriage occur with him? Did I not want him, or did he not want me? That I don't want to explain. But let people say what they will—aside from you, I have no others who are mine. Whatever—after we get married, it won't be possible to say this and that carelessly to me in various manners.

Okay, why should I keep writing so many things? Forgive this old woman's mistakes.

Your love who has no mind
 You, a very mind-ful person
 Farewell farewell farewell farewell
 "O.K. By By"



Letter #63—Vajra to Shila

shree

Date: 2048/1/9

Dear Shila, my life friend, heartfelt, auspicious good wishes for the new year 2048, and hundreds of thousands of remembrances and hundreds of thousands of kisses and hundreds of thousands of tokens of affection.

Being well, I also hope for your good health.

Shila, what to do? I find that life is a mixture of sorrow and joy. As sad as you are—that's how sad I am, too. I have spilled out my own sorrows to you in letters. Don't you ever consider that oppressive. Shila, I'm not cruel. How many troubles you probably have—we both know how many. In life, each person has his/her own stories—that's the law of the world. Shila, you can say anything to me without bashfulness. It's not all right to act as you do forever [i.e., to stay unmarried]. If I hurt your heart/mind with too many words, because of that I'm very miserable. I never want to deliver suffering to you.

I also never want to deliver any suffering to you in the future. I don't want to make your heart/mind miserable. But will you do those sorts of things to me? Shila, is it all right for two life friends to do things that make each other's heart/mind miserable? It's certainly not all right. Both must understand this when they act. "Life friend" means to share each other's joy and sorrow. You must be wise, and I must be wise. Shila, we'll talk of various joys and sorrows when we meet.

Instead, let's head for the main thing. Shila, as easy as it is to talk about something, it will be more difficult to put it into action. Shila, I said that our wedding must occur before the 10th. Now there's just tomorrow left for us of that time. If it doesn't occur today, it must occur tomorrow. That's what it seems like to me. Let's make our life's joyful union today, okay, because there's so little time. Today would also be very appropriate because you'll certainly go to do work or carry water at your sister-cousin's wedding feast, right? My brother-cousin and I will come to eat at the wedding feast in the evening, and we'll meet you there. We'll have a conversation. Shila, let it not happen differently. Okay, Shila, we'll talk about other things when we meet. I beg forgiveness for my mistakes. Shila, let's meet this evening. Okay, farewell.

Your miserable L[ife] Friend,

V. B. [Last Name]



Letter #64—Vajra to Shila

[written several months after marriage, when Shila was visiting her natal home]

2048/5/4

shree

Date: 4 Bhadra

My dear, lawful wife, who is like a diamond, unbreakable remembrances and affections from your husband who has been blessed by you. Appropriate greetings according to our respective kinship relations to my mother-in-law and my two brothers-in-law also. Being well, I hope for your good health also.

There was nothing special to write about, except for the memories of you. I've sent you your bag. There are also two letters here; please mail them at the post office when you go into Tansen, and another thing—I've also included money to get supplies for the youth club this month.

How are you these days? Do you feel like eating, or not? Have you recovered, or not? Shila, don't ever bring worry into your heart/mind. You yourself are wise. I certainly see that you don't need to keep on being reminded. Shila, no matter how dark the night is, at the end of it a beautiful morning is certainly hidden. Similarly, no matter how much suffering and troubles there are in life, after that we must expect that there will certainly be a joyful time in life. After suffering there will certainly be joy.

Forget my mistakes and read them as if they were correct. Okay, farewell.

Your husband-god [*dev*],

Vajra Last Name



Letter #65—Shila to Vajra

[undated]

“V. B.” Dear “V. B.,” many, many remembrances and affections from your love.

In particular—yesterday you said, “Let's take the cows out to graze

together, okay?” But I couldn’t keep my promise, even though I wanted to take the cows out to graze with you. Don’t get angry over this, okay? If you do get angry, do so by caressing with your penis.

[diagonally across bottom:] Okay, farewell Tonight.....? I/we? will be, dear.....?

“V. B. By By”



Letter #66—Vajra to Shila

[undated, wrinkled, disjointed letter, obviously written in anger; only has “103/27” in corner as possible clue to date—or may be irrelevant]

[One side has three separate segments—first segment, written horizontally, with largest writing in middle of page:]

I pray to Shree Pashupatibaba that I might find release from this.....

Just as my soul cannot find peace, so, too, will your soul find twice as little peace.

[segment written vertically at one end:]

You weren’t able to pass my test. You betrayed me. Don’t forget that God [*bhaguwān*] knows who loved truly and who loved only one person.

I’m not two-faced like you. If you did that with others, then you committed a huge sin by playing a game of untrue love with me.

[segment written vertically on other end:]

People shouldn’t just look into the future and envision a large share for themselves; they should also wait and look tomorrow. A tree that has begun to die because of the cold will be full of leaves in the spring. I’m like this now: whatever I want to do, I can’t do it. The day I was expecting has arrived. May I see your life become successful in this miserable life.

[written in large writing vertically across entire back side:]

It’s never possible to hide sinful things. Some day or other God [*bhaguwān*] will reveal it for sure. God [*bhaguwān*] revealed it to me. What trust and dreams I.....a betrayer! Sometimes, it seems, one should listen to the talk of others, like the ones who opened my eyes today. Up until yesterday what did I think?? I don’t.....anything. Today this is my first gift to my so-called very, very trustworthy beloved. Now I have no idea what I’m going to do. Time will explain these things. You watch, okay? This kind of gift also in the end.....