

## FPMT Education and Organization

FPMT is extremely fortunate, unbelievably fortunate that we have many qualified teachers, resident teachers who have spent their life in a monastery on the basis of living in vinaya, guarding their vows, their mind. And then extensively studied Buddhist philosophy, the whole path to enlightenment, the four noble truths. And who are not only scholars but are living in practice - that is an extremely important moral for us. So therefore the organization is very fortunate, extremely fortunate. If you look at others, no question if they are not Buddhist, but even other Buddhist organizations, if you look then you can understand how fortunate we are having many qualified teachers, having the opportunity to study. Through that we are able to offer service to the world, to sentient beings: with our Dharma knowledge and practice we can enlighten other sentient beings, liberate others by giving Dharma education, by giving the light of Dharma to others, in their heart. In minds which are dark, where there is ignorance, we bring the light of Dharma, bring the wisdom eye. I think that's the best service to sentient beings, the best service to the world.

The whole global problem is a lack of understanding Dharma, due to ignorance. A lack of understanding karma, lack of good heart: the whole problem in the world is that, whether we are talking about environment problems, global environment problems, that the cold place is becoming hot or whatever, all these issues are also due to karma. The root is ignorance and self-centered mind, including environmental problems. The entire problem is that, came from that. So therefore I think learning Buddhism and practicing, especially lam-rim, the whole 84,000 teachings, all the extensive BuddhaDharma, integrating the lam-rim and putting it into practice, that's the best, best life. The richest life, the most meaningful life in the world. That's the main answer to world problems.

So what the centers do, ourselves learning, practicing, and giving wisdom to others, Dharma training to others, an understanding of karma, bodhicitta and so forth, I think that is the best. Through that beings achieve liberation, total liberation from whole entire oceans of samsaric suffering and achieve enlightenment. So that is where we lead them to. So our activities, what we do is most urgent, an emergency, the most important thing for ourselves and for sentient beings.

So we are very fortunate [to have teachers who] are not just scholars in words, but beings who are actually living the practice. Sincere hearted, good hearted, this is an extremely important quality for teachers, a very good model for students, for their inspiration for their studies, inspiration to have deep, clear understanding of Dharma, and be inspired to practice. Basically I am just bringing up how fortunate we are, that's the essence. We have to realize that. We have to remember that. FPMT is very fortunate - and that's the most important thing, without a qualified teacher then nothing happens, nothing is able to be developed, so that's the main thing I want to bring up, as we are gathered here.

FPMT has about 38 geshe - we had a meeting in Sarnath in the winter, of course everyone couldn't come. All 38 geshe who are serving in the organization are all lharampa geshe who have done extensive study in the monastery, have studied well. Not like me, Mickey

Mouse - Solu Khumbu Mickey Mouse! Therefore I always feel that the FPMT organization has good luck, having qualified teachers.

I am happy with the education [in the organization]. The reason I'm saying this here is that there are people from International Office and various places who have done hard work for many years, there are many old students here. I am quite happy with the way education is going now, it has been developing for many years, and now we have the eight year Masters Program at Istituto Lama Tsong Khapa and I think Holland will also start this with Geshe Sonam Gyaltzen. I would like more centers to start this eight year program, and the five year or two year programs also. Istituto Lama Tsong Khapa also has the two year program as everyone is already there so it's very easy to do. The five year program happens in the city centers where it is hard to do it in two years. This is happening in many places so I'm very happy about that, feel that is a great success. Even though there are many centers where teachings have been given for so many years, all the teachings - philosophy, lam-rim, lojong, on and on, repeated over and over, but establishing the study program makes more sure that the students take it seriously and learn and complete the texts and clearly understand Buddhist philosophy for their own deeper and clearer understanding, for their attainments, realizations and enlightenment. Also you need that deeper and clearer understanding in order to spread Dharma to other beings, so that's very necessary, especially if you are able to teach others, fulfill the wishes of others sentient beings who have different levels of intelligence. So I'm very happy with the way the organization is going now with education.

And materially we have come a very long way. For many years we had so much hardship, so many problems, because we didn't have experience of business, had so many young students who came to Nepal and India, who benefited so much after the Kopan course and as they received so much benefit for their heart they wanted to give others in the West the same benefit, show others the meaning of life; so many young people who were very good hearted but had no experience in business or managing, these external things. So went through so many hardships, started different businesses, lost so much through lack of economic knowledge of business and management. So we've come a very long way - what is developed now came from a very long way. So many people at different times put in a lot of effort, sacrificed their lives into the organization, into centers, put their lives into that. So now what is developed, that it is relatively good for many centers, came from so many people sacrificing their lives for so many years and bearing so many hardships. It's not truly existent or independent, even though it may appear like that! So with much experience the old students for many years, those who started communities, even though they are not involved now, for many years they put in a lot of effort. There are people here who did that, who are still doing it now or who did that in the past, and the result is that now we are able to benefit so many sentient beings for so long. So many sentient beings got so much benefit from each center, getting closer to liberation, to enlightenment by learning more Dharma, doing more practice, purification, leaving more imprints on the mind so becoming closer to attainments.

So generally overall some maybe degenerated, got worse, but overall in the FPMT I see people becoming more compassionate and wise, from watching the old students for many years this is generally what I see. So I am very happy with that, the good heart which has developed. That's what we really need, that's what benefits the world, that's what benefits all sentient beings, and helps them to achieve enlightenment in a short period of time.

Thank you very much.

*Colophon: An excerpt from a talk given by Lama Zopa Rinpoche before and after Guru Puja at Tse Chen Ling, San Francisco, USA on 26 April, 2007. Transcribed by Sara Vurek, edited by Claire Isitt.*