

Lama Zopa Rinpoche's Message: Thank You for Helping the Sera Je Food Fund

So, there has been a direct need to thank and talk to you, to dedicate, even though the dedication is normally done by the monks or by me. So this time, to directly speak to you. I want to offer numberless thanks directly to you, to all the benefactors, who offered food toward the Sera Je Monastery. And not only the benefactors, anybody who helped: organizers, anybody who gave help in the aspect of body, speech and mind, everybody from the beginning. To everybody, I want to thank from the heart, numberless thanks to everybody. On behalf of all the Sera Je monks, on behalf of whoever was able to help with the food, and then on behalf of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, on behalf of Lama Yeshe, on behalf of all the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, thank you very, very, very much. Thank you to everyone.

First, I want to talk about karma. In the past, in India, a person who probably was nothing, very poor, offered medicine and food to four monks, four ordinary monks, not arya monks who have direct realization of emptiness. He offered only one time, medicine and food to four ordinary monks living in the 253 vows. After the man died, he was born in Kashika. In India, in a place called Kashika, he was born as a king, the most powerful, most rich, most powerful, wealthy king of Kashika. The cause was just one time, offering medicine food to four monks. That was all, four ordinary monks, nothing else!

To give you the idea, the cause was a powerful object, a monk, *gelong*, fully ordained monk, and only offering food one time, that's all. A very simple cause—virtue—but you see, the result is UNBELIEVABLE, UNBELIEVABLE, UNBELIEVABLE, UNBELIEVABLE! Amazing, amazing, amazing, can't figure out how that could happen! For an ordinary mind, it is kind of hard to believe. Oh ho! Now if you relate that story to yourself, the benefactors and those who have helped. Wah ha! How much good karma you collected over so many years, so many years, so many years. That example is just an offering one time, can you imagine? Now, for so many years, every day offering food, breakfast, lunch and dinner to the monks, wow! You have to know that you have the karma. You have to recognize the good karma, how much unbelievable good karma you collected. So many years, so many years, so many years, wow! You have to rejoice, rejoice! No time for depression, no space for depression in the life! Can't imagine! For so many years, you have offered dinner, lunch, breakfast, can't imagine, wow!

I'm sure from your side, you also dedicated to be free from oceans of samsaric suffering and to achieve peerless happiness, enlightenment, total cessation of obscurations, subtle obscurations—not only gross—subtle obscurations, complete realizations. There is also the dedication done by the monks, and of course all the people who helped, the benefactors. Can't imagine! Then all of those become the cause of enlightenment. All your good karma becomes the direct cause to achieve enlightenment—amazing! To achieve infinite qualities of Buddha's holy body, holy speech, holy mind, to be the perfect guide, to free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering, to bring them to Buddhahood, full enlightenment. Wow, do you understand now? Now rejoice! There are skies of virtuous actions to rejoice in. Every action has its result. But if you rejoice, then everything becomes doubled up, all the merits collected in this life, all the offerings to sangha, your help, even though you might not have directly offered money but you helped, you worked for that, you inspired them to collect that virtue. You helped with body, speech and mind. You helped. One main person who helped is Ven. Holly. So many people helped. Due to them, they inspired many people who were able to directly donate and then offered food. All the merits are doubled up by rejoicing, doubled up, doubled up. Each time you do it everything doubles up. Skies of merit to achieve enlightenment easily!

I was told by many monks, the older monks, in the early times, one person's food, a teacher's food had to be shared with two or three students, one plate of food had to be shared with several students, so nobody got enough food in the stomach. Nobody! Then also, many monks left the monastery and went back to Tibet because they did not get enough food there. Many monks told

me that so many monks left for Tibet. So, you have to rejoice, how your offering food helped so much! The Sera Je monks, those who are teachers now for very young monks in the monastery and those teaching in the FPMT: How many teachers do we have? Resident teachers?

Ven. Holly: Maybe forty-six.

Nearly forty-six, yeah! Most of those resident teachers came from Sera Je, those who got the food that you gave. Now, those forty-six are teaching in the rest of the world, benefiting SOOOOOOOOO many sentient beings. And the monks who are educating the younger monks in the monastery, they all got their education and they don't have to go to Tibet after they got the food. Many monks told me that.. So please rejoice in what you have done, including all the people who have helped! Okay? That is unbelievable, unbelievable.

Now, in many countries in the world, so many people are receiving *lamrim* teachings, philosophy teachings. Those people who offered food, they developed their education, they got their education and so many people in the world are receiving benefit from them. This is not material benefit but this is benefit for the mind! Because, the mind is the one who creates hell, who creates enlightenment! The mind is the one who creates samsara. The mind is the one that creates nirvana. The mind creates everyday happiness and problems. Therefore, you need to help the mind, to pacify the mind, which created suffering. You need to pacify that! When we make the mind positive, more and more positive, then it will cause happiness up to enlightenment for yourself, and the cause of happiness of this life, the happiness of future lives, and not only future lives, all the future lives, ultimate happiness free from samsara, and then even free from lower nirvana, then achieving enlightenment, peerless happiness, wow! There is so much happiness and so much benefit from these geshe who are teaching.

Then, not only that: These people practice Dharma. They learn Dharma with bodhichitta. With bodhichitta, they are benefiting the numberless hell realms, hungry ghosts, animals, numberless human beings. There are numberless universes: numberless human beings, numberless *sura* beings, numberless *asura* beings and numberless intermediate state beings. By generating bodhichitta, they do meditation and then practice Dharma. They do actions with the body, actions with the speech, actions with the mind, and they benefit ALL sentient beings. All sentient beings get happiness from you, the benefactors of the food fund and you are helping to inspire the people to help, to offer food, wow! All the happiness comes from you, what they received from the geshe. Then they practice to have bodhichitta, practice to then help numberless sentient beings to have all the happiness: Happiness of this life, happiness of future lives, liberation from samsara, then enlightenment, great liberation. Then they receive all the happiness from these people, they receive benefit from geshe. All of this is coming from you, so rejoice! You must recognize, RECOGNIZE! Thank you very much!

The example I gave was, the man who had nothing, he offered one time, medicine and food to four monks. Here, there are three thousand monks, or less than three thousand, it changes with time. So many, so many, so many who live in the 253 vows, the *gelongs*, and *getsul* vows so many, so many, can you imagine? Can you imagine? Wow! Do you understand? The merits!

Then, making offerings to the same pores, those who receive teachings from His Holiness. All those Sera Je monks, they are His Holiness's disciples also. So, you are making offerings to the pores of your guru. In that case, every day, every breakfast, every lunch, every dinner, even if it was just one time, the merit you collect by making offering to one disciple of the same guru, His Holiness, you collect FAARRRRRRRRRR more merits than offering to numberless Buddhas, numberless Dharma, numberless Sangha, numberless statues, numberless stupas, numberless scriptures. They become so small compared to offering to one pore of the guru, a disciple.

As an example, the pores can be the guru's dog, the guru's horse, the guru's neighbor or the guru's friend. If the guru is a layperson, then it is the guru's wife and the guru's children. If the guru is a woman, then it is the guru's husband. So, all are the guru's pores. All those monks are

His Holiness's disciples, so they are the pores. Even just one time offering to one disciple, the pore of the guru, you collect more merit than offering to numberless Buddhas, numberless Dharma, numberless Sangha, numberless statues, numberless stupas, numberless scriptures.

With Sera Je monastery, there is not only one disciple. Thousands! In the past, there were thousands, and then less, but more than two thousand—the number goes up and down sometimes. So a thousand pores, more than two thousand! Amazing, amazing! Do you understand, how much merit you collect like that? Can you imagine? Okay, so thank you very, very, very much! Thank you very, very much! So much merit you created, so many lifetimes to enjoy, to meet Dharma, to achieve enlightenment, not only to be free from samsara, but to achieve enlightenment. Free the numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering by you, and bring to enlightenment. So, thank you very much.

Colophon: Thank you from Lama Zopa Rinpoche given at Amitabha Buddhist Centre, Singapore, on September 28, 2018. Transcription and light editing by Ven. Tenzin Tsultrim.