

Letter to New Director and Coordinator

November 5, 2009

My very dear Center Directors and Study Group Coordinators

I am very happy you are going to be director. Thank you very much, again thank you very much. Serving others from the heart is the best offering to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Shantideva said, "Even having the mere thought to benefit others is considered much more beneficial than making offerings to all the buddhas." So there's no need to say anything about those who actually attempt to bring happiness to others. Even one person or one insect - each sentient being - is cherished most by each bodhisattva. Of course, needless to say, it's the same for numberless buddhas and bodhisattvas. So this one sentient being who could be against you is cherished most by all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. This one sentient being becomes most unbelievably, unbelievably, unbelievably precious. So even slightly disrespecting one sentient being is disrespecting all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. In the same way, even showing modest respect to one sentient being is the best offering to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. So you can see how being the director of a center has incredible advantages.

Don't let yourself think, sometimes, "I'm the leader," having arrogance and pride, etc. This blocks you from helping the center. It opens the door for many problems, instead of opening the door to all happiness and enlightenment, and bringing all sentient beings into happiness - the four types of happiness - to benefit all sentient beings of the six suffering realms. If your wish is to open the door to all the problems, this is your goal, it offers so much harm to all the sentient beings and yourself. The most important thing for this life's happiness, especially for the sentient beings you meet, is to have the thought, "I'm the servant and they are the masters, I'm the servant and they are the kings, they are the masters and I am like the dog. Sentient beings are the ones from whom I have received all my happiness. They are the dearest and most kind. They are the ones from whom all opportunities come, in relation to whom I have the opportunity to purify all my negative karma, create all the merit, and attain enlightenment. So they are the kindest of all. I should use my body, speech and mind to serve others, especially the people of the center, as well as all the animals and insects." This is also the attitude one should have with one's family, or if you are a teacher or leader of a company, etc.

The purpose of a meditation center is to take care of the minds of others, to keep the mind in virtue as much as possible. This means keeping your own mind in virtue. **YOU HAVE TO TRY. IT IS VERY GOOD TO TRY.** If you can't do that, you can't help others. So your motivation should be to use your body, speech and mind to create even the smallest happiness in others. Many people in the world waste their lives. People try to climb mountains no matter what risk to their life, some people use themselves as bullets, getting fired from cannons, and so forth, unbelievable things, putting their lives in danger to achieve such insignificant happiness in this life.

The Ornament of Sutra by Maitreya Buddha says, "The child of the victorious one who has stabilized the supreme perseverance of thoroughly ripening the multitude of sentient beings will work to have even one virtuous thought arise in a sentient being's mind, even if it takes 10 millions thousand eons, without getting upset."

When you train the mind in positive virtue, especially a good heart trying to benefit others, it creates very good communication. There is no Great Wall of China or Germany between yourself and others. It brings so much happiness to you and others, and brings world peace.

Every sentient being has buddha nature. Even a mosquito can achieve enlightenment and liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering if it practices Dharma. So especially for us who now have this precious human body, which can do so many things to liberate from any problem or circumstance that gives rise to problems, especially having a perfect human rebirth on top of buddha nature, we are able to achieve all the happiness for all future lives, even for insects, ants, cockroaches, spiders and snakes, even for a mouse. You can cause the mice and the ants to achieve all the happiness in future lives, and ultimate happiness, liberation from samsara and enlightenment. You are able to cause the four levels of happiness for all sentient beings, not only to liberate them from the oceans of suffering and bring them to enlightenment, but to do that as quickly as possible through tantric practice.

Being the director of a center means you have an unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable opportunity to help yourself and others, to purify unbelievable negative karma that has been created since beginningless lifetimes, especially if this is the Guru's advice or what you are doing makes the Guru very happy; then every second of that action as a director has incredible purification - the most powerful purification - especially if the work is more difficult and hard to bear. When there are more problems and difficulties, you should recognize all the most unbelievable, unbelievable, unbelievable benefit you receive: more powerful purification and collecting extensive merits to rapidly attain enlightenment. For example, Milarepa achieved enlightenment in the quickest time. Because of his enlightened Guru, Marpa's most wise skills, he purified in the quickest way all the negative karma collected from beginningless rebirths, of killing humans and animals; then collected extensive merit that would take three countless great eons in the Sutra Paramita path, enabling Milarepa to become enlightened in a brief lifetime of degenerative time.

Now you should realize that Director means that you are going to be the principal person to receive blame, criticism and various things that cause the negative emotions to rise. It makes them very active, even violent sometimes, and it is possible even friends might become enemies because of having different views and the discipline you have to make. You can avert such things if you don't want them by various practices, starting with kindness. Maybe here the motivation could be selfish, doing the practice so you can be happy, not thinking about others; doing this practice so others can be happy is not selfish.

Especially towards those who are angry or disrespectful, criticizing the director, practice compassion and loving kindness. Also practice patience, and rejoicing always in virtuous and meaningful things, those that result in good karma, which happened and are happening to yourself and other people.

It is important to be clear about right and wrong patience and contentment. Bearing whatever hardships necessary in order to harm holy beings, other sentient beings, your enemy etc., also bearing much hardship for negative karma, is wrong patience.

There are three types of patience:

1. Patience of voluntarily taking on suffering or difficulties
2. Patience towards an enemy who is harming you or you don't like
3. Patience of definitely thinking of Dharma, e.g. studying philosophy no matter how hard it is to understand; maintaining practice for realizations no matter how long it takes or difficult it is.

Dedicating the life to achieve enlightenment to liberate all sentient beings from suffering of samsara and enlighten them, no matter how difficult it is or how long it takes, many lifetimes, many eons.

With renunciation to this life taking refuge, with morality as foundation living in the ten virtues and abandoning the ten non-virtues, causes future good rebirth as deva or human, especially perfect human rebirth with seven qualities, rebirth with the four Mahayana Dharma Wheels, the eight ripening qualities or to be in a pure land.

With renunciation of samsara, living in the three special higher trainings causes liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering. Then with bodhicitta taking bodhisattva vows, living in the six paramitas and the four methods of drawing in the sentient beings in order to achieve enlightenment.

By having taken initiation, living in the tantric vows, practicing pure appearance, generation and completion stages, causes to achieve full enlightenment much quicker, within one brief lifetime of degenerated time.

Contentment is not for others but with your own needs. Usually we have attachment to so many different things, or to having many of a similar object e.g. wife, husband, girlfriend or boyfriend, sexual relationships, wanting many, not content with one. Or wanting more money; when we have \$1000, wanting \$10,000, then a million, then a billion, it is endless. Then to get more one engages in the ten non-virtues, cheats or even kills others. Then one gets into trouble and receives punishment, sent to prison, becoming famous for negative mind, bad reputation.

Contentment means not needing more than you have or what you don't have. You can understand better if you think of renunciation, it is similar, bringing peace in the heart by healing the mental sickness of attachment. Shortcomings of discontent in young people:

1. Drug addiction, with no control over life, can't live, can't do earning job, what they call normal life – and impossible to have a special life with meditation, Dharma practice and learning, making your heart practice not harming yourself and the numberless sentient beings, then bringing all beings temporal peace and happiness as well as liberation from the oceans of samsaric suffering, and enlightenment.
2. Alcoholism destroys family wealth, brings disharmony, terrible suffering and bad relationships, harming your life and others.
3. Addiction to sex is unbelievable hell suffering in a human life, totally hallucinated and suffocated, totally terrible life, people killing each other.
4. General addiction brings so many problems, material and so forth.
5. Addiction to laziness means especially unable to practice Dharma, what you should you cannot do, miss out for weeks, months and years, it can happen even lives.
6. People get depressed and upset in relation to the body, especially when they see it becoming old, grey and wrinkled.

Virtuous actions and virtuous thoughts need to be developed until enlightenment is achieved. Always continuously develop completing the great works, as much as one can, like collecting merit, the cause of happiness, developing realizations, to achieve liberation and enlightenment. One should never be content regarding developing positive actions, virtue, which lead to one's own and others' ultimate happiness, enlightenment; always strive to do more.

Apologise immediately if one did some mistake, harmed others, was disrespectful or said hurtful words. Forgive immediately if somebody gets angry, is disrespectful to you or harms you. Develop courage by thinking of the benefit to others, serving others. This is the best offering to the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Not courage in collecting negative karma, harming oneself and others, but develop courage in virtue, good qualities, that which is Dharma. Otherwise sometimes people have funny definitions of good quality what you should **BE** or **DO** – HA HA HA!

Yes, of course thinking of benefiting others, serving others from the heart – WAH! Can you imagine? Like a mother cherishes her most beloved child, wishing happiness, especially ultimate happiness enlightenment, as mentioned in Guru Puja, Lama Chopra.

If these things are done, trying to practice is the best offering, fulfilling all the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' HOLY WISHES – WAH!

So please enjoy numberless billions trillions and zillions.

Big love and no praise, **HA HA HO!**

Lama Zopa Rinpoche

P.S. Of course, the external peaceful means is usually very good but sometimes that aspect doesn't change the mind of the person so then you need to use a wrathful aspect. I'm not saying to get angry and create the cause of a hell realm, don't misunderstand, not saying become mad, I am talking about being very wise. You can have wrathful body and speech with some aspect of anger but not actual anger.

For example, in highest yoga tantra, there are pujas to overcome evil beings who degenerated samaya, the interfering enemies who harm many sentient beings as well as the teachings of Buddha (the one source of all sentient beings' happiness) and holy beings who preserve the Dharma, working for sentient beings. You hook the consciousness of that evil being who engaged in (Tib.) *Shiing.chu tsang.we* – ten very heavy negative karmas related mainly to the Guru and Dharma. Best qualities for doing such wrathful pujas are bodhicitta realization and no question, if you have tantric powers, realization of the generation stage, and on top of that illusory body and clear light. Actually, if you have the potential to do such pujas and don't do them when necessary, you break your bodhisattva vows.

Doing the practice with bodhicitta means the practitioner's mind is cleansed of self-cherishing thought. As it is based on renunciation, it means the mind has been cleansed of attachment; by having realized emptiness the mind is cleansed of ignorance. Added to bodhicitta is the tantric generation stage, and on top of that is the clear light and illusory body, the most powerful, as attained by Lama Yeshe and many of my teachers including Geshe Rabten Rinpoche and Geshe Jampa Wangdu, really great teachers.

The idea is that the evil being's consciousness splits from the body and is sent to a pure land. It is done with compassion, not smashed uncaringly, to actually protect that being from creating heavy negative karma, and send it to the pure land. The wrathful action is used when peaceful actions aren't effective.

Here it is important to understand two types of motivation:

1. Motivation of cause, before the action, i.e. very strong compassion, unbearable compassion for the suffering of the sentient being, that evil doer who has to experience numberless eons of suffering in the hell realm, difficult to see when it will be able to come back as a human let alone when it will be able to meet the Dharma.
2. Motivation of time, during the action, the hooking and sending away, throwing tormas etc. That is wrathful motivation, but not ordinary or actual anger. Usually anger is based on self-cherishing thought, totally careless, no ultimate protection for the other being.

I'm using this example to give the idea that sometimes it may be necessary to do wrathful actions when working at the centre and in other situations, when peaceful means cannot pacify the situation. But of course you need to be skilful and think well, and the timing must be right.

For example, according to the Lower Tantric College Constitution if a monk makes a mistake, the *gekyu* (disciplinarian) doesn't immediately say anything to him directly. First he announces publicly that this mistake has been done so that the person understands. If the monk doesn't change, the *gekyu* will quietly tell the person sitting next to that monk to advise him not to do it again. Thirdly, if nothing changes, the *gekyu* tells the monk directly.

You can understand from this constitution, made by great lamas, the whole point is to avoid hurting the person, very skilful. So you have to think like that at the centre, don't express immediately bl bl bl, pouring out your negative emotions like garbage into a garbage can, like vomiting over the person.

Normal companies are made for business, not to take care of the mind; companies are not built to practice Dharma and as they have money, normally, they can kick out and replace people. A Dharma Centre is made to practice Dharma, to benefit the minds of sentient beings, from guru devotion up to enlightenment, particularly to lay the foundation for realization of renunciation, bodhicitta and right view - extremely important for that foundation to be laid in their hearts, subduing or pacifying ignorance, attachment and self-cherishing thought. Then there is the practice of tantra to pacify the ordinary view and concept and to cease the ordinary impure mind and mind, the cause of samsara, by actualizing the path-time three kayas.

Dharma centre is taking care of the mind, totally different from a company. Then especially to practice compassion because what differentiates Buddhism from other religions is compassion - not only for sick and poor people, not only human beings, also for pigs, fish and so forth, all the animals, as well as rich human beings, all people and all sentient beings, not leaving out even one. There is no other religion that embodies compassion towards all sentient beings.

Of course we will make mistakes because we don't have even ordinary clairvoyance to know the right method to tame a person's mind, what words would help. We don't have deep valid clairvoyance like the arya bodhisattvas, or omniscience, so of course we would make many mistakes. Even the tenth bhumi bodhisattvas cannot do perfect work for sentient beings, they still have the four causes of unknowing, therefore they have the possibility to make mistakes. But it's very important to use our compassion and wisdom as much as possible, to be as skilful as possible. Motivation compassion – in the end the main thing is compassion.

For example, out of compassion for their naughty child who doesn't want to attend school, not wanting the child to suffer a difficult life later, to have good education and easy going life, much pleasure, good job and money, parents will beat or scold the child who otherwise wouldn't listen to nice words; by being hard on the child he learns.

Dictated by Lama Zopa Rinpoche to Venerable Roger Kunsang and Venerable Trisha Labdron, Nov 5, 2009, Dehradun, India. Edited by Venerable Trisha Labdron.