

Advice For A Center Director Faced With Difficult People At The Center

I hope you are very well and I would like to thank you very much for all your continued dedication and service for sentient beings and the teachings of Buddha, by taking care of these meditators at the center, who are trying to practice Dharma, to achieve enlightenment in order to liberate numberless sentient beings from the oceans of samsaric suffering and bring them to enlightenment.

I am sure for a long time, especially recently, there must have been a lot of thoughts going on in you about certain challenging people at the center.

How I see the situation about these people is that they are quite different from others, how I see it is that they have their own particular karma, things happen to them, like they get extremely cold because their house is under trees and no sun can come or that many insects are in their house, so that they spent many months just picking up insects. Maybe it was because they didn't keep the house clean. Anyway regardless, they have their own particular karma.

It has been explained in the teachings by Buddha that everybody does not have the same karma, some people experience one thing as extreme suffering and other people experience the same thing as enjoyment.

So we have to recognize these things, we can't expect everyone to have the same karma. If you think that everyone has their own karma and how they experience things is according to their own karma (whether as a blessing or great problem), if you see it this way then you can understand things better (like with difficult people) and it can also become a cause to generate compassion.

Like how the buddhas and bodhisattvas have more compassion towards those who are more evil, having heresy, more self cherishing thought, who create more heavy karma: the bodhisattvas cherish these sentient beings more, because they have more suffering.

Including when you do good things but in return other people don't see your kindness but just see harm and criticize you back, so this is including those people. Thinking in this way helps you generate compassion, patience and tolerance.

The other thing is for example Lama Atisha had one Indian sadhu who always criticized Lama Atisha, was always angry at Lama Atisha, creating problems etc. People thought that Lama Atisha should not keep him around, should kick him out but Lama Atisha always kept him close.

Also one of my Gurus had one attendant for 30 years. I think Rinpoche met this person at the airport, and he had strong karma with Rinpoche. He was the main person helping Rinpoche. However all those years he was with Rinpoche he didn't get along with any of the other people around Rinpoche, even with other geshe and disciples. So many people were unhappy with him, quite a lot of the students and even geshe suggested to not keep

him around. Not only that but he would get very angry with Rinpoche. Even the Abbott of Sera Jhe cried when he heard this attendant scolding Rinpoche, as people don't normally speak like that to Rinpoche, so it made his disciples very upset.

Also there was one nun, an old student, who became Rinpoche's attendant for 1-2 years and she actually suggested to Rinpoche to kick out this other attendant. Rinpoche said if I have to choose between kicking out you or this other person, I choose to kick you out.

This attendant even affected the center making it very difficult for other people, but Rinpoche didn't listen to anyone and kept him for his whole life. The attendant became a monk and then did Vajrasattva retreat and he actually died during the retreat.

Also at another of our centers there is one monk, who many times when the center is having big functions, especially the day of the function he will get very angry and actually throw tables around.

Many centers have somebody like this in the center, they have the karma to have people like this around, I think most centers have someone like this, maybe even one or two people.

So it's just karma, having somebody there like this is extremely helpful and kind, as I mentioned in the thought transformation teachings, these people really make you practice thought transformation, especially tolerance and compassion.

These difficult people exist because it's empty, totally empty because it is dependent arising, depending on causes and conditions, on the base and the thought labeling and believing on that.

So here I am just mentioning another way to look at it. Different viewpoints and different ways to use the situation for enlightenment, which helps for enlightenment. Using the situation in this way helps for your practice, it helps for your future enlightenment.

Even in Tibetan society there is of course His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who historically it is proven that he is Chenrezig, even predicted from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha. But many Tibetans criticize His Holiness; even write books criticizing His Holiness, even learned geshes, no question about lay people. So these things happen due to karma that cause sentient beings to criticize even bodhisattvas, which is unbelievably most heavy negative karma, without thinking about criticizing buddhas and especially the Guru.

Of course then there are those who criticize, if they are not Buddha and criticize with attachment and anger they create the most unbelievable, heavy negative karma, which causes them to be reborn for so many eons in hell realms for an inconceivable amount of eons. It is as if they come in human rebirth just to do shopping to buy the hell realms, like going shopping in supermarket. They do all this criticizing and use the most precious human body, in which they can achieve enlightenment within one brief lifetime in this degenerate time, and instead they use it to buy the hell realms by engaging in all these heavy negative actions, such as criticizing and so on.

Not only that but by negatively influencing, brainwashing many other people, who then lose faith, and so because you criticize, then it also makes them create so much heavy negative karma, so then bringing them also together with you into the hell realms.

However you are an exceptionally kind person and able to offer service to the students in the center, just to have that thought, to rise this thought to help them and serve them is unimaginable.

As Milarepa said to the people taking care of and serving meditators:

“The meditator meditating on the rock and the benefactor offering the food have an auspicious arrangement to achieve enlightenment together”

Also this means in all future lives you will achieve all your wishes, they will easily be fulfilled, people will easily provide everything for you, whatever you wish, including all the realizations, as this is what you are doing now for the meditators. As you are fulfilling their wishes now, as a result other sentient beings become wish fulfilling to you in all your future lives. For hundreds and thousands of lives, even you are in samsara (but it doesn't mean that you will have to be in samsara for that long).

So here I am just explaining how karma is experienced differently, please use this situation in order to be free from the oceans of samsaric sufferings (6 realms sufferings) and to be able to achieve enlightenment quickly.

Again I would like to thank you very much to you.

With much love and prayers,

Lama Zopa

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