

## How To Rejoice About Hardships Borne While Working For The Center, and Thanks

Our sacrifice, our life sacrificed for Dharma, the teachings of the Buddha, yourself practicing, living in the vows, lay or ordained living in the vows, putting all the effort as much as possible to live in the vows, putting so much effort to learn Dharma, and putting so much effort to practice meditation, to practice the teachings one has studied, to put into practice, to meditate, to achieve realizations; how much of our life we have had to bear hardships for this, how much suffering you did, all that, you can see now the incredible need. But what hardship we have gone through is nothing, it is unbelievable comfort compared to what Buddha did. What hardships we have borne, we have gone through it is nothing, it is great comfort. What hardship we bore to spread the Dharma to sentient beings, for the center to spread Dharma to sentient beings, how much hardship we bore, however hard we have worked, however much hardship we have borne to spread Dharma to sentient beings is nothing compared to what the Buddha did. Understand this.

It is most unimaginable how it is so beneficial - one example is FPMT. Since the centers started so many years ago, there were so many hardships at the beginning. There were unbelievable hardships at the beginning, because there were no finances. Most times people came to Nepal and did a one month course, blah, blah, blah. It benefited to their heart, then they came back to their home, their country. The benefit they got, the happiness and inner peace, they wanted many other people in their country to get this happiness and peace, real freedom – freedom from oceans of samsaric sufferings, not just to heal a headache temporarily, to heal the stomach temporarily, to heal cancer temporarily, but to liberate them from oceans of samsaric sufferings by liberating them from the cause: karma and delusions. By liberating them from the seed of delusions, to cease that, then they can achieve ultimate happiness, everlasting happiness. You have opportunity to do that. So, then you want to give that opportunity to many people in your country. By practicing the true path to achieve true cessation of suffering, then bodhichitta to complete the qualities of realizations, you want to cause so many people in the West, in your country, to achieve that peerless happiness. Can you imagine?

Then you start a center. So many of the centers started like that. You have no business experience; you have no idea. You just finished your studies in school or dropped out, or some finished university. Some were unable to finish university, then came to the East to look for something new, to look for happiness. Some came for spiritual reasons. According to your karma, you came to Nepal and similarly to India. So you had no experience, no business experience, you had no idea how to do external work. Then there were a lot of debts. You invite a geshe, but the geshe doesn't speak English. Then you need a translator. There are all these course expenses, then there are other expenses. I am not going to talk about the other things which make it very expensive at the center. I just want to bring this up. I won't mention more details. It is so unbelievable, then you are sunk in the mud of debts. You sank, sank like you fell inside snow, under the snow, like that. Then it takes many years to pay them back. But at the same time there are a lot of expenses, so many expenses. You don't have much experience. I mean, you just grew up; your life just grew up. It's not that you

just grew up this morning, but just a little bit ago, so not much experience. You have a good heart to benefit others, to help others, but not much experience of outside things, how to handle them. You have no idea how to handle them. There are so many things you need to do, so many things to do.

Of course, you need good karma. The first thing is good karma, but by knowing those other [external] things it makes the life running the center easier, more smooth, not giving rise to problems. It makes everything go more smoothly, more professionally. Of course, it is based on good karma. Constantly, success has to come from merit, good karma, collecting merit. So, always, you have to think of collecting merit. Collecting merit has to be the main focus. For example, in the lam-rim there are four ways to collect extensive merits, four ways of collecting extensive merits.

Usually the advice [to work in a center, project or service] is given by the guru. It is to fulfill the wishes of the guru, so therefore can you imagine every day, every hour, every minute, your service from obtaining the advice, and fulfilling the holy wishes? Every day, every hour, every minute, every second can you imagine the merit you collect? The most powerful karma, merit. It is the wisest way of collecting merit, the most skillful, because you are doing it in relation to the most powerful object, following the advice. Every minute, every second that you are studying, serving, working there, can you imagine? Can you imagine? It is unbelievable.

So you work so hard, sacrifice your life for soooo many years. Among the Sangha there are quite a number who did that, for soooo many years bearing hardships in the center to spread Dharma for sentient beings to come, to learn meditation, to practice, for their mind to become Dharma, to achieve renunciation, bodhichitta, right view, to achieve liberation and enlightenment, to get out of samsara. Now remember what the Buddha did for sentient beings, how he sacrificed his life for sentient beings and for you. He sacrificed his life for three countless great eons. Each of these practices was done for three countless great eons. If you remember that, for so many years you worked for sentient beings to spread the Dharma, it is nothing. Compared to that, it is nothing. The hardships you have gone through are nothing compared to what the Buddha did for you and for sentient beings. It is nothing.

This is what I wanted to say, so rejoice. That understanding is very important, and then to rejoice.

Here, there are many old students, so from the bottom of my heart I want to thank you today. It doesn't always happen, so I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart on behalf of Lama Yeshe. Here, there are many old students who for soooooo many years worked so hard for the center to benefit sentient beings, for Lama Yeshe, for me, for the teachings of the Buddha. So, you see, many years of hard work at your center, if you didn't do that, if you hadn't started a center, if you hadn't born all those hardships for so many years – the debts, the expenses, the worry and fear – if you didn't do that...

Now the organization has developed and now is able to benefit the world in so many ways. It is able to extensively benefit the world, and so many sentient beings in so many ways, with Dharma education, and so many ways to benefit the world. This wouldn't have happened if in early times you hadn't done hard work for the center. Now we are able to offer extensive benefit to sentient beings.

This wouldn't have happened. Even this gathering to do the course here wouldn't have happened. Similarly, there wouldn't be Kadampa Center. By now, this wouldn't have happened. The great and many ways we have to benefit sentient beings now wouldn't have happened, if in the early time you hadn't sacrificed yourself for the center. It all came from many years of dedication to the center, with so many difficulties, especially money. Education and everything was there, mostly teachings were happening, mostly that part happens, but the money is not there.

I want here to thank everyone, many people who sacrificed their life for the center, for the organization, for many years. I want to thank on behalf of Lama Yeshe, on behalf of myself, on behalf of all buddhas, on behalf of all sentient beings.

The organization has been developed. People have more and more education in Buddhism and the good heart. Good heart has been developed. Compassion is what makes it possible to achieve enlightenment, so overall compassion is more developed, compassion with Dharma wisdom, compassion developed with Dharma wisdom, that is the development that I see in the FPMT organization, more compassion. That is the most important one for enlightenment, most important one for the happiness of all sentient beings.

*Colophon: From the Light of the Path Teachings, by Lama Zopa Rinpoche. September 20, 2010. Lightly edited by Kendall Magnussen without checking against the audio, and edited by Claire Isitt.*