

## Attitude for Offering Service

My dear center director,

I hope you are very well, serving the Buddha and sentient beings as well as myself.

I just wanted to take the opportunity to again thank you for accepting this very special job as director - it is different to ordinary work which you do for money and worldly reasons. Working for the center and serving sentient beings is a very unique situation and when done with bodhicitta motivation you earn skies, unbelievable amounts of merit because you are educating others in the Buddha's method that completely eliminates suffering and brings lasting happiness. This is something very special. So the nature of the work and result of the work is very different.

Of course there is another aspect of being director - when you become the leader of people, for example a director, you will become an object to be criticized by people sometimes. If you expect to receive criticism at the beginning, instead of praise, that is going to be much happier for you. It is extremely beneficial. When criticism is happening, if it is expected, you will not be shocked. Life will be much smoother and easier and there will be no disturbance. It becomes pleasant by expecting that. This is the best psychology.

For a Dharma practitioner and thought transformation practitioner, it is best not to expect praise from others all the time. If there is the thought clinging for praise and for worldly feelings, then when receiving criticism you will be in great shock. You will lose aspiration and so many personal and emotional problems will arise. Also, if you live your life with craving for reputation and praise, your entire work will be done for that. All your work will be done with clinging to this life with attachment. Your work will not be done for sentient beings, to benefit sentient beings. It will not be done for liberation from samsara for oneself, and not even for future happiness for oneself which is long term happiness. Then all your activities in life become negative. Since your wish is non-virtuous, your actions will become non-virtuous and you will keep on creating negative karma. You will create the cause to be born in the lower realms. Instead of getting a higher rebirth, attaining liberation, liberating sentient beings and enlightening them, you will create negative karma to again be reborn in the lower realms, from where you just came not so long ago.

The best motivation is the goal to benefit others. Being a director is to serve sentient

beings, free them from suffering and its causes, bring them happiness and its causes - cause happiness of future lives, liberate them from samsara and bring them to full enlightenment.

Although you are the leader, in the heart of the leader, it is best to think that you are low, instead of high. No matter how high the position of the leader is, the motivation should be humble. One should always think that one is the servant and others are leaders. Others are most precious and kind, are from whom I receive all my past, present and future happiness, liberation from samsara, the peerless happiness of enlightenment; from whom the object of refuge, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha comes; they are more precious than Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha come from them. Sentient beings become most kind and precious. They become an unbelievable object of respect, to be cherished, worked for, taken care of and served.

One should treat others like a mother treats her most beloved child. A mother cherishes her beloved child more than herself, day and night, all the time. Even when she is sick, she only gives the best things to her child, saves her child from danger and cherishes her child. Similarly, a very good child also loves his/her mother in the same way. It is very important to think that all sentient beings are our mother or child. We should train our mind this way in daily life, at home, in the center, especially with people you are with, anybody you meet or work together with. They are my wish-fulfilling jewel. 'Wish-fulfilling one' means someone who is giving you happiness of the past, present and future, all the way to enlightenment.

When you abandon harm to others, you receive so much happiness from others, from life to life, for 100 lifetimes. Just by abstaining from harm to others one time you receive benefit for 100 lifetimes. By practicing the morality of not stealing, you receive wealth for 100 lifetimes. By practicing charity one time, you will enjoy good results in hundreds and thousands of lifetimes. In the *Arya Sanghata sutra* it is said that by practicing generosity once to a sentient being you will gain enjoyment for 80 or 80,000 eons. With a good heart, if you benefit somebody, you will receive enjoyment for 100 lifetimes, since karma is expandable. From one virtue, you experience the result for so many lifetimes or for so many times in one life.

Firstly, you should think that sentient beings are wish-fulfilling jewels. Secondly, you should be the wish-fulfilling jewel to other sentient beings in daily life. This is very important. Even if you are not working or you are in a cave, not seeing anybody, not even an insect, you should meditate on bodhicitta. You should think how precious

sentient beings are. And think, “I must do the same.” This is an excellent way to live life, especially living a busy life with others. By living life with this attitude, it is the happiest life and most meaningful life. There will be nothing to be scared of in the future. Life is like sunshine in the future.

I presented the above in relation to Dharma and Buddhism – how others will feel if you are a wish-fulfilling jewel to others. If you become a wish-fulfilling jewel to others, as a result, others will become a wish-fulfilling jewel to you. This can be explained on this basis.

For non-believers of Buddhism, it can be explained by the following example. When you drive a car and you offer a lift to people on the road, you will receive 100 or 1,000 times that car ride. From just one action, you will receive the result so many times. For non-believers of Buddhism, by fulfilling others’ wishes, others will fulfill your wishes and others will offer you a ride.

Now, I need to tell you something specific. This is the most important and confidential policy of the center. The success of the center depends on the resident teacher’s attitude, whether it is negative or positive. If the motivation of working for the center is negative, it can bring lots of problems. If the motivation is selfish, the heart is not for the center, only for one’s own wishes, wealth and other matters, problems will arise constantly. Obstacles and unhappiness will generate more and more. After sometime it will become unbearable. If the students become followers of the teacher and if they like the teacher instead of the organization, so many problems will arise.

If the teacher is very faithful to me, trying to achieve what I advise and taking my advice as very important, based on that, the center becomes beneficial and positive to sentient beings. It becomes a healthy center. Therefore, I think it is very important to have good relationship with the resident teacher. Then everything will come together – healthy, peaceful, harmonious and united. Then the rest will be easy.

Of course, there can be different ideas sometimes – the teacher has one idea and you may have another. If it is difficult to decide, you can check with Claire at International Office, if she cannot help she will ask me. It is important to keep harmony in the center with everyone being harmonious. Being the director, there needs to be lots of skillfulness. Running the center in this way, the resident teacher will be happy. Even if you do not regard the teacher as your guru, if they are fully ordained Sangha, then by respecting Sangha, incredible good karma will be created. There will be unbelievable benefit. You

need to always respect Sangha and Dharma teachers of the center. It is good to humbly discuss things with the teacher, of course you are the director but certain matters are still good to discuss

Here, I mentioned that it is very important to develop the center with a happy relationship with the resident teacher. Also please help other FPMT centers or groups near you whenever you can – keep good harmony and good relationship.

It is unbelievably precious to be director. You are the exact and suitable person at this time.

With much love & prayers,  
Lama Zopa

*Colophon: Letter written by Lama Zopa Rinpoche, April 2008. Edited by Claire Isitt.*