

## WORKING FOR DHARMA CENTERS

At the meeting of the Board of Directors and center directors they suggested that I give some advice.

Overall there's more success than failure - that's what I believe, what I think, what I see. What I think I see. And that's what I believe. Overall, the students, the centers, there's more success than failure. This is what I feel. So there's more rejoicing than depression. Even during Lama's time I think in certain cases there has been failure, but I think the majority of cases have been very pleasing, very satisfying - according to the capacity of the students. This is what I think from the side of Lama.

The purpose of having a center - as it is mentioned in *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*:

"May the teaching which is the one medicine of the migrating beings exist a long time with offerings and services."

It is very true. This is the only medicine to really solve our problems and sentient beings' problems. Even though there are many hospitals in the world, many expert doctors, as long as beings don't change their attitude, they don't change their actions, don't stop the actions which become the cause of their sufferings, problems. They don't stop. If there's no change in their actions, therefore there's no change in their life problems, now and in the future. To change attitude depends on having Dharma wisdom. That depends on meeting the teachings. For the complete change of attitude, the perfect change of attitude, the complete development of the mind, as well as the action of stopping all harm to sentient beings, to oneself as well as towards sentient beings, and to develop actions to benefit sentient beings, that depends on meeting the BuddhaDharma. Therefore, until they meet the BuddhaDharma and then practice changing their attitude - until that, however many times they get healed, there's no end to healing, because out of wrong conception they continuously do wrong actions - the cause of problems - so there's no end to healing, no end to taking medicine, there's no end to the expenses, operations, all the life dangers, all the fears, worries - there's no end. The whole problem becomes endless.

For example, by living in one vow, for example not to kill, by seeing the shortcomings of the negative karma of killing and then renouncing that, and then living in the vow not to kill - by that one stops experiencing the four aspects of suffering results - the ripening aspect of the lower realms; the experiencing of the result similar to the cause, which is experiencing a short life in this life or next life; doing the action of killing again; possessing the result of being born in a place where there's a lot of life danger, epidemic disease, the elements are harmful, there are harmful creatures and people and even medicines and food don't have power and they turn into harm and disturbance for health, are the cause for unhealthiness, like that. So living in this one vow not to kill stops these four types of problems. Now, by thinking of creating the result similar to the cause by having the habit of doing an action again in the next life, then by having done that, by completing that karma, then again from that one experiences the four types of suffering results. Then again from that creating the result similar to the cause, again one experiences another four suffering results. So it goes on and on - so that's how one makes the suffering of samsara without end.

So just living even in one vow is unbelievable how many problems it stops, how much confusion it stops in this life and especially in future lives - hundreds and hundreds. If you don't stop, if you don't change the attitude, don't change the action, then the problems one experience go on and on without end. So even this change of one action means you stop experiencing all these endless suffering results which comes from that action. So it's unbelievable. So that is happiness - not only happiness in this life, but long-term happiness from life to life. The absence of the problems which come from that wrong action.

And by living in that vow there are four types of good result: creating the result similar to the cause means that again one lives in the vow life to life. So it's unbelievable just thinking of the benefits of one Dharma practice, living in one vow. One can see so clearly, so logically, how that is the source of happiness in life. And happiness in life comes from oneself, one's own change of attitude, change of action, through one's own Dharma practice. So it completely depends upon oneself. This life and all future lives' happiness up to enlightenment completely depends upon oneself.

So now think like this, compare a weekend lam-rim meditation course - listening, reflecting, meditation practice for a weekend. Just one minute of reading the lam-rim prayer, doing direct meditation mindfully reading the lam-rim prayer - if we compare that with the benefit of all the hospitals that are on the earth, all the external treatments, now we compare that one minute of meditation on the lam-rim, mindfully reading the prayer, to all those external treatments. This one minute reading the lam-rim prayer, which becomes direct meditation - this plants the seed of the whole path to enlightenment in that one minute. That builds the potential to end all samsaric sufferings, including their cause. But all these external treatments, these cannot have that effect, cannot plant the seed of enlightenment. They don't develop the potential of the mind towards enlightenment. Compared to this one minute of direct lam-rim meditation, listening or mindfully reading - the benefits of that have no comparison to all those external treatments. So when you compare the value, all those others are completely lost. Even though they are beneficial, they are completely lost when you compare their benefits with one minute of reciting or listening to lam-rim prayer. From this one is able to obtain happiness in your future life, from this one is able to attain liberation. From this one is able to achieve enlightenment. But from all those others one cannot obtain all these things. I often say that while I think of course it is very beneficial and very good to be able to cure sicknesses, to stop problems by giving medicines - it is beneficial to be able to cure - but as long as sentient beings do not meet Dharma, do not practice Dharma, they continuously create the problems. So there's no end to the treatment, the healing. The problem is stopped by meeting the Dharma and by having Dharma wisdom - by putting it into practice, the problem stops. The problems, the suffering of samsara are ceased.

Thinking this, seeing this benefit, is one that inspires me, that gives me inspiration about how important it is to teach lam-rim. That gives enjoyment, seeing the benefit, how incredibly it benefits sentient beings, that gives great joyfulness or pleasure to do it.

One can see very clearly that the teaching of the Buddha is the one medicine to end, to completely cease the entire problems and suffering of samsara and their causes - to cease all mental stains. The teaching is the source of happiness, temporal and all ultimate happiness, only the teaching. So in *Bodhicharyavatara* it says that the teaching is the one medicine to cure the suffering of migrating

beings - may it exist a long time. In order to exist a long time it needs these things, needs support from those who practice, who do the work to spread it - so that is the service. Without depending on those things the teachings cannot exist, cannot be spread, disseminated.

In life, of course the best is if one can live in a solitary place to practice, to make development in the lam-rim path year by year, so that way you benefit sentient beings. Then next, if one cannot do that, then one studies as much as possible and teaches others. Oneself practices as much as possible and teaches others. In that way you benefit sentient beings. Then if one cannot do that, one cannot do much study and teachings, the other thing is to help obtain the necessary conditions. One cannot do the activities of teaching, but can do other beneficial things, just as mentioned in *Bodhicharyavatara* - one can help make the necessary conditions possible.

The purpose of the center is for that. Without the necessary conditions - the place and means of living, finance - without these things, there's no way to invite teachers and for other sentient beings to come there to practice.

I mentioned before about the benefits, the importance of teaching Dharma generally, but particularly teaching lam-rim. These ultimate benefits, besides all the temporal happiness that the sentient beings can experience, which they receive by meeting the Dharma, by practicing Dharma - all this ultimate happiness is what we offer by making the center, by working at the center. This is what we offer to sentient beings. Inconceivable temporal happiness and especially, the main thing that we offer, ultimate happiness. Making it possible to achieve liberation and enlightenment. These immeasurable benefits are what they receive from all the members, from all those who teach, then also from the directors, spiritual program coordinators, the secretaries, the members of the center who help with the finances, everyone who contributes: those who do the Dharma activity and those who help provide the material conditions in order for the Dharma activity to happen. These immeasurable benefits are what are being given to sentient beings by us.

It is important to remember these incredible benefits. Ultimate happiness is the most important, greatest need of sentient beings, what they're starving for. The greatest benefit is this, which we're offering. So it is important to remember again and again the incredible good thing that we're doing for other sentient beings. Not only concentrating all the time on the problems of the center: like reciting mantras with a mala, reciting the problems of the center, counting those same problems. Instead of looking only on the negative side, looking only on the side of the problems, we should look at the positive side again and again - the great benefit that you're offering to other sentient beings. If you look only from the side of the problem then what you see, for one's own mind, the understanding that comes when you think about the center is "problems" - nothing less than problems. Like the meditators who see everything as illusory, whatever object they look at or they think of they see it as the unification of dependent arising and empty of true existence - whatever they see, they see it as empty, empty of true existence. So like that - whenever we think of the center, the understanding that comes is of problems. Instead of emptiness, what comes in the heart by seeing the object, instead of understanding emptiness - problem. Center = problem. It happens like that. Then it becomes very unpleasant to stay at the center, and very unpleasant to think about the center. It becomes like living in a thorn bush.

Generally, how things appear depends on how we look at them. How things appear to us, whether

they appear as a problem or benefit depends on how we look at them, depends on how we interpret them.

Decisions have to be taken with concern for others - if it's not beneficial but is harmful, then it needs to be changed. Not being personal. Not so much personal involvement. Not so much making decisions with ego but more with concern for others, for the majority of people at the center. Whether it is beneficial or harmful, on that basis, by analyzing the different views, then whatever is most practical, whichever has more benefits, then that should be chosen.

Especially the director should have the expectation, the idea that "Director" means that since one takes responsibility for so many things, so many people - therefore "I'm the Director" means "I'm the object to be criticized, I'm the object of other people's criticism." So one has to expect that, one has to prepare to practice thought transformation. One has to have that plan, that motivation. You are an object to be criticized, badly treated by others - you help, but in return others harm. It's very important to have this plan in the mind. "Director" means this - so therefore, you have to practice thought transformation very strongly.

When one doesn't have any responsibility, when one lives alone, there's nobody criticizing you because one doesn't take responsibility for others. Criticism comes the more one takes responsibility - it's natural that one receives more criticism, more problems. If one looks at the situation as your Dharma practice, then it's something about which there's no choice - being in a center, the more problems there are, the more one has to practice. It gives you the opportunity to practice more. The thought training teachings, all the lam-rim that one has heard so many times, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, the bodhicitta teachings from lam-rim, the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought, from which naturally one can understand the benefits of cherishing others. So you get more opportunity to practice, to see the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought by being in such a position, being in such a place. So I think that is very important when one takes on responsibility: to prepare, to have this plan. If one is going to defeat the enemy by going to war one has to have all the equipment, all the weapons ready to use. It's like that.

Because one's own mind has obscurations, has ignorance, so there's negative karma created. So there's a cause to receive criticism, because of ignorance, because of negative karma created in the past. And other sentient beings' minds are obscured, have ignorance, anger, attachment, all these mental stains. So of course because of that it's natural for problems to arise, it's natural that sentient beings criticize you. That is why they're sentient beings. If one is Buddha, others are Buddha, having ceased all the mental stains, then there's no reason to hear criticism. But since oneself and others are not enlightened beings, have not ceased the mental stains, then it's natural to have problems and to receive criticism.

This is a place to examine one's own mind. When one is with others, then somehow other sentient beings who are around oneself are a reflection of one's own mind. People who become negative towards oneself are a reflection, the quality of one's own mind is reflected, is appearing to you. Someone who has a very good heart, someone who is very generous sees that there are more people who are kind, there are more people helping them. How people surrounding you appear to you is kind of the reflection of one's own mind. People are manifesting in that way according to one's own attitude and according to one's own actions. It very much looks this way. It depends on one's own

attitude. This one person could be very negative, a bad friend, negative to somebody. But for you, this same person who many other people may see as very cruel, very vicious, very negative, but for oneself one sees this person as very kind, as someone who loves, respects, likes you. That is because that person feels your attitude, warmhearted, kind. So that person has a different attitude towards you. That's why I'm saying that the people around you are very much the reflection of one's own mind, one's own attitude, the quality of one's own mind determines how the people around you appear to you. Generally it seems like that.

So for the person who practices patience, even though all sentient beings criticize them, even though everyone criticizes and treats them badly, for the person who practices thought transformation or practices patience, the person whose mind is living in patience cannot find one single enemy. Finds others only benefiting, only benefiting - even though what others do is to criticize, treat badly, harm, kill - all that. So if there's no anger one doesn't find any enemy outside. As there's no anger there's no enemy outside. So I think it very much depends on one's attitude, how one interprets, how one looks at things. I think the good heart really seems to be the solution for everything.

I often talk about all the inconceivable benefits that sentient beings receive by practicing tantra, by meeting tantric teaching at the center. By making the center, then other sentient beings are able to meet the tantra teachings. Besides all the inconceivable benefits that they receive just from the lam-rim, the *3 Principles of the Path* to enlightenment. By hearing teachings about bodhicitta - even if it's a one-day course or weekend course - that makes it possible for sentient beings to receive enlightenment. By hearing teachings about renunciation of samsara, that makes it possible for sentient beings to receive liberation. By hearing teachings on emptiness, that makes it possible for sentient beings to cut the root of samsara. By understanding intellectually, even by understanding the meaning of dependent arising, just from that minute, the sentient being has started to open the door to liberation, from that minute understanding the meaning of dependent arising gives the opportunity to eliminate the ignorance of true existence. From that minute, they open the door. The opportunity to end starts, the possibility to end the suffering of samsara. The possibility to completely cease the suffering of samsara started the minute that sentient being understood what dependent arising means, even just from that one-day teaching. Even one minute, even one second of meditating on dependent arising and emptiness purifies even the heaviest negative karma, uninterrupted negative karma, all those other negative karmas, the ten non-virtues get purified by meditating on emptiness even for such a short time.

By hearing teachings on bodhicitta and then each time they meditate on bodhicitta they accumulate infinite merit and create the cause of enlightenment. And it becomes the greatest purification. All this is what we're offering to other sentient beings - offering from the teacher, director, spiritual program coordinator, all the members who help with the finance, whoever works at the center, this is what we're offering to other sentient beings.

Particularly when they hear BuddhaDharma, they generate faith in Buddha. When they start to meditate, they get experience, as they start to get experience of calmness, peace, they develop faith in Buddha. By taking teachings on karma they understand what is right and wrong - what is wrong to abandon, what is right to practice - the cause of suffering, cause of happiness. That's how we lead sentient beings in the right path. That is the greatest benefit that we're offering.

I used to mention that whatever style of life one lives, the work one does, all the success that we're talking about, that people talk about in the world: without depending on Dharma, there's no way to have success. Success in business is dependent on good karma. To be healthy, success in one's health, that depends on good karma. Finding a job depends on having good karma. Having wealth depends on good karma. Having harmonious life, harmonious relationship, harmony in the family, in society, depends on good karma. So everything, all good things are dependent on good karma. All failures, all undesirable things are dependent on negative karma.

Everything is dependent on practice. To prevent all undesirable things, to have all success, all the good things is dependent on good karma. So therefore there's no way to have success, no way to have any good desirable things without Dharma practice. No way. That is the ultimate answer. So people in the world, whether they accept reincarnation or not, whether they accept the definition of what virtue means and what non-virtue means, whether they reject or accept Buddhism, the ultimate answer is Dharma practice. To stop life problems and to have success, one needs to purify. The ultimate answer is: if one doesn't want problems, you need to purify the cause and need to abandon the cause of the problems. There are two things: one is to purify past causes which are already created, and the other thing is to abandon creating the cause again. That is Dharma practice. So in reality there's no way to stop problems and to have success without Dharma practice. That is the ultimate answer in everything. Whether the sentient being accepts or understands or not, that is the ultimate answer. The ultimate solution is to practice Dharma.

Therefore it is important that we ourselves study as much as possible and practice as much as possible and teach. Or even if we don't teach, that we help provide the conditions causing other sentient beings to meet the Dharma. There's no other real solution for life problems except Dharma. There's no other real solution. Everything - the ultimate answer is Dharma practice. Purify the causes already created and abandon creating the cause again. Again, this is what we're offering to the sentient beings. So rejoice!

All these are the benefits. Oneself alone, it's difficult to do. Oneself alone cannot do all the activities: be the teacher, the director, the spiritual program coordinator - oneself cannot be everything. Therefore to offer these extensive benefits, it has to depend on the help of the group, who can do different things. So by joining with the group doing Dharma activities, having a teacher and so forth, in this way one receives all these benefits. Each member, each person helping at the center receives all these benefits, offers all these benefits to other sentient beings. That is the benefit of working as a group, that is the purpose of the center, the group. Therefore each group member is very kind. One is able to offer all these benefits with their help. By working together with them one is able to offer all these extensive benefits to other sentient beings. So therefore they are very kind.

Another thing. While one is working at the center, one should remember Guru Yoga, particularly that the work is given directly by Lama - that service becomes Guru Yoga. No matter how hard it is, no matter how difficult is, it becomes guru yoga practice. That is one thing to concentrate on - it's guru yoga practice. Then one needs to think of the benefits. The first of the benefits is becoming closer to enlightenment by following the advice. Each time one obtains advice, one becomes closer to enlightenment. The second thing is, even by making offering one comes closer to enlightenment. One remembers guru yoga practice, and then the benefits of that. As mentioned in the Kalachakra tantra, having done prostrations to the buddhas of the 3 times, in all the past,

present, and future eons; in all these 3 times having made offerings to all the buddhas; even if one protected 10 million sentient beings and creatures from being killed - one doesn't become enlightened in this life. But if one pleases the lama who has oceans of qualities, if one pleases the lama with devotion, then one will achieve qualities, sublime and general realizations in this life.

In other words, without pleasing the guru, one's own virtuous teacher, without pleasing them, doing something unpleasing and yet on the other hand doing a lot of prostrations, offerings, a lot of practices, protecting so many animals, liberating millions of animals from being killed - but not paying attention to this practice in relation to the guru - then one cannot become enlightened. Then even though those other virtuous things don't get done, but if one with devotion is able to please the virtuous teacher, that makes it possible to achieve the general and sublime realizations in this very lifetime. The conclusion is that realization depends on pleasing the virtuous teacher. It depends on that.

In the tantric text called *She tub pa* (?), one who is expert in the service of the guru, that fortunate one's service has much greater meaning than having done 10 million, six hundred thousand prostrations to the Buddhas. If one obtains [and follows] the guru's advice, instruction - then all wishes will succeed, one will achieve infinite merit. It's good to remember these benefits that are explained in the teachings. One has to remember that when one is working, even if one doesn't live at a center but works at a center, try to remember this. Especially when one faces difficulties, when one meets difficulties doing the work, offering service, it's very important to remember this and in this way there's something to enjoy. You see it is a path. What one is doing is a path to enlightenment. By seeing the benefit, there's great enjoyment.

Another thing to remember is: since we took the bodhisattva vow, there are three types of morality. One is morality doing work for sentient beings. Therefore we should recognize the work we do at the center is practicing the bodhisattva vow of morality doing work for sentient beings. For example, there's about 11 explained in the lam-rim teachings, such as guiding someone on the road who doesn't know the road; giving medicine to someone who is sick - there's about 11 things mentioned. So recognize the activity at the center as Dharma. Doing work at the center is putting the bodhisattva vow into practice. Many other sentient beings are depending on your help. So whatever responsibility one has taken, whatever work one is doing, other beings are depending on you. They need your help - teaching, translating, whatever - they need your help. So your doing that is the practice of the bodhisattva vow.

Then also, after taking initiation there are the five dhyani buddha samayas. The Vairocana samaya again has is the morality of doing works to benefit sentient beings. So again, offering service is putting into practice the samaya of Vairocana. Another thing is the Amoghasiddhi samaya, there are four types of charity. Again we should recognize the work that we do as the charity of fearlessness. What we're doing is we're causing the suffering of samsara, all the obscurations to end. What we are doing is causing all fears to end, to cease. Dharma is the best protection, is the only one which can end all fears. Always there is the question of how to stop fear. Without practicing Dharma there's no way to stop fear. The essence of Dharma is karma. The good heart, especially the Mahayana teaching of the good heart, bodhicitta and karma. That protects sentient beings from fears, from dangers, from the sufferings of samsara, from those mental stains. This is not just the charity of fearlessness when somebody is beating someone and you stop it, or someone is hungry and then you

give them food, sick and you give medicine - not just that. Here, it is the charity of fearlessness to completely end fear, danger. So realize what you are doing. There are many temporary charities of fearlessness, there are many other things we do, but the main one is to not have fear, to be free from the danger of samsara. And also, by spreading the Mahayana teaching, to free from the danger of falling into peace, the liberation for self, the lower nirvana - protecting from that danger. Then there's Dharma charity, if one does work out of loving-kindness. As one helps, even just with material things, the charity of contributing physically, helping the center with materials, helping others at the center and miscellaneous charity, one is practicing the samaya of Amoghasiddhi.

Also it is very important sometimes to remember Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's life, which comes at the end of the Chod practice. By becoming king, having everything, then making charity of the whole family, everything, to other sentient beings. Then making charity of the whole body, the flesh to the tiger. Then making charity of blood to the yakshas - to those who gave harm, in return he gave benefit. All those bodhisattva life stories. The brahmin Patient One - the king cut all his limbs off and yet he continuously practiced patience, without disturbing his mind. Those bodhisattva life stories of all those great sacrifices for others are very helpful to read sometimes - like at the end of 6 session yoga or when one does the lam-rim prayer, or during Lama Chopal's lam-rim prayer when it comes to the section on charity or the section on exchanging oneself for others, then to read this prayer is very effective. Also even to recite it in a group at the center. It is very inspiring for the practice of bodhicitta.

Also in the *Eight Verses of Thought Transformation*, the second verse talks about holding oneself as the lowest of all and respecting others and keeping them higher. We need to practice like that. That is very important in order to have good communication with others. This verse is very important to practice, so that respect comes for others, then there is good communication. Good communication depends on how much good heart one has. A person who is more selfish, angry, impatient, has less communication with others; the more good heart there is, the more communication with others, communication with more people. So the solution for communication is the good heart. And again, for the good heart one needs to purify negative karma. Not having good communication, no success, those karmas, again what we have to do is to purify the karma. So it involves Dharma practice: purification and practicing the good heart. That helps to have good communication, I think. The answer, the solution is lam-rim practice. It is very important for all of us to practice the second verse from the *Eight Verses*, as much as possible to look at others' qualities, what they have, the many things that we see and the many things that we don't see, the qualities that others have. Always to have in mind that "I am the servant of sentient beings" - however many people there are at the center, to think that "I am the servant of all the people." To have that attitude is very important, to put others higher than oneself. Whatever the outside appearance is, to have that mental attitude helps very much for communication - respect comes so then there is a very comfortable feeling in the body.

"I am the servant of the sentient beings, to pacify their sufferings, to obtain happiness for them." Then particularly one thinks "I am the servant of all these people at the center." However many there are at the center, "I am for their use, I am for their enjoyment." Like that. In this way there is great pleasure. The other way around, that "they are for my enjoyment, my use" then the mind becomes very unhappy, because it involves the self-cherishing thought, the mind becomes painful. The nature of that is painful, uptight. Not healthy, not comfortable. The other way of thinking



brings a very relaxed mind, really relaxed. Not physically relaxed but mentally. Real relaxation is mental relaxation. I think that attitude can stop a lot of problems at the center, a lot of conflicts of personalities and many things. The point is, as it says in the *Bodhicaryavatara*, and as often His Holiness the Dalai Lama says that "this is what I practice" - "may I become the means of living for sentient beings, like the earth and so forth". That means the four elements - fire, water, earth, sky. How these four elements are used is up to sentient beings, it is not up to the elements. How the water is used is up to sentient beings - it is not up to the water. So like that with each one. Like this, how oneself is used by other sentient beings is up to other sentient beings, it's not up to oneself how oneself is used by other sentient beings. Oneself to become the means of living for other sentient beings, like the four elements and the sky - for sentient beings to use for their happiness. It's good to remember this verse and these things in the morning, after one has motivated.

So this is a short way to do it:

In the morning as one gets up, remember how fortunate you are, you didn't die, you once again have the perfect human rebirth to practice Dharma, and Dharma is the only solution for oneself and for other sentient beings, bringing definite benefit. And if one is happy or suffering, now or in a future life, remember death - that one is constantly dying, one is called "alive" but actually there is no difference from a person who has AIDS and cancer - even though I don't have these diseases, still I may die before people who have them, death can happen today. Besides continuously running towards the Lord of Death, running towards death so fast, if the negative karma is not purified, I am going so fast to the lower realms, without stopping for even one second, going so fast, there's no rest, there's no stop to becoming nearer to the Lord of Death, to the lower realms. There's no stop, even for a minute or a second. Then, on top of that, we have uncertainty about the time of death - death can happen today. Like the people in hospital who are told by the doctor that there's only two years left or only 3 months left to live. For me, death can happen even today. There is no difference to those who are in hospital and those who are regarded as dying even now. Remember this very strongly.

Then generate the power of the attitude. You can use the verse from *Lama Chopal*:

"Cherishing oneself is the source of all degeneration, all the undesirable things; and cherishing others is the source of all the qualities, all the desirable things, all the success. Therefore, please grant me blessings to be able to do the exchange of oneself for others as the heart practice." Remember this quotation, then think of how the self-cherishing thought has been keeping me in the oceans of samsaric sufferings from beginningless rebirths and has not allowed me to have any realizations in my mental continuum. In either a short or elaborate way think of the shortcomings of samsara. Then think of the benefits of bodhicitta, cherishing others. Bodhicitta is the most powerful means of purification; bodhicitta practice is the best means of accumulating the most extensive merit, it is the best medicine, the best way of bringing wealth, the best protection. Remember Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's bodhicitta - from Guru Shakyamuni Buddha's bodhicitta so many sentient beings were led to happiness, liberation and enlightenment - this is continuously happening until samsara ends. One's own bodhicitta is similar to this. If one has bodhicitta, if I have bodhicitta, I also can lead numberless sentient beings to happiness, liberation and enlightenment, purifying all the mental stains and completing all the realizations until all sentient beings become enlightened. Bodhicitta is the source of all happiness.

Then after that one can think: "Until I achieve enlightenment, this life, particularly this year, this month, this week, especially today - I won't let myself be under the control of the self-cherishing thought and I will never separate from bodhicitta." You can motivate like that. Then from now on think "In order to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings, to pacify all their sufferings, to lead them to enlightenment, therefore I'm going to do virtuous practices, work with body, speech and mind. May these works of body, speech and mind, may this virtuous practice become only a cause for myself to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings."

So you motivate that way. Which becomes causal motivation. There's causal-time motivation and the action-time motivation. So this becomes causal-time motivation. For example, there's motivation before we begin the sadhana - we try to generate bodhicitta; then during the sadhana there can be all kinds of motivations. During the sadhana, or during the recitation of mantra, the action-time motivation could be something else, could be opposite to the causal motivation. It could be non-virtue during the reciting of mantra; the causal motivation did not continue, it changed. However, this becomes causal motivation of the work or the activities of body, speech and mind. Causal motivation is regarded as very important.

So by training like this, then gradually the mind can gradually be oneness with, can be transformed into this motivation. Now it looks kind of artificial, we have to force it. But later, by training it becomes natural.

The other thing that I would like to request, especially for the students who have connection with me, is to take the 8 Mahayana precepts. Taking the 8 Mahayana precepts also helps ordained ones on that day, it helps to a certain extent to live purely in a certain number of vows that day. Especially for lay people to take the 8 Mahayana precepts at least once a month. That gives so much hope and confidence when death comes not to have worry, creates so much cause to receive, confidence to go to a pure realm, even if the path is not completed in this life, that gives the opportunity to appear in a pure realm where there's the opportunity to continue the rest of the path and to receive again the body of the happy migrating being, the perfect human rebirth to continue the practice. So this is my plan, or what I would like. Since it is one day and so easy to do. Without morality there's no good rebirth next life. Without legs one cannot walk, cannot go to the place where one wishes to go. And it is a practical Dharma practice, a source of happiness for oneself and others.

I recently did the translation of all the extensive benefits that are explained in a few different texts. The first reason was to have it in the Chinese language so that the Chinese people who like nyung nays or 8 Mahayana precepts so much - it's something that they can do immediately, so they like it so much. The first reason was to put the whole commentary, the whole thing about the 8 Mahayana precepts into Chinese, something which they enjoy so much. Then later, it would be good in English, so it is available to everybody.

As I mentioned yesterday during the precepts, as one made a vow to not kill and as one lives in that vow for 24 hours, all the rest of the sentient beings do not receive the harm of killing from that one person, from you. Therefore, not receiving that harm from you is peace, the absence of harm is peace. So by living in one vow you are offering this peace to all sentient beings. Like this, the more vows that one lives in, the less harm you give to other sentient beings, so the more peace one offers other sentient beings. So that is the real world peace: you are causing, you are giving world peace,

practically, whether one attends world peace meetings or not. From one's own side, that is a real practical contribution to world peace.

By doing these practices it makes our connections worthwhile, that's all. Having connections or having met each other - so it makes it worthwhile. It's supposed to be for happiness, so the purpose gets fulfilled. So I think that's all.

I would like to thank the Vajrapani Institute students, all the service that was done to help the meetings. I think it's very good - that cuts off the feeling of isolation. One feels unity and doing Dharma activities cuts off the feeling of the isolation. So it generated some more feeling like living in the family. The way Vajrapani is running is a very particular center that depends upon a few strong or unique families. So the center runs in that way and has been for so many years. With much hardship it has been continuing - even though in the summertime it is muddy and in the winter time it is dusty. In spite of all the hardships it has continued and invited great teachers from time to time and given the opportunity for many other sentient beings to take initiations and tantra teachings, many times gave the incredible opportunity to other sentient beings to hear and be able to practice all those profound teachings, all those incredible means that make it possible to achieve enlightenment within a few years. And one particular thing is that the students here themselves are very strong in doing commitments, doing sadhanas - it's very good, very inspiring. While working very hard in the daytime, then also doing the practices, the sadhanas and so forth continuously, so keeping their strength. I think that is great, inspiring.

So I would like to thank everybody very much. And please continue. The directors asked me to say something, so mainly this is about how we should work, with what attitude we should work for the center. The main thing is those great positive things and so many great benefits that we do at the center - we should remember again and again what they are. So this is a very brief, very basic introduction. That is all. Thank you very much.

*Colophon: Talk given by Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche, Vajrapani Institute, Boulder Creek, California, 26 July 1989 prior to a Vajra Yogini self initiation. Typed by Karen Gudmundsson according to the transcript by Ven. Wendy Finster. Reformatted by Murray Wright, FPMT Central Office, June 1993. Edited by Claire Isitt, FPMT International Office, April 2007.*