



Advice from the Tradition

October 22-24, 2013

Bodh Gaya

Day Three: Closing speech by Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, Seminar Advisor

(Speech in Tibetan, Translated into English)

Present in this gathering are Kyabne Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, the great scholar Samdhong Rinpoche, Kyabne Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche, the great preceptor Padma Sherab, the accomplished professor Sempa Dorji, as well as scholars of Buddhism from around the world with expertise in languages such as Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, and English. All have come here to discuss the task of translation. This is a very fortunate occasion.

We have talked about the precious Kangyur being a jewel that belongs to everyone. That common wealth of ours we also need to take care of in common. As for the present translation project, it really is Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche who is doing the work, 100%. My name has been mentioned a number of times here, but I have not been able to assist much myself. On the other hand, I do head a group of translators and we have had a number of meetings and discussions about this project. I have also been able to establish an international institute for Buddhist Studies. Students there can pursue Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees as they study classical Buddhist languages and a number of scriptures of both Sutra and Mantra. I have always hoped that this institute would become a source of good translators. Currently we have about fifteen to twenty working translators. In the present context I have done what I could to let them all serve the precious Kangyur of the Victorious One.

I noted that Professor Sempa Dorji said we need to "take responsibility." I find that a very important point. We all need to take responsibility. Our shared wealth we need to take responsibility for together. Personally, I lack both the knowledge and the material means that would allow me to take responsibility and really serve this project. However, with good intention I have been a sort of motivator for 15-20 translators, and I feel very happy that I have been able to help in that way. Today our senior translator Erik Pema Kunzang is also here. He has lived for many years with us in the monastery. He began by learning the Tibetan alphabet, but by now he has produced over one hundred books of different lengths. He has also created a good dictionary. Well, my service has just been of this sort. I have not been able to help this project in any other way.

Now, during these three days we have received abundant advice and engaged in much discussion. I think it would be good to also make some decisions. Dr. John Canti made a very good point when he encouraged accomplished scholars to let the editorial committee know right away if they come across any errors. It would probably also be good if the translators would note where the great scholars live and how they may contact them. Also, if we are going to have meetings like this in the future, then where should the next meeting be held?

As we meet with Sanskrit scholars, I think it would be good if we can reach some conclusions about the terms we are using - even if only about a couple of them. Think of the translation of *bde gshegs snying po* as “Buddha nature.” It seems to me that *snying po* and “nature” are rather different. Similarly, isn’t translating *lhung bzed* as “begging bowl” somewhat disrespectful? The same goes for the translation of *bsod snyoms* as “alms begging”. We can’t just say that these things are insignificant.

It is also interesting to note that in *sman rag gtor gsum*, or “medicine, rakta, and offering cake” the Tibetan translators left *rakta* in Sanskrit. They did so for a good reason. “Medicine, blood, and offering cake” does not sound all too pleasant. Similarly, saying, “stirring hell from its depths” is not quite as appealing as “stirring *naraka* from its depths.” Whenever we have a good way to render a given term in English we should of course do so. But if we find that none really is available, perhaps it’s better to simply leave the given term in Sanskrit.

As for the term *dharma*, I think it would be good if we could find a way to translate it into English. They tell me that it has been done in Chinese. I therefore believe it should be possible to translate this term into English as well. These are perhaps small issues, but our current choices will have great implications for the future. Some kind of decisions should be made. Otherwise, wouldn’t it be as if the clouds had gathered, but only to disappear again without yielding any rain. Shouldn’t we now also let the rain fall?

Please excuse me for having spoken so much. At this point I would just like to say to all of you, I am so happy to have been with you here. I feel very fortunate. The organizers and all of have come here have accomplished excellent and meritorious work. Just as Kyabne Dungsey Rinpoche said, let us dedicate all this merit to the long life and successful activities of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and all the lineage holders and great masters of the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana - wherever they may be living, in East or in West. We want everyone of them to be healthy, live long, and continue their teaching. May there be peace and happiness everywhere. Thank you so much.