

My Thoughts About Some Auspicious Good News

First, I'd like to send everyone my warmest greetings. On this day when I have become a citizen of the great country of America, I'd like to offer some thoughts that I have for all of my disciples and friends everywhere, wherever you are. Please, everyone, keep this in mind.

The results of a great deal of exhausting hard work finally came to fruition yesterday and I am so happy! I want to take this opportunity to thank Lingtrul Rinpoche who first sent me a letter of invitation, my heart-cherished disciples, Heidi and Stephanie, my lawyer, Jeff, and my translator Tobden. Thank you from the depths of my heart! I am not just saying this; I thank you from the very depths of my being. Never forgetting your kindness, I will strive to repay it and will always keep you in my prayers.

Wherever I go I seem to have the best of luck and my wishes are accomplished spontaneously, without hindrances. For this to happen I must have great merit. This merit, however, I would not attribute to my own capabilities or cleverness, but to the protection and aid I have received from my root Guru because of having made prayers to him and entrusting my mind completely to the Buddhadharma. In any case, for many years I have also willingly borne hardships with patience and light-heartedness. When I look back on the past seven or eight years, I have not only obtained this American citizenship, but have also accomplished powerful activities which have been of benefit to myself and others in this country. For example, with the great kindness of an anonymous donor, I have bought a Dharma center, and have led meditations and chanting there, Mondays and Saturdays, on a continual basis. I also completed giving a rare complete commentary to the Jewel Ornament of Liberation over the course of almost two years. I have not just remained ostentatiously teaching in the center, either, but for protection of the environment have led water blessings on solstices, and naga days. Along the way I have also given blessings for the trees and butterfly sanctuary, for houses and lands. Also, even though there have been very few other Tibetans living in the area, I have kept up yearly observance of March 30th Tibetan Uprising Day and other culturally important Tibetan holidays. I have also gone to hospitals to visit patients in distress, and have been in attendance at the bedside of many dying people to make prayers for them and to perform 'phowa'— transference of consciousness at the time of death. I am happy to have been able to accomplish these kinds of real, practical benefit for the sake of others.

I have not been able to accomplish these things all on my own. It is only thanks to the support of many people in this country, and the fruit of the hard work of Manjushri Dharma Center members. We still have a lot of work ahead of us to benefit beings through the Dharma, not only in this area, but for people and animals all over America. I have many plans in line for Dharma activities in this part of the world. If we can together accomplish these activities that are beneficial for many it will make our human lives meaningful and worthwhile. Taking myself for example, if I can accomplish benefit for society and the world during my life I will not have the slightest regret when I die. For this reason, if we all take responsibility for accomplishing this work together, the results will also emerge together. There is a Tibetan saying, 'Five fingers clenched together make a fist.' Each finger alone does not have much power. If the five fingers are curled together they have great strength. Like that, if we work together there are greater results. Because our Dharma work is altruistic, for the sake of others, it is highly worthwhile. When we do things for our own sake alone, even if we work very hard, when we have to leave this world alone at death we cannot take the slightest bit of wealth or property we have gained; better than that is to limit our desires and cultivate contentment. On the other hand, we should

never be content with the amount of benefit we can bring to others, but always wish to do more. The Bodhisattvas make a promise:

All the way to the ends of space
Wherever beings exist, without exception,
For all who are bound by karma and delusion
My aspirations also extend that far.

Likewise, I give up my body, life, and wealth for the sake of others. In this twenty-first century, an age of great material and technological advancement, most people think primarily of themselves and it is rare to find someone solely dedicated to the aid and welfare of others. Nevertheless, there are numerous examples we can look up to such as world leaders like His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the heads of other religions. I am also a follower of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He follows the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. If we all follow his noble path of compassion all will be well.

At this time I am going to travel for about three months to India and other countries to see my disciples, family, Dharma friends, and so forth, who say they have been thirsting to see me for many years. I must say, however, that I never want to move away from this wonderful place which, today, has become my second country. We are all so fortunate to live in such a beautiful environment. As I always say, my Sangha is my family. That is really how I feel. I will be praying for your good physical health, your mental happiness, and the fulfillment of all your wishes in accordance with Dharma. Although my body will be away from you for some time, my mind is always with you. I will see you soon. Tashi Deleks.

—Khenpo Karten Rinpoche