

Your Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche,

Firstly I want to encourage you in this very important and worthwhile endeavour. As there are so many non Tibetan speaking people who are very eager to learn dharma it is very important to have good translation and good ways of presenting dharma. So all of you there at the conference should work hard so that we can achieve perfect presentations of the dharma in non Tibetan and non Sanskrit languages. This will also create great merit and through this so many people can attain liberation and enlightenment.

Whether you come to doing translation of the dharma through academic and scholarly interests or through the desire to practice both will lead to better dharma. When you know the deeper meanings of the dharma then you will have the aspirations to practice, so the academic path will lead into the practice path. When you learn the deeper meanings as a practitioner your practice will develop well. My main translators are both academics or scholars and practitioners, as are many of the other well known translators among you.

There are a number of important issues that your conference could address.

The authenticity of translations is a problem. We should try to emulate the translations of the olden times transmissions of dharma from India into Tibet. At that time all the Tibetan translations were done with one Indian Master and one Tibetan translator working together. Of course at that time the situation is very different, people had no distractions, they were fully devoted to that work and they were not just ordinary persons, but all noble ones. In that way their translations were perfect. Of course at this time it is almost impossible to be just like them, but we must try at least to follow their ways translation and it is best to have two people, Tibetan and English, working together.

I also feel that we must always translate even if imperfectly. Nobody can make the perfect translation from the beginning. But at least we should translate, and then somebody else from that base can make it even more pure, and then again somebody else can again translate it, and in that way eventually we aim to have the perfect translation.

In doing the translation work it is very important not to translate in haste in the midst of a being busy with our general life. We must devote our time to the translation. We must have time to think carefully and chose the right words and we must read the commentaries on whatever we are translating, because commentaries make the meaning clear and without fully understanding the meanings one cannot translate correctly. Many

root texts are very vivid and condensed. Tibetan words are very evocative of great depth of meaning, so many short phrases can contain a lot of very condensed meanings. Thus only through the commentaries can you the real meaning in that very short phrase, and be able to translate it correctly.

The need to Restrict the distribution of tantric texts that you choose to translate needs to be addressed. Secret Tantric texts should be translated and only distributed to those who have the authority and qualification to read them through having received the empowerment from an authentic Master.

While the Mahayana teachings should not be secret and can be translated, printed, published and distributed generally, the tantric teachings, particularly the highest tantras, should not be allowed to be read except by people with the relevant empowerment. Of course they should only be translated by those that have had the relevant empowerment. As it is said:

༄༅། །དབང་བསྐྱུར་མེད་པར་རྒྱུད་འཆད་དང་། །ཟབ་མེད་དེ་ཉིད་སྒྲོམ་བྱེད་པ། །དེ་དོན་
ལེགས་པར་རྟོག་ན་ཡང་། །དཔྱུལ་བར་འགྱུར་གྱི་གྲོལ་བ་མིན། །

If you explain the tantras without empowerment
And do the Meditation of that profound meaning,
Even if you comprehend the meaning correctly
You will manifest the hell realms not liberation

Moreover it is not enough to just state or write the restriction as people do not believe this and take no notice. So a controlled method of distribution is required. There are serious consequences to the practitioner who causes tantra to become accessible to people who are not qualified to access it, to the ongoing transmission of the tantra itself, and to the unqualified people who receive it. Therefore it is necessary that we make a strong and genuine effort to deal with this.

There are of course issues of resources so that people to have the time and space to translate well. Sponsorship should be worked out. Experienced teachers especially those who have a close connection with the west and English people should decide what should be translated and then work out sponsoring for that.

A network of translators is a very good idea. Otherwise someone else is translating the same text, which is a waste of energy and time. They should exchange information so they do not unknowingly repeat the same translations and they can help each other choose the right terminologies.

The texts I would choose to be given priority are:

Tantric texts: Although we have a translation of Khonchog Lhundrups snang gsum it would be good to do an improved translation of this work and also translate his rgyud gsum.

Mahayana text: Kunkhyen Gorampa Sonam Senge's dbu mas: General Meaning of the Madhyamaka.

Also on your list of invitees I did not see David Jackson and Cyrus Stern whom it might be good to invite. Also for future consideration as well as those invited already Jay Goldberg and Lama Pema of New York, Lama Migmar, Dr Tashi Tsering and Jurgen Tillman are also involved in translating Sakya works.

I will note your progress with interest and I wish your conference the greatest success. We pray that you may live long and fulfil your noble works!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sakya Trizin', written in a cursive style.

Sakya Trizin

16th June 2008