

Boudhanath, March 11, 2009

Your Eminence Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche,

I send you warmest greetings from Boudhanath with the hope that this letter finds you in excellent health and vigorous spirits.

Over the years I have become increasingly aware of the importance of seeing the words of Lord Buddha translated into English. Although the precious Dharma currently exists in Tibetan, Chinese, Sanskrit, Pali, and other Asian languages, it still remains largely inaccessible for anyone who does not have the fortune of studying and mastering these difficult tongues. As such, it is exceedingly difficult for most students of Buddhism around the world to fully enjoy the nectar of Lord Buddha's vast and profound teachings. For this reason I have, on several occasions, encouraged the Dharmachakra Translation Committee to focus its energies towards translation of Kangyur materials. I was therefore especially delighted to learn of the opportunity extended to the Committee to participate in the forthcoming KF conference and we look forward to contributing to its success in whatever way we can.

While I understand that the conference will not necessarily be concerned with setting deadlines for such a monumental project, I cannot but feel inspired by the prospect of one day having Lord Buddha's words translated into English and other languages in their entirety. Moreover, while this may appear a daunting task, I personally find this project to be extremely urgent. At present we are able benefit from the advice, guidance, and blessings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and other truly learned and accomplished, senior masters from all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Their presence among us is indeed a great fortune and yet, as we know, one that cannot be taken for granted indefinitely. It is with this concern in mind that I here write to express our full support for your most noble aspiration.

For some time now I have directed our committee to seriously consider ways in which the Kangyur can be translated in a genuine and efficient manner that does full justice to the sacred nature of the original scriptures. In this regard, the Committee has tentatively projected the resources and timeframes likely to be needed to complete such a task. Drawing on our experience and calculations, we believe that a team of 35 full-time translators and editors should be able to complete the task within 10 to 15 years. Moreover, in order to make such a project feasible, we envisage that translators from all four schools should participate under the guidance of an advisory committee consisting of senior masters from each of the four schools, and headed by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Based on our conversations with other translators around the world, it seems clear that many qualified individuals may not be able to participate in this project by virtue of their being committed to other long-term projects. As such, we anticipate that it may prove a significant challenge to bring together a large and cohesive group of capable translators able to work full-time on this project. Nevertheless, since I consider this project to be one of the most significant and meritorious undertakings in the world today - and one that will be of great importance for ensuring the genuine presence of the Dharma in the future - I would like to offer the Dharmachakra Translation Committee's full support to this noble project.

In practical terms, I propose to direct 15 translators from the Dharmachakra Translation Committee to begin work on the Kangyur project. At present, these translators are engaged in other projects, but each would be able to devote 50% of his/her time to the project immediately. In addition, our organization will be able to train an additional 10 to 15 translators over the next five years through the Rangjung Yeshe Institute's Buddhist Studies program. Accordingly, it is our expectation that within a five-year period the Dharmachakra Translation Committee will be able to commit 15 to 20 full-time and 10 to 15 part-time translators to the project. In this way, we will be in a position to provide 50% of the translators needed to complete the translation of the Kangyur within a 10 to 15 year period.

In order to be successful in this undertaking, we believe that the full backing of the broader Tibetan Buddhist community and the active involvement of many other skilled translators, editors, supporters, and benefactors from around the world will be needed. In this regard, I would like to stress that the Dharmachakra Translation Committee sees its role in this project simply as contributors and participants in a vast shared project involving all schools and traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. We believe that it is only through working together that such a profound project can be fully realized.

I hope that this commitment of support will prove useful during your preparations for the conference at the Deer Park Institute. I also hope that you do not find our plan to see the Kangyur translated within a 10 to 15 year period wholly unrealistic. Naturally, many causes and conditions would need to come together for the project to be realized, but given that this has been the constant aspiration of so many great masters, we cannot help but feel drawn to this project and exhilarated by the prospect of seeing this precious collection translated within our lifetime.

I realize that your distinguished gathering of renowned translators will be eminently qualified to take these matters forward, and I wish your historic meeting every possible success. Finally, let me conclude by expressing my sincere delight and appreciation for your vision in planning the conference and for all your vast and profound dharma activities that continue to benefit the teachings and all sentient beings - far and wide.

Respectfully,

Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche

President, Dharmachakra Translation Committee