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**Speech Delivered by His Holiness the  
14th Dalai Lama during the Inauguration  
Ceremony of the Main Assembly Hall at  
Jangchub Choeling Nunnery,  
Mundgod, India  
January, 2008**

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ངར་མཎ་ཉེ་མ་རྫོག་ནང་པའི་སློབ་གཉེན་ཁང་གི་སྐབ་ཚ་ནས་པར་བསྐྱུན་ཞུས།  
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Bhikshuni Jampa Tsedroen  
Foundation for Buddhist Studies, Hamburg, Germany

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Ceremony of the Main Assembly Hall at  
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I visited here once in the past. At that time this was only a small nunnery, but you were all very good and active at debate. One year we had a chance to meet during a Jamyang Gunchoe assembly in Dharamsala. During that time it was said that among the nuns participating in the festival, the nuns who came from Mundgod were the best at debate. Now, your nunnery has expanded and everything has been very well executed. Today we are here to perform the inauguration ceremony. I would like to extend my greetings and Tashi Delek to every one of you. You have all worked so diligently, both you nuns and those connected with you. I thank you all. As is described in your account list, this nunnery came into being through the help and facilities provided by many sponsors. I would like to say thank you! Like seeds that fully ripen into fruit, you can see before your very eyes the outcome of your kind support, without any waste of effort. I am sure you are feeling very happy.

At the same time it is important for us to dedicate the merits, as this is Dharma and a virtuous action. Therefore, it is important to dedicate the merits you attained from helping in building this nunnery. As we are all followers of the Dharma tradition of the great Nalanda tradition, we must consider that, 'By the virtue of these merits, may this bring benefit and happiness to countless sentient beings,' and it is important to seal this dedication with the view of emptiness.

As for the religion of Lord Buddha, according to the generally accepted system of calculating, it has been more than 2,000 years



since the Buddha passed into parinirvana. Today, in terms of material development, with each passing year scientific advances grow deeper and standards are increasing in the world. In actual fact, most of the problems among the more than six billion human beings living on this earth come about because of a lack of inner thoughts of love and affection. People face a large number of problems, beginning with family problems and individuals' problems of mental agitation, and on a broader scale, disputes among human races and countries, due to this lack of a feeling of love and affection in the world. This is widely recognized.

In today's world, it has even come to the point that politicians speak these two words: 'love' and 'affection.' Even among scientists, the time has come that they report that feelings of love and affection are important for the maintenance of a healthy mind and body. Therefore, it is time to develop the sense of love and affection in the world. This is a point I make often. The 20th century was a century of violence, killing and bloodshed. I often say that we must try to make the 21st century a century of non-violence and a century endowed with the feeling of love and affection.

At this point, in our case, the Buddhadharma isn't something that was nonexistent for us in the past and has to be newly learned from someone else from the very beginning. Since the time of our ancestors, we have been practitioners of the Lord Buddha's teachings which are endowed with the essence of love and affection. More strongly, in the Land of Snow, when Buddhism spread and increased during the reign of the Dharma king Songtsen Gampo,

opposition arose. However, when we left aside our own ancestral Bon religion, we came to a time when the practice of Buddhism became established. Since then, for over one thousand years Buddhadharma has been the religion of our country, Tibet. Hence, we have been practitioners of Buddhadharma from the time of our ancestors.

This being the case, there are probably one billion Christians in the world, one billion Muslims, six to seven hundred million Hindus, and Buddhists may be perhaps two to three hundred million in number.

In terms of Buddhadharma, Lord Buddha himself first went forth from the household life to become a monk. His religious tradition is concerned with bringing about liberation, which is characterized by the complete abandonment of afflictions by applying the antidotes to them. As a means to attaining this sort of liberation, since in general we automatically come to experience the afflictive emotions of attachment and anger when living in a family, and since many of the grosser levels of afflictive emotions are naturally reduced when adopting a monastic life, Buddha himself also first became a monk for this reason and to this aim. As it is stated in our Mahayana treatises, it was not the case that Buddha had afflictions that needed to be abandoned, and that he then newly attained Buddhahood. However, in order to guide his subsequent disciples, he first lived in a family as a royal prince and later went forth to become a monk. This is how it was. In the interest of the Buddhadharma, one of the most favorable conditions for pre-

serving, nourishing and propagating the Buddhadharma is monastic ordination. This being the case, Buddha himself established the system of monastic ordination. And within this, Buddha himself, as the master of his own words, implemented two orders, that of monks and that of nuns (*rabjungpa* and *rabjungma*). This is how it was.

### **Tibet Lacks the Four Circles of Followers of a Central Land**

Therefore, usually when we are considering what a central land is, we identify a central land as that land which possesses the four circles of followers of Buddha. Even in our tantric rites, it is stated:

*The four circles of followers possessing individual vows  
And the mind of the greater vehicle:  
They will subsequently perform the correct rituals  
That were stated by the Tathagata.  
Those who wish to practice secret mantra  
Will enter into the mandala.*

The aforementioned verse is cited in performance tantra. The four circles of followers possessing individual vows are common to both the smaller and greater vehicle. So, therefore the main practitioners of tantra are the four circles of followers who possess the mind of enlightenment. When counting the four circles of followers of Buddha, we count fully ordained monks and fully ordained nuns (*bhikshus* and *bhikshunis*), and although there are some

who count novice monks and nuns (*shramaneras and shramanerikas*), usually the four circles of followers are counted as lay male and lay female disciples (*upasakas and upasikas*), in terms of householders, and fully ordained monks and nuns (*bhikshus and bhikshunis*) who are the chief basis in terms of their ordination.

For a thousand years we have been calling our country, Tibet, a 'central land.' However, we don't have a complete set of the four circles of followers. Nevertheless, as we have fully ordained monks, who are the chief of the four circles of followers, it seems as if it might be adequate to have only that. And we have to make do with that. In this way, this is what is generally said.

### **The Need to Restore Bhikshuni Ordination**

Nevertheless, at a period of time such as we are now in, if there is a possibility to do so, then we the followers of Buddha must restore the vow of fully ordained nuns (*bhikshunis*). This was a decision taken at one point by Lord Buddha that later became incomplete because of his subsequent disciples' lack of capability and due to their becoming negligent and careless. If something that has become incomplete can be made complete, then this is something that we should do, isn't it? Therefore, we have conducted a sort of research over the course of many years. In general, this topic naturally leads to other areas of discussion. Regarding this, word has emerged that there exists a continuum of the vow of fully ordained nuns in the Chinese tradition. Apart from

that, in the case of Thailand it does not exist, and it probably does not exist in Sri Lanka or in Burma either. Now, on the whole, in Buddhist countries where there exists the practice of monastic discipline, those who lack the continuum of the vow of fully ordained nuns are facing problems at present. Therefore, I have heard the news that recently in Thailand and Sri Lanka the continuum of the vow of fully ordained nuns has been restored from the Chinese tradition and there are probably a few fully ordained nuns there. Even among us Tibetans, there are accounts in our past history of Tibetan lamas and spiritual masters conferring the full ordination ceremony for some women. However, we belong to the Mulasarvastivada school. Therefore, it is a topic for discussion as to whether that school's way of conferring the full ordination ceremony is flawless and valid on the basis of its vinaya or not. In any case, it has become important to clear doubts on these issues. For such reasons, for the past twenty or thirty years we have been conducting research and holding a series of discussions on the restoration of the vow of fully ordained nuns. Nevertheless we have still been unable to reach a final decision. Hence, it is now up to us to bring this to a conclusion.

Basically speaking, I feel that it truly is our responsibility as followers of Lord Buddha to restore the full ordination of nuns (Bhikshuni ordination). But the way of its restoration should be in accordance with the vinaya. As there are separate Buddhist schools with different practices, we need to have a means of restoring it that is in accord with our own system and through a valid ceremonial practice. Other than that, casually or rashly, for instance, a

person like me cannot decide it. It is something that must be decided in accordance with the vinaya treatises. This being the case, it has remained unsettled.

Apart from that, for instance, the decision as to whether our ordained nuns can study the great treatises of Buddhist philosophy is one that I can make. Therefore after we arrived in India we decided that the Tibetan nunneries should study the great treatises. Once the decision was made, the study of the great treatises commenced and has continued to this day, and this has produced very good results indeed.

However, as the practice of monastic discipline must proceed in accordance with the treatises, this remains a matter into which we still need to carry out further research and investigation. Our aim is to establish the complete set of the four circles of followers. But we must consider how we are going to make it complete in accordance with the intended meaning of the holy Dharma's vinaya. This is one issue, which is especially associated with you, and also a responsibility has come upon your shoulders.

### **Establishing Geshema Degree and Female Abbesses**

Next, regarding your studying, it is as I mentioned earlier. It is extremely important for us to study. Actually, the Buddhadharma is concerned with improving our wisdom in discerning phenomena, then advancing on to the realizations of stages and paths and finally attaining the omniscient state of buddhahood. For the pur-

pose of what is called the omniscient mind, since we have to transform our present mind into an omniscient mind, from the very beginning we must proceed by enhancing the skill of our wisdom in discerning phenomena. To that end, the study of the great treatises is extremely important. So has the “Tibetan Department of Religion & Culture” approved a resolution on nuns attaining the female geshe (geshema) degree or not?

[His Holiness asks Kalon Tripa Samdhong Rinpoche, who indicates that it has.]

It has. We will need female geshe and then gradually when it becomes possible to have female abbesses, there will be no need to rely on the bhikshus. [His Holiness laughs.] It would be nice if the nuns could do everything themselves beginning from the task of abbess, wouldn't it? But since this is not the case at the moment, we have no alternative other than to be controlled by the bhikshus [HHDL laughs.] You understand, don't you? I thought from my side to speak about this matter with you, since it is relevant. In any case, you have been studying sincerely, and it remains extremely important for you to make efforts in your studies.

### **Making the Curriculum Nonsectarian to Become Teachers Worldwide**

This nunnery of yours is a new nunnery. Probably this is not the restoration of one that had previously existed in Tibet. For instance, the Shugseb Nunnery that is in Dharamsala had previ-

ously existed in Tibet and is a continuation of that. Therefore, it belongs to the Nyingma sect and it proceeds according to its own Nyingma school of thought. In the case of Drolmaling Nunnery in Dharamsala, it is a new nunnery and wasn't established as a successor to a nunnery that was already existing. Hence, they practice as non-sectarian. Likewise, with regard to the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics in Dharamsala, on the basis of non-sectarianism they study the great treatises. They even invite non-sectarian teachers and sometimes they go to other non-sectarian Buddhist institutes and study there. They are doing this. I think it has a great significance.

In future you who are studying in our monasteries and nunneries in India must provide greater service in every possible way to the Buddhadharma, mainly in the Buddhist countries of this world, especially in the Himalayan regions, China, Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. These Buddhist nations share the same religious tradition with us. They are the same as us in upholding the great Nalanda tradition. In particular, when the time comes that we are re-united in Tibet, the responsibility for restoring the Buddhadharma whose foundation has been destroyed in Tibet will fall to us. Although our numbers here are small, these small numbers must regard themselves to be undergoing training to be teachers. With the idea that you are studying to become teachers, if you do well in study and practice, and become well qualified, then if each student could take the initiative on their own in the future to serve the Buddhadharma in the various countries, this would be a great thing.



This being the case, it is important for us to study the treatises of each one of the Tibetan Buddhist sects over time. There is also a need for us to study the philosophy of the Pali tradition. But at the present we don't have adequate facilities for that. Likewise, in the case of the Buddhism of the Chinese tradition, if we mainly know the Buddhism of Chinese tradition, we will largely come to understand Vietnamese, Korean, Thai and Japanese Buddhisms. These are also things that we should know about. Presently, we are making an effort at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies at Saranath in Varanasi in this regard. We are hoping and making an effort to build an international Buddhist institute for students from different places, and in addition where every existing Buddhist tradition in the world can be studied in a single place. In particular, we can easily make available for study the Buddhism of the entire Tibetan Buddhist sects of Sakya, Nyingma and Kagyu and others. These can be studied in Tibetan, as we already have the scriptures of these Tibetan Buddhist sects in the Tibetan language itself.

However, if this had been a Gelugpa nunnery in the past then it should maintain its past tradition. Had it been a Nyingma nunnery, it should maintain its past tradition, and similarly in the case of Kagyu. But the newly founded nunneries have a kind of freedom, and they can basically do whatever they want. Hence, I thought it would be good if you could study in a non-sectarian way. Do you understand? Now, formerly with respect to the teaching of tenet systems, among the tenet systems I know there is the *Treasure of Tenets* of the All-Knowing Longchen Rabjampa. This is a very good presentation of the tenets covering all the nine vehicles. It

would be good if you could study this tenet system. On the other hand, for the purpose of teaching meditation practice, we have the *Relaxation of the Suchness of Mind* of the All-Knowing Longchen Rabjampa. Its root verse and commentary are similar to the stages of the path (*lamrim*). There are only slight differences in its structure and that of *lamrim* and beyond that it is extremely good. I had the thought that it would be good if the nuns became familiar with these treatises. As for myself, I received the transmission of the complete set of Longchen Rabjampa's seven treasuries. In particular, for the teaching of *Relaxation of the Suchness of Mind* of the *Three Cycles of Relaxation*, one needs to perform 40 days' meditation practice on its subject matters and I performed this as well. It was really very good. If we study *Relaxation of the Suchness of Mind* along with the *Lamrim Chenmo* of Je Rinpoche, they can probably go together. There are some topics such as the way of achieving the intermediate state after death that are explained in more detail in the *Relaxation of the Suchness of Mind*. The explanations on these topics in the *Relaxation of the Suchness of Mind* are expounded in relation with the tantric tradition. Therefore, explanations on these topics are better and clearer in the *Relaxation of the Suchness of Mind*. To familiarize you with these scriptures, then from the side of the Sakyapa, we have scriptures such as the *Ornament of the Viewpoint of the Muni*, the *Classification of the Three Vows* and the *Treasure of Knowledge* which are very difficult texts. In our valid-cognition texts of the Gelug system, besides making a few quotations from that text we do not especially study it. We need to study this text as well. The *Treasure of Knowledge* text

of Sakya Pandita is very good but it is very difficult. As for myself, I do not know it well. Therefore, if we could gain familiarity with non-sectarian treatises, then in the future when you are serving the Buddhadharma you will be able to explain to any kind of non-sectarian Dharma practitioners and meet the expectations of the Buddhadharma. This would be a good thing, wouldn't it?

For instance, I usually relate my own story. In my own case, at one point in the past, probably thirty or forty years ago, an old monk from Kunu once came to see me, at the time that a new palace had just been completed for me in Dharamsala. This old man was a very good person and a pure practitioner. He asked me to give him teachings on 'basic mind' of the Dzogchen tradition. But I did not know it. So I told him that I did not know it, and I advised him to go to Bodhgaya to receive this teaching from Kunu Lama Rinpoche Tenzin Gyaltsen, who was staying there. At that very moment, in my mind I had an unhappy feeling. This old man came to me with some hope and actually I should be able to fulfill his hopes. Therefore, in my mind, I thought I had failed and had been unable to benefit him. At that time my tutor Yongzin Rinpoche was alive and so was Kunu Lama Rinpoche. At that time, I expressed to Yongzin Rinpoche my desire to receive the oral transmission on the *Essence of the Great Secret Tantra* of the Dzogchen tradition from Kunu Lama Rinpoche. When I asked tutor Yongzin Rinpoche about this, he said not to receive it. There was absolutely no reason except that at that time I was propitiating the spirit Doegyal. Yongzin Rinpoche became frightened thinking that if Gyalwa Rinpoche practiced the Nyingma religion, the

spirit Doegyal might bring harm to His Holiness. At that time I missed out on Dharma teachings. Do you understand? That being so, I remembered the verse from the *Ornament of Clear Realization* that we often cite:

*Those who bring benefit to beings fulfill the welfare of the world through their very understanding of the path.*

It is also stated in a sutra:

*All the paths are to be generated.  
All the paths are to be completed.*

Thus it speaks about the three: understanding, generation and completion of the paths.

It also says:

*Even the paths of the Hearers are to be understood,  
Also the paths of the Solitary Realizers are to be understood,  
and the actions of their paths are to be performed.*

Such things are stated in the sutras. Our model Lord Buddha himself taught us in a way that is relevant to the natures and aspirations of his disciples. But we are such stubborn people. When meeting with a Nyingmapa we have to say, 'I do not know about that.' When we meet with a Kagyupa and the conversation turns to the Kagyus' Mahamudra practice, we have to sit there saying, 'I do not know about this.' It has come to be like this, hasn't it?

In the saying, ‘infusing adulteration upon opposite views,’ if we interpret ‘adulteration’ in this way, it does not make any great difference, does it? Has this benefited or harmed the Buddhadharma? Nyingmapas not giving ink to Gelugpas [to print their texts] and Gelugpas not giving ink to Nyingmapas: what benefit has this brought to the Buddhadharma? Give some thought to this! Please consider this, abbots! It hasn’t brought any benefit.

Therefore, I feel it is important for us to be non-sectarian. But it is totally in your hands whether you want to do it or not, and I cannot force you to do so. It is up to you to think about this.

### **Concluding Remarks and Mantra Transmission**

Now it is already 9:15 a.m. You have brought here a supplication for teaching. There is no need of this. The time has already arrived for me to leave. Now, visualize a real Buddha, the lord of the Buddhadharma, in front of you. We are all followers of that Buddha. If you want to become a good follower of Buddha, you need to have good refuge and good bodhicitta. It is now more than 2,500 years ago that Lord Buddha, the master of the Buddhadharma, passed into parinirvana. Nevertheless, even today Buddha’s enlightened activity of teaching still remains undeteriorated in this world. From my side, I am making prayers and efforts for the continuous flourishing in the world of the profound and vast Dharma of the kind Teacher, corresponding with reality, and to benefit in every possible way through it. You also

need to do the same, and, taking refuge in the kind Buddha from the very depths of your heart, think, 'Teacher, whatever expectations you have, I am going to fulfill them.' In short, generate courage, thinking, 'For as long as space remains, I am going to bring about the welfare of sentient beings, both directly and indirectly.' Then repeat the refuge verse three times:

*I go for refuge until I am enlightened  
To the Buddha, the Dharma and the Supreme Assembly.  
By the virtuous merit created by practicing giving and  
others,  
May I attain the state of a Buddha in order to benefit all  
migrators.*

So this is the essence of Buddha-dharma. Now, repeat the mani mantra three times.

*Om Mani Padme Hung.*

I am sorry; I have done it out of order here.

*Om Muni Muni Maha Muni Ye Svaha.*

*Om A Ra Pa Tsa Na Dhi.*

*Om Tare Tuttare Ture Svaha.*

And then repeat this verse:

*As long as space remains,  
As long as sentient beings remain,  
Until then may I too remain  
To dispel the sufferings of sentient beings.*

A short mandala offering is made:

*This ground, anointed with perfume, strewn with flowers,  
Mount Meru, four continents, sun and moon,  
I imagine as a Buddha field and offer it to you.  
May all beings enjoy this pure land.*

*Idam guru ratna mandalakam niryatayami.*

Thank you.