

## Lung-pa

### The Importance of close bonding between Student and Teacher.

Regardless if concerned with the Hinayana or Mahayana Traditions of Buddhism a close bonding between Student and Teacher is of great importance as soon as one is taking the step from being a culturally influenced practitioner of the religion to becoming a true student of the deeper meanings of the teachings as well as meditations. This is even more so in the Vajrayana Schools and Traditions which rely heavily on both inner meaning, and advanced meditation practices. What all Traditions have in common though is the function of the Teacher, the Guru, Master, or Lama, which can best be described in the following words that explain what a Guru is, and also what a Guru is not.

*"Through the Outer Guru one gets to know the Inner Guru; through the Inner Guru one gets to know the Secret Guru, Buddha Nature, which is your Original Nature. You could say that when you hang out long enough with a positive Role Model, he or she will drag you along a good part of the way."*

Both the words Guru and Lama (b'Lama) mean Teacher. In the Vajrayana the honorary title Rinpoche is also often added to a name. Rinpoche means Precious One, and is a title of appreciation which either can be used as part of a name, or used by students to show their appreciation of the Lama.

In the Vajrayana traditions, the lama or guru, is particularly important since he / she is the physical world, or nirmanakaya representation of the perfectly enlightened nirmanakaya Buddha, Shakyamuni, as well as a direct link to the perfect light world, or samboghakaya Buddha, and the the primordial, dharmakaya Buddha, or Adi Buddha. The close bonding between disciple and teacher is if not a pre condition, then at least the most important facilitator of a true spiritual development.

### The Relationship Between Teacher and Student in Buddhism.

The spiritual relationship and close bonding between student and teacher in accordance with highest ethical values is one of the most important elements of spiritual development in Vajrayana Buddhism. Regardless whether students have the privilege to study with a single or with several teachers throughout their lifetimes, it is important to develop awareness about the traditions, the ethics, the psychology, as well as spiritual factors that are involved in the student-teacher relationship. Especially if you are a student who has been raised in a culture where Buddhism has not yet been integrated into the spiritual and sociological network of society, it is important to study this information and to raise it into your awareness when bonding with a teacher. However, also as a student who has been raised in a culture where Buddhism is an integrated and important element of everyday-life you will benefit from reading this information and more so, from maintaining awareness and mindfulness about it.

Progress in spiritual studies can be understood by stages of attainment. Not every student has the same degree of attainment. Not every teacher has the same degree of attainment. The appropriate relation between student and teacher depends to a large degree on the level of attainment of the student as well as that of the teacher and how these two match each other at their current stages of attainment. Since proper bonding between student and teacher shall facilitate spiritual growth it is important to develop an open, authentic, honest, and respectful view about what function a teacher can and shall fulfill in a student's life. As the student progresses along the path of spiritual attainment this function may change into a progressively deeper and more profound form of bonding, where both student and teacher may make deeper commitments towards one another. Depending on the relationship, these commitments may last for days, weeks, years, decades, and even for several life-times. Regardless how deep this bonding becomes, a student-teacher relationship is never to be taken lightly by a responsible student, and particularly not by a responsible teacher.

Besides fulfilling a function of spiritual guidance there are other forms of student-teacher relations in Buddhism. Though many of them can be part of a spiritual relationship, it is important not to confuse one with another. These forms of relationships can be that of a college or university student and a professor of religious studies, that of a trainee and trainer in meditation, and the like. Though those relationships can be fruitful, it is important not to confuse them with relationships between a student who is travelling the spiritual path towards becoming a Buddha, and a teacher who is committed to monastic vows or to Bodhisattva or Tantric vows, and who is making a profound commitment towards helping his student achieve everything from minor attainment to a supreme, complete enlightenment and liberation. Lung-pa is a Buddhist, Religious Community and Monastic Order. It's teachings may contain elements one also may learn at a university college or at meditation schools, but they are more profound than that, and so is the relationship between student and teacher.

Regardless if your aim is just to get some basic information about Buddhism and Dharma, regardless if you find that the meditations taught and practiced are beneficial for you, and this is all you wish to learn, – all are welcome to take part in Lung-pa's activities, and all activities are provided freely without charge. You may also wish to practice Buddhism as a philosophy of life or as your religion, without therefore to rely on a teacher, and you are welcome to take part in our activities.

If you then wish to embark on a path of spiritual development however; if your goal is to attain enlightenment, to attain liberation, or to embark on the path of the Bodhisattva or the path of Tantra, you are not only advised to, but whole-heartedly invited to see if you wish to develop a proper student-teacher relationship, and if your aspirations and the qualifications of the teacher create a basis for a constructive way of bonding.

#### A Disciples Potential

If you wish to become a disciple of a qualified teacher it is important to have an open and honest dialog about your aspirations, and the possibilities to find a teacher who can provide the best possible teaching according to your development. Depending on your attainments so far, there may be required more than what you can read below, but as a very minimum you need to have a sincere aspiration to learn and practice the teachings of the Buddha, to attain enlightenment, and eventually to embark on the path of an Arahant or Bodhisattva. You have a wish to develop a close and respectful relationship with a teacher and have appreciation for the teachers commitment towards his work, towards you, and all sentient beings. You need to be open minded, emotionally stable, able to make an informed decision, mature and responsible, and have a strong sense of ethics.

#### A Teachers Potential

A qualified teacher has all of the above and more, and besides that a teacher has a healthy relationship towards his or her own teachers, has a knowledge of Dharma that exceeds your knowledge, has an extensive theoretical background on meditation and spirituality and extensive experience and attainments in practicing meditation. A proper teacher is a living example, authentic and without pretence, has ethics and self discipline, and is able to convey the teachings in a pedagogical manner that is a source of inspiration for the students. Importantly, a teacher radiates awareness and love to all sentient beings, and the main inspiration for his or her teaching is an intense wish to benefit all sentient beings.

#### Wellcome

Regardless whether you simply wish to learn about Buddhism, whether you wish to learn about some meditation practices that you find beneficial for your well being, whether you are a Buddhist and wish to practice your religion, or whether you want to embark on a path of spiritual development, towards enlightenment and become a disciple of a qualified teacher, you are welcome at the Buddhist Religious Community and Order Lung-pa.

#### Accumulating Merit and Economy

Regardless the kind of your affiliation, all activities of Lung-pa are free of charge and exclusively financed by gifts

and donations. Rlung-pa is following the Buddhist practice and tradition by giving all who can contribute the possibility to create positive karma and merit by the practice of giving what they can. All offerings and donations are thus received with compassion and used for the benefit of all sentient beings. Everyone is free to make inquiries about Lung-pa economy at any time.

Should the day come, when you want to make a deeper commitment, you can be ordained as junior monk or nun, lay monk or nun, or choose so, and there is a basis for supporting monks and nuns, you may choose to live the life of fully ordained monks and nuns.

With Loving Kindness

Lama Zopa Kundun Rinpoche