

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, from a talk given in Merigar, July 1996
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I would like to add something more related to our attitude, awareness, and responsibility. We are practitioners and follow the teachings, therefore we apply and follow the principle of the Dzogchen teaching. For many years I have transmitted this teaching, and for many years many of you have been following this teaching and we collaborate with each other. We are still developing and therefore there is no consideration of an end or limitation, because samsara continues infinitely. So we must continue to transmit the understanding and knowledge of this teaching. This is the responsibility of all of us.

First of all I have this responsibility because I transmit this teaching to you. You also have a responsibility, and then we share this responsibility. With this responsibility we must keep the transmission in the correct way, and to keep the transmission in the correct way we should not mix it with something else. We should not modify, change or create problems in the transmission. If we learn in the correct way then we can continue the transmission. We all need to accept this responsibility.

So, after many years I decided to organise this Santi Maha Sangha training. There are two kinds of people: most are very happy to do this training but then there are some people who are worried and think Santi Maha Sangha is like studying at University in an academic style. I am not interested in this. Some people think I am giving essential teachings only to those doing Santi Maha Sangha. First of all, I want to make it clear that it is not obligatory to do Santi Maha Sangha. Also, I never said that I do not give important teachings outside of Santi Maha Sangha.

I have constructed this to help people have a very precise knowledge of the Dzogchen teachings. In the future there will be qualified people who can teach, help and continue the transmission which they have received in the correct way. This is a way of producing qualified people. If someone is not interested in doing it, it does not mean they cannot do practice. I always give big, open retreats and there I give all kinds of teachings. That is sufficient. It is not necessary to do Santi Maha Sangha. Even if you do not participate in Santi Maha Sangha, you need to understand its value.

I am really working hard for it. I am living for this...

Santi Maha Sangha and Karma Yoga
(The Mirror # 56, March/April 2001)

According to the Santi Maha Sangha Base examination, for people who are interested and participate in Santi Maha Sangha, first of all they must be interested in the Dzogchen Community. The training of Santi Maha Sangha is not only something learned in an intellectual way, but this knowledge should be totally integrated into one's condition. If someone is not interested in the Dzogchen Community, there is no way they can be totally integrated. The Dzogchen Community is like a boat; we are traveling by boat in order to arrive beyond a very big river and until we arrive beyond the very big river we should be interested in that boat. Therefore, we can understand how important the Dzogchen Community is for the trainee.

If people are interested in any kind of Karma Yoga activity related to the Dzogchen Community it means those people are interested in the

Dzogchen Community. For example, if someone is a member of a family then that person is interested in everything related to that family. In the same way, if there is something to do for the Dzogchen Community, one who is interested in the Dzogchen Community is always ready to participate.

The main subject of the examination for the Santi Maha Sangha Base is not only the ten questions; they are only one of the Three Main Subjects. As we know very well, we have Three Gates and these Gates are body, voice and mind; so we also have Three Main Subjects of the examination related with these Three Gates.

Relative to the body, we should contribute physically to any kind of Karma Yoga activities for the Dzogchen Community. One who participates in Karma Yoga for the Dzogchen Community indicates or shows clearly one's interest in the Dzogchen Community in a concrete way. According to the voice, one should learn the book of Santi Maha Sangha Base, and during the examination one should reply correctly to the ten questions. According to the mind, one should apply all practices which are indicated in the book of Santi Maha Sangha Base.

Regarding the first Main Subject of Santi Maha Sangha Base training, since the beginning of Merigar we started developing Karma Yoga there. Merigar is the number one or primordial Gar of the Dzogchen Community, and recently we also started to register the names of people, how they contribute Karma Yoga activities in the Dzogchen Community, how many hours they have contributed, and so on.

Many people ask me how many hours of Karma Yoga they should contribute for the Santi Maha Sangha Base examination and for the second level and so on. Registering how many hours people dedicate for Karma Yoga is not to realize limited hours in order to take the examination of Santi Maha Sangha Base; the registration of how many times and how many hours someone dedicated to Karma Yoga is relative, it is not the main point. The registration of the number of hours dedicated to Karma Yoga is in order to know who and how they have dedicated Karma Yoga to the Dzogchen Community and if we didn't register the Karma Yoga we couldn't know that. The registration of Karma Yoga is very useful in general for the Dzogchen Community to know who is seriously involved, and particularly it is very important to know how it is related to those people who participate in the Santi Maha Sangha Examinations.

Some people feel that it is enough that we ask people to do their best for dedicating Karma Yoga, that it is not necessary to do a registration of it. I think it is only enough for a few honest people, but not for most people. If you ask people during the examination no one will say, "I am not interested in the Dzogchen Community" or "I didn't dedicate Karma Yoga". They will say, "I am interested in the Dzogchen Community" and "I did my best for dedicating Karma Yoga". These are the common replies we could receive. In general, these words become a kind of ritual thing, not something serious. We don't really need any ritualized words; we need something concrete. Therefore we need a registration book of Karma Yoga in order to see who has seriously dedicated to Karma Yoga.

Of course, the intention is not that Karma Yoga is only work like cleaning the bush, etc. There are many forms of Karma Yoga. For example, when guests of Dzogchen Community arrive and someone voluntarily goes to take these guests and accompany them when and where it is necessary at the request of Dzogchen Community responsables, that is collaboration with the Dzogchen Community and is valid Karma Yoga.

I am using the example of the first Gar of Dzogchen Community [Merigar], but we know very well that the situation of the Gars is not the same – we can find many different situations in the Gars and Gakyils of different countries - but even though, in any part of the world, if someone contributes voluntarily some good and useful things for the Dzogchen Community, the Gakyil of that place shouldn't view that participation with indifference. The Gakyil should register all the good things contributed by that person and when they go to do the examination of Santi Maha Sangha the Gakyil can present his or her situation of conduct with the list of all the good things they have contributed to the Dzogchen Community. When we have this kind of presentation from the local Gakyils, we can finally understand how the conduct of that person is, and his or her first of the Three Main Subjects for the examination can be seriously applied.

We also know there are many people living in isolated places and in those places there is no Gakyil. For whoever has this kind of situation, if they have some possibility, they should try to connect to a Gakyil which is close to their place. Otherwise, they try to make contact with a Gar to receive more information about the Santi Maha Sangha examination, training and so on. For people who are in this kind of situation, we will try to help somehow and directly check their possibilities.

Please do not come to the examination of Santi Maha Sangha without having the preparations of Three Main Subjects for the Santi Maha Sangha examinations. Santi Maha Sangha training is a very important thing in our Dzogchen Community and therefore it is very important that we participate seriously, not only running to get to the higher levels. If you don't participate seriously, even if you arrive at a higher level you won't have any benefit. If you are going calmly ahead and seriously, even if you arrive at the first level, you can really get great benefit and at the same time you are getting qualified to be a Dzogchenpa.

With many greetings to all our Dzogchen practitioners,

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

SPEECH ON SANTI MAHA SANGHA Merigar, August 29th, 2006

Everybody knows very well what Santi Maha Sangha is and how important it is. For the future people will continue to follow Santi Maha Sangha: for example, the practitioners that participated in this Second Level Training will go on to do the examination of the Third Level. For the people who did the examination in these days we have only a little clarity about how they practiced because we simply have to believe what they say about their practice, that is all. But it is very difficult for us to understand how their attitude is.

You remember that in our teaching there are the three principles of *tawa*, *gompa*, and *chöpa*. The Santi Maha Sangha examination not only consists of some questions to which you reply, like in a school. It is not that way. Particularly in Santi Maha Sangha the most important point is how you integrate your knowledge in your existence. But when we did the examination this point was not clear at all because we considered, "Oh, yes, it is okay."

So in the future when you come to do a Santi Maha Sangha examination, please bring some kind of information from your Gakyil

because at least they should know how your attitude is, because if your attitude is not perfect but we consider that it is, then how will the Dzogchen teaching continue in the future? This is really very important.

In the case of practitioners who are very much in contact with Merigar or with Tashigar Norte, we know them a bit because we can see what they are doing and what their attitude is like. But in the case of some practitioners who came for this Santi Maha Sangha examination and training, for example, it seems to me I have never seen them before. For me it is not so easy because there are many people in the Dzogchen Community, and even if I have seen them before at a retreat, it is often not so easy to recognize everybody. So this is a responsibility that should be taken not only by me but by everybody because this is a principle for the continuation of the Dzogchen teaching, therefore it is something important. You can inform people living in different countries that if they want to come for the Santi Maha Sangha First Level or Second Level examination etc., we really need to have a kind of presentation of their attitude.

Also regarding Karma Yoga, many people think, "Karma Yoga is useful because we can do something for the Dzogchen Community without paying anybody and without looking for people to do many of the things that need doing." But that is not the reason. Karma Yoga shows whether a practitioner is seriously interested in the Dzogchen Community or not. If people are interested in the Dzogchen Community, that means they are also interested in the continuation of the Dzogchen teaching. This is something very important, and for that reason we also ask about Karma Yoga.

Karma Yoga is a symbol that shows people's attitudes. For example in many places when we do a retreat, there are a hundred or two hundred people or more. But later if I ask, "How many people are participating and doing Ganapujas or meetings in the Dzogchen Community?" sometimes they say, "Oh, ten or twelve people," sometimes they even say, "We are six people." Why are there one or two hundred people at a retreat, but only six or twelve people interested in doing something? This shows that people are not seriously interested in the continuation of the teaching, and that is a little sad; it's not so nice. In some countries, for example, which I have visited many times, they have not even formed a Gakyil. They say, "Yes, but if there is a Gakyil then we have to take some responsibility." That means they don't want to do anything, and when I go there they just enjoy listening to the teaching. Then they move around a bit like nomads and if a small group wants to do a Ganapuja etc., they say, "Today we go to Giorgio's house, tomorrow we go to Maria's." You can do that at the beginning but if you continue like this for one or two years, it would be much better to think a bit about how we can continue the Dzogchen Community.