

Teaching: Buddhist Education Raw Transcription
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[2:24]

Thank you for inviting me here, the organizer, the Foundation. I have been a beneficiary by lot of your work. And just myself but many Tibetan lamas, Rinpoches, monks so benefited a lot from your work. You are very good quality and of course, free of charge. And most importantly very well proof read texts are very valuable. The foundation...name of the foundation is Buddhist Education and this is something interesting for me. I'm not here actually today to really give you some sort of talk or a teaching. I'm more here for appeal. Not personally for sort of project or specific project but appear to for some sort of attention.

[5:09]

To do something with education has been a big passion for me for probably twenty years - longer. Ideally of course, we should not be brainwashed. But that's just not going to be possible. We will...Our brain will be washed as it has been washed ever since the history of mankind. But with the right view, and the right attitude, right motivation, maybe even the brainwashing can bring something beneficial. Because education is a brainwashing. Education actually really is a key factor that makes you gullible, believing in everything. Education also makes you lose your freedom. And looking at the current situation in the world, the education that we have is not really leading to something like a wholesome harmonious world. This is how my impure perception sees.

[8:25]

I flew in here from Bali by the way - from paradise. And, you know, like there's a holiday destinations like Hawaii. Bali is one of them. There are things that Hawaii has that Bali doesn't have - big American shopping malls, high speed internet - even in the toilet. Acres and acres and acres of shopping malls and multiplex cinemas. and just you know sunglasses. But there's something that Bali has that Hawaii can never have - I don't think so, unless the American education system changes. Bali has magic. It's just so magical. And I don't know, this again is my own perception. And I think magic comes from superstition. Bali has superstition that Americans will not even know how to have. I'm sure it is the same with Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing - you probably you might have big hotels, big impressive shopping malls, all this, but a lot of these places don't have magic.

And the Balinese, as I was saying - they have superstitions. I use the word in very chauvinistic way, as if I know better. The word "superstition" is very derogatory. They do so many pujas. Daily pujas - every day, two, three, four times. There's some kind of offering going on on every corner, every street, every doorstep. You know, like these big hotels or big monuments - they have these statues of elephants or horses or a human. Elsewhere it is just an artifact. But in Bali - you go in the morning or evening some have incense burned next to it, flowers you know, put on the top of their head, and some elaborately they even have sorong?? You know a skirt offered.

[13:25]

So everything kind of feels like... even the things they sell in the shop, feels like they're all living. And more importantly, the Balinese seem to be very confident and relaxed. They can't understand why people like us and from Hong Kong or Singapore or from China, why they have to be so efficient - they don't understand. Why they have to be so worked up if, you know, if your downloading is not happening as fast as whatever you think. This I think, is all to do with the brainwashing - all to do with education.

As I said, since we have no choice, but our brain gets washed, my appear you know...is that we should really pay some attention to how we are going to wash our kids' brains. In twenty years time, this world is going to change. Probably the divorce rate will go much higher. Probably there will be no marriage at all. Probably we will be busy adopting grandparents. We don't know. The world is changing so fast. The education that we have right now seems to value so much on things like degrees. Degrees and therefore, jobs. And job - we are really, really just completely caught by this net of phenomena called 'job.' Is this really going to take us comfortably beyond twenty years? I don't think so. Is this how we are going to stress our children to think and work so hard, to make yourself equipped with getting the right job, which is not even guaranteed.

[18:32]

Buddhism has a really good wisdom and method to contribute to this world of brainwashing or education. So when I think of Buddhist education, I'm not talking about a school where we teach Buddhist sutras, and make children recite Buddhist slokas. I'm talking about a school or an education or a brainwashing system that values self-contemplation. Emphasizing more on being a decent human being rather than being rich or well-quipped human being. You know, you have to really think this way. Right now we are not really sleeping with mothers - we brothers and sisters don't sleep together, have sex - at the moment. You may think oh this will never happen; how can we guarantee? You know dogs and cats they sleep with their mothers, and produce children too. There's not a single guarantee that we, our children in twenty years....children that they won't do such things. Way we wash their brains continue like this.

[22:08]

Right now we are sort of in this stage where you hear the news that a small toddler got run over by a car and then another car and another car and everybody watched it. Nobody done something. The whole world makes such a big issue of this - Wow! This is just so unbelievable. How can people do such thing. That actually tells us that there is some decency left with us human beings - that this is not acceptable. Right now, we go through...we are at the age where we feel that the free-loving society like Australia produces you know like fanatics that go to Middle East and kill other innocent children and you know human beings, and let the children play using a human head as a ball. And then we just get shocked. Wow - this exists. You know it indicates that we have some decency left. But we cannot guarantee that this will go on. These are the things that we need to think about to prepare ourselves for the next generation.

[24:53]

In Buddhism we can also contribute by offering hundreds and hundreds of years experience to teach how everything is interdependent - that nothing is independent - and this is very important information that modern people have to have. I don't really - I'm a very pessimistic - I don't really believe that all these world problems is going to be solved and then there will be no chaos in the world one day. I don't really believe it - probably I don't want to believe it anyway because then it sort of would be so boring - no news to watch. But this just proves that I'm a byproduct of a very sophisticated brainwashing system

that values chaos of the world as an entertainment. So I'm here actually today really as an appeal to really pay some attention and also brainstorm – because you know like me, unfortunately I should say, I'm not a father.

You know when you are a father and a mother, or any way you know, someone who takes care of someone else, a sibling, I guess you have to have a really astute strong responsibility, and I'm sure you are thinking of children's future in a very long way. You know much bigger picture. I have no experience in how to raise the next generation basically. I do have siblings, brothers and sisters, but unfortunately I was raised as some sort of a strange species, independently. I don't know whether you will believe this – now I'm 52 - I don't have a single photo taken during the Christmas eve –all together father, mother, brothers. None – nothing. There is family values. This is where Chinese wisdom - there is so much ancient Chinese wisdom, or I should use maybe the ancient Chinese common sense, which can really contribute. What I know very little is some intellectual academic Buddhist wisdom. What I can see is suffering of the world seems to be... a lot of this suffering of the world seems to be a by-product of how you got your education.

31:10]

Like when you hear some remote village Korean boy or girl is working so hard to save enough to have a plastic surgery. Or a remote Chinese villager man sold his kidney so that he can buy an iPad. Many of us we get so shocked, but actually a lot of us do almost the same thing. We just end up causing similar suffering or more suffering for others. And then there's a whole thing about environment, ecology. Again, due to our education, it seems no matter how human beings can achieve scientifically, technologically, in the medical science even, there's like amazing diseases that can really...they are so vicious they can overthrow you within 24 hours. Just within this Horse year – let's blame it to Horse year – you know my...so many close friends got sick, or some even died, and many of them they were very good with their diet, you know fanatical gym goer. Meanwhile, this is just a – you know, I just feel like dropping this in – one of my own teachers who is still living, 103 now - Chatral Rinpoche – has to have a coke every day. So what is all this? So, you know, again, to really live a life, to have a life – I'm not talking about being Buddhist. I'm not talking about Buddhist education for becoming Buddhist – that's very limited view. That's for someone probably for me and probably some of you Buddhist fanatics. But I'm talking about Buddhist education for decency - to have a life!

So please help to help ourselves. This has been something that I've always wanted to do, but I don't know what to do and how to do it. There are some good side of modern technology too. You know like for years I tried to assemble some sort of school in Australia, to begin with using Buddhist kids as guinea pig, Buddhist family kids. But Australia...I mean when I was starting that, Australia was very new to Buddhism. And you know, the small Buddhist community that Australia has – they're everywhere; Perth, Adelaide, Sydney, just like a thousand miles apart. Now those kids have their kids. Well of course, big part is my own laziness, and also just never...and also you know being some sort of Rinpoche, some sort of entitlement, and then all the Buddhist...the actual buddhist activity also... you know high jacked me from this endeavor of educating children.

[39:21]

Not giving up the idea, I tried to set up something very small in India. We even some sort of experiment for a few weeks. I remember even asking...I can be a bit like Kim Jong An, by the way – I made even....because I want to experiment bringing up these kids, and I've even asked some people, like Pawo and Stephanie, OK, go and have babies because I sort of want to experience this. So you know we started sort of... and very inspired - we have all kinds of ideas. We even thought about things like

uniform. Because the uniform has its own you know benefit, I feel. And we thought- why not? Like one week everyone wears - like Indian, and then the next week Tang Dynasty Chinese. Then next week Balinese - you know like that. And we even have thought among the class, kids' class, there would be like 60 and 70 year's old men, women sitting as a student – with the kids. Not as the teacher. And we have the idea of really emphasizing on things that are considered useless, like the ancient Chinese music, you know ancient Indian music - things that won't get you job.

But also have some practical things, like you know like have the kids to also play act. OK so today you are the president, or you know you have a political party. Then you are the rival political party and you try to campaign for your... whatever; portfolio or your belief. And you know you get elected and then you are the defense minister. You know you are economic... you know like finance minister. You'll be the ...I don't know...education minister. And what will you do to rule your world.

[43:35]

And also have some principles like really making sure that they don't grow up. They grow up too fast. I feel so sad you know that some of my friends' kids, by force, because of their family, by their school, they have to grow up so fast. Some of the American kids they could basically sit at KF Board meeting, actually. Some are like 10 years old. And things like creating toys instead of buying toys. And even the subject what they study - letting them choose. If they want to choose some strange for us adults - that's our challenge. These were sort of coming out from the excitement, from my excitement when we were beginning to experiment a little in Bir. But somehow with so many different cause and condition, again it didn't really manage to continue.

Also, one like me, I need a lot of courage, and parents also need a lot of courage. Like by going to this school, your kid may end up becoming the most out-casted. What is your value, also, as a parent? In fact, this is another thing – the kids' school is equally a school for the parents. Because parent, as they say is the first school for the children. Learning the definition of patience also. But also parents must have long term visionary compassion; so you also need that, so therefore you have to have discipline.

[47:58]

What's happening in America, some parts of America, is also just too extreme. My friends in New York, New Jersey- they have two kids. They were going out somewhere and the family put their kids maybe like five seconds in the car and they went in to get something from the house; they're driving away. And somebody immediately reported, and then they had to go to the court for the next few months to prove that they were healthy and sound parents.

You know, I think it's good to also let the children climb trees - no safety helmet. You know, let them fall, get bitten by crabs, you know whatever....scratch. Otherwise, our modern good parents, so called good parents, are really producing the most sensitive, the most fragile, the most spoiled lump of meat. So as I was saying, there's something good about modern technology. I now even think, well with Skype and maybe other similar technology, maybe one could even have a web-based school with interaction with the kids and the parents. To give them values. To give.... Assist them to discover themselves so to speak.

It's really...it's not surprising when you read these young kids, 18 and 19 years old from Europe, joining ISIS to fight, and many of them say you know like they want to belong to something. They don't have identity. That is such a profound statement. I think our education and our brainwashing is systematically destroying identity. Right now our identity is – we buy a Prada bag – so everybody looks

at you – you are holding a Prada bag. But sadly, you meet somebody who also bought one, so you're nothing special. Could be fake but doesn't matter - it bothers you. You know, like when you go to places like Shanghai, it's kind of disappointing to see there are more Prada and Rolex shops than bookshops. So identity, of course, is so important for us – isn't it as human beings. Of course, if all of human beings are... if their faculties are powerful enough to hear the Buddhist teaching – you know there's not such thing as identity, selflessness; but that's difficult to hear. That takes a long time. Before you here this you have to find identity and only then go to chopping it down.

Identity – I'm reading a book by this East European writer called Milan Kundera – I'm sure many of you know. There's a book called "Life is Elsewhere." And it's really good. It's a relationship between the mother and the son, the son who grows up so much under the love of mother... but then it has... I would not say negative, but still it sort of... it can do something to the son's identity. Anyway, I'm talking too much rubbish here. I will end it here saying, basically I think we will have to find a way to teach our children, next generation, that not all problems are solvable. Not all problems are solvable, and many times to live with it is better. And in search for a solution for this unsolvable problem, you in fact create more problems... Which of course our consumer society will always promise... you do this – you'll solve...

[58:25]

Anyway, this is something that I just want to share as a closing to this very mixed and... I don't know... at times, a time that forces us to really think inwardly - year of 2014. I know it's happening only tomorrow, but since I'm not going to speak to the public. And hopefully you know, that 2015 we will have a different way of looking at our life, at least in a very small way. And through that, we will have a different attitude on how to raise our next generation, how to design a new toy, how to buy the next birthday present – I don't know. So that's it.

Questions:

[100:57]

Since the topic is education, and since you have run a school in India yourself... [Rinpoche: not running at the moment] I think about the idea of grades because good grades will get you a job, but grades is what we are brain-washed with so what do you think about the ideas of grades?

Rinpoche: I don't know - I have mixed feelings. It can be good for certain things. But it's very, also, not creative... how you give grade... and actually I forgot to talk about big important part - teacher – so important. And the most important quality of the teacher is kindness. Like really, it should not be treated as a job. This is a big responsibility.... You are actually responsible for somebody's life. You are responsible for a few hundred... a lot of children's life. Kindness. So how do you give grade? Kindness, compassionate based grade?

Bhutan has one... I think one of the worst children's education system. It's you know sort of the leftover of the leftover of the British 1940s system. British left for the Indians, and the Indians gave it to Bhutanese. It's terrible. I met a kid in Bhutan - he was expelled from class because he had to help his own... he was the only kid at home – very poor and his mother was not well. And he's always late to join the class, you know because his mother... he has to help do the chores – you know like household chores which is helping mother. You know – there. Maybe we could also give him an extra grade. Maybe he doesn't even know how to read and write properly but A+ because he's helping the mother. You know,

which sets an example for the other kids. This is what you need to do. So you keep on setting this kind of trend - all the way to the university.

[1:06]

Okay, I'll be a little more fanatic here, why not. I would really like...given a job to really re-think this whole thing, I would analyze about things like Father Christmas, Santa Claus. I would analyze him. I don't know how much good this is. And then you know the stories that you read to the kids, it needs to be analyzed. What's that... who is that princess that had to kiss a frog. What story is that? It has something good about it, a little bit of equanimity there, pure perception there. but also we have to be now... you know, children now are so different than the children of a hundred years ago... maybe you know kissing a frog and that turns not necessarily into a prince... maybe it's wrong. Maybe it should not be a prince anymore. Because you see stories like this when you are told to a kid therefore you end up after twenty years having more Prada shops. It's because of these stories you end up having more Prada shops.

There's a very beautiful story..I always think this is a really good story about about a turtle –this is actually about a previous life of Buddha. And two heads and one stomach – two beings, by the way sharing one stomach. And they are in the ocean and... like whenever they eat I think the other one is sleeping. They have to wake the other one up - to share. I forgot the story.

And anyway, one day a fruit came along in the ocean, this Buddha – previous life Buddha of a turtle notices the other head is sleeping and very exhausted. They are both so exhausted and it's a small fruit. And he thought well, let him rest. Anyway it's going to one stomach so it really doesn't matter. So he ate it. So when later the other one woke up, the other one also burped and then the food smell come. The other one is Devadatta's previous incarnation, by the way, and he was very angry for not telling him. He said, okay. Next time the other one – Buddha's previous incarnation was sleeping and that time a big fruit came. And he thought, since he didn't tell me before, I'm not going to tell him. So he ate it and it happened to be poison - and both of them died because there was only one stomach. That's quite a good story I think to tell to the kids. We kind of have one stomach now. There are a lot of fables like this, kind of funny and kind of extreme too.

[1:13]

My favorite is this idiot son... he wanted so his old father, who's tired, sleeping, resting, and time to time bothered by a fly landing on his head, disturbing. And the son thought you know this fly is not letting my father rest. So what he did was lift the ax and aim while the fly was on the father's head Aimed and killed the fly and the father also. It's like idiot compassion. OK. One or two questions.

Question: Good morning Rinpoche. My question would be that seems in my purview that nowadays in Chinese society and Taiwanese society the parents mostly fall on two ends of spectrum, like they either really spoil their kids with an ipad or phone, or they're like tiger parents and very strict. And especially if they're a Buddhist family they want to have their kids reciting sutras, and maybe not let them not go out to play when they want to. I was wondering if you could give us any advise on finding a healthier balance for educating our kids and not being constrained by the two extremes?

Rinpoche: Again as I was saying earlier, I'm really not experienced with this –I actually need your help, especially the parents who are Buddhists. But I think common sense says that maybe it's not so good to

be forcing your kids if you happen to be Buddhist – forcing your kids to be reciting sutras and etc, because as a human we never like being told so it might end up your kids may end up being the opposite. As a parent we know Buddhism has so much value. And we are convinced that this is the only truth. And, of course, our children whom we love the most, we want to also make them somehow have this. So creating very skillfully...not necessarily make them do aiding the situation so that – even if it means - oh no need to meditate, you know just telling them no need to recite – they actually they end up wanting to do it. Whatever you tell them so don't do it, they end up wanting to do it. You know, learning all these human games, especially children's games. And, also, maybe not too much emphasis on actually doing like recitations, or sitting still, which are probably the least things the children would like to do. But instead of emphasizing that let them involve... like traveling. I always tell parents to take them to places like India. Children so far, I've told so many parents and so far success ratio is 100% good. Yes of course they get diarrhea and all that, but you should let your children go through some scars and you know like all that.

[1:20]

Lot of this depends on your skill also so this is why educating the parents is kind of important too. Just you know recently there's a Chinese lady who has a daughter and she told me her daughter's so spoiled and stubborn, etc. And we decided to show her a photo of some African kid who has just one toy, and he's so...and that's his world. So we were talking about ...you're a kid and they're a kid, what do you think; and, you know, immediately you know... kids are quite good, and immediately reaching home I heard the daughter herself voluntarily wanting to donate most of her toys to these kids. So kids are quite open.

In Thailand I've notice that many of these Theravadin countries, the parents let the kids, even the very small ones, make offerings. Like let the kids hold the offerings like big flowers and stuff like that. And you know of course the parents assist them. And offer the monks. I think it's a really good idea – with...from the hand. And children feel involved, Children likes to do things. I will let a lot of children polish my shoes. They're very happy to polish shoes. They feel that they've done a big job. And you know like sometimes I pay them, and sometimes I say how about being very generous and not get paid today. That you offer your service to me, and they think and say why not. So I think letting them do things is good. So instead of letting the children recite sutras, maybe let them arrange flowers. I'm sure they'll make a mess out of it, but doesn't matter. Clean the Buddha statues, light incense, whatever, depending on the kids' age. Just one more.

[1:25]

Question: The question is there are many kids now a days in Taiwan using drugs or joining a gang - how to help them?

Rinpoche: Taiwan is still very good. I have to confess, your children are doing much better than even Buddhist kingdom like Bhutan. I'm not talking about your children have better to eat or better highways. I'm talking about just everything. Anyway, I'm not the best person to ask. I'm a little biased about Taiwan and Taiwanese. I see Taiwan and Taiwanese with a little bit of rosy colors. This is... in my life, this is the only Chinese society that's so vibrant and dynamic. It's amazing to watch your high school and like...they are almost like regimented – like this, and like this – even the exercise they do together. And then when they go to India, they're all wearing the same baseball hat, same uniform, flag... you can tell they're Taiwanese. Of course, they are Taiwanese. They're all following like ducks. But, also, this is one Chinese society I think you have your ex-president in the prison. Even the very fact, even the very fact that he's in the prison is making the Taiwanese society strong. The fact that this is

happening. I'm not even talking about whether he's guilty or not. We are not even... the fact that he's there shows that there is dynamic, that brilliantness. And I have – this again, I'm being probably biased but I have to say for years I have walked around just by myself, and the warmth of the ordinary people, especially the taxi drivers. That's where I got the idea of **pin??** and I also eat. Now if I'm wearing robes and travel many times they give me free. But that comes from being Buddhist. And for a Society it is very advanced, economically, technologically. This is a very special country. You should really appreciate this onw. It's also not boring place, and that's saying a lot coming from me. I get bored after six hours. I still feel that the Taiwanese, that sort of humanness is going to protect for some time – I feel. . I can just see it from high school girls... boys sitting in book shops reading books and sort of making noise, but their attitude, their body language is so gentle and good.

I arrived here yesterday at eleven am in the morning, it's almost eleven now, I haven't heard one siren yet. Even in Vancouver, within three hours, you will hear a police siren. So keep up with your Taiwanese values. Yes, please, keep on wearing those baseball hats when you travel around. Be like a duck when you follow here and there, when it is necessary. But be very individual also because you are a member of a society that has your ex-president in prison - also fantastic. And it's such a beautiful mixture of, you know, Confucius, and of course I think there is a lot of Buddhist value, that's helping you. There's a massage place there and sometimes I go there and get head massage, and there's a television right in front, and then there are several channels the monks, and I ask Stephanie to translate. And they teach love, compassion, so on and so forth – so good. But although once there was one someone wearing a big mala. Maybe he's from Kowshu?? Or ???, I have a little prejudice toward that. Greasy hair... maybe from **Kurukule**. That was a little dodgy by the way.

Anyway, I think here we will end. I'm sure some of you will come to Ushnishavijaya puja and we'll see you there.

[Something in Chinese]

You know, me and many of my students and my monks especially, have got probably 40,000, 50,000 books over the years from you guys. And now I'm giving you just one book back.

END