

WISDOM FOUNDATION

Shamar Rinpoche, Spiritual Founder

July 10, 2017

Dear Friends of Bodhi Path:

We would like to share Shamar Rinpoche's inspirational vision for the Natural Bridge, Virginia retreat center.

Shamar Rinpoche: My Vision for Virginia [excerpt]

As told to Pamela Gayle White, Approved by Shamar Rinpoche in March 2014

My goal here in Virginia is to create a very good, authentic Buddhist studies center where people can learn meditation and Buddhist knowledge. I have a vision of a center that will last for many, many generations. Here in Lexington you have a military school that is 175 years old and is still running very well, as is Washington and Lee, which was founded over 250 years ago. My vision is similar.

I'm not interested in teachings that developed lately, where someone claims that the Buddha taught something somewhere, but nobody has any proof. Here I'm organizing a center where the Dharma will be transmitted in the form of meditation according to the Buddha's teachings, and philosophical studies according to the Buddha's teachings. Not dialectical and not ritualistic, like in Tibetan monasteries; and not New Age either. Simple and authentic, set up in a simple way that society will naturally find acceptable.

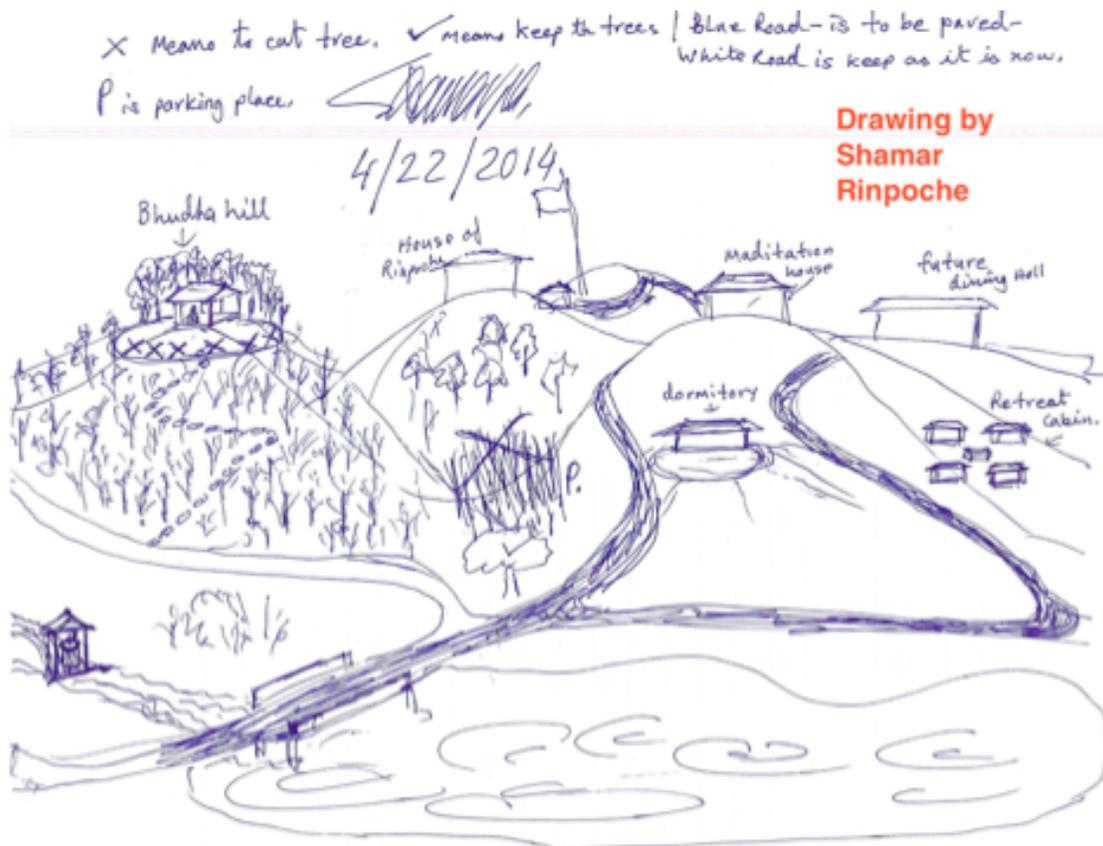
When I say that we will be focusing on the Buddha's teachings, I mean that the main philosophical focus is on teachings that the historic Buddha gave to humans on this earth, primarily sutras. Lojong, or Mind Training, will continue to be the main focus of the practice curriculum because it involves a good deal of meditation and I've packed everything into it. And of course we will continue to teach practices such as Chenrezig because they are also quite helpful...

...Concerning the infrastructure, we have begun to create a lovely park that we will continue to develop. It will be a place that inspires peace and quiet as soon as you enter the grounds: an environment of compassion and of Buddha's wisdom. That's why there's a Buddha pavilion on

top of the hill, and a stupa down below. We're also going to have a Bhutanese water wheel pagoda so that the moment you arrive in this area, you'll be in contact with the peace that carries the blessings of compassion and wisdom.

We plan to build a dining hall, as well as individual retreat cabins for students who come here to learn meditation. There is already a meditation hall for group meditation and teaching. The cabins will mainly be for meditators. This is because meditation teachers like myself and other teachers cannot travel everywhere, and practitioners can't find good guides just anywhere. You have to study meditation by doing it, and until you're good at meditating you need guidance. So you can come and we'll be here to help you learn how to meditate...

...The structures that have been built so far in Virginia have been made possible by the open-hearted kindness of many benefactors and volunteers. The fulfillment of our vision continues to rely on the generosity, commitment, and involvement of individuals...



If you would like to give to the vision: <http://www.bodhipath.org/giving-usa>

If you would like to see additional photo galleries: <http://virginiaretreatcenter.weebly.com>