



*Immenstadt, 10th of August 2018*

Dear Allgäuers,

We, the Europe Center, an international project of Diamond Way Buddhism, have felt at home here in the Allgäu since 2007. And, we feel good. For more than ten years we have made connections with locals on different levels – privately, on a business level, in clubs and as a neighbor. We know each other. A lot of friendships have developed. We are therefore quite concerned, even shocked, that due to poorly researched and one-sided newspaper articles, our integrity is being questioned, and there are already cases of Buddhist friends suffering from discrimination. We are suddenly pushed into a political corner in a rather extreme way.

In recent reports, quotes of our teacher, Lama Ole Nydahl, have been published out of context, which has altered their meaning. Also crucial parts of our own statement have been withheld. The responsible journalists had received the following statement of Lama Ole in writing, which opposes the depiction in the article: “The means by which you pursue your goals are not irrelevant. They should be appropriate and in line with the constitution and human rights.”

As a Buddhist center we have no political agenda. The Europe Center is an international meeting point at which Buddhists from the whole world meet for the Summer Course every year. It is about Buddhist teachings, common meditation and exchange with friends.

We are not monks and nuns. We are a colorful mix of people that have normal lives – with jobs, families and differing opinions. What we all share is that we stand for our basic, democratic rights. Freedom of speech, as long as in compliance with the constitution, is important to us.

Every citizen in a democracy is free to draw attention to human rights violations by Sharia law and to criticize political Islam. Of course, this also applies to a Buddhist teacher or a Buddhist. Therefore we find it comprehensible that for a brief moment during one of his lectures Lama Ole draws attention to this topic. This is in no way contrary to Buddhist values. A comparative evaluation of totalitarian systems is also within freedom of expression.

Lama Ole Nydahl comments, "As a Buddhist you cannot help but being an honest humanist. It is everybody's right to criticize, but only the state is permitted the use of



force in Germany. It would be enough if all those who live here abide by the law, whatever their religion. Of course, as a lama I don't want violence and my capable students and friends should just meditate."

For us it is completely ludicrous that the latest articles suggest in a manipulative way that there could be a connection between statements critical of Islam and being in traditional rifle associations in the Allgäu.

"For the benefit of all beings. . ." Every Buddhist in the Europe Center starts his meditation like this. This was also recently mentioned in the Allgäuer Zeitung, and it is true. Buddhists meditate on love and compassion. It is not in accordance with our values to exclude people personally or to judge them generally. To make it clear - racism as well as fascism are not compatible with Buddhist values and such ideologies have no place here.

Lama Jigme Rinpoche, the General Secretary of Thaye Dorje, His Holiness the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, visited this year's Summer Course. He expressly thanked Lama Ole Nydahl for tirelessly following by the wishes of the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, who asked him more than 45 years ago to teach Buddhism in the West. During his visit, Rinpoche emphasized to about 3000 listeners that, "the selection of Buddhist methods of the Karma Kagyu Lineage taught by Lama Ole Nydahl is," in his view, "perfectly suited for the West".

Gut Hochreute has become a home for international Diamond Way Buddhism. From the very beginning, the dialogue with you, the local people, the Allgäuers, has been very important to us. Many of you know us - some very well. But for some we still seem exotic, which unfortunately leads to rumors and uncertainties due to recent newspaper articles. It's important to us that you know that we want to continue to maintain our good relations with you, are open and want to get to know you further. Make your own opinion of us!

In order to get to know each other better, we look forward to inviting you to visit us at Gut Hochreute in the second half of September. We will send out an invitation after the Summer Course. Weather permitting we will serve "grilled pork sausages," of course from the Allgäu organic farmer next door.

*The residents and friends of the Europe Center*