

ONLY THE DHARMA IS NEW

NEW YEAR 2020

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They say, “New Year.” Actually it is the same, same. What is new? I am an old man. Old means I’m never going to be new again. Why do we call it new? A new year means getting older, nothing new! Body absolutely has nothing new. Just older, older, and more complaining. Complaining is not new either! Oho! Complaining is the oldest tradition.

We are so busy...and then dead! What are we busy with? “It’s not my fault!” “It’s your fault!” “I didn’t do it!” “She did it!” “My things! Don’t touch!” Our whole life, trying to gobble up everything. That is samsara. We did it a million times. Still we will do a million more. Never satisfied. Never tired. Never let go of that. Where is the new?

Now we got this body—this is the only body that, if we get it, we can connect deeply to the dharma. No other body. No other place. No other riches. We connect, and then dharma can bring benefit to our consciousness. Then maybe our next life can be better. But I don’t think we will get better than this—a precious human body, with everything perfect. We need to really look at where we are standing and appreciate our situation. To be a human being is number one—look at what you can do. You can understand everything. But it is difficult to get a human body.

The lamas say this body is the result of our previously accumulated virtue and purification of negativity. And to have not only a human body but also qualities like intelligence, or to be successful, require even more of those. If we didn’t create those causes in the past but were just negative beings making trouble, then we will have no success, no qualities, and for us everything will just be an obstacle.

Now we have a body, a real human precious one, different than all the countless bodies before. Now we have a chance for our real ‘new one.’ But still difficult! Nothing easy, everything complicated!

If you want the really new thing, that is only dharma. If you want something new in your body, speech, and mind, that is only practice. Our minds every year for how many billions of years have just been the same. Up-down, up-down, doesn’t matter—up is same, down is same. We have followed ourselves exactly. Different kinds of bodies, realms, happy, sad, this and that—you name it! So many phenomena, always changing. But always suffering. Same-same! Always under the five poisons, same-same. Always stupidly destroy ourselves, same-same. You think

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you are going to get something new? Good luck! You think your mind is going to change after so many billions of lifetimes being the same? Good luck again!

If we want to change a little bit, only dharma can do that. If you want freedom, only practice can give you that. You think you have freedom? Show it to me! Do you have freedom to keep even one tiny thing when you die? Do you have the freedom to make even one tiny dust speck permanent? What kind of freedom do you have? You are in the five poisons prison—when you think you are free from desire prison, then again there is anger prison. You think you are free from jealousy prison, but instantly you are in pride handcuffs. Where is our freedom? We think we are some kind of hero, but we are under the thumb of our five poisons, worse than servants. What kind of hero is that?

Whose fault? Our own. We put ourselves there. We put our own head under their feet. We put on our own handcuffs. Where are we going to point the finger?

New year just means older. Dumber. More zombied-out. Unless we practice. That is our one thing. One hope. One chance. 'New year' means try, okay? More than try, *do it!* Otherwise nothing new, again.

Tashi Delek!

- Gyatrul