

## *Advice In the New Year*

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You are asking if I have any advice or message for the New Year? I don't know! This isn't my holiday! This isn't my tradition! I am not your servant, that I have to say something. I have no wisdom, either! Why are you bothering me? I am just peacefully trying to drink my cup of delicious tea! [He laughs.]

I think everybody needs to be careful, though. Please be careful of your merit. Respect your merit. Even about things like not wasting food. My guru, Tulku Natsog, he was always very careful that food didn't get wasted. My teacher, Sangye Gön, who was my guru's uncle, he was always very strict about that, too, and made a big deal about it! They never threw away food. They would give it to someone, or give it to the birds or animals to eat, that's fine, but they wouldn't throw it away like it was garbage—they said to do that damages one's merit.

We all need merit. Without merit, we have no success in anything. Without merit, we won't have money, our bodies won't be strong or healthy, and we will have only obstacles. Therefore, please be careful of your merit. Respect it, value it, and so don't waste it. Respect your merit and respect the virtue that it comes from. That means respect generosity, discipline, patience, and so on—all the virtues, all the ways we can do what is positive. Don't ignore these.

Sometimes people ask me how they can practice dzogchen. I don't know! But I know if you want dzogchen, you need lots of merit. You need to have patience and practice generosity—that way you will slowly empty out your stinginess bag. We each do have a stinginess bag, quite full, with all our stinginess there. We need to empty that out until our stinginess is finished. Then we need to start a generosity bag instead, and fill it up with pure generosity. Not dirty things, just clean, pure ones. Then that means that discipline will be there, too. Then with clean generosity and discipline, then slowly we can practice all of the six transcendent perfections.

We need to be generous, not stingy. We need to give up our hungry ghost thinking. Everyone thinks that a *yidag*, a hungry ghost, just means some kind of spirit. Actually everyone is a *yidag*! The *yi* means thinking that you don't have something. The *dag* means holding that continuously and never giving up your "I don't have it! I don't have it!" idea. Everyone is a *yidag*. Particularly American rich people—however much they have, still their mouths are open, desperate for more. Not only Americans, of course; Tibetans are the same, Chinese, everybody, from any country. Everybody holds that idea. We need to drop that. If we don't want to be a hungry ghost in the future, we need to not make that habit now, always thinking desperately about what we don't have.

And don't be naughty! You don't need this old man to tell you what that means. You all know about being naughty. You are all professional! So if somebody tells you, "Don't be naughty!" don't pretend you don't know what that means!

You STILL don't know what it means to be naughty? Then get out! I don't believe you. Your own naughtiness, you do know. You do see it. Don't pretend to be stupid. We really screw ourselves up that way.

Don't be spoiled. Americans are one way so smart, one way the most stupid! They love to act spoiled—that is just stupid! What is spoiled? Spoiled means tired, lazy. Not too tired for chasing the ladies or chasing the guys, stupid things, but too tired to do what will really benefit yourself. Spoiled means you have lots of diligence in non-virtue but are lazy about what will be a real kindness to yourself. You do know! You know what is lazy and spoiled and what is clean. But you complain so much about why you can't do the clean one. So many excuses! The bottom line? You are just spoiled. Spoiled means you have everything perfectly and then you screw yourself up. Was it because you didn't have it? No. You have it perfectly. Your body, perfectly; your speech, perfectly; your mind, perfectly. Right now everything is clean and clear, your mind functioning, body and speech, everything good. Right now you have freedom. You want to throw away your freedom? If yes, then keep saying, "I'm tired, I'm lazy." Then everything becomes more and more complicated. Your spoiledness becomes laziness and your laziness becomes spoiledness. Then, look! You have made something wonderful! Really, you took your jewel and made a big shit on it! Are you proud?

Please, try not to do that. Try not to be spoiled and arrogant. Try to be humble. What you have—your freedom, your opportunity, your precious human life—recognize that. Then use it, however you can, however much you can use it for the positive. Otherwise, if you just waste it, then all your good circumstances you are wasting. Better you had gone to prison and been tortured. Better that you had been thrown into a hole with poisonous snakes. Your own spoiledness is like the worst poisonous snake. Don't go that way. Please, try.

Shut up and practice. Mostly what we are complaining about, better that we shut up and practice and put up instead. Including the president—everyone is complaining about Mr. Trunk or Trumpet or whatever his name is a lot these days. I don't think that's our business too much, just bringing more shame to our country. I don't think everyone's complaining is really of too much benefit.

In general, complaining about other people is wonderful! Wonderful way to waste your time, wonderful way to destroy your merit, wonderful way to screw up. If somebody asks, "Did you have a precious human body?" "Oh, yes!" "Really? What did you do with that?" "I really was a professional complainer! Number one! Nobody was like me!" So wonderful! Then you can enjoy really wonderful hell.

Instead, we need to recognize our own faults. Mostly we don't see our own faults, our own shadows. Recognize your own shadows—black or white or yellow or red, round or pointed, doesn't matter. First recognize, and then, slowly, slowly, change them. It's difficult, though, because our faults become habits. Then more and more difficult to change. I learned from myself—my own faults, my own habits. I do know these things, how much they are difficult. Nothing is simple or easy. But we make more and more complicated, more and more

complicated. We need to drop that. Focus there, and drop there. Drop the gun—the gun of our own faults. Maybe that will benefit, the real way.

Anyway, don't ask me. Even what day or year it is, I don't know. I don't know if it's a new year or old year or whatever. I do know that I am an old man, going to die soon, body every day more and more funky, with a very garbage mind and nasty mouth, too. Don't be like me, okay? Old year or new year, doesn't matter. We need to try, and we need to be honest with ourselves. Sorry I don't have nice words for you in the new year, but you have known me a long time and this is my nasty mouth tradition.

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatral*