

Our Every Day Losar: The Centers and Sangha

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I saw pictures of everyone working and cleaning, preparing for the Losar [Tibetan New Year celebration] practices. Wonderful, thank you! But not only today. This isn't just your job for one day or this one Losar. What are you cleaning? You are cleaning your temple, your dharma center. Those places aren't just for Losar. They are where you practice, where you meditate, where you teach, where you receive teachings—that is why we need to keep them clean and take care of them. The temple is there every day. Therefore, we need to clean it every day, watch it every day, take care of it every day. It is our every day Losar.

Thank you! Everything looks good. Everybody maintain in the future for a hundred years that way! Step by step, one by one. Everybody watch, everybody help.

You have amazing temples, amazing centers. It used to be nothing. For example, the Colestin Valley used to have nothing. Then slowly, slowly, Tashi Choling was built. Now it's wonderful, amazing—Tashi Choling, Portland, O.D.D., Mexico, Texas, Montana, all the centers. I feel. Maybe it is just my dumb ego, but I think His Holiness the Dalai Lama is very happy with you guys holding the temples, holding the lineages. Of course, it's good to make His Holiness happy; he is an emanation of Chenrezig. But the bottom line is you guys are creating merit and purifying your obscurations. We have many generations' worth of negativity—you are purifying that.

Therefore, be harmonious! The dharma centers aren't just in one person's pocket. You shouldn't think the center is just in your pocket or just in someone else's pocket. It belongs to everybody. More than in your pocket, it is on your head—everybody's head. Therefore, we need to keep harmony, because it is not just up to one person. Together, harmoniously learn; harmoniously teach; harmoniously practice; harmoniously meditate into your own buddhanature. Wonderful, wonderful! All the sangha together. Everybody's giant pocket together, nothing stingy.

Everyone is too much focused on their own pocket. They are worried if they have enough money in their pocket, they are worried about somebody stealing something from their pocket, they are worried about what is in somebody else's pocket and want to get it for themselves. Some people want to gobble up more than will fit in their pocket, too, even though they have no place to put it! Such disgusting people, thinking only about their own gaping mouths! I don't think that's any kind of dharma style.

Do lamas do this? Sure, plenty. Lots of so-called lamas, lots of tulkus, lots of khenpos, lots of scholars. Is this because they want to benefit the doctrine and sentient beings? No. It is just because they want to shame themselves, it looks like, and bring down the doctrine. It doesn't

matter how high a lama's name is, if they think in that way, they are really low. Don't follow that example, okay? You know what is in your pocket. Just be satisfied with that.

Stay low and humble, and just...happy! Happy means if you have a lot, still happy; if you have a little, still happy. That kind of low, humble, funky one maybe looks kind of low and stays in low places but really their qualities are getting higher and higher. That one is a real lama or real practitioner, without any fancy name. Just fancy qualities. Even if they are sitting with the doggies or outside the door, all the time they are on the high throne of their natural qualities.

Some people complain, "All the great teachers have passed away! Where can we get blessings now?" It is true that the past masters are now dead. But the living ones, you don't accept! You think you have no teachers? There are plenty of students who know more than you, who have studied more than you, practiced more than you. If you are not stubborn and arrogant, you can learn lots from them! If you want to practice, there are plenty of practices you can do! I don't think anybody has that kind of excuse! More than complaining that you don't have teachers, you need to learn well yourself, practice well yourself, so then you know for yourself, and you can teach others, too. If you know something, share it! Don't be stingy! But don't be arrogant, either, thinking you are something special. Don't pop up with ego. Do things humbly, cleanly, purely, everything, every piece.

Anyone who says, "We don't have a lama!" really is saying, "We need to learn, ourselves! We need to study, ourselves! We need to wake up, stand up!" Don't think you can just sit around with your mouth open and the lama will come fill it up for you. My goodness! How many lamas have already come? You need more? More than saying, "We need a lama!" stupidly, better to say, "We didn't learn! What the lamas said, we didn't listen to that! We need to listen again! We need to learn! We need to study, we need to contemplate, we need to meditate!" Yes, THAT is true. That is your job, exactly, again and again. The screaming of "We don't have a lama! We don't have a lama!" —that's a sign that we need to learn. You don't need to be upset or angry, you don't need to panic. Just you need to learn. You have so many books! So many teachings! Then you need to practice, go in, deeper and deeper, recognize wisdom qualities more and more.

I heard that Lama Yeshe's students down in Mexico are still trying to study and practice since he passed. That way it works! Even if the teacher has passed away, still they remember his kindness, still remember his teachings, still study and still practice. That is the right way to rely on the lama, taking the practices into your heart, taking refuge in your heart. That is very important. The lama is called the root—is that because they have a trunk and a tree? No. They are the root of the tree of dharma, the trunk of dharma. There are many layers of meaning. The root lama is the root of all virtue and all qualities, not only in this life but in all future lives. When we develop our qualities, the lama is our root. When we create virtue, we are connecting there.

To Yeshe's students I say, "Your lama passed away, but you can still maintain his blessing, holding his center, his teaching, whatever he taught you. Keep his teaching! Then, go step by

step. You need to practice. You need to have faith. How do those come? By teaching and learning, step by step. Still you can practice, just as he taught you. Still you can remember his teachings. That is really to remember him, really to respect and rely on him as your teacher, even though he has passed away. What he showed you, how to practice, what he taught, you can rely on that continuously. It has no mistakes. Just practice that, always. To maintain that steadily, not jumping in the ten directions and mixing in other ideas or traditions, that is the way to keep everything purely. You don't have to jump from one direction to another, one way in the morning and a different one in the afternoon—that just mixes everything up. Just go straight, directly, just as he taught. Go more and more deeply into understanding the meaning. Stay nicely and practice—that will really benefit yourself. And not only yourself, but those who come after you, as well."

That is the way to do it, the way to respect your lama whether they are still alive or have passed away. Not complaining! If you have a lama physically at the center or not, still you need to learn and practice. In that way, nothing is different. Better to focus on that, rather than on complaining.

Also some people are complaining that there are not many young people at the center, not many new people. Give me a break! Still you need someone else to come wipe your butt, after all these years? If you are complaining about that, why don't you learn, yourself? How many students have been practicing for so many years, and still they don't know how to play the bell nicely? Still they don't know how to hold a vajra? Still they don't want to play the long horns, or the drums, or gyalings? Maybe they have been practicing for 30 or 40 years, but still they have never made one tormo or touched one offering. They think, "Not my job!" Just looking the other way! Disgusting! Some older students really shameless. Not somebody else's job! Everybody learn and practice!

More than whining and screeching like old ladies' style, looking around for somebody else to do it, learn! You have teachers and teachings, you can learn whatever you want. Learn, and then contemplate, thinking about the meaning of what you have learned. Think about it until you know it without mistake. Then meditate. But to just grumble and yowl without any study, contemplation, or meditation, that is no good. My goodness! Do you think that is some kind of benefit? I really don't want to hear that kind of talk. Makes me sick!

You do your job! What is that? Study, contemplation, meditation. Learn the dharma. Practice the dharma. What you know, you can teach to others. Do your job purely, cleanly, exactly. You want to benefit yourself? That benefits yourself. You want to benefit others? That benefits others. You want to benefit the dharma? That supports and benefits everything. Watch your own conduct and your own business and do those nicely. You don't need to go sniffing around others too much. That's not your business! Gossip and slander are not your business, either. Really, please, try not to do that—that is actually really embarrassing! I think better not to wear pants than to do that. You are embarrassed to show your dirty butt but you are not embarrassed to show your mouth all dirty with every kind of blah, blah, blah that is not your business!

Be careful not to gossip about others. Instead, everybody needs to respect each other and keep harmony. If you start doing things based on politics, then the dharma centers will be brought down. How many years have we done that kind of garbage? You are doing dharma with your dharma brothers and sisters, not fighting with enemies! You are trying to benefit sentient beings and support the buddhadharma together. Your real enemy is desire, and aversion, and ignorance. If you want to point your weapons, that is the direction. Not at each other! You are not there at the dharma center to stand up and dislike each other. You are there to stand up to the five poisons. You are there to learn.

You are not there to chase each other, and you are not there to fight with each other, either. Don't embarrass yourself that way! Don't embarrass your teachers. Don't bring shame on the doctrine.

America is slowly, slowly, getting very good with dharma. Nothing instant, push-button, but it looks like it is maybe happening. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche, and other such high lamas have come and taught and given such blessings! We can't say that we don't have any blessings to hold. We can't say the lineage holders didn't establish anything here. I don't think they were stupid!

For myself, His Holiness the Dalai Lama sent me here, even when I told him I wouldn't come. Really he and my other teachers forced me. Now it looks like maybe they were right, maybe there has been some benefit through their blessing even though I don't have any qualities. Don't make disharmony, destroying what has been built. Don't twist the dharma, destroying the lineage. We have had plenty of that. Enough to make you cry. We don't need that anymore.

What do we need? Everybody try, sincerely. Everybody practice. Everybody study. Everybody learn. Everybody support and help each other. Everybody benefit each other, not trying to gobble up each other.

It's supposed to be that real human beings treat each other that way, with respect. My goodness, not as Buddhists particularly but just as human beings; it is supposed to be that way. So everybody please try to be real human beings. Treat each other with respect and compassion, both. Without that, how can we call it a dharma center? Looks like not even a dharma edge, or dharma corner, or one hair's tip's piece of dharma. Nothing in the center, and you are just putting dharma in the corner. Not even really dharma, forget about being in the center! Don't do that way. Keep your dharma and keep your center.

They say Losar is coming soon. I don't know about that. I do know it looks like the centers are doing good, and that is wonderful, thank you. It looks like in general people are trying sincerely. That is my "Happy Losar." Everybody, please try. In the future, please continue and maintain everything. "Continue" means to continue going up, continue purifying your negativity more and more, continue making more and more virtue. Continue making your dharma flower blossom. Don't go backwards or upside down. Don't screw up yourself. Don't screw up each other.

Thank you, everybody, for trying and working so hard. Now you have everything wonderful!
Now be satisfied! Be happy with the temple! Happy with the sangha! Happy with the practice!

Tashi Delek!

-Gyatral

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