



## **A SPECIAL MESSAGE of NEW YEAR of the IRON OX 2021 from GARCHEN RINPOCHE for ALL BUDDHISTS in VIETNAM and the WORLD**

Rinpoche said Tashi Delek ... to all the Vietnamese people in the world.

I remember when I was in the country of Vietnam. The Vietnamese really understand the meaning of the dharma, and because of that, no matter how many hardships they have undergone, they have never really changed, never really stepped away from their conviction in the dharma, in the view. Even though the communist might have taken over (even though the country has gone through many wars and conflicts), they remain unwavering in their Buddhist view and conviction. I was very happy to see that and see how the Vietnamese sangha is sustaining and preserving the Buddha dharma. I've rejoiced in that.

I would like to say Tashi Delek to all the Vietnamese sangha – happy new year, lots of Tashi Delek! I'm giving you this message because I know you all trust in the precious teachings of the Buddha. Trusting in those teachings, you know that these teachings are of the greatest benefit to this world. What are the Buddhist teachings? Their purpose is to clear away, the self-cherishing mind. The way to do that is mainly through the altruistic mind, and that is really the Buddha. There is no other Buddha than that.

In brief, the essence of the Buddha is love. Every being possesses love. For example, even a tiny animal possesses some love. However much love it has, to that extent it will experience happiness. That is what I have seen in the Vietnamese sangha, and I really rejoice in that very much. Everyone has so much love.

I would like to wish you all a happy new year. In the new year, what are we supposed to do? His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the second Buddha, said that we have to look back at our past year and bring to mind all the mistakes we have made and negative things we have done, especially with a mind of jealousy and anger. All the things done with body, speech, and mind that have been mistaken and negative, we should bring them all to mind and confess them openly. For this purpose, you can also recite the Three Heaps Sutra (Confessions to 35 Buddhas). In this way according to this task, we confess with great regret all the negativities of the past year. Think, “Now, as I am transitioning from the old to new year, I confess all of these negative deeds”, and then take a commitment while thinking that many positive things were also done in the past year.

Bring to mind all the love and compassion of yourself and others in this world, the love and compassion of all the people in the world, that have arisen. Even if it is a single moment of love, even if it was just one thought of wanting to help, wanting to benefit, even that is great merit. Bring to mind all of these actions done with thoughts in mind of love and compassion – that is what we call merit. Merit is this mind of love, this altruistic mind. It is merit which will lead to temporary happiness in the higher realms and the ultimate happiness of enlightenment. And again, where does merit come from? It comes from love and then all the actions we do with body and speech that come from a mind of love. Whoever has that mind of love, whether it was myself or other beings, I rejoice in that. I rejoice in all that merit. In this way, rejoice in all the merit and all the love and goodness that was generated this year. Think that this is my commitment of the coming year.

The essence of Buddhist teachings is love. It is said that Buddhist teachings are the source of all benefit and happiness. Who was the one who was able to give rise to love where it had not yet arisen, to not let it decline where it had arisen, and to further increase love? It was the Buddha. No one else has done it to the extent the Buddha had done – so bring to mind mainly the Buddhist teachings but also all of other religions in the world, and rejoice in all the things done with a mind of love. Then looking into a new year, think “Now I have completely purified all negative actions, all defilement from the past year, and for the next year I am taking a vow – I will not do this again. I will not allow these negativities to arise within myself. I am stepping into the new year with a completely pure mind, and this new year I will do my best to only practice virtue to do beneficial things that bring about happiness with body, speech, and mind for others. I will abandon even the slightest harm towards others. I will abandon all the harm, all the subtle and coarse forms of harm. I will practice even the slightest virtue. For example, even if it means just to give a little bit of food to an animal, I will do that. Thinking this way, I am going to give up harm entirely, and I will practice the benefit of others as much as I can.” Take such a commitment for the next year; regret all the negative things done in the past, confess them, and take a commitment not to repeat them again in the next year.

That pervades wherever you go. For example, if you have one family and there is one good person in the family, then the goodness of that person pervades the entire family with happiness. But it is really the power of love that pervades them with happiness. Think “In the new year I am going to engage in excellent conduct just like that.” Make such an aspiration prayer for the new year. In the new year we try to cleanse on a physical level – for example we wash our body and put on new clothes, shoes, ornaments, jewelry, and so on – and similarly now our mind think “I will completely purify my mind, and in the new year I will only engage in positive activity.” Please think this way for the next year. For the future, for the next year, make your prayers through the deity, through the Three Jewels, especially to Tara, Achi Chokyi Drolma to increase the happiness of sentient beings and to propagate the Buddhist teachings for the sake of sentient beings.

We should recite together the World Peace Prayer for the new year and remember that our minds are together. Whoever has love, their minds are together. There is no one who is not together if they just cultivate love. In this world, everyone who possesses love, starting from the Buddha and every other being who possesses love, they become all one. This is the nature of things. It is similar with a negative mind. All those with evil intentions – like demons, demonic beings, and so on – they also unite their evil minds. All the beings who cause a lot of harm and all the troublemakers in the world also become the same. Think “I will not follow them, but I will follow goodness and benefit.” Make such a prayer for the new year. That is really the source of benefit and happiness for yourself and all others. The purpose of yourself and others are not all separate; it is one and the same. The cause of benefit and happiness for self and others is the precious bodhicitta. Think “Even at the cost of my life, I will not forsake bodhicitta.”

In the Drikung lineage, in this prayer book that His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon [Chetsang] Rinpoche has spread, there’s this prayer where we say:

- “For this purpose until I attain enlightenment, I apply my body, speech, and mind to virtue.”
  - That refers to the relative and ultimate bodhicitta as well as the practice of mahamudra. When you read that, think “This is what I am going to practice from now onward until attaining enlightenment.” Then the next line said:
- “Until death I will apply my body, speech, and mind to virtue.”
  - That refers to any virtuous activity that you engage in, such as spinning a prayer wheel. Think “I am going to practice virtue by spinning the prayer wheel as much as I can, as well as I can.” Spinning the prayer wheel is actually most important because it combines the practices of body, speech, and mind. Therefore, it is a very easy practice to do that is very profound in meaning. The third line said:
- “From now until this time tomorrow, I will apply body, speech, and mind to virtue.”
  - That refers to your commitment to engaging in practices that are shorter in duration – for example, Nyungne or Nyingne vows, one day vows, certain rituals that we do, certain retreats, a Sadhana practice, and so on – things we do for a certain time or even a certain vow. Even to just hold a single vow, please think “I will keep whichever vow it is to do as well as I can” because this is what will bring happiness in this and future lives. This is what will free you from suffering.

In this world, there is so much suffering because of karma. It is said that if karma is not created, then a result will not be encountered. There are some people in the world who experience so much suffering, and there are others who live like kings and don’t suffer at all in the midst of all of that. That’s because of the cause they have created. Remember the causes, the workings of karma, cause and effect. Therefore, we say “May all beings have happiness and the causes of happiness.” The cause of happiness is love. What’s important is not the body – the body is not so precious. It’s love that’s precious. A person’s mind is like their real person, and the body is just like a house. Think,

“Even at the cost of my life, I will not forsake bodhicitta because that is my only cause of happiness.” We say, “May beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.”

The cause of suffering is the self-cherishing mind. It is the attachment to the self and the aversion against other. Think, “I must give it up. I will give up self-grasping.” How can we give it up? We give it up when we cultivate an altruistic mind. When you care about others, you do not think about yourself. When you think about yourself, you do not think about others. That’s the cause of happiness and the cause of suffering. If you practice accordingly, then you will temporarily experience the happiness of the higher realms and ultimately attain the state of enlightenment. When you cultivate this precious bodhicitta, it begins with the people around you. You start with your family, and then you extend it to your town, your country, the entire world, and then all sentient beings in these three realms of samsara.

Make such a prayer for the new year of letting go of self-grasping and cultivating love. For the new year, think “The 37 Practices of Bodhisattvas will be my law book, my guidelines. I will follow the 37 Bodhisattva practices.” Please study them well and make a commitment to practice according to these 37 practices. I am sending you many Tashi Delek. We are all together. It is our minds that are together. We are together in the mind of love. Lots of Tashi Delek, happy new year!

---

During the new year, I have mentioned there are 2 prayers that are very important to practice:

1. The first is the World Peace Prayer.
  - All Buddhists should recite this together at the new year. It really unifies the sutras and tantras, and it is the foundation of both the 3 jewels and the 3 roots. With love as the basis, we shall recite the World Peace Prayer.
2. The second is the 7 Verses of Supplication to Tara for Protection.
  - There are actually 2 Tara prayers, one of which is a short one for the being Tara, the mother of enlightened activities of the 3 times Buddhas. And there is the 7 Verses of Supplication to Tara for Protection. You must understand the relation between the outer, inner, and secret aspects of Tara. What is her connection to the Buddha? That is really shown clearly in the 7 Verses of Supplication to Tara for Protection. It shows her inner and secret nature and how she’s connected to our mind and to us like a mother is connected to her child. Ultimately, we need to understand these aspects of Tara, the inner and the secret aspects. These aspects are actually also related to the twofold truth, the relative and ultimate truth. This supplication prayer is extremely precious. When somebody reads this prayer, often they experience a feeling of “my mind really is” and they feel they are together with Tara.

For example, if a person describes love and compassion, they should recognize this love, this compassion, this feeling – that is Tara. Also, any positive thing that you do with wisdom and mindfulness is Tara. For example, when we encounter difficulties and with wisdom, we find a method, that is Tara. This wisdom is Tara. Therefore, in this prayer, it says I supplicate to the mother goddess of mindfulness, I supplicate to the authentic mother goddess, and so on. These 7 verses are extremely precious and practiced in all Buddhist lineages without any bias. Everyone practices them. If you really understand its meaning, then you know that Tara is together with you in your mind. Her outer aspect is how she appeared in this world like a mother. Her inner aspect is your wisdom, the eyes of wisdom. In this world, her outer aspect appeared, for example, in the form of the protectress Achi and also the form of Mahakala appeared as an emanation of Chenrezig. Achi and Mahakala are connected to Chenrezig and Tara. They are emanations. Achi is an emanation of Tara and enlightened activities. This particular supplication is very short but very deep in meaning. I encourage you to practice this text in the new year.

These are the 2 main texts of prayer I would like to announce for the new year.

---

This message is for the Drikung Dharma Surya Center, which is mainly Vietnamese but also is a center where many different nationalities and ethnic groups come together: Vietnamese, Mongolians, Chinese, Americans, and so on. Many really come together, not just from different ethnic groups but also from different religions and lineages. Khenpo Samdup Rinpoche continuously engages in activities and teachings to benefit the center and others. That is really excellent. Such a sangha member, like a teacher, his body is the sangha, his speech is the dharma, and his mind is the Buddha. That is for all the sangha in the world, whoever engages in activities that bring about benefit and happiness. The seed of all happiness in this world is bodhicitta. This is the intention of the Drikung Dharma Surya Center, and therefore, I encourage you to continue to study there and have teachings and discussions group there. This has been going on uninterrupted. Khenpo has been teaching non-stop, and you've been having discussion groups. It is actually very important that you continue to do that, that the disciples continue to discuss the dharma with each other. Many Tashi Delek to all of you!

***Garchen Rinpoche's message was recorded by Khenpo Samdup Rinpoche, orally translated from Tibetan into English by Ina Bieler, and transcribed by Nicole Bui in January 2021.***

*Website: <http://drikungdharma-surya.org/>*