

## *On New Year's Nyung Ney Practice at O.D.D.*

Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche

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I think everybody has finished their Christmas parties by now. Myself, I am not a Christmas guy. I am not Santa Claus or anything. But anyway, everybody has a party, according to their tradition. You don't need to be shy or hesitate—nobody needs to say, "We are Buddhist, we don't have a Christmas party." We don't need to make people upset, or disturb them or make them angry. We don't need to be foolish ourselves that way. Just be comfortable and peaceful.

Anyway, now Christmas is finished, impermanent, whether you were comfortable or uncomfortable or uptight or constipated or whatever. Or maybe you are thinking, "Dammit! I lost my Christmas!" That's okay—no big deal. Someday you will lose everything, even your impermanent body—Christmas is just tiny.

Now it's getting to be the New Year and I heard at O.D.D. they have a tradition that on New Year's Day they do Nyung Ney [24 hour vows and practice, including fasting]. Hey! That is a wonderful Happy Losar [New Year]! That is a really wonderful tradition. More than a party, that is a real party. That is our merit party, really meaningful, more than anything. Thank you to Lama Drimed for always teaching that practice and maintaining that tradition every year.

I know you are all busy, but don't be too busy to do that practice. Lama Drimed shouldn't be too busy to lead the practice, and everybody shouldn't be too busy to come and do it, either. The rest of America doesn't care about practice, they are just busy, but hey! If you are Buddhist, you should think about your busy-ness a little bit. I don't think anybody is too busy to do the practice just for one day. In one year, to do just one day—I think we can do at least that. At least for that one day we can not waste our precious human body.

Also, if you can't come to do the practice and take the vows, don't think, "Oh, shit! Now I can't practice!" No, no. Anybody can do Chenrezig mantra, anytime. Just say your OM MANI PEME HUNG and don't have lots of doubt, just focus on Chenrezig with faith. But to come to the practice is best. Don't pretend you are busy and cheat yourself.

If you do that practice just one time, that's wonderful. So listen to the vows, read the vows, and really keep them from beginning to end. Otherwise you are again cheating yourself. Some people think Nyung Ney is sort of difficult but actually it gets easier and easier. The vows are not really heavy—mostly they are "don't be crazy!" Of course you don't eat dinner on that day—maybe some people are really going to cry over that! Especially some people who have been practicing for a long time—that's sort of embarrassing. Anyway, we won't say their names. Just tell them if they cry, then the next day we won't give them pancakes for breakfast. Then it's okay.

Anyway, every day you can run around, jumping in the ten directions with no brain, but for one day you can take the vows and keep them really nicely, sit quietly and practice and focus. That is your opportunity. There are amazing stories about the benefits of Nyung Ney. It is absolutely not just some Tibetan idea or something that somebody made up. It is a very powerful practice and really can benefit you.

When I heard you are doing that practice, that made me really happy. For me, that is the real "Happy Losar!" So everyone please, don't forget to do this practice, don't be too busy, and really focus for that one day. Thank you, everybody, for that!

Tashi Delek!

*-Gyatrul*