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DREPUNG LOSEL LING
MEDITATION AND SCIENCE CENTER



Drepung Losel Ling Meditation and Science Center, Mundgod, Karnataka, India

The Annual Examination



The abbot of the monastery overseeing a debate during the examination

On 4th August 2020, over 1200 monk students and 108 geshe of Drepung Losel Ling monastery began their annual examination with strict adherence to comprehensive Covid-19-prevention guidelines laid down by the monastery's Examination Board based upon latest WHO recommendation. The Examination Board, lead by the Abbot, ensured that all examinees follow the social distancing protocols along with the use of face masks during the examination. Every examination hall was thoroughly sanitized and the occupancy was limited to 18 monks per hall.

The annual examination assesses the students' academic studies as well as mental sharpness in Buddhist philosophical debates along with the memorization of scriptures and written compositions on Buddhist ideas.



Monks giving oral test.

The examination consisting of three tests; oral, debate, and written test will conclude on September 9th, 2020.

As a summative assessment, each student must pass their annual examination in order to enter their respective higher level of studies.



Monks debating during the examination

Monk Scholars in Thukdam Project

Two monks, Ven. Lobsang Jinpa and Ven. Tenzin Mutup of Drepung Losel Ling has been selected to participate in a collaborative research project between Russian scientists and Buddhist scholars on the phenomenon of Thukdam.

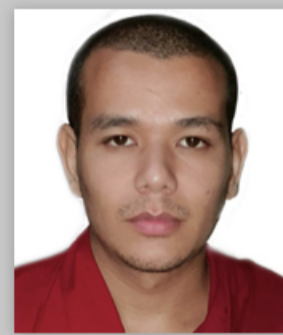
Thukdam, a combination of two Tibetan words, 'thuk' meaning mind and 'dam' meaning meditative state, is a phenomenon in which Tibetan Buddhist masters die in a consciously controlled manner as if they have entered into a deep meditative state. Though, in terms of modern medicine, they are declared clinically dead, their bodies show no sign of decomposition, putrefaction, or skin discoloration for days or sometimes for weeks.

The collaborative research project on studying or understanding the meditative state of thukdam through western scientific methods was initiated with the encouragement from His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The two monks will soon join Ven. Thupten Sherap and Ven. Tenzin Wangchuk, who have been working on the project since last year.



Ven. Lobsang Jinpa



Ven. Tenzin Mutup

Summer Retreat

A month and a half long summer retreat of Drepung began on 4th August 2020. The summer retreat also known as the rainy season retreat was established by the Buddha in the *Vinaya Sutra*. The Buddha instructed monks to stay in one place during the monsoon period to prevent the killing of insects while walking on paths.

Retreats are essential as it allows monks time for prayer, reflection, and meditation. The Tibetan word summer retreat is *yarne*- 'yar' meaning summer and 'ne' retreat. The retreat begins on the next day of the full moon day of the sixth month of the Tibetan lunar calendar. So, usually, the retreat falls in the month of July.

Yarne, at Drepung began with the *sojong* vows. *Sojong* is a practice for purifying and restoring broken vows. During the retreat, monks were instructed to limit their movement within the boundary set particularly for the retreat, and encouraged to stay indoors and do prayers and meditation. Subsequently, the monastery hosts a picnic called *gaye* at the conclusion of the summer retreat. This year's summer retreat will conclude on 17th September 2020.

"If you need to get freedom from this karmic bondage, the mental defilements and the karmic force, you have to see the things as they are. You have to see the selflessness, or the interdependent nature of all. It might be the ultimate truth or it might be the relative truth, all of these exist through interdependent nature, through interrelatedness."

~ H. E. Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche

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