

THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration from Ligmincha Institute

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For easy reading, we recommend that you print out "The Voice of Clear Light."

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"A TEA EXPERIENCE" - an excerpt from the edited transcript of oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at Ligmincha's Eighth Annual Summer Retreat in July, 2000 at Serenity Ridge.

"It is okay to learn the idea of single taste without having had that experience on your plate, or in the kitchen. It is very hard to have that single-taste experience on your plate especially in a country like this. Where I grew up, we just had Lipton Tea. It was not simply that we chose to have Lipton Tea; Lipton Tea was all we had. It was fine for us.

"What kind of tea do you want to drink?" That was my biggest confusion in the West at the beginning.

"What tea do you want?"

"It is okay, just bring anything."

"But, what kind do you want?"

"Okay, I'll have black tea."

"What kind of black tea do you want?" It really makes you work hard!

"Any kind of black tea." So many choices! So confusing. The notion of single taste - forget about it. And people are really, really picky about it - how much milk, what kind of milk, heated, not heated, skim. Amazing!

When you have all these ideas of what you want, when you are being very picky, you know the idea of "single taste" is not working for you because somebody brings you something different than what you want and it is problematic for you. It is not saying you don't have any choice and everything will be fine but it's how picky one becomes. You need something and you don't have it - how problematic that becomes in life. If you don't have something that you are used to in your life it becomes a big problem and discussion. That means there is no sense of flexibility. There is no sense of single taste. It means that grasping is very strong. So sitting in front of the master, receiving wonderful teachings, it is very easy to go into the idea of single taste. I am speaking about the ability to make the distinction between Dzogchen and Dzogchenpa. When we are speaking about these teachings, these experiences and where you can relate to them, you find it is not in the kitchen, on the plate, but maybe in your shrine room. When you are meditating you have different images. Maybe you see a cup of tea without milk and in your meditation you can accept it. No grasping and no attachment - let it come without milk; let it stay there without milk; let it liberate there also without milk! When it comes to you in an expensive coffee place where you think they are charging so much, and they are not so nice, and they bring it late, and then they bring it without milk, in that situation, of course you will not let it come like that; neither will you let it be that way; and you

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will not liberate it without milk. Understand? It is easier for you to liberate with milk than without. There is no energy to move the cup without milk!

When we are talking about these experiences, we are reflecting that you can work where these are applicable. Don't get confused by simply saying everything is flexible. If you need milk in your coffee, have milk. And ask inside, "Who is the one who always needs the milk?" That is the Dzogchen way of asking questions. Not to always say, "Who am I?" but to say, "Who wants milk?" Acknowledge that part. Acknowledge that this is what it is. That is the balance between the three kayas and this world that we live in. The harmony of this work is very important, fundamentally to harmonize the world of energy. It is very important to harmonize the world of energy in order to balance the spiritual

aspect of your self, your practice.

HIS HOLINESS LUNGTOK TENPAI NYIMA RINPOCHE'S RESPONSE TO TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GURU YOGA PRAYER.

The Voice of Clear Light recently published an interview that took place last year with the 33rd Menri Trizen, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, on the subject of guru yoga. In the course of that time with His Holiness, a number of questions were asked that had been posed by Ligmincha students on details of the guru yoga practice. Two of those answers appear below. (Translation assistance by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Jann Ronis.)

His Holiness was born in Amdo, in Tibet, in 1927 and became a monk at the age of eight. An accomplished scholar and practitioner, he was chosen in 1968 by the Protectors of Bon to be the abbot of Menri Monastery. As the spiritual head of the Bon tradition, His Holiness has been instrumental in the survival of this endangered religion. He is a wise, funny, and compassionate teacher, an able administrator, and formidable presence. His Holiness is currently planning to visit the United States this fall. More information on his teaching schedule will appear in the VOCL as it becomes available.

- Helen Gatling-Austin

VOCL: Your Holiness, a sangha member requested you to say more about what the Tibetan words "sol wa deb" mean, since they appear in many prayers.

HH: "Sol wa deb" is a request, clear and strong, not

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superficial. Here in the Guru Yoga, you are asking for the lama's blessing with a strong deep request. "Please bless me to recognize myself." [Translator Jann Ronis adds that the Tibetan language has two sets of vocabulary, one being honorific. In this case, "sol wa deb" is used by someone of lower status asking or receiving from someone above - so there is a sense of entreating or offering here.]

VOCL: In the "Chi Tsuk De Wa" guru yoga prayer we recite, there is reference to the "palace of great bliss." Can you please explain what this means?"

HH: The crown chakra is called the "great bliss chakra." It is the highest position in the body and the highest energy. By visualizing your lama there, unifying with your lama, you can abide in that blissful place, that place of high, balanced energy.

THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE ZHINE RETREAT:

"Calm Abiding: The Foundation for Dzogchen"- February 26-29, 2004, at Serenity Ridge with Gabriel Rocco.

Zhine (calm abiding) is one of the most important foundational practices of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition. For beginning practitioners, zhine strengthens the attention and develops the powers of concentration necessary to calm the mind, experience inner peace, and enter the tantric and dzogchen practices of Bon. For more experienced practitioners, zhine continues to develop the stability necessary for contemplation, the capacity to abide in the union of emptiness and clarity.

Gabriel is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He has studied and practiced with Rinpoche since 1993 and is a member of the Ligmincha Board of Directors. Gabriel received his master's degree in Contemplative Psychotherapy from Naropa University.

To attend this wonderful four-day retreat, register by February 4 for the price of \$250 or after February 4 for \$275.

Call Ligmincha to register: (434)977-6161 or e-mail: ligmincha@aol.com.

A FEW EXCERPTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ZHINE.

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In "The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep," Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche writes:

"Developing concentration is like strengthening the muscles of the body: exercise must be done regularly and frequently. To become stronger keep pushing against your limits."

In "An Open Heart," His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes:

"Developing calm abiding demands that you devote yourself to the process utterly until you master it. A calm, quiet environment is said to be essential, as is having supportive friends. You should put aside worldly preoccupations - family, business, or social involvements - and dedicate yourself exclusively to developing concentration."

In, "Turning the Mind Into An Ally," Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche writes:

"Training our mind through peaceful abiding, we can create an alliance that allows us to actually use our mind, rather than be used by it. This is a practice that anyone can do. Although it has its roots in Buddhism, it is a complement to any spiritual tradition. If we want to undo our own bewilderment and suffering and be of benefit to others and the planet, we're going to have to be responsible for learning what our own mind is and how it works, no matter what beliefs we hold. Once we see how our mind works, we see how our life works, too. That changes us."

In "Present Fresh Wakefulness," Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche writes:
"The person who grows increasingly accustomed to this practice will notice a change in character. You can say that he or she has calmed down. The effect of this practice shows itself in all the other moments in life. You can see that the person has settled and has become gentler and more relaxed. Shamatha [Zhine] practice has a lot of benefit. By calming down, you become much less involved in selfish emotions."

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In "Luminous Mind," Kalu Rinpoche writes:

"Early on, samatha practice stabilizes the mind, which is habitually agitated by its thoughts and emotions. Mind here is like the ocean during a storm; thoughts and emotions are its waves. Samatha cuts short the energy sustaining the agitation, which in this example is like the wind. When the wind stops, the ocean settles. In the absence of stimulation, the previously agitated mind calms down. Mental agitation is the source of our illusions and painful conditioning, and we must learn to let it settle. Progress in samatha introduces mind to a state of clarity, rest, and peace, which is also a blissful state."

Sources:

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. "Present Fresh Wakefulness." Compiled by Marcia Binder Schmidt and Edited with Kerry Moran. Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2002.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama. "An Open Heart: Practicing Compassion in Everyday Life." Edited by Nicholas Vreeland. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2001.

Kalu Rinpoche. "Luminous Mind." Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997.

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. "Turning The Mind Into An Ally." New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. "The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep." Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998. (Available from Ligmincha's Bookstore).

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE'S 13TH ANNUAL SUMMER RETREAT:

"The Twenty One Nails and the Bon Mother Tantra" with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, July 4 - July 24, 2004, at Serenity Ridge. Over the course of three weeks this summer, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will focus his ability to clarify profound teachings on one of the most cherished texts within the Dzogchen Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung: the Twenty One Nails. It is among the innermost secret cycles of dzogchen, directly cutting through doubts about one's natural

state of mind by tracing the nature back to its own source.

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The Twenty One Nails can be understood as the most direct possible expression of enlightenment, a Buddha's own natural condition.

Each nail describes this state from a different point of view.

The views are called `nails' or `seals' because they stabilize the experiential understanding of the natural state. For one who understands this, nothing else is needed.

These teachings are said to have come directly from the primordial Buddha, Kuntu Zangpo, passed by mind to mind transmission to eight successive Buddhas, and then transmitted orally to twenty-four human Bon lineage holders, all yogis and siddhas. It was first written down by disciples of the twenty-fourth master, Nagnzher Lopo. These teachings have been transmitted in an unbroken succession down to our teachers of the present day: Yongdzin Sangye Tenzin, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Suffice it to say, it will be a fortunate opportunity to attend this summer's retreat. In addition, Rinpoche will be presenting pith instructions on the channels, vital breath, essential spheres, and syllables from chapters of the Mother Tantra. Continuing in the same insightful way he introduced last year, Rinpoche will continue to guide our tsa lung practice to a deeper level through instructions contained in these potent tantric teachings.

The teachings and practices presented by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at this retreat are an exceptional gateway for new students to experience both the wisdom and practicality of the Bon teachings.

For those already connected to Bon, this is obviously a precious opportunity to be with Rinpoche and deepen their study and practice.

We welcome everyone to join us at Serenity Ridge this summer.

One may attend one, two, or three weeks of the summer retreat.

Week One: July 4-10, Week Two: July 11-17, Week Three: July 18-24.

The early-bird cost per week of attending the retreat is \$450, if you register by May 19, or \$500 if you register by June 9, or \$550 if you register after June 9.

Call Ligmincha Institute to register: (434)977-6161 or e-mail: ligmincha@aol.com

AUSPICIOUS DATES IN FEBRUARY:

FEBRUARY 21 IS TIBETAN NEW YEAR'S DAY. HAPPY LOSAR!

"LOSAR AND THE RAISING OF LUNG TA"

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Mark your calendars! February 21st is Losar, Tibetan New Year's Day. It will be the year 2131 on the Tibetan calendar, the year of

the wood monkey. Tenzin Rinpoche is in Nepal and will celebrate Losar with his teacher Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. There will be celebration and prayer, dance and ritual, offerings and feasts to bring in the new year.

Rather than watching an illumined ball drop or watching the hands of a clock approach midnight on New Year's Eve, folks in the Tibetan tradition are preparing for the new year with special protection and purification practices including the popular age-old ritual known as lung ta, performed early New Year's Day.

Lung ta translates as "wind-horse" symbolizing the two fastest, most powerful forms of movement of olden days. The lung ta ritual is about harnessing those energies within ourselves, feeling the strength, power and beautiful qualities of life force. In Tibet, the prayer flag is also known as lung ta. As the prayer flags wave in the wind, it is said that the prayers are sent out on the wind.

As we breathe this blessed air and feel it touch us, we receive the blessings of lung ta. So, by hanging prayer flags, as many of us do, we offer and spread the blessings of these lung ta prayers out into the universe.

At the recent medical conference in Washington, D.C., Tenzin Rinpoche described the significance of lung ta in his keynote address on healing. His few simple words about it alone raised my lung ta that evening. To me, lung ta feels like an essential, shared aliveness, both magical and real, experienced directly, beyond our concepts to describe. When we are down or sick, it is the raising of this life force that can be powerfully transforming.

As Rinpoche described, on Losar morning, everyone wakes up early preparing themselves for lung ta. You dress in your best clothes that make you feel strong and powerful, feeling the beautiful qualities and uplifting energy of lung ta. What better way to start a new year!

With heightened awareness, Tibetans offer prayer flags, hanging them in high places outdoors where they are exposed to the wind. You see them on mountain-tops, or strung from rooftops and balconies, from poles at sacred sites, such as monasteries or stupas, and of course, waving over our very own Serenity Ridge, home of Ligmincha Institute. Early Losar morning a large fire, too, burns sang chod or smoke offerings as the wind carries prayers from the newly hung prayer flags to all.

Many of you may remember our very own "Lung Ta Festival" at Serenity Ridge a few years ago, celebrating Ligmincha Institute's 10 year anniversary. During that festival, under the guidance of Mon, Oct 3, 2005 11:51 AM

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Khedup Gyatso, the nephew of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima and dear friend of Rinpoche and the sangha, we were shown how to make our

own prayer flags from wooden blocks carved with Tibetan prayers. These wood blocks are carved by monks or lamas with mantras and prayers empowered to increase one's spirit, success and luck. The colorful prayer flags blowing in the wind have many interesting details and symbols. They are made of white, green, red, blue, yellow cloths, and sewn along a cord in groups of five, symbolizing the five elements and the five Buddha Families. A windhorse with a wishfulfilling jewel on it's back is usually printed in the center with the 4 mystical animals - garuda, snow lion, dragon and tiger printed in the corners.

Each year, new flags are hung on auspicious days such as Losar and the Dalai Lama's birthday, and on days of the new moon. Lung ta remain hanging until they disintegrate.

So as we celebrate this Losar around the world, alone, or with friends, family or teachers, may we all summon and raise our lung ta for the benefit of all beings. Happy Losar!

- Aline Fisher

EDITOR'S NOTE: Prayer flags are available from Ligmincha's store for only \$8. They are printed with Bon-po prayers with a windhorse in the center! Contact Sue at the Bookstore. You can e-mail: bookstore@ligminchastore.org or call toll-free: 866-522-5269.

NYAME SHERAB GYALTSEN WAS BORN FEBRUARY 25.

A Short Background.

In 1405, the great Bonpo teacher, Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen, (1356-1415) founded Menri monastery near the site of Yeru Wensakha (a great monastery established in 1072, destroyed by floods in 1386). Later, Yungdrung Ling monastery was founded in 1834 and soon after that, Kharna monastery, both in the vicinity of Menri.

These remained the most important Bon monasteries until the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959, and following their inspiration many monasteries were established throughout Tibet, especially in Khyungpo, Kham, Amdo, Gyarong and Hor, so that by the start of the 20th century there were 330 Bonpo monasteries in Tibet.

Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen was especially venerated for his great achievements and realization. He was know as a great reformer and reinvigorated the Bonpo monastic tradition, causing many monasteries to flourish. Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen also was the first master to

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collect and hold all the transmissions and empowerments of all the Bon lineages. All of these transmissions have continued to be held by each of the successive abbots of Menri, and over time the abbot of Menri came to be regarded as the head of the Bon religion.

(Source: website for Yungdrung Bon Association in France, www.yungdrung-bon.org.)

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You can find these new items by going to Ligminchastore.org and clicking on "Search by Category" and then click on "New Items".

Or, you can go directly to: [https://www.ligminchastore.org/items.asp?](https://www.ligminchastore.org/items.asp?CategoryID=16&SubCategory=0&Submit=Search&offset=0)

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Books

Ambrosia Heart Tantra, Annotated by Dr. Yeshe Dhonden, Translated by Jhampa Kelsang.

Fundamentals of Tibetan Medicine, Men-Tsee Khang Publications.

Lectures on Tibetan Medicine, By Dr. Lobsang Dolma Khangkar.

Tibetan Buddhist Life, By Don Farber.

Translating Buddhism from Tibetan, By Joe B. Wilson.

Tapes

Awareness of the Body, Mind, Heart and Soul

Transcripts

The Second Experiential Transmission of the Zhang Zhung Nyam Gyu,

Dec. 2002, by Transmission only.

Ritual Items

Chod Drum

Conch Shell

Dadar

Kapala

Khatas

Melong

Sil-Nyen (Bonpo Flat Bell)

Ting-Sha Bells

Tsok Spoons

Jewelry

"A" Pendant

Bracelets with Bon Prayers

Gau, designed with the logo of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima

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OFFERINGS

From "Guru Yoga" by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche:

"Of all practices, the one which, through its blessings, will fulfil our aims and aspirations most rapidly is Guru Yoga (or Lama Naljor in Tibetan). Guru Yoga literally means "union with the nature of the guru" and it is both the quintessence and the ground of all the preliminary and main practices. It is the ultimate teaching, yet one which can be accomplished equally by anyone, whatever their capacity - superior, medium, or ordinary. For dispelling obstacles, making progress in our practice, and receiving blessings, there is no better practice than Guru Yoga. And it is as

a result of the blessings obtained through practicing Guru Yoga that we can progress through the main practice - the development and completion stages, or Kyerim and Dzogrim - and so on to Dzogpachenpo."

"Guru Yoga" by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Translated by Matthieu Ricard. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1999.

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