

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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Happy Losar! Tashi Delek! The Tibetan New Year begins Feb. 9 - it's the year of the Wood Bird!

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HAPPY 80TH BIRTHDAY TO YONGDZIN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE!

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Let's all join our hearts as a worldwide sangha to honor and celebrate Yongdzin Rinpoche's (Lopon's) 80th birthday this month and recite his Long Life Prayer to ensure his health and prosperity over a long lifetime! And let's direct our sincere wishes to everyone at Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal, where His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, the supreme head of the Yungdrung Bon tradition, will be presiding over this great celebration on the auspicious day of Feb. 23 - the birthday of Tonpa Shenrab. It is also the day of a full moon! Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche plans to be there along with many guests, friends and students of Yongdzin's from around the world. The celebration will extend over the course of several days before and after the 23rd. The Long Life Prayers for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche appear below.

Long Life Prayer for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

Rab jam chog chu gyal wa se che chi

Chen tse ye she ngo wo chik du pa

Zab gye shen ten pel we trin le chen

Lung tok ten pa'i nyi ma tag char shog
The omniscient wisdom of the Buddhas and
Bodhisattvas of the ten directions is condensed
in a single essence in you, Highest One.
Possessor of the enlightened activity of the profound,
expanded, increasing teachings of Tonpa Shenrab,
We pray that you, Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, shine
forever.

Long Life Prayer for Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, by His Holiness
Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima

Lob sum ten pe dag nyi dro we gon
Kun chen nyi wang nam rol gong tsel dzog
Do de ngag kyi ne lug dzog pa che
Ten pa dzin chong trin le nam par dak
Yong dzin ma we wang por sol wa deb
To the master who teaches the three trainings,
protector of all beings,
To the emanation of the omniscient Nyi Wang,
who completes the primordial intention and actualization,
Through your great perfection of the abiding nature
of sutra and tantra
You purify the activity of holding and sustaining the teachings,
To you who hold and proclaim all [teachings] we pray.

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Long Life Prayer for Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, by Yongdzin
Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

Chog sum gyal wa se che chin lab dang
Don dam lu wa me pe den tob dang
Nel jor dag gyi ting dzin nu pe thu
Ten zin kye bu'i ku tse thar chin shog
Through the blessings of the Three Jewels,
the Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas,
The strength of the ultimate unfailing truth,
And the power of the meditation of us practitioners,
Holder of the Teachings, may your lifespan be
perfectly fulfilled.

"BODHICITTA AND COMPASSION" - an edited excerpt from oral teachings
given by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, 2004.

The arising of bodhicitta within oneself depends, first of all, on
one's development of compassion. Without compassion bodhicitta
cannot come. Nowadays everyone knows this word "compassion," and it
is a very popular word used today. The way that you will truly

understand compassion, though, is first by looking deeply at your actual experience of your own suffering and miseries. Each time suffering arises look deeply at how painful the experience is and see the difficulties that it creates for you. The thought immediately arises, then, "How can I release myself from this suffering and misery?" By truly looking into your own experiences of suffering in this way, you will find that the wish to be released arises when you are eating, sleeping, talking - all the time.

You must realize your own suffering and want to be released from it. This is the basic motivation for practicing and following the teachings, because study and practice are the only method for liberation.

When you are seriously sick or in pain, you naturally long for medicines and for a doctor to make you well. You always think that way when you are sick or injured. In the same way, when we recognize our own deeper level of suffering and misery, we sincerely want to know, "How can I be released? Who can help me? What can I do? What method can I use?"

You can also think in the same way on behalf of another person, and then another person, and then another - and eventually on behalf of all who suffer in a similar way as you. You are always thinking the

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same thing, "How can I help? How can I release them?" This is real compassion. It doesn't matter if it is an enemy or a friend; you see, any being who has problems similar to yours is wishing to be released from their miseries and suffering just as you are.

Think of it in this way: If right in front of you someone were to cut another person's throat and then come to cut your throat, how would you feel at that moment? You would experience very real suffering.

But the other person, who has completely perfect senses, consciousness, everything, is able to easily kill others. That is completely the opposite of compassion. Compassion is very clear. Usually we refer to it as recognizing all beings as having been our own mother in a previous lifetime. So, you are wanting this release from suffering for all others just the same as for yourself. The true meaning of compassion is as close as our own experience. If you are able to recognize your own condition, and see that it is the same for others, that is real compassion. That is the foundation of Yungdrung Bon. Yungdrung Bon practitioners must have this compassion.

"AT HOME IN THE HEART" - an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 2004.

In the Tibetan Buddhist and Bon teachings on compassion, the idea of loving everyone as if they were your own mother is repeated many times. You see, at one point or another, throughout countless

lifetimes, everyone has been your mother. This metaphor, though, doesn't make sense for many people in the West. In my first years teaching here, when I would ask students to view everyone as their mother, people would say things like, "Oh, then that means that I won't be able to love anyone." Or they would wince and say, "You mean everyone has been like her?"

This is very sad to see. I understand that there can be many different kinds of parents - some better and some not so good. But one's own parents cannot be expected to be perfect. You would not expect yourself to be perfect, so in the same way, you cannot expect your parents to be perfect either, can you?

As your parents grow old, and when they are dying, that is the great opportunity, probably the only one, to conclude things with them.

You should! After all, they are the closest people to you biologically, aren't they? You have the opportunity to find out, "Am I able to deal with the issues that I have with them or not?"

I've seen many people go to visit their parents for a weekend to try to help them and then all they talk about afterwards is how hard it was and that their parents never change! But, don't you see, of course they never change! You never change either, do you? No one

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ever changes like that! Look, they never managed to change you working at it their entire lives! So don't even think about changing them now!

Instead, realize that you have a last opportunity here to love and spoil your parents. So, spoil your parents - but not your teenagers! [laughs] Just let your parents do whatever it is that they do; let them laugh, let them scream, let them do this and not do that. Just be there with your heart open. Whatever they want and however they want to be in their situation, let them be. What do you lose? You don't lose anything. The more you allow them to be who they are, the more you gain, not lose, because you feel your heart opening and you feel the space to let them be who they are. It's not like you are going to spend the rest of your life with them. Usually, people are talking about seeing their parents for just a weekend! So what is the big deal about giving up a weekend? Sometimes people sleep for an entire weekend! [laughter]

So when you go to visit your parents for the weekend, just allow them to be who they are. Love them as they are. When they say something, just agree with it. What's the problem with doing this? Are you running for president against them as their opponent and you need to defeat them in debate on that issue? It's just a game of words, ideas, egos. And this is not the time to exercise your ego - you have enough of that exercise outside in the world during the rest of the week. Instead, you are supposed to be helping your mother and

father who are getting old or sick, who are having fears of dying, feeling hopeless and lonely, and missing your presence. This is the real opportunity to share and to give.

So, I would like to encourage everyone to work with their parents, if there is still an opportunity. Try to change your attitude, and try to do something for them and be with them.

We have been talking during this retreat about being open, feeling this sense of openness, connecting with your essence. So when you are there with your parents, just be yourself - and let them be themselves. In being yourself, you allow the compassion to come. Recognize their needs. Recognize their age. Recognize their fear of death. Recognize their loneliness. Recognize that you are not able to be there that often. Recognize all of those things and change your attitude, rapidly. Not slowly, rapidly. Change your attitude and start working very differently with them. That would be the real sense of bodhicitta.

"COMPASSION AND DILIGENCE" - EXCERPTS FROM WRITTEN TEACHINGS BY HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA.

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From "An Open Heart," by His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

"Once we are able to combine a feeling of empathy for others with a profound understanding of the suffering they experience, we become able to generate genuine compassion for them. We must work at this continually. We can compare this process to the way in which we start a fire by rubbing two sticks together. To get to the smoldering point, we know that we must maintain a continuous friction to ratchet up the temperature to the point where the wood can catch fire. Similarly, as we work at developing mental qualities such as compassion, we must diligently apply the mental techniques necessary to bring about the desired effect. Going about this in a haphazard way is of no real benefit."

From "Live in a Better Way," by His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

"Just as we are concerned for ourselves and think about ways to remove suffering and how to actualize nirvana and liberation and the state of ultimate happiness, if we turn our thoughts upon others and concern ourselves with the welfare of other sentient beings and reflect upon the removal of their suffering, we generate altruism or the wish to actualize Enlightenment for their benefit. That motivation is bodhicitta - the determination that is needed if we want to achieve Buddhahood."

SOURCES

H.H. the Dalai Lama. "An Open Heart." Edited by Nicholas Vreeland. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2001.

H.H. the Dalai Lama. "Live in a Better Way." Compiled and edited by Renuka Singh. New York: Penguin Compass, 1999.

COME SEE SANGHA PHOTOS FROM THE FALL RETREAT NOW ON LIGMINCHA'S WEBSITE.

Happy New Year and Happy Losar to Everyone!

I am very pleased to announce that the group photos from the October retreat with Yongdzin Rinpoche have been uploaded to the Ligmincha website.

The photos are at the following link:

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http://www.ligmincha.org/html/photo_gallery.html

If you click on this link you will go to that page on the Ligmincha website and see a list of all the groups. (Or you can get to the page from the Ligmincha home page by clicking on the "Photo Gallery" link under "New Features.")

To download the image(s) to your computer, do the following:

Double-click on the group you wish to download. The photo will appear large on your screen. Go to FILE and choose SAVE AS. Save the image to a folder where you know you can find it. Double-click on the file and a prompt should ask you what program you want to use to open it. Choose whatever photo program you usually use to open and print picture files. Choose PRINT and print to your printer.

I use a Macintosh so it's always easy for me. If you have a PC and you run into a problem with the above, an alternative is:

When you choose SAVE AS, rename the file with something like "group.JPG". Sometimes PCs need the .JPG (period JPG) extension or they don't recognize the file for what it is.

If you still can't download it, contact a member of your group and ask if they can send the file to you. If you still have a problem, contact me at: riverwalker2@earthlink.net

Lots of love,

Mary Ellen

Mary Ellen McCourt

Ligmincha Institute

Communications Director

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

[Editor's Note: I recently received this e-mail from Daan Van Ophuijsen of the Netherlands. Thanks, Daan, for sharing! Others can feel free to drop me a note with their thoughts and I'll try to share them, too! Send your e-mail to me, Aline Fisher, at: jfishbon@aol.com]

From Daan Van Ophuijsen:

Thank you for your regular mailings of "The Voice of Clear Light." I

appreciate getting them very much. The last issue [January 2005]
which emphasized the best postures for meditation had good quotes and
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good information. Perhaps the following thoughts would be useful to
others as well:

Few remarks by teachers have been more inspiring to me than Tenzin
Rinpoche's words about practice - that although time seems scarce,
you can always do SOMETHING! And he emphasizes that the practice is
there for YOU - it's not that you are there for the practice!

In Lopon's words about practice, he says that we should find whatever
works for each of us! Lopon urges us to see that while married
people have marriage problems, single people have singles' problems,
so never use that excuse to postpone practice!

In short, regarding one's practice: Never postpone, never force and
never stray - whatever your posture or situation! Of course, sitting
straight is the best among postures, but doing something is nearly
always better than not practicing at all, isn't it?

- Daan Van Ophuijsen

RETREAT REMINDER

There is still space available to attend the Zhine "Dwelling in
Peace" Retreat, Feb. 24-27, 2005, with Gabriel Rocco at Serenity
Ridge.

Everyone is invited to attend this four-day retreat, an opportunity
for beginning and senior students to gather and practice zhine, or
calm abiding. 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 capability to rest in the
uncontrived natural state of the mind.

Contact Ligmincha Institute at ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

FEBRUARY LOSAR SALE AT LIGMINCHA'S BOOKSTORE

In honor of Losar, which falls on Feb. 9 of this year, we are
offering sale prices on some of our books and ritual items. You will
find these items at www.ligminchastore.org, by going to "Search by
category and subcategory," and clicking on "February Losar Sale!"

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