

THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration from Ligmincha Institute

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IN THIS ISSUE:

An interview with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Anne Carolyn Klein on their just-released book, "Unbounded Wholeness," published by Oxford University Press

"The Ten Paramitas: The Keys to Awakening" – a series focusing on the practice of each of the 10 paramitas or perfections, the means of transcending the limits of one's karmic tendencies.

"Sang Chod – An Ancient Ritual for Modern Life" by John Jackson

Upcoming Retreats

Sangha Sharing – "Postcards sent from sangha at the Stupa Consecration"

The Latest on Chamma Ling Retreat Center in Crestone, Colorado

New Items at Ligmincha's Bookstore

AN INTERVIEW WITH GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE AND ANNE CAROLYN KLEIN ON THEIR JUST-RELEASED BOOK, "UNBOUNDED WHOLENES," PUBLISHED BY OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

We are very pleased to announce the publication of the book "Unbounded Wholeness," by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Anne Carolyn Klein, Ph.D. "Unbounded Wholeness" is a translation and commentary on the unique Bon dzogchen text "Authenticity of Open Awareness." As Rinpoche and Anne Klein mention in the interview below, this text offers a distinctive perspective unifying a systematic methodology of logic with the experiential understanding of dzogchen. Because of its complex nature, the authors' translation and study of this text took 11 years to complete.

Question: Why did you choose to translate this particular text?

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: When I was growing up at Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, we studied a great deal of philosophy and logic in the dialectic school as well as the practices and experiences of dzogchen. Often there could be quite a gap between the theoretical teachings on logic and the experiential practices of dzogchen.

Sometimes the two systems did not fit very well together at all. This particular text, "Authenticity of Open Awareness," beautifully unifies the two systems by using logic to establish the authenticity of the statements of dzogchen. I love this text. I spent many hours studying it with Yongdzin Rinpoche and other scholars when I was growing up. I always thought it would be wonderful to do further work with this text. When I first came to the United States and met Anne Klein, I mentioned to her that I thought this would be a good text to translate. Anne was very enthusiastic, and we decided to work together to translate it. This text is very complex and Anne was particularly suited to translate it because of her knowledge of the theoretical and sutric aspects of Tibetan Buddhism.

Anne Klein: There were personal, contemplative, and intellectual considerations in the choice of text. First of all I had just met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche when he described this text to me, and looked forward to the opportunity to work with him and with Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. Second, I have always been interested in how different systems understand the way that the intellect interweaves with other kinds of knowing, especially contemplative knowing, in the process of meditation. I feel this is one way to get a richer picture of the way contemplative practice can serve to integrate all our human capacity for different kinds of knowing. And finally, I was fascinated by the subject matter. My first books, "Knowledge and Liberation" and "Knowing, Naming and Negation," use Geluk sutra sources to describe the ways in which the intellect is a crucial part of practice, part of the path to direct perception. This book has a different view, it is interested in the limits of the intellect while at the same time engaging it vigorously in the course of its own debates.

Question: Can you tell us a little about the translation process?

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: The translation process was quite long because this text is very complex in its logic and meaning. In some cases we had to create translations for words and concepts for which there were no accurate English equivalents. Other words and concepts needed to be compared and contrasted within the context of other tenet systems as well. This all took time. We had to change the translation again and again in order to finalize it; even so it is very difficult to say that a translation is ever final. Anne and I worked very hard, at various times spending hours, weeks and months together. I am so pleased that finally the translation is being published.

Anne Klein: Translation is a multi-tiered process. Many terms either have no exact equivalent in English or have a different semantic range — are broader or narrower in meaning — than the words they are meant to translate. So a translation never feels "complete" - you are always searching for a better turn of phrase, a more graceful rendering, one that resonates with the feeling as well as the cognitive content.

Tenzin Rinpoche and I spent nearly a year, under the auspices of a

National Endowment for the Humanities grant, completing and reviewing the first draft of the translation; his teaching on it was my real introduction to the text. Our first draft held most of the meaning, but many questions remained and much refinement was still needed. It is difficult to make word choices or appreciate the line or argument without deeply understanding the meaning, and this text has many ideas that are subtle indeed. I went on to ask many questions of Yongdzin Rinpoche; his insights and patient responses were crucial in shaping much of the commentary in the text. I also consulted Western scholars on various points, and the translation went through at least three if not four or more drafts before it became what we are publishing today. I especially enjoyed working with the poetry, exploring a balance between literal and poetic renditions. Tenzin Rinpoche was very generous in giving me space to explore this and answering my questions along the way.

Question: What distinguishes this text from other dzogchen texts?

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: Many cycles of dzogchen texts, such as the Zhang Zhung Nyam Gyu, focus almost exclusively on the experiential aspects of dzogchen; there is not much emphasis on theory, logic or interpretation. Those texts were written using symbols, metaphors, and images, and give a much more direct explanation of dzogchen. In contrast, "Authenticity of Open Awareness" uses a systematic methodology of logic. It always seeks to establish that dzogchen and the lower eight tenet systems are clearly different by using theory and logic. As I said earlier, this text has dzogchen and logic balanced well together.

Anne Klein: Ahh ... this is quite a distinctive dzogchen text. For one thing, it carefully investigates the limits of intellectual knowing, while at the same time clearly honoring the need for intellectual understanding, since this is a text filled with debate and other intellectual challenges. Unlike any other work we are aware of, it tries to incorporate a discussion of the classic Buddhist category of valid or authentic knowledge (Tib. tshad ma) into its discussion of the rig pa so famous in dzogchen. This is a very unusual crosscurrent. It's also unusual for the way it marries poetic reflection with reasoned debate. It was a breakthrough for me when I realized I needed to reflect on this as a piece of literature, not only as information about dzogchen and the Bon tradition. The poetry has a very significant role to play — in some ways its placement in the text models the relationship between intellectual and more close-to-the-bone spiritual understanding. Sometimes the debate goes back and forth, question and rebuttal, and then without actually settling the issue intellectually, a new kind of space opens and a piece of poetry simply resolves it. I think practice works like this also.

Question: Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: I would like to thank Anne Klein who did

such wonderful work on this especially complex text. I am very happy to have had this opportunity for us to work together. I am also very thankful to Anne because it was she who originally invited me to teach in this country through Rice University and since then all of my dharma activities and teachings have flourished in the United States. I also want to thank my teacher Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and all the scholars and monks who were available each time we needed additional clarification or explanation. I hope that this book will bring a great deal of benefit to those who read it. It is my wish that it will help them to develop knowledge, understanding, experience, and become an important cause and part of their liberation.

Anne Klein: I'd add that the particularly colorful colophon to the text harkens back to the 8th century and Bon's struggles as well as triumphs at that time. Therefore the book includes two chapters of discussion of Bon history, these follow five chapters exploring the philosophical. Historically as well as philosophically, there is a search for authenticity. What really happened? What can really be known? These are profound and excellent questions, and the book, and all the teachings we received which support our understanding of the book, suggest that such questions can only be fully opened in a state of unbounded wholeness, a realization that includes all perspectives and is bound by none.

"Unbounded Wholeness: Bon Dzogchen and the Logic of the Nonconceptual" by Anne Carolyn Klein and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is available from Ligmincha's Bookstore. 384 pages, \$25. Please visit: www.ligminchastore.org

"THE TEN PARAMITAS: THE KEYS TO AWAKENING" – a series focusing on the practice of each of the 10 paramitas or perfections, the means of transcending the limits of one's karmic tendencies.

Fully mastering these 10 virtues may take many lifetimes, but even the act of turning one's awareness toward practicing them can have a transformative effect on one's attitude and on one's relations with others.

The Ten Perfections or Ten Paramitas

Generosity - jin pa (sbyin pa)

Moral discipline or ethical behavior - tsul trim
(tshul khrims)

Patience - zo pa (bzod pa)

Diligence or vigor - ton dru (btson 'grus)

Meditation or concentration - sam ten (bsam gtan)

Strength, power, or capacity - tob (stobs)

Compassion - nying je (snying rje)

Aspiration - mon lam (smon lam)

Skillful means/dedication - ngo wa (bsngo ba)

Wisdom - she rab (shes rab)

“PATIENCE” - An edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, the abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal, November 2005:

The third paramita is patience, which is very important for every practice. It doesn't just mean that you have to be patient with your enemy who may very well be about to hit you, although that is also important. He may actually hit you, and it may hurt right then, but by not hitting back, great benefit will come later. If you do hit back, then more and more anger results. But if you stay patient, then although he may hit you several times, he cannot carry on endlessly. After a while of developing the perfection of patience, you will find great joy in maintaining this quality.

Most important is your patience toward any kind of meditation practice, because great patience is needed for practice to be successful. If we feel our practice is boring, or that it is not developing, then we need to work through this kind of feeling. It is not necessary to give up so early or to complain. Keep doing practice patiently and things will develop slowly, slowly.

There is also a kind of patience involved with our losing our fear of emptiness. Sometimes when we speak of emptiness, or sometimes when we keep to our meditation in the natural state, then fear may arise. We have a feeling that something is wrong. “Am I doing this correctly or not? Maybe if I keep doing this ...” We can become frightened for a variety of reasons. So you must be brave and be patient about this. There is also a patience that allows for your facing any kind of suffering. While helping others, it lets you feel ready to face any kind of suffering in yourself in order to develop a successful practice. You are ready to face temporary minor suffering. If we are going to a solitary place for a personal retreat, usually we will have worries about this or that, and in fact all of these worries are fears that one has to have patience for, and be ready to face. “Whatever the circumstances, I am determined to do this practice.” This is patience. So, for any kind of practice you do, patience is absolutely necessary.

EXCERPTS ON PATIENCE FROM THE WRITINGS OF BUDDHIST MASTERS

From “Luminous Mind” by Kalu Rinpoche:

Patience is the ability to endure, through faith, compassion, or understanding emptiness, all the suffering and misfortunes we might encounter, whatever their cause. These might be inflicted on us directly or indirectly, by beings who err because of dualistic illusory appearances, by ignorant beings bound by the notion of ego, by our own minds overpowered by afflictions, or by interruptions or obstacles opposing our Dharma practice.

From “The Essence of Buddhism” by Traleg Kyabgon:

The next paramita is patience (kshanti), which is seen as the antidote to anger, frustration, resentment, hostility, and the like. An impatient mind becomes a victim of these emotions. As Shantideva says in the *Boddhisattvacharyavatara*: “When one adopts an attitude tinged with the sting of malevolence, the mind does not experience peace. Since one does not find joy and happiness, one becomes sleepless and restless.” If there is hatred in the mind so that it is dominated by feelings of resentment and anger, then it becomes restless, and as Shantideva says, we cannot even sleep properly.

From “A Flash of Lightning in the Dark of Night” by His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

As a destructive force there is nothing as strong as anger. An instant of anger can destroy all the positive actions accumulated over thousands of kalpas through the practice of generosity, making offerings to the buddhas, keeping discipline, and so on. Indeed, there is no fault as serious as anger.

Patience, on the other hand, as a discipline that neutralizes and prevents us from succumbing to anger, is unrivaled. Through it, the suffering we endure from the heat of the negative emotions is relieved. It is therefore of the utmost importance that we resolve to practice patience, gaining inspiration through reflecting on its advantages and on the terrible effects of anger.

From “The Heart of the Buddha” by Chogyam Trungpa:

The paramita of patience is the willingness to work with our own emotions through the practice of meditation. This in turn allows us to begin to work peacefully with others. Usually we don’t want to work with aggressive people because we feel they will not give us an easy time. They are a threat to our unbodhisattvalike mentality of looking for pleasure and security. And when we encounter somebody who wrongs us, we harbor tremendous resentment and refuse to forgive him. Our tendency is always to view such aggressive people, rather than our attitude of holding back, as the problem. But the paramita of patience means not returning threats, anger, attacks, or insults.

From “The Infinite Life” by Robert Thurman:

The more you master the practice of patience, the more you will be able to live under its protection in your daily life. The better protected you are by it, protected primarily from your true inner enemy of anger, the more powerfully you will be able to perform selfless and heroic deeds for the sake of yours and others’ ongoing positive evolution.

SOURCES:

Kalu Rinpoche. “Luminous Mind.” Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997.
Traleg Kyabgon. “The Essence of Buddhism.” Boston: Shambhala

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"SANG CHOD – AN ANCIENT RITUAL FOR MODERN LIFE"

By John Jackson

Sang (Tibetan: smoke offering) – The ritual practice of burning fragrant cedar boughs as an offering to the buddhas, bodhisattvas, lineage protectors and nature spirits in order to remove obstacles and increase life force.

If you talk to an anthropologist about the practice and origins of Sang Chod you will learn that rituals of making smoke offerings to nature spirits are common in many cultures around the world. It is easy to understand the human desire to relate to the forces of nature and offer something in return for the blessings we receive from our environment. Even easier to comprehend is the desire to placate the forces of nature so that we may more readily go about our ordinary activities. While we may feel more insulated from nature in our modern times than did our forefathers who lived by the plow and herd, recent storms and natural disasters drive home our continuing interdependence with nature. Natural forces can be incredibly powerful and overwhelming, dwarfing human activities and accomplishments. Simply becoming aware of their vast potential can change our perspective of our role in the world, and can open the door to relating to nature in a more respectful and reflective way.

Most indigenous cultures accept that the natural world is alive with many forms of spirits. Nature spirits are said to inhabit mountains, streams, trees, rocks, plants, and even the earth that we till. Some spirits guard power places, such as a holy pilgrimage site; others might exist as the overarching spirit of a plant or animal; while others may simply inhabit the greater environment. Each spirit has a personality, and just like humans, will vary in habits and tendencies. Some may be very helpful, while others can be quite irritated by human activities. It is traditionally believed in many cultures that one can unwittingly incur the wrath of nature spirits by polluting a stream, disturbing the earth, wantonly cutting trees, or performing other, similarly disrespectful activities. In many ways these beliefs have provided a way for humans to remain in harmony with their natural surroundings, never going so far as to destroy the delicate balance of the world in which they live.

At its surface, the Tibetan practice of Sang Chod is about making offerings to the spirits of nature as a way to stay in their good graces, so that our transgressions do not lead to the accidents,

illnesses, or other misfortunes that spirits can cause. It can be seen as a great feast given in thanks, for within the clouds of smoke the practitioner visualizes all that would be attractive to the spirits. The ritual can also be performed in advance of important business or travel, smoothing the way for success and increased prosperity, for if the local spirits are happy they will see that we too enjoy the bounties of nature.

As we look more deeply at the practice of Sang Chod, we can find that beyond its harmonizing aspects, it also has elements of Tibetan tantra and dzogchen meditation, allowing the practitioner to work at multiple levels of inner development. During the ritual, through the power of meditation the practitioner sees gathered round him or her all the buddhas, bodhisattvas and lineage protectors, as well as all the spirits of nature. Then, through the power of visualization, intent and mantra, the practitioner transforms the offerings of cedar and smoke into vast clouds of precious substances, everything that would please the deities and spirits. This process of transformation opens the awareness to other realms of experience, and develops a direct connection to the unseen worlds. As the practitioner comes to experience the deepest levels of the ritual meditation, it is realized that the most precious offering to the enlightened beings is our direct awareness of the nature of reality. Through the power of the ritual we not only cleanse and purify our natural surroundings, but also our discursive thoughts that cloud our own true nature. Sang Chod is truly an integrative practice that helps us connect to the world we live in as well as to our own hidden, secret essence.

Sang Chod practices can be found in all five Tibetan lineages, but most scholars agree that the ritual is derived from Bon, the indigenous tradition of Tibet, for it is clearly described in the funeral practices of the ancient pre-Buddhist Tibetan kings. The title of the Bon text clarifies the purpose and intent: bSang gi dig gtSang sngon 'gro'l rim pa bshugs, The Preliminary Stages for Cleansing and Purifying by Means of Fumigation. This ritual is commonly performed each morning by Tibetan lay practitioners, and is their principle way of relating to spiritual practice and the environment. Customarily there are special times that call for the ritual, including the beginning of each lunar month, before setting out on a trip, and the first and third day of a new year. In general, the ritual is traditionally performed to encourage the uplifting and revitalization of the practitioner as well as to dissolve obstructions and pacify any spirits that might cause difficulty.

The age-old ritual of Sang Chod operates on many levels, only a few of which have been touched upon here. At first the ritual steps may seem complex, but as with all sacred ritual, the outer form is designed to help one connect with an inner experience that may not otherwise be attainable. Given time and practice, ritual becomes a support and

guide to inner experience. With the guidance of an experienced teacher, Sang Chod can open a path to new levels of awareness, appreciation and integration.

For those interested in the how the ritual is actually performed, here is a brief description of Sang Chod:

The ritual begins with the collection of cedar boughs and other fragrant offerings, done with a clear, quiet mind that respectfully regards each contributing tree and plant. A special golden liquor offering is prepared by placing a piece of gold in beer or wine, which then absorbs the energetic qualities of the precious mineral. A fire is built, traditionally in a structure known as a sang khang, which looks like a small, hollow stupa (Buddhist shrine) with its top serving as a chimney. If a sang khang is not available the fire can be made in another vessel or on the ground in any clear, open space. The fire is allowed to die down to embers, so that later during the main practice, the boughs may be placed on the embers to produce abundant clouds of smoke. The liturgy begins as the offerings are first consecrated and purified through sprinkling with water and fumigation with incense.

Then a series of prayers are recited that consecrate and purify the practitioner by cultivating compassion for all beings, taking refuge in the sources of enlightenment, and confessing wrong acts, views and thoughts. Once both offerings and practitioner are prepared, the boundaries of the ritual space are secured through visualization and mantra. Then all of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, protectors of the lineage, and spirits of nature are invited into the ritual space through the power of intention and visualization. This concludes the preliminary preparations that enable the practitioner to connect with the deepest levels of awareness and the spirits of nature.

The main practice begins through the tantric method of generating through visualization a mandala of deities within the fire. These energetic forms represent qualities of our own enlightened mind, the potential that lies within us, the potential that can communicate with beings in all levels of reality. From the hearts of the fire deities emanate the seed syllables of the natural elements, RAM, YANG and MANG, which touch the offerings gathered around the fire and transform them into incredible gifts that will please all the enlightened beings, the protectors of the lineage and the nature spirits to whom we owe debts, as well as those spirits who are the objects of our compassion. In this type of ritual one generally makes offerings first to the highest guests, the enlightened beings that are our inspiration and guides; then one progressively makes offerings to beings who have lesser levels of awareness, concluding with those who can be difficult and troublesome. Each of these different guests has different values and needs and requires different offerings. To the enlightened beings the practitioner offers his or her own primordial awareness, clear of

discursive thoughts, the highest attainment of meditation practice. To the lower guests the delights of body, speech and mind are visualized and offered. These visualized offerings are actualized by offering the cedar into the fire, along with the golden liquor; and the fire deities within the mandala are seen carrying the offerings to each and every one of the guests, from the highest buddha to the most noxious nature spirit. A lengthy liturgy is recited to invoke each of the guests, and each is beseeched to please accept the visualized offerings and to engage only in peaceful activities and be great friends of virtue. Each different class of nature spirit is invoked - those of mountains, streams, lakes, trees and stones - and to each of them sumptuous offerings are made such that the spirits will be happy and satisfied and undisturbed by our activities.

The ritual is traditionally concluded as everyone present takes a handful of tsampa (roasted barley, the staple food of Tibet) and gathers in a circle around the fire. The group slowly sings the syllable SO, gradually raising the pitch as the tsampa is raised to the sky. Repeating this three times, the group then shouts KI KI SO SO LHA JA LO! ("Victory to the Gods!") and throws the tsampa into the air with shouts and joyful laughter. This final culmination is said to encourage and increase all that is good and virtuous.

John Jackson has studied in Tibetan monasteries in India and Nepal and practiced meditation for 25 years. For more than 10 of those years he has studied with great masters of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition, including Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

UPCOMING RETREATS

APRIL 19-23, 2006

“SANG CHOD - CULTIVATING LIFE FORCE, PERSONAL POWER, FORTUNE AND SOUL”

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at Serenity Ridge

Retreat cost: (includes all meals; on-site housing is available)

\$450 if received by April 6

\$500 if received after April 6

For further information see the Ligmincha website:

www.ligmincha.org/program/sr_teachings/06_sangchod.html

To register please contact Ligmincha Institute at: ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

June 16–18, 2006

SIX LOKAS PRACTICE RETREAT

Dissolving the Obstacles to Enlightenment

At one time or another each of us suffers strong emotions that throw us off balance, cause us to act in ways we later regret, and make us lose touch with our true nature. Centuries ago the masters of the Bon lineage developed the meditations of the Six Lokas specifically to purify the disturbing emotions and help us live our lives in a more

balanced and relaxed way.

These meditations focus on the root causes of our suffering: anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride and laziness. Through each meditation we examine our habitual patterns so that we may recognize them and then purify and transform them. The practices have a deep healing and transformative power, and are traditionally practiced in retreat as a preliminary to dzogchen contemplation.

This practice retreat is an opportunity to develop clear visualization, energize mantra practice, enjoy the support of sangha, dissolve emotional limitations, and simply and clearly be.

JOHN JACKSON has studied in Tibetan monasteries in India and Nepal and practiced meditation for 25 years. For more than 10 of those years he has studied with great masters of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition.

Note: This retreat is open only to those who have received the transmission of the Six Lokas practice.

Retreat cost (includes meals): \$150

To register please contact Ligmincha Institute at: ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

JULY 2-22, 2006

14TH ANNUAL SUMMER RETREAT: "TUMMO – INNER FIRE OF REALIZATION," with GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE AT SERENITY RIDGE

At this year's annual summer retreat Rinpoche will instruct and guide us in the practice of tummo (generating the inner heat) to burn away subtle obscurations and cultivate bliss. He will also teach meditation practices for retrieving healing essences from nature and the elements, which will include light fasting combined with herbal drinks to purify and rejuvenate the body and enhance meditative experience. We will engage the mind and speech with prayer, healing sounds, mantra and visualization; and we will incorporate the potent body movements of Tsa Lung, Trul Khor and prostrations. Rinpoche is happy to announce that both Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe will join him at the retreat to help lead these practices.

It is Tenzin Rinpoche's sincere wish that through the intensive study and practice opportunity offered during this year's summer retreat, each student will find his or her own door to a life that is more physically healthy, energetically vital and spiritually fulfilling.

As always, you may come for one, two or all three weeks of the summer retreat. If you are new to Serenity Ridge, or able to come for only one week, Rinpoche recommends that you come to the first week, when an indepth explanation of the practices will be offered. Of course all are welcome no matter which week they attend. Each week is designed to be a complete series of teachings, and a direct and powerful healing experience with aspects of all of the practices presented each week.

Week One: July 2-8 / Week Two: July 9-15 / Week Three: July 16-22

Retreat cost PER WEEK (includes meals):

\$450 received by May 21; \$500 received by June 15; \$550 received after June 15

Note: Those who participate in the summer work retreat will receive a 50% discount on one week of the summer retreat.

To register please contact Ligmincha Institute at: ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

JUNE 27-JULY 1, 2006

SERENITY RIDGE SUMMER WORK RETREAT

This is a wonderful time to share with sangha and to be of joyful service.

Our work retreat includes vigorous work periods, daily meditation practice, and ample time for a swim in the pool or a walk along the Rockfish River. The work retreat is free of charge, and participants are provided with free tenting and meals.

For those who participate in the entire work retreat there will be a 50% discount on one week of the summer retreat.

AUGUST 16-20, 2006

“SHERAB CHAMMA – THE WISDOM LOVING MOTHER OF THE BON TRADITION”

with Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe

The tantric cycle of Sherab Chamma (Wisdom Loving Mother) is one of the most important in Bon. The practice of Sherab Chamma helps us to deeply connect with the healing radiance of love and compassion and with the innate wisdom through which all obstacles are cleared.

Sherab Chamma has been a main practice of Geshe Nyima Kunchap for many years. He and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe will present teachings on Sherab Chamma and her eight primary aspects, which manifest in order to heal the eight forms of fear.

During this retreat we will learn about the power of Sherab Chamma to dispel obstacles. We will also learn how to prepare the tormas (dough offerings) that represent Sherab Chamma and her retinue, and how to perform the mudras (symbolic hand gestures) of the main outer offerings of flower, incense, light, water and food.

Retreat cost (includes meals):

\$350 if received by July 5; \$375 if received by July 25; \$400 if received after July 25

To register please contact Ligmincha Institute at: ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

SANGHA SHARING – “Postcards sent from sangha at the Stupa consecration”

Last month, The Voice of Clear Light asked sangha members who attended the stupa consecration ceremony in Torreon, Mexico, to send us a postcard sharing something about their observations, feelings, or other experiences on that auspicious day, Feb. 12, 2006, when the first Bon Stupa built in the Americas was consecrated. We thank all of you for

your contributions and for the wonderful translating done by Lourdes Hinojosa!

You can see an image of the Stupa at www.ligmincha.org; follow the "Picture Gallery" link to see many more images from the consecration ceremony.

Here are a few glowing "love letters" from our Mexican sangha (more sharings to come in future issues):

"It is such a deep and great joy, that it is hard for me to put it into words. It has been a unique experience in this lifetime, and probably in other lifetimes as well. The seeds have been planted in us. The power of the stupa is being manifested. And it is perceived in our deepest essence with an intense and sincere joy, a peace and harmony, that unceasingly touches our surroundings.

I'm so happy to perceive and share in the joy of so many people who are first making contact with the Bon Buddhist teachings, and especially with the stupa. I feel totally grateful to our teachers, our sangha brothers and sisters, my family and friends, and to life for giving me the opportunity to participate in this path. A sincere hug from the depths of my heart to each and every one who has manifested in my life."

In Bon,
Ma. Del Pilar Revuelta
Torreon, Mexico

The stupa consecration in Torreon was an extraordinary event for a Bonpo practitioner such as myself.

There is something I'd like to tell you about that deeply moved me - it was the energy that the sangha from Torreon (La Laguna) emanated on the day of the consecration. This was the result of their splendid organization throughout all the events, which all took place successfully. In my homeland they would say, "They threw the house out of the window," because not a single detail was missing!

Among the things that left a trace in my heart was the warmth and welcome that all of us who participated in the ceremony received. To me that sangha is an example of what is called the third jewel.

During the consecration, I was able to observe and feel the actualization of the four immeasurables in the attitude of the sangha from Torreon. In each and every one of the ceremonies held during the process of the stupa's construction, they always made me feel a part of the sangha; they opened their arms and hearts to me; they encouraged me to be a part of them, allowing me to work alongside them during the days of my stay; I was shoulder to shoulder with the rest of the group, as a member.

It was in the generosity of Carlos and Gaby and the whole sangha that I found the manifestation of Bon's magic in those who are practitioners. And all that I have experienced has reminded me of Khenpo Tenpa

Yungdrung, who has said that to attend this kind of event brings many blessings.

This has proven to be true in all the wonderful experiences that manifested during all these events. Above all, I have found it true in the personal experiences that are manifesting continuously in my daily life. Having had the chance to attend all of the events, having shared so much with a strong sangha, and having been close to our wonderful teachers, all have given me great energy to strengthen my meditation practice. This has for me been really magical and wonderful and has given me great bliss. The bliss is such that even now, when my mother is dying of terminal cancer, the sadness cannot extinguish the joy that remains in my heart, rather it is this joy that pacifies the pain of seeing my mother vanishing.

Thanks to all the enlightened beings who were present, thanks to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, to Geshe Nyima, Geshe Tenzin, Geshe la, and Jorge Rene, for being there. Without them so many wonders would not have been possible. I prostrate before them. Thanks to Carlos, Gaby and the Lagunera sangha from the Torreon area for all they shared and their generous way to do so. I "take off my hat" to them.

Balbina Rey

Mexico City

THE LATEST ON CHAMMA LING RETREAT CENTER IN CRESTONE, COLORADO

It has been Rinpoche's dream to have a solitary retreat center where practitioners can dive deeply into their practices for weeks, months or even years. I am glad to announce that the Chamma Ling Retreat Center in Crestone, Colorado, is manifesting that dream and is now accepting applications for personal retreats. This manifestation would not have been possible without the ceaseless effort of the Chamma Ling Council, volunteers, generous benefactors and the blessings of Tenzin Rinpoche.

We plan to open for retreats beginning May 22, after several years of preparation, design and construction. And we believe it has been well worth all the effort. We will have three private cabins designed for one person each, and they can be used for either dark or other types of retreats. The cabins have four windows that can be sealed for dark retreat, or left uncovered to reveal the beautiful mountain scenery. We will have a caretaker who can assist people in retreat in any way needed, including preparing meals for dark retreat or bringing in supplies periodically for other closed retreats. We have complete information

about the cabins, rates, services, and application process on our Website at:

<http://www.chammaling.org>

Please take some time to look in the photo gallery section to see what the area and the cabins are like, then imagine yourself there dissolving into the vast expanse of the sky.

Applications for retreat include a brief practice biography and a description of your retreat plan, including how you plan to spend your time practicing each day. Application forms will be found on our Website, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche reviews each application personally and sometimes makes recommendations for specific practices.

We hope to see you soon!

John Jackson

Chamma Ling director

NEW ITEMS AT LIGMINCHA'S BOOKSTORE

To see photographs of the newest items at Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore and for order information, please go to www.ligminchastore.org and click on "search by category or description" and then click on "New items." Or, go directly to:

<http://www.ligminchastore.org/items.asp?CategoryID=16&SubCategory=0&Submit=Search>

BOOKS

"Unbounded Wholeness: Bon Dzogchen and the Logic of the Nonconceptual"

by Anne Carolyn Klein and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

The long awaited study and translation of "Authenticity of Open Awareness," a foundational text of the Bon Dzogchen tradition. It includes an extensive commentary and explanatory material.

Paperback, 384 pages

Price: \$25

"Spirit-Mediums, Sacred Mountains and Related Bon Textual Traditions in Upper Tibet: Calling Down the Gods"

by John Vincent Bellezza

Hardcover: 568 pages

Price: \$227

John Vincent Bellezza, Visiting Scholar, University of Virginia, has spent over two decades researching the cultural history of the Great Western Himalaya and Upper Tibet. He is the author of several books and numerous articles on indigenous aspects of Tibetan culture, including "Divine Dyads: Ancient Civilization in Tibet" (LTWA, 1997).

Book review from the publisher, Brill:

This book uniquely provides first-hand insights into the spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet, the men and women who channel the gods. John Vincent Bellezza presents the conclusions of his extensive research in the region itself, shedding light on the historical context, the tradition, characteristics, ceremonies, and paraphernalia of the phenomenon. With extensive interviews with spirit-mediums, including interpretive material drawn from Tibetan texts; annotated translations of rituals devoted to the major deities of the spirit-mediums; and annotated translation of Bon literature relevant to the origins of spiritmediums,

and concluding with a chapter on Bon literary references to the ritual implements and practices.

“Manual of Standard Tibetan: Language and Civilization” by Nicolas Tournadre and Sangda Dorje.

This comprehensive textbook is used in the University of Virginia summer language intensive program.

Oversized paperback, 562 pages plus two CDs

Price: \$80

“A Tibetan Verb Lexicon: Verbs, Classes and Syntactic Frames” by Paul G. Hackett.

The entries contain Tibetan verbs with their English meanings, Sanskrit equivalents, complete sentences, and related sentence structure information.

Paperback, 209 pages.

Price: \$29.95

TRANSCRIPT

“The First Experiential Transmission from the Chag Tri: The Ngondro” by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche.

Exceptional teachings from an exceptional teacher. These teachings were given at Serenity Ridge, Nelson County, Va., Nov. 20-23, 2003.

Softcover, 83 pages

Price: \$16

DVDs - produced for the Zhang-Bod Documentation Center, Menri Bon Monastery, Dolanji, India

1) The Visit of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, the 33rd Menri Trizen, to Amdo, Tibet, Summer, 2004

Edited and produced by Geshe Samdup Lama

Time: 29 minutes.

Price \$30

2) Khalong: The Summer Ritual of Menri Monastery

Edited and produced by the monks of Menri Bon Monastery

This was an "Official Selection" in the 18th annual Dallas Video Festival, 2005

Time: 11 minutes

Price \$25