

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."

A printable PDF version of this month's edition of VOCL, in readerfriendly newsletter format complete with color photographs, will be available online after June 10. Please check the link for VOCL on Ligmincha Institute's home page at www.ligmincha.org. You can also access an archive of previous issues at:

<http://ligmincha.org/study/vocl.html>

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"THE GIFT OF FULLY GIVING" - an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 2005.

Often when I hear people in the West talk about giving and generosity, they'll speak of the virtue of giving. But many, many people also speak of feeling this sense that, "I have been giving so much in my life to everybody: I have been giving to my family; I have been giving to my kids; I have been giving to my friends; I have been giving and giving and giving. I am tired of giving. And, oh, people don't appreciate what I am giving them. I give too much. I am totally exhausted by giving and of taking care of others."

I have compassion for those who feel that way. However, I am not sure they are seeing clearly all aspects of their problem. You see, everyone has their own unique story about their exhaustion with giving, but people tend to translate their personal stories into the general idea that "Giving is not always good." The issue is not that there is something generally wrong with giving. Giving is always a good thing! Rather, the problem is that you may have personal experiences with giving that are not always good.

So, you have to be careful about how you engage yourself in giving to others. If what you're doing is truly giving, it will never be a problem, never. One experiences no exhaustion in doing that. The exhaustion comes with one's resistance to giving, and one's resistance to the giving is not the giving itself. Is that clear? How could

anyone truly give while at the same time feel resistance to giving? “I don’t really feel love for you, but I love you!” Or, “I really don’t want to help you, but I suppose I will help you now, because who else is going to take care of you here in this moment?” Those actions are not ones of real giving; those responses are related to conditioning, to roles, responsibilities, legalities, philosophies, religious morals – whatever it is in your mind that is telling you to respond in that way. You are not genuinely giving – you are doing it “because” of something. Those responses would not be called real gifts.

Clearly you can sense the moments when you have that kind of resistance. I sometimes feel it myself: when one has been giving, giving, giving, giving, and someone asks for more, one just gives, and can only hope they don’t ask too much.

When you feel that resistance in the giving, that effort of resisting, that’s when you begin to feel exhausted. But in real giving - it is always so joyful to give. So you see, it’s never an issue with the giving itself, but rather with the resistance you have toward giving. Making that distinction is very important, so you won’t accidentally mistake one of the ten paramitas as being “The Perfection of Resistance Giving” or “The Suffering of Giving.”

So, when you are feeling this resistance, you should not put yourself in the position of “giver,” because with that feeling you cannot truly give. Do you know what I’m saying? If you go somewhere with an intention to help, then completely help. If you are not able to have that intention to help, don’t go. That’s logical, right? But, to go there and not be able to truly give creates in you an inner conflict. “I’m here to help, but I don’t want to help.” So, when you do put yourself in the position of being a giver, then give, okay? That’s a great practice.

“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.

This series was inspired by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung’s beautiful and concise heart advice on the 10 paramitas that he gave one day during a ngondro retreat at Serenity Ridge, November 2005.

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)

“THE PERFECTION OF MEDITATION OR CONCENTRATION” - an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, the abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery, Nepal:

The fifth paramita is sam ten, which is meditation or concentration.

It is important for any practice we do to have concentration and focus.

If not, we cannot accomplish anything, even maintaining our awareness during a normal walk. We develop this focus of attention with practices of meditation. Concentration strengthens all your practices.

To practice generosity or moral discipline you need to focus. In guru yoga or refuge, we need good concentration. And, of course for dzogchen you need good concentration.

There are many classifications of concentration, among them shamatha and vipassana; these all develop the potential of a focused and unmoving mind.

Excerpts from Buddhist writings on the practice of the fifth perfection, “Meditation”:

From “No Time to Lose” by Pema Chodron:

The stability of the mind is like a candle flame that at this point is very vulnerable. Solitude is like a glass chimney that keeps it from blowing out in the wind. When the flame is stable, we can take the cover off. The wind is no longer a threat; now, in fact, it will make the flame burn like a bonfire...

In order to work with difficult outer circumstances, we need to gather our inner strength. If even ten or twenty minutes of meditation a day helps us to do this, let's go for it!

Making good use of our limited time – the limited time from birth until death, as well as our limited time each day – is the key to developing inner steadiness and calm.

One of the most inspiring stories I've heard in this regard concerns Dzigar Kongtrul's grandmother. Her life was extremely demanding. But even though she worked hard from early morning until late at night, she became a highly realized person by practicing in the gaps. Whenever she wasn't talking to somebody, she would relax her mind and be present. Whether she was milking cows, washing dishes, or walking from here to there, she used any opportunity to settle and expand her mind. With every pause, she found outer solitude and thus discovered an inner solitude that was unshakable and profound.”

From “Indestructible Truth” by Reginald Ray:

Instead of meditating in order to benefit oneself, to create psychological comfort or protection, or to gain some other such end, now one's primary inspiration for practice is the benefit of others. The bodhisattva will notice that when he has a wandering mind, he is constantly being distracted from situations and from other beings, and is incapable of practicing the other four relative paramitas. He is instead agitated, confused, and led astray by his own discursive thinking.

Through the paramita of meditation, one trains again and again in bringing one's attention back to the breath, acknowledging and then letting go of thoughts when they arise, learning to be more and more fully present to one's object of mindfulness. This mindfulness practice, "on the meditation cushion," so to speak, is then easily and naturally transferred to one's ordinary life. When with others, particularly in difficult situations that one would rather avoid, one brings oneself back again and again. It is precisely when one is fully present to the situation that one can see its possibilities and can then engage the paramitas of generosity, discipline, patience, and exertion.

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

The process by which we transform our more instinctual attitude to life, that state of mind which seeks only to satisfy desire and avoid discomforts, is what we mean when we use the word meditation. We tend to be controlled by our mind, following it along its self-centered path. Meditation is the process whereby we gain control over the mind and guide it in a more virtuous direction. Meditation may be thought of as a technique by which we diminish the force of old thought habits and develop new ones. We thereby protect ourselves from engaging in actions of mind, word, or deed that lead to our suffering. Such meditation is to be used extensively in our spiritual practice.

From "Luminous Mind" by Kalu Rinpoche:

Meditation practice, according to the literal meaning of the Tibetan term, is "mental stabilization." In order to develop a stable mind, it is necessary to begin by abandoning attachment to sense objects and distracting activities. To do this, we enter into retreat, restraining our desires and learning to be satisfied with what we have. We sit down in the meditation posture and observe perfect silence; this way the mind can learn to abide in single-pointed concentration, whether on lucid emptiness, absence of fixation, the coming and going of the breath, contemplation of an aspect of Buddha, seed syllables, points of light, or other objects of meditation.

From "The Heart of the Buddha" by Chogyam Trungpa:

In practicing the paramita of meditation, we relate to meditation as a

natural process; it is neither an obstacle nor a particular virtue. If we become impatient with constant thought-chattering in our meditation practice, we may avoid meditating. We had been expecting a comfortably rewarding situation, so we are unwilling to work with the irritations that constantly come up – we can't be bothered. On the other hand, we might get very attached to how good a meditator we are. Any kind of blissful experience we regard as some form of divine grace, as proof that what we are doing makes sense. We feel we can meditate better and more than anybody else. In this case, we view our meditation practice as a contest for the championship. But whether we try to avoid sitting practice or become attached to it as some sort of self-confirmation, we are still avoiding the paramita of meditation, which is a willingness to work unceasingly with our own neurosis and speed.

SOURCES:

Pema Chodron. "No Time to Lose." Edited by Helen Berliner. Boston: Shambhala Publications Inc., 2005.

Reginald Ray. "Indestructible Truth." Boston: Shambhala Publications Inc., 2000.

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

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

Chogyam Trungpa. "The Heart of the Buddha." Edited by Judith Lief. Boston: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1991.

RETREAT REMINDERS

14th Annual Summer Retreat

July 2–22, 2006

"TUMMO – INNER FIRE OF REALIZATION"

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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

Retreat cost PER WEEK (includes meals):

\$500 received by June 15; \$550 received after June 15

The Summer Work Retreat at Serenity Ridge takes place the week prior to the summer retreat: June 27 – July 1. The work retreat is free of charge, and participants are provided with free tenting sites and meals.

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

For more information or to register, contact Ligmincha Institute at: Ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

June 16–18, 2006

SIX LOKAS PRACTICE RETREAT

"Dissolving the Obstacles to Enlightenment"

with John Jackson

(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.

AUGUST 16-20, 2006

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

with Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe

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 FROM SANGHA AT THE BON STUPA CONSECRATION”

The first Bon stupa built in the Americas was consecrated this past February in Torreon, Mexico. The Voice of Clear Light asked sangha members who attended the consecration ceremony to send us a postcard sharing something about their experience, observations or feelings on that auspicious day. We thank all of you for your contributions and for the wonderful translating done by Lourdes Hinojosa!

You can see images of the stupa by going to Ligmincha’s homepage, www.ligmincha.org, and then following the link.

From the editors: Please note this correction to Sylvia Manzanilla’s article “The Birth of a Stupa” printed in our last issue: We printed that the stupa in Torreon is the one dedicated to Lopon Sangye Tenzin, but it is the Chamma Ling stupa in Valle de Bravo, Mexico, that is dedicated to him.

Students wrote about the stupa and its consecration:

A stupa is a representation of enlightened heart/mind. It makes sense to me that such a form should arise from the Mexican sangha. They have that enlightened heart/mind. I prostrate to the sangha.

Candace Byers

USA

I can’t think of the right words to describe the experience...

All words seem small, limited; all terms, all descriptions, not enough.

I must say I experienced a deep purification, and the removal of many obstacles, in myself and other practitioners as well, during the days prior to the ceremony. I felt the power of the stupa and its meaning.

Being in the presence of my root lama, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, along with Tulku Jorge Rene sitting beside him, Geshe Nyima Kunchap,

Geshe Tenzin Yeshe, and Alejandro Chaoul, and listening to Tenzin Rinpoche's teachings, his explanation about the meaning of the stupa, and realizing that I had the enormous blessing to be present - I felt so grateful. I felt such bliss.

Rinpoche said that our great masters, the ones who have left, left us their bodies in the form of statues and images; their words, their speech, in the texts; and they left us their enlightened hearts in the form of the stupas.

Having realized that, my heart opened with great joy. I felt the stupa was alive, awakened with the energy of the enlightened mind-heart of the great masters. After the consecration ceremony, which I found deeply moving and energizing, the stupa was literally alive.

Being in the gumpa at Chamma Ling, Torreon, Mexico, with more than 500 sangha members from all over Mexico and some dear friends from the U.S. sangha, in the powerful and loving presence of our teachers, I felt as if we all were one, tuning in together to receive the blessing of the peace-generating Bon stupa. Tears came from my eyes and many others' eyes, as we were moved with the blessings we were receiving. My deep thanks to Carlos and Gaby Madero, who were the human channels who made this possible... and to the effort and presence of many who tirelessly worked continuously in order to realize this project.

And now, our commitment to the next step: the great main Bon stupa at Chamma Ling, Valle de Bravo, Mexico. May our master's dream come true. Emaho!

Lourdes Hinojosa
Monterrey, Mexico

"I can't stop feeling grateful and very fortunate for having met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, this lineage, these teachings, and my dharma friends. When I attended my first teaching with Tenzin Rinpoche I could not explain how my heart opened, but I felt that something very important happened. I felt confident.

And since then, many things have happened. It seems that in the sangha there is an energy manifesting. In the beginning, it seemed strange to have a stupa here in Torreon. And it's amazing how everything has happened so smoothly since Carlos and Gaby expressed their wish to have a stupa built here, and everyone in the sangha got so excited, and soon we had Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe performing the preparatory rituals. Then, we all together participated in the weapon bury ritual and we all danced over the burial site. It was a very powerful experience. Then we engaged in the process of making hundreds of tsa tsas (small statues), like little plaster stupas. It was challenging, but a joyful effort. And then the ritual when the great wooden tree of life was placed in the center of the stupa, with everyone's khatas around it, representing the stupa's central channel. We placed the relics on the inside. Everything was magical and

wonderful.

And finally, having Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the geshe, Alejandro Chaoul and Tulku Jorge Rene over here, performing the ritual and chanting prayers for the consecration, it was very inspiring for all of us who attended the ceremony.

The stupa is beautiful, and its shape enrapturing. As I open up to its meaning, the connection is taking place, and I feel deeply grateful, and full of joy. I feel total trust and it moves me to tears, realizing all is perfect. This is what I can share."

With all my love,

Paty Vigil

Torreon, Mexico