

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 later in the month. 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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"ON FINDING YOURSELF IN THE NATURE OF MIND" – an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

In order to directly experience the nature of mind, during dzogchen practice we try to create certain conditions within the body, speech and mind. We use postures or movements of the physical body, practices of the breath, and the concentration and focus of awareness of the mind.

It is not as if the nature of mind is a separate object, a separate place where you as a subject can take a bus, train or a plane to. It is not like that - there is no place to go, no place to search for the nature of mind. Nor is the nature of mind a form with a particular shape or color that you can experience. If you are searching for your nature in those ways, you will not find anything. That is guaranteed. We are so conditioned to always be expecting to see some THING. It is very, very difficult for us to rid ourselves of the mind of ours that has expectations.

If you go out to find a job, you go with the expectation of finding one that pays well, say. That expectation helps guide your search toward finding the right job for you. In looking for the nature of mind,

though, it makes no sense to look with the expectation that you will see something, because there is nothing to see.

Now you may be thinking, "There's nothing to see? Well, that's a little discouraging." Maybe you are curious about what this means. You are beginning to realize that you cannot experience the nature of mind in the same way you can experience your dreams, your thoughts, your feelings, or any kind of form. The nature of mind will not be seen in any of those ways. It is possible that during meditation, sometimes you will see various colors or shapes that are signs or qualities of some experience of, or connection to, the nature of mind, but even these are not the nature of mind.

The introduction to the nature of mind is essentially about creating the right causes and conditions - that's really what it is. In the same way that by placing a mirror in different locations you find that your view changes, so too by putting your body in the right position, your breath in the right position, and your mind in the right position, you are able to simply find your self in that place. But when you find your self in that place, it is not that you are seeing something, it is only that you are being. The moment you think that you are seeing your nature, you are actually not. You see, one of the subtlest obstacles to resting in the nature of mind is not being able to get rid of the seer, the one who sees. Until you get rid of the observer, the perceiver, the subject, the nature remains hidden.

So, you don't create or force the experience of the nature of mind; rather, you can put the proper conditions together for finding your self there. It would be a good idea to look at all that we experience in our lives in that same way - understanding that we can't always achieve the results we want by forcing them, but we can instead try to set up the proper conditions for those results to arise naturally.

Often we ignore the advantages of setting up the proper conditions and just struggle to force the result into manifestation.

For example, you want to be happy. So what do you do sometimes? You just try to force yourself to be happy, even though in a relative sense you are simply in the wrong place to support being happy. Let's say you are somebody who has a knack for electronics, who is fascinated working all day long on computers and has so much knowledge about how they work, and yet you may not be able to cook even a cup of tea for yourself. Now, if you were put into the position of being a chef at a restaurant, then that would definitely be the wrong place for you to be happy. So, you don't realize you are in the wrong place, the wrong time, the wrong situation, and all you know is that you want to be happy. The location makes you suffer, the situation makes you suffer, the timing makes you suffer, and yet you simply push yourself to be happy. You just cook furiously, and the customers continually are dissatisfied, and eventually the restaurant has to go out of business. That forcing of the situation would obviously be the wrong approach.

What should you do instead? Focus your effort on changing the place, changing the timing, changing the circumstances to make them the right ones for being happy. If you do find the right conditions, then you'll be naturally happy. You create the causes for natural happiness rather than futilely struggling to force the result.

Many times in our lives we get stuck simply because we don't know we are trying to force a result that is not supported by our circumstances. We may only be repeating to ourselves, "I want to be happy, I want to be happy, I want to be happy." The added tension created by trying to force your happiness actually tends to worsen your situation. It actually creates the opposite effect, digging you deeper into that unfortunate situation. Do you see how that kind of narrow, result-oriented focus can be a kind of a secret obstacle for us at times?

This is especially true regarding the practices of the nature of mind. So, what is the introduction to the nature of mind? You understand that it is not the same as my saying "Look at this cup" (Rinpoche holds up a teacup). Rather, there are exercises, practices and techniques that all create a space where there is a greater chance to have experience. None of those techniques you learn are the nature of mind. None of those practices are the nature of mind. They are a very skillful means. In one important sense the only time you will have an experience of the nature of mind is when you are not practicing. But you must begin with the practice and then during the session you forget the practice. How can you forget the practice? When you come to the place where there is nothing at all you could call effort, that is the moment when you find yourself in the nature of mind: free from your thoughts, feelings, emotions and conditions, abiding in the space of infinite potential, in which there is a cause for the perfection of every experience that could arise. There is a sense of nothing lacking, because everything is perfected. The sense of longing, lacking, missing, not having enough - none of those experiences are there. On the contrary, there is the sense of being complete, perfected, whole; and you find your self.

So, regarding the introduction to the nature of mind, the important point here is not to get too attached to the techniques or methods, but to work with them so you can create the right position of the body, the right breathing, the right focus of the mind. If you are able to bring together the right conditions of body, energy and mind, then there is no way not to experience your nature. As we always say, there is no power or force that could possibly stop the result when all the causes and conditions are together. The same is true with regard to being happy. If all the causes and conditions for your being happy are together there, you will naturally be happy, and there is no force at all that can stop you from being happy and make you suffer. Likewise, if those causes and conditions are not there, if the causes and

conditions are the wrong ones, then there is no force that can make you feel good. That is why the whole notion of cause and effect, or the law of karma, is so important in the dharma.

So, we must develop those causes and conditions that support the experience of the nature of mind without being too attached to the techniques or practices. This does not mean you don't learn how to do the practices precisely; you do learn them - very precisely. However, it's just like an old man who walks from one place to another with the help of a walking stick: His goal is to arrive at the new location, not simply to become attached to the walking stick, right? We also know that if the old man tries to walk there without the stick, for sure he will not reach his goal. Therefore, when walking to the new location he makes sure he has a firm grasp of the sturdy stick that supports him. Once he reaches his destination, the walking stick is no longer important to him. The practices, the techniques, are exactly like that. The methods are exactly like that. They never lose their potential to be of benefit when the need arises, but just don't get attached to them. Is that clear?

LATE-BREAKING NEWS FROM LIGMINCHA

Ligmincha Institute's first grant request has been approved. The grant is from the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation and will enable Kalsang Nyima to come to the United States this summer to paint thangkas related to the Tummo teachings.

NEXT WWW TEACHING WITH TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE WILL BE APRIL 28

Please mark your calendars for the next WWW teaching with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:

Saturday, April 28, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. ET (New York/Charlottesville time)

The teaching topic will be:

The Five Warrior Seed Syllables: The Healing Power of Sound in the Tibetan Bon Buddhist Tradition

Since ancient times meditative practices from a variety of spiritual traditions have used sound and its vibration as an essential tool for healing. Through the singing and chanting of sacred syllables and mantras, spiritual practitioners, healers and laypersons can purify and restore harmony to a range of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions. Guided by the mind and carried by the breath through subtle channels, the power of sound opens the potential to heal illness and dissolve energetic disturbances.

The Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition is one of the oldest unbroken lineages of wisdom to make use of sound for health, well-being and spiritual growth. The knowledge of its sound practices is contained in a number of Bon texts, including the revered Mother Tantra.

During this WWW teaching Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will explain the

relationship between the sounds of the five warrior seed syllables and their healing qualities. He'll also instruct us on the meditations that empower their healing capabilities.

VOCL subscribers will receive an email bulletin with instructions for registration and logging in. Or, visit Ligmincha's Web site, www.ligmincha.org, for this information prior to the WWW teaching.

DONATIONS FROM THE HEART:

A MESSAGE FROM GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

To all my students and friends of Bon,

In our sangha many people have offered their financial support with a great deal of generosity. Another way to give is through physical labor. Many people know that I do physical work myself. For example, when I go to Yongdzin Rinpoche's place in France I paint or clean windows and put my physical labor into things for five to ten days at a time. In this way some sense of my body is involved in service, not only my check is involved.

In a similar way, I would like sangha members who visit the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center to become physically involved in its creation and maintenance. I encourage people to come to help paint the new wing of the Garuda House. We will be setting aside time for this purpose in the coming work retreat, from Monday through Wednesday, April 23 to 25, right after the spring retreat. I plan to be there to help myself, and many members of Council already have pledged to be there.

Since painting the wing ourselves will save Ligmincha many thousands of dollars, this opportunity is not only a way to offer physical support, it also is indirectly a way to offer your financial support. Please consider joining us in offering this service to the retreat center.

All my best wishes,

TWR

PAINTING RETREAT

with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

April 23-25, 2007

Join us for a three-day work retreat with Tenzin Rinpoche immediately following our spring retreat. Pre-registration required.

We will be painting the finishing coat in the rooms of the new wing of Garuda House in the five element colors! The joyful work of painting the interior rooms of Garuda's new wing will alternate with periods of meditation practice. Free accommodations in the old wing and meals will be provided. You can come for one, two or all three days. Everyone is welcome. (For anyone who can stay a little longer, Rinpoche will also be giving a free public talk at Ligmincha's Downtown Meditation Center on Wednesday evening, April 25, from 7-8:30 p.m.)

Pre-registration for the painting retreat is required because we will need a head count for the kitchen. If you can help us with this very

important - and fun! - project please contact Lee Hartline by April 20
at ligmincha@aol.com or 434-977-6161.

A REQUEST FOR ITEMS FOR THE SUMMER 2007 AUCTION – SERENITY RIDGE

*Deadline is May 15

Each year during the summer retreat we celebrate and support Rinpoche's dream of developing Ligmincha Institute's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center with a lively auction and banquet. Traditionally, this has been the only public fund-raising event that Ligmincha Institute holds to finance land development projects at Serenity Ridge.

We will have completed construction of the second wing of Garuda House by June. Over 40 percent of the construction was paid for by sangha donations; the rest we have paid for by securing a mortgage. The 2007 auction is vital to repaying this debt so development of Serenity Ridge can continue.

Every year we seek donations for the auction of quality practice- or shrine-related items that can inspire and deepen one's practice. Below is a list of some of the items that have helped generate lively bidding and generous contributions in the past:

Crystal objects: stupas, balls, malas, phurbas, vajras

Tibetan singing bowls and drums, large or small

Tibetan or English texts that have been used by our teachers

Silver or gold gaus or amulets

Malas made from precious or semi-precious stones

Photos of our teachers, or of sacred sites

Thankas, prayer banners

Items blessed by His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, or Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Your enthusiastic participation and support are essential at this important time of growth for Ligmincha Institute's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. All donations are tax deductible.

DEADLINE IS MAY 15, 2007. If you have an item to donate, please call or email me to discuss its suitability, the information we will need about it, and shipping instructions.

Candace Byers

Director of Fund-Raising

Ligmincha Institute

203-570-7320

CandaceB108@aol.com

ART FOR THE NEW WING OF GARUDA HOUSE

As most of you know by now, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will be presenting further teachings on Tummo this summer. At the same time, our Garuda House will have completely unfolded its second wing, ready to fly. It would be a wonderful offering if artists in our sangha would consider donating "practitioner art" to hang on the walls of the new

bedrooms, hallways and lounges. We are going to try to spiff up all four of the lounges in Garuda House so that they are welcoming places for people to gather and share. We are going to try to make them simple and lovely, warm, contemplative spaces.

We can frame your piece if necessary; don't worry about presentation, we are most interested in your creative effort. If you have artwork you wish to share, please contact Candace Byers at CandaceB108@aol.com or 203-570-7320.

SPRING AND SUMMER RETREATS AT SERENITY RIDGE

** To register for the following retreats contact Ligmincha Institute at Ligmincha@aol.com or call 434-977-6161. For more information about retreats at Serenity Ridge and elsewhere, please visit www.ligmincha.org

April 18-22, 2007

“Conquering Negative Influences – The Healing Practice of the Red Garuda”

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Spring Retreat at Serenity Ridge is a time for healing and rejuvenation. Each year Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche introduces a therapeutic practice from the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet for healing our physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions. During this retreat, Tenzin Rinpoche will transmit the tantric practice of self-transformation into red garuda, empowering us to conquer the negative forces that spread sickness and misery.

The garuda is a bird that is said to emerge from its egg fully matured and able to fly. It is a symbol of enlightenment, innately free from limitations. There are five types of garuda, one for each of the elements – earth, water, fire, air and space. The red garuda is associated with the fire element.

The teachings and practices of this mystical bird originated with the founder of Bon, Tonpa Shenrab. Although they are among the world's most ancient healing practices, they play a special role in our modern times. They have the power to conquer the forces of negativity that give rise to many forms of illness experienced today.

The red garuda practice cultivates absolute fearlessness and is particularly effective in restoring balance between humanity and our environment. It generates health and well-being not only for ourselves, but also for other beings, seen and unseen, who inhabit the natural world.

Please join us for this unique opportunity to experience Tenzin Rinpoche's personable teaching style, humor and warmth while receiving instructions in one of Bon's most remarkable healing practices: the red garuda.

RETREAT COST (includes meals): \$500

May 18-20, 2007

Ngondro Practice Retreat

with Marcy Vaughn

**** REGISTRATION DEADLINE: April 27**

The ngondro is the doorway through which one enters the vast and profound Bon Buddhist path. A set of nine foundational or preliminary practices, the ngondro provides a solid base of understanding and experience upon which a strong spiritual life develops.

Although the practices that make up the ngondro are called preliminary, many practitioners adopt them as their main practice, completing the accumulations of the entire ngondro many times over the course of a lifetime. It is possible to understand these beautiful practices as complete practices in themselves, for within each is contained a complete path to liberation.

The more you devote yourself to these practices that tame, purify and perfect the mind and the more you become familiar with the experiences they bring, the more you will find spiritual practice grounded within you. The ngondro then becomes a true friend that accompanies you throughout your spiritual life.

Join your fellow practitioners for this three-day practice intensive to connect with the power and beauty of the ngondro.

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

RETREAT COST (includes meals): \$150

July 1-21, 2007

“The Fireball of Primordial Wisdom”

Part II of the Tummo Practice from the Bon Tradition

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

****“Early-bird” registration date for the summer retreat is May 28**

This summer, Tenzin Rinpoche will continue to instruct us in the practice of tummo (generating the inner heat) to burn away subtle obscurations and cultivate bliss, from the text *Ku Sum Rang Shar* (Spontaneous Arising of the Three Kayas). This text is by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche, a Bon master who achieved the body of light, or rainbow body, in 1934.

At last year’s summer retreat Tenzin Rinpoche began the instruction of this beautiful and powerful tantric practice by teaching the outer, inner and secret foundational practices of tummo. The manner in which Rinpoche crafted each day of the retreat and guided the meditation sessions, allowing sufficient time to develop each stage of practice, led to powerful experiential results.

At this year’s retreat, Rinpoche will provide similar opportunities for students to engage deeply with the practice to help maximize each person’s experience of the benefits of tummo. Tenzin Rinpoche is preparing a pre-retreat practice program; registrants will be

encouraged to engage with this program daily for one month prior to the retreat. (More information will be provided at the time of registration.) In addition to tummo, the practices of the nine breathings of purification and the physical yogas of tsa lung and trul khor will reinforce the clearing of obstacles, hindrances and obscurations.

You may come for one, two or all three weeks of the retreat. If you are able to attend only one week, Rinpoche recommends that you come to the first week, when he will review the practices that he taught last summer. Of course all are welcome no matter which week they attend.

RETREAT COST (PER WEEK) – includes meals: \$450 if received by May 28: \$500 if received by June 13; \$550 if received after June 13. (Week One: July 1-7; Week Two: July 8-14; Week Three: July 15-21)

*Note: Participants in the summer work retreat receive a 50 percent discount on one week of the summer retreat (see below.)

June 24-30, 2007

Serenity Ridge Summer Work Retreat

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

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

NEW ITEMS AT LIGMINCHA'S BOOKSTORE AND TIBET SHOP

To view descriptions and photographs of the newest items at Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore and Tibet Shop 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>

LOSAR PHOTO OF TENZIN RINPOCHE AND FAMILY:

All funds from your purchase of this photo go directly to the Serenity Ridge Land Fund. Price: \$10

NEW FIVE-ELEMENTS CARD SET:

We've redesigned our Five Elements Meditation Card Set that accompanies Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book "Healing With Form, Energy and Light."

Set includes a card for each element, with the respective seed syllable depicted in color (calligraphy by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche). Also included: a card depicting the mandala of all five elements. Each card is 6" x 6 1/2". Price: \$12.95

KHORLO – PROTECTION AMULETS:

Yeshe Walmo Healing Mantra protection amulet. One side features an

image of Yeshe Walmo, the other the seed syllable 'SO.' To be worn around the neck or hung in one's home or shrine. Price: \$15

Tapihritsa Khorlo. The mandala has been drawn on paper, adorned with sacred mantras, folded, wrapped in colored threads, and encased in clear plastic. This khorlo is said to protect one from negativities. To be worn around the neck or hung in one's home or shrine. Price: \$20

CD - 'MELODIC WISDOM':

Now back in stock with a new CD cover. Price: \$20

INCENSE:

Sorig Incense - large box, 60 sticks. Sorig incense is made by the Men Tsee Khang, the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute of H.H. XIV Dalai Lama, in Dharamsala, India. Price: \$10.95. (We also carry a smaller box of 40 sticks for \$8.95.)

Sorig Incense Powder, 2.5 oz. package. Price: \$5.00

Swift-Lite Charcoal Tablets. Package of 10 tablets. Used for burning powdered incense and copal resin. Price: \$2.25