

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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THE NEW VOCL: A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear VOCL subscriber,

With the next issue of Voice of Clear Light you will notice a minor change in presentation. To serve you better while also reflecting the realities of our editorial process, VOCL will now come to you in two alternating formats: the original VOCL e-newsletter (such as this one), which you will receive every other month as you are now; and a new VOCL Announcement Issue.

This change in presentation will give each regular VOCL issue a stronger emphasis on the dharma, including teachings by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and sharings by sangha; and ensure that announcements about upcoming teachings and other events can reach you in a more timely manner. In the end, little is changing in the way of content– you'll just be receiving it a little differently.

-- Aline and Jeff Fisher, VOCL Editors

A REQUEST FOR PRAYERS FOR THE PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF THE SITUATION IN TIBET

From Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Gabriel Rocco Greetings, I assume that most if not all of you on our VOCL list are well aware of, and following, the events taking place in Lhasa and other regions of Tibet since March 14, and which now are spreading elsewhere. I have had a recent communication from Tenzin Rinpoche. He asks that all of us pray for a reduction in the violence, for temperance, and for the abatement of suffering until a resolution of the discord can be attained. He knows it is not necessary for those well grounded in the Bon and Buddhist teachings, but suggested I include a gentle reminder that our compassion be neither political nor partisan, and that our prayers include all spiritual practitioners, the Tibetan people, the Chinese, Indians, Nepalese, Westerners, and all others who may be affected by the clashes that are taking place. In Bon, Gabriel

MESSAGE FROM H.H. THE DALAI LAMA

An appeal to the Chinese people from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama can be viewed at:

www.dalailama.com/news.220.htm

“BRINGING PRACTICE TO LIFE” - an excerpt from an edited transcript of oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 2005.

Back home in Tibet family ties are very strong, and if something happens to one member of a family, everyone gets involved. It's a long and involved process of getting caught up in these life issues. When Yongdzin Rinpoche left his family he was 7 or 8 years old. He returned to see his mother at age 15 or 16, and then he left and didn't see his mother again until his 50s or 60s. There are a lot of stories like this of the masters, this sense of being able to detach and leave their families. For the rest of us this is difficult to do. So maybe it is not a question of our leaving our families, but more a question of balancing our personal lives with our spiritual practice. We all definitely have family and other personal issues we can reflect on. Of course there are issues with health, and you try to maintain good health to the best of your ability. If you are not well, try to bring your meditation practice into that place, into that particular situation, rather than thinking, “I will get better and then I will practice.” Do not approach practice in that way. If you are not happy, don't think, “I'll get happy and then I will practice.” Instead, you should think, “Well, when I'm not happy this is the right moment to practice and to transform my sadness into happiness. Maybe this is the opportunity for me to see if it does work, or does not work, or how much I can make it work or not.”

When you are suffering from some problem, you may not want to think about practicing or even reading about the teachings. You may think to yourself, “I want to clear this problem and then practice.” But how many years might it take to clear that problem? If you do clear that problem, the next problem may only be waiting for you! That is the way life goes. If you bring your problems into your meditation practice and learn to live with them, maybe you will discover the problems are not that much of a problem. The main point here is to bring practice into your life, into the situation you are dealing with, rather than waiting to overcome the problem before practicing. That is something each of us can reflect on.

Practice is always a response to your own personal experiences. It's not that you are trying to make something up in order to do practice. If you are suffering, then practice with suffering and not with joy. If you are joyful then practice with joy, don't think about suffering. Practice is always about the circumstances in which you experience yourself. Somehow we all have something we are struggling with at any time, and I don't think it is hard to identify one. The question is: What is your most intense struggle at this time in your life? Use that - bring that into your practice. That is the most important focus for your meditation. You are not only practicing, but you are also changing something in your life. It affects your life in real, practical ways.

LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE'S UPCOMING RETREATS AT SERENITY RIDGE

** To register online for the following Serenity Ridge retreats, or to learn about other retreats scheduled worldwide with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, visit www.ligmincha.org and click on "Retreats." Or, contact Ligmincha Institute at Ligmincha@aol.com or 434-977-6161.

Annual Spring Healing Retreat

April 16-20, 2008

Reclaim Your Soul and Rejuvenate Your Life Force

With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Many spiritual and healing traditions bring each year to a close with purification practices, then enter springtime with practices to cultivate and benefit from the sense of renewal and elemental vitality that come with the season. In keeping with this custom, at this year's spring healing retreat Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will introduce us to the richness of soul retrieval, an

ancient practice of the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet.

The Tibetan people traditionally view the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space as pervading all of life and as the essential components of our entire worldly existence. The soul (la) is said to be composed of these elements at a very subtle level – and it is believed that a traumatic event or other shock can cause an individual to lose connection with the elements and become dispirited.

The shamanic rites of soul retrieval (la gu) and life-force retrieval (tse gu) are methods of calling on the living essence of the elements – the elemental spirits – to balance and heal the individual. At this retreat, Rinpoche will explain how to diagnose the need for soul retrieval as well as how to perform it. Through ritual and meditation practice, one can bring back the positive qualities that are missing or reinforce the qualities that are weakened in oneself or in others. This past year has brought many difficulties to individuals, communities, and nations, as well as to the natural environment. We have experienced what the ancient Tibetans would refer to as a “black year.” During the retreat Tenzin Rinpoche will emphasize practices for home clearing, land clearing, and full soul and life-force retrieval to overcome the negative influences that have darkened our individual and collective lives.

Rinpoche suggests that this spring retreat is an opportunity to do far more than collect new information. He invites new students and experienced practitioners, including those who have attended previous soul retrieval teachings, to directly experience and seriously practice these powerful shamanic methods for healing, growth, and spiritual awakening.

Retreat cost \$525 (includes meals; accommodations are available)

May 1-4, 2008

Vital Breath: Harnessing the Healing Power of Movement and Sound:

Tsa Lung and the 5 Warrior Seed Syllables

With Marcy Vaughn

This May offers an opportunity to learn and engage in two ancient practices from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet. In a four-day retreat at Ligmincha's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Nelson County, Va., Marcy Vaughn, a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, will introduce and guide the simple yet powerful practices of the five tsa lung exercises and the Five Warrior Syllables.

Each participant will learn to identify negative patterns and obstacles in body, breath, and mind; to clear these obstacles; and to cultivate and manifest positive qualities in everyday life.

The five tsa lung exercises bring together focus of mind, breath, and physical movement to open subtle energy channels and centers in the body. Through the process of identifying negative patterns, without judgment or analysis we clear these patterns through the tsa lung exercises.

As we clear obstacles, we bring clear attention to the space that opens up within us. Meditation is all about becoming familiar with this space, the source of infinite positive qualities. Abiding in this openness is the best medicine for healing our lives, and the simple yet powerful tsa lung movements enable us to benefit from this medicine.

The Five Warrior Syllables Practice relies on the power of sound to help heal physical illness, clear psychological and energetic disturbances, and support the spiritual practitioner to abide with clear and open awareness. Guided by the mind and carried by the subtle breath through the channels and chakras of the body, the power of sound helps to uncover positive qualities such as love, compassion, joy, and

equanimity. Through practicing with five sacred and powerful sounds known as the Five Warrior Syllables, we transform our lives and discern a clear path that begins with openness and leads to spontaneous, virtuous action in the world.

Marcy Vaughn serves as practice leader for most of Ligmincha Institute's retreats at Serenity Ridge. A senior student of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, she has practiced Tibetan Buddhism since 1973. As director of practice and support for Ligmincha, she works with Rinpoche to plan courses that facilitate study and practice among Bon practitioners. Marcy is editor of *Tibetan Sound Healing*, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (Boulder, Colo.: Sounds True, 2006).

Retreat cost \$325 (includes meals; accommodations are available)

May 15-18, 2008

A Tri trul Khor (Tibetan Yoga)

With Alejandro Chaoul-Reich

In the Tibetan spiritual traditions, body, energy, and mind are known as the three doors to enlightenment. The contemplative physical movements of Tibetan yoga (trul khor) enable us to enter all three doors at once through a single practice, offering a powerful, skillful means for clearing the obstacles and obscurations to openness and clarity in meditation practice.

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche encourages all his students to engage in the trul khor movements to support their meditation practice. A committed group of practitioners continues to regularly engage in the trul khor of the Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung. However, because some students have found these practices to be physically too demanding, Rinpoche has created a new, more accessible presentation of 16 "magical movements," drawing from the 40 trul khor movements of the A Tri Bon dzogchen tradition.

This new set of 16 contemplative physical movements is appropriate, doable and recommended for virtually every student. It incorporates each of the five kinds of lung (prana, vital breath) that many students will recognize from the tsa lung practice of the Bon Mother Tantra.

This retreat led by senior student Alejandro Chaoul-Reich provides an in-depth exploration of the body's energetic dimension: the subtle channels, the vital breath that circulates through them, and the subtlest aspects of the mind. There is no prerequisite for attending. All students are warmly invited by Tenzin Rinpoche to learn these movements and benefit from practicing them.

Alejandro Chaoul-Reich is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and has studied tsa lung trul khor with many masters of the Bon tradition. Alejandro teaches meditation to cancer patients and their supporters and is involved in research using tsa lung trul khor with cancer patients at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. Alejandro received his Ph.D. in Tibetan religions from Rice University.

Retreat cost (includes meals; accommodations are available):

\$275 received by April 10; \$325 received after April 10

16th Annual Summer Retreat

July 6-26, 2008

Fireball of Primordial Wisdom

Part III of the Tummo Practice From the Bon Tradition

With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

(Note: Registration by May 6 is required to participate in the full two-month pre-retreat practice)

program.)

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche continues to present the practice of tummo throughout all three weeks of this year's annual summer retreat at Serenity Ridge. This summer will be the third consecutive (and final) annual retreat imparting these teachings on the Fireball of Primordial Wisdom, a practice that cultivates bliss while burning away subtle obscurations to abiding in the natural state of mind. Tenzin Rinpoche will complete the teachings from the text Ku Sum Rang Shar (Spontaneous Arising of the Three Kayas), written by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche, a Bon master who achieved the body of light, or rainbow body, in 1934. Everyone interested in receiving the tummo teachings is welcome to attend this retreat regardless of previous participation. Tummo refers to inner fire, inner heat, or wisdom. Its teachings include both tantric and dzogchen support practices to achieve liberation. These practices require an in-depth understanding of the subtle channels in the body and the movement of prana, or energy, through those channels. To clarify this knowledge and to reinforce the clearing of obstacles and obscurations, students will also learn and engage in the practices of the nine breathings of purification and the physical yogas of tsa lung and trul khor (Tibetan yoga). The manner in which Rinpoche crafts each day of the retreat and guides its meditation sessions allows every participant sufficient time to develop and connect with each stage of practice. To maximize the benefits of this retreat and to provide new students the required foundation for participating, Rinpoche will provide a pre-retreat practice program.

**Students are asked to register at least two months in advance of the retreat and are encouraged to follow the pre-retreat program daily at home in preparation for attending these precious tummo teachings. As always, you may come for one, two or all three weeks of the summer retreat. Each week is designed to be a direct and powerful healing experience. Retreat cost (includes meals; accommodations are available): Week 1 and Week 3: \$500 received by May 28; \$575 received after May 28. Week 2 (includes auction banquet): \$515 by May 28; \$590 received after May 28.

REQUESTING ITEMS FOR THE SUMMER 2008 AUCTION AT SERENITY RIDGE

"What exactly does DZA mean? It is effortless, spontaneous, enlightened activity. It is not the burning fire; it is activity itself.... Enlightened beings manifest in a myriad of forms out of compassion, according to the needs of beings ... it is as simple as that gesture of giving.... Your heart is full. Your eyes are moist. Your gesture is spontaneous."

- From "Tibetan Sound Healing" by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Greetings to the worldwide sangha,

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 fundraising event that Ligmincha Institute holds to finance land-development projects at Serenity Ridge.

The second wing of the Garuda House is complete and has been inaugurated all year with the sleepy heads of sangha members resting while on retreat. But we still have a large mortgage to pay. We need your help. Your enthusiastic participation and support are essential at this important time of growth for Serenity Ridge. All donations are tax deductible.

Next time you are on retreat, look to your left. Look to your right. Listen to the footsteps of sangha brothers and sisters walking down the hall. Imagine the warmth you would feel in your heart by knowing that the rooms and walls that hold us and all our efforts exist only because of

you and because of them. Imagine the happiness that comes from connecting with the teachings. Is there a greater gift? Is there anything else worth giving?

Every year we seek auction donations of quality practice- or shrine-related items that will inspire and deepen our practice. Some of you traveled with Rinpoche to Tibet and have already donated prayer wheels and malas that made the Bonri Kora and were blessed by Rinpoche at the summit. Many people have emailed me to say they have still more contributions from the pilgrimage to Tibet. Bring it on!

Below are the kinds of items that have helped generate lively bidding 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 sacred sites

Thangkas, prayer banners

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

THE DEADLINE IS MAY 15, 2008: Please email Sue Davis-Dill at ligminchastr@ntelos.net if you have an item to donate or call her at 434-220-0060.

From my heart,

Candace Byers, Director of Fundraising

CandaceB108@aol.com