

Teaching Issue

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Teachings

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‘Our Spiritual Life Supports’ – an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, summer 2000



I believe that everyone has experiences in connecting with the essence: with the base of all, the mind's empty, spacious nature that is the source of all enlightened qualities. For sure, everyone needs that connection and seeks that connection, even if there is no clear understanding of what one is needing and seeking. And at some time or another, everyone does experience a level of genuine connection with the essence in their day-to-day lives. For some people, this experience is very subtle and fleeting, for others it is deeper.

When one does connect, why does the experience not last? It is because there is no support for maintaining that state. All the meditation practices we are learning have to do with support for maintaining that connection. We are learning how to support the experience itself, and we also are learning methods for overcoming the external, internal, and secret obstacles to maintaining that experience.

As an example of an external obstacle to abiding in the essence, there may be someone in your

life who for no apparent reason is angry with you. This person may just seem like a problem maker, someone who seems to always draw you away from your higher self. Other obstacles are internal: your own thoughts, obsessions, ideas. Some of those ideas, you know, are just crazy! What do you do about them? Sometimes you engage in an internal conversation with that craziness. Or sometimes you let it act out a bit, as if to say, “Okay, do what you want, I’m not paying attention.” You discuss, fight, and suffer with these thoughts. This is an example of an internal obstacle.

Then there are secret obstacles: Maybe you are experiencing very little conflict, confusion, or physical distractions in your life, but at the same time not much is happening in your meditation practice. Internally there is no deep sense of wish to connect, and there is little sense that the enlightened qualities are ripening in you. You may be obscured by ignorance, dullness, laziness, or other subtle obscurations that may not be causing recognizable problems, but are preventing your practice from developing. Why are they called secret obstacles? They are secret because they don’t seem like a problem. They are hidden.

We will continue to face obstacles like these all along the spiritual path. Therefore, our practice is about learning how to face them while also supporting our experiences of the essence. All the practices in the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition are about this.

Occasionally people can have very deep experiences of connection. I am not necessarily talking about people who have discovered the dharma, the spiritual teachings. You can have a very deep experience of the essence while on a wonderful camping trip, or while at a beautiful beach, hiking in the mountains, or dining with good friends. Nevertheless, when these experiences are not supported they quickly fade to nothing but a memory, a story from your past: “Oh, when I was a teenager, that wonderful thing happened.” Clearly we lack enough support; therefore we lose these experiences. Just as a good vessel or container is the right support to hold liquid, a practice such as guru yoga or the ngondro can be a strong means of support for consistently holding the experience of the natural state.

Of course one can become extreme in one’s attachment to the formalities of practice and lose connection to the essence that way, too. This is not to say that formality is not good; it does play a necessary role. But as you progress in your practice it is important not to be too attached to the formalities, otherwise your experience will be limited.

Lopon (Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche) has mentioned a few times this week that when you’re crossing the river, you need the boat to get to the other side. Once you cross, though, then that’s it — the boat is left behind. The point is to recognize the support offered by the form while not being too attached to the form. As we let go of form, our sense of devotion can remain to support the open awareness.

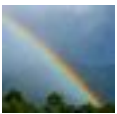
Let’s talk for a moment not about the experience of the nature of mind, but about the experience of being well. At certain times in your life you feel just fine: You are active enough, resting enough, giving enough, and receiving enough. You feel gratitude. You feel like you have a full life, a good life. When you experience your life in this way, you know that the experience can be easily taken away unless what makes you feel well is continually supported. Without the support

you need, that experience can disappear with one conversation, with just one piece of bad news. In an instant, one can feel lost. So we need support just to feel well in life.

Far more important is to have the right support for abiding in the nature of mind: for abiding in the state of *rigpa*, the luminous self-awareness of the mind. That is really what practice is all about. First it is important to recognize your obstacles to abiding, and then it is important to recognize the supports for abiding. Finding a solution to support the practice can be a practice in itself, just as finding a job can be a job in itself. Trying to find balance can also be a big part of your practice — not being too attached to the form of practice, while not entirely letting go of the form when you need it, either.

In the end, every form is a doorway to the essence: It can serve as a reminder, and as a means, to connect to the essence. Without the right view, understanding, and method, though, you can get stuck in the form without realizing the essence. On the other hand, there are those who think, “I don’t need to recite the mantra, I don’t need to visualize, I don’t need these methods.” Either way, one will miss the connection.

One needs to understand the important balance between contemplative meditation and the practices that support it. Contemplation on the natural state is beautiful, and the supportive practices are also beautiful and needed.



The 2nd International Lishu Institute Retreat, India

Registration Deadline Is Sept. 20, 2010

Please join us from Feb. 22 through March 4, 2011, for the second international retreat at Lishu Institute in Dehradun, Uttaranchal, India; plus a visit to Menri Monastery, Himachel Pradesh, India. During his retreat Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will give teachings on the Advice of Lishu Taring and [the practice of Sherap Chamma](#) .

Registration deadline is Sept. 20, 2010. If you do not have a valid passport or Indian tourist visa, please apply for these well in advance so you will have them in hand by January 10.□

[More information >](#)



Celebrate Rinpoche's 50th in Nepal

You Are Invited to a Birthday Celebration for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Dear Worldwide Sangha,

Greetings and love from Senghe Wangyal and Tsering Wangmo. We have a special announcement for all our sangha members around the world. Our loving father and husband Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, your beloved teacher, is gracefully aging! Rinpoche is turning 50 years old in 2011. For this significant milestone we want to invite you to join us in celebrating Rinpoche's birthday in Kathmandu, Nepal, on March 6 and 7, 2011.

[More information >](#)



Upcoming Retreat in Crestone, Colo.

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“The Chamma Ling Experience” by Al Vreeland



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has graciously agreed to teach from the Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu Masters for the Chamma Ling retreat in Crestone, Colorado, this year. The

Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu (Oral

Transmission of Zhang Zhung

) is the oldest and most important dzogchen text in the Bon Buddhist tradition. It was first written down in the 8th century in the Zhang Zhung language and a century later was translated into Tibetan by Ponchen Tsanpo. This series of teachings contains some of the most subtle explanations within the dzogchen tradition.

The masters who are described in this text are acknowledged to have achieved the highest level of realization. As each of the masters approached the end of his life, his disciple would ask for him to relate a brief biography and the essence of his lifetime of practice and realization. The result is a series of poetic pith teachings that point out an unconditioned state of being and awareness beyond the tantric process of transformation.

For someone born and raised in Western culture, the experience of dzogchen teachings is not only unique, it is also uniquely challenging to describe appropriately. A dzogchen teaching is like a note written in disappearing ink that instructs you to burn the paper it is written on. As you follow Rinpoche's instructions during the retreat, you realize he is attempting to help you achieve a level of perception and understanding that allows you to directly experience a state of mind that itself is beyond concepts and teaching. If you can relax while skillfully maintaining intent focus, if you can hold trust in Rinpoche while letting go of your belief in conventional reality, the opportunity for personal development is unbounded.

The retreat will be held from September 23 to 26, 2010, in Crestone, Colorado. You will find details and can register at: <http://www.chammaling.org/>



Web-Based Teachings

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Next Online Workshop With Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche Begins Sept. 25



Registrations are now being accepted for the next three-week Tibetan Sound Healing course with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. This course, offered in an interactive online format, will take place from Sept. 25 through Oct. 17, 2010. Through instructional videos Tenzin Rinpoche will explain and guide the practice of ancient sound healing techniques. You can progress through

the practices from the comfort and privacy of your own home, and Rinpoche will make himself available to provide guidance and answer questions.

[More information >](#)

[Brief video: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes his online workshop >](#)

[Participants' comments from first workshop >](#)



International Sangha News□ □ □

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Students Report From Around the World

News From Germany



Festive evening during Three Doors retreat The German Sangha reports about the recent “Three Doors” retreat with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, organized by

Garuda Germany and held in Buchenau (near Frankfurt) on August 2-8. More than 100 participants from all over Europe traveled to Buchenau to attend this profound retreat, during which Rinpoche helped participants explore in depth the techniques for opening the three doors of body, speech, and mind.

Practices taught included the Nine Breathings of Purification, the Five Tsa Lung Exercises, the Five Warrior Seed Syllables Practice, and the Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen. “We are grateful that Rinpoche offered this opportunity and we will go on exercising these practices in our local practice groups.”



Invitation: Consecration of the Great Stupa

Please Join Us This November and December

Dear friends:

In the name of Garuda Mexico I am pleased to invite all members of the Bon worldwide sangha to celebrate the Internal Consecration of the Great Stupa for World Peace. We would be very pleased if all [More >](#)



Upcoming Retreats

Ligmincha's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

The retreats described below will take place at Serenity Ridge, Ligmincha Institute's retreat center in Nelson County, Va. To register or for more information, click on the links below, or contact us at Ligmincha@aol.com or 434-263-6304.

Oct. 2, 2010

New Directions in the Dialogue Between Buddhism and Science

A One-Day Workshop With Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Presenters From the University of Virginia

Researchers from the Division of Perceptual Studies within the Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences of UVA will share their findings related to core elements of the Buddhist teachings, including the belief in rebirth. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will participate in the dialogue and guide meditation practices.

[More information/register online >](#)

Oct. 6-10, 2010

**Sleep of Clear Light: The Practice of Sleep Yoga
With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

Centuries ago, Tibetan yogis developed the practice of sleep yoga to transform these dark hours of ignorance into a path toward enlightenment. A powerful tool for awakening, sleep yoga is more than a practice of the night. It helps us to integrate all moments — waking, sleeping, meditation, and even death — with the clear light of awareness. During this intensive five-day retreat, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach and guide us in the clear-light sleep practices of the Mother Tantra, one of the most important cycles of teachings in the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition.

[New: Extend your stay >](#)

[Learn more or register >](#)

Oct. 10, 2010, 12 noon - 1:15 p.m. Eastern Time U.S. (New York time)

Live Internet Broadcast

Guided Dzogchen Practice With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

For our Internet audience only.

[More information >](#)

[Enter the broadcast site >](#)

Oct. 12, 2010, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Eastern Time U.S. (New York time)

Live Internet Broadcast

‘The Power of Openness,’ With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

This will be a live Webcast of a free public talk in Charlottesville, Va., offered in partnership with Unity Church.

[More information >](#)

[Enter the broadcast site >](#)

Nov. 3 - 7, 2010

**Tibetan Yoga, Part 2: *Trul Khor* Training From the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu*
With Alejandro Chaoul-Reich**

The contemplative movements of Tibetan Yoga (*trul khor*) enable us to enter all three doors of body, energy and mind through a single practice, offering a powerful, skillful means for clearing the obstacles and obscurations to openness and clarity in meditation practice. Open to students who have received the Part 1 teachings of

Trul Khor

(

Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu

) since Jan. 1, 2000.

[Learn more or register >](#)

Dec. 27, 2010 - Jan. 1, 2011

Dzogchen: The View, Meditation, Behavior, and Result

The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung, Part 3

With Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

The Experiential Transmission of the Zhang Zhung Masters is the centerpiece of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's dzogchen teachings and is presented at Serenity Ridge each year at our winter retreat. *Prerequisite:* Practitioners who have already received the Part 2 or higher-level teachings in a previous cycle of Chag Tri teachings are warmly invited to attend this retreat.

[Learn more or register >](#)

New: Extend your stay! You may stay up to three days after the winter retreat for personal retreat time. For more information or to register for an extended stay, contact the Ligmincha office at ligmincha@aol.com or 434-263-6304

To register for any of the above retreats, or for more information about teachings in the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet, please contact us at gmincha@aol.com [Li](#)

gmincha@aol.com

or 434-263-6304, or go to:

<https://www.ligmincha.org/retreats/retreats.html>