

Teaching Issue

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A Letter from VOCL Editors

Wishes for a Happy Losar!

Hello and Happy Losar Everyone!

Feb. 11 began the Tibetan Year of the Water Snake. Tashi Delek!

Of special note:

- Our sangha in Mexico is happy to announce that the VOCL will soon be coming to them in Spanish, thanks to Lourdes Hinojosa. We welcome her to the VOCL team and look forward to seeing her beautiful work manifest. More details to come!
- The VOCL team's copy editor, Vickie Walter, is now the new Communications Director for Serenity Ridge. She has been working closely with Polly Turner, who recently retired as Communication Director. (Polly continues to work with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Ligmincha in a number of areas.)
- Have you seen the new Ligmincha International Website? It's beautiful, user friendly and

offers us all a taste of Rinpoche's worldwide sangha and the connection that we all share. See more below and be sure to [visit the website](#) .

- Please enjoy the edited excerpt below from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's oral teachings on the Six Lamps during last summer's retreat at Serenity Ridge.

In Bön,
Aline and Jeff Fisher



'Coming Back to the Heart'

An Edited Excerpt from Oral Teachings Given by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the Six Lamps, Summer 2012



The idea of a lamp is that it illuminates the darkness; it makes the darkness disappear. A lamp can illuminate what you want to see, what you can't see. There are many functions of a lamp, but the most important quality is that a lamp illuminates itself internally. So here, the meaning of the lamp is to look at oneself and thereby cut the source of delusion. When we are taking inner refuge, we are not looking out at anything. We are trying to look at our inner self, our inner buddha, our inner Samantabhadra. In this way it is called the self-clearing lamp. That is the meaning of the lamp.

These teachings are the lamp that shows the hidden wisdom. Hidden wisdom is hidden not because somebody has hidden it from us, but because it just sometimes remains hidden for us. It's not hidden because it is too difficult but, rather, because it is too easy. It's not hidden because it is so far away but, rather, because it is so close. It's not hidden because of being rarely within us; rather, it's hidden because it is always within us. So sometimes the reason why things are hidden is the opposite of what is usually meant by hidden. They can elude us by being so simple, so close, so accessible and all the time with us that we just cannot get it.

It seems like it is human nature to become more interested in something if it appears difficult to us. And our level of interest can vary even over the course of just one day! With regard to relationships, often when one person gets a little closer, then the other person creates a little more distance. It seems we are interested in what is difficult, interested in hardship and interested in what is not there.

A friend of mine is always having difficulty finding a relationship. I recently told him, I can see what your problem is: If somebody begins to love you, then you begin to not love that person. And likewise, if somebody begins losing interest in you, then you begin to go crazy for that person. That is the pattern that I've been seeing in him over the past 10 years! [laughter] I asked him, "Why do you do that?" Some things you have to learn; you develop a love with somebody and you learn some things by going deeply into them. You don't always remain conditioned by the frenzied mind, because that mind is always interested in the difficult thing. If you live your life with the support of that mind, you'll drive yourself crazy, along with all the people around you. [laughter] But in one sense that is human nature; our mind is like that.

So the Six Lamps text refers to the lamp of the heart, which is the lamp that brings out the hidden wisdom. When we go to the inner refuge, the heart place is what we're referring to. So each time we do the practice, we recite this inner refuge prayer, and we just go to the heart place, the knowing of that. I believe that the single goal for spiritual development in life would be to get closer to that knowing. That's it.

If you look at it from the view of complexity versus simplicity, complexity will be all one's conflicts and issues and obstacles and emotions and thoughts. Simplicity is the abiding. And the relationship between the complexity and the simplicity is incredible. You accomplish the simple one to overcome the complex one. If it were the other way around, then we would really be in trouble! Luckily, it's not that way. But we don't trust enough—that is the real issue: We don't trust enough. We prefer the more complex means for overcoming the complex things; that's what we trust in, and that's truly what we believe in. One way to look at it, then, is that life's single purpose, its single focus, is to get closer, to get familiar, and eventually to live all the time with that single essence, that knowledge of the source within.

I've shared many times an experience I had while I was traveling in Tibet. I gave a very concise teaching to a small group of older monks. Afterward, one monk came out of our meeting and held my hand, with tears in his eyes, and said, "Now I know what to do for the rest of my life!" After just one hour of interaction, he felt fully confident that he now knew what to do for the rest of his life. It is amazing that you can come to know in an hour what to do for the rest of your life, even though it has eluded you throughout the course of your whole life so far! For me as a teacher, that was a very important moment. It comes down to a very simple understanding, but it's one that requires so much trust, so much in the way of one's valuing it.

One very important characteristic in the teachings of dzogchen is that the conceptual mind is not encouraged. The point is not to stop thinking but, rather, not to take one's thinking as the way of liberation. You see, within every conversation and conflict there is rational thinking, and there is thinking that includes a strong sense of ego. In that restricted space, resolution is difficult. But the moment thinking becomes less and ego becomes less and the warmth of the heart takes more of a place in the interaction, there is more space opening up between the people and a resolution begins to arise. Everything resolves; issues are not issues anymore. They dissolve into that space; they dissolve into that base of all. Of course, it's easy to say and hard to do. But at least we know not to encourage conceptual mind.

With regard to psychological analysis, some say they really need it sometimes. My advice is to go for it, but go for it for as short a time as possible. The reason you may want to engage in analysis is because at that very moment you feel weak and really feel the need for it. But behind that urge, you have a wisdom that sees that this is not the sole way to do it, and that wisdom helps you to bring it to a close when you can. But if you don't have that second wisdom, you can be stuck there forever. Someone told me recently that a woman had been analyzing one of her dreams for 15 years and that she was very proud of that. Well, if it takes 15 years to analyze one dream, and we supposedly have 84,000 thoughts every day, then if you were to dedicate 15 years to analyzing each thought, then that would be the end of things, a guarantee for your not ever getting out of samsara!

In therapy, one might trace a particular problem back to childhood. It may almost appear as if samsara started when you were 13 years old, when your father was very mean to you, or something like that—a sort of chronological delusion. But the truth is that your samsara began well before that. It had already started a long, long time ago, so long ago that it is said that there is no beginning of your samsara. So if you think about a chronological source of your delusion, or the historical sources of your delusion, and then with each event we encounter we make a big deal of it as we often do, it would be impossible to ever become liberated.

Looking at your problems, you may say, “I have a tendency to be fearful in my life.” Okay, that’s one thing—you see that you are fearful. That’s a single source, and it’s within you. But from another perspective one could say, “I have a fear of this person I work with; I have a fear of flying; I have a fear in this situation and a fear in that situation.” If you approach the problem from a complex view, with a focus on each individual person and situation that seems to evoke that fearfulness, then it’s very hard, because you might have countless things that provoke your fear. So, sometimes we have a tendency to look at our problems in a very specific, historic, individual way, emphasizing certain situations. We try to concretize the problem and make it really solid: This is my problem; this is the person of my problem; this is the time of my problem and this is the story of my problem—this is it! That is not really the case, yet we make it like that. And with all of the focus on the complexity, it is not possible to resolve, because that is not the source of the problem.

If you work directly with the core source of your fear, the source within you, then the problem becomes only one thing and not many. From that unique perspective you see that the source of your fear has nothing to do with anybody else; it has to do only with yourself. Usually, though, we are more interested in dealing with the complexity, the many people evoking our problem, rather than simply dealing with the one person who is the source—you, right? So when we say, go to the source of the delusion, it has nothing to do with the chronological aspects and the varieties of manifestations of it.

Look at the effect that a simple change of mood has on one’s view, such as when somebody is in a good mood, for whatever reason. On that day that person’s point of view is quite different from their normal view. It doesn’t matter where they look. It may be the bad breakfast: “Oh, that’s okay, I wasn’t that hungry.” Or it may be the bad traffic: “Oh, that’s okay, it’s quite interesting traffic today.” No matter what they look at, there’s always something to learn about it, or something interesting about it, something beneficial about it. But on a bad day, even good things no longer look interesting! So it is not about where you are looking and the stories around the details, it is about the one who is looking at them. And the *who* that is looking is not many, it’s one. But the *where* toward

which one looks is many. So, if you want to do a lot of work to resolve one core problem, then go for the
where
! If you want to simplify, though, then look at the
who
, which is you.

That is the method here. The source of our delusion is simple: From a lack of awareness of our base, delusion simply arises. The inner refuge prayer refers to the source of all positive qualities without exception, which is that space. So the joy of the new car? You can get that in that space. The joy of the new relationship? You can get that in that space. The joy of the new home? You can get that in that space. What kind of joy do you want? The joy of chocolate? You can get that in that space. All of the experiences that you are seeking in your life are a quality of mind that you can get in that space—it is the source of all the positive qualities. And when you don't recognize it, then that is also the source of delusion.

The teachings of the Six Lamps are the heart advice which finger-pointedly shows us the truth. They are the heart advice giving us the most important password we could have, the password to the truth. And this password has three digits—unbounded space, infinite awareness and genuine warmth. That is the password to the truth.

(Editors' Note: Please [tune in to the live webcast](#) on March 23 to learn more about Rinpoche's teachings on "The Inner Refuge." It's Ligmincha's first free all-day webcast with Rinpoche, and includes practice sessions and simultaneous translations, too. You can find out more in the article below.)

Photograph by Maria Aurelia Kulik



Announcing a Free Full-Day International Webcast March 23

'The Gift of Inner Refuge' with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

The worldwide sangha, friends and those new to these teachings are invited to join Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche March 23 for an [all-day live webcast](#) on the topic “The Gift of Inner Refuge.” The event will be held from 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time (New York time).

In this full-day online retreat, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will guide you in shifting your attention to the source of all healing, the space of inner refuge. For more information about these teachings on inner refuge, see Rinpoche's latest book, *Awakening the Luminous Mind: Tibetan Meditation for Inner Peace and Joy* (Hay House, June 2012).

This special event is Rinpoche's idea and is the fruit of his wish for all practitioners worldwide to have a full day of teaching, practice and retreat together, as one sangha.

During the webcast, Rinpoche will present two 90-minute teaching sessions. In addition, senior teachers will guide two 60-minute practice sessions. Time for breaks also is built into the schedule.

Real-time translation in Spanish, German, Polish, Italian, French and other languages will be available.

Lourdes Hinojosa, Rinpoche's translator in Mexico and also an active teacher, is coordinating the full-day webcast. Lourdes and Marcy Vaughn, director of study and practice at Ligmincha, will guide the practice sessions.

“This is a great opportunity to gather energy and to be together as a worldwide sangha,” Rinpoche says. Thanks to Rinpoche's unlimited generosity, this full day of teaching and practice is totally free and is open for everyone. So please spread the word to friends, family and those who are ill or may not be able to gather with a group.

[Learn more, get the schedule, enter the broadcast page](#)



Ligmincha's International Website Up and Running!

Our Door to Connect Ligmincha's Centers and Sanghas Worldwide

Please be sure to check out Ligmincha's [new international website](#) . It's really a beautiful site and a way for everyone to stay in touch worldwide. Many thanks to all those who are making it happen!

Ligmincha.org, formerly the site for Ligmincha Institute and Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, is now your entryway to Ligmincha International, which contains information of interest to the international community and is a way to connect all of Ligmincha's worldwide centers and sanghas.

A separate website for [Serenity Ridge](#) features much of the same information that you have been accustomed to seeing on our website over the past several years. You also can link to the Serenity Ridge website from the Ligmincha International homepage.



New! Six Lokas Online Workshop Begins April 14

Seven-Week Course on Transforming Our Emotions



Three-Week Online Course Begins March 2

'Achieving Great Bliss Through Pure Awareness'

In this three-week online course, to start March 2 and run through March 24, 2013, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will instruct and guide the practice of the Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen, a revered Tibetan Bon dzogchen meditation master who lived in the eighth century A.D. This ancient teaching offers pith instructions for a meditation practice that guides one to enter a state of pure awareness that can lead to peace, joy and ultimately the great bliss of self-realization. Offered in cooperation with GlideWing Productions.

[Learn more or register](#)



A Warm Invitation to the Summer Retreat

Sanghas Invited to Accumulate Long-Life Mantras



The worldwide sangha is warmly invited to attend this summer's retreat on the topic of "The Twenty-One Nails, Part 1," and to accumulate the Long Life Mantra for [His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche](#), worldwide spiritual leader of the Bon tradition. The annual three-week retreat will be held June 23–July 13. You are welcome to attend one, two or all three weeks.

His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizen and abbot of Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, will be teaching at the retreat for about six days during Week 2 and Week 3.

Whether or not you are able to attend the summer retreat, all the worldwide sanghas are invited to [accumulate the Long Life Mantra](#) simultaneously for both His Holiness and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher in the Bon tradition and founder of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Please plan to contact the representative on your country by June 1 with the number of mantras you have accumulated. [Check the website](#) soon for information on each country's contact person.

We plan to present a card to His Holiness with the total number of mantra accumulations during his time with us at the summer retreat.

[Learn more about Summer Retreat](#)



Be Sure to See Winter Issue of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*

Featuring Rinpoche's Plans to Establish a European Retreat Center

Find out more about this exciting news as Ligmincha Europe begins searching for the right place for a retreat center; meet the Czech sangha; read about a magical place called Mustang; and much more in the new issue of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*!

[View the Winter 2012/13 issue](#)



New Video Features Chamma Ling Colorado Retreat Center

Rinpoche Shares His Vision for Retreats at Colorado Center



Recently released, this short video was filmed last fall at Chamma Ling near Crestone, Colo., after Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Geshe Yungdrung Gyaltzen gave the blessing for the new Community House. The new facility is being built as a space for small group practice retreats and to support the needs of retreatants in future cabins higher in the mountains.

In this video, Rinpoche speaks of his vision for Chamma Ling, assisted by Maggie Freund, who updates us on the building projects. While they are speaking, we are also treated to the visual beauty of the landscape at Chamma Ling.

Here is a bit of background about a few of the hardworking sangha members who helped make this video possible and who are dedicated to making Rinpoche's vision of Chamma Ling manifest for us all:

John Jackson—Managing Director

John serves on the Board of Directors and is responsible for oversight of operations at Chamma Ling. He served on the Board of Directors for Ligmincha Institute for five years during the founding phase of that organization, and teaches meditation courses and retreats. John is a professor of medical education at the University of Virginia.

Margaret Freund—Design Director

Margaret leads the design and development team for all Chamma Ling facilities. She has worked previously on the design of the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. She also is Chamma

Ling's favorite auctioneer at our annual auction. Margaret has a business based in Richmond, Va. and Boulder, Colo., that focuses on the commercial redevelopment of historic buildings.

Andrea Heckman

Andrea coordinates the Chamma Ling annual fundraising auction. She is a cultural anthropologist and has a business importing Andean textiles near Taos. She has been a trekking guide in Peru for many years.

Gerry Heikes

Gerry manages the support Chamma Ling's facilities and helps organize group retreats. Gerry recently retired in Crestone after careers in health care and the military.

[View video](#)

[Visit Chamma Ling's website](#)



Sangha Sharing

Thoughts on the Benefits of Working with Prisoners



[Read an interview with Hannah in Ligmincha Europe \(January 2012\)](#)



Upcoming Events

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 registration@ligmincha.org or 434-263-6304.

March 9-10, 2013

The Nine Ways of Bon with John Jackson

[Learn more or register](#)

March 23, 2013

Free Full-Day Live Webcast: The Gift of Inner Refuge

[Learn more](#)

April 10–14, 2013

Spring Retreat 2013—Embracing Impermanence: Inner Refuge in the Face of Change

[Learn more or register](#)

May 4–5, 2013

Healing with the Medicine Buddha with Geshe Nyima Kunchap

[Learn more or register](#)

June 9–22, 2013

Summer Work Retreat

[Learn more or register](#)

June 23–July 13, 2013

Summer Retreat—The Twenty-One Nails, Part 1

Join us for one, two or all three weeks.

[Learn more or register](#)

Sept. 13–15, 2013

H.E. Menri Lopon Teachings (topic to be announced)

Online registration opens Monday, March 4.

Oct. 9–10, 2013

New Dialogs Between Buddhism and Science

(to be followed by annual fall retreat; consider registering for both)

Online registration opens Monday, March 4.

Oct. 11–13, 2013

Fall Retreat—The Open Heart: Healing in the Dzogchen Tradition

Online registration opens Monday, March 4.

Dec. 27, 2013–Jan. 1, 2014

Winter Retreat—Dzogchen Practice Retreat

Open to all.

Online registration opens Monday, March 18.

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 registration@ligmincha.org or 434-263-6304, or visit the [Serenity Ridge website](#) or the [Ligmincha Institute website](#).