

Voice of Clear Light

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Year One of the International Board

A Report from Ligmincha International Board Chair Rob Patzig



Ligmincha International Board of Directors at the Summer Retreat. From left: Carlos Madero, Mexico; Anneke Dekkers, The Netherlands; Justyna Przondo, Poland; Rob Patzig, USA (Board chair); Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche; Serenity Ridge Resident Lama Geshe Tenzin Yangton; Pam Rodeheaver, USA; and Gabriel Rocco, USA. Missing from photo: Oliver Wirtz, Germany, and newest board member, Patty Gift, USA. (photo by Eustaquio Martinez del Rio Escalante)

The Ligmincha International Board of Directors marked its first anniversary during the first week of Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge in June.

Current board members Anneke Dekkers, Carlos Madero, Gabriel Rocco, Justyna Przondo, Pam Rodeheaver and I all attended the first week of retreat, and Oliver Wirtz, who could not attend in person, joined some of our meetings by Skype. Patty Gift, our newest addition to the board, could not attend week one, but attended the second week of retreat and was appointed to the board by Rinpoche then. Ligmincha International's Executive Director Sue Davis Dill and Secretary Maggie Scobie also participated in these meetings. Finally, Lourdes Hinojosa kindly provided translation services to board members on several occasions.

The Board met several times during retreat, both formally and informally. Our objective during this week was not to accomplish specific tasks but to have broad and lively conversations across a range of topics in order to set an agenda for the coming year. Our major discussions

included:

- **Regional Structure and Support:** How are sanghas organized around the world? How do we coordinate teachings and activities both regionally and globally? We will be looking at this and sharing stories and learnings in the coming year.
- **Online Education and Support:** How can we make more support available online for students and practitioners around the world and protect the teachings? How do we approach multiple languages and interests? Can we conduct online trainings? Can we augment retreats at our centers with online education and materials?
- **Ligmincha Website:** We need to revise the website to reflect the international nature of our community, and we need to make it easier to find information. We are working on a plan to develop a new website.
- **Umdze and Practice Leader Training and Qualifications:** What skills and knowledge does a practice leader or an umdze need to serve a community of practitioners or sangha? What processes are in place or should be put in place to provide a method for qualified practitioners to serve in such roles?
- **The Mandala Council:** This group of representatives from many of our larger or more established sanghas is meant to be a critical part of how Ligmincha creates a sense of international community and belonging. How can it become more active? How should the board and the Mandala Council best support one another? How should they communicate? How should the council be organized and governed? What projects should the council undertake?

These are the major areas selected for discussion in the coming year.

During its first year, the board focused on learning to work as an international group, across time zones and multiple languages, and to establish basic policies and procedures for the organization. The board finalized and published the Charter and Bylaws for Ligmincha International, and a guidance document regarding bylaws for new and existing Ligmincha entities around the world. We also have begun several surveys of practitioners with support from the Mandala Council, and a survey of Facebook use by sanghas worldwide as a part of looking at how individual sanghas, countries, regions and the international communities communicate with each other.

The Ligmincha International Board meets formally once a month for one to two hours, and there are often ad hoc groups of two to three members working on special projects. Email and social media apps also are common tools that we use to work together. We work primarily in English, though our members speak many other languages. Videoconferencing technologies help us

greatly to hear and be responsive to one another and also to ensure that enough time is given for any translation that needs to take place.

To support the growing needs of the sangha, the board also has the power to create standing committees, which can include non-board members. The first such committee is the Practice and Trainings Committee. This working group includes some of Ligmincha's senior teachers, as well as Geshe Tenzin Yangton, the resident lama at Serenity Ridge. This group is working to define and to create new practice and support materials for use within Ligmincha. We will talk more about the role of this group and their work in a future Voice of Clear Light.