

THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration From Ligmincha Institute

Volume 5, Number 1

January 8, 2005

For easy reading, we recommend that you print out "The Voice of Clear Light."

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Revised focus for the Spring and Summer Retreats at Serenity Ridge with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

"Prana and Your Practice" - edited excerpts from the written and oral teachings of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

"Advice on Posture and Gaze During Meditation" - selected excerpts from the writings of Bon and Buddhist Masters.

Update on the Chamma Ling Retreat Center - Transforming Dreams Into Reality.

REVISED SPRING AND SUMMER RETREAT TOPICS

Dear Sangha,

Please note that there has been a modification to the topics for the 2005 spring and summer retreats with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

During the spring retreat, Rinpoche will now give an in-depth teaching and practice retreat exclusively on the Healing Practice of Sidpa Gyalmo and the summer retreat will now focus on the Meditation of the Six Lokas for all three weeks.

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Complete descriptions for both retreats follow.

ANNUAL SPRING RETREAT, April 20-24, 2005

DISCOVERING SACRED WATERS

The Healing Power of the Water Element in the Bon Buddhist Tradition of Tibet.

Join Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at Serenity Ridge this spring when he offers a special healing experience for students, health care professionals, and anyone currently encountering illness. During the retreat Rinpoche will focus on the Healing Practice of Sidpai Gyalmo and include additional teachings on the healing attributes of the water element.

Rinpoche will guide this meditation and healing ritual that concentrates on the compassion of the fully enlightened protector of Bon, Yeshe Walmo, the principal emanation of Sidpai Gyalmo. The stream of transmission of this energetic healing practice originated

with Yeshe Walmo herself. It was transmitted from master to master and eventually to Yongdzin Rinpoche in Northern Tibet, and from him to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

The healing waters produced during the meditation are considered to be a powerful remedy for the physical illnesses arising in modern times. In addition to our practicing together with Tenzin Rinpoche and receiving the healing waters during the retreat, we will receive transmission from Rinpoche and supplementary teachings to allow continued practice in our daily lives.

Retreat cost (includes meals):

\$400 received by March 16; \$450 received by April 6; \$500 received after April 6.

ANNUAL SUMMER RETREAT, July 3-23, 2005

PURIFYING THE OBSTACLES TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Transformation Through Body, Breath and Mind

Through the power of the Meditation of the Six Lokas one relates to the emotional afflictions associated with each of the six realms of cyclic existence and purifies them in one's own life. These afflictions are the six destructive emotions that are the obstacles to enlightenment: anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride, and pleasurable distraction.

During this retreat Tenzin Rinpoche will explain how physical movements, the breath, mantra, imagery, and the base of contemplation deeply purify the seeds of our karmic patterns and support the

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healing that comes from resting in one's true nature, the source of all joy and happiness.

Tenzin Rinpoche welcomes everyone to be with him at Serenity Ridge this summer when he offers commentary, practice instructions, and transmission of the Meditation of the Six Lokas based on Bon dzogchen texts from the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu. Rinpoche will also perform refuge and bodhisattva vow ceremonies during the second week of this enlightening and healing three-week retreat. One may attend one, two, or all three weeks of the summer retreat.

Retreat cost PER WEEK (includes meals):

\$450 received by May 18; \$500 received by June 8; \$550 received after June 8.

Retreats are held at Serenity Ridge, our retreat center in rural Nelson County, Va. Serenity Ridge is located atop a hill with views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

PLEASE NOTE:

Space is limited; early registration is encouraged for both retreats. On-site dormitory housing and tenting are available.

Contact Ligmincha Institute at ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

"PRANA AND YOUR PRACTICE"

From Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book "Healing With Form, Energy, and Light":

"The Tibetan word for the vital energy is lung, but I will use the widely known Sanskrit word, prana. Prana is the energy that powers and is the substance of all things material and immaterial. It is the fundamental energy from which all things arise, the energy of the kunzhi, the basis of existence. At its most subtle level it is undifferentiated, non-localized, and non-dual. Its first discrimination is into the five pure lights of the elements, which are too subtle for us to perceive with our ordinary minds. However, we can sense prana directly at the grosser levels in the air we breathe. We can also sense its flow in our bodies. It is at this level, in which prana can be felt both in its movement and its effects, that we work in tantra. We become sensitive to and develop the flow of prana using mind, imagination, breathing, posture, and movement. By guiding the grosser manifestations of prana, we can affect more subtle levels. As our sensitivity increases, we can directly experience prana in subtler dimensions."

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A few edited excerpts from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:

Prana is very important to our practice in its ability to purify or refine our clarity of mind. We all are familiar with how the mind can constantly change from clear to unclear. What is it in our experience that creates this lack of clarity? And what is it that makes the mind really clear, without doubt, without impurities? Strictly speaking, this is the job of the prana. The prana can either separate us from our clarity of mind, or enhance our meditation practice.

The reason why we sit in a specific meditation posture is only so the prana will be free to move in the right direction. If you want to move the prana upward so that clear meditative visions will arise, you have to sit upright. However, if you want to develop zhiñe or calm abiding concentration practice, you want to have your body more relaxed with a downward gaze, so that the mind has more of a resting nature. Basically, the position of the body and the gaze of the eye help direct both the mind and the prana.

The more we look at all the different Eastern spiritual traditions, the more clear and obvious it becomes that prana is a fundamental aspect of the practice, especially related to the teachings of tantra and dzogchen. Chi gong, tai chi, different forms of yoga ^ all

are

directly related to one's chi, or prana. These practices lead one to reconnect or reinforce or transform in some way, and they all are doing so through skilled use of prana. Sometimes these practices may place more emphasis on developing one's physical body and one's health, but more often the purpose of working with prana is to develop more subtle, meditative experiences.

In the text there are five pranas referred to as "precious ones."

These five are upward-moving prana, life-force prana, fire-like prana, pervasive prana and downward-moving prana. These pranas are indeed precious! Without them, without an understanding of them, and without the practices that work with them, there is no way to achieve enlightenment. There is no way! In ancient times, prana was called "windhorse." Prana is the horse that transports one from samsara to nirvana. It is the horse that transports one from a weak place to the strongest place within oneself. It is the horse that transports one from poor health to the healthiest place in oneself. These pranas are basically a means of transport and of transformation.

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Various parts of our body are associated with different pranic forces. Each form of prana contains an element of mind. And that element of mind can develop in a positive or in a negative direction. Depending on the flow of prana, you can have higher or lower experiences of the mind, a healthy or unhealthy body, and healthy or unhealthy energy. Basically, the flow of wind is what makes everything happen. Some winds flow upward, some downward, some are pervading, some are opening. Prana has a movement, a rhythm. The movement and its direction define the quality of experience. In the end, the way prana flows or does not flow always depends on one's awareness.

[Editor's Note: To learn more about prana and related practices such as the Nine Breathings of Purification and the Tsa Lung exercises, see Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book "Healing With Form, Energy and Light." Published by Snow Lion Publications in 2003, it is available from Ligmincha's Bookstore. Visit www.ligminchastore.org, or call toll-free (866) 522-5269. (In the Charlottesville area, call (434) 220-0600.)]

ADVICE ON POSTURE AND GAZE DURING MEDITATION

From "Healing With Form, Energy and Light" by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:

"The posture is taught in terms of five points. The first is to cross the legs to keep the pranic energy circulating back to the

trunk of the body, to the secret chakra. This promotes the generation of subtle internal heat. The second is to fold the hands in the position of equipoise, one upon the other in the lap. In our tradition both hands are palm up, the left hand resting on top of the right. The hands are tucked against the low belly, at the level of the chakra, four finger-widths below the navel. Like the crossed legs, this keeps the energy from being dispersed. The third is to keep the spine straight, not hyper-extended or rigid or slumped or bent. This keeps the channels, particularly the three main ones, straight and open so that the prana can flow smoothly and easily. The fourth is to pull the jaw slightly down and in, which lengthens the back of the neck and helps quiet thought. The fifth point is to keep the chest open, which aids breathing and helps open the heart chakra."

From "Turning the Mind Into an Ally," by Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche:
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"There are many statues and paintings of the Buddha in meditation posture. These beautifully illustrate how the posture is designed to allow natural strength and groundedness with some kind of openness and dignity. By taking an upright sitting posture, we enable the body to relax and the mind to be awake. You can use different postures for meditation, but under ordinary circumstances, sitting on either a cushion or a chair is best. If you're unable to sit, it is possible to do this technique while walking or standing or even lying down. However, the most efficient posture for this practice is sitting.

"When you sit down, take a balance, grounded posture to allow the energy in the center of your body to move freely. If you're on a cushion, sit with your legs loosely crossed. If you're in a chair, keep your legs uncrossed and your feet flat on the floor. Imagine that a string attached to the top of your head is pulling you upright. Let your organs, muscles, and bones settle around your erect spine, like a coat falling around a hanger. Your vertebrae should feel as though they are stacked like gold coins, allowing for the natural curvature of the spine."

From "Luminous Mind," by Kalu Rinpoche:

"The body provides important assistance to the practice of meditation in general and samatha in particular, because mind and body are clearly related and interdependent. The posture facilitates meditation, although it is not absolutely indispensable. Ultimately, we can meditate in any position, but posture is important when we are starting out. Good physical posture fosters correct positioning of the mind. The body has different subtle channels within which the

winds or subtle energies circulate. These animate our thoughts and states of consciousness. With a straight posture, the channels are also straight and the winds can circulate freely, causing the mind to come naturally to a state of equilibrium and rest."

From "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying," by Sogyal Rinpoche:
"In the Dzogchen teachings it is said that your View and your posture should be like a mountain. Your View is the summation of your whole understanding and insight into the nature of mind, which you bring to your meditation. So your View translates into and inspires your posture, expressing the core of your being in the way you sit.

"Sit, then, as if you were a mountain, with all the unshakable, steadfast majesty of a mountain. A mountain is completely natural and at ease with itself, however strong the winds that batter it,

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however thick the dark clouds that swirl around its peak. Sitting like a mountain, let your mind rise and fly and soar.

"The most essential point of this posture is to keep the back straight, like 'an arrow' or 'a pile of golden coins.' The 'inner energy' or prana will then flow easily through the subtle channels of the body, and your mind will find its true state of rest. Don't force anything. The lower part of the spine has a natural curve; it should be relaxed but upright. Your head should be balanced comfortably on your neck. It is your shoulders and the upper part of your torso that carry the strength and grace of the posture, and they should be held in strong poise, but without any tension."

SOURCES:

Kalu Rinpoche. "Luminous Mind." Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997.

Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche. "Turning the Mind Into an Ally." New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

Sogyal Rinpoche. "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying." Edited by Patrick Gaffney and Andrew Harvey. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. "Healing With Form, Energy and Light." Edited by Mark Dahlby. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002.

EDITOR'S NOTE: All of these excellent books are available from Ligmincha's Bookstore. Visit www.ligminchastore.org, or call toll-free (866) 522-5269. (In the Charlottesville area, call (434) 220-0060.)

AN UPDATE ON THE CHAMMA LING RETREAT CENTER: TRANSFORMING DREAMS INTO REALITY.

EDITOR'S NOTE: During this past fall retreat, Tenzin Wangyal

Rinpoche spoke about the Chamma Ling Retreat Center in Colorado, encouraging everyone to come visit and to learn more about it, as well as to participate in its development. Here is a brief edited excerpt from his comments:

I want to let everyone know about Chamma Ling and to introduce you all to our vision of this special place. We all know what Chamma Ling means, right? It is the place of Sherab Chamma, the Wisdom, Loving Mon, Oct 3, 2005 11:57 AM

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Mother, now in Colorado. I know many of you have already been there and seen this beautiful land. For three years now, I have been going there once a year to teach. Our plan is to build the Chamma Ling Retreat Center as a setting for practice, especially for smaller groups and individuals and for longer-term retreats. This makes it different from the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, where we will continue to have many larger retreats and to host many teachers, with more of a focus on learning and training.

The project is moving along wonderfully. Everyone in our worldwide sangha who is ready for long retreats will have a place at Chamma Ling. We know it is very difficult to do longer retreats in one's own home. That's where we build our lives in samsara, so it's very difficult to build our nirvana there as well! I feel very strongly, and I think everyone here agrees, that it will be great to be able to take a break from our lives and go to this great new place.

And more from the latest brochure about Chamma Ling:

It has long been the dream of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to provide practitioners a secluded site for long-term retreats. Chamma Ling, Land of the Loving Mother, is the manifestation of that dream and will be built by and for the support of our community of practitioners. Through our dedication we will manifest 12 retreat cabins, a house for our lamas, and a small teaching hall all connected by a beautiful system of trails winding through the spectacular mountain wilderness. This retreat center will provide our many sanghas a space for personal retreats, a space to discover what lies within us, a space to reveal within ourselves our own true nature.

The solitude of the mountains and the powerful energy of this ancient pilgrimage site are the perfect supports for many types of retreat and practice. For those working with the elements, there could be no better place to deeply connect with earth, water, fire, wind and the all-pervading space that is so clear in these high mountains. The deep, crystal-like mountain sky is an amazing support for the dzogchen practices of sky and sun gazing. Some cabins will also be outfitted and supplied to support long-term dark retreats. Those exploring the causal vehicle will find a ground ripe for connecting

to the spirits of mountains, streams, trees and sky, as the Native Americans have done here for centuries. Whatever your practice, the deep solitude and clear energy of Chamma Ling will be the perfect support. Our goal is to provide simple and affordable cabins for practitioners to dive deep into their practices for a few weeks, a few months, or perhaps a few years.

SUPPORTING THE VISION

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Chamma Ling of Crestone will provide Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche with a place for his own personal retreats, empowering the space with his presence and blessings. Rinpoche will also give final instructions and blessings, then put individual practitioners into retreat at least once each year. If Tenzin Rinpoche is not present during your retreat we will have a monk or senior practitioner resident at Chamma Ling to assist retreatants if questions arise related to practice.

Our initial goal is to complete four cabins by September 2005. We plan to start construction this spring. After our normally scheduled teaching retreat in September, Tenzin Rinpoche will stay a few extra days and give personal instruction to the first set of practitioners to go into retreat in the first cabins at Chamma Ling. Only initial benefactors will be eligible to apply for this unique, once in a lifetime opportunity.

As we prepare to begin construction of this unique retreat facility in the wilderness of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, we are offering several ways for you to support Tenzin Rinpoche's vision. Since our goal is to give people a place for personal retreat, we will reward personal generosity with time in our retreat cabins.

LEVELS OF GENEROSITY

- 1)The Foundation to the Path: Five months in a retreat cabin at the time of your choosing, with no restriction on how soon the time must be used. \$1000.
- 2)The Middle Way: Thirteen months use of a retreat cabin at any time in your life. \$2500.
- 3)The Path of Vision: You gain the use of a cabin for one month each year for the rest of your life. \$5000.
- 4)The Crystal Mountain: For your generosity, a cabin will be made available for up to two months each year, at intervals of your choice, for the rest of your life. \$10,000.

Our cabins will be available for rentals to all practitioners, but benefactors will have first choice for time in the cabins. Weekly and monthly cabin rental rates are bound to increase over time, but benefactors will have "locked in" at the lowest available rates.

CHAMMA LING OFFICERS

BOARD: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, John Jackson, Margaret Freund, Khedup

Gyatso.

COUNCIL: Kent Magner, Eyahanna Magner, Elisabeth DesMarais, Andrea Heckman, Raven Lee, Jane Goe, Peter May.

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PLEASE NOTE:

If you would like to consider pledging and would like more information, please contact one of these folks:

Ken Okuno kenokuno@pacbell.net

Christina Bell crmbell@ix.netcom.com

Alaina Speraw goldlake@earthlink.net

Also, there is a slight change in the Chamma Ling website:

<http://www.chammaling-crestone.org>. Visit the website to learn and see more!

And plan now for the retreat at Crestone to be held Sept. 22-25, 2005 on "Tibetan Yogas of Dreaming and Dying" with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Many thanks to the Board and Council Members of Chamma Ling for their vision and their work in making the Chamma Ling Retreat Center a reality!

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For more information about Ligmincha Institute, the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, or retreats at

Serenity Ridge or our regional centers, please contact us:

Ligmincha Institute

313 2nd St. SE Suite #207

Charlottesville, VA 22902

434-977-6161 fax 434-977-7020

ligmincha@aol.com www.ligmincha.org

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