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Special Announcements Issue

Volume 11, Number 1 / January 2011



Happy 2011!

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A Few Special Dates for Your Calendar

We may still be stuck in winter, but the groundhog has promised an early spring, and this year spring brings with it these special observances and events:

Losar (Tibetan New Year) – *March 5, 2011.*

This March marks the start of the year of the Iron Rabbit, 2138.

Rinpoche's 50th Birthday Celebration in Kathmandu – *March 6 and 7, 2011.*

Registrations are no longer being accepted for this occasion, but we can all celebrate by adding to the growing number of long-life mantra recitations in honor of the birthday of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. [Learn more >](#)

First Live Internet Broadcast of 2011 – *April 17, 12 noon – 1:15 pm Eastern Time (New York time).*

A guided dzogchen practice with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

[View the full schedule of live Webcasts >](#)

Now is the time to register for the **June 24 fundraising dinner with esteemed guest His Holiness**

Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, who will be joined on the eve of the summer retreat by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during a special fundraising dinner to benefit orphans at Menri Monastery.

[More details >](#)

More schedule items will arrive with the next issue of *VOCL*, when we expect to have news about an upcoming retreat at Serenity Ridge with H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, head instructor of Menri Monastery in India; and about the fall retreat with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (hint: See Rinpoche's book [Healing With Form, Energy and Light](#)).

All our best for a Happy Year of the Iron Rabbit!

Aline and Jeff Fisher

Editors, *Voice of Clear Light*



Words of Appreciation

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With Gratitude for Mary Ellen McCourt and Jan Cressman

As of December we've had some important changes in the Ligmincha Council, the group of dedicated volunteers who help make everything happen here at our retreat center. Mary Ellen McCourt stepped down from her position as Co-director of Communications, and Jan Cressman from her role as Director of

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Bookstore & Tibet Shop

Ligmincha's online store is **currently offline** because of staffing issues.

We hope it will return soon.

In the meantime, visit the Bookstore & Tibet Shop when you come to Serenity Ridge Retreat Center. Most books published through Sacred Sky Press, Ligmincha International's publishing arm which supports books on Bon teachings and translations of texts, are available through [lulu.com](#).

About Voice of Clear Light

Voice of Clear Light is a free email publication of Ligmincha International. Your suggestions and contributions to *Voice of Clear Light* are welcome. To contact us, send an email to: voiceofclearlight@ligmincha.org

For more information about Ligmincha International, the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, or retreats at Serenity Ridge or our other regional centers, please contact us at:

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Stay in Touch

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Fundraising. I'd like to take this opportunity to express words of thanks to both Mary Ellen and Jan for their contributions to Ligmincha Institute.

* * *



It all started in 2000, when Rinpoche came into the office in downtown Charlottesville and handed me an image Mary Ellen had made for him. She had taken a photograph of Rinpoche during his teachings at the Open Center in New York. Around the photo she'd added a border, so that it looked a bit like a thangka painting framed in brocade. At the time I was a volunteer with Ligmincha's Tibet Shop. In handing me the photo, Rinpoche simply said, "You and Marcy should talk with her."

Soon after, Mary Ellen attended a retreat with Rinpoche at Serenity Ridge. She arrived with a stack of images she had created, and donated them to the store so we could sell them to raise money for Ligmincha. During that same retreat I proposed that we create a Ligmincha wall calendar to sell through the store, and our creative working relationship began. Over the years in collaboration with Marcy and Polly, and now most recently with Melissa, we have created a wide variety of calendars, deity cards, visualization supports, T-shirts, note cards, teaching transcripts, and other meditation practice supports. When I look around at the shop, Mary Ellen's impact is abundantly obvious. The shelves are filled with her beautiful designs. Mary Ellen truly taught me how to work creatively as a team member, holding a shared vision without attachment or ownership over a project. It has been a privilege to work with her for the nine years that she has been on the Council.

Importantly, Mary Ellen's efforts over the years have helped countless people know about the treasures Ligmincha offers in the form of wisdom teachings and practices, through her selfless and devoted actions in creating and designing print promotions for local and national media. Many people don't realize the role she has played in leading them to Serenity Ridge.

Mary Ellen has offered to continue volunteering her services as Ligmincha's Art Director. Here she will continue to create our yearly calendar, design our teaching transcripts and help bring them to publication, design ads for upcoming retreats, and help create new support materials for our store. We are fortunate to benefit from her passion to serve Ligmincha in this way.

* * *



I have had the pleasure to get to know Jan through the many conversations we've had about fundraising over these past many months that she's served on Council, and have truly enjoyed discussing the ways in which Ligmincha can grow through a more cohesive fundraising effort. I deeply appreciate her questions and insights, and her valuable help in pointing out areas where we need clarification. Jan spent many hours pondering Ligmincha's needs and researching how fundraising is done at other non-profits. She outlined a plan that will serve Ligmincha well as she steps down from the Council position as Director of Fundraising. Jan holds a holistic and encompassing view in which she sees Ligmincha and its potential for growth. Although she is no longer on the Council, we will continue to benefit from Jan's insightful comments and suggestions.

With much appreciation for Mary Ellen and Jan,

Sue Davis-Dill
Executive Director
Ligmincha Institute



Sangha Sharing

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Retreatants Share Writings and Photo

We invited sangha members to share their personal experiences from the recent winter retreat at Serenity Ridge. Here are four offerings.



Follow Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on



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Photograph of Serenity Ridge by Jitka Polanská

Who ever could have
imagined me like this,
prostrating before sacred
images,

holding my hands in the gesture of a prayer?

And yet, now I know that I had been always looking for this, just for this.
Since ever, there was something inside looking at me through this stream of
consciousness,

something feeling imprisoned. Now, I am on the way to liberate this sacred, silent
presence.

These are my teachers, this is my home, this is the source which had always been
calling me.

Now I know. And so I prostrate and bow to the one who brought me back.

— *Jitka Polanská*



Solid as a rock
and wind blows
through every cell
of my body



Virginia night sky

The night is so calm
with a sky pitch black
and a thousand of sizzling stars
The end & beginning of
every single possibility

— *Poems and photographs by Floor van Orsouw*

* * *

What ~not~ to say ... so precious! Rinpoche as usual addressed all of my potentially silly concerns without me ever having to ask out loud — making for an even stronger commitment to the Teachings and Practice. Between the Teaching itself, Rinpoche's sweet words of encouragement, and the related texts available, I now know better what to ~do~ with the new experiential glasses I find myself with. In addition to all of this is the precious Sangha; connecting in a way that is indescribable, like family, only closer. I look forward to the transcript of this Winter's Retreat as well as the Root Texts and especially the day when registration for the next Winter Retreat is open.

— *Gerry Heikes*

* * *

A Leap of Trust

By Scott Clearwater, Jan. 19, 2011



I was asked to share this story about a recent event in my life that very well exemplifies the manifestation in real life of some of the precious teachings we have received.

The story takes place during an approximately one hour period during my recent honeymoon where we visited New Zealand. Shortly after arriving in Auckland we were walking around and saw the Sky Tower, the tallest building in the Southern Hemisphere. We noticed that there was a tourist attraction in which someone could jump off the building and fall over 600 feet (about 200 meters) at a speed of 60 mph (100kmh) before being slowed down by the steel cable which you were harnessed to. I always avoid these kinds of activities as being unnecessarily exposing oneself to danger and being mere thrill-seeking which I do not regard as productive in any way.

As we walked around the Sky Tower my new bride said to me "Why don't you jump?" I immediately answered, "Sure!" And I really meant it. I really would jump and it took no effort and no decision was required. After I said it I reflected why Cristina would ask me to do such a thing after being married for a day. I knew that her intention was that I extend myself and use this activity to overcome limitations about the fear of trying new things.

In terms of my personal practice to deal with fear issues I have used all the practices of the Three Doors Seminars. I use the tsa lung, especially the pervasive lung exercise, to help me to pervade my life experiences farther and farther into the space of all possibilities. I use the Five Warrior Syllables, in particular the A to feel the fearlessness in space. I use the "vision is mind" and "mind is empty" from the Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen to know the source and emptiness of the fear that arises.

When I answered "Sure" to jumping off the tower I have no doubt that it came directly as a result of having done the Three Doors practices over the past years. To use the dzogchen metaphor my answer was "like a snowflake dissolving in the ocean" — there was no effort on my part and there was an effortless manifestation. The effortlessness reveals that it really was coming from my heart and not a conceptual creation.

To get back to the story, I was not sure whether Cristina really meant for me to jump or not but I was ready in any case. When she asked me again, "Are you really going to jump?" I knew she meant it and I paid the money, signed the waiver, and put on the jumping harness. Then I took a long elevator ride up to the jumping platform. When I got up there, there was another jumper and I watched her go through the procedure. All during this time I was very calm and not thinking about anything in particular but patiently waiting for my turn to jump. When it was my turn to take the jump I walked sure-footedly onto the platform and I was hooked to the cable that would eventually slow me down as I fell. Still I had no fear. As I walked out to the edge of the platform I looked out over the beautiful city of Auckland and enjoyed its beauty. Still no fear. Then I looked down.

I saw the tops of tall buildings below me and the small target area where I would land. That was when fear came. It was a feeling that turned into a thought. At that point a deeper part of my being recognized that if I followed that thought I would not jump. So I did not engage with that thought. Then another fearful thought came up. Again, I was able to let it melt by itself by not creating an ongoing story for it. Then another fearful thought. Again, I did not allow the sequel. At that point I knew that I would allow no fear to conquer me. Then I leapt off the tower without any fear.

This type of experience corresponds to the dzogchen metaphor of "the sun melting dew" — it took a little awareness to dissolve the fear. For me it was a perfect example of the power one experiences by not creating a supporting story for a thought that arises. It is the power for one to overcome anything because the fearful aspect has been rendered powerless itself.

As I hurtled down to the ground I felt a sense of trust and that I was to be fine with whatever happened. The feeling of trust just appeared without any effort on my part and was able to do so because there was no fear to occupy the space for the trust. I was able to enjoy and experience the moments as they were coming without any projection. As I got close to the ground the cable slowed me down and I landed safely.

After enjoying the safe landing the technician asked to see how steady my hand was and it was steady and she asked if I wanted to jump again. So I took another leap of faith, this time with my back facing the ground so I could not even see what lay below. So this was not simply a repetition of the previous jump but a slightly different version and as I leaned back to fall could not see the buildings below but I could not see anything which evoked a different kind of fear which again momentarily appeared and with even less effort was dissolved and I jumped again.

To me this event has been very valuable in that it gave me the direct experience of two very important dzogchen teachings. It was an opportunity to see how innate qualities appear by themselves when the obstacles to them have been removed. I have no doubt these experiences came about because of my practices of the Bon teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. It also showed me that when qualities have ripened they can manifest very rapidly!

To see my leap of trust go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVDSWExLdKw>



Video Highlights Rinpoche's Latest Book

A Brief Introduction to *Awakening the Sacred Body*

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche introduces his newly released book, *Awakening the Sacred Body*, in a recent video.

[Watch >](#)

[Learn more / order the book >](#)



A Glimpse of the Consecration of the Great Mexican Stupa

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Gabriel Rocco's Opening Remarks

On December 4, 2010, close to 1,000 people attended the celebration of the Internal Consecration of the Great Stupa for World Peace in Chamma Ling, Valle de Bravo, Mexico, with honored guests Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Gabriel Rocco, senior student of Tenzin Rinpoche and board chair of Ligmincha Institute, gave this short speech at the ceremony.



It's an honor to be with all of you today here in front of this Great Bon Stupa for World Peace. Tenzin Rinpoche has asked me to say just a few words as a member of the Board of Directors of Ligmincha Institute, and on behalf of the growing number of Bon Garudas, and members of his International Sangha of students.

As all of us here well know, the form and structure of the Stupa symbolizes the enlightened mind and heart, and includes all the parts and paths of enlightenment. From the outer foundation of the five elements, to inner discovery of the Four Immeasurable qualities of Love, Compassion, Equanimity, and Joy, through to the attainment of the Ten Bhumis - this physical structure represents all the knowledge and wisdom to attain liberation from suffering.

The sacred energy radiating from this magnificent Bon Stupa is dedicated to World Peace, freedom from confusion, violence, and aggression — beginning here in Mexico and spreading from this forest at Valle de Bravo all around this earth. But we who are gathered here also know that what we joyfully celebrate today is the accomplishment of a long-held dream of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, to complete this Stupa dedicated to his and Tenzin Rinpoche's dzogchen master and teacher, Lopon Sangye Tenzin, here in Mexico, home to his reincarnation — Tulku Jorge Rene.

This Stupa is also the physical manifestation of the planning, years of labor, the selfless donations of energy and finances, peaceful resolutions of conflict, Bodhisattva-like perseverance, and in the end, the unceasing heartfelt devotion to the living Bon Tradition, to Yongdzin Rinpoche, to Tenzin Wangyal, Rinpoche, and all the Bon lineage holders, masters, and teachers all — who have shown us such priceless generosity.

When work on this Stupa began, I recall that Tenzin Rinpoche spoke to me not only about the outer physical manifestation, but how this project and the challenges it would bring, would come to represent within the Mexican sangha and the worldwide sangha, whether seen or unseen, how internally we as practitioners of Bon have built some strength — a strength of purpose to liberate ourselves in order to support the liberation of all beings from unnecessary pain.

In closing, on behalf of our teachers and members of our international sangha of Bon practitioners, I want to acknowledge the board of directors and council members of Garuda Mexico, the leadership of Jorge Valle, and the devotion of every member of the Mexican sangha who have together brought to manifestation this Great Bon Stupa for World Peace. In this special case, thank you all, so much, for turning a dream into a reality!

— Gabriel Rocco



Properties on a Hilltop

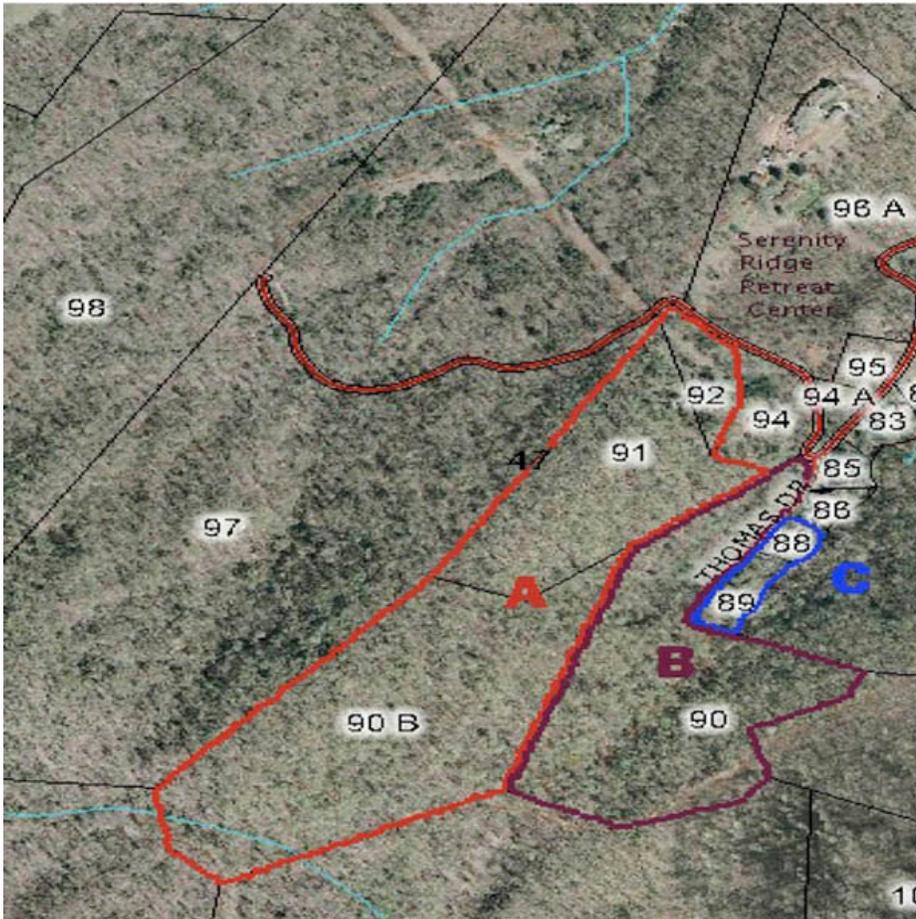
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Land and Homes for Sale Adjacent to Serenity Ridge

Do you love coming to Serenity Ridge Retreat Center for teachings? Would you like to be here more often? Would you like your own piece of Serenity?

We've come to learn of three properties now available for sale adjacent to Serenity Ridge, and thought we would let the greater sangha know in case someone is interested before they are all made known to the market at large.

Looking at the tax map displayed here:



Property A (outlined in red) consists of three lots described in tax maps 47-A-91 (8.1 acres), 47-A-92 (1.96 acres), and 47-A-90B (21.93 acres) for a total of 32 acres.

Property B (maroon) consists of one lot of 14.7 acres, tax map 47-A-90

Properties A and B are not yet listed on the Multiple Listing Service (MLS), but the owners say they are open to selling them individually or together as a whole. It is our understanding that the 32 Drumheller acres (Property A) consist of three lots, each with another division right, which may permit six lots total via property-line adjustment. *Realtor:* McLean Faulconer

Property C (blue) consists of 2.2 acres and two houses. At the hairpin turn just before Serenity Ridge, Thomas Lane branches off, and this property is not the first house on the left, but the two on the hill, 41 and 55 Thomas Lane. A new well provides water for both properties; and there is approval for a new septic, although this is not currently needed. Rent from tenants currently living on the property amounts to \$1,600 per month. *Realtor:* Nest Realty Group. **To view property C:**

http://www.nestrealtygroup.com/listings/res/41_thomas_dr_%28nelson%29/483493.html

<http://mycaar.com/%280spvab55rrjdkvuqiydljbq%29/propertyDetails.aspx?mls=483493>

If you would like further contact information please contact Melissa O'Neill at store@ligmincha.org



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.

April 13 - 17, 2011**Living With Joy, Dying in Peace****Gaining Comfort and Intimacy With the Dying Process****Annual Spring Retreat With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

Denying our own mortality not only separates us from the vibrancy of living in the moment, it also leaves us ill equipped for the critical moment when death comes to ourselves or to our loved ones. The Bon Buddhist tradition is rich with knowledge and methods for using this Great Moment wisely. Through teachings and guided meditations, in this five-day retreat Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will help us to: recognize death as a doorway to opening the heart and achieving self-realization; prepare for our own death; and learn how to promote a more peaceful, uplifting dying process in others.

[Learn more or register >](#)

May 18 - 22, 2011**Self-Purification Through the Five Enlightened Bodies****With Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche**

Please join us this May for these special teachings with [Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche](#), abbot (khenpo) of Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal. A powerful means of purifying oneself on all levels of experience, these teachings from the ancient *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu* cycle of dzogchen teachings have never before been offered at Ligmincha.

[Learn more or register >](#)

June 11-24, 2011**Summer Work Retreat**

Free of charge. Whether you join us for one afternoon, one day, one week, or the entire two weeks, this is a wonderful time to share with sangha and to be of joyful service. Our work retreat includes vigorous work periods, daily meditation practice, and ample time for a swim in the pool or a walk along the Rockfish River. Participants are provided with free air-conditioned accommodations in Garuda House and free meals. For those who participate in one full week, there will be a 50 percent discount on one week of the summer retreat. If you participate in both full weeks of the work retreat, there will be a 50 percent discount on two weeks of the summer retreat.

For more information or to register, please email Ligmincha at registration@ligmincha.org or call 434-263-6304.

June 24, 2011 (Friday), 4-8 p.m.**Fundraising Dinner at Serenity Ridge****A special evening with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

Proceeds from this dinner will benefit the orphans under the care of His Holiness at Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India.

[Learn more or register >](#)

June 25 - July 15, 2011**A View From the Heart: Purifying Your Vision Through the Practice of the Six Lamps****Annual Summer Retreat With Honored Guest H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche****and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**

Online registration is now open! Everyone is cordially invited to join us this summer for a rare and unique opportunity to receive teachings and transmissions from His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizen; and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute. Ligmincha's annual Summer Retreat is open to newcomers and longtime students alike. You may attend one, two, or all three weeks of the retreat.

[Learn more or register >](#)

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 ligmincha@aol.com or 434-263-6304, or go to:

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

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