

THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration from Ligmincha Institute

Volume 5, Number 5

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

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Sangha Sharing.

"Early-bird" registration date for the summer retreat is May 18!

Now available online at Ligmincha's Bookstore.

Offerings

Excerpt from "Dzogchen: The Heart Essence of the Great Perfection" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

A REQUEST FOR 2005 SUMMER AUCTION ITEMS

"Because you have been born with the ability to practice, this shows something of how you acted in your previous lives. But now you must consider how to use this precious opportunity. ... We have a proverb saying that if you put one drop of water in the ocean, then

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until the ocean is dry, that drop of water will not evaporate. In the same way, this virtue, whatever you do, is never spoiled."

- Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

Greetings everyone,

Most of you know that each year we celebrate and support Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's dream of developing Ligmincha Institute's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center by holding a lively and joyous fund-raising auction and dinner.

This year's auction will be held during the second week of the summer retreat on Friday evening, July 15.

Historically, this has been the only public fund-raising event that Ligmincha Institute holds to finance the land development projects at our retreat center, Serenity Ridge.

The next phase of land development is in the planning stages right now, and the 2005 summer auction is vital to this development.

It is our goal that construction on the urgently needed second wing of the Garuda House can begin soon.

When this phase is completed, Garuda House will have doubled its

dormitory occupancy and many more retreatants will be able to stay on the land during each retreat.

Sangha members frequently ask how they can help Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche actualize his dream. In addition to a monetary donation given directly to the land fund, we encourage you to consider donating a quality item to this auction. It is a generous and heartfelt way to give something back to Tenzin Rinpoche and our community.

Each year we ask for donations of quality practice- or shrine-related items for the auction - items that will inspire and deepen our practice.

Below is a list of some of the items that have helped generate lively bidding and generous contributions at past auctions:

Crystal objects: stupas, balls, malas, phurbas, vajras

Tibetan singing bowls

Tibetan drums - large and small

Texts in Tibetan or English that have been used by our teachers

Silver or gold gaus and amulets

Malas created from semi-precious and precious stones

Photos of our teachers and sacred sites

Thangkas

Prayer banners

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Items blessed by His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Please know that your enthusiastic participation and support are essential at this important time of growth for our Bon community in the United States.

DEADLINE JUNE 1

We hope to receive all auction items no later than June 1.

If you have an item to donate or would like to discuss whether an item is suitable, please e-mail me at ellenk@mac.com or feel free to call me at 212-285-1584.

Please note: Your donations are tax deductible.

Thank you so much for your generosity.

With great warmth and good wishes,

In Bon

Ellen Katzman

ellenk@mac.com

AN EDITED EXCERPT OF TEACHINGS GIVEN BY GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

DURING THE RECENT SPRING RETREAT AT SERENITY RIDGE.

"The Yogi and the Businessman"

Imagine there are two Tibetan people: One doesn't know much about

dharma, the other is a yogi who lives in a cave. The yogi has no money with which to buy or make prayer flags. He hardly has enough food to survive. He has nothing but lots of knowledge. The other person is a businessman who does tsog offerings and gets new prayer flags at all the necessary times. Let's say the yogi is in a bad mood. Bad days happen for yogis ^ maybe it's raining and water is coming down in his cave, and the yogi's lungta is going down a bit. At the same time, the businessman has the stress of work and of taking care of his family, yaks and cows. His lungta is going down as well. The yogi goes inward. The businessman goes outward - he goes to the monastery and climbs up a hill carrying the prayer flags and incense. He is dressed up wearing symbols of power. Nowadays, you might carry your credit card or checkbook instead to symbolize your power. So, the businessman climbs up and up. The process of going from low lungta to high is already beginning. Just climbing a

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hill, carrying prayer flags, and being exposed to the wind and open space improves your lungta. Meanwhile, what is the yogi doing? He is going inward and visualizing the three channels within his energy body. He breathes in and visualizes red and white light entering the channels, and brings the two qualities together as a luminous sphere, which rises in his central channel. As the sphere rises, the yogi is also climbing up, just as the businessman is going up the hill with all his stuff. At the same moment the prayer flags are hung and the smoke from the incense rises in the businessman's sang ceremony, the yogi visualizes propelling the luminous sphere up and out into space. Both of them are now feeling good. The actions are different, but the principle is the same ^ connecting with open space, awareness, and light.

"THE PANTHEON OF THE BON" - a column devoted to deepening our connection to our great Bon family.

Many of us are familiar with the image of Tapihritsa, central to our Bon practice and to our shrines and thangkas. The white luminous figure of Tapihritsa in meditation posture radiating light and encircled by rainbow light is often visualized as representing the realization of all the masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu lineage, one of the three Bon dzogchen lineages.

At a Ngondro retreat with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, he strongly urged us to learn about the masters and their lives and to recognize them as real beings like us. I was a bit awe-struck to hear him say that Tapihritsa learned these same teachings and practices that we are learning - just like us. Khen Rinpoche assured us that through connecting with the masters we will find inspiration and develop devotion. And through devotion we will open our hearts.

Here is "The Story of Tapihritsa" as told by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche during the Summer Retreat in 2000 (excerpted from the edited transcript of his oral teachings translated by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche). Knowing the details of Tapihritsa's very real life makes the "Invocation of Tapihritsa," an offering composed and sung by Nangzher Lopo, Tapihritsa's student, all the more inspiring! It seems the perfect accompaniment to Lopon's great story. Enjoy!

- Aline Fisher

Tapihritsa was an ordinary person from a nomadic family in the country of Zhang Zhung. The main teacher of Tapihritsa was Dawa Gyaltzen. Tapihritsa practiced for nine years before he attained

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illumination. The place where he practiced is a holy place outside Mount Kailash, a place called Senge Tap. After nine years of practice there, Tapihritsa achieved the rainbow body.

Tapihritsa was a contemporary of the king of Zhang Zhung, Ligmincha, and the king of Tibet, Tritson Detsun, and other famous yogis of Bon. Nangzher Lopo was a very famous master, a knowledgeable and very accomplished practitioner, famous at that time in Zhang Zhung. Later he became the main student of Tapihritsa. Even though Tapihritsa had been taught by Nangzher Lopo before, Nangzher Lopo had had a problem with pride and had not been fully realized. Therefore, at this time, Tapihritsa emanated as a young boy and came down to the village where a rich man, Yungdrung Gyal, the main sponsor of Nangzher Lopo, lived. Tapihritsa came in the form of a young boy seeking employment in the family of Yungdrung Gyal, and he served them for a number of years. Nangzher Lopo was meditating on a mountain where there were bushes, and Tapihritsa was taking care of the family's animals.

These very places can be identified today in the Western part of Tibet. Today when people go to these powerful places they have a lot of experiences and visions. Some people who don't know the history of the place think they are seeing ghosts or something.

Tapihritsa was carrying a lot of wood in his bag for cooking food. He went to visit Nangzher Lopo to pay respect. Nangzher Lopo hesitated when he saw the behavior of this young boy. The way he was paying respect seemed special and mature, and he thought, "Who is this guy?" So Nangzher Lopo said to the boy that it looked like he had worked through some doctrines and tenets. He asked him, "Who is your teacher and what is your practice? What are you carrying? Why are you behaving this way?" The young boy said, "My teacher is this vision. Visions are my teacher. My practice is thought-less, my meditation is all sentient beings. What I am carrying is my thoughts. I am behaving like this because I am a servant of the family of samsara." Since the young boy answered in that way,

Nangzher Lopo was surprised and they entered into a debate. Nangzher Lopo said, "If these visions are your master, it probably means you don't have a master; if your meditation is thought-less, you don't need food; if you are meditating on sentient beings, that means you are enlightened; if you are carrying thoughts, you don't have desire; and if you are a servant of samsaric beings, you don't suffer!"

The young boy answered again (and in this debate the teachings have already begun). "If you don't realize that vision is your master, who taught Samantabhadra?" asked the young boy. "My practice is thought-less because in the base there is no thought, and when there is a thought, there is no practice. I am meditating on all sentient beings because I don't separate or discriminate among others, because if one is discriminating there won't be meditation. I am carrying thoughts. That means I don't have thoughts. Because I don't have thoughts, I don't have desire. I realize that everything is

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illusion. I help all sentient beings because I don't make a distinction between suffering and not suffering."

Then the debate continued. "If you are that good," says Nangzher Lopo, "we need to go in front of the king and debate. If you win, you will become my master. If I win, you will be punished by the king." Tapihritsa had a big laugh. "All karma and conditions, causes and results are false." Basically, he was teasing Nangzher Lopo, saying, "All these meditators are prisoners of thoughts; they keep thoughts in a prison and are prison guards! All these intellectuals who debate don't realize they cast a net in the darkness. All these discussions are like a joke and a play, a weapon of words. All the sacred tantras are merely elaborations of one's mind. All these knowledgeable persons are meaningless - they know and have no experience." So he was teasing, saying, "These great views are bubbles of words - all these things are meaningless and make no sense. The real condition cannot be changed. The real essence cannot be practiced. Self-arising wisdom cannot be obscured. When you realize, you cannot re-realize or try to realize again. So what is the matter? Who is complaining?"

Now Nangzher Lopo was getting a bit irritated and realized this was not just a boy, but a special person. He was shocked and could almost not speak. In that moment of shock and surprise, he looked at the young boy who was sitting up in space and that is how we draw him - in space and in the rainbow. So Nangzher Lopo was really sad, realizing all this bad karma he had created by having the wrong view. He did prostrations and confession, realizing the boy was a manifestation of his teacher. Then he requested the teaching. Right at that moment, the owner of all the animals, Yungdrung Gyal, came and saw this discussion. He said, "What are you doing there all this

time? Where are all the animals?"

So immediately Nangzher Lopo - who knew Yungdrung Gyal very well - said, "What bad karma we created! You put the master as a servant and I said all these things to him!" Yungdrung Gyal went into shock. Those shocks are good. When you wake up, you are in a different place. So the young boy went up into space and said, "I am Tapihritsa and I came especially for you."

So this is the story. Then Tapihritsa began teaching Yungdrung Gyal and Nangzher Lopo. He said, "Listen carefully and do not be distracted." So both were clearly listening.

Do you understand who Tapihritsa is now? This is not just a story; it is a fact; it happened. It happened during the seventh or eighth century. The teachings are the Dzogpa Chenpo, the Great Perfection. The result is the rainbow body. There is no doubt. If there is doubt in you, it is your karma.

(Actually, Tapihritsa asked them to listen carefully, but at the same

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time he was speaking to all beings, and Lopo is saying that basically he is talking to all of you.)

INVOCATION OF TAPIHRITSA - composed and sung by Nangzher Lopo to his teacher, Tapihritsa.

E MA HO! How wonderful!

You are the manifestation of Kuntu Zangpo, the primordial base.

Your body appears like a white luminous crystal, clear and without impurities, radiating light in the ten directions.

You are naked, without ornaments, signifying the innermost essence, the primordial state.

Endowed with the two-fold wisdom of emptiness and skillful means, with compassion you contemplate the benefit of beings.

You embody Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, supreme among the teachings,

the essence of the awareness of the realized ones, the peak of the way

of realization, the heart of the tantras, of the essential scriptures,

and of the secret instructions,

You point out the natural state, the base from which delusion, which is

samsara, and liberation, which is nirvana, arise; whereupon as sounds, lights, and rays, all the defects and virtues are selfclear.

Having completely dispelled the darkness of the minds of beings, you enable us to experience the base as empty and rootless, and simultaneously realize all stages of the path.

Experiences and realization become manifest, and samsara and nirvana liberate within one's natural mind.

In that vastness, the three dimensions, which are the fruit, are arrayed.

With one-pointed devotion I pray to you, Taphritsa, protector of beings, grant the blessings of bestowing the empowerment upon me and other beings.

May the external, internal, and secret obstacles be pacified, and may the error of self-grasping, which is ignorance, be liberated.

Having recognized self-awareness, may the view and the conduct be fully realized.

Please bestow upon me, at this very moment, the great meaning beyond intellect of the primordial base, empty and rootless.

To you, Taphritsa, noble protector of beings, I pray:

May the beings of the six realms be protected by your compassion.

And may my mind be liberated.

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SANGHA SHARING

Guru Yoga

At the bottom of understanding,

Love is there.

Breathtaking.

- Candace Byers

"EARLY-BIRD" REGISTRATION DATE FOR THE SUMMER RETREAT IS MAY 18!

Just a reminder: To receive the "early-bird" discount, register soon for Ligmincha's summer retreat, July 3-23, "Purifying the Obstacles to Enlightenment" with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at Serenity Ridge. For details please visit

www.ligmincha.org/html/summer_2005.html. To register:

Ligmincha@aol.com, 434-977-6161.

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE AT LIGMINCHA'S BOOKSTORE

To see photographs of the new items at Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore and for order information, please go to

www.ligminchastore.org, click on "search by category" and then click on "New Items."

Photos:

Photo of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, taken by Jane Guldener.

4"x6" \$3.50, 5"x7" \$5.50.

Photo of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, taken by Bill Millard.

4"x6" \$3.50, 5"x7" \$5.50.

Note: Both of these photos are the images we have on our shrine at

Serenity Ridge.

Ritual Items:

Bhumpa (ritual vase), copper and brass, \$28.

Peacock feathers for Bhumpa, \$14.

Chod drum, with brocade case, \$110.

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To order any of these items, contact Sue Davis at orders@ligminchastore.org, or by phone at 434-220-0060, toll-free 866-522-5269.

OFFERINGS

From "Dzogchen: Heart Essence of the Great Perfection" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

"For an actual practitioner of Dzogchen, what is of vital importance is to maintain a continuous effort in your practice. As I remarked yesterday, and I would like to reiterate: to have a real experience and realization of an advanced level of the path, it is crucial to lay a very firm foundation and grounding in the common paths. This is why in the Dzogchen system great emphasis is placed on the preliminary practices, or ngondro. In the Dzogchen approach, the common ngondro or preliminary practices include the practices of taking refuge, generating bodhicitta, the Vajrasattva meditation and recitation, mandala offering, prostrations and guru yoga. The complete preliminary practices are explained systematically in great detail in a text called 'The Words of My Perfect Teacher' - Kunsang Lama Shyalung, composed by Dza Patrul Rinpoche, as notes taken at a teaching given by his teacher Jikme Gyalwe Nyugu. This text has been translated and is available in English.

"So if you maintain a sustained effort, without losing your hope or your courage, you will make progress along your spiritual path, and that is certain."

"Dzogchen: Heart Essence of the Great Perfection" is a collection of Dzogchen Teachings given in the West by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and published in 2000 by Snow Lion Publications. It is available at Ligmincha's Online Bookstore. Also available at Ligmincha's Bookstore is the book the Dalai Lama refers to in this excerpt, "The Words of My Perfect Teacher" by Dza Patrul Rinpoche. Visit www.ligminchastore.org, or call toll-free (866) 522-5269. (In the Charlottesville area, call (434) 220-0060.)

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