

THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration from Ligmincha Institute

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

There will not be a PDF version of this month's edition of VOCL due to Ligmincha's three-week summer retreat. You can access an archive of previous issues at: <http://ligmincha.org/study/vocl.html>

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"RECOGNIZING YOUR RELATION TO PRACTICE" - an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, summer 2005

As I guide meditation practices at retreats, I often say during the visualization, "Try to imagine and feel." But there are other ways to approach the practice. The best way would be that you don't even have to imagine, that you don't have to visualize, that you don't have to try and feel; rather, the moment you intend to be in the experience, you are there. It's like when you are eating lunch - do you have to imagine eating lunch? Do you have to feel that you're eating lunch? Do you have to think that you're eating lunch? No, you are eating lunch and that's it. There's no question that would be the best way to practice, right?

What would be the second best way to do practice? Feeling the experience, right? Feeling it with heart, feeling it in a real or authentic way. When I am feeling the presence of a divine being of light, for example, the sense of reality in that experience can be just as strong as when I experience a negative feeling or emotion. How real does that negativity feel? It is with that same sense of reality that I can feel the presence of the quality of love, or generosity, or openness. So, having this feeling naturally arise in practice would be the next best thing.

And then, to simply imagine the presence of the divine being of light, or the quality of generosity, say, during practice is the next best way. "Imagine" is a word I use a lot in teaching. In every positive experience we aspire to in practice, we first have to imagine it happening. We have to imagine it well, and we have to have a good, creative imagination. When done right, this imagining has a sense of realness to it, a good sense of clarity to it. There is some sense of certainty there, but still it is imagination. When the imagination is real, clear and certain, then the practices will definitely have power. That is not so hard to imagine, is it?

Finally, if imagining is difficult for you, then the next best possibility is for you to use your conceptual mind and in a way, think your way through the practice, talk yourself through the practice. This is similar to being guided by someone else in meditation. The practice leader is guiding your experience by talking to you. You are listening to the sound of the words, and hopefully following the leader at that moment. Over time, with the help of the leader you can develop confidence and a deeper connection to the practice.

So you can see the different ways in which practice can work. They are all valid in their own ways. The only question is: Which way do I normally find myself connecting to practice; and from that place, how can I further develop my connection?

Students often tell me, "I can feel" or "I can't feel"; or, "I can visualize" or "I cannot visualize." They'll ask, "Am I doing it right?" "Am I supposed to do it a different way?" These questions always pop up in people's minds, right?

In a way, everyone is in the right place in practice, no matter what method they are using. It cannot be the wrong place, because it is the only place that exists at that moment for you, so to be there is the right place to be. It is important to recognize that it is indeed the right place for oneself at this moment - while also to recognize that other experiences are possible. For example, if you have become comfortable with using the imagination during practice, then you may want to try practicing now a little bit more from the place of feeling. If a better approach is easy for you, then begin practicing in that better way. If it's not so easy, then understand that the way you are connecting to practice at the moment is fine. Don't think, "I am unable to do it the better way; I'm only able to do it this way - what's the matter with me?" When you think in this way, not only are you saying that your way is a bad way, but you are mistakenly labeling yourself. Recognizing this will be the first step of growth in your development.

Looking at the different ways of doing the practice, where do you stand? Have you reflected on your choices? Have you narrowed them down? Can you now look at your practice and say, "I think I practice this way and sometimes that way"? Have you become comfortable in a

certain way of practicing? And have you looked into the next step you can take?

HONORING HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA ON HIS 71st BIRTHDAY!

July 6 is the birthday of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Let's join together on this auspicious day in heart and in prayer for his health, happiness and long life!

Here is the Long Life Prayer for His Holiness (in Tibetan and English):

Gang ri ra be kor wai shing kham su
Pen dang de wa ma lu chung pai ne
Chen re zig wang Ten zin Gya tso yi
Shab pe kel gyai bar du ten gyur chig
In the heavenly realm of Tibet
Surrounded by a chain of snow mountains
The source of all happiness and help for beings
Is Tenzin Gyatso, Chenrezig in person.
May his life be secure for hundreds of kalpas!

From "The Joy of Living and Dying in Peace" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

Ultimately, all the excellent qualities within the cycle of existence, the state of liberation, and Buddhahood are the result of the awakening mind. It is also like a supreme medicine healing sentient beings' sickness. It is like a wish-fulfilling tree in whose shade exhausted wandering beings can rest and relax. It is like a bridge over which sentient beings can be liberated from their negative states of existence.

Cultivating the awakening mind is like the moon shining, dispelling the darkness of disturbing emotions. It is like the bright sun removing the murky ignorance of sentient beings. It is like the butter obtained by churning the milk of the Dharma. Sentient beings are like travelers wandering endlessly on the paths of the cycle of existence. This mind wishing to benefit other sentient beings is like the very sustenance of these wandering sentient beings. All of us wandering in the cycle of existence are the same. The only difference is that today, because of our merit, because of the kindness of our teachers, and because we have encountered the Buddha's teachings, we are able to cultivate such an awakening mind in the presence of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

"The Joy of Living and Dying in Peace" by His Holiness the Dalai Lama was published in 1997 by HarperCollins Publishers. Edited by Donald Lopez, Jr. Part of a series by the Library of Tibet, General Series Editor John F. Avedon. Available at local bookstores and online at Amazon.com.

SANGHA SHARING

“HIS HOLINESS LUNGTOK TENPA’I NYIMA VISITS SERENITY RIDGE FOR THE FUNDRAISING BANQUET”

On May 27, Ligmincha Institute had the great fortune and honor to host a fund-raising event in support of the Tibetan refugee orphans who are under the care of the 33rd abbot of Menri Monastery, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa’i Nyima Rinpoche. The event was held at Serenity Ridge, Ligmincha’s retreat center in Nelson County, Va.

Clouds of purifying smoke lifted into the afternoon sky. The long and winding driveway, which had been ornamented with colorful chalk drawings of the eight symbols of auspiciousness, was lined by sangha, friends and family eager to greet His Holiness. Upon his arrival each greeter offered him a traditional silk scarf (khata), some offered flowers, and everyone spontaneously broke into wide smiles as His Holiness received their offerings.

Later in our beautiful gompa, Tenzin Rinpoche along with the rest of those gathered offered to His Holiness the mandala as well as prayers for a long life. During this time together we were blessed to receive from His Holiness the transmission for the Sherab Chamma practice as well as an opportunity to be individually blessed by the text from which he read. We then gathered outside in the hot Virginia sun to participate in a blessing of the land and a ritual groundbreaking for the upcoming construction that will complete the second wing of the Garuda House dormitory.

After a brief rest period, the fund-raising dinner began. We were joined under the tent by His Holiness, Chongtrul Rinpoche, Geshe Lhasay Tenzin, Geshe Tenzin Yeshe, as well as Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Tsering Wangmo and their son Senghe. A bounty of delicious food and diverse entertainment was provided by both sangha and local musicians.

Due to the generosity of dinner attendees, other private donors, local businesses that donated goods and services, and a large group of volunteers who offered their time and energy, Ligmincha was able to manifest this event in order to support the tireless work of His Holiness in providing for the children under his care. Thanks to each and every one of you. May all beings benefit!

- Raven Wood

ANNUAL FALL RETREAT AT CHAMMA LING RETREAT CENTER

Heart Drops of Dharmakaya

With an Introduction to Sky Gazing

September 7-10, 2006

With Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Crestone, Colorado

The nature of our own mind remains hidden behind clouds of thoughts and emotions until the time when a master directly points out to us the source, the essence, the heart drop. This is the method of direct

introduction to dzogchen, the highest and most subtle path of meditation in Tibetan Bon Buddhism.

The text "Heart Drops of Dharmakaya" was composed by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, a Tibetan master who passed away in 1935, at which time his physical body dissolved into light, into the rainbow body. Shardza Rinpoche was one of the most influential teachers of his time, and his works are used as textbooks in many Tibetan monasteries.

During this retreat Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will lead us in a series of practices that use body, speech and mind in extraordinary ways to invoke direct perception of the nature of mind. Unlike methods that rely on observing the breath or calming the thoughts, these practices use body postures and simple yet potent visualizations to draw us directly and quickly to the experience of our essence. With the introduction to sky gazing, we will learn to connect to and dissolve within the vast expanse of space. There could be no better place to learn these ancient practices than the high mountains of Crestone. Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche received these teachings from his root teacher Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, one of the greatest living dzogchen masters of the Bon lineage and the author of the commentary in the book "Heart Drops of Dharmakaya," published by Snow Lion, 2002. Tenzin Rinpoche has a unique ability to relate these teachings clearly and directly to our everyday lives. Please join us for this unique opportunity!

RETREAT FEES ONLY: \$210 (received by Aug. 7); \$240 (received after Aug. 7). Cancellation fee: \$30

Visit www.chammaling.org for further information as well as to view many beautiful photos of this amazing place.

Contact: John Jackson

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THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE AUGUST RETREAT AT SERENITY RIDGE
AUGUST 16-20, 2006

"SHERAB CHAMMA: THE WISDOM LOVING MOTHER OF THE BON TRADITION"

with Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe

The tantric cycle of Sherab Chamma (Wisdom Loving Mother) is one of the most important in Bon. The practice of Sherab Chamma helps us to deeply connect with the healing radiance of love and compassion and with the innate wisdom through which all obstacles are cleared.

Sherab Chamma has been a main practice of Geshe Nyima Kunchap for many years. He and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe will present teachings on Sherab Chamma and her eight primary aspects, which manifest in order to heal the eight forms of fear.

During this retreat we will learn about the power of Sherab Chamma to dispel obstacles. We will also learn how to prepare the tormas (dough offerings) that represent Sherab Chamma and her retinue, and how to

perform the mudras (symbolic hand gestures) of the main outer offerings of flower, incense, light, water and food.

Retreat cost (includes meals):

\$375 if received by July 25; \$400 if received after July 25

To register please contact Ligmincha Institute at: ligmincha@aol.com or (434) 977-6161.

NEW ITEMS AT LIGMINCHA'S TIBET SHOP

To read descriptions and see photographs of the newest items at Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore and Tibet Shop and for order information, please go to www.ligminchastore.org and click on "search by category or description" and then click on "New items." Or, go directly to:

<http://www.ligminchastore.org/items.asp?CategoryID=16&SubCategory=0&Submit=Search>

BOOKS:

"Unbounded Wholeness: Dzogchen, Bön and the Logic of the Nonconceptual." By Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Anne Carolyn Klein. Now available in leather-bound hardcover. Price: \$85. (paperback edition is also available, at \$25)

"The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet, Volume II." By Samten G. Karmay. A collection of articles written by the author since 1999, including "History and the 'Yul Lha' Cult in Tibet"; "The Fifth Dalai Lama and Nyingmapa Teachings"; and "Bonpo People and Their Heritage." Paperback, 237 pages. Price: \$22

"The Healthy Mind Interviews: Khenpo Nyima Wangyal." By Henry M. Vyner, M.D. Interview with Bon lama Khenpo Nyima Wangyal on the defining characteristics of a healthy mind. Dimensions: 4" x 5". Paperback, 117 pages. Price: \$7.95

"Dzogchen Teachings," by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Just published! Paperback, 168 pages. Price: \$16.95

"Old Man Basking in the Sun: Longchenpa's Treasury of Natural Perfection. Foreword by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu; translation and commentary by Keith Dowman. Paperback, 335 pages. Price: \$19.95

NEW DEITY CARD:

Elements Khandros, with written description on the back of the card. Price: \$4

MAPS OF TIBET:

Kailash - Lake Manasarovara, Trekking Map. Price: \$18

South Central Tibet Map. Price: \$18

Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim & Bhutan Map. Price: \$18

SUPPORT FOR THE YOGAS OF DREAM AND SLEEP:

Zen Timepiece - This clock is both beautiful and functional. Its alarm is the inspiring sound of a brass singing bowl. It includes a 'repeat'

timer, perfect for sounding intervals during meditation and yoga practice; and for dream yoga practitioners, the timer can be set to go off every two hours to enable waking for practice. The Zen Timepiece runs on two C batteries (not included). It measures 4.5" (h) x 9.5"(w) x 7" (d), and comes with instruction booklet.