

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."

A printable PDF version of this month's edition of VOCL, in readerfriendly newsletter format complete with color photographs, will be available online after Nov. 20. Please check the link for VOCL on Ligmincha Institute's home page at www.ligmincha.org. You can also access an archive of previous issues at:

<http://ligmincha.org/study/vocl.html>

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"RELATING TO THE NATURE OF OUR THREE ROOT POISONS" – an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, summer 2006
Ignorance, desire and hatred are called the three root poisons because all of samsara begins from there. Ignorance is the primary root, and from ignorance arises its two offspring, desire and aversion. Desire: If you like something, you try to get it. Hatred: If you dislike something, then you try to get away from it. The many manifestations of these three root poisons arise in our lives without effort – they're just there.

Not only do we have these three within us, but we have also created many variations on them. For example, not only have we created the list of people we hate, but also the lists of those we dislike, those with whom we feel uncomfortable, as well as those with whom we wish we could have a relationship but can't. The list of everything we don't have but we want is a very long one. And, if you happen to start thinking too much about the things you don't want, you may end up wanting them! It's also not uncommon to first have the desire for something, then actually get it, and then find that you don't really want it anymore. You see, once you finally have something you lose your desire for it. That is the nature of desire.

Through these three root poisons we have created a lot of problematic situations for ourselves as individuals, a lot of collective situations

as families and groups, and a lot of global situations as nations.

Often we feel we have been thrown into these situations. We take them very personally, and we direct our emotions outward toward a specific object or person: "I don't like you – you did this to me and I can see that you are planning to do it again!" Every experience of hatred or aversion seems to have its own independent existence, but where is it really coming from? Try tracing a very specific experience all the way back to its root. Its root is not in the person you are angry at, or even in the thing that person did - the root is in you.

We engage in the three root poisons a lot in relation to others. In a bad relationship there may be constant fighting. How many hours, days, weeks, even years can you relate in that way? A lot! When you engage in that negative way, you feel bad much of the time, and you affect your surroundings negatively. But one day, one moment, say, on a quiet Sunday morning, you may wake up and think, "Where is all this negative experience really coming from?" In that space just close your eyes: No one else exists there in that moment, just you. Look into yourself and reflect: How do I feel when there is no story here in this space? How do I feel when there is no object of the desire or aversion here? How do I feel when there is no situation here that creates the desire or hatred? How do I feel?

In that space, breathe in deeply and then imagine as you exhale that you are breathing out one of the three root poisons, such as ignorance. Imagine and feel the ignorance as a form of energy related to your self-doubt, to your lack of confidence, to the lack of confidence that allows your anger to arise. When you feel a lack of confidence, how does it feel? It is deep inside, almost invisible, manifesting as a very subtle energy block. The origin of your emotion is not your relationship with a particular person. It is a subtle energy block inside you, which you are now releasing with each out-breath.

If you can come to see the root causes of the various types of relationship that manifest in your life, then naturally your relationships become much better - better in the sense that they become more workable, more understandable, more clear in a deep way.

The quality of awareness that we generate in this simple breathing practice has great depth to it. We have been doing the practice of the nine breathings of purification for a long time, haven't we? Each time we do it, it's an opportunity for all of us, for me too, to reflect more deeply and among other things, to develop a real understanding of the subtle workings of the three root poisons within us.

EXCERPTS FROM BUDDHIST WRITINGS ON THE FIRST ROOT POISON - IGNORANCE

From "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying" by Sogyal Rinpoche:

As the Buddha said in his first teaching, the root of all our suffering in samsara is ignorance. Ignorance, until we free ourselves from it, can seem endless, and even when we have embarked on the spiritual path

our search is fogged by it. However, if you remember this, and keep the teachings in your heart, you will gradually develop the discernment to recognize the innumerable confusions of ignorance for what they are, and so never jeopardize your commitment or lose your perspective.

From “Luminous Mind” by Kalu Rinpoche:

The mind’s ignorance of its true nature, that is, the simple fact that it does not recognize what it truly is, is called fundamental ignorance. It is the basic inability of the conditioned mind to perceive itself. We can compare the pure mind having the three previously discussed essential qualities to calm, transparent waters in which everything can be seen clearly. The veil of ignorance is a lack of intelligence, a kind of clouded state, as an opaque vase causes water to lose its transparent clarity. Such an obscured mind loses the experience of lucid openness and becomes ignorant of its essential nature.

Fundamental ignorance is said to be innate, because it is inherent to our experience; we are born with it. It is, in fact, the point of departure of duality, the root of all delusions and the source of all suffering.

From “The Heart Treasure of the Enlightened Ones” by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche:

It is because of ignorance that we are the slaves of our thoughts and cannot tell right from wrong. It is because of ignorance that we are blind to the law of cause and effect and refuse to believe that every action has a result. It is because of ignorance that we cannot accept the existence of past and future lives. It is because of ignorance that we have no confidence in the beneficial results of praying to the Three Jewels. It is because of ignorance that we do not recognize the truth of the Dharma. Ignorance is at the very root of the eighty-four thousand negative emotions, for as long as we fail to see that the true nature of everything is voidness, we insist on believing that things really exist; and this is the source of all deluded perceptions and all negative thoughts.

However, ignorance is not everlasting like the permanent darkness of a cavern deep underground. Like any other phenomenon, it can only have arisen from voidness and therefore can have no true existence. Once you recognize the void nature of ignorance, it turns into the wisdom of the absolute expanse. This is the wisdom mind of Chenrezi, the Buddhanature, the essence of the Tathagatas, which is present in all beings.

Only because of ignorance, as the Buddha demonstrated, do we believe our deluded perception instead of recognizing this, our own nature.

From “This Precious Life” by Khandro Rinpoche:

If you have any attraction or devotion to the path of practice, any

sense that it is really helpful and beneficial, you must ask yourself, "How well do I truly understand suffering?" The purpose of these teachings is to help us see the depth of suffering in the world and the cause of that suffering, which is ignorance. Ignorance is the one – if very invisible – cause of unhappiness in this world. It is the one thing that prevents simple awareness and genuine human goodness and kindness from arising without obstructions. In the form of habitual tendencies, it distracts us from our fundamental nature – which nevertheless remains constant and complete, like the luminosity of the sun.

SOURCES:

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

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

Dilgo Khyentse. "The Heart Treasure of the Enlightened Ones." Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1992.

Khandro Rinpoche. "This Precious Life." Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2003.

RETREAT REMINDERS

**"EARLY-BIRD" REGISTRATION DATE FOR LIGMINCHA'S WINTER RETREAT AND NGONDRO PRACTICE RETREAT IS NOV. 15

Dec. 27, 2006-Jan. 1, 2007

Ligmincha's Annual Winter Retreat

THE FRUITION OF DZOGCHEN - The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung

- Part Three, Chapter Seven of the Chag Tri

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

This winter, Rinpoche will present the teachings and methods contained in Chapter Seven: The Fruition of Dzogchen. This chapter reveals how the fruition of developing confidence in the three kayas and finding "one's own place" provides the accomplishment of the Great Perfection.

Over the past three years, Rinpoche has introduced students of the Experiential Transmission to the boundless view, the spontaneous meditation, and the flexible behavior of dzogchen in preparation for this retreat. During this time, the community of practitioners has grown as more students have committed themselves to the Experiential Transmission teachings, completed Parts One and Two, and entered into Part Three.

Students who have attended a previous Part Three retreat as well as students who have received the Part Two teachings are invited to attend this retreat.

Retreat Cost (includes meals): \$400 if received by Nov. 15; \$450 if received by Dec. 6; \$500 if received after Dec. 6

**To register for any of these retreats please contact Ligmincha at

Ligmincha@aol.com or call (434) 977-6161.

Dec. 27, 2006- Jan. 1, 2007

NGONDRO PRACTICE RETREAT

During the winter retreat, students who have received Part One: Ngondro teachings and transmission are warmly invited to attend this practice retreat.

Tenzin Rinpoche highly recommends this retreat for those students who received the ngondro teachings from Khen Rinpoche as well as for students who have received ngondro transmission in recent years and are practicing in preparation for Part Two of the Experiential Transmission.

The ngondro practice section of the winter retreat offers a wonderful opportunity to experience the benefits of group practice within the boundary of our blessed and protected retreat land. The presence of Tenzin Rinpoche and students engaged in study and practice of the Chag Tri will add a powerful support for deep engagement with these beautiful and essential foundational practices of our lineage.

Students who have received ngondro from other lineages may request from Tenzin Rinpoche entrance to the Experiential Transmission ngondro practice retreat.

Practice leader to be announced.

RETREAT COST (includes meals): \$200 if received by Nov. 15; \$250 if received by Dec. 6; \$275 if received after Dec. 6

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE TEACHES OVER THE WORLDWIDE WEB LIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME

On Oct. 21, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time broadcast a teaching live over the Internet. As Rinpoche explained, "The purpose is to find different ways to keep in contact and be close together as an international sangha, so people can have contact with each other worldwide."

The Mexican sangha worked very hard to coordinate this pilot Webcast. Rinpoche's teaching was on the meaning of the Bon stupa. His hope is to raise much needed money for the Great Bon Stupa in Valle de Bravo. Rinpoche emphasized that the stupa's construction has been going well, but more funds are needed from each sangha for its completion.

According to the event's organizers, most of the participating sangha and other invited guests were very happy with the experience. The organizers were surprised to find out afterwards that there were exactly 108 connections: 82 in English, 18 in Spanish and eight in Polish!

The next Webcast will be on Saturday, Nov. 25. Details concerning the time and how to sign-in to the WWW teaching will be posted in a special bulletin on the VOCL in about a week.

We asked Rinpoche about his experience teaching through this new connection:

"My experience was very powerful and very moving. I felt a sense of breaking boundaries or limitations in connecting with the whole sangha. Tsering's sister was listening in her kitchen in Sweden, and she said she felt as though there was a lama right in her home doing prayers. We have found another way to connect with each other and on a much broader level as an international sangha.

I feel that through these Web broadcasts, we will as a sangha be able to connect more often, and there will be more support for those who cannot easily come to a teaching and those who are sick and in need of instruction for practice. We are in a developing process, but these teachings will be done to support the sangha."

A sangha member describes the experience:

Upstairs in his home office, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche speaks into his computer. Downstairs in the kitchen preparing lunch, Tsering listens to her husband on her laptop. A county away, a greeting is typed onto the office computer at Serenity Ridge, where retreat participants are lunching in anticipation of Rinpoche's afternoon presence. The greeting instantly pops up on Rinpoche's screen adjacent to a list of scrolling names: Woiczek in Poland, Bob in L.A., Silvia in Canada, Karoline in Austria, Eustaquio in Mexico ... 100-odd computers across the globe, each with a screen name, are at once receiving his words in homes, offices, gompas and other locales, as Rinpoche gives his teaching about the meaning of the Bon stupa.

The stupa reflects the entire path to enlightenment and the fulfillment of all the teachings; yet we ourselves as individuals and as worldwide sangha should also be reflections of the stupa, Rinpoche explains. We are all one - and we are all connected through this web of chakras known as the Internet.

In some cases, a single screen name represents dozens of sangha seated before one computer. In another case, it represents a bed-bound student. On all the screens and through all the speakers arrive words of devotion, of thanks, and of amazement that these far-flung brothers and sisters could all be connected so directly with Rinpoche and each other. In these brief shared minutes, a whole new series of channels have been opened to the teachings of the Bon tradition. The teacher's words now reach people who can't reach the retreat centers, and sangha are brought together with their teacher as one ... together to the stupa displayed on their screens. How amazing, and how wonderful!

- Polly Turner

ENJOYING A DARK RETREAT AT CHAMMA LING

One of our sangha members from California, Kallon Basquin, recently completed a dark retreat at Chamma Ling in Crestone, Colo. His was the

first dark retreat held in the newly constructed retreat cabins, and we were curious to hear how things worked out.

Kallon chose Chamma Ling because he wanted a secure, protected and powerful environment to support his experiences. He has completed numerous previous dark retreats, logging a total of approximately 80 days in complete darkness, including a long retreat in Nepal at Triten Norbutse Monastery under the guidance of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.

Kallon reports that his retreat cabin at Chamma Ling was small but cozy, with hot and cold running water, a shower, toilet, bed and practice area, and small refrigerator, sink, and stove. An attendant was available to bring food twice a day; however, Kallon brought his own food for the three-week retreat. Cabin climate control was reasonable, and Kallon made some great suggestions for improvements in air circulation and light control that are now being implemented.

The surrounding environment brought daily thunderstorms, driving rain and howling winds. Night sounds included those of coyotes and raccoons, as well as the movements of a doglike creature, perhaps a fox. Anyone practicing on this land will experience its raw, direct and uncompromising energy, Kallon notes; yet, he believes that in most cases, experienced practitioners or those who are connected to the Bön lineage should be able to easily adjust. For the first time ever, he says, he experienced what he's heard Tenzin Rinpoche say many times: "We are not alone." The energy and sense of presence on the land invited him in, welcoming and protecting him from the worst demons his mind could ever manifest.

In closing, Kallon said he intends to return to Chamma Ling many times before he dies, including perhaps a three- to four-week dzogchen retreat in the light of day.

Those who visit Chamma Ling to do sky gazing or other retreats "in the light of day" can use their breaks to take walks, drive themselves to a grocery store, or just prepare their own food in their cabin's great kitchen. For more information on Chamma Ling, for a virtual tour of the cabins, or to request retreat space, visit www.chammaling.org.

Darlene Sessions

2007 LIGMINCHA CALENDAR NOW AVAILABLE!

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>

We are very pleased to announce this year's wall calendar: Ligmincha

Institute's 2007 calendar of Tibetan Bon and Buddhist auspicious days:

The Bon Dzogchen Masters of Zhang Zhung.

The pages feature hand-painted images of the renowned dzogchen yogis of Zhang Zhung, along with their meditation instructions from the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu (Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung). As usual, we have included both Western and Tibetan dates, as well as major Bon and Buddhist auspicious days, and U.S. and Mexican holidays. The calendar is 9" x 11", 18" x 11" when opened. Price: \$14.95. International shipping available.

To contact Ligmincha's Bookstore and Tibet Shop, e-mail:

bookstore@ligminchastore.org or call: (434) 220-0060; (866) 522-5269 (toll-free).