

THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration from Ligmincha Institute

Volume 8, Number 3 June 10, 2008

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

IN THIS ISSUE:

"Refuge: A Heart Relation" - excerpt from an edited transcript of oral teachings giving by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Sangha Sharing

Invitation to the Coming Work Retreat

Children's Camp to be offered at 2008 Summer Retreat

Join Us for Pilgrimage to India

New Books on Bon this month at Ligmincha's Bookstore (plus cards from Triten Norbutse Monastery)

"REFUGE: A HEART RELATION" – excerpt from an edited transcript of oral teachings giving by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

In order to connect in any significant way with the teachings you receive, it is essential to understand the notion of refuge. When we say the refuge prayer, we are taking refuge in the lama, yidam, and khandro, or dakini.

When we talk about the teachings as being sacred, what does "sacred" mean? Sacred describes the relationship we have to the teachings. Sacred means you are not just collecting information and learning specific techniques and doing the practices because you enjoy them or because they are new, different or esoteric. You need to ask yourself: Do I have a heart connection to the master, to the yidam, to the dakini? Or is this just one more workshop I am attending among many? If it is just one of those workshops that you will attend, pay your fee, get some information, pick up a few photocopies or books, and then are ready to go back home, then I think the real sense of benefit of these teachings is diminished. This doesn't mean you will not learn something. You will learn some information and will be able to do some practice, and that might benefit you. But your relation to these teachings will be shallow. The depth of your relationship to the buddhadharma depends so much on understanding the connection to the sacred.

When you enter a temple or a church, what do you do? When you face a sacred image, how do you relate? You don't walk into a temple in the same way that you walk into a museum. Of course you can enjoy the beauty of the art, but there is a difference. When you see a sacred image you definitely have a different attitude, a different relationship, a different experience. You've got to be open to having a different experience, for that's the only way that you can enter into that space and have access to that world. This same kind of relationship is important as a foundation for meditation practice.

I want to say to the new people, it takes time for the depth of understanding and connection to develop. It is always a question of being patient. If the older students look back a few years to how it was hearing the teachings for the first time, you may recall that it didn't make complete sense to you. It may have been confusing and overwhelming. Once things start to make sense, students often tell me, "Oh, you are teaching much better now." [Rinpoche and students laugh.] And I say, "Well, thank you." They tell me I'm speaking more clearly and so on. They don't

suspect it's also that they are listening better. When you have more understanding and more experiences of the base, things change. In time you learn. Please consider taking this retreat not just as another workshop. Of course, you can. And people do. But it is my responsibility to guide you in a different direction here. If you can find and enter the sacred relationship, then the full benefit of the teachings will be there.

Generally speaking, there is a very natural tendency for people to accumulate more and more learning. Their focus is not on how to relate or connect but simply on accumulating more information and techniques. But how you relate, connect, and experience is the real basis of your development. Information can take you in the right direction or it can take you in the wrong direction, but when your heart is open through refuge and devotion, when the right attitude is there, every question is answered.

I emphasize this principle of the foundation of practice because sometimes I notice that people want to learn techniques. I am fine with that, so I usually explain the technique. Then, I realize something very important is missing. As a teacher I feel responsible to at least explain what is missing. Explaining is what teachers do. These teachings come from a tradition of thousands of years, and to truly connect with them, one needs a very specific sacred attitude toward them. If it were not for these ways and attitudes, the teachings would be lost, they would not have been preserved.

So we say the guru yoga and refuge prayers to open our hearts to the sources of the teachings. When we open in that way, we are preparing in the right way, and the practices have much more power and benefit for us.

REFUGE PRAYER

Chen den tse wai lama nam la chab su chi
Tob den ngag gyi yidam lha la chab su chi
Nu den sang wai khandro ma la chab su chi
Lama yidam khandro sum la chab su chi
I take refuge in my knowledgeable root lama.
I take refuge in the powerful tantric yidam.
I take refuge in the potent secret khandro.
I take refuge in all three: lama, yidam, and khandro.

Taking refuge is important to develop this sense of trust in the lama, yidam and dakini. The lama, or master, is the one who gives you transmission and instructions. The yidam is the source from which the teachings come. The khandro, or dakini, is the one who serves as a very active support in the practice. We open our hearts through taking refuge. It is very simple. Refuge is basically the sense of trust.

So, we go for refuge in the lama, yidam and khandro, also known as the master, deity and dakini. In order for you to practice the right way, you need to understand these three. If you do not know these three and only know the technique, it will not work. That is very important to understand: They are a very important part of practice.

We visualize the lama in the form of Tapihritsa. The image of Tapihritsa is very peaceful with a spacious quality. Tapihritsa represents not only the master, but the union of all the lineage masters. Feel that connection and cultivate devotion.

The yidam is a deity, a tantric deity. A yidam is not like a human spirit or a spirit of nature, rather it is enlightened consciousness, an enlightened being. It is the place from which these teachings

arise, the place to which one should relate, the place where one finds genuine understanding of the practice.

Basically you imagine or visualize the yidam as a fully enlightened, powerful being. Visualization is a way to the experience. Through visualizing we are able to feel the presence of the yidam. It is not just visualization for its own sake, but through the visualization we feel and even become the yidam. The purpose of this is to gain a sense of protection.

When our mind is occupied by the presence of the yidam, the mind is blessed. When we feel the presence of the yidam in the body, the body is blessed. When we experience the presence of the yidam in the room, the room is blessed. When we imagine the presence of the yidam in the land, the land is blessed.

Dakini refers to the one specifically connected with your practice. She appears as a beautiful goddess, but she is a quality or a force that moves within to help you in your practice. Try to understand her more in that aspect. She is the one who will help you mature in the practice. Imagine the goddess and pray to her, asking for her help and support. Feel her presence there. Imagine throughout the practice the feeling that she is there.

Even without visualizing her form you can experience her motherly, protecting and helping quality within you. Or, you can visualize her

form, her color, and her implements. Some people love to relate to a detailed image.

So, we can receive the blessings of the lama to open our hearts, cultivate devotion, and connect to the teachings. We can receive the blessings of the yidam as a transformation or protection for the body. We can receive the blessings of the dakini to support the process of the practice.

Therefore, we want to begin our practice with connecting with the lama, yidam and dakini, and then come from the right place within. It is important to connect to the master, to the yidam, and to the dakini, because these are the sources of the teachings, and we want to come from the right place, a deep, warm place, and be in full relation to these sacred places.

SANGHA SHARING

To the Sangha

The goddesses surround me as I practice

Heartfelt prayer to connect to their energies and their qualities

Shivers go up my spine as I melt into their presence

So alive, so inspiring, these dakinis

The world is filled with light as I sing with all my heart

Free and awake in accepting their blessings

Like sparks connecting us, their qualities are transmitted

Love is born here, the touch of one heart to another

Creativity arises here through open minds meeting

Peaceful presence in you grounds me to who I am

The fearlessness in your openness and honesty and clarity

Shines a light on the path for me

Through you, dear sangha, the goddesses have come alive

And remind me of this connection we all share to the great space

-

Aline Fisher

(written spontaneously on the back of an envelope during the drive home from the retreat during which the above teachings were given)

INVITATION TO THE COMING WORK RETREAT

Please join us from Monday, June 30, through Saturday, July 5, 2008 — or any portion thereof — for a work retreat at Ligmincha's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Nelson County, Va. The retreat is free of charge, meals and tent space included, and participants who work the entire retreat receive 50 percent off the registration fee for one week of the summer retreat (July 6-26). This is a wonderful time to share with sangha and be of joyful service. Our work retreat includes vigorous work periods, daily meditation practice, beautiful views, and ample time for a swim in the pool or a walk along the Rockfish River. Even if you can only come to help for a few hours one day, your contribution of time and effort will be much needed and most appreciated. To register, please email Ligmincha at Ligmincha@aol.com or call the Ligmincha office at 434-977-6161.

CHILDREN'S CAMP TO BE OFFERED AT 2008 SUMMER RETREAT

Parents of young children will find it easier to attend this year's Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge. An all-volunteer, parent-cooperative children's camp will be offered during the first two weeks of the retreat; parents are now invited to enroll their children ages 2 1/2 to 10. For details about this program, visit www.ligmincha.org and click on "News."

JOIN US FOR PILGRIMAGE TO INDIA

This Oct. 23 through 27, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will offer the first teachings in India for Lishu Institute. Please join us for a two-week pilgrimage to India, including a visit to the Lishu Institute land for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Institute; a four-day teaching in Dehradun, India; a visit and teaching with Tulku Kundrol at his monastery in Madawala; and a visit and teaching by Ponlop Rinpoche at Menri Monastery, Dolanji, India. If you would like to learn more, please email us at Lishu@Ligmincha.org or visit www.lishu.org.

NEW BOOKS ON BON THIS MONTH AT LIGMINCHA'S BOOKSTORE

(plus cards from Triten Norbutse Monastery)

To see the newest items at Ligmincha Institute's Bookstore & Tibet Shop, visit <https://www.ligmincha.org/store/by-type/new-items/view-all-products.html?practice=0>