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THE VOICE OF CLEAR LIGHT

News and Inspiration from Ligmincha Institute

Volume 5, Number 4

April 7, 2005

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

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New items at Ligmincha's Bookstore: Tapes, Prayers, Books on Dzogchen, Children's Books and Ritual Items.

"RECOGNIZE THE NATURE OF GRASPING MIND" - an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, 2003

Somehow, it seems, we've developed a dilemma. We feel empty, incomplete, or that we cannot find enjoyment, that we cannot fully be ourselves. Feeling that way, the urge arises to grasp at what is outside of us. We feel that it's only through having certain things, or through having certain relationships, that our life will be complete, that we will have everything we need, that we will be real.

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We have that attitude throughout our upbringing. You look forward to going to high school, and once you're in high school, then you are looking forward to going to college. And, it has to be this certain college or that college. And then when you go to college, your focus is all about getting into a university afterward for higher education. Then, once you get to the university, your focus is all about getting a job. And then, when you have a job, it's all about getting a better job and buying a house. And, when you buy a house, you dream about having a better house. In a general sense, we all engage ourselves in this way.

If, when you were about to have your 80th birthday, someone were to offer you an extension on your life, and they asked, "How long an extension would you like?," imagine what your answer would be. "Long! Very long! I need 80 more years, please." "Okay, we can

give you 80 years, but we want to know exactly what you're going to do in those 80 years. Do you want to repeat the same exact things that you have done in these last 80 years? Or, would you want to try something new?" The answers will be varied.

That same pattern of grasping goes on not only throughout life, but also through our dreams and after death. In the bardo, when a light appears, you think, "What is this light?" And then you respond, "Oh, it's beautiful." That means, "I need it." Or, you go in the opposite direction: "Oh, I don't like it," or "I don't want it," or "I'm afraid of it." It's as if there's no way of simply letting it be and feeling complete in the experience as it is. Basically, whatever arises in the bardo is only your self-manifestation. Just be. Don't be afraid. Don't grasp. There is nothing substantial there. Just be yourself. That's the realization, the achievement that you can have.

Somehow, this notion of living fully in the moment, regardless of whatever arises - we just don't experience it! In a way, it seems that we want to suffer, therefore we are always looking for the next cause for our suffering. And we will always find one, that's a guarantee - a samsaric guarantee.

"MORE ON LOOSENING THE GRIP OF GRASPING MIND" - excerpts from the writings of three Buddhist teachers.

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

The intention behind grasping may not in itself be bad; there's nothing wrong with the desire to be happy, but what we grasp on to is by nature ungraspable. The Tibetans say you cannot wash the same dirty hand twice in the same running river, and, "No matter how much

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you squeeze a handful of sand, you will never get oil out of it."

Taking impermanence truly to heart is to be slowly freed from the idea of grasping, from our flawed and destructive view of permanence, from the false passion for security on which we have built everything. Slowly it dawns on us that all the heartache we have been through from grasping at the ungraspable was, in the deepest sense, unnecessary. At the beginning this too may be painful to accept, because it seems so unfamiliar. But as we reflect, and go on reflecting, our hearts and minds go through a gradual transformation. Letting go begins to feel more natural, and becomes easier and easier. It may take a long time for the extent of our foolishness to sink in, but the more we reflect, the more we develop the view of letting go; it is then that a shift takes place in our way of looking at everything.

From "Living With the Devil," by Stephen Batchelor:

Progress along the Buddhist path to awakening is said to be "obstructed" by the devil of compulsions. A compulsion is any mental or emotional state that, on breaking into consciousness, disturbs and captivates us. Whether inflamed by anger or inflated by pride, we feel ill at ease and hemmed in. A compulsion encloses us within its boundaries. When overwhelmed by depression, not only are we inwardly sunk in despair but whatever we see, hear, and touch is abhorrent.

Shantideva compares compulsions to "bands of thieves" who lie in wait for an opportunity to invade us and "steal the treasures" of our minds. As soon as there is a lapse in self-awareness, a compulsive thought or image is liable to erupt, triggering a torrent of longing or despair that leaves us rattled and bewildered.

Compulsions obstruct the path by monopolizing consciousness. The hypnotic fascination they exert prevents us from attending to anything else. We behave like a rabbit dazzled by the headlights of a car. Not only do compulsions make us lose sight of our goal, they inwardly paralyze us. To escape their grip does not entail suppressing them but creating a space in which we are freed to let them go and they are freed to disappear. "As soon as I know the mind is distorted," says Shantideva, "I should remain as steady as a log." Without condoning or condemning what is breaking into consciousness, calmly note that an emotionally charged complex of phrases and images has erupted. You do not have to think of it as "me" or "mine." Having arisen of its own accord, it will pass away of its own accord. Given the space to do so, a compulsion frees itself.

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From "The Wisdom of No Escape," by Pema Chodron:

Holding on to beliefs limits our experience of life. That doesn't mean that beliefs or ideas or thinking is a problem; the stubborn attitude of having to have things be a particular way, grasping on to our beliefs and thoughts, all these cause the problems. To put it simply, using your belief system this way creates a situation in which you choose to be blind instead of being able to see, to be deaf instead of being able to hear, to be dead rather than alive, asleep rather than awake.

For us, as people sitting here meditating, as people wanting to live a good, full, unrestricted, adventurous, real kind of life, there is concrete instruction that we can follow, which is the one that we have been following all along in meditation: See what is.

Acknowledge it without judging it as right or wrong. Let it go and come back to the present moment. Whatever comes up, see what is without calling it right or wrong. Acknowledge it. See it clearly

without judgment and let it go. Come back to the present moment. From now until the moment of your death, you could do this. As a way of becoming more compassionate toward yourself and toward others, as a way of becoming less dogmatic, prejudiced, determined to have your own way, absolutely sure that you're right and the other person is wrong, as a way to develop a sense of humor about the whole thing, to lighten it up, open it up, you could do this. You could also begin to notice whenever you find yourself blaming others or justifying yourself. If you spent the rest of your life just noticing that and letting it be a way to uncover the silliness of the human condition - the tragic yet comic drama that we all continually buy into - you could develop a lot of wisdom and lot of kindness as well as a great sense of humor.

SOURCES

Batchelor, Stephen. "Living With the Devil." New York: Riverhead Books, 2004.

Chodron, Pema. "The Wisdom of No Escape." Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1991.

Sogyal Rinpoche. "The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying." Edited by Patrick Gaffney and Andrew Harvey. San Francisco:

HarperSanFrancisco, 1992. Available from Ligmincha's Bookstore.

Visit www.ligminchastore.org, or call toll-free (866) 522-5269. (In the Charlottesville area, call (434) 220-0060.)

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LIGMINCHA INSTITUTE'S UPCOMING 2005 RETREATS AND A SERIES OF FREE PUBLIC TALKS

Dear Sangha,

There is a lot happening at Ligmincha Institute in the next few months. Please visit the links below to find out more about the retreats at our Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Nelson County, Va., as well as the free public talks by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, miniretreats, and ongoing practices at Ligmincha Institute in Charlottesville, Va. For additional information about any of these retreats or to register, e-mail Ligmincha@aol.com or call 434-977-6161.

APRIL-JULY RETREATS at our Serenity Ridge retreat center

www.ligmincha.org/html/sr_sched.html

ANNUAL SPRING RETREAT with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, APRIL 20-24

www.ligmincha.org/html/healing_waters.html

DZOGCHEN RETREAT with Ponlop Thinley Nyima Rinpoche, MAY 11-15

www.ligmincha.org/html/exp_trans_pt_2.html

TRUL KHOR (TIBETAN YOGA) RETREATS with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, MAY 18-22

www.ligmincha.org/html/tibetan_yoga.html

SUMMER RETREAT with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, JULY 3-23

www.ligmincha.org/html/summer_2005.html

MARCH - AUGUST 2005 HIGHLIGHTS at Ligmincha Institute in Charlottesville

To see the full schedule, visit:

www.ligmincha.org/html/c_ville_calendar.html

FREE PUBLIC TALKS & PRACTICE SESSIONS

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will be offering an unprecedented series of six free public talks at Ligmincha in 2005, on selected Wednesday evenings beginning April 6.

There is something new in the format that will be welcomed by newcomers and experienced students alike. This year, each of the six talks will be immediately followed by a series of Thursday evening practice sessions led by experienced practitioners, so that people attending the talk will have an immediate opportunity to put Rinpoche's teachings into practice. Each series of practices in turn will conclude with a weekend mini-retreat at Ligmincha, as an opportunity for more intensive practice; with the next scheduled free public talk by Rinpoche following immediately thereafter.

The first talk, on April 6 from 7-8:30 p.m., will be: "Entering the Mandala: Connecting with space, light, and the four immeasurables"

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(an introduction to the mandala of the Bon Mother Tantra and to the Three Syllables Practice).

Follow-up practice sessions will take place each Thursday from April 7 through May 5, 7-8 p.m., and will conclude with a mini-retreat on Saturday, May 7.

Future public talks by Rinpoche are:

May 11: Purifying the Obstacles to Enlightenment

June 22: Harnessing the Prana

Sept. 7: Opening the Chakras

Oct. 5: Tapping In to Joy

Nov. 9: Discovering the Light Within

THE MA GYUD SHORT SADHANA: PRACTICE, EXPLANATION & DISCUSSION WITH JOHN JACKSON

This series is now taking place on Wednesday evenings at Ligmincha from 7-8:15 p.m. (date of final session to be determined)

REGULAR WEEKLY PRACTICES AT LIGMINCHA in Charlottesville

Tuesday evenings, 7-8 p.m. (ongoing): Meditation practices of Tsa Lung and Calm Abiding (Zhine)

Wednesday evenings, 7-8 p.m. (ongoing): Practice of the Short Sadhana of the Ma Gyud (Mother Tantra)

"PRACTICING TRUL KHOR (TIBETAN YOGA)" - edited excerpts from oral

teachings given by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during Ligmincha's Eighth Annual Summer Retreat, July 2000.

"Trul khor" refers to physical yoga. Alejandro Chaoul-Reich is going to lead an intensive trul khor training, and I strongly recommend it to those of you who are interested in physical movement or who do yoga. As we are learning, these practices are directly related to the teachings and transmissions we have received. There is a direct connection, which makes it so powerful.

Each of the different groups of trul khor exercises is based on the five natural elements of earth, water, fire, air and space. Similar to other forms of physical yoga, Trul Khor is also very much about body posture, physical movement, opening the flow of vital energy, and clearing disturbing emotions. The exercises are very well thought out and a wonderful support for meditation practice.

Everything we do that keeps our body in one type of position for a long period of time - whether while sitting, walking or working - has an energetic effect on us. Sometimes we don't pay much attention

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to our posture. When we take a weekend off and go to a yoga center, we pay attention, but the rest of the time we don't. In any given moment, just look around you and see how people are sitting. Just do a very general analysis. What does each posture represent? Is it a happy posture, a doubtful posture, a posture of reinforcement? Immediately you can see that some postures are hopeful; some are doubtful; some are just holding on. In a way, it is very hard to keep your body in a posture that is not related with some emotion or energetic pattern in yourself. Maybe the emotion or type of energy is not clearly identifiable, but there is something there.

Zen and Tibetan monasteries often require assuming certain types of postures that are supportive of meditation practice. For example, there is a posture in which contemplation is supported, alertness is supported, and agitation is avoided. It may be hard to feel the difference when you are doing it, but sitting cross-legged generates and retains heat for the practice. Sitting on a chair might for sure be better for the knees - many lamas suffer as a result of sitting cross-legged for long periods of time. But generally speaking, the cross-legged position is very supportive for the practice. Tilting the neck slightly down helps to prevent thoughts. It is very interesting, right? Sometimes you may feel tilting your neck makes a difference, sometimes you feel that no matter what you do, your thoughts still come! The position of your body is important; it affects not only your practice, but also your health and psychological well-being.

REMINDER: There will be two Trul Khor (Tibetan Yoga) retreats offered

this May 18-22, 2005, with Alejandro Chaoul-Reich. "Tsa Lung Trul Khor: Introduction to Harmony of Body, Breath and Mind" is an introductory retreat open to all. "Tsa Lung Trul Khor I: Beginning the Training" is open only to those who have attended either the "Tsa Lung Trul Khor: Introduction to Harmony of Body, Breath and Mind" course in November 2004, or any previous Trul Khor Part 1. You can find additional details about this retreat at www.ligmincha.org/html/tibetan_yoga.html.

NEW ITEMS AT LIGMINCHA'S BOOKSTORE: TAPES, PRAYERS, BOOKS ON DZOGCHEN, CHILDREN'S BOOKS AND RITUAL ITEMS.

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," then click on "New Items."

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Audiocassette Tape:

Dreaming and Dying: The Parallel Process, a talk by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (\$10)

Prayers:

The Prayer of the Intermediate State: The Precious Garland (\$10)

Prayer for Spreading the Bon Teachings - Ten Gye Mon Lam (\$5)

Books on Dzogchen:

Carefree Dignity, by Tsoknyi Rinpoche (\$18)

Dzogchen Essentials, compiled and edited by Marcia Vinder Schmidt (\$18)

Dzogchen: Heart Essence of the Great Perfection, by His Holiness the Dalai Lama (\$18.95)

Fearless Simplicity, by Tsoknyi Rinpoche (\$22)

Traveling Between the Worlds, by Hillary Webb (\$15.95)

Children's Books:

A Snowlion's Lesson, by Norbu Kharitsang (\$6.50)

Tibetan Tales for Little Buddhas, by Naomi Rose (\$16.95)

Where Is Tibet, by Gina Halpern (\$12.95)

Ritual Items:

Abalone Shell With Wood Stand (\$12)

Butterlamp (small \$16, large \$28)

Bon Healing Incense (\$3)

Mala Counters, Bone (\$8)

Mandala Set, Gilt or Silverplate (\$58)

Mandala Set, Copper (\$74)

Prayer Wheel, Table-Top (small \$20, large \$35)

Jewelry:

"A" Pendant on Silver Chain (\$24)

"A" Pendant, Large (\$40)

Mandala of Yeshe Walmo (\$20)

Postcards:

"Rigpa," calligraphy by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (\$3)

"Tigle Nyag Chig," calligraphy by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (\$3)

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

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