

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 May 10. 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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2006 SUMMER RETREAT WILL HIGHLIGHT THE THREE DOORS TO ENLIGHTENMENT – TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE TALKS WITH VOCL

VOCL: Rinpoche, could you explain what you will be teaching about during the 2006 summer retreat?

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE: For a number of years I have thought that it is very important, for both those who have been practicing a long time as well as new practitioners, to have a fundamental understanding of what spiritual practice can really mean in one's daily life. It is my strong belief that spiritual practice should not remain in one's head only as mental concepts. This summer, therefore, I want to offer a way for students to explore the tremendous possibilities that arise when they are able to practice through all three doors to enlightenment - through their body, their speech and their mind.

In the teachings it is said that one's mind need not be a slave to the pain in one's body, nor should one's body and speech be slaves to the pain in one's mind. Rather, body and speech should be supports for the mind, and the mind should support the body and speech. Through a correct approach to spiritual practice one can learn to integrate all three - and this state of integration is a very clear, powerful and

healthy way to live. I have found this approach to be personally beneficial and so want to share this with my students.

In my new book, which will be published later this year, I have tried to distill a very simple, direct, clear approach to integrating spiritual practice through the three doors of body, speech and mind. This new book will provide a basis for the teachings at this year's summer retreat.

The text I will teach from is Ku Sum Rang Shar (Spontaneous Arising of the Three Kayas) by Shardze Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche, who achieved the rainbow body (ja lus). Many of the practices we will do during the retreat are drawn from the Ku Sum Rang Shar: for example, the practice of tummo, which generates the inner heat to burn away subtle obscurations of mind; and the practice of retrieving elemental essences from nature and the elements. We will engage both mind and speech with prayer, mantra and visualization and engage the body with the physical yogas of tsa lung and trul khor as well as prostrations. My wish is that each student will have the opportunity to gain a direct, personal experience of the integration of these three doors.

(Note: More information about this retreat appears below.)

“BRINGING THE VIEW FULLY INTO ONE’S LIFE” – an excerpt from “Healing with Form, Energy and Light” by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

When I first began to teach in the West, I did so in a traditional way.

This usually meant explaining what was in a particular text and adding my commentary. Then it was up to the student to understand or not.

But as I spent more time in the West I began to see that there was a need to teach about the teaching, to explain how to develop experience and how to apply the teachings and practices to the situations of daily life. My main interest is in teaching what can be useful to people, what can help them heal conflict, work through their unhappiness, remove obstacles to meditation, and develop stability in the natural state.

Sometimes this means applying a very profound teaching to the psychological level of experience even though the view of the teaching is beyond psychological or emotional concerns, as is the case with dzogchen. The view of dzogchen is the highest view, the non-dual view, but this doesn't mean that it shouldn't affect everyday situations.

For the real practitioner it affects everything – every relationship and every situation.

The point of the practice is to stop being the person who has problems, and instead to abide fully in the nature of mind where there are neither problems nor a separate individual to struggle with them.

SOURCE:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. “Healing With Form, Energy and Light.”

Edited by Mark Dahlby. Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 2002.

Available at Ligmincha's Bookstore. Visit: www.ligminchastore.org

"EARLY-BIRD" DATE IS MAY 21 FOR REGISTERING FOR THE SUMMER RETREAT!

14th Annual Summer Retreat

July 2–22, 2006

"Tummo - Inner Fire of Realization"

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

For 15 years Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has presented the dzogchen teachings of the Bon Buddhist tradition in the West. His teachings and commentaries convey a fundamental understanding of spiritual practice in the context of modern Western life. His ability to make these oncehidden teachings accessible, while maintaining the purity of their transmission, has allowed his students to move beyond conceptual understanding and bring authentic dzogchen experience into their conventional lives.

In his soon-to-be-published book, Tenzin Rinpoche presents very simple, clear and direct instructions for integrating spiritual practice through the three doors of body, speech and mind. This summer, at Ligmincha Institute's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, Tenzin Rinpoche will combine material from his book with practice instructions from the text Ku Sum Rang Shar (Spontaneous Arising of the Three Kayas). This text is by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche, a Bon master who achieved the body of light, or rainbow body, in 1934.

At this year's annual summer retreat Rinpoche will instruct and guide us in the practice of tummo (generating the inner heat) to burn away subtle obscurations and cultivate bliss. He will also teach meditation practices for retrieving healing essences from nature and the elements, which will include light fasting combined with herbal drinks to purify and rejuvenate the body and enhance meditative experience. We will engage the mind and speech with prayer, healing sounds, mantra and visualization; and we will incorporate the potent body movements of tsa lung, trul khor and prostrations. Rinpoche is happy to announce that both Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe will join him at the retreat to help lead these practices.

It is Tenzin Rinpoche's sincere wish that through the intensive study and practice opportunity offered during this year's summer retreat, each student will find his or her own door to a life that is more physically healthy, energetically vital and spiritually fulfilling.

As always, you may come for one, two or all three weeks of the summer retreat. If you are new to Serenity Ridge, or able to come for only one week, Rinpoche recommends that you come to the first week, when an indepth explanation of the practices will be offered. Of course all are welcome no matter which week they attend. Each week is designed to be a complete series of teachings, and a direct and powerful healing experience with aspects of all of the practices presented each week.

Week One: July 2-8 / Week Two: July 9-15 / Week Three: July 16-22

Retreat cost PER WEEK (includes meals):

\$450 received by May 21; \$500 received by June 15; \$550 received after June 15

Note: Those who participate in the summer work retreat will receive a 50% discount on one week of the summer retreat.

The Summer Work Retreat at Serenity Ridge takes place the week prior to the summer retreat: June 27 – July 1. It is a wonderful time to share with sangha and to be of joyful service.

Our work retreat includes vigorous work periods, daily meditation practice, and ample time for a swim in the pool or a walk along the Rockfish River. The work retreat is free of charge, and participants are provided with free tenting sites and meals.

For more information or to register, contact Ligmincha Institute: Ligmincha@aol.com or (434)977-6161.

“THE TEN PARAMITAS: THE KEYS TO AWAKENING” – a series focusing on the practice of each of the 10 paramitas or perfections, the means of transcending the limits of one’s karmic tendencies.

Fully mastering these 10 virtues may take many lifetimes, but even the act of turning one’s awareness toward practicing them can have a transformative effect on one’s attitude and on one’s relations with others.

This series was inspired by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung’s beautiful and concise heart advice on the 10 paramitas that he gave one day during a ngondro retreat at Serenity Ridge, November 2005.

The Ten Perfections or Ten Paramitas

Generosity - jin pa (sbyin pa)

Moral discipline or ethical behavior - tsul trim (tshul khrim)

Patience - zo pa (bzod pa)

Diligence or vigor - ton dru (btson ‘grus)

Meditation or concentration - sam ten (bsam gtan)

Strength, power, or capacity - tob (stobs)

Compassion - nying je (snying rje)

Aspiration - mon lam (smon lam)

Skillful means/dedication - ngo wa (bsngo ba)

Wisdom - she rab (shes rab)

“THE PERFECTION OF DILIGENCE OR VIGOR” – an edited excerpt from oral teachings given by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, the abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery, Nepal:

The fourth paramita is tondru, the practice of diligence. Diligence refers to the feeling of enthusiasm or joy that you have in your practice, and the feeling of joy that you have in performing virtuous or meritorious actions. As you develop this kind of enthusiasm, then even if you experience major difficulties or disturbances, they cannot destroy your practice. In fact, they will no longer even feel like

difficulties. However, without this enthusiasm, even a minor difficulty will be a big problem for you.

“On Exertion” – an excerpt from “Indestructible Truth” by Reginald Ray: Our dharma practice puts us in a situation where we must go ahead rather than seeking our own personal comfort and security. The paramita of exertion is needed to enable us to continue on. The way is long, and there will be opportunities and temptations to give up. Through the energy of exertion, we persevere. The way of the bodhisattva is painful; exertion provides the strength to step into our pain and take advantage of it rather than try to avoid it.

It is critical to realize that exertion is not manufactured like the energy we sometimes feel from being a workaholic, being distraught or taking stimulants. Exertion is not the mindless speed and aggression that mark much of modern life. This may be illustrated by the following example. In the dzokchen tradition, laziness is defined as “being busy,” being constantly preoccupied with various activities. This kind of laziness involves engaging in activity-based preconceptions. We have a concept of something that we want to get or achieve, and our desire, our hope and fear, provide the fuel to drive us forward. It is as if our lust for a “result” provides the driving force behind our relentless activity. This model of the person who is constantly “on the run,” who never has a free minute, who goes from dawn until dusk, is held up as the ideal in modern culture, the model that everyone should emulate. Why, in dzokchen, is this regarded as the ultimate form of laziness? Because for dzokchen, the ultimate laziness is dwelling in ignorance, simply repeating one’s habitual patterns over and over, and refusing to relate to the challenge of reality beyond ego. It is lazy in the sense that it reflects a desire to dwell in the morass and confusion of one’s own self-absorption rather than step into the bright light and fresh air of reality, where what we are and how we spend our time may be called into question.

SOURCE:

Ray, Reginald. “Indestructible Truth.” Boston: Shambhala Publications Inc., 2000.

UPCOMING RETREATS

June 16–18, 2006

SIX LOKAS PRACTICE RETREAT

Dissolving the Obstacles to Enlightenment

(Note: This retreat is open only to those who have received the transmission of the Six Lokas practice.)

At one time or another each of us suffers strong emotions that throw us off balance, cause us to act in ways we later regret, and make us lose touch with our true nature. Centuries ago the masters of the Bon

lineage developed the meditations of the Six Lokas specifically to purify the disturbing emotions and help us live our lives in a more balanced and relaxed way.

These meditations focus on the root causes of our suffering: anger, greed, ignorance, jealousy, pride and laziness. Through each meditation we examine our habitual patterns so that we may recognize them and then purify and transform them. The practices have a deep healing and transformative power, and are traditionally practiced in retreat as a preliminary to dzogchen contemplation.

This practice retreat is an opportunity to develop clear visualization, energize mantra practice, enjoy the support of sangha, dissolve emotional limitations, and simply and clearly be.

JOHN JACKSON has studied in Tibetan monasteries in India and Nepal and practiced meditation for 25 years. For more than 10 of those years he has studied with great masters of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition.

Retreat cost (includes meals): \$150

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

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):

\$350 if received by July 5; \$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.

SANGHA SHARING – “THE BIRTH OF A STUPA”

By Silvia Manzanilla in collaboration with Gaby and Carlos Madero, Balbina Rey, Jackie Ruiz, Martha Perez and Lourdes Hinojosa

I will take you on a journey seldom traversed by practitioners even in Tibet nowadays - it is a journey of light, of peace, of spiritual

development. It is the construction and consecration of the first major Bonpo chorten, or stupa, in the Western world.

The Mexican sangha is filled with fiery people, and we have learned that when we come together as one, anything can manifest, even a stupa. This is what happened with the stupa in Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche had long dreamt of a stupa that would be dedicated to the late Lopon Sange Tenzin Rinpoche and to world peace; and around the year 2000 his dream began to manifest in handwritten notes and drawings. At first there were many obstacles; but in 2003 a group of dynamic people from Torreon attended their first retreat in Valle de Bravo with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. They spoke their minds, they were sincere of heart, and their presence energized our sangha. Fortunately, they also made a very strong connection with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the Bon teachings, and they decided to create a Bon sangha and meditation center in their city. Soon after, with the support of this new sangha Carlos Madero and Gaby Madero expressed their deep desire to build a stupa in Torreon. Tenzin Rinpoche was very supportive of this initiative, which was clearly rooted in serious intention and commitment.

From that day forward the planning and building process went forward with great energy and focus. In February 2005 Tenzin Rinpoche invited two geshees to Torreon under the sponsorship of the Madero family, and very soon all the Mexican sangha was engaged.

In May 2005 the geshees arrived. Geshe Nyima Odzer, Geshe Nyima Kunkhyab and later Geshe Tenzin Yeshe worked very hard to initiate the building process and encourage everyone in the Mexican sangha to work together toward our great goal. The geshees seemed very happy here. Although they only spoke Tibetan, communication from the heart flowed easily for everyone right from the start. The earlier obstacles began to dissipate, the process began to flow smoothly, and we could see that the actual construction of the stupa for world peace at Chamma Ling, in Torreon, would soon begin. E Ma Ho!

Blessing of the Land

The blessing of the land ritual was performed on May 16, 2005. The geshees chose the site, and very soon afterward the laying of the foundation began. Later, the red garuda ritual was performed to remove any remaining obstacles and poisons.

In June 2005, while in Lhasa, Tibet, I saw a large rainbow around the sun in broad daylight. The sky was so vast and clear; the sun was like a naked pupil with a rainbow iris. Later that day I received an email from Balbina Rey and Jackie Ruiz, who participated in the process of building the stupa from its inception. They recounted their beautiful experiences during the rituals for opening the land. They told me how the sangha had taken turns doing kora (circumambulations) around the future site of the stupa, and how during a midnight kora they had heard the sounds of a conch shell being blown and a bell being rung in the

gompa. The geshe said these were two very auspicious signs.

Gaby and Carlos Madero write, "There was a time when we were thinking of stopping the construction, but the protectors were always with us and helped us overcome obstacles. Geshe Nyima and Geshe Tenzin made a ritual and tormas for our home. The geshe as well as we had a lot of dreams related to the stupa; we used to share them, and it was like living in a magical dimension."

Tsa Tsas

During this time all of the sanghas of Mexico City and Torreon were making tsa tsas - hundreds of tsa tsas with medicinal herbs blessed by the geshe. A tsa tsa is a small, votive-like tablet, usually made of clay, bearing the impression of a deity, stupa or other sacred symbol. Tibetan people believe the act of making tsa tsas accumulates merit. As holy objects, they can be found inside stupas, prayer wheel niches, holy caves and monastery altars, as well as beside holy mountains, holy lakes and other holy sites. Traditionally small tsa tsas have been placed inside portable amulet shrines (called gau in Tibetan) and worn by travelers as protection.

Before and during the making of the tsa tsas, many prayers and mantras were said including guru yoga, refuge and bodhicitta, and participants visualized the buddha Shenlha Okar purifying them and all beings. Later the tsa tsas were painted gold and silver and stored in the meditation center until their inclusion in the stupa's bumpa, or jewel.

Coronation

In October, many of us came to Torreon for the great occasion when the stupa was to be crowned with the 13 rings and the yaru (two horns, jewel and center flame). As I approached the center coming from the airport, I could see the bumpa (jewel) for the first time from afar and my heart started beating faster. When I entered the center courtyard and saw the unfinished stupa, tears filled my eyes with reverence, joy and gratitude. I made three prostrations.

That night, I was mesmerized by the stupa's presence. I did kora around it and prayed. That night I dreamt I was still doing kora. Suddenly in the dream I asked myself, Why are you dreaming when you can actually do kora? So I awoke and went outside. The dawn air was crisp, the sky clear, and I began the circumambulations. Other sangha members arrived to join me, and with no exchange of words or greetings, we soon were all doing kora in our pajamas and bare feet.

After a long tsa tsa day, Martha Perez, from our Monterrey sangha, went to bed and dreamt of making tsa tsas while saying mantras continuously. She awoke with a sore arm from the hard work! That morning I also had the wonderful experience of making and painting tsa tsas with the sangha. The sun was warm, the energy was high and loving, our clothes were stained with paint, and our hearts were full of joy. Finally 11,000 tsa tsas were completed.

After breakfast we noticed an enormous crane parked outside to carry

the 13 rings and place them on the bumpa. The rings were made of concrete, because metal rings would not last long in Torreon's climate. As the crane did its work, Carlos and Gaby's eldest sons directed and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe oversaw the maneuvers from a ladder; while Amalia, Paty and Efrain from Torreon, and I were inside the stupa looking out. It was exhilarating to be inside a stupa, but later it would be more exciting.

Long before this, the geshe had worked very hard preparing the tree trunk that would go within the stupa as a sacred central channel. The tree trunk was 10 meters long, carved octagonally, painted red, and engraved in gold with mantras, sacred seed syllables and other sacred markings. It had taken much effort for the sangha to locate the right tree for this purpose.

On the morning the tree trunk was to be installed, we tied khatas (silk scarves) all over the trunk. On the count of three, we all carried it toward the stupa amid cheers and shouts, singing and laughing with joy. It reminded me of how my sister and I used to carry a gift to a birthday party, each carrying a corner so that the birthday friend would know it was from both of us. We all felt as though we were merging with the tree trunk; as if our own essence was being embraced by it.

The tree trunk was soon lifted by the crane and suspended in the air with all the khatas flying like clouds in the wind. Then it was guided to the center of the stupa. Eustaquio and I were waiting inside with two strong workers, who were asking all kinds of questions about the meaning of all this.

We watched the tree trunk descend into its base. Suddenly it became clear to everyone that it was a little too long to fit - a challenge!

After deliberating with the geshe, it was decided to lift the trunk in place and cut it at the base to the right length. All of this was magical. We hadn't eaten, we hadn't rested, yet we had an electrifying energy that kept us going with joy, commitment and hope.

Next the umbrella-shaped piece was placed atop the stupa. We plastered and sealed the bumpa from within. I felt as if we were safeguarding our own home, as if we all were caretaking the wellbeing of a loved one.

Eustaquio, Amalia, Juan Cordova, Gabriel Madero and I stayed inside the stupa. As Geshe Tenzin Yeshe supervised, the sacred process began of introducing the thangkas, texts, relics, other sacred objects, and the thousands of tsa tsas to the bumpa. Everyone in the sangha participated - carrying, lifting, chanting - and our hearts became one with the heart of the stupa. We were literally in the heart of our hearts. We could feel the divine presence, a nameless grandeur of some kind; we could feel the awe and shelter that this was for all the formless beings that we could not see but were present there with us.

During the process of introducing the relics, texts, and tsa tsas, many sangha members from all over Mexico felt a magical, wonderful shift in

their lives. Martha Perez says that ever since that time she has seen and felt the world as one. We have gained an insight that the world is so lacking in love and compassion; and that through our active connection to these sacred qualities, we have experienced a change without effort.

During my pilgrimage to sacred Bonpo sites in Tibet in early 2005, in Khyung Dzong (Garuda Castle) I met with two hermits, a Bonpo monk by the name of Yeshe Nyingpo and a Bonpo nun named Sherab Wangmo. When I told them about the stupa in Mexico, they were so joyful tears came to their eyes. They both gave me sacred soil from their own pilgrimages to other sacred Bonpo and Zhang Zhung places in Tibet so that I could bring it to the stupa in Mexico. This soil, as well as other precious gifts from them and from the monks of Triten Norbutse in Nepal, are now in the heart of the Torreon stupa.

Consecration

The stupa was finished on October 16, 2005, and it was consecrated in February of 2006. We were all looking forward to the consecration as well as to receiving the sacred-syllable teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The Mexican sangha was very eager to greet our bold sisters from the United States sangha who were to join us for this sacred occasion. That the stupa creates this uplifted mental, emotional and physical environment around it, I have no doubt!

My personal gift was to see Ponse Jigme Tenzin there (Jorge Rene, the recognized reincarnation of Lopon Sangye Tenzin, to whom the stupa is dedicated). I had not seen my dear tulku for so long. He greeted me so warmly that my heart was full. He seemed happy to be there too. This is also true for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche who always is so caring and warm to all of us who crowd around him.

According to Gaby and Carlos Madero, "We also experienced the receptivity, cooperation and connection our workers had by the time the stupa was finished. They were all very moved and some even cried when Rinpoche consecrated the stupa. They might not have been very learned in the meaning, but this shows that the energy of the stupa reaches all, not through the intellect, but through all of our being."

The consecration celebration was in perfect alignment with DZA, the seed syllable of enlightened action. It was a true example of how, when one's conviction is firm and mature and when minds and hearts come together as one, a grand manifestation of enlightenment can arise from a dream. Therefore, the Five Warrior Syllables practice was also the best teaching for us at this sacred time.

The stupa was finally ready to be blessed, empowered and consecrated for the benefit of all beings. On Sunday afternoon, Feb. 12, 2006, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Geshe Nyima Kunchap and Geshe Tenzin Yeshe consecrated the stupa with prayers. Our beloved Alejandro Chaoul sat like a guardian behind them. The vast blue sky with the luminous sun was covering us and holding us. We held offerings of flower petals,

seeds, herbs and tsampa. We offered them to the sky, to the stupa, to the divine, to our connection to our precious lineage, to our ancestral teachers and those of the present, to all beings, and to the pure essence of the four immeasurables — love, compassion, joy and equanimity. We offered without limit, without bounds and with all of our hearts!

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

Dictionary: "The New Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan"
Edited by Melvyn C. Goldstein. Oversized hardback, 1211 pages, \$55

MEDITATION SUPPLIES:

- 1) Zafu, by Samadhi Cushions, \$49.
- 2) Zabuton, by Samadhi Cushions, \$50.
- 3) Omni Bench - in cherry wood (\$98) and in hardwood (\$68).
Handcrafted of premium wood, with unique rounded legs. This design allows for individual adjustment and spinal alignment. Hinges on the legs make travel easy.
- 4) Salubrion Seat, \$49. Provides support for floor sitting, assisting in proper back alignment and lumbar curve for superior comfort. It is lightweight (2 pounds) which makes for easy traveling. Dimensions: 15" (diameter) x 4.5" (height).
- 5) Tush-Cush, \$39.95. Designed to relieve and prevent back pain and other discomforts associated with sitting by suspending the tailbone (coccyx) in the air, which reduces the pressure on and within the lower spinal discs, tipping the pelvis forward to help restore the spine's natural lumbar curve. Dimensions: 14" x 18"