



SER CHÖ ÖSEL LING UPDATE

A Kagyu Changchub Chuling Project

First Quarter 2009

ALAN WALLACE SPEAKS IN PORTLAND

An interested and enthusiastic crowd of 80 or more turned out on a rainy November 1 evening to hear noted Buddhist scholar Alan Wallace give a public talk at the historic First Congregational Church on Portland's South Park Blocks. The talk was a benefit for KCC's retreat center, Ser Chö Ösel Ling.

B. Alan Wallace, Ph.D., is the president and founder of the Santa Barbara Institute for Consciousness Studies, a place for studies seeking to integrate the insights and techniques of contemporary science with those of the world's classic contemplative and philosophical traditions. Alan is a prolific author, Buddhist teacher and practitioner, translator for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and presenter at the Mind and Life Conferences bringing His Holiness together with western scientists.

Alan also leads many Buddhist retreats worldwide. Over the past five years we have been privileged to have Alan lead a number of retreats in or near Portland under KCC auspices. The November 1 talk immediately preceded a week-long contemplative retreat, held this year at Great Vow Monastery in Clatskanie, Oregon.

The talk was titled "Achieving Free Will, a Buddhist Perspective." Alan started by noting different views throughout history, from ancient India long before the time of Buddha Shakyamuni down to present times, on whether humans truly possess free will. He quoted William James, the noted late 19th century

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SAVE THE DATE: MAY 16TH, 2009

SER CHÖ ÖSEL LING ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

Please join KCC community and friends for a day at the retreat land. Activities include tours of our 240 acres: open meadows, ponderosa pine, grand oak forests and eastside wildflowers. See the building site of future retreat facilities and explore the completed sections. Hear stories of the land, KCC's vision, and "what's in it" for you! Allow a sumptuous potluck lunch and glorious springtime in Klickitat County to fill all your senses with delight! Celebrate the promise of this project; may its gift buoy your spirit for days to come...



This Buddha sits in one of SCOL's several rocky meadows that are often dotted by wildflowers in the spring. Photo: Adele Hilsen



The retreat land inspires solitude, contemplation and looking inward at the causes of true happiness, as well as those patterns of relating to the world that cause suffering, for ourselves and others. Photo: Karen Nelson

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American psychologist and philosopher, as remarking that what we attend to at the moment is reality. But by the mid-19th century, western science and thought had centered on the material world as equivalent to reality. James called for observing the realm of mental phenomena, but in the west that has only begun to happen within the past two decades

In contrast, Buddhist contemplative practice for centuries has focused on afflictions that inhibit the experience of free will, and the means to overcome those afflictions. Alan related that the 8th century Buddhist scholar and contemplative Shantideva wrote that a person whose mind is distracted lives between fangs of mental affliction. Settling the mind, however, simply to be present and to observe creates the possibility of making a choice in one's actions.

A careful train of reasoning and contemplative experience, Alan continued, leads to the conclusion that free will comes about through choice. We can choose to be free by developing the ability of stabilizing our attention, allowing mental clarity to guide us rather than our unconsidered, automatic patterns of thought and behavior.

Those in attendance at the talk found their attention held throughout by Alan's erudition, augmented by his engaging speaking style. A number of those who came and listened, as the Buddha enjoined his followers to do, have since shown up at KCC. They were welcome, and we trust they felt welcome, and if so moved will return again and again.

By Jim Kimball



MATCH NEWS!

As we enter 2009, having raised \$176K in 2008, we find ourselves within \$12K of meeting Janet McAlpin's generous \$400K challenge. Every dollar that you give, up to \$12K, will still be matched one for one by Janet. At that point, we will have raised over two million dollars from over 400 donors, and be well along towards funding needed to complete long retreat facilities.



This Buddha sits at the base of a rock wall set at the top of a hill covered in snowberry and oak. Photo: Roger Edwards

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