

## A PURE LAND IN COPPER-COLORED WOODS IN PRAISE OF PEMA OSEL LING

Though it is said that there are Buddhas and pure lands everywhere, we may not see them due to obscurations and habits. But every now and then – ever so rarely –, due to the kindness of enlightened teachers and the merit of fortunate beings who have a connection with them, pure lands manifest in more apparent forms, so that they can be experienced by people who have the capacity and inclination, rather easily. For some others, it will be a place to learn how to behave, how to love, and how to view phenomena. And perhaps for some others, it will just be an oasis to relax and rejuvenate – but a unique one nonetheless. What a comfort that there are such places on this continent!

One of these rare lands is in the midst of copper-colored woods, like a hidden valley nestled in a mountainous region.

This is a place

Where the whole universe can fit under a tent  
and a million-pound Guru Rinpoche can sit in your heart.  
Where one can practice all nine vehicles,  
– from the Shrivakayana to the Mahayana to the Vajrayana –,  
and so learn to *tame* the mind, to *train* the mind, and to *recognize* mind.  
Where we can endeavor on the graduated and non-graduated paths  
and swiftly perfect the two accumulations.  
Where we can bathe in the omniscient wisdom, the boundless power,  
and the unconditional love of the Buddhas.  
Where the teachers have the theoretical knowledge, the inner experience,  
and the blessings of the lineage.  
And where one can replace bad habits by good habits  
until there are no habits.

This is a place

Where we can be offered a guided tour of *all realms* – if we pay attention.  
Where there is humor – can you hear Vajrasattva's laughter?  
Where we can learn to *continuously* take birth in wonderful realms.  
Where what doesn't have a beginning can have an end.  
Where the extremes of nihilism and eternalism are avoided.  
And where we can effortlessly experience openness.

This is a place

Frequented by ever-youthful dakinis and sturdy dakas,  
Powerful ngagpas and hidden yogis,  
Vidyadharas and bodhisattvas of all levels,  
And simple, honest, devoted people.  
A place where friendships may help to keep samaya – not break them.

This is a place

Where giant turkeys cheer you up.  
Where wild boars charge your anger.  
And where the occasional tick deflates the balloon of your pride.

This is a place

Where ants circumambulate incalculable pure lands.  
Where we can watch ducks play just like we can witness the play of thoughts.  
And where red-tailed hawks fly high in the sky and remind you of the view.

Most importantly, this is a most-perfect place to develop  
– A GOOD HEART.

And to discover the meaning of the ever-so-simple  
and ever-so-profound instruction  
– ABIDE.

This was written as a humble offering for Lama Sonam Tsering, Sam Bercholz and Amy Green, as well as for the cheerful Sangha members at Pema Osel Ling, by some pale parakeet, during the ngondro retreat of the year 2018.