

# Serenity Ridge Dialogues: Body, Breath & Mind

April 5–7, 2020

Serenity Ridge Retreat Center

## Presenters and Discussion Participants:

**Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche** is the founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha International and an acclaimed author of many books. Teaching all around the world, he is renowned for his depth of wisdom, clear and engaging teaching style, and ability to make ancient teachings accessible and relevant for modern times. His work has been translated into more than 20 languages.

**Daniel Aitkin** is the CEO and publisher of Wisdom Publications, a nonprofit charitable publisher of books, podcasts and online courses on contemporary and classical Buddhism, mindfulness and meditation.

**Alejandro Chaoul–Reich, Ph.D.**, is the Huffington Foundation endowed director of The Jung Center’s Mind Body Spirit Institute in Houston Texas. He is a senior teacher with The 3 Doors and has been a student of Tibetan Buddhism since 1989, studying with His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

**Gaelle Desbordes, Ph.D.**, is an Instructor in radiology at Harvard Medical School and a member of the research staff at the Athinoula A. Martinos Center for Biomedical Imaging within Massachusetts General Hospital. Her research uses advanced methods in brain imaging (fMRI) and physiological measurements of the autonomic nervous system to investigate meditative practices. She is particularly interested in practices for cultivating compassion and promoting behavior change.

**David Germano, Ph.D.**, (tentative presenter) is the executive director of the Contemplative Sciences Center at the University of Virginia. He has taught and researched Tibetan and Buddhist studies at UVA since 1992. In this context, he works extensively with each of UVA’s 11 schools to explore learning, research and engagement initiatives regarding contemplation in their own disciplinary and professional areas.

**Menas C. Kafatos, Ph.D.**, is a Greek–born American physicist and a writer on spirituality and science. His books include *The Non–Local Universe: The New Physics and Matters of the Mind* and *The Conscious Universe: Parts and Wholes in Physical Reality*. Kafatos has written and lectured extensively, promoting discourse among science, spirituality and religion.

**Maria Kozhevnikov, Ph.D.**, is associate professor at the National University of Singapore and visiting associate professor at Harvard Medical School. Her research focuses on examining neural mechanisms of visual imagery and in exploring the ways to train visualization abilities.

**Michael Sheehy, Ph.D.**, is the director of scholarship at the Contemplative Sciences Center, research assistant professor in Tibetan Buddhist studies in the Department of Religious Studies, and affiliated faculty at the Tibet Center at the University of Virginia. Previously, he was director of programs at the Mind & Life Institute, a leading organization for the scientific research on contemplation.

**Sat Bir Singh Khasla, Ph.D.**, is assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School; and associate neuroscientist, Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders, with the Departments of Medicine and Neurology, Brigham and Women's Hospital. His research includes the evaluation of the benefits of yoga practice in public school settings and efficacy studies of yoga for insomnia, chronic stress, PTSD and anxiety disorders.

**Tawni Tidwell, Ph.D.**, is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center for Healthy Minds at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. She is a biocultural anthropologist and Tibetan medical doctor. Her research facilitates bridges across the western scientific tradition and the Tibetan medical tradition, along with their attendant epistemologies, ontologies and pedagogical methods.

**David R. Vago, Ph.D.**, is research director at the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, Vanderbilt University Medical Center. His work aims to clarify adaptive mind–brain–body interactions and their therapeutic relevance in psychiatric and other health settings. In this context, he has been specifically focusing on the study of mindfulness–based interventions in clinical settings, and the basic cognitive and neuroscientific mechanisms by which mindfulness–based practices function.