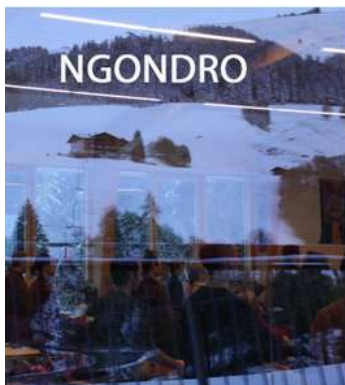


European Bon Garuda Newsletter



Number 1 - Spring 2011



Content

GREETINGS

- 3 Gabriele Penders, Vice Chairman of the European Bon Garuda Foundation
- 3 Ton Bisscheroux, Chief Editor European Bon Garuda Newsletter

EVENTS: NGONDRO

- 4 The start of the European sangha 2.0: the Ngondro retreat in Austria
- 6 Participants reflecting on the Ngondro retreat
- 7 Falling in love with the Ngondro
- 8 Ngondro: purify yourself through practice

IN THE SPOTLIGHT: THE THREE DOORS

- 10 The Three Doors: Transformative Practices for Body, Speech and Mind
- 10 Profound teachings for today's world
- 12 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Heart Drop: The Three Doors
- 13 A chance for radical transformation

PHOTOS

- 16 Photo of the Refuge Tree
- 17 Photos of the consecration of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace in Mexico

GOING BEYOND: CONSECRATION OF THE GREAT BON STUPA FOR WORLD PEACE

- 18 Stupa in the jungle

THE SANGHA

- 21 Happy birthday Rinpoche
- 22 Finland has a strong connection with Bon
- 23 Connecting Europe: letters from our sangha
- 25 The European Bon Garuda Foundation
- 28 A common European Bon Garuda website
- 29 Introducing the editors
- 30 Healing the earth, healing yourself

THE TEACHER AND THE DHARMA

- 31 The ancient Bon practice of Sang Chod
- 32 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching program in Europe in 2011

The **European Bon Garuda Newsletter** is a joint venture of the community of European students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Its creation has been encouraged by Rinpoche and the Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation.

Ideas and contributions are welcome at newsletter@bongaruda.eu

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Greetings

Dear members of the sangha,

Our European Bon Garuda Newsletter is born and we, as the Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation, are very happy to share this with you. We are convinced that the newsletter will enhance our communication with sangha members from all the different countries and help to keep you updated about our projects and activities. The European newsletter will help us to become an international community of students of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, supporting actively our teacher in his efforts to preserve and cultivate the ancient wisdom of Bon in Europe. More as readers than as the Board, we are looking forward to finding here many interesting articles, interviews and pictures about events taking place on local and also on the European level. We wish every success to the editors and we thank everybody who has contributed to this first issue.

Gabriele Penders, Vice-Chairman of the European Bon Garuda Foundation

Dear readers,

Since Rinpoche likes the Dutch newsletter, which has already been published for more than ten years, Jan Dinkelaar, Chairman of the Board of European Bon Garuda Foundation, asked me to be responsible for creating a newsletter for the European sangha.

After forming a team of editors we started to work on it in September 2010 and now, the first issue is ready. We publish the newsletter in English, but we think it would be nice to have it translated into German, Polish, Russian and other languages so that more people can read it. We will support and guide anybody willing to take on this task.

We hope you will enjoy this first issue and we would be happy to receive any kind of suggestions and contributions. Come and create the newsletter with us! The next release is planned for autumn 2011.

The newsletter is also meant as an expression of the gratitude that we, as editors, feel toward our teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



For the Rinpoche's upcoming 50th birthday, we collected congratulations in the various sangha's languages. We know that all the sanghas have been accumulating long life prayers and mantras for him in the past months. I do it as well, by reciting them and also by turning on a special prayer wheel. I built it inspired by what Rinpoche once said during the Bardo retreat in Amsterdam. "After somebody dies," he told us on that occasion, "you do the recitation of the Bardo prayers as many times as possible. You can read it by yourself and you can also turn a tape on for twenty-four hours for three or four days in a row."

That time the idea came to me to build a prayer wheel working off an electric current. I printed three long life mantras and three long life prayers and used a fan from a computer to rotate them. I put the prayer wheel on my shrine and I turn it on every time I meditate. Since it goes round several times a second, I calculated that it must have rotated now at least 333.333 times. Three prayers per rotation make one million in total. Long life to you, Rinpoche!

Ton Bisscheroux, Chief Editor European Bon Garuda Newsletter

February 15, 2011

The start of the European sangha 2.0: the Ngondro retreat in Austria

The term Web 2.0 is used to describe a new way of approaching the internet: instead of just passive viewing of content people now use it for sharing information and interacting in social media dialogue. The first retreat of the five-year cycle of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud teachings which took place in October 19-25 2010 in Austria was a kind of a generation 2.0 for the European sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: a start of building a community. The event that allowed us to taste pan-european energy, was planned and organized by a group of Austrian students of Rinpoche. The heart of the group is Karoline Seltenheim. She had been preparing the field for this event to happen for years and it was a fruit of her care and work. We asked her to talk about the 'genesis' of the retreat and about her impressions from it.



“Actually, the story is quite interesting. Somewhere in the period of 1996-99 Rinpoche was already teaching a dzogchen cycle in Austria, to a group of around sixty to sixty-five people. I was one of them, but not the organizer. I was quite a newcomer to all this environment and teachings at that time, a greenhorn, I would say. Then, in 2000 Rinpoche could not come and he asked us to have a practice retreat without him. And we had one, a wonderful one, in an area near the place where the retreat in 2010 was held. But out of those more than sixty only twelve people came and following that, Rinpoche's decision was not to continue teaching the cycle in Europe. Every year, when I met him at weekend retreats around Europe or at the annual retreat in Germany, I asked him whether he would give the teachings here in Europe again and I offered that I would organize everything. And until 2008 it stayed like this, he was smiling but there

was no concrete outcome from these talks. In 2008 I started to look for a place. I was thinking that when we would have a nice place it would be easier to convince Rinpoche to come.

It was Volker Graf who told me about the place where we decided to stay in the end. He had a retreat there once with another lama. The sport and relaxation center seems built specifically for our needs. It is located in Maria Alm, quite a well known touristic place, one thousand metre above the sea, in a charming spacious landscape at the foot of the Alps. Rinpoche said to me that spending days in such a place, seeing the open sky and snow on the mountains, was like taking a deep breath for him, like being in Tibet for a while.



The center is used by sport teams, ski instructors, basketball players for their training and really nothing is missing there. This was my thought – to find full comfort so that we are not distracted by anything like bad beds or water not running well. And the place was full of light. This light was entering into the dining room and the room that we used as a gompa from huge walled windows and pouring in on us. And the center has an enormous

gym with a very high ceiling as well. When I saw it, it glimpsed through my mind: here we might do prostrations. And we did, together with Rinpoche. He told me that it was one of the most memorable moments for him, doing prostrations with his students and with so much space around – and inside – all of us.

But let's go back to the preparations of the event. With the place found, one day Rinpoche said: yes, let us do it. And I began to organize it.



I made a reservation of the center and took some risk on myself because I had to pay quite a lot of money beforehand with no guarantee to fill the capacity of one hundred and thirty people. I put an announcement of the retreat on our web site and we made some leaflets but we actually didn't do much promotion for it. I don't know how people got to know about it but in May, five months before it would begin, all places were gone. I booked some more places in a hotel nearby – and at the end one hundred forty-two people from eleven countries took part. They were coming from Finland, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and USA. Some people from Turkey and Bulgaria were interested too.



The atmosphere of the retreat was wonderful. It is not only my impression. Many other people told me this. We all agreed that the energy circulating there was unique. It was different from other retreats. It was a feeling of growing together as sangha of a new generation.

I felt so relaxed and confident about all the organization and actually everything went very smoothly, as if people had been very familiar with all things that they had never done before. Like the Tsok, for example, the food offering ceremony. I was so calm and confident also because I felt Rinpoche's support, and his joy and kindness.

I think those days were like taking a deep breath for all of us."



Karoline Seltenheim

The next five-year cycle of the Ngondro will start in 2012, also in Austria.

Participants reflecting on the Ngondro retreat

“Actually I don't know if I would have been talking about connecting and openness so much before the Ngondro. Something really changed there. I think of Rinpoche saying it is good to share with other people, and even if there are some ego-related fears, I am willing to get to know other people, being aware they for sure have been dear to me in a previous lifetime even if my ego today is scared of them or something else. And I am less scared of telling people about myself, which I have been more before. It is all just stories, as Rinpoche says, and beyond them we find a strong sangha full of wisdom and love if we allow it to manifest.”

Anja Benesch, Germany

“I registered for the Ngondro retreat because of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, whose personality has deeply impressed me. He raised my self-confidence hence I had the strength that I can and shall give my spiritual development a structure. Free from the daily pressure and the necessity to react to everyday life circumstances, I was open to Rinpoche's teachings. His presence and his words revealed to me other dimensions of being. I felt comfortable during the retreat, connected with myself and with my surroundings. Now I try to integrate the sound of silence of the retreat in every moment of my life and to extend it through the daily Ngondro practice. Thank you very much for your teachings, Rinpoche, and thanks to all participants of the retreat for sharing this beautiful time. See you in October 2011!”

Bogusia Dausend, Spain

“To take part in the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Ngondro with Rinpoche had been my wish since I came in connection with him. Now it's possible, quiet easily and very comfortably in Austria, so I am very very happy and grateful for this!!! Being with

about 150 people is a bit of a challenge for me, as I usually live a more reclusive life and I love to be silent. So in between I often felt the need to withdraw a bit. But when I got all the photos I felt really warm-hearted towards everyone I saw, almost had the feeling we are still together and it will be very soon October again! The teachings and practice really changed my focus of life. I feel less lost inside, have more positive energy for my work, and the relationship to my husband seems to be going through a time of healing. These things were on my mind before, but the decision to really get into it now and practice daily has a birth giving power! Thanks to this precious lineage, our wonderful master and the whole sangha!!!”

Ida Bujok, Germany

“It is hard to say in a few words what we have learned during the October retreat. Rinpoche's teachings feel like a defining experience of our lives, not to mention the fact that the practices we were taught have fantastic effects on both ourselves and our lives, they initiated spiritual development. We decided to follow this path and go through it. We are thankful for this to both Rinpoche and the Tan Kapuja Buddhist College (Gate of Lore Buddhist College) that helped us – as its students – to participate in the retreat,

and our teacher Katalin Jakab who also helped us by being our interpreter. Thanks for the staff of the event. We enjoyed such a harmonious environment during the almost week-long retreat, it grabbed us out of our everyday lives, thus helping to concentrate on the teachings and practices. We really loved the sangha, we met people who we still love to recall. We are looking forward for the next event, to receive the next session of Rinpoche's five-year teachings in the loving atmosphere of the sangha.”

Kata Bertók and Péter Tongori, Hungary



Falling in love with the Ngondro

One lama said: The Ngondro is 100.000 opportunities to do the practice once with full concentration and faith.

Many teachings in Bon and Buddhist tradition begin with the Ngondro, or so called preliminary practices. The first part of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud cycle of teachings that Rinpoche gave last year in October in Austria was dedicated to the Ngondro. The Nine Practices included in it – Guru Yoga Prayer, Hundred Syllable Mantra, Great Mantra, Bodhicitta Prayer, Refuge Prayer, Prostrations, Mandala Offering, A Kar A Mé Mantra and Sa Lé Ö Mantra – should be repeated one hundred thousand times by anybody wanting to receive further teachings of this cycle. This is what the tradition specifies. This will probably be a hot topic for many people: how to deal with the numbers, not neglecting them, and not getting obsessed with them either? How to find a balanced relationship with these practices or even – how to fall in love with the Ngondro? Learning about how the Ngondro is approached in monasteries perhaps can help. Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, a young lama who took his geshe degree at Menri monastery in 2008 and has been currently doing his Ph.D. in Prague, talked to us about this.

“Many monks coming to Menri from Tibet for the Dialectic school have already done the Ngondro in their monasteries in Tibet. And so, in one class at Menri monastery, there are monks with different ‘study histories’. Anyway, at Menri you will not hear anything about the Ngondro before the seventh or eighth year of your studies, before you are twenty or twenty-five years old. It is only then, when you start learning tantra, that you are introduced to the Ngondro practices. Before that, you study logic and cosmology and sutric teachings, but nothing about the Ngondro. From this point of view, the Ngondro is quite high teachings, even if it is called preliminary or foundational. You also have to take all the monk’s vows, they are two hundred and fifty, and become fully ordained (*drang song*) before you start entering the tantra class.

Then the students are taught the Ngondro, and they begin to practice it. Usually, everybody does it individually. Nobody is there to check. Our class decided to do it all together. But we had no time during the day or even in the evening, and so we started to do it every day before breakfast. Practicing in a group helps but, of course, slowly, slowly, some people were dropping out, because they were busy with some other things. You go on,

but slowly. Even if you dedicate half an hour a day to prostrations, you can do a maximum of two hundred and you will not finish the required amount before one year and a half – and this is only prostrations.



You can’t receive the main practice – we called it ‘ngoeshi’ (*dnegos gzhi*) – before you at least begin the Ngondro. Such a main practice is Powa, for example, and of course dzogchen. Actually, according to the tradition you should finish the Ngondro before receiving the teachings of Powa but for many monks the case is that they start and go on but they are not finished by the time they receive Powa or even dzogchen teachings. Some monks even became geshe before finishing their Ngondro. There are some good excuses that can be accepted by their teachers –

a necessity to use all their time for studying may be an example. But they know that they are supposed to finish it during their lifetime. It is a kind of debt that you have. You can have some delay of payment, but still sooner or later you should pay it back.”

Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang

Ngondro: purify yourself through practice

If you want to read more about the Ngondro, we can recommend the book 'Opening the door to Bön' by Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche, published by Snow Lion. From chapter four, titled 'Nine Preliminary Practices', we have selected this text.

The Ngondro practices presented here provide beginning practitioners with the necessary foundation that opens the door to the vast world of the Bon teachings. Traditionally practitioners do the Nine Preliminary Practices one-hundred-thousand times. After gaining an understanding of compassion for all sentient beings as the heart of the practice, many students then ask their teacher to describe the philosophical basis of the teachings and give further instructions for deepening their own experience. These next steps occur through the actual practices, which include the Powa and Bardo instructions, as well as the introduction to the Natural State of Mind. Once students have trained thoroughly with a well-qualified teacher in all these practices with pure motivation and compassion for all sentient beings, they are well along the pathway to enlightenment.

The student's mind needs to be prepared in order to take the first step into the practice, the nine preliminary practices (the Ngondro). After having opened your mind to receive the teachings, you have examined your motivation and gained some awareness of the five poisons and their pervasive influence. You have contemplated the rareness of the perfect human body and its nature of impermanence, and the suffering of this cyclic existence. You have increased your awareness of the law of cause and result. You are now ready to begin the Ngondro.

Each of the following nine preliminary practices will help you to understand more deeply the qualities of the practice and how to apply them to your day-to-day life. These methods will help you to gain stability and confidence in the practice. The six practices and the three recitations that comprise the nine preliminary practices are as follows.

Preliminary practice 1: Generating the mind of enlightenment

The ultimate goal of the practice is to achieve enlightenment and be liberated completely from the suffering of this cyclic world. It is important to understand the sources of suffering of all sentient beings and know the ways to overcome them.

In order to be able to generate the mind of enlightenment toward all sentient beings, the key is to create a good foundation by practicing the Four Immeasurables: limitless compassion, limitless kindness, limitless love, and limitless equanimity. You visualize Shenla Ödkar, great masters and protectors of the Bon. They will protect and support you

in your practice. Then you realize that all sentient beings have once been your mother, and now you have the responsibility to take care of them. Finally you dedicate all your virtuous deeds for the benefit of all sentient beings.



Preliminary practice 2: Taking refuge

The purpose of taking refuge in the Three jewels is to receive blessings and be protected from the suffering of this cyclic existence. In order to seek refuge you have to realize truly the suffering of this cyclic existence. Refuge also depends on your trust and faith in the Three Jewels. Accordingly, you will receive protection and blessings from them. Trust is the key to opening the door to Bon and its wisdom.

Preliminary practice 3: Confession

The purpose of the practice of confession is to purify the negative deeds that you have cultivated in the past, present, and future, not just the ones from this lifetime. We sentient beings are continuing to be reborn, life after life, in this cyclic world. During all this time, with and without intention, we have cultivated limitless non-virtuous deeds. Their negative energy will continue to grow and obstruct us from developing our practice and realization unless we purify them.

To purify yourself from negative deeds, it is essential to accomplish the four powers of the practice of confession: the power of the witness, the power of regret, the power of commitment, and the power of the antidote. Think about your non virtuous deeds that you regret. From the core of your heart, feel sorry about them and experience your regret. You commit to not repeating similar non virtuous deeds again. The antidote is engaging in practice and reciting prayers in order to purify your deeds from the past.



Preliminary practice 4: Mandala offering

The purpose of cultivating merit by offering a mandala is to make yourself more spacious and open, and thus be able to absorb and digest the valuable teachings without any obstacles to your practice. We human beings in our temporary state with this physical body depend on many circumstances – especially our good fortune – to receive the teachings, which is not something that is common to all. This only occurs based on the great efforts of your good merit in the past. It is still important to cultivate more merits in order to fulfil the goal of practice, especially two important merits: the causal merits of fortune, which is compassion, and the fruition merits of wisdom, which is the wisdom to realize the true nature of mind.



Preliminary Practice 5: Connecting with the teacher

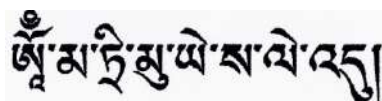
The essential aspect of the preliminary practice of connecting with the teacher is to open your inner wisdom. It is very important to receive blessings from your teacher to support you. Whatever teachings you may receive, even the shortest recitation prayers or oral transmissions, will depend on your teacher; all the teachings have to be transmitted from the teacher. No one in the past has ever achieved enlightenment without following the instructions of a teacher.

By viewing your teacher as the real presence of the Buddha or the enlightened ones, you will receive blessings, powers, and teachings like nectar. If you view him as a businessman, his blessings and teachings will affect you more like an object for sale. And if you view him as an ordinary person, accordingly, all his blessings may just be like food.

Preliminary practice 6: Prostrations

Prostrations mainly involve movement of the physical body. The main purpose of prostrations is to purify the non virtuous deeds and negativities of the body. One does prostrations in front of a statue, in a temple, in a holy place, in front of one's teacher, and so on.

The most important aspect of this practice is again one's pure intention.



Preliminary practices 7-9: The three essential recitations

The Three Essential Recitations are the Recitation of the Enlightened One of Compassion (Sa Le Öd), the Recitation of Dhe Chog Rinchin Dolma (Ma Tri), and the Recitation of Ngensong Dong Tuk (Dhu Tri Su).

The Three Doors: Transformative Practices for Body, Speech and Mind

The Three Doors is an educational organization developed in response to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's desire to open Bon-Buddhist practices to a world-wide audience. With headquarters in the United States, the organization is headed by an international team of senior students who have been trained by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to teach The Three Doors Transformative Practices to future teachers and to the general public.

The Three Doors will offer a special three-year training program to those sangha members in the United States, Europe and Mexico who are interested in working deeply with these practices. If certified at the completion of the training, the attendees will be authorized to then share these practices with others. This training program is called The Three Doors Academy. There is also a program, offering the practices to the general public, called The Three Doors Seminars. The first European Academy three-year training program will be held in Germany.

Profound teachings for today's world

Kallon Basquin, Director of Operations, discusses 'The Three Doors'

How and when did The Three Doors program start and how did you become involved?

About fifteen years ago, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started thinking outside the box of the traditional training he received. He realized planting the dharma in the West was going to require a different approach. He had a series of dreams which he saw as the first signs of what is now called The Three Doors program. Over the past five to ten years he spoke often with His Holiness and Loponla seeking their support and encouragement in developing his vision of opening the teachings to today's world. About four years ago, he selected a group of senior students to begin practicing privately with him to explore a new way of doing selected practices. Out of that experiment, many aspects of what is now The Three Doors training naturally evolved.

I became more deeply involved with manifesting The Three Doors when, about two years ago, Tenzin Wangyal asked me to meet with him. I'd been studying with Tibetan masters for over thirty-five years and with Tenzin Wangyal exclusively for the last fifteen years. Because of my background, when Rinpoche told me about his idea of opening the doors of the teachings to the general public, I understood what a radical act that was. He explained he'd been having dreams of me and asked me: "Would you create a program around my vision?" We didn't know what the exact form would be, but Rinpoche's vision was instantaneously apparent to me. As details of the structure, focus, and curriculum of the programs emerged for me, I began taking notes. Then I would meet with Rinpoche to get his corrections and clarification. Finally, he encouraged me to write up all the notes

as proposals. These became the basis for The Three Doors Public Programs, a rigorous training called The Three Doors Academy, The Teachers Manual, and The Trainees' Practice Journal.



In terms of the organization itself, we are currently working on securing non-profit status. The Three Doors International will then be the vehicle through which we'll present Rinpoche's vision to the world.

Who is helping to develop the programs, curriculum, and structures of The Three Doors?

Rinpoche asked me to be responsible for the creation and direction of the organization, training programs, and curriculum. I worked with Marcy Vaughn (Rinpoche's practice leader and recognized teacher within the Bon lineage) and Gabriel Rocco (Rinpoche's Chief Adviser and Chairman of the Ligmincha Institute Board). Together, we revised my initial proposals to create the manual and curriculum for The Three Doors Academy. We were guided by Rinpoche's desire to create a rigorous teachers training program, one that would require the discipline, devotion, and intensity of

commitment and transformation necessary to produce 'carriers of tradition'.

Everyone in the group of senior students Tenzin Wangyal selected as the first training group participated in bringing the organization and programs into form. Many people in this group have backgrounds in psychology. Working together, incorporating that element, we explored applying the practices in ways which go beyond their traditional monastic applications. As Tenzin Wangyal intended, the training program became a psycho-spiritual exploration for modern people, a way of freeing ourselves from the shadow-selves which limit our full awareness and compassion. We focused on transforming what Rinpoche calls our Pain Body, Pain Speech, Pain Mind, Pain Quality, and Pain Action. We (Rinpoche and the group together) developed other psycho-spiritual techniques, processes, and methods that will be used in The Three Doors Academy training.

As a group, as we shared and deepened our trust of one another, we went deeper into our unconscious blocks and issues. Rinpoche himself did the practices with us. The student/teacher relationship dissolved on many occasions and Rinpoche turned us loose to go as deep as we dared, or dreaded. It became apparent that Rinpoche trusted our relationship to the practices to both free us and train us. Because of the group context, our individual transformations also supported our collective transformation.

During our last meeting, Rinpoche empowered many of us to teach. His trust continues to unfold. In private meetings with him, he has told me he thoroughly trusts the members of that training group to speak with his voice. Many of these senior students feel as though they have been practicing their entire lives to prepare for The Three Doors. Almost everyone agreed that using The Three Doors practices to complete sixty-three transformations was harder than any Ngondro they'd ever done.

We are still working on the syllabi for four weekend programs for the public. These Public Programs will be taught by the graduates of The Three Doors

Academy and will constitute the completion of the circle of Rinpoche's vision to offer the teachings to the western world.

Other people helped give form to the organizational structure: the administrative structures were developed by the tireless work and skill of Tharina Crafford (in South Africa). She works with Lutz Dausend (in Spain) to build our website and the basis of our functioning as an organization. Anja Benesch (in Germany) is The Three Doors Coordinator for Europe and Laura Calderon is the Coordinator for Mexico. Rose Najia (in Taiwan) also contributed to fleshing out the organization. Mary Ellen McCourt (in New York) developed The Three Doors logo and other designs for the organization.



What are the current plans, perspectives, and next steps for The Three Doors?

Tenzin Wangyal sees the next step as 'training the future trainers' in Europe, Mexico and the United States. To that end, we are planning to offer the three-year training program called the Three Doors Academy in the those areas. After certification, trainees may become teachers of The Three Doors. A teacher is a manifestation of courage and love

that gifts the world with enlightened activity. Rinpoche's vision is for the Three Doors Academy to be a place where people will be transformed by the training and the practices themselves in order to carry these teachings to today's world. The training will support the deep, individual and collective processing of the soul as it exists in the 21st century western world. In a way, the Three Doors Academy could be described as a modern Bodhisattva training.

The application deadline for The Three Doors Academy training in Europe ends in March 2011.

For more information, visit the website:

www.the3doors.org, or contact:

info.europe@the3door.org.

The Three Doors will start soon publishing on its own You Tube channel:

www.youtube.com/user/the3doorsacademy

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Heart Drop: The Three Doors

Introducing the Three Doors Academy and its Teachers for Europe

"Since coming to the West over twenty years ago to share the teachings of Bon-Buddhism, I have witnessed many people benefit in their personal, relational, and professional lives from Bon's legacy of wisdom and compassion. Over those two decades I have continually worked on how best to present the teachings coherently and effectively in a cultural context so different from my own. Almost without exception, the teachings and practices healing Body, Speech and Mind (The Nine Breathings of Purification, Tsa Lung, Five Warriors Syllables, and Fivefold Practice) have been the most useful and transformative."

These are the words of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describing his vision for the Three Doors.

Now this vision is coming true: beginning in August 2011, sangha members in Europe will have the opportunity to take part in The Three Doors Academy, a three-year in-depth meditation program and training that has been created with the blessings of Yongdzin Rinpoche and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. The Three Doors is Tenzin Rinpoche's 'Heart Drop', his gift to us, and he considers it to be a 'Western way to enlightenment' in one lifetime. Tenzin Rinpoche has stated that The Three Doors Academy empowers trainees to become 'tradition carriers' of his Heart Drop. You learn not only how to transform your own life using the Three Doors Practices, but also how to present these practices to others. Graduates who get certified as official teachers may then choose to take these teachings into the world in their individual ways and settings. While maintaining the authenticity of what they've been taught, they can provide teachings in public programs, hospitals, educational organizations, or business environments. It will be up to the participants to determine where to take the fruits of their Academy training.

Raven Lee and John Jackson, close US students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, were chosen by him to teach the Three Doors Academy in Europe. They have undergone an intensive three-year training with him and will represent and realize his vision authentically. Both Raven and John have expressed their wish to let the European sangha know of their profound joy in being able to be with us for the

next three years. They feel blessed and honored to share what they have learned.

John Jackson expressed what The Three Doors means to him: "I feel that this has been the richest training and practice experience of my life. These practices reached the source of issues that I had never been able to fully resolve through psychotherapy or other meditation methods. The Three Doors have touched me to the core. I am pleased and excited to be able to share these practices and support others so that they may discover for themselves the richness of these gifts. I am especially thrilled to be asked to work with our communities in Europe, a place close to my heart, where I have travelled many times for business and pleasure. I look forward to getting to know more people there, and sharing the wealth of our tradition."

And Raven explains: "Being part of the Three Doors training over the last three years has been a phenomenal experience. I thought I had understood the practices, but the Three Doors program took me deeper in a very direct and intimate way. I connected to a subtler level of my pain body, speech and mind, and dissolved patterns that had eluded me. I also realized that the Three Doors is Rinpoche's precious gift from his heart essence, and am grateful for his vision in bringing these teachings to all of us in this very accessible way. Having spent ten years in Scotland and in Germany, Europe has been like a second home to me. I am excited to be able to participate in the EU programs and share this transformative training with others."



A chance for radical transformation

Rose Najia, one of the senior students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, talked with Jitka Polanská about the Three Doors training

Rose is one of eighteen senior students invited by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to be part of a deep psycho-spiritual training under Rinpoche's guidance. The purpose of the training is to prepare these students to teach the Bon-Buddhist practices to the general public. One aspect of the training was the students' commitment to exploring practices known as The Three Door practices. These are Tsa Lung, The Nine Breathings of Purification, Five Warrior Syllables and The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltzen, and the Inner Refuge of Stillness, Silence and Spaciousness. Each student did these practices as part of a transformation process leading to deeper states of self-awareness.

Talking with Rose about the training made a strong impression on me. Before our conversation, I already felt the program was very useful and important. But now I see why the training is such a rare chance for a radical transformation.

When you were invited into the program, was it difficult to say yes?

No, I felt honoured and thrilled. The idea that I could offer myself as a bridge between the deep spiritual teachings and the general public is something I've been interested in for a long time, interested to the point of feeling a personal calling. I am an awareness teacher now. I focus on training gestalt therapy practitioners, teaching nature awareness, and other healing approaches. My work puts me in a good position to share The Three Doors practices with people who are interested in awareness but who are not Buddhists. But without the training from Rinpoche, I wouldn't have gained the deeper knowledge of the specific practices that I got from being part of the training group. So, of course, it was very easy to say yes to the invitation even though, at the time, I had absolutely no idea what the training would consist of. I just knew I wanted to do it.



What did your training involve?

We all did the practices together and shared our experiences. Sometimes Rinpoche met with us. Marcy Vaughn led us in practice sessions. Rinpoche asked Kallon Basquin, who is an experienced practitioner, therapist and teacher, to lead our training group and Kallon worked closely with Rinpoche to create and facilitate our program. We were all doing the practices in a very focused and disciplined way and sharing what we were discovering. Out of that sharing, our mutual support began to grow. Our main learning experiences was selecting and writing about the sixty-three transformations we were all committed to making in our lives, using the practices. This took three years and some of us are still working on them. Some people completed all sixty-three transformations two or three times. We did what Rinpoche teaches to all his students to do – we selected issues, problems, and limitations in our lives and then used the practices to transform them. There were three categories for the transformations – personal, family and relationship, and work – twenty-one transformations in each category. We kept journals of how we were applying the practices to these sixty-three issues we chose to transform. I was inspired by Rinpoche's visits to our group and him speaking to us in a very personal way. He communicated from his heart about his idea of opening the access to these practices that have helped so many people within the sangha. I could see it was a radical step on his part to take this risk, to go against the centuries of monastic tradition and open these teachings to the public. I think all of us in the training group could

feel his commitment, so I felt a great desire to support him in that.

How did the training affect your everyday life?

Most of the time, I woke up an hour earlier than usual to do my practices. When I joined the program I was doing the Ngondro practices so it was challenging for me to find time every day to do both the Ngondro and The Three Doors practices. After a while I realized The Three Doors training was a kind of Ngondro practice itself – doing the work of transforming my moment to moment experience and consciousness. In a way, the training was a Ngondro practice that was even more direct than the traditional Ngondro.

Since Rinpoche set the goal of sixty-three transformations, you had to find sixty-three things about yourself to change. Was that difficult?

Well, probably any of us could look at our lives and immediately find, say, ten things we'd really like to change: what is disturbing me in my work, in my body, emotions and attitudes, in my relationships? It's easy to find ten problems right away. But to find sixty-three issues, I needed to look at myself at a different way. I had to begin to notice how thoughts and feelings were arising in me and how they were affecting me and the people around me. I had to notice things like – every time I hear the harsh way my friend talks to her little girl, I feel really angry. What's going on with me in this case? How can I transform the root of that anger? By doing the transformations, I started to become aware of things while they were arising instead of only after they were deeply entrenched. And I became aware that even very superficial irritations have deep, deep roots. I gained a lot of clarity.

Can you share some other results?

OK. Regarding my body, for about five years I was in constant pain. I couldn't walk well, my joints

were stiff, I was overweight and tired all time. This had been going on for so long I thought, OK, now that I'm getting older, I guess it's just going to be like this. I'm probably never going to feel really good again. After I started the training program, I decided to see if the practices could help me lose weight and improve my health and energy. It took time, but after about a year of working with the practices in relation to these issues, I was completely restored to pain-free, flexible movement, pleasure in dancing and hiking, and I lost twelve kilos. I felt totally rejuvenated. The practices helped me change deep suffering within me that was manifesting as physical pain and limitation.

Another big change was my relationship with my sister. We hadn't spoken to each other for eighteen years. I thought, I wonder if the practices can heal my broken relationship with my sister. I began working with my resentment, fear, pain, anger; so many deep and stubborn emotions and memories. After about three months, I suddenly felt like contacting her. I sent her an email which she responded to with kindness and openness. Since then our relationship has been developing and growing again after an eighteen year silence.

Let me tell you too about one overall thing that changed my life in a big way. I used to think that certain things about me or painful things about my life were just going to be that way forever, that they were impossible to change. I just needed to resign myself to accepting them. But The Three Doors training revolutionized that idea of resignation. Because I completed the sixty-three transformations, I experienced, I understood, I had even enacted the fact that actually everything can be changed. Because the practices gave me the tools and the training gave me the

support and the discipline, my whole view of life changed. I realized I could transform my relationship to anything, and my experience of



anything if I made a commitment to doing that. I have to tell you, that was such an exhilarating and freeing discovery.



That's interesting. All these practices were available to you before that as well, so why did the changes come only when you were engaged in the training?

Yes, that's such a good question. Maybe we all feel we have the tools to change our lives but most of the time, we don't use them. Maybe we don't have enough support, or we don't have enough trust, or we don't have enough motivation. For me the motivation came from my desire to share the teachings with others. If I wanted to teach the practices, I had to use them to transform myself first. I also felt accountable to the group I was studying with and to Rinpoche's trust. That external accountability helped me focus and persist. Frankly, sometimes it was so difficult and challenging I really wanted to escape. If I had been doing it alone, I probably would have given up. It's too bad I couldn't respect my essential self enough to make such a powerful commitment before, on my own. I just wasn't able to be that focused by myself. The consistency and depth of my practice came from being in the training program and from realizing that the other people in my group were struggling

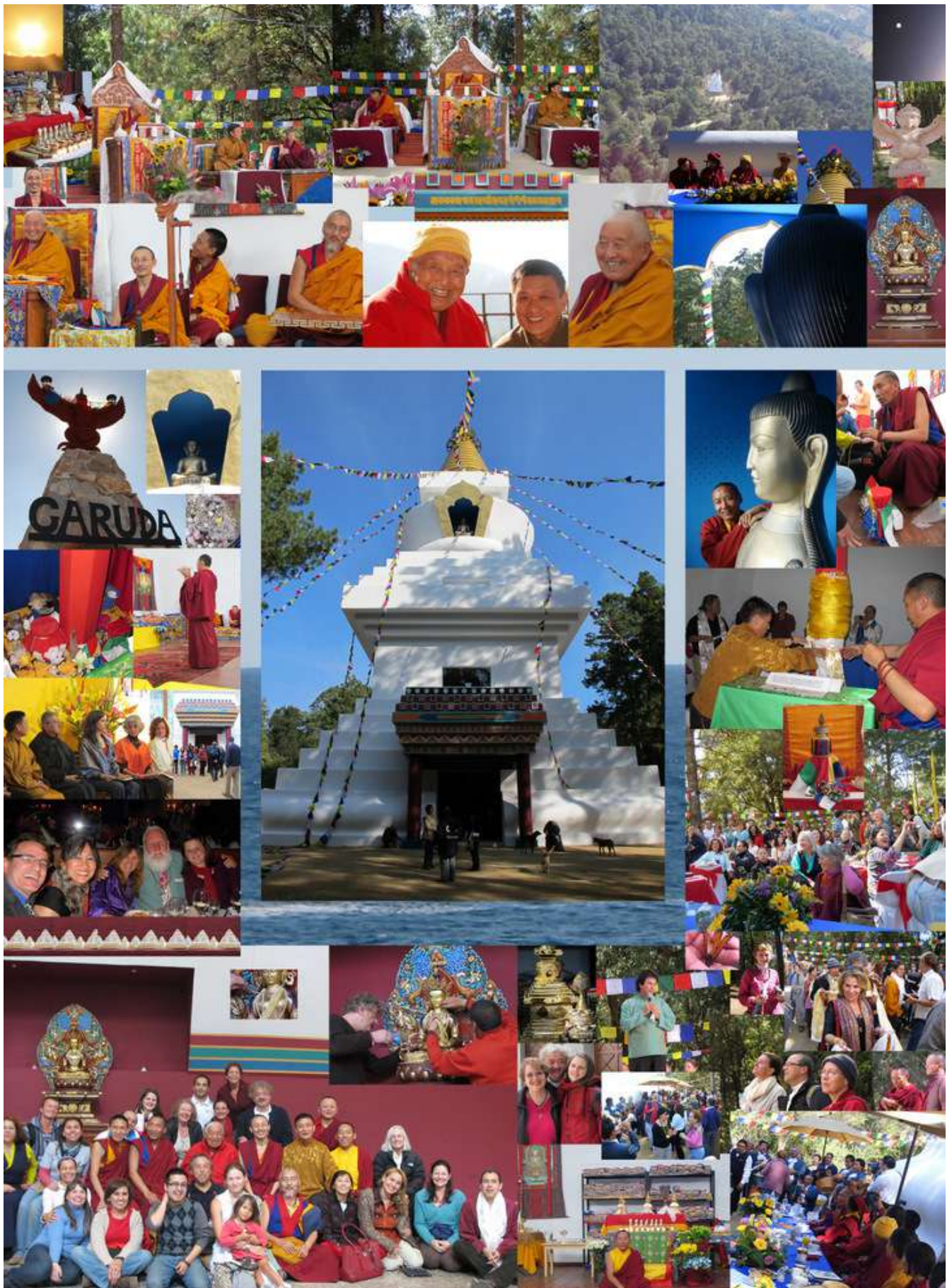
to face themselves in similar ways. That support brought forward new levels of determination and strength in me. I really needed that because, like everyone else, I have many layers of defences against seeing myself. So much pain, fear, shame, anger. I naturally resisted facing those things in myself. But in the context of the training, I couldn't avoid myself. Even if I choose some superficial thing to transform, the practices would carry me deeper, into the root of that superficial thing. So I had to look at my shadow-self, see things my personality would rather not admit to. It was very challenging.



There were some periods when I couldn't practice because I couldn't stand to look at myself so closely. Over time, the support of the group and the inner refuge got me through those difficult and 'foggy' times. I was also very motivated by being part of something I felt was important on a very large scale, something much more important than my own fear, laziness, or avoidance. I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to reach the deep levels of self-observation and transformation without the context of the training group. For me, that was the container that made everything possible. The training lifted me out of my ordinary life and planted me in a different place of more confidence, self-knowledge, freedom, clarity and celebration of my innate flexibility and wholeness. And it gave me a gift I can share with others.



Refuge tree



The Great Bon Stupa for World Peace

Stupa in the jungle

A report by Anja Benesch of the Consecration of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace

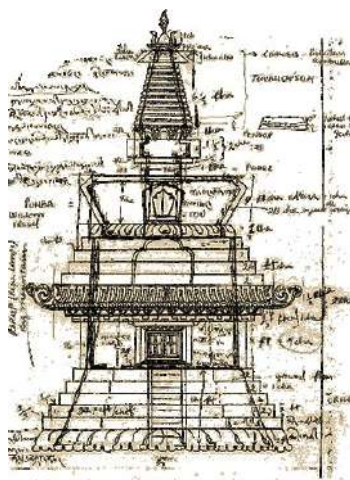
The silent humming of distant mantras, the heavy sweet smell of woods, caramel-coloured sand. And then, amidst the sand on top of the mountain: something very, very big, shimmering in bright white colour in the sunlight. These are my first impressions of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace in Valle de Bravo, Mexico. The Stupa radiates profound calmness and groundedness, and yet seems to be floating in time and space.

My dear host in Mexico, Lola, her long-time friend Ani Sherab Wangmo, a Mexican Bonpo nun, and me, were rushing to the site of the Stupa from Mexico City and arrive just in time before the lamas finish their day of blessing rituals for the Stupa.

At about 15 degrees it is quite warm in Mexico, but as we enter the Stupa, it feels rather cold. I only catch a glimpse of the ground floor which is still quite empty: marble-like stones on the floor, the walls half-painted in dark red with thin yellow, green and blue stripes, and a mildly smiling golden Shenlha Ödkar statue opposite the entrance. The three of us rush up a high twisted staircase. Taking the last angle, clearly hearing mantras now, I discover who is singing: Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the beloved teacher of our beloved teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Next to him, almost hidden by a huge hanging drum, sits Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, and then Geshe Samten and Lama Sangye Monlam.



After doing prostrations, I realize that rice mixed with beans and sweets of many kinds gets thrown all over the place by around twenty members of the Mexican and international sangha who are joining the lamas for these blessing rituals in the Stupa's library two days before the official program will start. Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima, a well-known thangka painter who has been working at the Stupa for many years, is moving a lot as he offers tormas to the deities, pours fluid into different vessels and lights incense on the altar. The altar is beautifully decorated with flowers in the five colours, and placed on top are three aureate miniature Stupas in front of shelves full of sacred bonpo-scriptures. My two friends and I sit down and melt with the group for an hour. Finally, the chanting stops, and Khenpo-la breaks into a broad smile and loudly says: "Finished!". Everybody starts smiling and laughing, joy and happiness are very present, and Yongdzin Rinpoche seems utterly happy.



For a Buddhist practitioner, a Stupa supports the faith. On Ligmincha's website it says: "It is a structure invoking peace and whose purpose is to awaken the practitioners, as well as to support them in their devotion and motivate them to

acquire the qualities of the enlightened mind. For others, it is a support for connecting to the Buddha mind. Those who come into contact with or see a Stupa have a seed planted in their stream of consciousness. Eventually, their suffering will be relieved, their disturbed attitudes will become clear, and the continuity of the Buddha mind will develop within them."

I am very happy I brought around eight kilogrammes of semi-precious stones from the European sangha, and that Wojtek, a dear old friend of many Mexicans, brought an amber

necklace for the Shenlha Ödkar statue as a gift from the Polish sangha – how wonderful that all these donators get in touch with the Stupa now!

Khenpo-la advises me to give the treasure vases with the stones, collected at the European Ngondro-retreat in Austria lately, to Geshe Tenzin Yeshe quickly before the blessings in the upstairs room will take place. The stones have been put into a small Tibetan treasure vase from Nepal and a fictile jar painted with mantras, covered in five-coloured clothing – including a small suitcase, basically my hand-luggage on the flights from Berlin to Mexico City.

In the upstairs room we find four small altars with more scriptures in the four directions, leaving space for treasures that get put around a giant red pole, painted with golden mantras. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche comes up with many other lamas and his wife Tsering, they are whispering mantras, throwing blessed rice, and bundling katas around the pole. The semi-precious stones from Europe will rest there, right behind the giant golden Tapihritsa statue on top of the Stupa.

A lot of pictures are being taken, and this continues on the ground level, when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche sits down with his teacher Yongdzin Rinpoche in the big empty Stupa. Suddenly, more and more people gather around these two, first more and more monks, cameras clicking all the time, until Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche invites everybody to join the group while the sangha members take turns in taking pictures with about twenty cameras. It is a very happy moment.

Completing the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace is a long-time dream of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. It started coming true about 14 years ago when his student Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had just started teaching in Mexico and was searching for an appropriate space for the Stupa. He found it in Mexico. Of course, many obstacles appeared, but the commitment, hard and enduring work of the Mexican sangha, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and monks from the Bonpo tradition made the vision come true. The Stupa is dedicated to the Venerable Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, teacher of Yongdzin Rinpoche and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Born in Mexico and being a teenager now, his reincarnation Tulku Jorge Rene (on the photo on the right side of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche) lives near the Stupa now.



Besides Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima, who with the help of other artists did the paintings in the Stupa, Geshe Tenzin Yeshe is somebody who has worked at the Stupa since 2005 when the actual construction of the Stupa began. Back then, after the land had been donated by Nizzo Bejar, people started cutting trees, taking measurements, calculating costs and considering all necessities. Sometimes money was missing, sometimes manpower, sometimes trucks with huge material on board got stuck on their way up the hill, because there were no streets back then. Geshe Tenzin Yeshe tells me that they prepared a forty meter long pole in the ground with mantras on it. And that mantras for deities and protectors are everywhere in the Stupa, although you cannot see them. As well as remains from lineage holders of the Bon tradition and blessings collected from H.H. Menri Trizin, H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and about one hundred masters from Tibet, which makes the Stupa even more powerful. There are many prayers which have been blessed by the lineages of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen masters. And also many mantras of different Tantra levels, namely Jagyu, Choegyu, Yeshe and great Yeshe in the Stupa. And there are some special mantras for long life, prosperities, reputations, luck, good fortune, Zambalha and powerfulness.

Lola, my host, used to live near the Stupa for a year, helping as an architect with the basic construction. She tells interesting stories about how to get a governmental permit for building a thirty-six meter high Stupa in Mexico, nagas living near the Stupa site, and rain appearing just when you need it with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche coincidentally being there. A lot of rituals have been performed throughout the years so that the protectors of the lineage are present.



Something that touched me extraordinarily, however, was meeting members of the international sangha, e.g. Bob, who first learned about Tibetan Buddhism at Woodstock and loves to be Santa Claus for kid; Gabriela with her great Mexican hospitality and a wonderful meditation space on her terrace; Alejandro, who impressed Mexican doctors during a lecture with Rinpoche at the Instituto Nacional de Cancerologia in Mexico City; Marcy and Gabriel, who look fabulous with blue tongues after eating wedding cake; Lola, who is the best person to be with when you want to get somewhere in time or get sick; Blanca, who speaks six languages and loves living in Brazil; Lourdes from Monterrey, Mexico, who is a dedicated translator for Rinpoche and most likely will never do any horse-riding again in her life after trying it to see the butterflies in the valley of Valle de Bravo. And of course my newly-found European family: Lidia from Italy, who starts every morning with yoga and black tea, and Wojtek from Poland who used to live in Mexico and made me laugh really hard so many times.

I am very thankful I could spend this precious time with all these people, because I realized that it is all true, that we are connected, that there is only one sangha in the world, that we are all part of this universe and that we, just as all beings that exist, are related through time and space, and therefore somehow you, dear readers, are all with me while I bring your gifts to the Stupa and get in touch with all these wonderful people.

The Stupa is 'placed in the middle of the jungle', as Yongdzin Rinpoche called the nature around the Stupa in the valley of Valle de Bravo in his Consecration speech, appreciating that many

people took the effort to come all the way to visit this Bon Stupa for World Peace. Geshe Tenzin Yeshe emphasized how important it was that many different sanghas come together to experience this feeling of international connectedness: "I hope it happens a lot more in the future." As the Stupa represents the enlightened mind of the Buddha, Yongdzin Rinpoche asked the audience to treat it with the greatest respect possible at all times and to protect it. And Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains that now that the blessing has been done, there is soul and life in the material, and the energy and the qualities of the Stupa will be radiating everywhere. It will bring peace not only to Mexico but to the whole world and every practitioner.

However, there is still a lot of work to be done. "Now that the Stupa is alive, it should not be left alone," Yongdzin Rinpoche told my friend Lola after the Consecration. The Mexican sangha has put a lot of work into the Stupa over the years. Now some more work inside the Stupa needs to be done, with the main focus on the painting of the mandala. Two painters are coming from Nepal and India: Gyaltsen already lives in Mexico and started working in January. All help for the final work is welcome: the painters will need support, such as assistance with transportation, buying materials, cooking for them, and there will be many other things that need to be done. If you are interested in helping, please write to Carlos Madero, the Director of Garuda Mexico, at garudamex@yahoo.com.mx. He and the Mexican sangha will be happy to learn about your skills and organize teams to work with in a specialized area. You can also contact him if you wish to donate money, because the Mexican sangha cannot go ahead without financial support.

At many occasions Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche expressed his hope that the Stupa will be a place for meditation, experiences of peacefulness not only for Bonpos but also for people from other spiritual groups and other backgrounds. In about two years, the 'inner Consecration' of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace will take place. The Stupa is located about two hours west of Mexico City, nearby is a beautiful lake, and I wish for everybody to be able to go there and see and experience for themselves. The Stupa is there for everyone – including: YOU.

If you wish to learn more about the Stupa and the Mexican sangha, please visit

www.garudamexico.org or www.liqmincha.org/donate/stupa-for-world-peace-valle-de-bravo-mexico.html

རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལགས། འཁྲུངས་སྐར་ལ་བྟག་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས།

Happy Birthday Rinpoche!

Vše nejlepší k narozeninám, Rinpoche! Tillykke med fødselsdagen Rinpoche! Gefeliciteerd met uw verjaardag Rinpoche! Joyeux anniversaire Rinpoche! Hyvää syntymäpäivää Rinpoche! Alles Gute zum Geburtstag Rinpoche! χρόνια πολλά Ρίνποτσε! Boz születésnapot Rinpócse! Buon compleanno Rinpoche! Wszystkiego najlepszego urodzin Rinpocze! С Днем Рождения Ринпоче! Feliz cumpleaños Rinpoche! Vše nejlepší k narozeninám, Rinpoche! Tillykke med fødselsdagen Rinpoche! Gefeliciteerd met uw verjaardag Rinpoche! Joyeux anniversaire Rinpoche! Hyvää syntymäpäivää Rinpoche! Alles Gute zum Geburtstag Rinpoche! χρόνια πολλά Ρίνποτσε! Boz születésnapot Rinpócse! Buon compleanno Rinpoche! Wszystkiego najlepszego urodzin Rinpocze! С Днем Рождения Ринпоче! Feliz cumpleaños Rinpoche!

SO DRUM A KAR MU LA TING NAM 'OD DU MU YE TSE NI DZA

Finland has a strong connection with Bon

Portrayal of a sangha by Jitka Polanská

Love at first sight

There is one truly amazing thing about the Finnish sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. It was founded and already prospering before the teacher ever came to Finland. How come? "We had been looking for a lineage, a teacher, a sangha for quite a long time, a few years maybe," said Tommi, the founder. "My cozy dream was to find and join a well established Buddhist group, with their nice web pages done and practices running regularly, but somehow, it wasn't happening. Then one day Soili, my wife, read an announcement in the Snow Lion newsletter, about the Rinpoche's upcoming teachings on Tummo in Germany. It was in 2007. And we went there." With this decision, they finally found the teacher. "It was just a few minutes after I saw Rinpoche that I knew this guy would be the right one. He even didn't speak yet, he was just making some funny faces before starting to teach. But I knew it was him," says Tommi. The second day of the teachings Tommi and Soili went to ask Rinpoche whether he would come to Finland. "Well, let's sleep on it," was Rinpoche's answer, remembers Tommi.



The trust to the teachings made things moving

It was only three years after, in 2010, when Rinpoche finally came to Finland. What he found there was a fully blossomed sangha, with regular practice groups meeting once or twice a week in five towns: Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Turku and Vaasa. "In our town, Kuopio, we had been practicing as a group before meeting Rinpoche, doing mainly Zhiné and Tonglen. And we tried to attract more people to the group, but they just came and went, it wasn't growing. But things changed rapidly after we met Rinpoche. People began to get really interested in what we were doing. We didn't expect anything like this happening, and were pretty much in awe. Maybe people felt and trust our confidence in what we were looking for and found in the Bon teachings," says Tommi. "Maybe they also had a connection to Bon and it just clicked when they met it," adds Anna-Kaisa, the umze of the Jyväskylä practice group. "Maybe Finland is a promised country of Bon, who knows?" Tommi says, laughing.

Fortunate encounter

Five to ten people in each of the five towns meet weekly or even two times a week for the practices of Tsa Lung, Zhiné, Five Warrior Syllables, and The Nine Breathings of Purification. More than one hundred pages of teaching materials translated, eight articles published in various Buddhist and other magazines, well done web pages, a guideline for the practice being finalized – all evidence that the encounter between the teacher and the students was the fortunate one and destined to last. When Rinpoche came to teach the Dream Yoga this summer, he found a hundred people waiting for him.

"We are northerners and Rinpoche might have expected gloomy, serious faces. But the atmosphere at the seminar was warm and open and I think he was pleased by that," says Matti, another 'old' member of the group, who is now responsible for the international communication in the sangha.

Right there, Rinpoche decided to come next year again. Logically: the Finnish sangha seems quite sure indeed about the way to take.

Connecting Europe: letters from our sangha

Support from the University in Budapest

Our perspectives really broadened a lot since Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche announced the five year training in Austria. Before that we went to meet him in Wilga in Poland several times, that nice center near Warsaw and also met him in Vienna.

Being a teacher at the Budapest Buddhist University (original name was: The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College) I was able to give seminars on the basis of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's books (two of which have been translated into Hungarian) and some of my seminar students are genuinely interested in the Bon Buddhist tradition. They, my students, were able to join me for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's retreats in Poland and Austria due to reasonable fees allowed by Rinpoche for our members. The College also was able to help financially with the costs, so I was able to buy the train tickets for the whole group. We were also able to further support with the five year training as the college was also able to provide the students with half of the travel costs. So we were eleven lucky people who were able to join the first group of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyu course with Rinpoche in October 2010. Perhaps some more will be able to join the second part in 2012.

Now about something else. I am writing this article one day after His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to Hungary on the 18th and 19th September 2010. It was an amazing event! Ten thousand people from seventy countries on both days were in his presence in the auditorium and forty thousand others followed on webcast! It was such a good feeling to experience that so many people are genuinely interested in His Holinesses profound teachings and Tibetan culture!

Katalin Jakab (Hungary)



Important teachings for our western mind

I was once again delighted to host Rinpoche in Cork and as always gain so much from the teachings that he presents. But I will say that it is not only the teachings, which I have attended many, but also the way in which Rinpoche teaches and presents these profound and important teachings for our time and most importantly for our western mind. It is as if sometimes he is voicing what he sees as the

obstacles in my mind and practice. Always humerously and compassionately. I continue to try to bring more awareness, not only to the dream and sleep time, but to all activities of daily life. As always I am profoundly grateful to Rinpoche and look forward very much to hosting him once again in Ireland next September 2011.

Mary Sky (Ireland)



Teachings require constant guidance

For me it is difficult to write something about last seminar. It is good that Rinpoche came to visit his Tradition's community and to give Bon teaching here in Ireland. Because many people are interested in eastern spiritual traditions in the whole world and it was a good opportunity to meet the renowned Rinpoche of the Bon tradition and to receive the oral teachings of the yogas of dream. It is somewhat different from just reading books on this subject because Rinpoche's presence strengthened the opportunity to realize the essence of such a teaching and he also represents the energy of this Tradition. But mostly it depends on the person and his ability to perceive these teachings and apply them to daily life. The information Rinpoche gave was similar to what is published in his book, but oral teachings and Rinpoche's blessings work on some unconscious level. So it was very useful to be there and receive this blessing and transmission. But the most difficult thing is to realize all this in one's own practice and to maintain awareness in daily life and night time. Rinpoche put much effort into explaining the principles of dream yoga and he was very kind and thoughtful to bring these teachings to all those people who listened to him and asked questions. It was a good seminar, but I am not happy that it is a very rare that Rinpoche comes to Ireland and that people do not have enough of his support here. Such teachings require constant guidance from a teacher because I believe it is not that easy to realize it fully without constant meetings with Rinpoche. But I have his books and am constantly trying to be aware of all aspects that Rinpoche brought to us. Hope he is coming soon again.

Maris (Ireland)

A spiritual teacher of great clarity & wisdom

Rinpoche Tenzin Wangyal whom I met for the first time in Cork totally justified his reputation as a spiritual teacher of great clarity & wisdom. He teaches what is practical and relevant to peoples lives.

At times serious at times humorous he draws from a deep font of spiritual tradition & deep experience. He has walked his talk and continues to do so. At the weekend in Cork he elucidated on the spiritual practice of dream yoga & how to develop the practice in our lives, so we live more intently and purposefully 24/7 while simultaneously getting bodily rest and recuperation.

Seems to me like a very good strategy.

Anraí Ó Ruadhain (Ireland)



Dream yoga seminar in Copenhagen

Remember that your life is like a dream. When people start to talk about taking something seriously I have noticed that its a means that they are putting a lot of suffering into it. This is approximately the words of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche when he was doing a seminar about dreamyoga in Copenhagen 5-7th November 2010.

Some of us react with slight fear to the wisdom of these words, because we think that not taking something seriously means to give in. You should stay and take your part of the suffering together with your compatriates. But with what do we contribute, then? Alas my love! We take part in the chorus of lamentation. Try to listen to your inner silence. Shut down the applications running around in your brain. What is here this moment? Come, arrive here in this very moment, contemplate your inner space and silence. Listen. Not only some answers come from here. It is the very source of wisdom in your life.

It has nothing to do with being weak or fleeing away from things. It is extremely powerful.

Like for instance these two sisters who were competing and conflicting for a lifetime. The younger sister came too late for a family party, and the older started to flip out and yell at her. The younger sister had the nerve to go into her inner silence, and instead of yelling back she just

answered: "You seem very stressed out, do you want a massage?"

She said yes. A great victory, a change of karma. However small or private your victory seems, be enthusiastic and happy about it! These are things that change our lives.

What we want before going to sleep is quite simply to shut down all your little stress-applications running in your brain, make a ninefold breath purification, and take refuge to the dream-dakini Salgye Du Dalma and your inner silence. In dreams we reproduce our karmic confusion, and to be aware that you are dreaming can make you change your prana, your life force.

In the moment you are conscious that you are dreaming you have a chance to free yourself from suffering, to drive your car up in the air and look at the confusion from a greater horizon, a horizon in which you can forgive old friends, loosen up conflicts and be aware of what you are doing instead of just reproducing suffering and confusion. The more clarity and consciousness you succeed to have in dreams, the more wisdom you can draw out from them. They can tell you about your strength and possibilities, and maybe make you aware of conflicts you should handle with care. Some of the great masters had dreams of clarity in which they grounded practices such as Chod. And some were simply abiding in the clear light of non-duality while sleeping.

Rinpoche was listening to the dreams and experiences of the guests at the seminar with interest, and with his usual great sense of humor. This humor which made us feel that life indeed is not dead serious, it is flexible and wonderful and spacious like clear light. He made us feel present, and opened up gates to light that healed old sadnesses and wounds. I can only speak for myself of course, but I saw and felt the joy spreading among people.

Here from Copenhagen, a heartfelt and sincere thank to Rinpoche for spreading light in the unconscious and conscious part of our lives!

Aviaja Larsen (Denmark)



The European Bon Garuda Foundation

Gabriele Penders, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Board of European Bon Garuda Foundation, talked to us about how the European sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's students is developing a common and flexible structure.



Gabriele, can we trace back the starting point? Who came up with the idea to create the European Bon Garuda Foundation and what is it?

During the summer retreat in Buchenau in 2005 Rinpoche was talking to a group of people from Switzerland, The Netherlands and Austria about his dream of a European sangha working together to preserve the Tibetan culture and to support the Bon teaching's in Europe. Jan Dinkelaar, who is now the Chairman of the Board of the European Bon Garuda foundation, then invited about ten people from different countries to meet that same year in October in Frankfurt, Germany. We spent a weekend there, meditating together and exchanging ideas, trying to get in touch with the vision and to understand how we could realize it. The initiative of a European Bon Foundation began to come alive. At the next meeting in Spain we practiced together in order to approach the realization of the dream, working closer together with the other European countries. In Spain in 2006 we prepared a practice seminar for Rinpoche's students from different countries, with guided meditations and we also made some preparations for Rinpoche's upcoming seminar in Buchenau on Dream and Sleep Yoga. In this way, we were

exploring our capacity and ability of working together, getting a clearer picture of what we could do together as a team. From the beginning of 2009 we also started to meet on skype regularly.

In the Summer of 2009 at our retreat in Buchenau we had some meetings with the goal to create a European foundation/organization. This was initiated by Jan. With the whole group from eight different European countries, a European Board with Jan Dinkelaar from the Netherlands as the chairman was chosen.

At a meeting with Rinpoche we presented to him the other board members: Johan Smith, Karoline Seltenheim and I, Gabriele.

What is the function of the board?

As the board of the Foundation we are responsible for the conceptual content, organization, text and training of the international European Bon sangha. Based on Rinpoche's vision. We formulated our tasks, visions and goals for the next three years e.g., a structure for the organization, creating a website, booklets for beginners, advanced practitioners and more.

A job of the future, for example is that all board members will work together with Rinpoche to compile a list of authorized umze's in Europe. The positions of the Board members except that of the President, rotates every three to five years.

Early enough the five Board members help to find together with Rinpoche, new board members out of the European sangha as a suggestion for an European wide election.

Is the Foundation a legal entity, an organization? What are the ways of operating now?

From the beginning we planed to construct a legal entity. For this reason we chose to have the head office of the organization in the Netherlands, because it seems easier to have it there. Therefore Jan Dinkelaar asked Anneke Dekkers from the Dutch sangha to become our fifth board member as

the treasurer of the European Bon Garuda Foundation.

How do you operate now?

The Board has a regular Skype meeting every month, with Rinpoche joining us every four months. We have been keeping up our discussions and elaborations for the best system of ruling this organization. The great challenge was to develop a structure clear and firm enough to be a support for the national sanghas initiatives and common projects as well as for the international ones. At the same time it should be open and flexible, 'spacious enough', with common structures on European level.



Rinpoche recommended us to implement the structure of Ligmincha Institute. And so, besides the Board, different councils were conceived. These teams have each a different specialization and task to accomplish. We already have a council for practices and teachings, one for sales and a bookstore, and the production team of this newsletter is also considered to be a council. We also plan to have a volunteer management in the future. In the next issue of the newsletter we would like to present all the councils and the people who lead them in more detail, so that sangha members who have the desire to help and skills to offer will know who to contact.

What are the main meeting places for the European sangha?

The summer retreats organized by the German board, with Rinpoche in Buchenau, have become more and more of an international event.

And for the past five years we have our European sangha practice weekend in Buchenau as well. This year it is planned for March, the 18th – 20th. I

would like also to mention the cycle of teachings from the Zhang Zhung Nyam Gyud that started last October in Austria, as lots of people from many different countries have taken part in it and got know each other. The Board held its presentation there as well, and people were also acquainted with the upcoming Three Doors program as a huge international sangha's project starting this year in Europe.

The Board has also been promoting regular monthly Skype meetings for representatives of sangha from each country. At this time there are fifteen people, one from each country, who take part in these gatherings: Karoline Seltenheim from Austria, Nikolas Gournaropoulos from Belgium, Jitka Polanská from the Czech Republic, Johan Smith from Denmark, Matti Tuliharju from Finland, Gabriele Penders from Germany, Janos Kazsoki from Germany, Katalina Jakab from Hungary, Ton Bisscheroux - and usually Jan Dinkelaar - from Netherlands, Ann-Marie Jakob from Switzerland, Lutz Dausend from Spain, Pavel Kuzmin from Russia, and Wojtek Plucinski from Poland. Recently we invited Lidia Castellano from Italy to join us. Thirteen different European countries are represented at this time and we will invite someone from Ireland. These meetings are open also for guests as much as the capacity of the Skype connection will allow. We share information at these meetings about events in each country and about common initiatives, helping each other to support the development of the national and international sangha.

In Berlin, in May 2010, Rinpoche encouraged the European sangha to look for their own retreat center. Is this part of the current plans of the Board?

We were very inspired about this Vision of Rinpoche to create a European Retreat Center in Germany. Together with the German sangha members and with the German board we discussed some ideas. Rinpoche gave us this impulse to be able to create a vision, that can grow to a reality in the future.

Are there any common project running now that you would like to mention?

Yes, I would like to highlight the plan, which is actually a work in progress: to build a common European website for the European Bon Garuda foundation. Johan Smith who is responsible for the

realization asked Lutz Dausend, a sangha member who works as a professional web designer, for support with this task.

At the Retreat in Austria Rinpoche asked Lutz to create a Europe-wide communication platform. Lutz Dausend is working on this, with the support of Oliver Wirtz, head of the German sangha; Wojtek Plucinski, main teaching instructor of the Polish

sangha; and Wolfgang Krebs from Germany, the other instructor of the European sangha along with Wojtek. We are very happy with the development of such a comprehensive and special internet platform of a European sangha.

And of course, I want to say that I am happy about this European newsletter. I am sure it will help us to make of the European sangha a lively community.

The members of the Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation

President: Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute, an acclaimed author as well as a highly respected and beloved teacher to students throughout the world. Fluent in English, Tenzin Rinpoche is renowned for his depth of wisdom; his clear, engaging teaching style; and his ability to make the ancient Tibetan teachings highly accessible and relevant to the lives of Westerners.

Chairman: Jan Dinkelaar (the Netherlands)



Jan is a psychologist. He represents the Board and the Foundation. He also coordinates communication between the President, the Board and the Councils.

Text and Study Manager: Johan Smith (Denmark)



Johan is a teacher. He is responsible for practice and study.

Secretary and Communication Manager: Gabriele Penders (Germany)



Gabriele is a psychologist and breath-therapist. She is in charge of administration, organization and external communication. Currently, she is also Vice-Chairman.

Program and Event Manager: Karoline Seltenheim (Austria)



Karoline is a social and lifecouncillor. She is in charge of the organization of program and events.

Treasurer: Anneke Dekkers (the Netherlands)



Anneke is a psychologist. She is responsible for the budget of the Foundation.

A common European Bon Garuda website

Lutz Dausend together with his wife Bogusia created the web page of Lishu Institute (www.lishu.org). Lutz is also the co-author and webmaster of the website for The Three Doors program (www.the3doors.org). The next challenging task waiting for him – and for all of us – is building a common web site for the European sangha. In this article he and his wife Bogusia talk about it.

“While searching for more detailed information about Bon-Buddhism we found many different national Bon Garuda websites. Many of them have the same information, but others have extra information, for example practice descriptions, Bon Masters, Bon of rituals, etc. We were fortunate to find on the Polish website enormous archives with teachings, but these are available only in Polish.

Europe with its rich history, many nations and many languages is characterised by a cultural variety, but also a tendency for a proud national demarcation.

However we all are pupils of our beloved Master Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and thereby we form an international sangha; a spiritual community, which brings us nearer to the dharma,

accompanies us on the path of our spiritual development and assists us to maintain a vivid connection with Rinpoche. The sangha is also a union of friends, who obligate themselves to bear responsibility for common goals. From this perspective arose the idea to create a common web space for all European Bon Garudas, which would provide a forum for exchanging information more easily. It is also the wish of Rinpoche to connect the national sanghas in Europe more, with respect of the uniqueness of the individual groups, since only their different qualities together create a beautiful Mandala.

In co-operation with different members of our sangha the common website is now under development. It should be a basis for a ‘brotherhood of sanghas’, as Wojtek Plucinski

stated. We hope that the first part of the website will be on-line in spring 2011.

The European website shall provide a platform for each national sangha to publish information about their organisation, events, local centres, practise schedules, etc. in their own language, and any other language that they would like to maintain

as well. The Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation will have its section here and their news will be published in all languages. The dharma section shall be shared by all sanghas and enable fruitful exchange of knowledge. A common European teaching schedule will provide a better overview of Bon teachings in Europe under the guidance

of Rinpoche along with other Bon teachers. Photo galleries and publications will also be presented and shared. The European newsletter will find its ‘online home’ in the News section and it will have an archive on the web. It's also planned to have a registered section for sangha members only where more internal information and teachings will be shared. A common forum will be an external addition later on.

May the common European website be a manifestation of our support for the ongoing efforts of our Master Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. May it contribute to stabilize the Bon Garuda sangha and support our practice, thus ‘to recognize our own true nature as a Buddha’.”

Bogusia and Lutz Dausend



Introducing the editors

We are here just to keep the door open – for you to enter

Ton Bisscheroux, the Netherlands



Being an editor gives me a new opportunity to work with the Five Warrior Syllables. We start with space (empty pages have to be filled with words). Then there is light and openness; the space is full of potentiality (connecting to the potential of the sangha). The

next step is working with the Four Immeasurables: love, compassion, joy and equanimity (these qualities arise when we receive articles, discuss them, or when we write them ourselves). The ideas have to ripen and become more concrete (how are we going to use the material we have?). Finally we do it, we finish the project (we make a newsletter and distribute it).

Jitka Polanská, the Czech Republic



I have been a student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for five years. My favourite saying of Rinpoche is “all stories are similar in a way and definitely less interesting than what we find going beyond them”. But I happen to be helping with this newsletter and I wish it

be full of our stories – individual and collective ones.

Because it is through sharing stories that we can get to know each other and become a real community.

Anja Benesch, Germany



Having wandered through samsara, I always felt a little lonesome and alienated until I started studying with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. For three years now I am happy to discover a family with all its beautiful goddesses and formidable enlightened beings,

and also grateful to connect to more and more ‘karmic guests’ as our European sangha grows. Let's have a party and share the fruits of our practice in a nourishing European project made of words and letters!

Mary Sky (O'Sullivan), Ireland



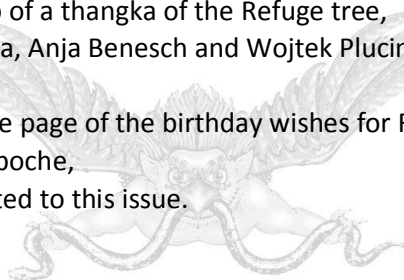
I am one of the Irish sangha of practitioners based in the south of Ireland. Cold wintery Ireland at the moment. I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about eight years ago after studying within the Nyingma tradition for many years before that. Finding Bon was,

for me, like being plugged into the mains.

Something about Bon resonated very very deeply and continues to do so. The Tsa Lung body-based practices of yoga are a god-send after many years of sitting practice and oral teachings. My body was crying out to be included in this wondrous journey called our life.

We would like to thank:

- Marianne Holitschko, Martin Schröder, Oliver Wirtz and Sarah Edgehill for the photos of the Ngondro,
- the Danish sangha for the photo of a thangka of the Refuge tree,
- Geshe Tenzin Yeshe, Tenzin Jinpa, Anja Benesch and Wojtek Plucinski for the photos of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace,
- Bogusia Dausend for creating the page of the birthday wishes for Rinpoche,
- Maria Kulik for the photo of Rinpoche,
- and all the others who contributed to this issue.



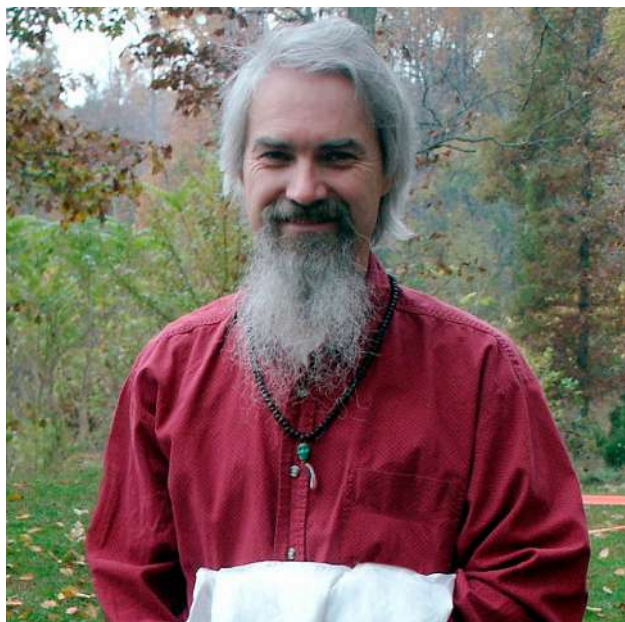
Healing the earth, healing yourself

The ancient Bon tradition of Tibet has its roots in a deep connection with the environment that surrounds us. Practices like Sang Chod - smoke offering - or Sur Chod - burnt food offering - have been used for centuries to develop and maintain a meaningful relationship with nature. This year, we will have an opportunity to experience and learn these practices here in Europe. A weekend meditation seminar titled 'Healing the earth, healing yourself', will be held by one of the senior students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and a long time Bon practitioner John Jackson, who has been invited to come by Nicolas Gounaropoulos from Belgium.

We will explore how to develop awareness of and relationship with the energies of streams, mountains, trees and stones, along with the enlightened ones of the Bon-Buddhist lineage. Through the practices of Sang Chod, the Five Elements, and Sur Chod, we will explore how to relate more intimately with the world in which we live. The result will be a new-found respect for and a sense of integration in our environment.

Most sessions will take place outdoors in a rich natural setting, weather permitting, where we will perform the rite of Sang Chod, the Elements, and Sur Chod, with many opportunities for sharing and working with personal issues.

The retreat is open to everyone interested in developing a closer connection with the elemental essence of the nature.



John Jackson, who will lead the retreat, is a long-time student of the Bon tradition. He has worked with the practice of Sang Chod for 17 years, under the guidance of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. John Jackson is the

director of the Chamma Ling solitary retreat center in the mountains of Colorado (www.chammaling.org). He will also be teaching The Three Doors training program in Europe.

The retreat will be held in Pauenhof Dharmasala in Germany, 3-5 June 2011. Pauenhof is located near to the German border and the Netherlands and Belgium. We expect it to be an European event.

Nicolas Gounaropoulos

For registration and questions, contact Nicolas Gounaropoulos at gounaropoulos@gmail.com.



The ancient Bon practice of Sang Chod

"The flow of life has its ups and downs. When the flow is upward it's not a problem but when it's downward we need some kind of solution, and these practices are that solution," says Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in an interview about the ancient Bon practice of Sang Chod, published in the Voice of Clear Light in March 2006. Since Bon students in Europe have the opportunity to learn these practices this year, we reprint a part of the interview.

Rinpoche, could you give us some background on the practice of Sang Chod that you'll be teaching in April 2006?

The Sang Chod text I will be teaching from draws from various sources in the ancient Bon Buddhist tradition, particularly a text entitled 'Sang', by the 14th century master Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen, the first abbot of Menri Monastery. Sang Chod is originally from the Cha Shen Thegpa (The Vehicle of Prosperity), the first causal vehicle of the Bon tradition. Nearly all Tibetans know about the ancient practices of the Cha Shen Thegpa and use them often in their daily lives.

Sang Chod and many of the other practices of the causal vehicle are very much about developing and strengthening the healthy energies we all need in order to be at our best in life. In the Sang Chod we focus mainly on our vitality or life force, our soul, our fortune, and our personal and inner power. When these forces are balanced within us we have a more stable foundation for whatever we want to do in life, including our spiritual development. A yogi who is practicing toward enlightenment needs to reinforce that kind of energy. A family can need that energy. One's business can need that energy. Even entire communities and countries need that kind of force and energy.

The practice of Sang Chod is a form of communication with nature and the nature spirits. In Bon as in many indigenous traditions, it is considered very important to live in harmony with the spirits of nature, to harmonize the elemental forces in the environment, to harmonize our own relationship with these forces, and to harmonize these forces within ourselves. It is believed that frequent physical illness, interpersonal difficulties, loss of energy, financial difficulties, etc., can

indicate an imbalance between ourselves and the spirits of the environment. As a remedy we communicate and work directly with those spirits using offering rituals that include prayer, mantra and smoke purification. Through these rituals we can uplift our own fortune, personal power, life force and spiritual vitality, as well as those of the environment and its spirits.

How could one incorporate this practice into everyday life?

If you look at the cycle of one day, we generally have more energy in the morning, we get a little tired by the afternoon, and by late at night we have

no energy at all. Each month or year has a similar cycle. People often think of starting new projects at the beginning of the month or year. In the West you have the idea of New Year's resolutions, for example. Every beginning has certain uplifting positive qualities, but these are not necessarily maintained.

The flow of life has its ups and downs. When the flow is upward it's not a problem but when it's downward we need some kind of solution, and these practices are that solution. It is important to know and

to trust that one can reinforce what has declined; and that a lot of support is available to help us in this purpose. There are very clear, very ancient, and very effective ways to shift and change that downside - whether it is related to the environment, our health, or personal or business issues.

If we align ourselves more with the natural rhythm of the world then we will strengthen the upward momentum right from the beginning. If we create the right circumstances and the right energetic flow at the right time, we are more likely to be successful.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching program in Europe in 2011

March

18-20	Italy	Rome	Awakening the Sacred Body
25-27	Austria	Vienna	Soul Integration and strengthening the life force

May

13-15	Netherlands	Amsterdam	The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen
20-22	Germany	Berlin	Healing Through Love and Wisdom: The Sherap Chamma Practice
27-29	Russia	St. Petersburg	Tummo: Part 2

June

11-13	Switzerland	Zurich	The Clear Light of Awareness: The Practice of the Six Lamps (Part 1)
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August

02-07	Poland	Warsaw	The Practice of the Six Lamps
08-14	Germany	Buchenau	The Pith Dzogchen Teachings of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters
26-28	Finland	Helsinki	Dream Yoga

September

02-04	Russia	Moscow	Sleep of Clear Light: The Practice of Sleep Yoga
09-11	Ireland	Cork	Awakening the Sacred Body

October

14-16	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Soul Retrieval
18-23	Austria	Maria Alm	Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud: The Experiential Transmission, Part 2
28-30	Germany	Frankfurt	To be announced

For more details look at the website: www.bongaruda.eu

