



# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

# 4 – Spring 2012



Triten Norbutse celebrates  
Meet the Austrian sangha  
20 years of teachings  
Taste of The Three Doors  
Losar in Buchenau



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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

is a joint venture of the community of European students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Ideas and contributions are welcome at [magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu). You can find this and the previous issues at [www.ligmincha.eu](http://www.ligmincha.eu), and you can find us on the Facebook page of [Ligmincha Europe](https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaEurope).

**Editors:** Jitka Polanská and Ton Bisscheroux

**Proofreaders:** Bob Anger, Mary O'Sullivan and Thomas Danalloyd

**Editorial assistance:** Floor van Orsouw, Hilly Lokken and Patti Char

**Technical assistance:** Lutz Dausend

**Cover layout:** Nathalie Arts





# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

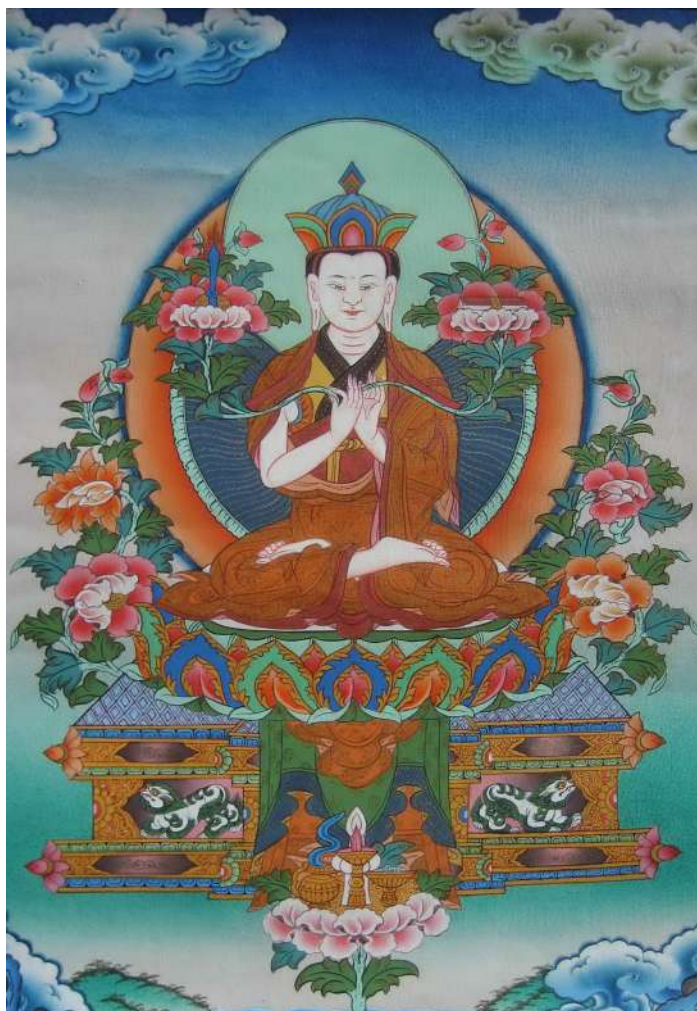
**Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,**

We are happy to present you the fourth issue of Ligmincha Europe Magazine!

We would like to highlight the interview with Khenpo Tenpa Yundrgung Rinpoche. He looks back at twenty-five years of existence of Triten Norbutse and expresses his gratitude toward Yongdzin Rinpoche, the founder. Floor Van Orsouw, the author of the interview, went to Triten Norbutse in February and took part in the Losar celebration there. Part of the festivities was the celebration of Nyame Sherab Gyaltzen's birthday.

Floor also gave our magazine to Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yundrgung Rinpoche. She then visited Menri Monastery and had an opportunity to meet his Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche. He showed a vivid interest in our initiative praised the Ligmincha Europe Magazine.

Another article that we recommend is the account of Wolfgang Krebs on twenty years of practising Bon with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche as well as the changes that the sangha has gone through in that time.



Nyame Sherab Gyaltzen, founder of the Menri Monastery

Wojtek Plucinski, a long term instructor originally from Poland, who now lives in Mexico.

We also continuing to take part in regular monthly Skype meetings, held since 2009, with representatives of the European sanghas. These gatherings allow us to stay informed about news in local sanghas and to coordinate common projects such as the European website and translations of internet teachings. If you wish to take part in these meetings write to [skype@ligmincha.eu](mailto:skype@ligmincha.eu) and we will contact you.

We are also very pleased to welcome Patti Char to our small team. Patti has been one of our proofreaders for some time and she is about to become a member of the editorial board.

The upcoming summer issue will include an interview with Geshe Gelek Jinpa about his recent trip to Tibet, an article about the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ligmincha Institute, a report from the conference 'New Dialogues Between Buddhism and Science' and news from Lishu.

Enjoy reading the Ligmincha Europe Magazine!

We would like to inform you that a practice manual for the sangha is being prepared by

**Jitka Polanská and Ton Bisscheroux, editors**



# LAMA, YOU HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I NEED

Wolfgang Krebs is one of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's most senior European students. He met Rinpoche twenty-two years ago and since then he has studied and practiced the Bon teachings. Wolfgang's personal account of his development guided by Rinpoche and of the growth of the community of Bon practitioners in Germany is a truly interesting story of an authentic adventure.

"I grew up in a Catholic family and my parents were deeply devoted people. Undoubtedly, this influenced my life but I started being critical toward Catholicism while quite young. I had the feeling that the priests didn't have any real experience of the spiritual dimension of life but I didn't lose my interest in religion and philosophy. I read many books about comparative religion, I was keen on Tibetan Buddhism. I remember I was very impressed by the knowledge and wisdom found in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. I was looking for a broader view. At the end of 1980s I needed to take another step by meeting a living teacher, a lama. It was in summer of 1989 that I went with a friend to my first retreat and heard the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in the southern part of Germany, in the area called Black Forrest. For the first time I heard something about the nature of mind.

*"When life becomes a spiritual path,  
That is called The Journey Home."*

Alex Pappas

These teachings attracted my attention and made me even more curious and so I took the next opportunity and at the end of the same year I went down to Italy to Namkhai Norbu's center *Merigar* in Tuscany, for more teachings. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was present at the retreat, assisting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. While Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was giving initiations to groups of participants, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was holding teachings for the rest of them; there were around five hundred people altogether. That was when I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time.



Wolfgang Krebs



August 1990, Schwarzwald

The first one week summer retreat with Rinpoche was held in Germany at Todtmoos, Black Forest. Above his head is a photograph of a thangka – believed to have been lost – of the protector of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud teachings, Meri.

While completing a Rockefeller Fellowship at Rice University in the U.S., Rinpoche found this thangka in a museum in Charlottesville. He was very happy and he took it as a sign that he should settle there. He then founded the Ligmincha Institute to begin his work for preserving and spreading the precious Bon teachings in the West.







#### Juli 1991, Hochkönig

The second retreat with Rinpoche brought the teachings to Austria. Rinpoche showed us his sense of humor when we tried to pull him into overly intellectual discussions on absolute and relative truth.

Tenzin Rinpoche was quite new to the West at that time. Invited to Italy by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, he had a job at the ISMEO (*Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente*) in Rome and spent lots of his time with Dzogchen students of Norbu Rinpoche's community.

Many of the students understood Dzogchen in a way that was rather shocking for Rinpoche and I remember this clearly. Their approach seemed to be driven by a combination of anarchy and pride: "You can do anything, be free and above any restrictions." This is what people largely took from Dzogchen. Years later Tenzin Rinpoche called it the danger of "wild Dzogchen". Nobody really knew what the Nature of Mind was but everybody felt liberated. Rinpoche understood then that the highest teachings reach a different audience here and started to be careful about it.

I remember him saying often: "You have to make sure where you have to work in yourself. And you have to verify it with your experience."

Dzogchen teachings were not very clear to me either that time. I had no clue what emptiness and clarity meant. But it was still interesting enough to keep my attention and for me to continue. I started to attend a small group of Dzogchen practitioners in Frankfurt where I live, and to practice with them. We did Guru Yoga, some pujas and tantric practices. But somehow, often my impression was that the meetings were gatherings to chat more than to do real practicing.

In the summer of 1990 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Germany at the invitation of the German Dzogchen Community and gave teachings from Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud to a group of fifteen people or so. We did Zhiñé practice and contemplative breathing with him and I felt this is something close to what I had been looking for. So, I started to practice it when I was back at home. So, for some years in the 90ies as for sangha activities and practices I was connected to Norbu Rinpoche's Dzogchen Community while my personal practice at home was more and more based on the teachings of Tenzin Rinpoche.

A year after, when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had already moved to the United States, having obtained a fellowship at Rice University in Houston, we invited him to a highland in Austria where he began to teach us the text '21 Nails'. There is nothing higher than that text and I was rather lost in it, but I trusted him. I already felt



#### August 1992, Kapellenhof

In this year in March, the Ligmincha Institute was founded and Rinpoche was accompanied by some of his American students and supporters. As in the previous year, some of Rinpoche's Italian friends and students also came to Germany.





### 1996-1998, Garanas

For four years, Rinpoche taught The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud, parts 1–4 in our summer retreats. In 1996, 1997 and 1998, we gathered at a far away place in the deep south of Austria, Garanas.

### 1999, Hochkönig

The last teachings of this cycle were received in 1999 in the beautiful Hochkönig Mountains.



that trust and respect for the knowledge and pure intentions expressed in the reverential “Lama chenno”: Lama, you have the knowledge that I need. In the next three consecutive years he completed the teaching even though he realized that we didn't understand it properly.

In 1996 he started a new cycle of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud but he discontinued it in 1999. The group of participants was very unstable with people changing to a big degree from one year to another. The group of regularly attending people was getting smaller and smaller and so he decided to stop. Since then he put Dzogchen teachings aside in Europe and he taught more from Mother Tantra with practices related to transformation and prana. It was very helpful for me. Before that, all the knowledge was mainly in my head, now, with clearing the prana I was able to open my body to experience it. Strong emotions, especially anger, were my focus much of that time. I got angry very easily. Even when somebody got in my way or obstructed a passage on a street, I used to get very upset: “give me space”, I used to silently comment to myself, angrily. Funny: I requested space from them, instead of finding it in myself. I remember that I could not see how so many complicated emotions I felt could be reduced to the three root poisons.

I witnessed that from year to year Tenzin Rinpoche found new points and new words leading us to connect with the teachings. It was also ten years of development for Rinpoche and very much for me as well. After ten years of practicing, I started to experience changes in myself. I recognized a bit more of what the teachings talk about, which was not really clear during my first ten years. I think we sometimes expect changes to arrive too quickly and don't keep on enough to experience them. If things ripen an experience can occur at once, but ripening is necessary. We should be patient.

We cannot achieve the opening of our deep inner nature just by our willpower, we cannot force it, we have to allow it to happen. In my experience it is a very soft development in which we learn to release wrong and often unconscious identifications, to accept things as they are and to calm down our mind. We have to go with our conditions and circumstances,







**August 2003, Buchenau**

Since 2003, the annual summer retreat in Germany takes place at Buchenau.

patiently, through ups and downs, not losing direction, keeping the contact with the heart. It is everyone's individual path, not a race, and nobody can really tell you what to do. Many people seek mom and dad in lamas, but they can't be that for them. A lama is a wise guide instead, a guide who makes you work with yourself.

The presence of the teacher is very important for many individuals and for the sangha as well. People need the living inspiration around to nourish their motivation and support them in perseverance. When the teacher doesn't come, a sangha usually grows very slowly or doesn't grow at all, people come and go and their motivation fades.

But for me personally it was and is not so important that a teacher is always available, physically. After the summer retreats I knew what I should do and new practices kept me busy enough for a year as I got familiar with it. But for building a sangha the presence of the teacher seems to be much more important. In the late nineties I stopped attending the meetings of the Dzogchen group of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and we started a small Bonpo group here in Frankfurt. For quite a long time we weren't able to build a stable sangha of Tenzin Rinpoche's students either in my town or in Germany altogether.

In the last decade Tenzin Rinpoche's activities in Europe have changed and developed. In Poland and Netherlands sanghas grew and things in Germany also changed. Due to retreats in different locations in Northern Germany and in Berlin, where Rinpoche started teaching from 2007, a growing number of people were interested in Bon teachings.

The big retreat held by Tenzin Rinpoche in summer 2001 about one hundred kilometer northeast of Frankfurt was probably a slow start toward building a community. In 2006 Rinpoche made Berlin his second home, buying an apartment there. This undoubtedly gave strong boost to the development of a Berlin Bon center and the German sangha in general. Things are coming together. Since 2003 the German sangha's main annual summer retreats take place in Buchenau, near Frankfurt. Finally the time arrived for Rinpoche's wish to manifest a Bon retreat center in Germany.

And I am still here, one of the three German students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche who were there at the very beginning of his presence and teaching in the West. Grateful for all what I have received."

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos: courtesy of the German sangha

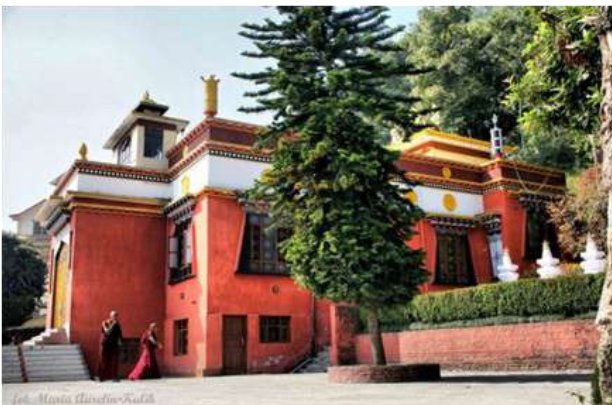


# TRITEN NORBUTSE AT THE MILESTONE

**Triten Norbutse, one of the two main bon monasteries in exile, celebrates 25 years of existence this year. We talked with the Abbot of the monastery Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche about this important milestone.**

**Rinpoche, what are the specific responsibilities of the Abbot of Triten Norbutse nowadays?**

I take care of both the spiritual aspects and the administration of the monastery. In the past, the Abbot was the spiritual leader of the community. At Menri Monastery in Tibet, after a new Abbot was appointed he would go into retreat for a long time; this was how he exercised the spiritual guidance of the monastery. The administration was done by a team of monks. Here in exile things changed. Everything had to be started from the beginning. A few monks that undertook the challenge to build a monastery had to take on all kinds of responsibilities, both spiritual and administrative. That's how His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche built the new Menri Monastery in India and how Yongdzin Rinpoche founded and developed this monastery in Nepal. So, coming back to my responsibilities, I help Yongdzin Rinpoche in this endeavor. He is very elderly, but still very active. Assisting him, I take care of the administration of the monastery and also of spiritual matters, under his guidance.



**Could you give an example of the spiritual side of your work?**

One of the main spiritual responsibilities of the Abbot is to ordain the monks. Besides this, he gives transmissions and initiations. I also teach. I used to teach monks in the dialectic school four hours every day. In the recent years I haven't been teaching so much anymore, because I have to travel and when I'm here, I have to take care of administration.



## **Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche**

**After being awarded the Geshe degree at Menri Monastery in India, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche went to Triten Norbutse in 1994 to continue his studies of Tantra and Dzogchen under the guidance of Yongdzin Rinpoche. In 1996 he was appointed as the head teacher (Ponlob) at the Yungdrung Bon Academy of Higher Studies. His Holiness Menri Trizen and Yongdzin Rinpoche appointed Rinpoche as the Abbot (Khenpo) of Triten Norbutse in 2001. Khenpo Rinpoche is in charge of both Triten Norbutse Monastery and Shenten Dargye Ling in France. Besides these responsibilities Khenpo Rinpoche teaches in Europe, USA and Mexico.**

**(source: <http://shenten.org>)**





**Triten Norbutse started with a few monks and now there are two hundred of them. What are the main changes related to this growth?**

The whole atmosphere of the monastery is changing, and also its physical structure. We have to extend our facilities more and more. There are lots of changes in our regular programs too, changes in a positive way: there are more active people and this brings better, more flourishing conditions. On the other hand it may sometimes be challenging for the quality of education. The growth of the population has good and bad sides: it brings new opportunities, but also limitations and challenges to overcome.

**What are the main highlights and events of the celebrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Triten Norbutse which will take place this year?**

The main reason of the celebration is to express our gratitude to Yongdzin Rinpoche and all lineage masters: they have done so much for us. During these short twenty-five years we have achieved a lot of things. Many geshees have graduated, and many monks have completed the meditation programs and their education. These are the main achievements of Yongdzin Rinpoche and the main purpose of the establishment of the monastery.

By celebrating this 25<sup>th</sup> year we look back and appreciate and acknowledge all the activities that Yongdzin Rinpoche has done. It is also a historical moment for Bon tradition. In Nepal, the Bon tradition has existed for thousands of years, but this monastery is the only and first one in Kathmandu.

During the celebration we want to perform *Mendruk*, a ritual ceremony of blessing herbal medicine done for many centuries. Externally, distributing the blessed medicine can be helpful for healing the whole atmosphere. Also, it can help people to heal from diseases. Through this ceremony we can also find true medicine in ourselves: our knowledge, wisdom and qualities.



The very beginning of Triten Norbutse Monastery at the foot of Nagajuna Hill in Kathmandu in 1987.



Yongdzin Rinpoche at the foot of Triten Norbutse's first building around 1988.



#### **When exactly the ceremony will be held?**

The main *Mendruk* ceremony will start December 14<sup>th</sup> and last until the 29<sup>th</sup>. One week before there will be three days of teaching when we will explain the ceremony to all the people participating. Everyone is welcome to join us in the precious moments. Occasions like this are very rare. Nowadays it takes place a bit more often, but traditionally it was held once every generation. We will do this in the presence of Yongdzin Rinpoche and hopefully also His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.

#### **In general, what possibilities are there for Western students to come to practice or take part in the life of the monastery?**

From time to time people come, do personal retreats and practices, sometimes they join the teachings or request teachings from Yongdzin Rinpoche and other teachers. It would be very good to continue in this way. So far we don't have the facilities to receive our friends and sangha members properly. Space is very limited in the monastery: four or five monks are crowded in one room and more and more children have to sleep in the shed below. But our guest practitioners understand the situation and don't mind that our facilities are not good. I appreciate that very much. But still I hope that in the future

we gradually can improve the conditions here and share all the facilities of the monastery with our sangha, including the Western students.

#### **And how can Western students help?**

In the first place by spiritual support. Another way is through volunteer work. And if we are talking about the physical conditions, it comes to finances. As our monastery doesn't have a permanent financial source, we always rely on the donations from individuals or groups. Traditionally we do a lot of prayers in the monastery and people give donations when they request for prayers. These requests come mainly from Tibet. Now the communication with Tibet is a little better than before. So in this way we get support. Support also comes from the Western students through the sponsorship of individual monks, and as the money comes on our bank account, it is shared with everyone. Sponsoring specific projects is also a possibility. We are now working on the kitchen extension and the temple extension, for example.

Traditionally, participating in these kinds of actions is considered as practice of generosity. If one is a practitioner, then this is a good chance to participate. Let me give you an example: if you have one spoon full of water and keep this to yourself, it will just dry out within a few days. But if you put it into a big ocean, then this water will be totally integrated with the ocean and will not be exhausted until the whole ocean is dried out. It's like investing your money into the stock market, but without risk of losing. If you invest your small merit in the bigger virtuous action, one's merit would never be lost.

#### **Would you like to add something at the end of this interview?**

I wish everybody good practice and good health and good aspiration for their practice and their life. And I hope there will be practitioners from Europe taking part in our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

#### **Interview by Floor van Orsouw**

Photos: courtesy of Douglas Arellanes, Gerd Manusch and Maria Aurelia Kulik





# LOSAR AT TRITEN NORBUTSE MONASTERY

The Tibetan New Year celebration is a big event, especially in monasteries. At Triten Norbutse the whole period lasts ten days, including purification, preparation, celebration and Nyamé Sherab Gyaltsen's birthday ceremony. From February 18 to 27 Floor van Orsouw was there to witness Losar. Geshe Gyatso Choekhortsang explained the many rituals. The pictures on this and the next page give an impression of this special time of the year.



During the last three days of the year many purification rituals, so called *Gutor*, are being performed. Some are open to the public, like Cham dance and blessing water offered by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. The purpose of these rituals is to not continue the bad things of the old year in the new year.

Then there is one day in between the old and new year: this day is preparation time for Losar. The special Losar offerings – stacks of dried, fried



cakes, called *derka* – together with sweets and fruits are being prepared. Traditionally in the families, the first day of Losar is 'lamas-Losar', the second day is 'leaders-Losar', and the third day is 'deities-Losar'.

On the fifth day of Losar, the birthday celebration of Nyamé Sherab Gyaltsen, an important Bon master who founded Menri Monastery in 1405 AD in Southern Tibet, takes place. Many prayers are being offered to him, monks and guests walk around the monastery – a procession called *kora* – accompanied by ritual music, and prayers flags are raised. When it becomes dark at the end of the day, which is also the end of Losar at Triten Norbutse, the offering of lights begins. The whole monastery is illuminated.







Text and photos by Floor van Orsouw





# THE STRENGTH OF PURE INTENTION

Mirka Janošková entered The Three Doors and has engaged in its practices to purify herself and to thereby help others. She talks about her experiences in an open, sweet and sincere manner, giving us a very personal perspective.

**Mirka, we met for the first time in October 2008 on the first trip to the land of Lishu Institute. I remember that you were very attracted to the study program when it opened. However, you applied for the Three Doors Academy instead. Why was that?**

Yes, originally I was very interested in the program at Lishu. I changed my mind because of practical reasons. It would require leaving all my work opportunities while attending a program in Europe allows me to earn money and pay for it. So, taking part in The Three Doors was more financially doable for me. But now that I am in The Three Doors Academy, I think it is better for me than a traditional course in all aspects. It gives me all the tools necessary for living a good life as it is here. It leads me to remember the tools and to use them every day, every moment. A more sequestered training affords less opportunity for contact with people, family, society – the real ground where we experience all of our limitations and challenges.

**What is the main difference for you between retreats and seminars guided by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and The Three Doors Academy?**

It is probably the sharing of experiences with other trainees and the development of mutual support among us – which is an emphasized component of the program. At usual retreats people are more introverted, I would say. The Three Doors is not only about learning the techniques, it is a bit like spiritual psychotherapy, bringing and offering our pains to the whole group. I feel a very strong connection to the whole group as well as to the teachers. Of course, I had to overcome some shyness at the beginning. At the first seminar, we were asked to share what we want to transform in ourselves, what is the issue we were working with. And it was not easy for me to express this in front of all the other people and to reveal to them my pain



**Mirka Janošková**

**“I heard about the Bon teaching in 2008 for the first time. One day my very good friend Lidia told me about Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book *The Wonders of the Natural Mind* and *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*. While reading these books I felt a strong connection to Rinpoche. At that time I lived in Mexico and decided to visit the Mexican sangha there and I had the opportunity to attend a teaching given by Ani Sherab Wangmo. Her initiation was amazing and I could not wait any longer to meet with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The same year I flew to India for the First Lishu Retreat to meet with him. And that was it...**

**I come from Slovakia, and I travelled and lived in other countries for a long time: many years in United Kingdom, Spain, Mexico and other countries of Central and South America. A year ago I decided to come back to Slovakia. Now one of my biggest wishes is to bring the teaching here.”**





and suffering. However, without sharing our pain others cannot host it. The Three Doors is very much about offering and hosting each other's pain.

**How is The Three Doors Academy structured, during the retreats and outside of them?**

The schedule of retreat is very similar to other retreats. There are blocks of teaching combined with practice, starting at seven in the morning and finishing at 8:30 pm with a practice. We have these retreats twice a year for a week. Each year we learn one of the main practices of The Three Doors: *Tsa Lung*, *Five Warrior Syllables* and *Fivefold Teaching of Dawa Gyaltsen*. As well we have a group teleconference once a month, about sixteen of us in each group. We also keep in touch through emails which is a great support for all of us. All of us have individual contact with our mentor – one of the teachers. Each month we send them a record of our transformations.

**Can you do all the transformations you planned to?**

Well, the plan was to do ten to eleven this half a year and I did ten so – yes, more or less I am successful.

**Can you share an example of a transformation?**

I wished to change my relationship with my dad and it has indeed changed. I can see him now without judging him, while before a real connection with him was obstructed by my inner chatter full of criticism. When this stopped I started to see him differently and now I even cannot say what irritated or hurt me so much. He is fine, more than fine, he is just himself and I am able to accept him and love him for who he is. This is the beauty of our work. There is space for natural love between us now. I feel much closer to him and I am very thankful for this change. Working on this issue, for the first time I was able to perceive the changes in others too, the way it is connected is just amazing. Changing myself I am helping others. Many people – not Buddhists – may think that meditation is a kind of separation from others, something introverted and excluding others. But I would say it is the opposite of that. Through my transformation I can bring new qualities into my relationships. That is a gift I can give to the people in my life.

**People say there are challenges in the process they go through in The Three Doors. Have you**







The Three Doors retreat location

**experienced any? If so, what was difficult for you?**

Yes, I had some very difficult moments. I didn't expect it would be so hard at times. You know, you meditate every day and you expect things will go smoothly because of that, you have this kind of expectation. But going deeper in your meditation results in the perception of more subtle things in you, more subtle energies, and so, paradoxically, what you get sometimes is a merciless mirror which shows you all your shadows. I found out for example that I judge others for something that is in me, but I don't see it. I could also see that even if I deeply wish to help others this wish is still driven by my ego. Another challenge was inviting my own fear into my practice – this was one of my biggest steps forward. My whole life I was trying to avoid it, I was too scared to face it. But with every change I accomplished, starting with an easy one, my confidence to deal with my fears grew. One day I knew I was ready to invite the more difficult issues of my own fear. What happened surprised me. I would have never believed that one is able to undergo such a huge change as overcoming my fears in such a short time. Now I really believe that through this teaching we have the potential to transform any pain into a great bliss.

**How do you see yourself in your life after you have completed the program?**

Well, I would love to give to others what I have received. I don't know in which form exactly but truly, looking at John and Raven, at the way they communicate the wisdom of this teaching to us, I can see wonderful possibilities and potentialities for myself. I think they are beautiful and inspiring examples for all of us. The most important is one's intention.

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos by Bogusia Dausend

**About The Three Doors**

The emphasis in The Three Doors training is to transform and heal limiting patterns of body, speech, and mind and bring forth positive contributions in relation to oneself, one's family, and one's greater society. Through reflecting upon your life and bringing that reflection directly into meditation, positive change manifests. Sharing and witnessing this process with others greatly enhances the power of meditation as a means to connect with the gift of being fully present and alive to the infinite possibility of each moment of life. More information at: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)



# A TASTE OF THE THREE DOORS

The Three Doors introduces its approach to personal transformation to the public in the form of weekend programs that allow people to have a taste of the practices in the Three Doors Academy training. Academy teachers Raven Lee and Marcy Vaughn taught the first public weekend-program 'A Taste of The Three Doors' in Los Angeles in early March 2012. Here is what Raven Lee shared with us about it.

## How was your personal experience of the 'Taste'-weekend?

It was an amazing experience. The Three Doors program is designed to support our connection with our authentic being and to be with the challenges of our life and our pain such that we don't get overwhelmed. We can't change something we are not aware of. At the beginning of the 'Taste'-weekend we talked about the difficulty of recognizing our pain and how at times pain would come and we would not know what to do with it. In the afternoon session we went into small groups to discuss our experience of the practice of connecting with ourselves and beginning to understand and experience the sense of being that is bigger than the pain. Participants felt the elation of "Wow! By connecting to the unbounded experience of myself I can shift this pain." I was very touched by how open people were and how deeply they responded to the safe place we cultivated. And it was a blessing to have been there with Marcy. We had a great time sharing the unbounded space of being.

## You already pointed out a little bit what people can expect if they would go to a 'Taste'-weekend. Can you say a little bit more about it please?

The Taste of The Three Doors is about having a glimpse of one's authentic self. And that authentic self is so solid, so lacking in anxiety and judgment, that the glimpse brings a sense of warmth, joy,

and openness so that people are not as identified with their pain. We introduced the inner refuge accessed through the door of the stillness of the body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind. Then through the vibrations of the syllables A, OM, and HUNG we helped people connect to a sense of the open space within them, the luminous awareness that knows that space, and the warmth that naturally arises from that. It was very exciting to see people's responses. We were giving them a taste of how deep they could go in The Three Doors three-year program.

## Can you remember your own very first taste of The Three Doors?

When Tenzin Wangyal first introduced this program, it was like "Oh, what is this?" So many people like myself had already learned these Three Doors practices and there was a confusion as to how this program added anything to what we already experienced. For me, the clarity and unshakable confidence occurred when I was meditating on Tenzin Wangyal's prayers of the inner refuge, and suddenly I realized the profundity of the training, and there was no going back. I know what I need to practice and how to practice for the rest of my life.

To have a sense of the three doors within ourselves gives one tremendous confidence. As a therapist, I feel that the Three Doors provides additional help to a lot of my patients who can see their pain as an actual doorway. And that is the gift of the 'Taste' of The Three Doors and of Tenzin Wangyal's vision.

The Three Doors 'Taste'-weekend-programs will be scheduled for Europe throughout the next months. If you are interested in hosting a 'Taste'-weekend in your city, please contact Kallon Basquin ([the3doors@gmail.com](mailto:the3doors@gmail.com)). More information: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)

## Interview by Anja Benesch

Photo: courtesy of Raven Lee





# GROWING TOGETHER

Heide Mitsche, member of the core team of the Austrian sangha, tells about their practice weekends and the structure of Ligmincha Österreich.

*“Johanna is already here. For her it is not far, only entering the next room where the altar is already prepared and cushions are waiting. Several times a year we gather together at Johanna's place near Graz for a common practice. This time we will practice Ngondro, Sherap Chamma, Zhiné, and Warrior Syllables. These practice week-ends are also a great opportunity for the core team of Ligmincha Österreich to meet and discuss any issues concerning our sangha. The core team composed of Hanna, Heide, Bertl, Christine and Renate was created in October 2011 with the blessing of Rinpoche.”*

Johanna is 79 years and one of the oldest members of our sangha. She met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 1997 and she regularly invites a small group of people for a week-end practice in her home. Bertl and Hanna are also long term students of Tenzin Rinpoches and it was Bertl who met Rinpoche when he first came to Austria in 1991 to teach “the introduction to the nature of mind” at the Hochkönig in Salzburg. The following years Rinpoche was teaching in Germany and Austria alternately before he started the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Cycle of teachings in 1996 in Austria. After four years of teaching this cycle he stopped coming to Austria. There was a little group of very interested and motivated practitioners left, who continued with the practices and as Rinpoche continued to give the

teachings in Germany they would go and receive the teachings there.

*“Eva and Bertl – both long-term students of Rinpoche and part of this little group – are arriving. They have only a thirty minutes drive from Graz to Johanna's place. Their car is full with food for all of us for the week-end.”*

In 2007 Rinpoche began once again to come to Vienna and teachings took place once a year in the springtime. He gave wonderful teachings on the *Warrior Syllables of sound healing, healing with the five Elements, Nine Lungs, Dawa Gyaltsen* and *Soul retrieval*. We all feel deeply blessed that we are able to receive these teachings and particularly blessed with regard to Rinpoche's ability to make us Westerners familiar with these precious ancient Bon teachings so that we can integrate them into our daily life. We are particularly happy as he will come again to Vienna in March 2013 to teach on “Awakening the luminous mind”!



Renate, Johanna, Heide, Hanna, Eva, Bertl and Christine

*“Another car just arrived – Hanna, Robert, Heide coming from Vienna. Robert, with two big plates of ‘Apfelstrudel’: we definitely won't starve this week-end. Tea is ready and we sit together at Johanna's Terrace and enjoy the wonderful view*





Hanna prepares the altar

*into her big garden, trees and bushes in full blooming."*

Many times we have asked Rinpoche if he would be ready to re-start the five years cycle of the Oral Transmission of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud in Austria. In October 2010 he finally agreed and the first part of the cycle started – in a lovely place, near the Hochkönig, close to the same venue that we had at the very beginning of Rinpoche's teachings in 1991. Karoline Seltenheim is the main organizer of this annual event – supported by the Austrian sangha and also members of other European sanghas. We all feel very blessed and grateful to Rinpoche that this cycle is being held again in Austria and that so many people from other European countries and also from the United States are able to participate and benefit.

*"Christine and Klaus, Renate and Gerhard have also arrived in the meantime. Now the core team of Ligmincha Österreich is complete – Hanna, Heide, Renate, Christine and Bertl."*

'Ligmincha Österreich' was created in 2011 when Rinpoche asked his worldwide sangha to standardize the names of the different centers. A team of five people has been designated to take on the responsibility of any issues that may arise concerning Ligmincha Österreich and the sangha here. The main focus of Ligmincha Österreich is to provide practice opportunities for long-term students and also for beginners; we as a core

team also emphasize to deepen our own practice, learning from each other and sharing experiences. The sangha became a family. We feel a growing trust and a tremendous mutual support when it comes to solving problems, wherever they appear. This can be in our relationships, in the sangha, in our work or in our personal development. With the teachings we have received, we are

learning to transform these problems as they arise.

Practicing together is so much more powerful and deepens our own personal experiences. We have a weekly practice group in Vienna which includes the *Nine Breathings*, the *Tsa Lung* yogas, the *Warrior Syllables of sound healing*, *Dawa Gyaltzen* and *Ngondro*. There is also a group in Graz, in Upper Austria and in Vorarlberg, where people have met regularly for quite a long time now. Four times a year we offer a full-day of practice.

Ligmincha Österreich is now also responsible for organizing the retreats in Vienna and relies on a support team of about fifteen people. It is wonderful for all of us to see the sangha growing, seeing the practice deepening and being with and having the support of such a wonderful teacher. Practicing together and sharing our experiences is like coming home for us all. We have gained a family not only in Austria but worldwide.

*"We all are grateful for this private atmosphere at Johanna's place and we enjoy practicing together. Time to start with the practice!"*

E MA HO!

**Text by Heide Mitsche in collaboration with the core team**

Photos by Klaus Polzhofer





## SUMMER RETREAT IN BUCHENAU

**In 2011, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche began teaching a three year program on the Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters. Even if you missed the retreat last year, you are welcome at the annual European summer retreat this year from July 24 - 29 in Buchenau.**

The Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud (Oral Transmission from Zhang Zhung) is the oldest and most important Dzogchen text in the Bon-Buddhist tradition. All of the masters who are described in this text achieved the rainbow body, where they dissolved into light at the end of their life, signifying the highest level of realization.

Of the vast number of profound teachings of the Bon-Buddhist tradition, Dzogchen is the highest, and this series of teachings contains some of the most subtle explanations within the Dzogchen tradition. The Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud was



Lhabön Yongsu Dagpa

traditionally very closely held, and passed from only *one* master to *one* disciple for twenty-five generations. As each of the masters approached the end of his life, his disciple would ask for him to relate a brief biography and the essence of his lifetime of practice and realization. The result is a series of poetic pith teachings that point out the subtlest of all realizations.

We are fortunate to have Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to explain these rare essential teachings, for he has a special gift to make teachings clear and understandable, and relate them to our everyday lives. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche began studying the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud with his master Lopon Sanghe Tenzin when he was only a boy, and has continued to make them a central focus of his practice and teachings in the West.

Information and registration:  
<http://retreat.ligmincha.de>

## SPECIAL AUCTION FOR EUROPEAN CENTRE

As part of this year's summer retreat in July in Buchenau, an auction will again be held. With the proceeds of this annual auction, we have the chance to contribute to many great projects of our beloved teacher, especially the Lishu Institute (noted under [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org)).

Now, together with Rinpoche and all the sangha members, we want to realize the dream of building a European retreat centre in Germany, which would complement Chamma Ling Poland. To realize this goal many conditions must be met. For this purpose, we need to collect a considerable



amount of money, and this auction is a possibility for sangha members to contribute.

We request all sangha members to participate within their capabilities at this year's auction by providing Dharma objects (ritual objects, books, etc.) for the auction or to support the auction with their bids. Sangha members who are not able to participate in this year's summer retreat can still support the project, and should contact us at:  
[fundraising@ligmincha.de](mailto:fundraising@ligmincha.de)

**Text by Elke Rung**  
Photo by Oliver Wirtz



## EUROPEAN PRACTICE WEEKEND IN BUCHENAU

In the weekend of 24 to 26 February we met in Buchenau for the annual European practice weekend. It was the first time that we came together in the week of Losar. We practiced and celebrated the Tibetan New Year. Twenty people registered for the weekend, and fourteen were present from Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. Here is a report written by the participants.

Some of us knew Buchenau only from the summer retreat, as a place with between one hundred and two hundred attendees. So, some were initially surprised by the small number of participants and felt slightly unsettled. But soon everyone enjoyed a very pleasant, warm and family-like atmosphere.

After a few introductory words of welcome from Oliver Wirtz, the practice weekend started on Friday afternoon with the *Guru Yoga*.

Saturday was dedicated completely to the *Practice of the twenty-four Masters*. In the afternoon, we had a skype meeting with Rinpoche for half an hour. We saw a relaxed and joyful Rinpoche and Tsering in a homey atmosphere. Rinpoche did not give a teaching, but he talked about his family situation, and the preparations to move to the West coast. They chose to move to a small town called Albany CA, because he found there the best conditions for the school education for their son Senghe. We received Rinpoche's blessings and good wishes for the New Year.

It was a very inspiring weekend for practitioners of all levels. Experienced practitioners such as Wolfgang Krebs and Gabriele Penders guided us well, and answered our questions. The weekend provided a chance for connecting, growing and expanding in a warm, relaxed way.

As always, Klaus and the people from Schloss Buchenau cared for us in an comforting way. They made us feel at home. There was a new cook, who prepared wonderful food and Klaus showed us the new meditation hall, where we will practice during the summer retreat, pure



space and light.

Being with the European sangha was a wonderful feeling, especially after hearing about Rinpoche's plans for a new Western European center that will come in the near future to Germany. It will be a place where we can practice and study together, and be with Rinpoche and other teachers.

On Saturday evening, we discussed how we can support each other in the European sangha. We saw a slideshow from last year's summer retreat, and photos of potential places for the proposed European center. And, we watched a video about the correct performance of the *Invocation of Yeshe Walmo*.



On Sunday, we celebrated Losar and had a wonderful *Sang Chöd* ritual. With branches collected from the surrounding forest, we started a fire. With the offerings, purification and prayers, we let go of the old year and welcomed the new one.

**Text by the participants of the weekend**

Photos by Ton Bisscheroux





# I DON'T USE DRUGS, I MEDITATE

During the 2011 summer retreat in Buchenau there was a young Tibetan with a French name: Samdup Allier. Anja Benesch and Ton Bisscheroux wanted to know more about him, and asked him for an interview. Here is their report.

**You are Tibetan and you speak fluent French and English. Can you tell us about your background?**

I was born nineteen years ago in Sikkim in Gangtok in northern India close to the Tibetan border, to a very poor Tibetan family. My father was a tailor and my mother was not working, so they did not have the financial means to take care of my education. My grandfather – who lived with us as the head of the family – was a Bonpo practitioner, and wanted me to be adopted to get a good education. He knew that all the great masters live in the West. So he asked one of his closest friends, the Abbot of the Bon monastery in Sikkim, to arrange an adoption by a Western family. When the Abbot first asked Martine and Michel Allier they did not want to adopt a Tibetan child, but when asked again a year later they agreed. It was written in my Tibetan father's astrology that he would lose something very precious, and in mine it was written that there would be a great change in my life when I was three years old. That was the age when I was adopted by my French parents.

**What is your nationality?**

That is a very good question. Well of course I'm feeling French, because I was raised in France. I have many friends who are French, but actually I would say I am from both cultures. Tibetan culture is more dominant in me. When I am with Tibetan people I feel like I am at home. Sometimes I feel a little bit split between my two cultures.

I miss India and my Tibetan family a lot, but I also realize that I need to be a real Westerner, and I need to keep my Tibetan roots too. It's somewhat like being a bridge between the Tibetan culture and the French culture.

**Can you tell us something about your education**



**in France?**

I want to thank my French mother, who spent a lot of time with me in dharma centers when I was young. When I was very young she explained the teachings to me in children's terms and we often visited Plum Village to stay with Thich Nhat Hanh. Later I studied with Sogyal Rinpoche. Five years ago I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and I think that he is really my root teacher.

In my worldly life I am studying political science and international relations in a French graduate school. I know that I won't be able to change the world even working in a humanitarian situation, but I think that by simply practicing, as Rinpoche said, we can really plant some positive seeds. I aspire to be like Yungdrung lama from the Bon monastery in Ravangla (Sikkim), whom I met several times; he is really a model for me. Simply the way he behaves, the way he is. For me he is really the embodiment of the Dzogchen teachings.

**Is it a challenge for you to do both the Buddhist studies and the political sciences?**

I would not say that it's a challenge but sometimes it is very hard to sort out my priorities. Like here, right now, I need to study international relations for my September exams, and I would



like very much to practice in the afternoon but I don't have the time for it. I could say for me it is impossible to study without practicing. Without practicing I would not be able to work properly. Practice is my life and study is my life. They go together.

### **What is your favorite practice?**

I practice the *Tsa Lung* very often because I really feel the energy inside me. It helps me, for instance, when I am studying to have a clear mind.

### **Do you also want to become a bridge in politics or in human rights?**

Yes, not yet, but it's really my aim in life. I know that I will have to train myself to improve myself and become a better human being in order to be useful to the world. I know the Western mind but I am also very imprinted by the Tibetan culture and I see among my French friends there is a real thirst for spirituality. Knowing and being from both cultures can be an asset but right now those are just words. I mean, I need to learn, learn, learn.



Samdup with his mother Martine Allier

### **What does the dharma mean to your friends?**

I am always surprised that not more young people are attracted to the dharma, and come to the dharma centers. I wish that people would discover this. In Grenoble, the city where I am studying, there is thirst for spirituality among the students. But many of my friends who are very bright, relieve their tensions by attending parties, where they smoke and drink. I can see that they are looking for something beyond smoking and drugs. It makes me sad when I see them behaving this way. We all want to find a way to escape from the daily pressure, but it is quite sad to see many people disconnected from their body and their energy.

### **Do you go to discotheques?**

No, never, because being raised in the Buddhist

wisdom tradition, I learned to respond to my problems in another way, and I always knew that it's not by smoking that I will feel happier. It's not by hanging out with friends and going to a party that I will find happiness. Instead, I get high on meditation.

### **Are you different from your friends of your age?**

I can't share my feelings with them or my involvement with Buddhism and I don't share their passion for drinking and drugs. I found my best friends in Dharma centers. When I see people often I feel that their life is empty. Sometimes seeing that makes me sad. I think that everybody has his own karma. I know that's why, sometimes, I don't talk so much with others because I feel that it would not be very helpful for them. The few friends I have in my school are quite broad-minded people. I feel a kind of connection with them and talking about Buddhism or spirituality is natural.

I also have some Tibetan friends who are not very interested in Buddhism. It's not that they are not interested in Buddhism, because their culture is really imprinted

by Buddhism, but they don't follow a master and maybe they are looking for something else: the western world.

That's why I feel I am very fortunate, because I'm both a Westerner and a Tibetan. I can see what we are in the West. I have everything I want and that makes me realize that all these things won't make me happy. I need something beyond, which I can only find in Buddhism, and that is more important. I really feel that Dzogchen is something very powerful, because it goes beyond comprehension and ordinary mind.

**Interview by Anja Benesch and Ton Bisscheroux**

**Transcription by Hilly Lokken**

Photos by Joop van Spronsen





# THE JOY OF LIVELY MOVEMENT



**From fear of being a victim of submission  
I am moving to being totally devoted to you.**

**From fear of not being capable of loving  
I find myself totally in love with you, with all my heart.**

**From insecurity of who I really am  
I find my self free-falling in curiosity, watching particles of me dissolve  
into the pure joyous process of being.**

**Fall and dance with me  
into bliss, my love**

**found and lost simultaneously  
I am happy to face all our daily hassles.**

***Anja Benesch***



# CAVE OF KNOTS

Endless being  
emerging from this cave of knots.

I have discovered myself  
discovered myself.

Alive  
and well  
contrary to all stormy  
insistances to the contrary.

Alive to love  
to passion  
energy, boundless  
connected as it is to the  
infinite generator.

The Vast Unknown  
the No-thing  
and the everything.

Shadowy knots  
Foggy pathways  
give way

to endless being.  
Endless curiosity.  
Endless life.

*Cielo (Mary O'Sullivan)*

Painting by Danielle de Warem





# RECONNECTING WITH OURSELVES

In the article *Finding Freedom From Our Negative Patterns*, published in *Buddhadharma* in summer 2011, was a contribution by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on liberating the mind from painful habits, addictions, and repetitive thoughts. It's about opening fully, even in difficult situations, and finding the freedom within awareness. Here we reprint the text, which is also published at the website:

[www.thebuddhadharma.com/archive](http://www.thebuddhadharma.com/archive)

"In order to heal our painful habits, says Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, we need to turn our attention inward and reconnect with our experience through stillness, silence, and spaciousness.

Through the negative, habitual patterns of distraction and restlessness, we frequently disconnect from ourselves. As a result, we are often depleted, for we do not fully receive what life offers, what nature offers, or what other people offer, and we don't recognize opportunities to benefit others.

You may be sitting on a bench in a beautiful park, yet not be seeing the trees, hearing the birds, or smelling the blossoms. Perhaps you are distracted with your cellphone or worrying about something, and though you are breathing you may have no actual relationship to your body, your speech, your mind, or to the park. I refer to this as sitting on a rotten karmic cushion.

This can happen anywhere – in a business meeting or at the family dinner table. You may even be at a lovely party, but your mind is not part of the celebration. Caught up in thoughts about some problem, we strategize solutions, but this never brings satisfaction because it never reconnects us to ourselves. In truth, our thoughts and strategies are the imaginations of our pain body, pain speech, and pain mind – the ego or identity we mistake as 'me' simply because it is so familiar.

Trying to improve ego does not bring liberation from suffering; it only reinforces the disconnection.

It is very important to acknowledge that suffering exists and to have the proper relationship with it. The root cause of suffering is ignorance, the failure to recognize the true nature of mind, which is always open and clear and the source of all positive qualities. By failing to recognize our true nature, we search for happiness outside ourselves. This fundamental disconnection from the actual source of positive qualities within, and the restless search for satisfaction outside ourselves is something we do habitually, yet we often don't even experience this as suffering because it doesn't seem all that dramatic.

Until we recognize this pain identity and truly acknowledge our own disconnection, there is no path of healing available and we will not realize our full potential in this life. So acknowledging

suffering is the first step, and a beautiful one, because it is the first step on the journey to awakening the sacred body, authentic speech, and luminous mind – which is who we truly are when we are fully present in each moment.

## Discovering Inner Refuge

We begin by acknowledging the habitual patterns that arise from our disconnection from ourselves, which I refer to as pain body, pain speech, and pain mind. We may experience this

disconnection in a variety of ways, such as irritation, boredom, restlessness, sadness, or an underlying feeling that something is missing. If we are to heal or awaken from these patterns, we need to generate a caring relationship with the evidence of our disconnection. Recall how you feel supported when you are with a friend who is simply present, open, and nonjudgmental, and bring those very qualities to your own experience. The silence containing this fullness of the presence of another is always there within you



and always beautiful. So that is exactly how you need to experience your pain. Connect with stillness, silence, and spaciousness, which enables you to observe, allow, and feel whatever you experience without judgment.

So often we identify with our pain – I am so sad. I can't believe you said that to me. You hurt me. Who is this *me* that is sad, angry, and hurt? It is one thing to experience pain; it is another thing to *be* pain. This self is ego and the fundamental suffering of ego is that it has no connection to what is.

In the middle of a confused or disconnected experience, or even at a seemingly ordinary moment, draw your attention inward. Do you experience the stillness that becomes available? It sounds easy and therefore may not seem very convincing as a remedy for suffering, yet it can take years or even a lifetime to make that simple shift and discover what becomes available when you do. Some people may not make the shift and may always perceive the world as potentially dangerous and threatening. But if you're able to make that shift again and again, it can transform your identity and experience. Being aware of a moment of agitation or restlessness and knowing there is another way to experience it – to turn one's attention inward and connect with the fundamental stillness of being – is the discovery of inner refuge through stillness.

When you turn your attention inward, you may notice competing internal voices. Turn toward the silence. Simply hear the silence that is available. Most of the time we do not listen to the silence but listen to our thoughts – we negotiate, we strategize, and we are pleased when we come up with a good solution, confusing this with clarity. Sometimes we try not to think about something and push it out of our mind and distract ourselves with other things. This is all noise, and considered pain speech. When we listen to the silence that is available in any given moment, whether we are in the middle of a busy airport or sitting at a holiday dinner table, our inner noise dissolves. In this way we discover inner refuge through silence.

When you have lots of thoughts, turn toward the spacious aspect of the mind. Spaciousness is always available because that is the nature of mind – it is open and clear. Don't try to reject,

control, or stop your thoughts. Simply allow them. Host them. Look at thinking as it is. It is like trying to catch a rainbow. As you go toward it, you simply find space. In this way you discover inner refuge through spaciousness.

It is important to neither reject nor invite thoughts. If you look at thought directly and nakedly, thought cannot sustain itself. If you reject thought, that is another thought. And that thought is only a smarter ego: "I am outsmarting that thought by observing it. Oh, there it is." And there you are, talking to yourself, holding on to the credential of being the observer of thoughts. The mind that strategizes is itself the creator of our suffering, and no matter how elegant or refined our strategy, it is still a version of the pain mind. So instead of coming up with a winning strategy, we must shift our relationship with pain mind altogether by hosting our thoughts, observing our thoughts, and then allow the observer to dissolve as well.

What is left you may wonder? You have to find out by directly and nakedly observing. The mind that wonders what is left if we don't rely on thinking or observing our experience can't discover the richness of the openness of being. We need to look directly into our thinking, busy mind to discover the inner refuge of spaciousness, and thereby discover the luminous mind. Fortunately, others who have gone before us have done so and provide pointing-out instructions and encouragement for us.

### **Transforming Painful Habits Through Open Awareness**

When ego is the result of disconnection, awareness itself is true connection. Awareness that is direct and naked is described as the sun, and the warmth of awareness dissolves the solidified pain identity the way the sun melts ice. So whenever you feel the pain of being disconnected from yourself, be open to it and be with it. Host your pain well with presence that is completely open, and most important, nonjudgmental.

Can you be open with your pain – still, silent, spacious? There is nothing better than open awareness for transforming pain, and that tool is within you at this very moment. The method of





transforming pain into the path of liberation has no conceptual aspect, it is simply being open. In open awareness, everything is processed. There is no unfinished business.

Another beautiful thing about open awareness is that it is like light. And light does not recognize the history of darkness – how long, how intense, or how complex the darkness is. Light simply illuminates darkness. Like the sun, it is not selective, and the moment it shines, darkness is dispelled. The moment you are aware, your negative patterns are dispelled.

### Finding the Closest Door

Stillness, silence, and spaciousness bring us to the same place – open awareness. But you go for refuge through a particular door: one through the body, one through speech, one through mind. Once you arrive, which door you entered through is no longer important. The door is only important when you are lost. If you are lost on the eastern side of the mountain, it is better to find the eastern path because it is the path closest to you. When we fly we are always reminded by the flight attendant that “the nearest exit could be right behind you.” The closest entrance is right here with you. The tension in your neck and shoulders could be your closest entrance. Your Inner Critic could be your closest entrance. Your doubting, hesitating mind could be your closest entrance. But we often overlook the opportunities right in front of us and take the farthest possible route. It is interesting how often we don't value that which is closest.

If open awareness is so simple, and any given moment of distraction, irritation, or anger is our doorway, why do we not turn toward our discomfort and discover a deeper truth? We are simply not very familiar with openness and we don't trust that it is sufficient. Turning our attention inward seems like the easiest thing to do, yet we don't do it.

### A Prescription for Inner Refuge

How is it possible to become more familiar with inner refuge? If we are ill and are given a

prescription for medicine that we've been told is absolutely necessary for our recovery and well-being, we are motivated to take our medicine. So perhaps we need to think of turning toward inner refuge as taking the medicine that will release us from our habit of disconnecting from the source of being. You have three pills to take: the pill of stillness, the pill of silence, the pill of spaciousness. Start by taking at least three pills a day. You can choose when to take stillness, when to take silence, or when to take spaciousness as your medicine. Actually, if you pay attention, opportunities will choose you. When you are rushing, you become agitated. Your agitation has chosen you. At that very moment say, “Thank you, agitation. You have reminded me to take the pill of stillness.” Breathe in slowly and go toward your agitation with openness. Your stillness is right in the midst of your agitation. Don't distract yourself and reject this moment, thinking you will try to find stillness later or somewhere else. Discover the stillness right here within your agitation.



The moment you hear complaint in your voice you can recognize this as the time to take the pill of silence. What do you do? Go toward your complaints. Be open. Hear the silence within your voice. Silence *is* within your voice because silence is the nature of sound. Don't search for silence, rejecting sound. That is not possible. Likewise, don't look for stillness, rejecting movement.

It is the same with the door of the mind. When your mind is going crazy with thoughts, take the pill of spaciousness. Remember, don't look for space by rejecting your thoughts – space is already here. It is important to make that discovery, and to make it again and again. The only reason you don't find it is because it is closer than you realize.

So that is my prescription. May the medicine of stillness, silence, and spaciousness liberate the suffering experienced through the three doors of body, speech, and mind – and in so doing, may you benefit many others through the infinite positive qualities that become available.”

**Interview by Stephen Ledyard (Buddhadharma)**



# AWAKENING THE LUMINOUS MIND

In 2011 were published: *Awakening the Sacred Body* and *Tibetan Yogas of Body, Speech, and Mind*. With *Awakening the Luminous Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche completes a series of three books that present meditation instructions and practices to help you discover the treasury of the natural mind. This book will be available from June 2012. We bring you parts of the Introduction.

“Inner refuge is the recognition of your true nature, which, according to these teachings, is the open and clear space of being. This is the nature of your true identity: open and clear. This nature is often referred to as the natural mind. It can be directly perceived, but not by the moving, problem-solving mind; only pure awareness can apprehend it. The awareness of openness is the source of all healing as well as the source of creativity, joy, love, compassion, and all other positive qualities.

To discover this source within, this inner refuge, you must shift your focus or attention from the perception of a problem to the awareness of *being* itself. This book provides specific guidance on how to do this, on how to recognize what is true in the midst of confusion. It will guide you to bring awareness to the ordinary experiences of everyday life, for these experiences, which may appear bounded and limited, can become doorways to experiencing the magic of infinite possibilities. It is not a matter of the technique of this meditation or that meditation, although there are many useful and skillful techniques to help

you. More than any technique, what is important is your relation to yourself. Changing your life is a matter of connecting with places in yourself you may have never fully connected with, and understanding things you may never have fully understood or trusted. Do you recognize and honor the *space of being*, the truth of who you are, in the life in which you find yourself? This space within yourself is not a passive place where nothing happens. The whole universe arises, rests, and dissolves in that single space. Everything in your body arises, rests, and dissolves in that space. Surely we can trust that there is a deeper intelligence at work than the intelligence of ego with all its plans and proposals. Solutions will come naturally from the connection with the open space of being, which is boundless and infinitely full of potential.

If you follow the principles in this book, guidance and creativity and intelligence will naturally and spontaneously arise as you recognize and connect with the openness of being fully present. You will see changes happening in your everyday life. Trust that openness is the source. Discovering this is not a passive experience; it is lively and participatory. As you come to know the liveliness of connecting to the infinite possibilities of each moment, you will experience an inherent

sense of worthiness and richness. Your actions will spontaneously arise from the warmth of connection and will bring benefits and blessings to yourself and others.”

**Text selected by Marcy Vaughn**  
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