



Ligmincha Europe Magazine

12 – Spring 2014



Awakening the Sacred Feminine

Meet the Russian Sangha

The 3Doors Graduates

Lishu Institute



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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. You can find this and the previous issues at www.ligmincha.eu, and you can find us on the Facebook page of [Ligmincha Europe](https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaEurope).

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GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

The past few months have been a exciting time, with a lot of teachings and possibilities to practice with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, other Bon lamas, or together during the European sangha weekend, and with senior students of Rinpoche who visited Europe. We inform you about these activities in this edition. And of course, we had the graduates for the 3Doors Acadamy in the U.S. and in Europe.

An international team is developing the plans for the teachings that are going to start in Lishu Institute in India in 2015. The program will offer in-depth training to western students in these three areas: *The Nine Ways of Bon*, the *Ma Gyud* and the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. They have put together a survey to help them understand the inter-

ests and needs of those who may consider attending programs at Lishu Institute or participating in the online programs. For this they would like to ask you to fill in a survey at lishu.questionpro.com. You can read more on page 8 – 10.

Furthermore we have an article on the *Shamatha Project*, a long term study on the effect of meditation of lay people. Frits de Vries shares his understanding with us about resting in the Nature of the Mind and the practice of Guru Yoga. We bring you the story behind Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's internet webcasts, and

more.

We are happy to inform you that H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is no longer having any health issues. Long Life Mantra accumulations for Yongdzin Rinpoche came to 6.000.000. We thank all that contributed to this effort for our most precious teacher of the teachers Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (Lopon). But doing the Long Life Mantra for our Teachers does not have to be the result of a special request as was the recent case with Yongdzin Rinpoche. You can in-

clude singing the Long Life Mantra as part of your regular daily practice. On page 23 you can read parts of the letter Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche wrote to the sangha.

The website of Ligmincha Europe has been updated, and you can find information there about the Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe. This

center will be a place where two resident lamas could live and support the European Sangha also in their alternative locations. When you want to support, financially or bring in your skills, go to the website www.ligmincha.eu.

If you like to contribute to this Magazine, as a writer of an article, or as editor, please let us know at: magazine@ligmincha.eu. We could use some support.

In Bon,
Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor



FIRST 3DOORS ACADEMY GRADUATION

In October 2013 there were the first graduates of the 3Doors Academy in the U.S. In March 2014 we had the first graduates in Europe. Here is a report from both ceremonies.



A three-part rainbow appeared in the sky the evening prior to graduation.

U.S. 3Doors Academy Graduates

On the mountaintop at Serenity Ridge, the misty morning of October 7, 2013 dawned. With great anticipation, we, the 28 members of the first U.S. 3Doors Academy, made final preparations for the ceremony that would mark the culmination of our journey over the last two and a half years together. Using the practices of the 3Doors we learned to stay with turbulent waves of emotion and gradually discover the refuge within. Together we'd celebrated the joy of birth and shared the sorrow of illness and death. We shared and shed outgrown pain identities, and opened and inspired

one another to experience our true natures.

In the months preceding our sixth and final Group Training Retreat, we collaborated virtually via email and phone to create this day of celebration and dedication. Stephen Ledyard writes of his experience of the graduation ceremony:

"Bathing in the luminous warmth and spaciousness in the presence of Rinpoche and my precious brothers and sisters — I can't imagine a fraternity or sorority bonding over three years at the depths to which we traveled — I felt that I was being blessed in the sacraments of the Five Elements, beyond time and space. Standing with my family and all my ancestors, and all who would travel this path after me, I was achieving for all of us something no grand letters on parchment, no degree traced in gold, not the most esteemed university, could ever confer as deeply in body, speech, and mind: a level of (self-arising) confidence that comes from receiving these keys to the doors of the nature of mind."

As we accepted Rinpoche's invitation to bring our open hearts to the world, we were called to genuine service. As Academy teacher, Gabriel Rocco, explains, "In our willingness to show up with all our imperfections, first to ourselves and then to each other, we reengage authentically with the world."

The graduation ceremony was followed by a celebratory luncheon in the (also miraculously transformed) Dining Room. With the gifted guidance of our director and fellow trainee, Juanita Rockwell, we presented as an appetizer a creative montage



Graduates of the first 3Doors Academy at Serenity Ridge.





At the Graduation Celebration Banquet, with profound gratitude to Rinpoche, our teachers Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn, and 3Doors director Kallon Basquin.

of song, poetry, prose, and collage representing our individual journeys of awakening. It was a poignant tour de force, profound and lighthearted at once. The culinary talents of the Serenity Ridge kitchen delighted us, and a grand time was had by all.

As a token of our deep appreciation, we presented Rinpoche with a donation to support scholarships for future Academy students.

European 3Doors Academy Graduates

In March 2014, near Goldberg, Germany, twenty-two individuals from across the continent gathered for the final retreat of the first European 3Doors Academy. The week culminated with a beautiful graduation ceremony led by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Academy teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson that reflected the diverse, multicultural nature of the European group.

The ceremony was the fruition of an intense two-and-a-half

years of inner work supported by a series of secular meditations through the doorways of body, speech and mind. Academy participants used these practices to transform themselves in three dimensions: in relationship to themselves, their family, and their work.

In the words of Karolina Seltenheim from Austria: "Looking back two-and-a-half years on a path that sometimes felt like crossing a jungle — not knowing where I was going or the way I had to go... To overcome fear, I was provided with skills like the *Nine Breathings*, and *The Five Warrior Syllables*, and the *Tsa Lung*. I was able to clear winds which sometimes appeared as a storm, always finding my way to Inner Refuge, where there was space and rest..."

John Jackson writes, "It has been a wonderful experience to support and observe the growth of these amazing individuals. We have people from across Europe participating, so our gatherings are beautifully diverse and multicultural. Throughout I have enjoyed the strength, wisdom, and support of Raven Lee, who co-leads the Academy with me,



Honored Guests for the Graduation Ceremony: Tenzin Wangyal (middle) with Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang from Prague, Geshe Lhundup from Ligmicha Paris, and Academy teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson (left to right).





Morning has broken for the first European 3Doors Academy Graduates. On March 28th they received blessings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Certificates from their Academy teachers Raven Lee and John Jackson in a beautiful Ceremony at Finkenwerder Hof. Welcome to our growing world-wide family!

and Kallon Basquin, ...director of the 3Doors (International) Program."

New Academies Accepting Applications:

U.S. Academy begins April 2015

European Academy begins June 2015

Headquartered in the United States, the 3Doors international organization currently offers classes and retreats throughout the United States, Mexico, and Europe. Applications are being accepted for the next U.S. and European Academies. The U.S. Academy, beginning April 2015, meets at Serenity Ridge, Shipman VA and is taught by [Marcy Vaughn](#) and [Gabriel Rocco](#). The European Academy, begins June 2015, (location to be determined) and is taught by [John Jackson](#) and [Raven Lee](#).

The 3Doors Academy supports personal transformation through meditation, self-reflection, and the power of collective support. The group meets for six 6-day retreats twice a year and is additionally supported by a relationship with a personal mentor, monthly group conference calls, and individual retreats.

For more information or to request an application:
For the US Academy:

US-3Coordinator@the3doors.org

For the European Academy:

EU-2Coordinator@the3doors.org



The 3Doors Practitioners Association

There is good news for anyone who is applying or is considering applying to participate in an upcoming 3Doors Academy. Once you complete your training, the 3Doors Practitioners Association (3PA) and its world-wide network of teachers, mentors and graduates, will

be there to support your continued personal growth, creative expression, and service to others.

The newly forming 3PA exists within the mandala of the 3Doors international organization and is guided by a council of its members. Its intention is to provide multiple avenues for graduates to connect with one another, access continuing education and training, and be supported to serve their communities and society at large. Out of the collective energy of ongoing connection will come the ideas, teachers, projects, service, and creative expressions that will sustain the ongoing heartbeat of Tenzin Wangyal's vision for the 3Doors.

Text and photos from the 3Doors (International) Program



3Doors Academy teachers John Jackson and Raven Lee on Graduation Day.



DONATE FOR OUR 'NEW HOME': AUCTION IN BUCHENAU

The European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, is slowly approaching (August 25 – 31) and with it, the auction, held annually there. You can support!

While other wonderful projects were supported in the past by the proceeds of the auction, the auction was held for the first time in 2012 to support a great new project that Rinpoche wants to realize in partnership with the European sanghas: a European Retreat Center for the Western and Central Europe, intended to complement the Chamma Ling in Poland.

In the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 7* you can read Rinpoche's letter send to the sanghas, in which he tells that for years he feels the need for a European center where all of the European sanghas can gather together. And

you can also read the presentation of the 'Ligmincha Europe Retreat Center.' Oliver Wirtz, chair of Ligmincha Deutschland, gave also presentations about the European Center during retreats in Buchenau (Germany), Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Maria Alm (Austria).

This year we want to take a further step towards realizing this dream of a common home, and invite you to support this event, and with joined forces and whatever you can donate to get involved in the auction. The proceeds will directly serve the acquisition of the Retreat Center.

Your participation may be that you give an object for sale, or to support the auction by your bids. We collect only items that are related to the

dharma, or the practice and are suitable to strengthen our connection to the precious teachings that we receive, and/or enhance our practice. We are particularly pleased about quality items that can achieve a good auction proceeds.

When you contribute to the auction, we would like to ask you to take pictures of the object you want to donate in advance and send the photo with a brief description to:

fundraising@ligmincha.de



If it is not possible for you to participate in the auction, we are very pleased, if you want to support our project by making a donation.

The *Circle of Founders*, which supports this project, includes the sanghas of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. The other sanghas are welcome to join in the future. We hope to inform you in the next Magazine about the proceeds of finding a home.

Let us work together for the manifestation of the vision of our beloved teacher!

Watch the video:

Ligmincha Europe: Finding a Home

www.home.ligmincha.eu



THE LISHU INSTITUTE SURVEY



Lishu Institute is the fulfillment of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's vision of providing a retreat center and study program for Western students to do long-term, in-depth study and practice of the Bon teachings. Bob Anger gives us an update.

It took some time, effort and research for Rinpoche's aspiration to manifest and in January 2009 Lishu Institute became the owner of land in Kotra Kalyanpur outside of Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India. This significant step was possible due to the devotion and involvement of Geshe Thupten G. Negi, a Tibetan-Indian and a Bon Geshe. Because he is an Indian citizen he is entitled to purchase land in India and he did so on behalf of Lishu Institute.

Since that time the first building on the Lishu cam-

pus has been completed and will provide classrooms and housing for Lishu Institute's teachers and students. Ongoing improvements are being made to this beautiful four-story building as we design and equip the kitchen, increase the water supply and prepare for the teachers and students to live, study and practice in this gorgeous and spacious setting.

The Lishu curriculum is being developed by Professor Kurt Kuetzer of the University of California at Berkeley and will be based on the three main Bon texts. The program will offer in-depth training to western students in these three areas; *The Nine Ways of Bon*, the *Ma Gyud* and the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. As well, there will be courses of instruction in the Tibetan language. Lishu students are expected to be proficient in the English language since the teachings will be presented in English.



Lishu Institute's mission is to provide training to serious practitioners, future leaders and teachers to preserve and propagate the Bon tradition in the West. This unique educational program will be offered in three ways. A student may attend all three years to complete the three courses on site, at Lishu Institute in India or a student may attend remotely, online, or a student may combine these approaches and attend some of the training in India and some of it elsewhere.

These teachings will be offered in time-blocks of two and a half months and a student will have to complete three of these two and a half-month-time-blocks in order to finish one of the three areas of study.

In order to provide the best possible instruction, we are recruiting the most qualified lamas and they will teach the texts in the traditional manner with a line-by-line explanation of the meaning as is done in the monasteries. The teachers will speak in Tibetan and an English translation will be provided of both the oral explanation and the original Tibetan texts. This will support the daily study of the Tibetan language and provide the most thorough form of instruction. We plan to

video record all of the teachings and these recordings will be the core of the Lishu curriculum. There will also be a well-qualified teacher on site who will lead discussions, answer questions, demonstrate methods and rituals and lead practice sessions. Each day will include instructions on the texts, meditation practice, Tibetan language instruction and time for individual reading and study.

An international team is developing these plans with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. We still have much to do and we would very much appreciate your input on how to best structure our programs. We have put together a survey to help us understand the interests and needs of those who may consider attending programs at Lishu Institute or participating in our online programs. If you are interested in participating, please complete our survey at lishu.questionpro.com.

Please visit www.lishu.org for news from Lishu Institute.

Text by the Committee

Photos by Paco Albisua and Monika Cardenas



THE STORY BEHIND THE LIVE WEBCASTS

More and more we can enjoy the live webcasts by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche from our computers. Lourdes Hinojosa tells us how this project began and how you can help.

In December 2012, while having dinner with a small group of students after teaching in Santiago, Chile, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche suddenly gave me a deep look and said: "Lourdes, I've been thinking about a new project, and I would like you to coordinate it. I want my live broadcasts to reach people all over the world, in their own languages. Many people cannot come to the teachings. They either do not have the resources or the spare time to do so, or are confined to their homes or perhaps to a hospital bed due to health issues. I want to bring the teachings to all of them, so they can receive the benefits also, just like those who are able to be present at the teachings during talks, seminars or retreats." I felt deep joy inside, and was moved to once again witness my teacher's infinite compassion and enlightened wisdom in full motion ... and of course I said: "Yes, Rinpoche! I will gladly do this."



That was the beginning of an exciting journey, contacting sangha coordinators in all the Ligmincha International centers and seeking volunteer translators — and now, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's live webcasts are being simultaneously translated into twelve different languages.

Long before I became involved, Rinpoche has



Sangha members in Malaga, Spain, watching the live webcast together.

been doing live webcasts for the sangha with the help of Polly Turner and other assistants. Since 2009, Polly has been producing and directing nearly all of his webcasts, an average of eight per year. Rinpoche's idea when he first spoke to me about this was to have someone coordinate all the international activity surrounding translation and promotions, to greatly increase access to the teachings. There has been good international participation from the very beginning, but it is twice as good now, with the help of talented translators and many other volunteers around the world!

On March 23, 2013, Rinpoche did his first broadcast from his home basement in California with live translation by translators around the world. It was a big success! From then on, Rinpoche has been broadcasting regularly from his home as well as from Serenity Ridge, with interpreters in twelve countries, for the benefit of many.

He has also featured special guests during his webcast teachings, such as His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche during their visits at Serenity Ridge. People from more than twenty-eight countries around the world have attended webcast teachings from their computers, including the cyber-sangha, as Rinpoche calls his devoted online students. We can feel the energy of Rinpoche's clear, loving guidance; his words touching our hearts and lives ... all of us together,





Watching the live webcast together inside of The Great Bon Stupa for World Peace in Valle de Bravo, Mexico.

as one, in the cyber-space. All webcasts are free and open to all.

All this can only be done with the help of many wonderful and talented volunteers: webcast producer, graphic designers, text editors, sangha coordinators, translators, promoters, group hosts, etc. Our deep gratitude to you all!

You can find information regarding past webcasts at: www.ligmincha.org.

Also, you can learn how to participate in live webcasts and access translations at: www.ligmincha.org.

We are in need of more volunteer translators. So far, webcasts are being translated live into Czech, Danish, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Turkish. It would be wonderful to find skilled volunteer translators in Chinese, Japanese, and other languages; as well as skilled volunteer backup translators in Spanish and Italian, among other languages. All volunteer translators receive detailed instruction and guidance in broadcasting their live translations via free, easy-to-use Inter-

net channels. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Lourdes Hinojosa (webcast coordinator) at webcast@ligmincha.org.

Also, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality and accessibility of the webcasts. Particularly welcome is informed advice regarding the ideal equipment and software to use, as well as recommendations for free or low-cost webcast service providers that can meet our needs. If you have both knowledge of and experience with doing live webcasts and are open to advising us, please write to Polly Turner (webcast producer) at webcast@ligmincha.org.

May Rinpoche's heartfelt desire of bringing the precious teachings all over the world — reaching countless sentient beings, guiding us to our inner refuge, freeing us from suffering and helping us all lead happier, fuller lives — continue to manifest even further through the expansion of his webcast project!

Text by Lourdes Hinojosa

Photos by Dr. Jose Ignacio Garcia (Spain), Salvador Espinosa (México) and the computer



WE HAVE TRANSLATED ALL THE WEBCASTS AND BOOKS

This time we introduce the sangha in Europe largest country. Pavel Kuzmin informs us about the Russian sangha.

Traveling in the Netherlands from the southern border to the northern border is less than three hundred kilometers. I know that Russia is vast, because I once travelled from Moscow to Beijing, China, by train, and that took me one week. So, can you tell us where is the Russian sangha is located?

The Russian sangha is spread all over Russia, but most of the sangha members live in Moscow and Saint Petersburg. When seminars with Rinpoche are organized people from far away come from all over the country. Some people have to travel thousands of kilometers to Moscow, and travel several days.

When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?

Before I met Rinpoche I read his book on *Dream Yoga*. I had been interested in *Dream Yoga* for twenty years, and it was amazing meeting Rinpoche the first time. His books were translated by people who invited him to Moscow for the first time in 1998. The books were published in the nineties in Russia. I met him in 2009 during a *Tumo* retreat in Saint Petersburg. The seminar was organized by Elena Rudoy, a very dedicated person, who organized many retreats with Rinpoche in Saint Petersburg. She had asked me to help her, and when I met Rinpoche he suggested that I would organize seminars in Moscow. Rinpoche was the first time in Moscow about sixteen years ago, when he taught *Dream Yoga* in a very beautiful museum of minerals in Moscow. During the retreat in 2009 I met the people who invited Rinpoche the first time to Moscow, and we started to work together. For Rinpoche this was a very good sign, so he decided to come to Russia twice a year since 2011: once to Saint Petersburg and once to Moscow.

Are there many Buddhist people in Russia?

Yes, and there are many schools represented. The most popular community in Moscow is dedicated to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and they have about five thousand members. They have a group of about one thousand people who regularly meet,



Dream Yoga seminar in Moscow in 1998.

and have different trainings. And also the Karma Kagyu, Gelugpa and others are represented. In the east of Russia we have three traditional Buddhists regions.

Was there always freedom of religion, or did it only come after 'Glasnost' in 1989?

Even in the Soviet time there were many Buddhists spread over the country. In the West of Russia Christianity was the main religion. People have been practicing Buddhism for many years, but since the beginning of the nineties it starts to develop fast. Some teachers are invited, but for H.H. the Dalai Lama it has not been possible to come to Russia, because of the political connections between Russia and China. Many lamas are invited, and also the Bon lamas. Nowadays two Bon lamas, Rinchen Tenzin and Arta Lama, live in Moscow, and they teach and perform rituals.

Did you feel religious suppression during the communist regime?

I don't know how it is in the regions, but I think it is the same as in Moscow. From the government nobody is interested in things that are not connected with making money. In the regions there is





21 Nails in Saint Petersburg in a Buddhists datsan.

more tradition, and then it might be that the local customs lead to restriction, but not from the authorities. The people on the countryside, who grew up in the Soviet time, may not be so open for changes. I think this is the same all over the world.

Can you tell us about the structure of Ligmincha Russia?

We actually have a poor structure. About five to seven people are always involved in the organization. We organize the retreats, translations of the books and webcasts. In Russia it is very difficult to have a legal religious organization, because you have to register and prove for fifteen years that your organization is active in the country. And they need facts of the daily activities of the organization. We have been thinking about how to realize it, but that is not easy.

Do you have practice groups?

Some of us meet to do the *Ngöngdro* with a Bonpo lama quite regular. Many people practice alone at home, and they are very happy with the webcast. More than two hundred people listen to the webcast live. All of Rinpoche's webcast are translated into Russian, so we have a big library with YouTube videos.

Most of the times we organized the retreats with Rinpoche in a center outside of Moscow, and Rinpoche asked us the last time to organize it in Moscow. So, in September we expect more than three hundred people. During the *Dream Yoga* retreat in 2010 we had between from two-hundred-fifty to three hundred people. Rinpoche's books are very popular and some have been published in a third or fourth edition. Till five years ago it was easy to publish books for free on the internet, so many people read the books for free. Only one of Rinpoche's books, *Unbounded wholeness*, is not translated into Russian; the others are all translated. Also most books of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche are translated.

Do you have contact with other sanghas in Europe?

We have close contact with Finland. Many Finnish people come to Rinpoche's seminars in Saint Petersburg, because it is very close to Helsinki. I also know members from the Polish sangha.

What are your plans for the future?

We think about possibilities to meet more regularly, because the live connection is important. There for we need to find a place. And we discuss how to structure the sangha, and create an official organization.

Is there anything you want to share with the sangha?

To the seminars many people come from Ukraine, Belorussia. We welcome everybody warmly, where ever they come from. So, maybe we'll see you in Moscow or Saint Petersburg...

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos by Elena Trepalina and Alexander Smolovoy



WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

It is always inspiring to read what happens in our sangha in Europe. Rinpoche visited Austria, France and Germany, and gave internet teachings. John Jackson came to Germany, Denmark and Ireland,

Raven Lee visited the Netherlands. Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang was invited to Hungary, we had a European sangha weekend in Germany, and Ryszard Adamiak taught *Thrul Khor* in Slovakia.



**March 28 – 30:
Dream Yoga seminar
with Tenzin Wangyal
Rinpoche in Berlin,
Germany.**

For the *Dream Yoga* Seminar in March 2014 we had booked a nice big place ahead of time, the *UfaFabrik*, which was a famous movie Factory in the old days and is a well known event place now. We all were a little bit anxious if enough people would be coming to fill the space. But everything worked out very well. At the beginning of the year we already had many registrations and realized there was a lot of interest in Rinpoche's teachings. For the public talk we had two-hundred-sixty, for the seminar two-hundred-twenty participants, and we had to close the registration before the weekend started. The feedback of most of the new participants was very enthusiastic and they were inspired by Rinpoche's Dzogchen approach and presentation of the *Dream Yoga* practices. The feed-

back from students who have been coming for a longer time was the same. The presence of two Geshes helped a lot to sustain the high energy during the weekend: Geshe Nyima, already well known and highly appreciated in our Berlin Sangha, and Geshe Lhöndrup, the new resident Lama in France. And last but not least the teachers of the 3Doors Academy (Europe), John Jackson and Raven Lee, had come over just for the Sunday and also contributed to the overall success of this wonderful weekend with their genuine presence.

As a Sangha Team we all felt we were working together very well and respectful of every other persons contribution. We enjoyed the warmth and closeness which manifested throughout this weekend.





March 14 – 16:

Awakening the Luminous Mind seminar in Paris, France. There were about two-hundred participants, and it was a very joyful teaching and the Paris sangha is always very enthusiastic.



March 21 – 23:

Dream Yoga seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Vienna, Austria.



March 21 – 22:

John Jackson taught *Sang Chöd* and *Sur Chöd* in Skander-borg, Denmark. Around thirty people attended, and they all felt very blessed to be there.





April 25 – 27:

On Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's advice our College sangha invited Geshe Nyima Choerkortshang in 2013 to give a weekend course in Budapest, Hungary. He kindly accepted our invitation and visited us in April 2014. We had a public talk on Friday evening with the theme: *The*

Nine Ways of Bon and full day retreat on Saturday and Sunday with the topic: *The Eight Manifestations of Sherab Chamma*. It was a wonderful course with details explaining the practice. We had thirty-two people coming from different parts of Hungary also from abroad Transylvania (Romania) and Serbia.



February 28 – March 2:

Ryszard Adamiak gave a public lecture in Bratislava, Slovakia, on *Tsa Lung – disco-ver the deeper breath of life*; on Saturday a *Tsa Lung Workshop* and on Sunday a workshop on *The Five Warrior Syllables*.





April 4 – 6:

A weekend workshop with John Jackson in Cork, Ireland, introducing the healing meditations of the five elements, and how they relate to our everyday lives. A testimony from two participants.



There is an old saying that “all the best things in life are free”. Having received the teachings of *Five Elements Goddesses* recently with John Jackson, I am now more aware of what the five best things in life are: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space.

I have always felt drawn to the beach. Now I know it is because of the five element availability and connection there. I have identified it as a place where my balance is restored. While practicing informally and integrating it with mindfulness training, I am finding a new awareness and gratitude arising within.

Regarding my energy I am now more aware of when there is balance, excess, or lack of elements. With this information I informally invite the Mother of the correct element to balance, or use the combination practice. I experienced a beautiful balance when the teacher just by being earth

helped me to access that element – and now I am aware that I can do likewise (with practice) for myself, loved ones and friends, which brings a lot of compassion into my interactions. It gives me time to respond rather than react.

Doing the practice has meaningfully enriched my present moment awareness and gratitude. Walking this earth is transformed, and I know that the best things in life are really cost free, and accessing elemental awareness has shown me greater personal freedom, and given me a chance to retrieve lost vitality.

Carmel Geary

The setting was very helpful. It was great to go outdoors at break times and consume vast amounts of fresh air, enjoy green grass, feel comfortable in loads of space, appreciate quiet atmosphere, and of course, the soft rain.

John Jackson was on the final stop of his world tour, but still had time for everybody.

I returned to my routine with the warm glow from the weekend lasting for a week. Thanks to John and also to Mary.

Jon Browne





**February 21 – 23:
European Losar Practice
weekend at Beuerhof,
Germany**

Since a few years it is a custom to organize the European Practice weekend near to the Tibetan New Year Festival *Losar*, and this year we met the last weekend of February, one week before *Losar*. The emphasis of the practice was the topic on the Summer Retreat 2013 in Buchenau: *The Twenty-*

four Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud. Florian Bruckmann led the practice. He did that in a very nice atmosphere, and also the sangha members who had not participated in the Summer retreats in Buchenau enjoyed the practice: connecting with the *Lineage of the Old Masters*, the *Invocation of Taphritsa*, the *Yeshe Walmo* ritual, and of course the *Nine Breathings of Purification* and *Tsa Lung*. And on Sunday morning we did the *Sang Chö* ritual. We started the weekend on Friday with twenty-one participants from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Belgium. On Saturday we had a Skype meeting with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



Maksuton suora verkkolähetys
 Opetuksia tiibetin bön-buddhalaisesta perinteestä
**Nosta tuulihevosesi—
 Hyvää onnea uudelle vuodelle**
 Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
2. Maaliskuuta, 2014
 20:00-21:30 Suomen aikaa

 *Lähetys käännetään suomeksi.*
www.ligmincha.fi



You can watch the recording here:

[Raising Your Windhorse — Good Fortune for the New Year \(02-03-2014\)](#)

Live Webcast
 Live onderricht uit de Tibetaanse bön boeddhistische traditie
**Je geest tot rust brengen met meditatie—
 de oefening van het rustig verblijven, Zhiné**
 met Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
9 Maart 2014
 18.00–19.30 u

 *Log in via:*
www.ligmincha.org



You can watch the recording here:

[Calming Your Mind with Meditation — The Practice of Calm Abiding \(Zhiné\) \(09-03-2014\)](#)

Webcast Gratuit
 En direct : Enseignements de la tradition Tibétaine Bön Bouddhiste
Eveil de l'Esprit Lumineux
 avec Guéshé Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoché
Le 10 avril 2014
 01h. - 2:30h. Heure de Paris

 www.new.livestream.com/yogaville



You can watch the recording here:

[Awakening the Luminous Mind \(10-04-2014\)](#)



Free Live Webcast
 Live teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition
Winds of Change: Discovering the Healing Power of Mind and Prana
 with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
April 12, 2014
 21.00–22:30 h. Central European time
 Translations in multiple languages available.
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You can watch the recording here:

[Winds of Change: Discovering the Healing Power of Mind and Prana \(12-04-2014\)](#)

Freier Live Webcast
 Live Belehrungen aus der Bön Buddhistischen Tradition Tibets
Die Schüler – Lehrer Beziehung
 mit Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
4. Mai 2014
 19–20:30 Uhr Mitteleuropäische Sommerzeit
 Simultanübersetzung ins Deutsche verfügbar
www.ligmincha.org
www.simultan.ligmincha.de




You can watch the recording here:

[The Student-Teacher Relationship \(04-05-2014\)](#)

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 18 APRIL 8-9 P.M. WARSAW TIME (GMT+1)
 INTRODUCTION TO NINE CLEANSING BREATHS.
 MEDITATION FOR PEACE AND MENTAL HARMONY
 22 APRIL
 INTRODUCTION TO FIVE INNER ELEMENTS OF
 OUR BODY AND THEIR FUNCTION IN EVERY DAY LIFE.
<http://yungdrungbon.streamonline.pl>



You can watch the recording here:

yungdrungbon.streamonline.pl (18-04-2014)



ON THE WAY TO ENLIGHTENMENT

From April 23 to 27 in Pauenhof, Germany, a retreat was organized on *Sherap Chamma*, The Mother of Wisdom and Love. Karolina Seltenheim shares with us some impressions of this special retreat.

As a result of the transformations required in the 3Doors Academy, the spontaneous manifestation of a retreat with a female teacher and the topic *Awakening the Sacred Feminine* came together during the last week of April at Pauenhof. Twenty-seven women and men from the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, and Austria experienced an incredible retreat under the guidance of Marcy Vaughn, a long-time student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and a teacher in the 3Doors Academy and programs.

I knew Marcy as the *umdze* from Ligmincha's retreats in the US, and had the dream that she would guide a *Yeshé Walmo* practice here in Europe. The dynamic and rhythm she brings to this practice attracted me, and most impressive on this five-day retreat was her embodiment of the teachings and practice.

We practiced Sherap Chamma from the early morning until late evening. The emphasis of the retreat was not so much about what was taught, but it was the power of Marcy's practice, experience, knowledge, and understanding that shone through. Like the natural flow of a river, these qualities came together and touched me very

deeply. During the retreat I had a series of dreams that deepened my practice and connected me with the inner refuge and the wisdom of *Sherap Chamma*. To have the opportunity to talk with Marcy personally about these dreams made this retreat an extraordinary experience.

Another aspect of this retreat that touched me was being with a Western teacher and a female

teacher as well. In my opinion, Rinpoche's tireless efforts to bring forth these precious teachings that are so close to our hearts is amazing, and we love him beyond measure for this. To experience how his teachings are embodied in one of us Westerners and in a female is beyond words for me. It's encouraging for my practice and encouraging for me to continue the path of transformation and to take the fruit of my transformations out into the world. Whether any of us does this in a traditional way as a Bon practitioner and/or through the 3Doors methods and programs, both approaches will support us to achieve our final goal — attaining liberation for the benefit of others.

For many of us it was a great experience, and we spontaneously and enthusiastically invited Marcy for another retreat next year. Save the date: March 10th – 15th 2015. Let's meet together to explore the path to enlightenment through the sacred feminine!

Text by Karolina Seltenheim



HOSTING OUR PROBLEMS IN THE INNER REFUGE

During the weekend from March 14 to 16 a 'Taste of the 3Doors' was organized in Dortmund, Germany. Hille Huigens reports from it.

It really was a taste, because the participants not only got a good idea about the 3Doors Academy program, but they also experienced it. Angelika Krone organized it, assisted by Michaela Bittner. The taste was under the guidance of John Jackson, one of the 3Doors teachers from America. Angelika translated into German.

The introduction on Friday evening was attended by about thirty-five persons. They received a glimpse of the background of the 3Doors program. John guided us through the three doors. The first door is the stillness of the body. And the experience of the inner space, related to it. The second door is the door of listening. Listening to the silence behind all sounds. Even the silence behind the inner talk. And the experience of lightness and peacefulness, which accompany this. And the third, the door of the heart. The spaciousness of the heart, which can merge with the spaciousness of the room and space around us. In this space we experience awareness and light and peace.

We name this 'the inner refuge'. There we can always find hospitality. No matter what restlessness disturbs us, we always can find shelter there. And we can safely take the restlessness with us and give it a place as well. Doing so, its power diminishes, and the problem becomes lesser. Pondering about it increases the problem. Hosting it in the inner refuge lessens the problem. During

the whole Saturday and Sunday we work with this hosting in the inner refuge.

Besides that, we sing *A, Om, Hung*. We let these sounds resonate, respective in the head (the crown chakra) in the throat and in the heart. What a joy in doing this together. For most of us it immediately is a liberating experience. Just like by hosting, our burden becomes lighter. Sometimes it even vanishes. At the same time a strong feeling of mutual connection arises.

This is even strengthened by lunching together. On Saturday we walk together through the park to a restaurant, where we enjoy the meal in each other's company. The next day the meal is near the Phoenix-Lake. The park and the lake are developed on the spot of the former iron mills. This part of Dortmund is also going through a big transformation and so it is a good place for our transformation-work. The atmosphere of the yoga meditation room itself was very appropriate. Together with the clear explanations of John and the hospitality of Angelika and Michaela, this all contributed to create a wonderful taste.

Text and photo by Hille Huigens



6.000.000 LONG LIFE MANTRAS ACCUMULATED FOR H.E. YONGDZIN TENZIN NAMDAK RINPOCHE

In January Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche requested that all of our Ligmincha international sanghas would accumulate 1.000.000 Long Life Mantras for H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher in the Bon tradition and founder of Tritten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Many sangha members engaged and on March 10, 2014, the total of the mantra accumulations: was **5.811.894**. We know that the sangha continues to accumulate the *Long Life Mantras*, but as far as keeping track in the office of Ligmincha, this is the total.

We are happy to let you know that the condition of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche has improved since December last year.

Here are parts from the letter in which Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche informed the sangha on January 31, 2014:

Dear Sangha members and friends,

(...) I am writing this letter particularly to share some news about our beloved teacher H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche's health. Recently some notice requesting prayers for Rinpoche's health have been posted through various media such as wechat and email etc. I sincerely thank to those who made effort to send these information asking for the prayers around.

However, many of you start wondering if any urgency occurred in Rinpoche's health. So I just want say please don't worry. Rinpoche's health now is much-more better. In early last December, Rinpoche's blood glucose became quite high. Therefore we had to hospitalize him for three day to bring his sugar down and stable. His diabetic doctor prescribed insulin four times a day. But this has already been brought down to once in a day combining with the pills. At that time we asked advice from H.H. Menri Tridzin Rinpoche for any pujas/prayers for Yongdzin Rinpoche's health and long life. H.H. Menri Tridzin Rinpoche advised

thousand *gana puja offerings of Walse* and 100 times of *trowo* prayer recitation. These were performed both in Menri monastery and Tritten Norbutse as well.

Yongdzin Rinpoche now feels much better and does his regular works and practices and he takes walk every day.

Recently when we requested to Shense Rinpoche for divination and advice for any further practices/rituals for Rinpoche's long life, Shen Rinpoche advised us to perform hundred thousand *gana puja offerings to Red-Mule Sipa Gyalmo*, hundred thousand *gana puja offerings to Takla Mebar*, hundred million times of recitation of long life mantra that is:

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

So, the hundred thousand *gana puja offering* are being done at Tritten Norbutse monastery for one week starting from Feb. 2 while the practice of one hundred thousand *ganapuja offerings of Takla Mebar* will take place in Tritten Norbutse monastery sometime after Tibetan new year in March. And we will make sure you to be informed the precise date. We are appealing to all our monks and Bonpo practitioners to participate these important communal practice though their practices and prayers and particularly by reciting hundred thousand times or more of above mentioned long life mantra dedicating for Rinpoche. Therefore, your participation is welcome and highly appreciated. (...)

I would like to pay my respect and appreciation to your practices and good thoughts.

Thank you,

Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche
(for Tritten Norbutse Monastery)



DREAM YOGA IN BRUSSELS



DREAM YOGA

From the 24 th to the 26 th of October
2014 in Brussels with

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE



Teacher and internationally renowned author, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach for the first time in Belgium the dream yoga practice from the tibetan Bön tradition.

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Nicolas Gounaropoulos
0032/81/22.10.18
gounaropoulos@gmail.com
(reservation indispensable)



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Du Chant d'Oiseau
Avenue des Fransiscains, 3A
1150 Bruxelles
Prcice : 135 euros *



THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF MIND

No words can describe it

No example can point to it

Samsara does not make it worse

Nirvana does not make it better

It has never been born

It has never ceased

It has never been liberated

It has never been deluded

It has never existed

It has never been nonexistent

It has no limits at all

It does not fall into any kind of category.

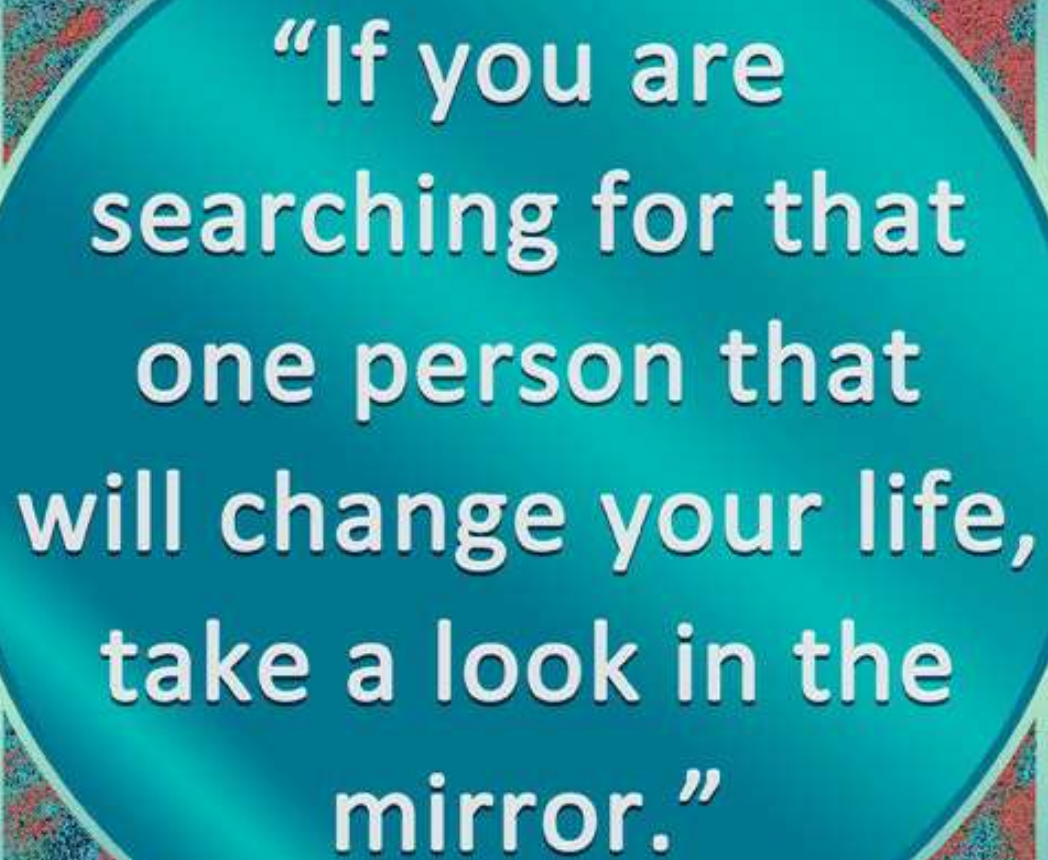
Dudjom Rinpoche



Photo by Martin Schroeder



CHANGE



“If you are
searching for that
one person that
will change your life,
take a look in the
mirror.”

<https://www.facebook.com/Institute of HeartMeth>



WHAT IS REBORN OR REINCARNATED?

In the *Buddhadharma* Spring 2014 issue an interesting question was raised in the section 'Ask the Teacher'. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave an answer.

QUESTION:

I was raised a Christian and taught that there is an eternal soul that leaves the body upon death and goes to heaven or hell. While I am now a Buddhist practitioner, my early religious upbringing has remained a problem. My logical brain tells me there must be something that animates a being and leaves the body when it dies; after all, one can tell the difference between a corpse and a living being.

In the Theravada tradition, we have the Jataka tales that describe Gautama's previous lives. In the Zen tradition, Jiyu-Kennett Roshi describes her former lives in her autobiography, *The Wild, White Goose*. In the Vajrayana tradition of Tibet, there is the tulku tradition with the intentional reincarnation of realized beings such as the Dalai Lama.

Please help me understand the Buddhist concept of what is reborn or reincarnated. What is it that is never born yet never dies? Is it consciousness? Awareness? Is it empty? It seems like an eternal soul to me.

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE:

In the Dzogchen teachings of my tradition, we make a distinction between mind and nature of mind. The mind is impure and can be obscured, but the nature of mind is primordially pure and cannot and cannot be obscured. The mind can be affected by causes and conditions, but the nature of mind cannot be affected. The mind is changeable. The nature of mind is not subject to birth or death.

So the essence or nature of mind is unchangeable and primordially pure. The teacher points out this

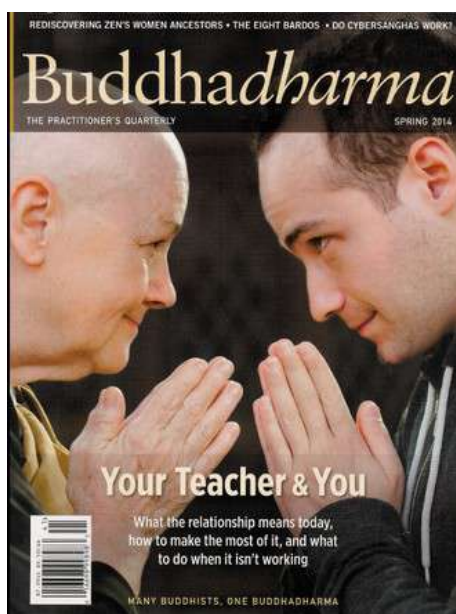
essence to the student, because awareness of this essence can be developed through meditation. Recognizing the nature of mind is wisdom; when one fully realizes the nature of mind, suffering is extinguished. Failing to realize the nature of mind is ignorance, the root of all suffering, and the mind that fails to recognize this nature is driven to take rebirth after rebirth.

What takes rebirth is *shé zhin*, or individual consciousness, the mind-stream driven by the reactivity that has not recognized the nature of mind. Separation of body and mind is the definition of death. When death happens, the mind continues, driven by the lack of recognition of the nature of mind. This mind endlessly takes rebirth in a variety of realms, and this is the definition of the suffering of cyclic existence.

Liberation from rebirth is the exhaustion of what obscures the nature of mind. Liberation is the dissolution of the veils of ignorance. When a buddha or higher bodhisattva reincarnates, they are not obscured by ignorance nor driven by the causes and conditions of karma but are born through the power of their compassionate prayer to benefit others who are suffering.

For the meditation practitioner, it is important to know that mind can evolve and purify its reactivity and karmic traces, transcend pain and conflict, and overcome duality. In any given moment, we can recognize the unbounded, primordially pure nature of mind. This recognition is like the sun shining in the clear, cloudless sky. The warmth of this realization gives birth spontaneously to qualities of immeasurable love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

From the point of view of Dzogchen, there is no moment when we cannot recognize the nature of mind and liberate suffering, including the great moment of the separation of the body and mind we refer to as death.



MEDITATION AND SCIENCE: *THE SHAMATHA PROJECT*

Adeline van Wanang participated in *The Shamatha Project, Meditation and Science*. In her book *The Less Dust, the More Trust* she brings to bear her professional training and experience as a psychiatrist together with her knowledge and these experiences in meditation to explain the nature and significance of these practices from both Buddhist and scientific perspectives. Frits de Vries wrote a review.

Introduction

There are two central meditation practices on the Buddhist path: *shamatha* or 'calm abiding' and *vipashyana* or 'clear seeing'. *Shamatha* is also translated as 'peacefully remaining' or 'tranquillity meditation'. In *shamatha* you get instructions for your ordinary, conceptual mind. In general you first train with one pointed concentration on a certain object, in order to stabilize your attention. When you are familiar with that, you fix your concentration on a point in the space before you and when familiar with that you train without a fixation point. In the Dzogchen training of *shamatha* you do not suppress or reject your thoughts, but when you see them arise you do not follow them. The result is that they resolve on their own and you remain peacefully. When you are able to experience long gaps between thoughts in your stream of consciousness you can go to the training in *vipashyana*, which is called 'insight meditation or contemplation. In Dzogchen it has the special meaning of training beyond your ordinary, conceptual mind on the central experience of Dzogchen called *rigpa*: the innermost nature of mind.

The attention in the *Shamatha Project* is fully on the preparatory *shamatha* practices. In the Bon Buddhist tradition *shamatha* is called *zhiné*. *Sha-*

matha and *zhiné* can have far reaching mind changes. In the *Wonders of the Natural Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes how his long-term practice of *zhiné* lead him to signs of experiencing the innermost nature of mind. Thereafter the confirmation of this experience by his teacher Lopon Sangye Tenzin was given through the 'direct introduction' to Dzogchen (1, p. 19).

Mind and Science: the *Shamatha Project*

A group of dedicated scientific researchers, lead by Dr. Clifford Saron, did empirical measurements

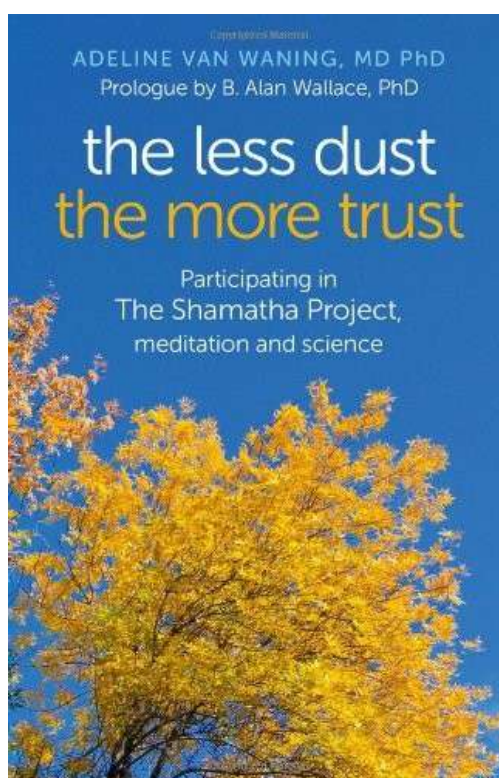
on Buddhist meditators. Years before, Dr. Saron was asked to give a presentation to the Dalai Lama, in the third series of *Mind and Life* dialogues between scientists and the Dalai Lama (2). This invitation lead to an encounter with Dr. Alan Wallace and the co-founder of the *Mind and Life* dialogues, Francisco Varela. From these meetings came the plan for a more comprehensive study on meditation, with full empirical measurements. As perhaps known, the Dalai Lama has a life long interest in western science which is why he fully endorses this project.

The overarching research questions for the Project

were:

- Can attention be trained through focused attention meditation practice?
- Can training in Loving Kindness, compassion and other beneficial aspirations support attention and improve emotion regulation?
- Are improvements in attention related to psychological function?
- What are the subjective, behavioral, neural, and physiological correlates of such training?

In this way we have a more quantitative view of the fruition of *shamatha*. The *Shamatha Project* was set up, based on a serious meditation program and also on a serious research hypothesis:



“The research hypothesis was that three months of shamatha training, combined with cultivation of the four ‘qualities of the heart’ would result in improved attentional performance (vigilance, selectivity, and metacognitive control), as well as greater compassion, security, and ability to diminish the impact and duration of negative emotions.”(3)

This research was done at Shambala Mountain Center in Colorado, with a selected group of sixty meditators in an intensive three-month meditation program with a longitudinal randomized waitlist control approach. The meditation was lead by Alan Wallace, an experienced *shamatha* and *vipashyana* trainer. The selected retreatants meditated mostly alone but also as a group. The whole project is long-term research, with publications and abstracts published in scientific journals and magazines. To get an impression of the full scope of the project, and the very exciting outcomes so far, see the project page of the University of California, Davis: mindbrain.ucdavis.edu. They include confirmation of the hypothesis, greater mindfulness, empathy and resilience, and groundbreaking findings of effects down to the chromosome level.

A personal account

As a participant in the project, the Dutch psychiatrist Adeline van Waning kept a diary during the three-month meditation period. She started writ-

ing in the context of preparing a thesis for an MA in Buddhist Studies about the *Shamatha Project*. This material, enriched with more elaborate studies on the *shamatha* and contemplation meditation fields, evolved into a larger text. The text was enriched with guided meditations from the pro-

ject. Also, in two chapters she discusses from a more psychological point of view on meditation experiences, not only from her first-hand experiences, but also from her psychological expertise as a psychiatrist. As a scientist herself (Ph.D.) she considers the current research outcomes of this unique project. (4)

The project started in 2007 and is ongoing. In her book she has some important recent news (4, p. 361):

“The news came in fall 2012. This is the headline message of the news-release: The Shamatha Project has been awarded a grant of 2.3 million dollars over three years to continue and extend this most comprehensive investigation yet conducted into

the effects of intensive meditation training on mind and body. The Grant, titled “Quantifiable Constituents of Spiritual Growth” will support the latest phase of research that will address two questions. Question one: “After going through intensive meditation training, what differentiates people who develop their lives in ways that relieve suffering for themselves and others close to them from those who do not?” And question two: “How are measured changes in cognitive, psychological



Shamatha Diagram





Dr. Saron from the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) talking with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

and physiological processes related to people's life experience years later?"

In line with her meditation experiences Adeline also studied more advanced meditation practices like *Mahamudra* and Dzogchen. In her book, she explores the *shamatha* practices in this larger context. Although her meditation experiences are touching on the borders of the primordial state and *rigpa*, the *Shamatha Project* is not designed to go that far. A recapitulation of her experiences is presented in a review (5):

"When increasingly she could let go of habitual attachment to self, she could feel that not she did things but that things happened through her, resulting in experiences of spaciousness and openness, with feelings of subtle lightness and joy. She noticed how sometimes there was the sense of transcending her physical senses and yet experiencing everything around her more clearly. She achieved a sense of freedom, of not being bound by beliefs, convictions and expectations. Also, she describes a heightened sense of presence in the world. The author addresses a sense of 'breaking the barriers of anxiety,' getting in touch with a deeper trust, beyond the 'dust' of attachments and conditionings."

Because of these potential farreaching experiences, the basic meditation practice of *shamatha* is very fundamental in the Buddhist tradition. Alan Wallace, her *shamatha* teacher, designed the meditation side of the whole *Shamatha Project*, supervised it and wrote the prologue for Adelines book.

As previously stated, meditation practices like *shamatha* or *zhiné* can lead to far reaching mind changes. When done properly there is a smooth

connection with the contemplation practice that follows. You then need a teacher or master for guidance. Especially when you want to continue with Dzogchen contemplation you have to connect with a qualified Dzogchen master. When you are ready the teacher gives you the 'direct introduction' to the natural state. The *shamatha* or *zhiné* practices provide you with the indispensable mental stability to step into the more advanced meditation practices of contemplation.

Conclusion

Based on her first-hand experiences and her study of meditation Adeline has written a very rich book for beginning and more experienced Buddhist practitioners alike. It is about concentration skills needed not only in this life, but also in other states, such as lucid dreaming, *Sleep Yoga* and finally the intermediate *Bardo* state.

Text by Frits de Vries

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- (1) *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, The Essence of Dzogchen in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet, Snow Lion Publications, 2000.
- (2) *Gentle Bridges*, Conversations with the Dalai Lama on the Sciences of Mind, J.W. Haywood and F.J. Varela, Shambhala Publications, 2001.
- (3) See: Shamatha Project on: www.fetzer.org.
- (4) *The Less Dust, the More Trust*, Adeline van Waning, M.D. Ph.D., John Hunt Publishing, 2014.
- (5) See: www.amazon.com, review J. Boekhoven.

Origin of photos:

Shamatha Diagram from: www.rigpawiki.org.

Dr. Saron with H.H. the Dalai Lama from: mindbrain.ucdavis.edu.



DZOGCHEN, GURU YOGA AND CONTEMPLATION

Our teachers often say that *Guru Yoga* is the most important practice one can do, but when we rest in the Nature of the Mind we don't need to do any practice. It sounds simple, but is it that easy? Frits de Vries studied several books on this subject and shares his understanding with us.

Introduction

Guru Yoga and contemplation are rather common concepts and practices, found in all schools of Tibetan Buddhism and can be found also in other Buddhist and non-Buddhist spiritual traditions.

We find the Dzogchen traditions only in the Nyingma and Bon schools of Tibetan Buddhism, whereby Bon is the fifth school of Tibetan Buddhism. In Bon and Nyingma the concepts of *Guru Yoga* and contemplation in Dzogchen have a very specific meaning and are connected with a specific practice.



The meanings and practices we study here are from the *Zhang-Zhung Nyan Gyud* (ZZNG), in the translations and commentaries of John Myrdhin Reynolds (4), who closely worked with H.E. Lopon Youngdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who is the main living Bon Zhang Zhung teacher. The question I want to answer in this article is: How does the essential principle practice of Dzogchen, resting in the Nature of Mind, combine with the most important daily practice of *Guru Yoga*? While resting in the Nature of Mind, also called Contemplation, lies beyond all operations of the mind and *Guru Yoga* is a step-by-step practice within all the operations of the mind?

Dzogchen and Contemplation

Contemplation is a practice in all spiritual schools, on all levels, but in the context of Dzogchen it has a very precise meaning. The Dzogchen learning process starts normally with preliminary exercises, which can be understood by your normal, ordinary awareness and then shifts, at a certain point, to a learning process outside your ordinary awareness. From then on any step-wise instructions fail. This shifting point is the 'direct introduction' to the Natural State by a qualified Dzogchen master to the practitioner.

Before this point you practice in general preliminary exercises, until your mind is stable and you are open and ready to receive this introduction. Usually these preliminary practices are from the *Ngöndro*, followed by supplementary exercises, on the advice of the Dzogchen master. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describes his learning process, starting with the *Ngöndro* and *Powa* (2, p. 19):

"After powa I did zhiné meditation on A with Lopon Sangye Tenzin for quite a long time, and through this meditation I received the direct introduction to Dzogchen."



In the chapter on the Zhiné concentration practice, after describing the 'signs of spiritual progress', Rinpoche elaborates more on this introduction, explaining it is certainly not a magical act of the master on the practitioner (2, p. 86):

"When the inner and outer signs start to manifest, the master introduces us to the natural state by explaining to us the nature of the experiences we have already had and of the knowledge we have already acquired by ourselves. In this way the practice becomes more calm and relaxed, less fixation and concentration practice and more like contemplation practice."

You have had this direct introduction and you had, at least for a few moments, the experience of the inseparability of emptiness and awareness. To bring yourself to the state of this experience, again and again a different learning process is tak-



ing place, without any conceptual step-by-step instructions on what to do. It is only expressed as getting more confidence in or getting familiar with the clear state of awareness the master has introduced one to, the Natural State.

According to the Lupon there is no method we can use (5, p. 114):

"There is no real method to use because it is unspeakable. If you follow what I am saying, words, then you won't find the natural state at all. You are listening to the outside, and you are just catching my words."

This 'problem' of instructions is clearly described in an interview by Henry M. Vyner of Lupon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (5, p. 110):

"Interviewer: How do you concentrate into the natural state? On what do you focus your awareness?

Lupon: There is nothing to do. Just leave it to itself. If you do something, if you try to do anything, then you are not in the natural state.

Interviewer: So there is no method.

Lupon: No. Just keep the natural state continuously.

Interviewer: How do you stabilize the natural state?

Lupon: Just do nothing.

Interviewer: Just sit there with my eyes open?

Lupon: No. That doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether your eyes are open or closed or whether you lie down in your bed. If you are familiar with keeping the natural state, if you are quite advanced with this practice, then you can talk, or you can do everything without disturbing it."

The Interviewer then checks with the Lupon: his "Just do nothing" is not an instruction, but simply means "do nothing within your mind: you don't reject, accept or follow your thoughts." It means, when looking into your 'mind-stream' you do not follow arising thoughts, because following thoughts causes more thoughts to arise. Not rejecting or accepting means: thoughts are allowed, and should be left untouched.

So, after this very distinctive Dzogchen 'direct introduction', there is still a gradual learning process of becoming more and more familiar with this unspeakable state of awareness and to experi-

ence it again and again, until you are quite advanced. The concept of this practice is easy to understand, but the practice itself is very difficult, because we are conditioned to reacting to all kinds of stimuli around us in daily life. We are very easily distracted, in contrast: you should not be distracted from the natural state of mind, not even for an instant. As Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche puts it nicely (2, p. 96):

"As Dzogchen practitioners, it is possible to get distracted while cooking, but not possible to get distracted from the natural state."



Rinpoche and other Dzogchen masters warn us not to confuse meditation experiences or *nyams*: bliss, inner pleasure and emptiness, with the genuine experience of *rigpa* (2, p. 95):

"However, these three nyams must not be confused with rigpa or with the primordial state. These are experiences that are comprehended by rigpa, the self-awareness of the state."

Also the blank state of 'no thoughts' is a meditation experience (4, p. 248):

"This Natural State, which one encounters in contemplation, is characterized by an intrinsic Awareness or Rigpa, whereas the condition of 'no thoughts' is just an experience (nyams) and in the absence of Rigpa, it does not constitute contemplation as such. It is not just emptiness that characterizes the state of Dzogchen, but equally this luminous clarity or Awareness."

Dzogchen contemplation has a different meaning than the usual *Sutra* or *Tantra* oriented meaning of contemplation (4, p. 248):



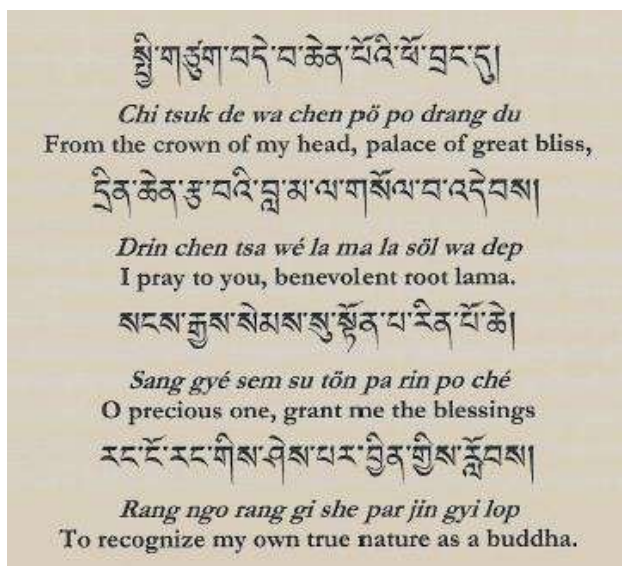
“Basically contemplation is a relaxing into the alert Natural State of the Nature of Mind, and this can in no way be coerced nor created by thoughts and mental exercises.”

Although contemplation in Dzogchen cannot be executed like a goal oriented task, we can create favourable conditions through the *Guru Yoga* practice or by practicing *zhiné*. When you are ready you can start with advanced Dzogchen practices (2, p. 68):

“The later contemplation practices particular to Dzogchen are trekchö and tögel; however before embarking on these practices, it is necessary to have established a firm base in meditation through concentration practice.”

Dzogchen and Guru Yoga

On every retreat occasion with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche we start with singing the *Guru Yoga* prayer in Tibetan (see below).



Guru Yoga is part and parcel of the preliminary practices for practitioners of Dzogchen, be it one of the Nyingma Buddhist Dzogchen streams or of the Bon Buddhist Dzogchen streams. It is a necessary practice. In Appendix 2 (4) you find a description of the complete preliminary practices for the *Zhang Zhung Dzogchen* and *Guru Yoga* is an important part of it. In order to practice it you need a qualified Bon master. In general *Guru Yoga* looks like any of the nine preliminary practices, with generating of devotion, sitting position, breathing exercises, visualizations, purifications prayers, recitations, etc. In Appendix 1 you find a specific description and explanation of the steps of the practice of *Guru Yoga* in *Zhang Zhung*

Dzogchen. It is considered to be the single most important daily practice in the Dzogchen tradition (4, p. 246):

“Through a repeated practice of the Guru Yoga, at least once a day, the practitioner maintains the vital link and connection with all of the transmissions one has received. The Guru Yoga is, therefore, the indispensable preliminary practice for the realization of Dzogchen.”

The *Guru Yoga* practice makes you part of the transmission lineage of the stream, in this case the *Zhang-Zhung Nyan Gyud* transmission lineage of the masters of the Oral Tradition. In the book *The Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung* you find a full description of the lineage and all the masters, complete with their pictures.

Importance of Tapihritsa

“According to the Bonpo tradition, originally Tapihritsa was an ordinary human being, a native of Zhang-Zhung in Northern Tibet. Through the dedicated practice of Dzogchen, both in terms of the state of contemplation, that is, Trekchod, and the visions of the Clear Light, that is, Thodgal, he attained realization and full enlightenment. In general, Tapihritsa is said to be the most important master in the lineage of transmission for the Zhang-Zhung Nyan-gyud.” (4, p. 217).

Tapihritsa lived in the seventh century and was the twenty-fifth master in the lineage. Until then the dzogchen instructions were kept secret and orally given, to one disciple only. Tapihritsa was the first master who allowed his disciple Gyerpungpa (Nangzher Lopo) to set down the secret oral precepts in writing and also to have more than a single disciple for the transmission.

In contrast with the usual image, you see Tapihritsa here as portrayed on a big thangka painting with eighty-six (!) lineage masters. The Tapihritsa image (1, p. 6) is part one of two very old thangka paintings, studied by Bon Dzogchen expert Samten G. Karmay. One image depicts the theoretical side of the teaching:

“... the other presenting figures of both legendary and historical masters in a long line who practiced the teaching, hence providing evidence for the religious culture of a kind little known even among specialists.” (1, p. viii).





Detail from a *thangka* with Tapihritsa portrayed on a big *thangka* painting with eighty-six lineage masters.

As Reynolds comments (4, p. 219):

“Thus, in a real sense, with Tapihritsa and Gyerpungpa, the Dzogchen teachings entered human history. Therefore, according to the Lupon, one visualizes Tapihritsa in the Guru Yoga practice not only because he exemplifies the great transfer, but because of his kindness and benevolence in revealing the Dzogchen precepts to his disciple and permitting him to set them down in writing.”

As we have seen, among the several preliminary practices *Guru Yoga* is the foremost. The aim is to establish a connection to the lineage of transmission. Tapihritsa is the manifestation of primordial awareness and he represents the union of all the Bon lineage masters. How Tapihritsa selected his successor is recounted by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (2, chap.4). When Gyerpungpa was liberated he chanted a long invocation to Tapihritsa. This invocation is known as *Nangzher Lodpo's Invocation to Tapihritsa*. From the introductory verses:

“With precision you teach

*The supreme teaching of the Great Perfection,
The essence of the awareness of the realized ones,
Peak of the way of realization,
Heart of the revealed texts (tantra),
of their essential Summaries (lung),
and of the secret instructions (upadesa);”*

In the selected part of Rinpoche's translation (2, p. 59) you can read why Tapihritsa is such an important Dzogchen master and why Dzogchen is the most important teaching.

Connection between Contemplation and Guru Yoga

We now arrive at an answer to the opening question: How does the essential principle practice of Dzogchen, resting in the Nature of Mind, combine with the most important daily practice of *Guru Yoga*? The answer is implied in the end verses of the long *Invocation to Tapihritsa*. According to Reynolds (4, p. 246):

“At the conclusion that follows this Upadesha, Gyerpungpa prays to Tapihritsa with single-minded devotion addressing him as the Protector of Beings. His own understanding now having become manifest as self-awareness, he fervently requests the master to bestow upon him the realization of the actual meaning of the Primordial State that is empty and without a source and totally transcending the intellect. This is accomplished through the mystical union experienced in the Guru Yoga practice, where the state of contemplation of the master merges with the contemplation of the disciple, thereby becoming inseparable, like pouring water into water. Thereupon the mind-stream of Gyerpungpa became liberated from all entanglements with the delusions of Sam-sara.”

In the expression ‘mystical union’ Reynolds expresses the crucial merging of two contemplation states, made possible by *Guru Yoga*. And so, for liberation to take place, contemplation and *Guru Yoga* of the practitioner fit seamlessly together, what's more: they need each other. The *Guru* exemplifies all liberated masters from the transmission-lineage and also (4, p.236):

“Tapihritsa represents the visible symbol of the Primordial State, which is, in individual terms, the Nature of Mind.”



We conclude with Namkhai Norbu from his introduction to the famous *Kunjed Gyalpo* Dzogchen tantra (3, p. 84):

“When we follow the Dzogchen teaching, if we have sufficient capacity, we can start directly with the practice of contemplation. The only really indispensable thing is the practice of guru yoga or ‘unification with the state of the teacher,’ because it is from the teacher that we receive the direct introduction to knowledge.”

Text by Frits de Vries

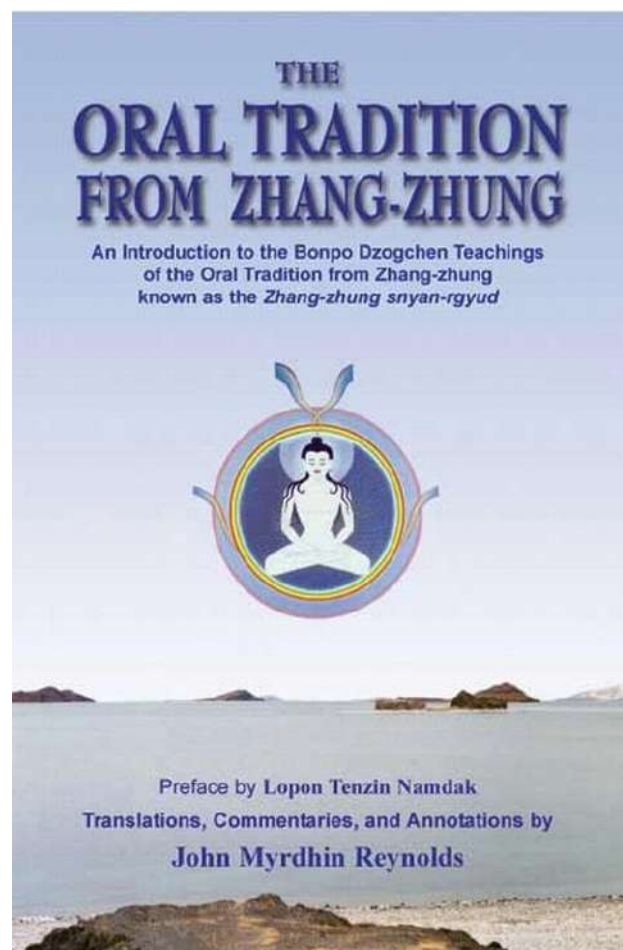
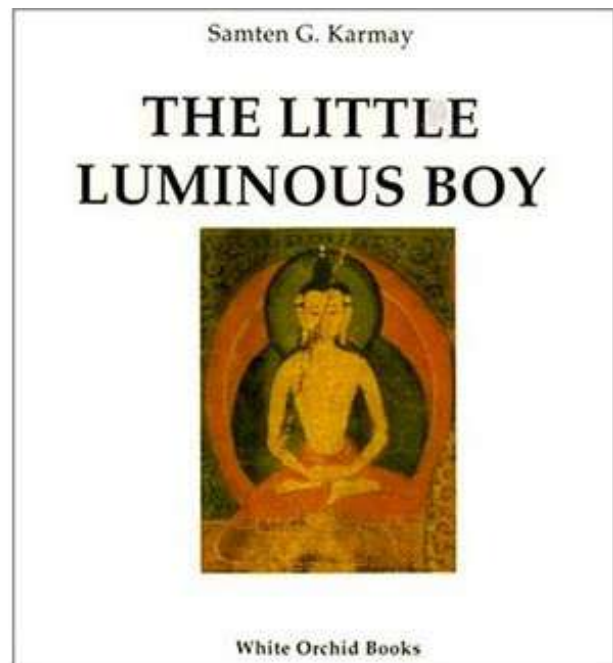
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- (5) *The Healthy Mind Interviews*, volume IV, 2007, Henry M. Vyner, M.D., Published by Vajra Publications. The Trekcho Interview with Lopon Tenzin Namdak.

Annotation

This article is mainly based upon Appendix 1 from *The Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung*, subtitled as: An Introduction to the Bonpo Dzogchen Teachings of the Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung known as the Zhang-Zhung snyan-rgyud.

Appendix 1 is in three parts. Part 1 is How to practice *Guru Yoga*. Part 2 is the *Invocation of Tapihritsa*. Of special importance is Part 3 of the appendix, *Guru Yoga* and the Practice of Contemplation.



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