



Ligmincha Europe Magazine

16 – Spring 2015



Meet the Italian sangha

Meeting of the Bon lamas

Lishu Spring Retreats

Soul Retrieval internet course



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WATER ELEMENT



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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 Magazine](https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaEuropeMagazine).

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GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

We wanted to share wonderful news from our sangha with you in this Magazine, but then there were the terrible earthquakes in Nepal, in April and May. Many sangha members wondered how they could help, and the Board of Ligmincha International gave an answer.

When earthquakes happened the Magazine was almost ready, and these events also shook up the content: we took some articles out and put some new in.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche wrote a poem how the earthquake touched him. And when I read it, I thought it is not only a poem, it is also a complete teaching. The earthquake and the poem were a wake-up call: I do not now what tomorrow will bring, so I better be prepared.

In the section 'Preparing to Die' you can read Padmasambhava's Advice to the Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal: "Don't return empty-handed after reaching the island of jewels; ... don't let the boat of the human body slip away!"

To support us on our spiritual journey Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started in January a yearlong free internet course in *Soul Retrieval*. And it is wonderful that many people participate in these teachings. Since Rinpoche's new book is not available yet, we have reprinted text from his book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light*.

In Lishu Institute the first Spring Retreats were organized, and you can read about it. When you, after reading the article have a feeling that you have missed something, there is a chance to register for the Three-Year Residential Program that starts in September 2015.

There is news from The 3 Doors Academy. And one of our editors went to one teacher — John Jackson — with different teachings: a 3 Doors introduction weekend and a traditional Bon teaching about *The Red Garuda*. Is there a differ-

ence in the teachings?

We introduce the Italian sangha, and have a report from Poland where they celebrate twenty years of Bon teachings. And Poland is also the place to be when you want to learn more about *Trul khor*.

On Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Facebook page we saw photos from meetings with other lamas, so we asked if he wanted to tell more about that.

For those who have done the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* training the article about the dark retreat will be interesting to read.

We are proud to let you know that on January 1, 2015, we had more than one hundred thousand impressions of the Ligmincha Europe Magazine on www.issuu.com. I know that not everybody who finds the Magazine on internet will read it — I have more than five thousand books on Buddhism and Bon on my computer, and have read only a few — but people have a chance to make contact with the precious Bon Teachers, the Teachings and the Sangha.



Not so very well known is the Facebook page of the [Ligmincha Europe Magazine](#), where you can find a link to all the Magazines. So far, we have only ten 'likes.'

In Bon,
Ton Bisscheroux,
chief editor



SECOND MEETING WITH BON LAMAS

On the Facebook page of [Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#) we saw photos from the second meeting of the Bon lamas. Curious about what they discussed, [Ton Bisscheroux](#) asked Rinpoche for an interview.

In 2013 you organized the first meeting with Bon lamas. Can you tell us how it started?

In 2011 I felt the need to bring all the Bon lamas together, because we all do different individual activities, but collectively we do not see and connect much. Everybody is busy with his own thing, and when I talked with some of them about the idea they were enthusiastic. I put a lot of effort in it in 2012, talking to Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Latri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche and others. It took me a month to convince everybody to come together. In October 2013 it was the first time we hosted at Ligmincha a meeting with Bon lamas teaching in the West. You can read more about that meeting in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 11](#). Then we decided to host this event every year at another place.

Was the meeting this year different from last year's meeting?

This year it was hosted by Gyalshen Institute in El Cerrito, California, US. Last year we met for two days, and this year we spent four days together. The first two days we discussed a lot and the last two days we used to socialize. By spending time together, and going to Hot Springs, having fun, we connected much more.

What did you talk about?

We are going to translate Tibetan text into English and other languages. We want to make a simple story booklet for children, particularly for children growing up in a Bon community in the West, who don't have access to the Bon culture. We try to standardize the practice books, so every center can practice the same prayers, the same melody and the same translation. We want to collaborate more with each other in the different centers. We want to encourage the high lamas in the Bon monasteries in Nepal and India to meet more. Our group is going to meet each year, and next year we will meet in Mexico.





but it is not ready yet. The idea behind this standardization is that if somebody goes to another Bon center, the practice will be the same, and easy to do.

Who participated in this years' meeting?

Present were: Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Geshe

What are the fruits of the meeting of last year?

The result of last years' meeting that you can see is that we are much closer to each other. The translation project is becoming more concrete, and we have raised over \$ 20.000. We have narrowed down what we want to translate, and who will do it. We are making a CD with prayers,



Chaphur Rinpoche, Geshe Tenzin Yangton, Lama Khemsar Rinpoche, Geshe Samten Tsukphu, Geshe YongDong, Geshe Nyima Kunchap, Lama Yungdrung and myself.

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos: courtesy of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



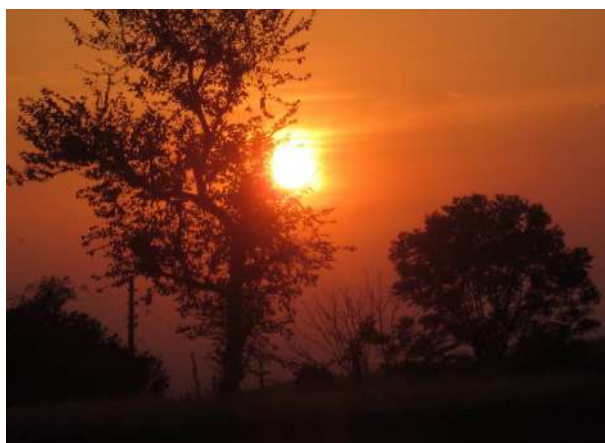
GRASS PUT IN OUR HEADS

In March and April 2015 were a *Phowa* Retreat and a 6-Week Intensive Tibetan Language Retreat at Lishu Institute. Jennie Makihara wrote some reflections on these Lishu Institute Spring Retreats.

The Sights and Sounds of Lishu Institute

Vickie Walter and I arrived at Lishu Institute for the first time in a hired car from Menri Monastery, where we had been enjoying the final days of Losar celebrations. We had been in the car more than six hours, riding down curving mountainous roads, and this was my first time seeing this section of India near Dehradun where Lishu Institute is located. As the car took a turn off the main road, it looked like we were turning into someone's driveway, one-storey farmhouses and cows close to the dirt road. Then we rounded a bend and all of a sudden, standing high above us was the tall Lishu Institute building I had been seeing for the past year in videos and photos. We were greeted by a line of welcomers holding *khatas* and leis of marigolds. The greeting touched my heart. I had come here to attend two spring retreats held before the three-year residential program begins this fall: a two-week *Phowa* retreat and a six-week Tibetan Language retreat.

Everyone lives and practices together in one building at Lishu Institute, which sits atop a small hill above the farming village of Kotra Kalyanpur like a tower, with sights and sounds rising up from below. Teachers, staff and guests lived on the third floor, while we students lived on the second floor below them. I could hear the quiet sounds of morning prayers when an honored guest stayed above my room, or people practicing in the meditation hall or their rooms. A pair of blackbirds would tap loudly at the window above my balcony door each morning at exactly 6:30 a.m., and the sounds of cuckoos, parakeets and other birds were plentiful throughout the day, often joined by the mooing of cows. From our balconies we would wave down at the nearby villagers cutting their wheat with sickles. Most are practicing Hindus, and frequently we heard their drumming and singing during prayers, festivals and weddings. I enjoyed taking my mala up to the west side of the roof each evening to recite *Ngondro* mantras



before dinner. Up there on the Lishu Institute roof I could watch the sun setting most evenings, red and sinking behind the clouds. I watched the colors change as the evening turned to darkness, peaceful sounds of creatures and earth calming, coming in for the night to rest.

On *Phowa* and *Kusha* Grass

During my first two weeks at Lishu Institute, we students were fortunate to be joined by the Menri Shedrup Lopon Geshe Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche, head teacher of the Bon Dialectic School at Menri Monastery. He taught us the practice of *Phowa* from the *Ma Gyud* teachings. Each day for two weeks, we had four practice sessions involving breath, sound and visualization that included shooting our consciousness through the tops of our heads. We would crack up sometimes, laughing at ourselves and each other when our teacher would call on us to sing — SOLO — one of the *Ma Gyud* or *Phowa* prayers to check if we had it right. Sometimes we were on pitch and sometimes we weren't; either way, the spirit and camaraderie were such that no one was judging or critical, just appreciating each other's sincere effort and laughing at our own humanness. And even though four languages were spoken at mealtimes by our diverse group — Tibetan, English, Russian and Hindi — we managed to communicate and grow close as time passed.

Traditionally, a piece of *kusha* grass is inserted into the crown of a student's head at the successful completion of a *Phowa* retreat. I had seen a photo once of a group of monks from Menri with the grass sticking up from their heads after *Phowa* training; and back in 2005 when I had





Menri Shedrup Lupon assists as His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche inserts *kusha* grass in Vickie Walter's head following the *Phowa* retreat.

done a *Phowa* retreat with two other students at Menri Monastery, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Menri Lupon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche had gone back and forth about whether or not to do the grass ceremony with us, and the end decision was no grass for us. Imagine my joy when I found out from Shedrup Lupon that he was planning to take us to Menri Monastery for the grass ceremony with His Holiness at the completion of our retreat this spring. This, indeed, did happen, and His Holiness successfully inserted individual stalks of grass into each of the five *Phowa* participants' heads. It was entirely worth the drive back up those very curvy mountain roads in a hot taxi to get precious time with His Holiness joking and laughing and very seriously taking time to find exactly the right spot where each sharpened piece of *kusha* grass met smoothly and relatively painlessly with our central channels.

Tibetan Language Retreat 2015

Classes in reading, Tibetan grammar and Tibetan prayers filled our days during the six-week Tibetan Language program at Lishu Institute led by Sangmo Yangri. My favorite class was Tibetan prayers. Within the first four weeks, with Sangmo's guidance, we had translated all the *Ngondo*

prayers and mantras. Then we translated the prayers about the mantras in what I call the Blue Book, used by the students at the Bon Dialectic School at Menri. Finally we moved on to working with reading and translating prayers to Yeshe Walmo and Sidpe Gyalmo.

Following our morning Tibetan grammar class, Sangmo also taught a reading class where we read together the praise poem to Tonpa Shenrap from the same Blue Book. Sangmo is an excellent storyteller and grew up in Dolanji Village close to all

the traditional Bon teachings. She filled in the holes of this encapsulated version of Tonpa Shenrap's life with vivid stories, mostly new to us. Most intriguing to me — perhaps more so than the story of Gya Kongtsa Trul Gyal, who built the library in the ocean with the help of the *Nagas* and the Gods — is the story of Queen Gu Ling Ma, especially the part where Tonpa Shenrap heals her of her leprosy and then the disease shrinks inside her and comes crawling out of her nostril as a spider . . . !

Text by Jennie Makihara

Photos by Lishu staff and participants



Matthew Conover, Jennie Makihara, and Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen received their Tibetan language certificates from Sangmo Yangri.



APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR THREE-YEAR LISHU PROGRAM

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. In September 2015 the first Three-Year Residential Program will start.

We are pleased to announce the opening of the application to attend the first year of the Three-Year Residential Program at Lishu Institute near Dehradun, India. Each year of this program will be divided into 10-week trimesters. The first trimester begins September 14, 2015.



Sangmo Yangri and Geshe Thupten Negi.

For the fall semester, Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D. will teach the first two *sutric* vehicles of *The Nine Ways of Bön from the Central Treasure*. She is the first Tibetan woman to earn a doctoral degree in Bon philosophy.

The second trimester, beginning January 4, 2016, a geshe selected by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will teach the third and fourth higher *sutric* vehicles

from *The Nine Ways of Bön*, with Sangmo Yangri translating into English.

During the third trimester, which starts March 28, 2016, the balance of this text will be taught.

Potential students are welcome to apply to attend Lishu Institute for one, two or all three trimesters per year. The deadline for submitting applications is July 1, 2015.

Interested students are encouraged to visit www.lishu.org to obtain the application and to learn more. All applications are welcome and will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

- History of spiritual practice and study;
- Motivation for applying;
- General and financial ability to attend.

Lishu Institute presents a unique and precious opportunity to study and practice the Bon teachings and to share them with others. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche would like each Ligmincha sangha to raise funds to sponsor a practitioner, or practitioners, from their group to attend the training at Lishu Institute. The Lishu International Support Committee is currently working with the Ligmincha International Board of Directors to develop a general scholarship fund for Lishu Institute.

Visit www.lishu.org for all of this information and more.

Please send questions or comments to:
director@lishu.org

Text by the Committee



FOURTH MEETING OF NON-SECTARIAN LAMAS

On the Facebook page of [Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#) we saw a photo of the 4th meeting of non-sectarian lamas. Rinpoche was prepared to answer some questions.

What is the group of non-sectarian lamas?

In 2010 a group lamas from the Nyingma tradition met the first time in California, US, and they found it very helpful to be together. A year later they opened the meeting up to all six Tibetan schools. In this group we want to connect with each other, respect each other, learn from each other, and most importantly not be sectarian or judge and criticize each other. The heads of all the schools support this group. After the first meeting we received a letter from His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

We have several platforms where we meet. One of the most active initiatives is a 'WeChat' group of more than one-hundred people who meet every week, and every time they have a speaker from one of the schools. Each school will speak about their history, their most fundamental meditation view, practice and conduct. They have also talked about raising non-sectarian awareness in their community and Tibetan society. Also younger Tibetan lamas who have been studying science and Buddhism make comparisons between science and Buddhism.

You come together once a year since 2011, can you tell us about that?

We meet every year for a couple of days. Our next meeting will be in June in Seattle, Washington, US. So far we have always met in the United States, but in the future we want to open that up so it can take place in many different places.

Do only lamas who live in the United States participate?

No, the members are from over all the world: there are many people from Tibet, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Europe, Canada and the United States.

Can you tell us about the organization?

All work is done by volunteers. We are now in the process of forming a legal organization. We are going to make a book where all the schools write



about the non-sectarian. Non-sectarian as we define it for our group means being loyal to what you do, being faithful and practice dedicated to your own tradition; and at the same time being respectful of others. Also if there is space to embody others view while you are doing it your own way, be open to that too. Non-sectarian does not mean making a soup out of everything, it doesn't mean mixing everything.

In 2013 and 2014 I was the President of the group. I spent at least ten hours every week mostly on administration and organization. That was challenging, so last June I turned it over to new people.

I am always amazed how you manage all that work, and I don't know everything you do. I know you teach, write books, travel all over the world; you founded Ligmincha, Lishu and a Stupa for world peace in Mexico, developed The 3 Doors Program; give many interviews and have a family life. How many hours does your day have?

Like everybody else, twenty-four. The only thing I try to do in everything I do is I don't bring the stress in it. I just do it. I don't think about doing it so much. I don't worry about it so much. I try not to complain so much. I'm just doing it in the moment. When I am speaking with you, I am just speaking with you. In that way I don't have more time than other people, but my time is spent efficiently.

I am writing a small book in Tibetan called *Society of Dzogchen*. 'Society of Dzogchen' means that from the point of view of Dzogchen, how society can be run, the ideas of non-sectarian and equality. Dzogchen has a lot to offer. I am trying to relate to the current situation in society.

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photo: courtesy of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche



THE 3 DOORS ACADEMY: A LIFE CHANGING PROGRAM OF CONTEMPLATION, TRANSFORMATION AND GENUINE EXPRESSION

The 3 Doors Academy is entering its 5th year of facilitating its trainees and graduates to become aware of and express their authentic selves. This expanding openness, awareness, and warmth has manifested in new (and often surprising) levels of clarity, commitment, and creativity that benefit relationships with family, friends, co-workers, community, and the world at large.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, founder of The 3 Doors, offers a brief overview of these teachings in [this videotaped interview](#).

In the following reflection, The 3 Doors Academy graduate Renee Daily reflects on the outcome of her training.

“The 3 Doors training has taught me how to be with my own pain in order to heal myself. I first had to learn to recognize my own suffering and discomfort and not be afraid of being with it. At first, just recognizing and acknowledging how my emotional distress affected me was a challenge. As deep pain began to show up in my practice it sometimes felt overwhelming. But the beauty of The 3 Doors is that you are always supported in facing whatever arises in your life. I learned meditation practices that outlined very clear steps to enable me to go safely into difficult places, to really be present, and to not push anything away. I learned to welcome discomfort because the end result of going directly into pain with openness and awareness is true healing.

As a result of my practice under the supervision of wonderful, generous teachers and mentors I am no longer afraid to confront issues in my life that I would not have faced in the past. I can invite them to be explored and know they will not consume me. In this process, my pain shifts in surprising ways. It is transformed into something beautiful and opens space for positive qualities to effortlessly arise. My confidence has grown as I have learned that I have the strength to face really



Renee Daily

difficult issues in my life. Shedding a lifetime of unproductive patterns has benefited not only me but also all those around me.

In my 3 Doors training I have experienced that my own openness is my protection, as well as my gift to others. I am now able to be more present with other people's pain. I have become a Hospice volunteer, which is all the more surprising to me because of my personal experience with death in my family. To be able to sit with someone who is dying, to be available, present, and open to them without fear, is the unexpected fruit of my practice, a direct result of The 3 Doors Academy training.

Every member of my Academy group made equally amazing discoveries and transformations in their lives. To witness and share those experiences over two and a half years has created a lifetime bond and a source of support between us like nothing I have ever experienced before. The 3 Doors training is a beautiful, beautiful opportunity and I'm so glad that I took it. I offer my deepest gratitude to all who brought it into being.”





THE 3 DOORS

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH MEDITATION

Interested in joining a 3 Doors Academy?

The third U.S. Academy began in the United States in early April 2015. *To receive notice of future Academies in the U.S. please contact Chelsea Canedy (chelsea@the3doors.org).*

The next European Academy is scheduled to begin in November 2015 and will be accepting applications through September 1, 2015. *Please inquire to eu-2coordinator@the3doors.org for information or an application.*

The Second Latin American Academy is scheduled to begin in February 2016, and is now accepting inquiries. *Please send questions and requests for applications to Chelsea Canedy (chelsea@the3doors.org).*

You can stay informed about Academy activities by signing up for our newsletter.

[The 3 Doors Global \(English\)](#)

[Las 3 Puertas Global \(Spanish\)](#)

Please Email us at info@the3Doors.org. We look forward to hearing from you!



An Invitation from John Jackson

3 Doors Senior Teacher, European Academy

It is deeply rewarding to support people making positive change in their lives, discovering who they truly are. If you yearn to connect with your true essence, discover new meaning in your life, and have the support of a close circle of spiritual friends, I encourage you to consider joining me and my co-leader Raven Lee for the next European Academy.



THE STORY OF THE TAOIST FARMER

We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and religions. Ton Bisscheroux choose a story told by Chin-Ning Chu of the Taoist Farmer. He likes it because in his dualistic mind he tends to make a difference between good and bad, and this story always reminds him not to judge too fast...

A man named Sei Weng owned a beautiful mare which was praised far and wide. One day this beautiful horse disappeared. The people of his village offered sympathy to Sei Weng for his great misfortune. Sei Weng said simply, "That's the way it is."

A few days later the lost mare returned, followed by a beautiful wild stallion. The village congratulated Sei Weng for his good fortune. He said, "That's the way it is."

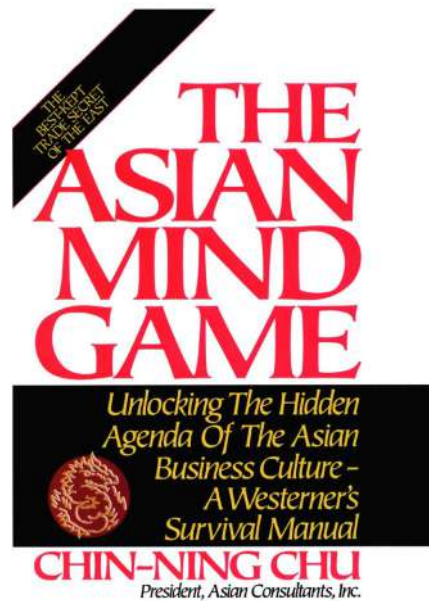
Some time later, Sei Weng's only son, while riding the stallion, fell off and broke his leg. The village people once again expressed their sympathy at Sei Weng's misfortune. Sei Weng again said, "That's the way it is."

Soon thereafter, war broke out and all the young men of the village except Sei Weng's lame son were drafted and were killed in battle. The village people were amazed as Sei Weng's good luck. His son was the only young

man left alive in the village. But Sei Weng kept his same attitude: despite all the turmoil, gains and losses, he gave the same reply, "That's the way it is."

As told by [Chin-Ning Chu](#), in *The Asian Mind Game: Unlocking The Hidden Agenda Of The Asian Business Culture — A Westerner's Survival Manual*, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, page 182. (1991)

Foto from: www.ukiyo-e.org



FINDING A TRUE TEACHER

Although every sangha has its own challenges, they all have wonderful stories to share. We asked Lidia Castellano to tell about the Italian sangha.

Where did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?

I met Rinpoche the first time in 2008, during a *Dream Yoga* retreat near Malaga, Spain. I had read his book about *Dream Yoga*, and then I felt I wanted to meet him. I found the book during one of my stays in India; I had gone to a bookstore looking for a book by H.H. the Dalai Lama, titled *Sleep, Dream and Death*. They did not have that book but they showed me the one by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, and I took it.

For many years I had been interested in Yoga, Buddhism, Eastern Philosophies and Religions, and I wondered if it was still possible nowadays to meet a lama, a guru, a true teacher, someone with whom you develop that very special relationship. Not just someone who teaches you something, there are plenty of these. When I read the book about *Dream Yoga*, I felt there was something special there and I really wanted to meet the author. Two months later, there was going to be this *Dream Yoga* seminar in Spain, so I went there.



Lidia Castellano with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Berlin, Germany.

Was he special?

It was very special: he knew my name before I told him! I don't know how he knew. During the seminar Rinpoche kept telling us "Just remember that everything is possible." Maybe that was the answer. But most of all, I recognized there was a connection with him and his teaching.

Through Rinpoche I got to know about Menri Monastery. And that made me curious because I had been travelling through India for many years, but I never heard about it. So I went there in 2008, and the meeting with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima had a big impact on me. That changed my life completely. Since then I have visited Menri Monastery at least once a year.

Can you tell us how it changed your life?

Well, by meeting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I felt connected to the teacher; by meeting His Holiness I found the connection to the whole lineage and the Bon Tradition. The first time, I spent two weeks at the Monastery; His Holiness invited me to stay longer, but at first this invitation scared me a lot. I needed more time and much reflection and soul searching before I was able to do that. When I finally did, I received formal and informal teachings from His Holiness, while being in silent retreat most of the time. It was a very intense and deep experience, and I keep going back to Menri Monastery at least for a few days whenever I can.

Can you tell something about the structure of Ligmincha Italia?

At present, everything is very informal. For a couple of years, I have been trying to set up practice groups, some kind of structure, a website etc., but I did not find anyone who would support with all this and it makes no sense to have an organization with one person. When Rinpoche was coming to Italy, people would show up, once he left, everyone would leave too!





The Losar celebration with His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima in Nepal, in 2009.

When did Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche come to Italy?

He has not been coming on a regular basis. In 1988, he was invited by the Dzogchen master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to teach in Italy, and he lived here for three years before moving to the USA. After moving, he has come a few times over the years. After I met him, I invited him, so he came to teach in Rome in 2011 and 2012.

Do you have any practice groups in Italy?

Sometimes, not on a regular basis at present.

You still invite teachers like John Jackson and Bon lamas to come and teach. Can you tell about that?

Last year I invited John Jackson and we had a teaching about the *Five Elements* on a nice island in the south of Italy. It was very good because of the teaching and the settings. And this year, together with a practitioner – Dana Lloyd Thomas – who lives in Orte, the same town where I live now, we invited Geshe Nyima Woser Choekortshang for a teaching on *Chöd*. Fourteen people participated, everybody was very interested in the topic and we all had a very good experience.

People came from nearby, from Rome, some from Northern Italy, and some of my 3 Doors Academy mates came from Slovakia and Denmark. Geshe Nyima will come back to teach here in May 2015.

Can you share some experiences from The 3 Doors Academy?

It was very interesting and deep in terms of self-knowledge and transformations. It still goes on, and it is not only a matter of the practices you do but of the depth you reach. It is very important to make a commitment to practice every day and it really makes a difference. And then you have the connection and guidance of the teachers who can always support you. We graduated in March 2014, and that was a joyful event where Rinpoche came. One of the most beautiful gifts we got from the process is the deep connection we share as a group, we feel like a family. In November 2014 we had a reunion in Berlin, Germany, and we are planning to have one at least once a year, hosted by each of us in turn. This year, 2015, will be in Finland, next year, 2016 I will host it in Italy.

Is there something you want to share with the sangha?





The practice group meeting in Pantelleria, in 2012.

Even though things have their ups and downs, I feel quite confident and relaxed; sometimes things do not necessarily have to go the way we think they should. For instance, last January I had planned one of my visits to Menri Monastery in India, and I was thinking of going there by myself. Then without any effort on my side, four different friends asked me to come along: I thought, well, they feel called to go there; if I can help them, how can I say no? Finally I found myself travelling

to Menri with a small group. We spent ten days there, we received some wonderful teachings and the whole experience was very intense and enriching for all of us. It was not what I had planned, but it was wonderful. As Rinpoche always says, just keep open!

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos: courtesy of Lidia Castellano



Geshe Nyima Woser Choekortshang in 2015.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is a report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited France, Spain, Austria, Germany, and gave internet teachings. Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang Rinpoche visited Poland, and Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen was invited for the European Losar weekend in Buchenau, Germany.



April 24 – 26:
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *The True Source of Healing* in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain.



February 20 – 22:
As every year, Sangha members took the opportunity to celebrate *Losar* together and gathered at 'Schloss Buchenau,' at the heart of Germany. Ten practitioners followed the

invitation to come together in order to connect and deepen their practice. They continued a happy tradition as this was already the ninth retreat of its kind.

Ligmincha Germany was happy to welcome Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen who supported the group by guiding practice as well as the rituals performed throughout these three days. Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen is a renowned Bon scholar who received his training and education at



Menri Monastery as well as in India, in exile. His current home is Paris where he serves as a resident lama.

Together the group practiced *Kora, Sang, Nyamed Söldeb* and offered light and music in honor of Nyamend Sherab Gyaltsen, Menri's first abbot. They participated in the international *Losar-Webcast* with Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen as resident lama. Of course core techniques such as *Guru Yoga*, Inner Refuge, prostrations and *Sang Chö* also found their place.

A beautiful weekend concluded with a long-life practice guided by Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen.





April 17 – 19:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *The True Source of Healing* in Paris, France. About two-hundred participants came to the teaching.



February 21 – March 8:
Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche (Nyima Woser) visited Poland

On February 21 the Polish sangha celebrated *Losar* (Tibetan New Year) and on February 22 Choekhortshang Rinpoche gave teachings about *Chöd* at Chamma Ling. Around thirty-five people participated.



From February 24 – 26 Choekhortshang Rinpoche visited Sopot, and gave a talk about the *Five Elements* and performed ritual of *Healing Water of Sipe Gyalmo* and *Ransom*. Around forty people participated.



From February 28 – March 1 Choekhortshang Rinpoche visited Kraków and gave teachings about *Sang* (smoke offering) and *Sur* (burnt food offering). Around thirty people participated.

From March 2 – 3 Choekhortshang Rinpoche visited Wadowice and gave a talk about the *Five Elements*, *Offering Mandala* and performed a *Ransom* ritual. Around thirty people participated.

From March 4 – 6 Choekhortshang Rinpoche participated in conference in Katowice, where he gave a talk about the *Ma Gyu* and Dzogchen.

March 7 – 8 Choekhortshang Rinpoche gave a weekend teaching about Dzogchen meditation in Katowice. Around thirty-five people participated.





May 8 – 10:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *Inner, Outer, and Secret Tsa Lung* in Berlin, Germany.



Begins January 10, 2015

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[The True Source of Healing, Part 1: Reconnecting with Your Joyful Essence. Session 4 — Guided Meditation](#)



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Communing with Nature to Nourish Your Soul

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

May 9, 2015
21:00–22:30 h (C.E.T.)

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[Communing with Nature to Nourish Your Soul](#)



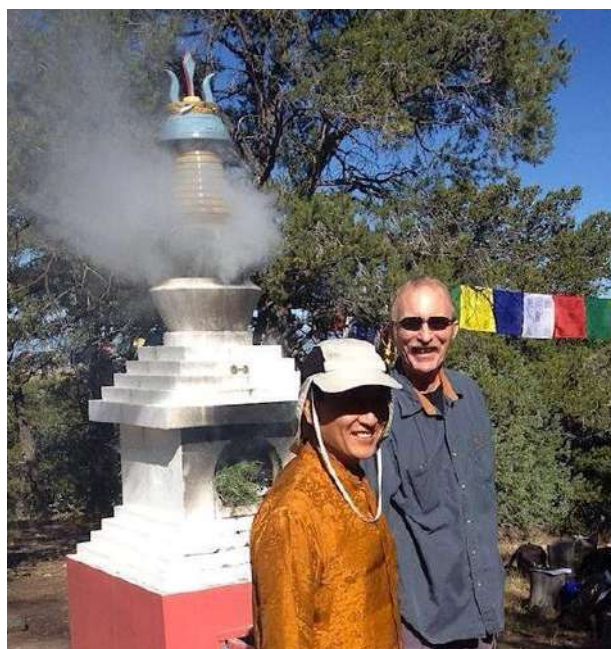
PRACTICING FORTY-NINE DAYS IN THE DARK

Now that the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud* cycle in Austria has come to an end, the students who participated are invited to do a dark retreat. Thomm Möslers shared his experiences of his dark retreats with us in *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* # 6. Then we expressed our hope that more students would share their dark retreat experiences. Recently Ton Bisscheroux asked Gerry Heikes to share his experience and he agreed.

Gerry, can you introduce yourself?

I have had a daily meditation practice for 17 years. I've been a Bonpo since 2007. Starting in 2009 by default I was the principal caretaker for Chamma Ling Colorado, helping a few people in their own dark retreats as well as regular and closed retreats. I retired in January 2010 to work with the teachings and devote my life to practice. I sometimes edit articles for *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*; have worked on teaching transcripts and help at Serenity Ridge and other locations when I go there for teachings. My formal work background includes fixing most everything from buildings to people as well as being an education developer. I am very fortunate to be in excellent physical health and my background in Ayurveda and Yoga Therapy has always been extremely useful not only for my own practice, but when others I am helping have a question. I stepped aside from the duties as principal caretaker for Chamma Ling Colorado at the end of 2013 to give others the opportunity to serve.

I feel the most connection to the teachings of Bon; literally everything is included in the *Nine Ways of Bon*, and for all levels of students/seekers. In December (2014) I was reading the latest *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*; I am always amazed at how much the European Sangha gets to share with each other. I enjoyed reading about how the European Sangha has received the entire *Experiential Transmission* of Drugyelwa Yungdrung's *Chagtri Manual* the way Tenzin Rinpoche teaches it, and how in the summer of 2015 they will receive *The Twenty-one Nails*. As I was reading, my wife was in her own short dark retreat here in our Crestone home. So it is with hopes to inspire others to



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Gerry Heikes in Chamma Ling in Crestone, Colorado.

continue with the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud* Cycle of Dzogchen that I agreed to share my experience.

What was for you the reason to work with these ancient teachings, and do a dark retreat?

If I personally experience 'suffering,' the 'unsatisfactoriness' of everyday life (from the Pali word '*dukkha*'); then chances are pretty good that I am not alone, others experience this also. Over the years I have explored and studied many spiritual paths. I even studied social-psychology in university, and years later Ayurveda and Yoga Therapy in hopes of better understanding this human experience. For me, the explanations offered in Buddhism and Bon provide answers that don't lead to more questions, or paradigms that are mostly situational. I know from my studies of Buddhist and Bonpo *Sutra* that the only true lasting way to help anyone is to become a Buddha, and that the most direct way to become a Buddha are the teachings of Dzogchen. Within the various teachings of Dzogchen, both Nyingmapa and Bonpo, the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud* is the only cycle of teachings that we know of that can be traced directly back to Kuntuzangpo, never had to be hidden, was not a mind revelation, or extrapolated from other teachings. Lastly, from *The Practice of Dzogchen in the Zhang Zhung Tradition of Tibet* by John Myrdhin Reynolds:



“... Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak [Rinpoche], and other Bonpo Lamas have been teaching their tradition for sometime to interested Western practitioners. Thus, there exists a real need for an English translation of the source texts. This is in accordance with the advice given in a vision by the goddess Sidpai Gyalmo, the special guardian to the Bönpo Dzogchen tradition, to Lopon Sangye Tenzin (1928-1977) many years ago. The goddess warned that if the teachings and practices of Dzogchen were not made more widely available, the tradition would die out within a generation or two. It was Lopon Sangye Tenzin who was singularly responsible for reviving the teaching and practice of the Zhang-zhung Nyan-gyud tradition at Menri monastery in Tibet, and later in India, whereas at the time the A-tri system of Dzogchen (A-Khrid) was largely practiced. Of course, detailed explanations of the practices must be had from a qualified Lama.”

When I began this cycle of teachings in 2008 at the guidance of my first Bonpo Lama, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche (who also told me how to cure the chronic physical pain I was in when we first met, which was completely gone six months later), there were not very many text translations or commentaries available. Initially the two I mainly worked with were *The Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung* (Drugyelwa Yungdrung's *Chagtri*, Introductory and *Ngondro* chapters) by John Myrdhin Reynolds, and a transcript of a teaching from Yongdzin Rinpoche titled *Practices from the Zhang-Zhung Nyan Gyud*, a commentary on *Ngondro* and the Introduction to the Nature of Mind (*Gnozhi* – principal practices).

Fortunately in 2011 (and before my forty-nine day dark retreat after Losar in 2013), John Myrdhin Reynolds had published the rest of Drugyelwa Yungdrung's *Chagtri Manual* under the title of *The Practice of Dzogchen in the Zhang Zhung Tradition of Tibet*. This way I was able to study between sessions of formal practice to ensure I was on track and not overly confused. In one of his commentaries, Yongdzin Rinpoche says that study and practice are like the two wings of the bird, you need both – in case there are any doubts about the need to study when practicing Dzogchen.

Perhaps first and foremost is actually knowing, or rather experiencing the Nature of Mind; for that I offer this anecdote.



H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche.

One day while walking to breakfast after morning sky gazing practice with Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche at the Dzogchen Serdam Retreat in Idyllwild, California, in October 2011, Menri Lopon Rinpoche and I had a little conversation. Menri Lopon wanted to know more about Chamma Ling Colorado and I wanted to know more about taking care of people in dark retreat. And then a question came to mind about Dzogchen generally. The conversation proceeded like this:

Gerry: “So the basic formula of Drugyelwa Yungdrung's *Chagtri Manual on the Zhang-zhung Cycle of Dzogchen*, where you receive the *Ngondro*, do the formal accumulations with heat until the signs come; receive the Introduction to the Nature of Mind, do the three *Zhine*'s; and take that third *Zhine* mind into the short dark retreat, then after you have a conversation with your Lama about what was found – how is that?”

Menri Lopon: (laughs) “Works almost every time!” (snaps fingers) “For the rest you have to work with them a little bit more closely, and everything after [the short dark retreat] is about stabilizing what was found to be one's steady state experience.”

Gerry: (laughter) “E MA HO!”



As I wrote on my Chamma Ling cabin use application in 2010 for my own short dark retreat under the section about practice(s) during your retreat: “Eat when hungry, sleep when tired, abide in the natural state the rest of the time, and if necessary a short *Ngondro* recitation to keep things fresh.” That is: no unnecessary moving of the body, no sounds from the voice (to include prayers), and focus the mind as in Ultimate *Zhine* (see *Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*). Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche reviews all cabin applications in case there is anything that needs to be added, and for mine Rinpoche said nothing. After my short dark retreat I talked about it with Lharila Kalsang Nyima, and continued with the teachings.



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima.

Can you tell what a dark retreat is?

That is really very simple. In the place where you do your closed retreat there is no light at all, it is completely dark and no using a flashlight or any other light source for the duration of the retreat. At first the idea can seem a little intimidating, but if you consider the many blind people in the world, many of whom mostly live alone, it is not so frightening; no need to crawl on your hands and knees.

Have you done dark retreats before?

Yes, I have done dark retreat four times now. The first time was at the suggestion of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, only for a couple of days just to see if being in the dark would be a problem or not. Some people have great fear of the dark and so this is a useful check. The second time was to assist with the introduction to the Nature of Mind. The root text is not very specific about this, but this was my understanding of what to do based on Yongdzin Rinpoche's commentary and later confirmed by a personal conversation with Menri Lopon (mentioned above). My second dark retreat was scheduled for two weeks after Losar in 2010, but ended after a week due to plumbing problems with the building – which was okay as the result was attained. The third time, the forty-nine days, starting on *Losar* in 2013, was three years after the short dark retreat and also after more teachings – the rest of the *Chagtri*, *The Six Lamps* and *The Twenty-one Nails*. The final time was only for a couple of days to assist with reintegrating after the forty-nine days. After my forty-nine days, I preferred my retreat space to being outside in

the world. Currently, from my conversations with my Lamas, I see no need for any future dark retreats.

Can everybody do a dark retreat?

Of course anyone can do a dark retreat. However, after my time assisting others at Chamma Ling Colorado, both Bonpos and other traditions, I do think one should check their motives first. These Dzogchen teachings are about attaining enlightenment and not so much about a ‘better’ day to day life. So perhaps the first question I think one should ask oneself is “Have I genuinely cultivated the mind intent on enlightenment?” That is, is attaining enlightenment for the benefit of others your true motive in life? If the answer is yes, I think there are a few more details to ask oneself. “Do I have a qualified master?” “Am I correctly following the instructions of my master(s) and the texts?” “Do I suffer from any of the various obstacles to meditation as described in the texts?” If there is a problem with any of these, then perhaps as Yongdzin Rinpoche says in a commentary, [instead of a dark retreat] “...your time would be better spent watching television”.

How do you prepare for a dark retreat?

Receive the teachings and follow the instructions from your master(s) and the texts. In my own case this meant first completing *Ngondro*, receiving the teachings on the Introduction to the Nature of Mind (part 2 *Gnozhi* as Tenzin Rinpoche teaches the *Experiential Transmission*) and then following those instructions. Then for the forty-nine days you need the teachings from the rest of the *Chagtri*. It would be useful to be very stable in your meditation practice and also have the



teachings of *The Six Lamps* and *Twenty-one Nails*. The texts do not come out and say this in so many words, but the texts were likely written for the master and not the student. However, there is a reason why it is called the *Experiential Transmission*; precisely following these instructions leads to very specific experiences.

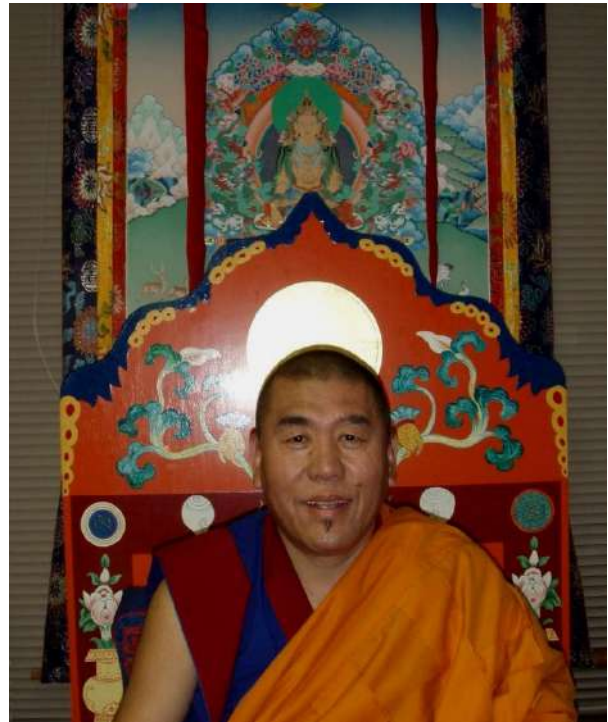
I can tell you that food (a potential discussion in itself) can be a logistical concern as is the proper functioning of the water and heat in the space where you will be. This is where the retreat caretaker is invaluable. Additionally, for the forty-nine days, it would be optimal if there were a Lama present to answer any questions and to give the weekly meditation instructions – similar to the way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains his dark retreat experience and Yongdzin Rinpoche being there for him. But that is not likely to happen any time soon for most of us. Menri Lopon recommends memorizing the weekly instructions, and some people have used a cassette recorder to play back the instructions. Many times the answers to questions come on their own from the Natural State, so you can always have another conversation with your Lama later after the retreat if you want to check.

Currently the places that I have heard of or know where it is possible to do dark retreat are Chamma Ling Colorado, Chamma Ling Poland, Shenten Dargye Ling in France, Menri Monastery in India and Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal. Perhaps someday Chamma Ling Torreon and Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo (both in Mexico) will also be ready. And of course it is always possible to do it in your home.

So what was it like? The forty-nine day dark retreat?

In short, if you hold the notions of the Bodhisattva vows dear to your heart (that is to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings), then the forty-nine day dark retreat is probably the most loving thing you will ever do for yourself. That's it... the rest, the particulars of what I actually experienced, will remain between my Lama's and I. But I will give some hints.

Remember the first time you sat for meditation and noticed all of the internal chatter of the moving mind. The 'noise' that was always there, but you never noticed it before because of living



Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche.

in that chatter. Remove the input to the eye sense consciousness. My analogy for this is that it is similar to retiring from the workforce; that sense of 'self' formerly associated with what you 'do' for a living is no longer there, and in its absence something is revealed. Similarly, remove the input to the eye consciousness and with an unwavering mind something is revealed (short dark retreat). Combine this with the teachings of the rest of the *Chagtri*, *The Six Lamps* and *Twenty-one Nails*, return to the dark for forty-nine days, and something further is revealed, an experiential revealing. Which I again will not say what 'it' is. This is similar to not knowing what the signs of practice are for *Ngondro*. If you know the signs of practice ahead of time, maybe what you 'experience' is merely an invention of mind. So maybe it is better to just do it and talk about it with your Lama(s) afterwards.

From a conversation with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche after I completed the forty-nine days:

Gerry: "So the *Zhang Zhung Cycle of Dzogchen* is the oldest of the Dzogchen Cycles and most direct teaching of the *Nine Ways of Bon*, and if working with the practices from it; that is *Ngondro* and *Gnozhi* – View, Meditation, Conduct, and Fruit – are all working for you, and there are no problems, then there is no need for any other



teachings or methods from the other eight ways of Bon?"

Khenpo Rinpoche: "Correct. If it is working for you, that is fine. If not, if there are obstacles, then that is where the other teachings can be of benefit, to help remove the obstacles. But this does not happen very often. Usually people have so many [obstacles], everything from their daily life situation to unseen beings."

Gerry: "It's amazing that we have had as many people take Rainbow Body as we have in the past, no?"

Khenpo Rinpoche: "Yes, very amazing, and rare."

In the conversation (above) with Khenpo Rinpoche, it is not that Dzogchen cannot take care of any 'problems' one may have, as all cures, healings, rituals, etc. are already inherent within the Natural State, Dzogchen. Rather, from the practitioner's side, there is a fault. The practitioner doesn't have faith in the Dzogchen teachings to address all concerns, or perhaps one is not practicing correctly, there could be many reasons – but the problem is with the practitioner, not Dzogchen. As Yongdzin Rinpoche said one time in a *Ngondro* teaching:

"If you lack that knowledge, you don't trust this Basic Nature so therefore you add mantras and recite them or worship Yidams; you add different things to the State. When you have this intention and feel comfortable with this and practice more along with visualizations and mantra recitation that means you are a tantric practitioner, not a Dzogchen practitioner. Okay, this State is perfect. If you realize well what 'perfect' means you understand that the State is perfected. How is it perfected? It is like milk which already has butter. If you do something to the milk, the butter comes out. If you don't do anything, the butter is still there; it is allowed to come from milk. So in a similar way, Nature is perfected with the Ten Paramitas and whatever practices or recitations, visualizations, things similar to the Madyamaka view, their practice and the result of the antidote which is able to purify ignorance – that all comes with the meditation of the Natural State. Nature is the Great Perfection of all Knowledge, and fruit, and pure things can appear as much as you practice. If you don't realize this then the Base is still the same, but you lack one part of Knowledge and you have to go to Tantric practice because you don't believe or perhaps you don't know that



Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Gerry Heikes, Irinea Moreno Meza and Geshe Tenzin Jinpa .

Nature is perfect. So instead of sitting and practicing and relaxing, you recite mantras. If this intention comes, you are not suitable to be a practitioner of Dzogchen."

Drugyelwa Yungdrung's entire *Chagtri Manual*, and the *Twenty-one Nails* (root text and commentary from Drugyelwa Yungdrung) have been translated to English. There are also many more commentaries available now. Hopefully someday *The Six Lamps* will also be translated, as well as all of the books and texts currently available (mostly in English) will be translated to other languages so more students can practice and study. I think it would also be beneficial if there were a student's version of Drugyelwa Yungdrung's *Chagtri Manual* for the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud* as well as the *A-Khrid* manual (which was only partially translated by Per Kvaerne). As an educator, I find both of these more geared to the Lama teaching, than for use by students. Also hopefully someday soon there will be some western incidences of rainbow body.

Last, I remember the words of both His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima and Yongdzin Rinpoche that say there is no Dzogchen without *Ngondro* or *Guru Yoga*. So with that in mind, I am very grateful for my many, many teachers over the years. May all of you receive the final result unless your wish is to return to teach again and again.

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos: courtesy of Gerry Heikes



FOUR YEARS PROGRAM OF *TRUL KHOR* IN POLAND

Ligmincha Poland invites everyone to learn Tibetan Yoga *Trul khor* in Poland led by Alejandro Chaoul. During four years (2015-2018) Alejandro will teach the most important *Trul khor* practices from the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* and *A-tri* cycles.

The first retreat will take place on August 23-26, 2015, in Chamma Ling Poland (city Wilga, Poland), and is open to anyone interested. This first course will focus on exercises such as the external *Tsa lung*, Jam Lung breathing, and *Trul khor A-tri Ngongdro* and two sets from *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* (sets 1 and 6). For more information please visit: www.ligmincha.pl/events/august-2015-trul-khor-alejandro-chaoul.

To attend the subsequent *Trul khor* retreats (2016-2018) participants will have the previous year as pre-requisite.

McGovern Center for Humanities and Ethics, where he teaches medical students in the areas of Spirituality and Medicine, Integrative Medicine, and end-of-life care.

About *Trul khor*

Trul khor or 'magical movement,' is a distinctive Tibetan practice of physical yoga in which breath and mental concentration are integrated with particular body movements. In contrast to Indian styles of yoga, in which the practitioner aims to hold a pose with the body still and the breath flowing naturally, in *Trul khor* the practitioner holds the breath still while the body moves in such a way as to guide the breath, guided by the mind.

Tibetan religious traditions have employed *Trul khor* as part of their spiritual training since at least the tenth century. Although *Trul khor* is found in five Tibetan spiritual tradition, it is most prevalent



LIGMINCHA POLSKA
ALEJANDRO CHAOUL
Trul khor, part 1
23-26th August 2015
WILGA

Alejandro Chaoul is a long-term student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Lopon Tenzin Namdak. He has also studied with many other masters of Bon and Buddhism, practicing meditation and spiritual development for more than twenty-five years. His academic focus led him to obtain his doctorate in Tibetan religions from Rice University, Houston, and he is currently faculty and director of education in Integrative Medicine at The University of Texas (UT) M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, where he conducts research and clinical practice on the use of meditation, Tibetan Yoga and other mind-body practices in the integrative treatment of oncology patients and their caregivers. In addition he is an associate faculty in UT Health's

in the Kagyu, Nyingma, and Bon schools. While *Trul khor* may have been practiced much earlier and preserved only as an oral tradition, written texts point to the practice of *Trul khor* by famed yogis of the eleventh through thirteenth centuries such as Marpa, Naropa, and Drugyalwa Yungdrung, among others.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who teaches *Tsa Lung Trul khor* at his Ligmincha Institute, says "*Trul khor* is a wonderful daily practice, especially to control and handle the stress of our modern life in society. It has the power to balance the energies of mind and body, and it also helps enormously to support one's meditation practices."





Alejandro Chaoul performing one of the *Trul khor* movements.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who teaches *Trul khor* under the Sanskrit name of *Yantra* yoga through his Dzogchen community, describes the practices as a tool to understand one's own true nature more clearly.

Within *Trul khor* there are practices that work specifically with the energetic or subtle body. This is composed of channels (Sanskrit: *nadis*), vital breath currents (*prana*), and essential spheres (*bindus*), providing the landscape where the mind and the physical body connect with each other. The Bon *Mother Tantra*, among other tantric texts, explains that the mind rides on the vital breath (or energy) currents like a rider on a horse, and the two travel together through the pathways of the channels. As the breath circulating in the channels becomes more balanced, the channels become increasingly pliable, allowing the vital breath currents to find their own comfortably smooth rhythm.

Put simply, our physical body, energy, and mind are said to be the three doors through which one can practice and eventually realize enlightenment. Therefore, *Trul khor* can be understood as movements that guide the energy linking the mind with the gross and subtle bodies. This brings

internal or even mystical experiences and transformations in the practitioner. Also, with the help of movements that guide the mind and vital breath currents into different areas, the practice brings the possibility of healing the body-energy-mind system, which is the model of good health in Tibetan medicine.

Until recently, Westerners were focused on receiving Tibetan teachings that develop the mind, but in the last few years there has been a growing interest in Tibetan physical yogas. While traditionally these practices were taught and practiced only after the student had undergone many years of meditation training, some Tibetan masters now teach it more openly, like many other meditative practices, yet with the appropriate supervision. Other teachers maintain the secrecy of the higher *Trul khor* practices.

[This text is fragment of Alejandro Chaoul's article [Trulkhor: The Magical Movement of Tibet, Shambhala Sun, March 2007](#)]

Between retreats:

Two students of Alejandro, Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen, from Finland and Darek Orwat, from Poland, will assist participants in their understanding and development of the *Trul khor* practices:





Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen teaches *Trul khor* in Finland.

"*Tsa Lung Trul khor* has been very much alive in Finland during the past year! From January 2014 to January 2015 there has been altogether six courses in different parts of the country: Helsinki, Jyväskylä and Kemiö (near Turku). The courses have been open to everyone and divided into part 1 and 2, including both *Tsa Lung* and *Trul khor* practices. So far around eighty people participated these weekends.

Tsa Lung Trul khor has been a part of my main practice since 2008. I've experienced a great benefit from the practices in my life and have already seen how they can really help many people by addressing all levels of our being: physical, energetic and spiritual. Instructing the courses has been a great opportunity for me to learn more about the practice by sharing them with others. It is inspiring to see that there's a number of people who feel a connection to these practices and are enthusiastic to meet our teachers to learn more."

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen



Trul khor master Lhundrup Muthur.

TSA LUNG - TRUL KHOR
Cudowne ćwiczenia z kanałami i życiodajnym oddechem

15-17 sierpnia 2014
Cziamma Ling, Al. Huberta 4, 08-470 Wilga
WIĘCEJ INFORMACJI: www.ligmincha.pl
kontakt: gos.kocur@poczta.fm

"I have been practicing *Yungdrung Bon* tradition for several years. *Tsa Lung* and *Trul khor* play special role on my spiritual journey. I have been practicing *Trul khor* since 2005. I have received teachings about *Tsa Lung* before, but only thanks to the valuable explanations given by Alejandro Chaoul during the first retreat of *Trul khor* in Poland my practice with *Tsa lung* began to bring good experiences. *Trul khor* is a great practice, when someone practices with engagement, it can calm even the most restless mind! It brings the experience of opening and vitality. It is very helpful on the path to freedom.

I am an instructor of *Trul khor* for *Ligmincha Poland* since 2012. I visit local centers in Poland, and I've been twice in Prague, Czech Republic, with teachings about *Tsa Lung Trul khor* and I encourage people to practice."

Darek Orwat



TWENTY YEARS OF BON TRADITION IN POLAND

In August 2015 Ligmincha Poland will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Bon tradition in Poland. Here is an invitation and a short history of the Bon tradition in Poland by Przemysław Dębowski, former chairman of Ligmincha Poland, and currently the manager of Chamma Ling Poland.

We would like to invite all those interested to Dzogchen teachings from the *21 Nails* text with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on August 18–23, 2015 in Wilga (near Warsaw), Poland. Celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the Bon tradition in Poland (1995-2015) will be a part of the course. More information about the course: www.ligmincha.pl. We encourage all members of Bon communities worldwide to participate in these beautiful events.

kissed his robe with agitation, the Teacher smiled and gave me his personal photograph of His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche saying: “This is my Teacher; everything I told you, I learned from him.”

Not many years of good practice later, our meetings were taking place in a new place in Świder near Otwock where our dream came true and His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche graced us with his presence along with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, transmitting Dzogchen teachings from the *Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud* cycle in 2000. The Garuda Association as a sangha established sixteen local branches in Poland where practitioners led by *umdze* were meeting regularly for joint practices. Annual visits of the founder of our sangha, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and retreats with him became a guidepost in the



A short history of the Bon tradition in Poland:

Walking down the streets of Poznań on a sunny summer day, I reached a meeting with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, a Dzogchen master. It was 1997.

The meeting was organized by the Kyung Dzong Association with Marek Górny as its Chairman. It was my first meeting with the Yungdrung Bon teachings. It was like being stunned. I went to my first retreat with Tenzin Rinpoche to Poręba Wielka, the center of our sangha. This is where the name Garuda was created; this is where the first transmissions of *A-tri (A-Khrid)* teachings were given. Everything started there for me after my Teacher gave me my Dharma name in a transparent plastic *Gompa* by a mountain stream and I entered the mandala of teachings. When I

life paths of us sangha members and supporters. We became students.

In 2004, the Garuda Association bought a piece of land for its own retreat center and, according to the will of our teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, it was established as Chamma Ling Poland. We started the construction of a *Stupa* in 2005 and finished it in 2006.

In June 2006, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpei Nyima Rinpoche visited Chamma Ling Poland, invited by Tenzin Rinpoche and the Garuda Association and transmitted his teachings to more than four hundred people from many countries. Thanks to the blessings of that visit, we began the construction of a *Gompa* in a location indicated by His Holiness in the Chamma Ling Poland land at the end of 2006. Years were passing and we were





Przemysław shows the new *Stupa* to His Holiness in 2006.

practicing, receiving teachings from many renowned teachers including His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche. Teachers such as Ponlob (Menri Lopon) Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Chongtul Rinpoche, Chaphur Rinpoche and many others visited Chamma Ling Poland and transmitted numerous priceless teachings.

The year 2013 saw the official consecration of the *Gompa* building by His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche in the presence of numerous *geshes* who arrived especially for that celebration, including the founder of our sangha, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Four hundred practitioners

from twenty-eight countries were present. The weather favored us: it was 22°C and rainbows appeared in the sky.

It is 2015 now. Our sangha is a part of the world-wide sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche representing Yungdrung Bon teachings; it consists of a few hundred practitioners.

As our teacher said during our last meeting in the *Gompa*: we survived; and we are called Ligmincha Poland.

Text by: Przemysław Dębowski

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha Poland



After the consecration H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche comes out of the new *Gompa* in 2013.



TWO HEALING PRACTICES

In January 2015 Jantien Spindler participated in a 3 Doors introduction weekend. And a week later she went to a traditional Bon weekend, *The Healing Practice of the Red Garuda*. Both weekends were in the Netherlands, and led by the same teacher: John Jackson. She shares with us her experiences.

John Jackson has practiced different meditation forms for over thirty-five years. He is the co-leader of the European 3 Doors Academy, and is the director of the Chamma Ling Retreat Center in Colorado, US. He teaches throughout Europe and the United States. He has been a professor at the University of Virginia School of Medicine for twenty-three years. (1)

Red Garuda

The *Red Garuda* is a mythological bird, and there are several legends about this bird. It was born in an immense large, fully grown-up form out of the egg its mother had laid. Its wings spread out over the whole earth; it rested in the space of the sky



and never contacted the earth (*samsara*). In the Bon tradition the *Red Garuda* is seen as a wrathful *yidam*.

Here wrath has not the negative meaning of the intense emotion that goes with loss of self-control, or being angry: an ego-emotion that can last long. Here is meant a form of wisdom arising like wrath, similar to the mother who with pure compassion and power protects her child in a dangerous situation. The action is direct and clear. As soon as the situation is past, also this wrath is gone. The wrath is not a part of the meditation, but is a form that can manifest in daily life. There is often even softness in the person that manifests this quality. The manifestation of this wrath is like walking on the edge of a razor: it is difficult to become humble again if you have stepped beside and slipped into the ego-emotion. You can easily fool yourself, so it requires a lot of internal practice without showing wrathful qualities externally.

This practice is a secret teaching, i.e. that only authorised teachers are allowed to transmit the knowledge, and that you are only allowed to practice it when you have received the transmission.

In modern times we are seeing an evolution in the way of transmission, for we can also get transmission through internet courses. H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche once told that we can feel the presence of a realized teacher three-hundred miles away. In the presence of a teacher you feel protected when practicing. We get a direct energetic transmission from John Jackson.

There are many authentic texts about this teaching and as many commentaries. The *Red Garuda* originates from a very old traditional layer of the Bon tradition. It is also a wisdom practice, designed to connect with the inner wisdom, and help us to achieve self-realisation. For people with a western scientific way of thinking the tantric form of the practice is difficult to follow. They are often sceptical towards the Tibetan explanation because in Western culture there is hardly or no connection with entities. Like all tantric practices it is aimed at transforming negativity into pure light, transforming internal and external blockages and receiving them as blessings. Transforming



poison into nectar. The *Red Garuda* offers a way to connect with daily life, to heal ourselves with fire, to discover who we really are. And through this we are able to help others. The practice gave me a deep appreciation for the sacredness of nature and energies.

The Saturday afternoon and Sunday the whole practice of the *Red Garuda* was taught and practiced in parts and build up to a very beautiful, elaborated and energetic practice. It gave me an intense experience of the beauty and power of this 'healing tool.'

Between the practices were involved discussions between John Jackson and the participants. Here is some advice John gave us.

When we are intensely practicing wrathful deities one can become agitated. Then you can find your balance with a peaceful practice. Do not push through, but back off and find a balance. To be able to cope with the contact with powerful energy of purification the body should be like an empty vessel. When we begin we might feel that our body is like a rusty pipe, filled with dirt, so that no water can pass. If you persist, slowly the water comes through, sometimes freeing large bits of rust. This can cause uneasy feelings as we feel shifts of purification. As the pipe gets more clear, the water can flow freely, and we can be comfortable with the powerful energy of the practice. Allow meditational experiences to arise and allow them to dissolve. Don't grasp or wish for them. Just accept them, allowing them to be. You can receive guidance in your meditation. Recognize your dream and follow it. We can only purify ourselves and cannot help someone else until we are very clear ourselves.

One does not need to practice all forms of *tantric* manifestations; connecting with one or two is all right. Often there is a kind of 'calling': "This is my root yidam, this is who I am." It is good to do a certain practice during a longer time (months) to really know how it works, to learn the benefit. So you can put together a kind of 'medicine box' with various meditation techniques from which you know what can when work optimal.

John encouraged us to reflect upon the connection with this practice. Commit to yourself how often you want to practice to build an armour for

yourself. For example practice or recite the mantra every day. Don't set a commitment you cannot hold; keep it modest. But if you make it, keep it.

John earnestly advised to study with other teachers. Every master has another flavour of his realisation that you can taste. When learning from more teachers your understanding of the teaching becomes greater. It is important to choose teachers with a connection to the same lineage. This prevents confusion. Other benefits are: if you put your trust in only one teacher you put yourself into danger. He pushes your button, finds any place that hurts. It is our own stuff, but we can get disappointed in our teacher and not continue our relationship.

On Sunday morning John's *mala* broke. He told that the meaning could be either the end of a relationship, or the spreading the *dharma*. John decided on the second meaning, and at the closure of the seminar with the offering of the *khata* everyone received a bead of his mala that was filled with very much healing energy.

The Five Warrior Sounds

The weekend before this *Red Garuda* seminar I participated in the weekend seminar *Awakening Authentic Presence* with the singing of the *Five Warrior Sounds*, a 'taste' of the 3 Doors Academy. On the [website](#) of The 3 Doors Academy it says: "*The 3 Doors Academy provides the trainee with the opportunity to engage deeply in the process of self-discovery. She presents experientially meditation practices of body, speech and mind over a two and a half year period. This program facilitates inner transformation and ripens the authentic expression of an individual's unique gifts.*"



The practice of the *Five Warrior Sounds* is an item of The 3 Doors Academy program. It is aimed on the five chakras and their connected resonating sound of the five seed syllables: *A, Om, Hung, Ram, Dza*. While singing a sound, we focussed on the concerned chakra and learned to experience that quality.

Singing this sound with a group gives a very strong support. We started with the three upper chakra's, with the qualities of openness, completeness and warmth. These were practiced in several sessions. The Sunday afternoon we sang the whole sequence, whereas the last two chakras were experienced as a 'tool' to cultivate all or specific qualities and manifest them in a spontaneous and effortless action in your own live and to benefit others.

This was also a very special experience, and I find it difficult to compare the two weekends. How can you compare a beautiful colourful sweet-smelling bouquet of wild flowers with three long velvet red roses? But, I will try to name some differences I found.

With the practice of the *Red Garuda* there were the known ornaments and rituals like: altar with photo, candles and water bowls, *thangkas*, prostrations, offering the *khata*, the use of Tibetan language. John Jackson spent considerable time explaining the meaning and background of the very old traditions and the connection with the energies of nature.

The program of the 3 Doors, developed by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, "is experientially based and focuses on the essence of the teachings. It does not so much emphasize



learning from the texts as it does gaining experience with the practices that bring direct benefit." (2)

It is the ultimate form where he stripped all the cultural forms. Here therefore no rituals and ornaments or Tibetan language. That made the instruction in this seminar very easy accessible for all those present.

With the *Red Garuda* practice the syllable 'A' was sung three times. The visualisation and intention were focussed on the meaning of this seed syllable.

When reciting the – to me new and unknown – mantra my attention was focussed too much on the text to be able to fully experience a collective sound.

The singing of a *Warrior Sound* for a long time caused a beautiful undulating sound with sometimes harmonics, which strongly resonated in the concerning chakra. For me hereby developed a feeling of being allowed to receive the sound that was sung by the others and being able to give in return by singing this sound myself. This 'sounding together' gave me a strong and touching feeling of connection.

John Jackson elaborated in the first weekend about the differences of the *Red Garuda* and the *Five Warrior Syllable Sounds*:

"The practice of the Red Garuda is, as well as the practice of the Five Warrior Syllable Sounds, a sound practice. The whole practice of the Red Garuda evolves around the repetition of that mantra, it is connected with a deity. The general theory behind all tantric practice is that there are many enlightened deities and each of those deities has a different enlightened quality.



Whenever you are practicing a tantric deity you invite that deity and try to embody that deity and their enlightened quality. Some of the qualities connected with the Red Garuda are confidence, fearlessness, courage, and strength.

Whereas when you practice with Sherap Chamma you practice with love and compassion.

In a traditional monastery setting monks and nuns are learning to practice a whole cycle of different types of deities in order to cultivate many different enlightened qualities. But then certain people will always feel a closeness with one or two practices wherein they feel “this is it, this what I need, this is my medicine.” And that feeling can change over the time too.

The beauty of the Five Warrior Syllables is that you can choose any of these qualities that you want to cultivate within yourself. It can be any enlightened quality, it can be self-confidence you can cultivate. This is one practice and you don't have to learn all the tantric visualisations.

But there is a great beauty in these sort of traditional practices as well and I don't see any conflict in doing this simple practice and these more elaborate traditional practices. It is just like different songs in a songbook. And some people like this song and some people like that song. Each person has its own unique likes.”

During a Red Garuda retreat in Ireland in 2012 John Jackson answered a question of one of the participants: “Why should anyone do this when you can



just rest in the Nature of Mind?” That is a fantastic question, and there are many answers to this question. Some days it is really hard to sit in the Nature of Mind: there are an awful lot of thoughts, or our emotions are very strong. We can try to sit with that and try to rest in that Inner Refuge, but sometimes the mind continues to wander. And as time goes on, at some point we realize: “I have not been here at all.” In those situations call the Red Garuda. The Garuda practice is very effective at overcoming our internal obstacles, our thoughts, our emotions, our attachments. It is a very powerful energetic

medicine that has a noticeably different flavor than working directly with the Inner Refuge or using the three practices of Body, Speech, and Mind.” (3)

Through his way of instruction and guidance John Jackson has brought during these weekends a very open atmosphere where clarity and a deep feeling for the elements and energies got a warm place.

This made the practice accessible and the power of the practice could be experienced. It was a gift to be allowed to stay in this teacher's backwind.



Notes

- 1) Flyer Weekend Seminar *Awakening Authentic Presence*, January 3 & 4, 2015.
- 2) Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Most students seek guidance*, *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* # 14, p. 5.
- 3) Transcription by Ton Bisscheroux, *Rest in the Nature of Mind*, *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* # 9, p. 27.

Text by: Jantien Spindler

Photos: Esther Drielsma and from www.kwling.org/bon/dieties



PRAYERS AND FUNDS REQUESTED FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY NEPAL EARTHQUAKE

More than 5,000 people have been reported dead in the massive 7.8 magnitude earthquake that occurred in Nepal on April 25. Ligmincha International Board Chair Rob Patzig suggests how sangha and friends can offer prayers and financial support.

Dear Sangha and Friends,

On Saturday, April 25, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake occurred in Nepal, causing incredible harm. As of April 28, more than 5,000 people are reported dead, and many are still trapped under rubble. BBC news reports shortages of water, food and electricity. Disease is also a concern. Our prayers go to all who have died or lost their loved ones and homes. We have learned that the monks at Triten Norbutse are all right and the monastery itself is largely unscathed, though there is some structural damage. Because of the continuing tremors, the monks are sleeping and cooking outdoors to be safe, as are most people in the affected areas. Many monasteries and sacred sites in Nepal, and even some in India, have suffered extensive damage.

At Menri Monastery, H.H. the 33rd Menri Trizin, and H.E. Menri Lopon Rinpoche is leading the monks in special prayers recited for three days from April 27–29, 2015 for those in Nepal, India and Tibet who have lost their lives. Additional rituals will be done for the removal of obstacles, as well as prayers to Sherap Chamma, the Mother of Wisdom and Love.

We ask that you send prayers to all the people who have been affected in this tragedy. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche encourages all of us to recite the Bon heart mantra (OM MA TRI MU YE SA LE DU) for those who have died, and the mantra of Sherap Chamma (OM MA WA MA DE MA HI MO HA E MA HO MA YE RU PA YE TA DU DU SO HA).

If you would like to donate to Triten Norbutse to assist with the necessary repairs to the buildings

and support of the monks and the Bon communities in the affected Himalayan region at this time, Ligmincha International is collecting donations for this purpose. [Click here to make a donation](#) to Triten Norbutse and the affected Bon communities. Please note all of these donations will be used specifically in support of Triten Norbutse and the Bon communities in the Himalayan region and not for Ligmincha. Our Ligmincha International Board will consider the most effective ways to help the Bon communities affected by this earthquake.

Ligmincha is not able to directly accept donations in general support of Nepal's earthquake relief

efforts. However, if you would like to support broad relief efforts in Nepal, please consider a donation to the organizations helping the people of Nepal, consider giving to: Unicef, the U.N. children's agency, the U.N. World Food Program, or Doctors without Borders. Ligmincha is not affiliated with any of these groups, but each is actively involved in relieving suffering and rebuilding in the areas affected by the earthquake.



This letter and fundraising effort have been prompted by the many queries of sangha members around the world to our offices. Thank you so much for you care, concern and active support to help the many victims of this natural disaster.

Update:

Tuesday May 12th saw another violent earthquake strike Nepal. The second quake has caused many buildings and homes, already weakened by the quake last month, to collapse. At least 65 people have died in this second quake and thousands have been injured. Please continue your prayers and practices in support of the many who are suffering in the aftermath of this disaster and for those who are working to provide aid. Ligmincha will continue accepting donations to benefit relief efforts in Nepal and the Bonpo communities there.

Yours in Bon,

Rob Patzig,

Board Chair, Ligmincha International



FROM A LAMENTING HEART

**While teaching the Bön in Spain
I hear the news of an earthquake in Nepal.
Instantly the hairs on my body stand up
Sadness whirls in my heart
Anguish penetrates my body.**



**Is this the punishment of angry local deities?
Or natural, samsaric destruction?
Or simply a fate that has befallen us?
Beneath the earth, stones collide.
There can be no certainty of any reason.
A profusion of causes and conditions
In spaces outer, inner, and secret
Result in this elemental dream-like disaster.
Among the thousands of dead and injured
Men and women, children and elderly.
Mother and child, once inseparable even for a moment,
Now apart, forever.
How appalling.
Couples bonded in love and affection,
With dreams for a lifetime together,
Are torn apart and permanently separated.
My heart fills with agony.**



In any family, many are dead.
 Some are left alive and injured.
 All that had been earned is lost.
 All that had been built up has collapsed.
 Lonely, friendless, hopeless, exhausted,
 A survivor looks to the sky and sees only a void,
 Looks down at a collapsed wall and sees corpses.
 Minds wander untethered like souls between lives.
 Fathers, spent of strength, do not know what to do.
 Grandparents nearing the completion of contented lives
 Once full of children and grandchildren leading joyful lives
 Are now alone.
 A home with generations of memories — gone.
 Spiritual monuments, priceless objects of heritage
 Turned to rubble in a moment.
 I am pierced with sadness.



There is a thundering sorrow beneath the earth.
 Who listens? No one.
 The sound vanishes like an echo.
 An innocent newborn child,
 Who has not even seen the light of this world,
 Experiences life and death at once.
 Challenging even to imagine
 Like a bad omen in a dream
 This too will dissolve.
 People will gradually forget.
 One day, it will be difficult to trace what happened here.
 Therefore, in this crucial time, let us remember!

The deceased of Nepal and Tibet have a long history of friendship.
 Let us perform a dedication prayer and join our merit.
 All who survive — laity, monks, and nuns
 United in heartfelt sadness
 Can lift some load of suffering, whether small or large.
 Each of us can dispel another's darkness with the light of compassion.
 Each of us can bear witness to the grieving of another.
 When we have lost the way forward and do not know what to do,
 When we cannot see the light because of the darkness of suffering,
 At that moment, our advice to one another is precious.

To intelligent men and women,
 There is no greater demonstration of impermanence than this.
 Now have the diligence to understand!
 Old and young are liable to become sick.
 The circumstances of your own death are uncertain.
 Possibly, your death is very close.



**Do not concern yourself with elaborate strategies for this lifetime.
Do not abandon your peace to busyness.
Do not abandon your happiness in pursuit of wealth.
Do not abandon your compassion in anger.**

**As if there were just today to live,
Do good for yourself and others.
Enjoy close friends and family.
Learn a new art form to be wiser.
Laugh like a child thousands upon thousands of times.
Take joy in activities outside your profession.
Even if one finds true happiness in that which is considered crazy, do it!
Spread your love and compassion like the million rays of the sun.
An altruistic heart effortlessly works for good.
Turn your happiness like a wheel — in all directions.
Endeavour to work without bias for all beings and for truth.**

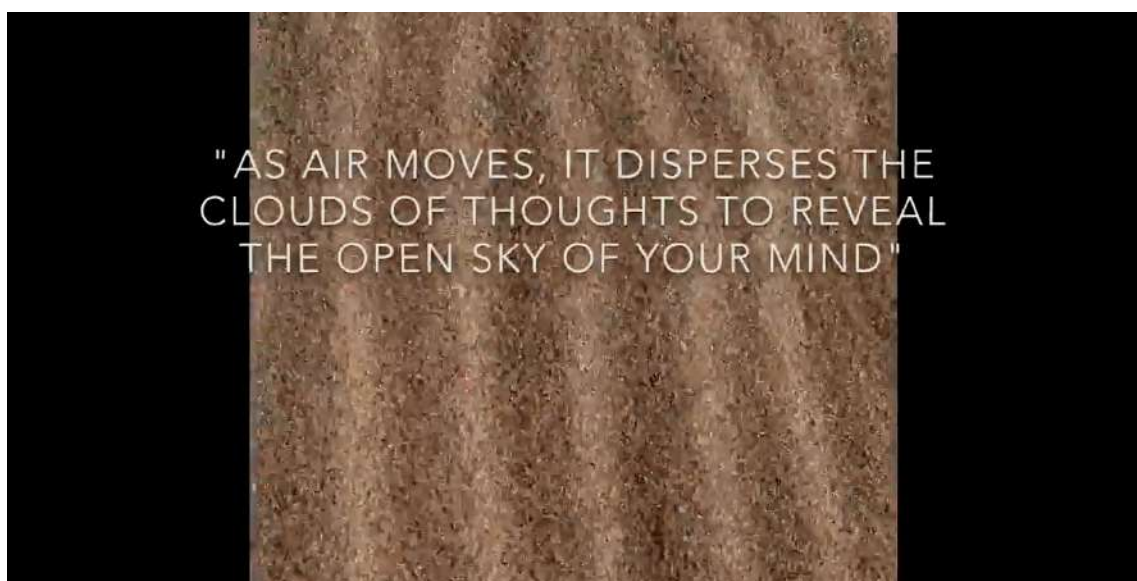
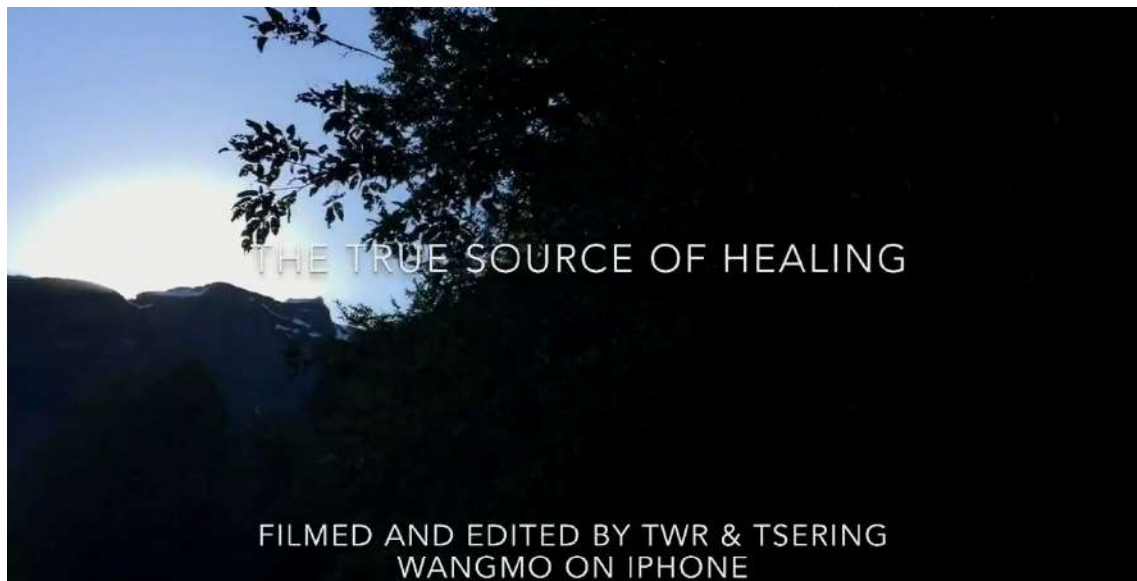
**This earthquake is a master of appearance.
If you still have difficulty understanding the essence of the teachings
After a lifetime of listening,
Perhaps now your heart has been moved.
If your mind is still unripe
After completing nine hundred thousand preliminary practices,
Perhaps now your mind has been tamed.
I praise the masters of natural existence!**

**For these deceased and faultless people,
With compassion and respect from the core of my heart
I will offer these strings of words like necklaces of flowers.
Every time I pray, I will not forget.
I dedicate my virtuous actions to all who suffer.
May you be liberated in a pure land.**

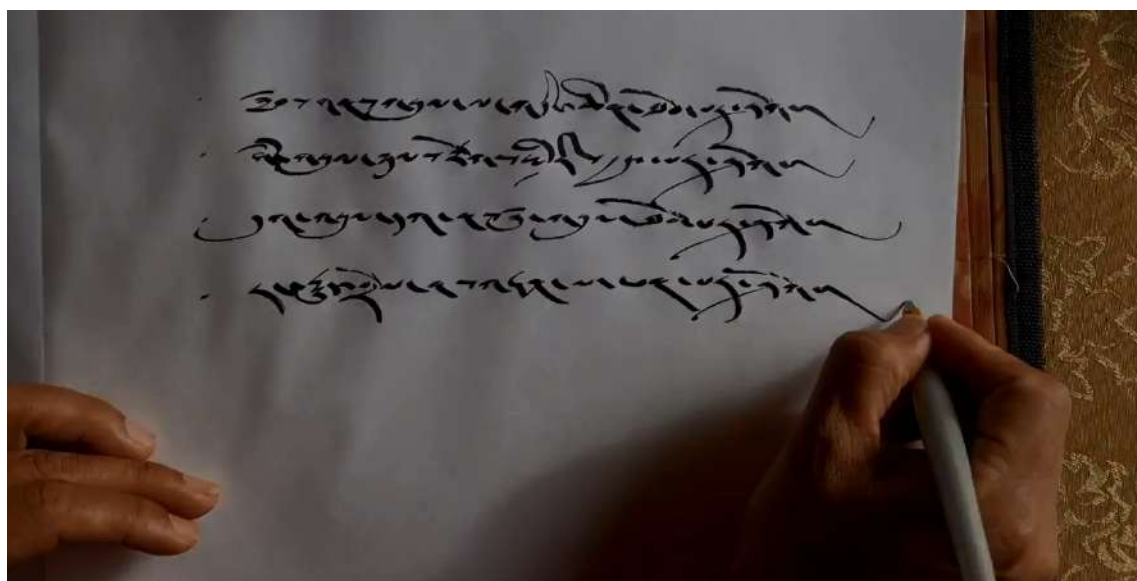
This is a spontaneous poem, written by Ababa (Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche) in Berlin, Germany, 2015. Translated from Tibetan to English by Dr. Sangmo Yangri and Matthew Conover. Edited by Marcy Vaughn.



THE TRUE SOURCE OF HEALING



You can watch this video on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ir7hmu1l7my



MAY LIGHT ALWAYS SURROUND YOU

*At the celebration of Losar Geshe Denma Gyaltsen
dedicated this poem to:*

*The Respected Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche,
All Resident Lamas,
Center Directors, and
Students of Ligmincha International.*

**May Light always surround you,
Hope kindle and rebound you.**

**May your hurts turn into healing,
Your heart embrace feeling.**

**May wounds become wisdom,
Every kindness a prism.**

**May laughter infect you,
Your passion resurrect you.**

**May goodness inspire,
Your deepest desires.**

**Through all that you reach for,
May your arms never get tired.**

D. Simone



LEARN *DREAM* YOGA TO PREPARE FOR DEATH

In the book *Preparing to Die: Practical Advice and Spiritual Wisdom from the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition*, Andrew Holecek asked several Spiritual Masters for their Heart Advice. One of them was Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

“Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was born in Amritsar, India. After completing eleven years of traditional studies, Rinpoche received his geshe degree (equivalent to a Western PhD). He is a leading exponent of the Tibetan Bön tradition as well as a master of Tibetan Buddhism. Rinpoche is the founder and spiritual director of the Ligmincha Institute in Virginia, an active teacher in the West, and the author of many books, including *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*; *Wonders of the Natural Mind*; *Healing with Form, Energy, and Light*; and most recently, *Awakening the Sacred Body*. This interview was conducted at Shambhala Mountain Center in Colorado.

What's the best thing to do to prepare for death?

The main thing, the best thing is to just let go of everything. Don't worry about anything. Whatever is remaining, whatever you have left behind, people will take care of it. You need to be free from loved ones, from possessions, from your own ideas and thoughts. Try to do what you have been trained to do on the path. Everything you have done over the spiritual path in this life is about letting go. At the end just let go of everything possible. If that is not possible, then you do need to take care of things. But to prepare oneself the point is to step by step just let go of whatever you are able to let go of, and gradually work your way into what you are not able to let go of, and then try to release that. There will always be challenges at the last minute – some people still don't want to let go of things – but do your best in advance to let go.

What's the best thing to do during the bardo of dying?

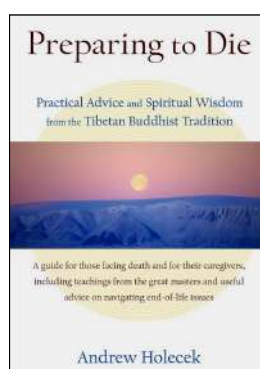
It varies from person to person. There are different paths and people believe different things. Generally, there will be a lot of experiences after death,



so try to become familiar with what is going to happen so that you are more prepared when the different visions come. It's like preparing to recognize a dream to be a dream. When you recognize that you are dreaming, you are no longer afraid of what happens in the dream. You can guide it, you can grow from it. It is the same thing with the dying process. If you understand, if you have the knowledge of the bardos – what the bardos are, what the visions are, what they mean – then you will have confidence. So during life you should learn about the bardos and practice for the bardos, become familiar with them. And even test some of those experiences in the dream, using dream yoga to

prepare, so that when you encounter these visions after death you will be ready.

It is also good to resolve any family conflicts before death. You don't want to carry those conflicts into the bardo. This conflict resolution is probably even more important than drawing up legal wills.



What's the best thing to do for someone after they have died?

Those left behind should do the *sur* offering, the smoke offering, for forty-nine days. Every day if possible. Then every seven days family and friends could do some special transition ceremonies, to help the person go from one step to the next step in their journey. It's also good to burn lots of candles, as a light offering, an offering of wisdom, that can illuminate their journey. That is considered important. And also to do phowa. If they were a believer, it's good to have someone, a lama, do phowa for them. This is my heart advice.”

Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux



DON'T RETURN EMPTY-HANDED

Many Bon and Buddhist teachers advise us to prepare for the time of dying. Frits de Vries has taken this advice seriously, and studies on this matter daily. Here he shares with us a text which inspired him.

When I discovered I was in an unfamiliar process of change of consciousness due to my meditations, I began searching for pointers. I found them in the chapter “The Golden Rosary of Nectar” from Padmasambhava's *Advice from the Lotus-Born*. Reading on in this fine collection of advice there was also the chapter “A Spur Towards Spiritual Practice.” Since then the words from this advice “don't return empty-handed” are following me on my spiritual path. I hope it will inspire you too.

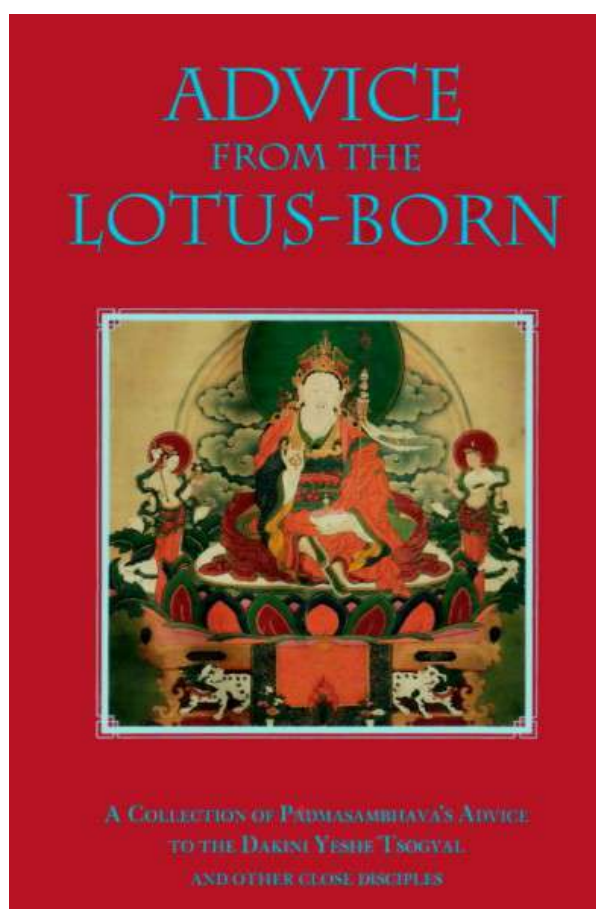
In the introduction to the chapter “A Spur Towards Spiritual Practice” I found the following text on page 126-128:

“Among the many instructions he gave me, Tsogyal of Kharchen, I have here written down a compilation of all the teachings on the expedient meaning as a spur towards spiritual practice.
MAHAKARUNIKA SAMATI AH.

Master Padma said: Tsogyal, we must practice a teaching that brings liberation from samsara! Unless we do so, it will be extremely difficult to attain such a body with the freedoms and riches.

How difficult is it to find a human body like this? It is as difficult to find as for a pea to stick when you throw it against the temple wall, as difficult as for a tortoise sticking its head through a yoke floating on the ocean, as difficult as throwing a mustard seed through the eye of a needle standing up-right.

The reason for this difficulty is that the six classes of beings are like a heap of grain. The hell beings, hungry ghosts and animals are like the bottom half, the demigods the upper half, and gods and humans are merely the tip. Compared to the other classes of beings, it seems impossible to gain a human form. Tsogyal, *try to count the beings of the six realms!*



Again Master Padma said: Tsogyal, if in spite of this difficulty (...) We have obtained what is difficult to attain, a precious human body, and while our sense faculties are still intact, we can meet with sublime masters, have the power to choose whatever we want to do, can enter the Buddha's teachings, practice the sacred Dharma, and associate with Sangha companions. If at this time we don't apply the teachings that bring liberation and enlightenment, this precious human body will have gone to waste.”

On page 128-129 I found a special selection for the topic ‘Preparing to Die’:

“Don't return empty-handed after reaching the island of jewels; don't linger around hungry when having met the inexhaustible treasure! We must cross the ocean while we have the vessel; don't let the boat of the human body slip away!

Now is the time to separate samsara from nirvana; joyfully exert yourself in practice! Now is the dividing point between happiness and misery;





Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal.

don't arrange your own disaster! Now is the time when the roads leading up and down separate; don't jump into the abyss of the lower realms!

Now is the time for showing the difference between being wise or dumb; don't stupidly babble or stare! Now is the time for lasting merit; don't busy yourself and go on empty-handed! Now is the time to see who is a great or ignoble man or woman; don't seek enlightenment in profit and fame!

Now is the time to see who is a good or evil man or woman; cast away your worldly pursuits! The present moment is comparable to a single meal in one hundred days; don't act as if you had plenty of time! Now is the time when the evil of a moment's laziness will have lasting effect; joyfully exert yourself in spiritual practice! Now is the time when a single year of perseverance brings happiness for all lives to come; remain constant in Dharma practice!

I have constant pity for the beings who leave this life empty-handed!

Again Master Padma said: Tsogyal, we don't know whether this human body, obtained with such great difficulty, will die tomorrow or the day after,

so don't make plans to live forever! We cannot be certain when this body, on loan from the four elements, will fall apart, so don't treasure it too fondly!

Birth leads to nothing other than death; train in the nature of nonarising as your destination! Meeting leads to nothing other than parting; cut your attachment to companionship! Gathering leads to nothing other than depletion; be generous without clinging! Building leads to nothing other than destruction; keep to caves and mountain retreats!

Desire and ambition lead to nothing other than pain; loosen your craving! Deluded experience leads to nothing other than delusion; destroy dualistic perception! By doing so you will always be happy – but who listens to beneficial advice!”

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Padmasambhava — The Lotus-Born.

Text by Frits de Vries



WORKING WITH THE ELEMENTS IN NATURE

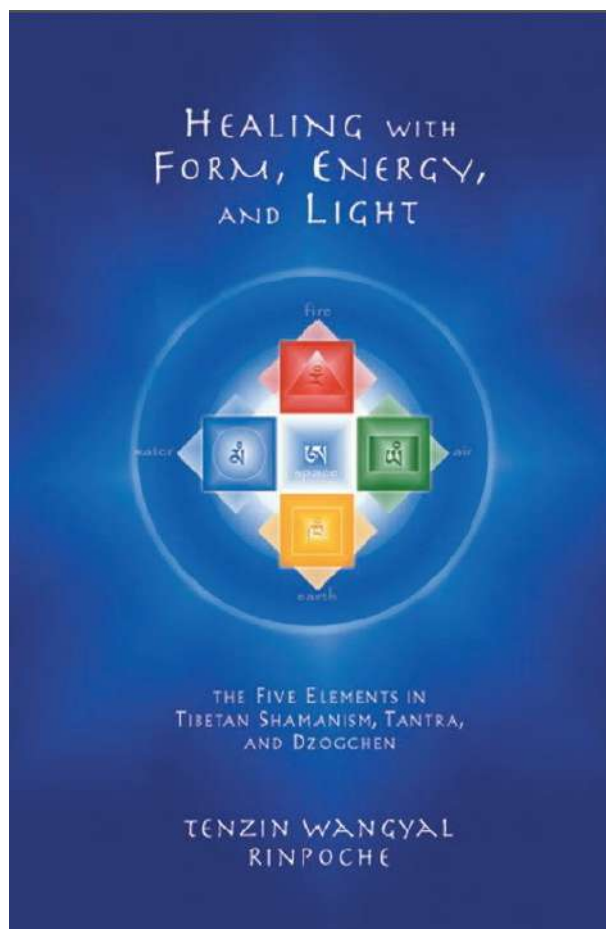
This year Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche introduced a free, yearlong internet course in *Soul Retrieval*. In the Tibetan Bon tradition, the soul is understood as the balance of the subtle energies and related qualities of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. The following excerpt, from Rinpoche's book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light* (Snow Lion, 2002), describes how to connect through nature with these elemental qualities.

Working with the raw natural elements is a process of connecting with the external elements and internalizing their qualities. Doing this ultimately leads to connection with the essence of the elements which, in the shamanic path, is considered part of the soul. At this level, connecting is healing. The internalization of elemental energies helps us to cultivate positive qualities and eliminate negative ones.

We are affected when we go where the land is in its natural state: deserts, mountains, jungles, and open plains. What affects us is not only the physical beauty that we see with our eyes. Rather, the whole body responds. These deeper responses are often unconscious, but with practice we can learn to internalize the energies of the natural elements for healing and regeneration. Even when we are not in the wilds of nature we are always in contact with the elements. Therefore these practices are always available.

When we take a hot bath or shower and feel the relaxation and comfort of the warm water, we can bring the comfort inside and feel it throughout our bodies. We can imagine bringing in the qualities with our breath. Then we can feel it in the more subtle dimensions of our experience, such as in the central channel and the heart center. We can let the comfort of water pervade us and the space around us and eventually all other beings and all places. Absorbing positive qualities and then radiating them to all beings is a practice that is common in tantra.

This pattern is used again and again in practice with the elements. We can practice with everyday



experiences — the warmth of the sun, for example. When you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin, relax and take it in to the deepest parts of yourself. Use your imagination. Feel the warmth stream through the channels of your body and into the central channel. Then feel it collect in the center of the central channel, the region of your heart. Let it in even deeper, into your soul. Immerse yourself in that, feeling the warmth of your body, channels, chakras, central channel, heart, and soul. Let the sunlight be the external phenomena that evokes the healing qualities of the fire element, which are always in you. The most essential level of the sun's energy is the most subtle level of fire and as you develop your practice you can use imagination and visualization to bring this energy into the most intimate dimensions of your being.

Ultimately we can merge with the element. We connect the external quality with the internal quality and then dissolve the distinctions. Reaching out is reaching in when we have developed



practices that connect the two. Otherwise, reaching out is just reaching out and going away from ourselves.

In order to do the practice described below it is helpful to go to an area where the natural elements are strong. A good time to practice is when you are staying at the beach, walking in the mountains, sitting in the sun or in front of a fire, standing on the ridge of a hill, feeling the wind blow — or anytime you become aware of the presence of one or more of the elements. Connecting with awareness to strong manifestations of the elements in nature supports the development of those elements internally.

There are traditional signs of success in this practice as in all the practices with the elements, but the most important sign is the appearance of positive changes in a life. What was internally weak becomes stronger, while negative qualities that once dominated experience begin to diminish. Watch for these changes to gauge the extent to which you are integrating your everyday life with the practices.

The practice is most effective when time, attitude, form of the element, mantra, sacred images, and imagination are used together harmoniously. Try to remain focused on the experience of the practice, keeping the awareness fresh and clear. Sessions can be of any length, but try to do them for at least a half hour or forty-five minutes to develop a stronger experience. You can be alone or with another person. Before beginning any practice, including this one, it is helpful to purify and open the channels of the body using the practice of the Nine Purification Breaths.

(...)

Earth

Go to a natural setting where there is a strong sense of the qualities of earth and sit on the ground. If you are sensitive to these kinds of energies, or would like to develop this sensitivity, walk around and try to find the place with the strongest earth energy. Don't get neurotic about it — either you actually have this sensitivity or you are using your imagination. It doesn't matter which for now; you are finding support for the practice and that is



what matters. When you find a spot, sit there. If you want to do more, dig out a hollow, preferably in the shape of a square. You can lie on your stomach and connect to the earth and the energy of the earth through your navel chakra. Don't worry about whether or not this is "real." Imagination is the tool that develops the practice; use it and don't worry about it.

(...)

Contact with the physical earth is important but need not be elaborate. You can do the practice sitting in a chair. Wherever you are right now as you read this, feel the ground beneath you. Feel the stability of it, the immensity of the planet, the gravity that holds you to it. Connect with the raw element. Let yourself be affected by it. Let your imagination be free. Feel the stability and internalize it. Bring it in through your skin. Feel it in your flesh, your bones, your central channel, your heart, your consciousness. Make it subtler and subtler, until it pervades your experience, until you merge with it.

This stability is always present and available and can be internalized whenever it is needed. The next time you are feeling ungrounded, scattered, insecure, or weak, retrieve earth. If you are knocked off balance in your relationships or at work or in your internal processes, make the decision to immediately feel grounded, focused, solid, and balanced by connecting to earth. Use the natural environment to develop these positive qualities. Visit places in which you naturally feel grounded and internalize the quality. Or focus in your body when you need to ground. Your body is very earthy: the feeling in it is the life of the earth. Bring your awareness there, relax, and connect. The elemental energy is already in you, is you; it's a question of bringing it to awareness, activating it, remembering it.

Water

If you live near an ocean, a large lake, a flowing river, or a still pond, go to it. If you are near none of these, simply pay attention to the water in your shower or bath and the water you drink. Or you can just use your imagination. Imagine the ocean: the coolness of it, the power of it, how it flows, and the calm of its



depths. The body of the ocean is peaceful even when the surface is agitated.

Connect with those qualities. If you can, feel the energy of water in your body. Internalize it. Bring it into your skin, your muscle, your bone. Feel the comfort of water, the relaxation, the ease as it flows around rock, opens and accepts what falls in it, rests in whatever holds it.

We lose this comfort too often. It is the comfort of being itself, the ease of being. We see someone who upsets us or we go to a party or a business appointment and feel uptight, jerky, and agitated. The water element is diminished. Recall such situations, but this time feel the comfort of water. Let the events unfold while you remain internally at peace. And when you find yourself next in a situation in which you are agitated, annoyed, overly critical, or worried, connect to water. The elemental energy is everywhere, even in the driest desert – though it helps to be near water for support when you're first learning the practice.

Water is comforting. Like earth, it gives a feeling of stability. It is accepting of others, of events, of self. Water also has to do with elimination, purification, and cleansing. It is associated with feelings of peace and comfort and gentle joy.

Fire

When you have time, find a sunny place such as a bench, sundrenched and warm. Or if the sun isn't out, sit in comfort before a fire. If you can do neither, sit next to a heater or a stove, or imagine being near a fire. Pay attention to what you feel: the warmth on your skin, the



relaxation. Bring the heat in through your flesh to the channels of the body. Feel the heat of fire circulating through your body, the heat of the blood, the heat of the metabolism, the heat of the muscles, the heat of the nerves firing. Feel emotional warmth and joy. Retrieve the quality. Feel it fill the center of your body, fill the central channel. Feel the warmth in your heart, the center of your being. Allow it to pervade consciousness. The pleasure of sitting in the sunlight feels good, but without internalizing the quality of fire only part of what is being offered is received. Besides heat and comfort, the energy of fire has to do

with ripening and maturing. Fire purifies through burning negativities. Fire is the underlying elemental energy of creativity and accomplishment and of both substantial and insubstantial bliss. Fire is related to orgasm and, more subtly, to the bliss of energy moving through the central channel.

When you are feeling uninspired, dull, or flat, connect with fire. When working with a negative habit or tendency in yourself, burn it in the fire of your practice. Use your mind to bring fire into areas of your body that are sick or wounded; use it to purify what is there and to invigorate the healing process. When you feel weak and uncertain, connect with fire for its strength and its creative vision. When you are weary or uninspired, draw on fire to give strength to the will.

In the advanced practice of inner fire (tummo) the psychic fire is developed. Successful yogis who practice the inner fire are able to live in the cold climate of Tibet with little clothing because they can draw on the energy of fire that is always present.

Air

Air allows flow and movement. When a strong wind arises, let it blow away your negative karma. When a gentle breeze arises, let it carry away discomfort, fear, and negative thoughts.



Go to a place where there is wind, perhaps a mountain pass or a beach. Or go where the air is cool and clean — in the shade of a forest or beside a river. Gentle your breathing. Feel the movement of air. Internalize it — the freedom of it, the quick intelligence of it. Feel the life moving in your flesh and in your thoughts, and the prana moving in the channels of the body. Recognize the air in the central channel, in the heart, in consciousness. The principal quality of air is flexibility; it is free.

Air lifts the spirit, lifts the mood. When you're feeling down or depressed, connect to air. Air is light, unbound, pervasive. Internalize that. When stuck in an argument, in a depression, in a narrow point of view, connect to the flexibility of air.



Escape the prison of constricted mental habits by connecting with air and flying above the walls of negative conditioning.

Strong air makes for fast progress on the spiritual path, but without balanced earth and water the result does not remain. Tantric practices with channels, chakras, and prana develop the qualities of air. In the practice of the transference of consciousness (pho wa) air is utilized to move consciousness from the confusion of ignorance to the clarity of realization. Air allows the shift of consciousness. The air element underlies life-force. Connect with air to build vitality and to develop greater freedom.

Space



Sky gazing is a very important practice. Go up on the top of a hill where there is a big, unobstructed view of the sky. In front of you is vast space. Your eyes should be open, your body relaxed, your breath free and easy. Breathe in the open, clear sky, and allow yourself to dissolve in it when you exhale. Let pure, infinite space pervade your body, your energy, your mind. Integrate your awareness with space. Merge with space.

When you integrate with space, healing occurs. The tight, constricted knots of anger and fear, of desire and worry, dissolve. Tensions dissolve. Thoughts dissolve. Your many identities start to dissolve. The more you integrate with the space element, the clearer and more expansive your awareness becomes, unstained by whatever arises in it, always fresh, open, and unconstrained. Space accommodates everything without effort. Don't let this practice be merely a conceptual exercise; internalize the experience of empty space, find it in you and as you. At this level of practice, it isn't so much about realizing the nature of mind (as it would be when done as a Dzogchen practice) as it is about dissolving daily problems, making space for positive experience, and finding and developing the capacity to release what is negative.

When the element of space is developed, the mind is clearer and there is more joy. There is less tension. There is more room for whatever experiences arise. If someone is late for an appointment, it's okay — you have the space to

accommodate that. If you find you have heavy responsibilities, that's all right — there's room for everything. This doesn't mean that you have to accept everything; instead, you can make a decision and act from awareness rather than reacting impulsively from emotional responses.

In meditation practice, when the space element is truly developed, the practice becomes Dzogchen, abiding in the nature of mind. It is pure presence. Fully integrating oneself with space is integrating with the ground of being.

Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux

The free internet course in *Soul Retrieval*

When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started in January 2015 with the yearlong free internet course in *Soul Retrieval* almost 4.000 people registered. On average about 1.500 computers were live online in January. Real-time translation was offered in 12 languages.

At several places people meet to watch the teachings and practice together.

When you want to watch the live broadcast register here: www.ligmincha.org.

You can find all the recorded internet teachings at: www.ligmincha.org.

To register for and participate in the full course with all its supports, including multi-language discussion forums, recorded webcasts, MP3 audio recordings, and downloadable print materials, go to: www.ligminchalearning.com.

This course is based on Rinpoche's upcoming book *The True Source of Healing: How the Ancient Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich Your Life* (Hay House, June 2015).



TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2015 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

When	Where	What	More information
June 13 15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Full-Day Live Webcast: The True Source of Healing: Your Own Inner Refuge	www.ligmincha.org
June 27 18.00 – 19.15 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: Dream Yoga	www.ligmincha.org
July 11 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: Tapping Into Relationships to Nourish Your Soul	www.ligmincha.org
July 11 – August 9	Your computer	Interactive online course: Awakening the Sacred Arts: Discovering Your Creative Potential	www.glidewing.com
August 10 – 16	Buchenau, Germany	European Summer Retreat: The Twenty-One Nails, Part 1 (of 3)	www.ligmincha.de
August 15 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: Overcoming Loneliness: Finding the Friend Within	www.ligmincha.org
August 18 – 23	Chamma Ling Poland, Wilga, Poland	Retreat: The Twenty-One Nails, Part 3 (of 3)	www.ligmincha.pl
September 12 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: Nourishing Your Inner Being: The Heart of Soul Retrieval	www.ligmincha.org
September 19 – October 11	Your computer	Interactive online course: Tibetan Sound Healing	www.glidewing.com
October 10 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: Nourishing Your Inner Being: Questions and Answers	www.ligmincha.org
November 14 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: The Power of Warmth: Physical Healing Through Meditation	www.ligmincha.org
December 12 15.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Full-Day Live Webcast: Healing from the Source: Cutting the Root of Your Pain	www.ligmincha.org

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