



# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 18 – Autumn 2015**



Meet the sangha from California

The Power of Prayers

Being Present with the Dying

Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltzen



# LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE 2015/18 — CONTENTS

## GREETINGS

- 3 Greetings and news from the editors

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

- 4 The Power of Prayer
- 6 Prayers in the Dzogchen Tradition of Tibet
- 9 Long Life Mantra Accumulations Requested for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche

## GOING BEYOND

- 11 Transforming Your Life through Meditation
- 12 Lishu Institute is a Great Gift
- 15 Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism

## THE SANGHA

- 16 Hotel California
- 25 What's Been Happening in Europe
- 31 A Tibetan in Paris
- 37 Meditation as Medicine
- 40 What comes after Death?
- 41 The Healing Practice of Sherap Chamma – Mother of Wisdom and Love

## ART IN THE SANGHA

- 42 With Love from Russia

## PREPARING TO DIE

- 43 On Death, Without Exaggeration
- 44 Being Present with the Dying

## THE TEACHER AND THE DHARMA

- 47 Relating to the Sacred
- 50 How Tantra Works
- 52 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's 2015 and 2016 European seminars and on-line teachings

## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

is a joint venture of the community of European students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Ideas and contributions are welcome at [magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu).

You can find this and the previous issues at [www.ligmincha.eu](http://www.ligmincha.eu),

and you can find us on the Facebook page of [Ligmincha Europe Magazine](https://www.facebook.com/LigminchaEuropeMagazine).

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

A few years ago, creating this magazine and writing 'the greetings' was challenging because it confronted me with my fears and self-doubt. Now it is a great joy, tapping into my creativity. I like to reflect on the content of this magazine, sharing my thoughts and borrowing words from others in the magazine. Interviewing people is wonderful, because their personal story is also universal when it inspires others.

There are many possibilities to practice, and there are different ways to practice.

Some upcoming activities are the free monthly internet teachings, a new internet course offered by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and The 3 Doors program. In November 2015 is a special opportunity to go to a five day retreat of The 3 Doors Academy in Germany. One of the reasons why it is special, is that you don't have to commit for two and a half years, but you get the chance to practice five days with the European 3 Doors teachers John Jackson and Raven Lee.

We also inform you about the group of Western students who started in September at Lishu Institute a Three Year Residential Retreat with the study of the traditional Bon text *The Nine Ways of Bon*. There were activities in Europe. I would have liked to go to the celebration of twenty years of Bon teachings in Poland, but there was also the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany.

I opted for the Summer Retreat. There I found myself often distracted during the meditation, thinking about the performances I was going to participate in during the Party on the Friday evening. In one of the performances, at one point it was no longer a play, but it got very personal and real for both of us. The performance was based on a dream. The first day of the retreat a sangha member told me about a dream she had that morning.

She woke up in a shock: in her dream her husband had brought her clothes to her mother. Later she told me she wanted to bring this on stage and asked me to play her husband. I was happy to do so, because I know how it feels when somebody else cleans up my things (my partner does that sometimes). In the performance, after a lot of fun and laughter, we arrived at the point that she discovered that I had brought her clothes to her mother. At that point she would get angry with me, and I would invite her to meditate to calm down. But on the stage, she was furious – later she told me that she wanted to kill me – so there was no way of nicely asking her to meditate, as we did during the rehearsal. On stage I realized that I had to cut through the situation, and said "PHET!" It worked, she came to reason, and we could end our performance with a meditation. It was great fun, but in real life it also healed both of us. That's the Power of Playing.



Summer Retreat in Buchenau: the Party.

During a seminar in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and the retreat in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talked about the Power of Praying. And in the book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light* Rinpoche elaborated about *Relating to the Sacred*. We share this with you.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is a great teacher, but there are more teachers – not so well known yet – who are also wonderful teachers. In this magazine we introduce Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen, a Ligmincha resident lama living in Paris, France.

There is more to enjoy reading in this magazine, Poetry, an excerpt of a text on Tantra, learn about the sanghas in California, US. And among the other things, we continue to confront you with death and you can read how the inner refuge supports the work in a hospice.

In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor**





# THE POWER OF PRAYER

**During a May 2015 seminar in Amsterdam, Netherlands, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche mentioned that prayers can be very powerful. Ton Bisscheroux was intrigued and asked Rinpoche to elaborate.**

**Dear Rinpoche, during the teachings in Amsterdam, you said that in recent years you have come to realize the true power of prayer. You said that praying is especially helpful when one feels stuck — for example, in a difficult situation or a troubling thought pattern — and that the benefits of prayer come not so much from someone else giving you something, but more from your allowing something. Can you explain what you meant by this?**

I do feel that prayers are important and powerful. From what I have seen, most people feel that they are in charge of their daily lives. And if they don't feel in control of the situations and people around them, then at least they are trying to be in control. Of course, sometimes things don't turn out the way we want, no matter how hard we try. We all face pain, suffering, and other challenges, and sometimes we realize we have few options left. We may arrive at a very dark and hopeless place.

In a situation like this, unless one can open one's heart and seek help from a higher source — something higher than one's ego and one's pain — it is possible to feel continuously lost in darkness and to suffer. So you might pray to the enlightened beings, guardians and protectors for help in removing obstacles, finding solutions, or obtaining clarity in decision-making. Even if you're not sure prayer will help, at least you can be open to the possibility. I think that when people ask for help with that kind of openness, the universe opens new doors and new opportunities.

Clearly, when you are in that place of openness, there are many people and beings who want to help you. Enlightened beings, family, friends, and colleagues, all want to help. Through prayer, you are opening a door in your heart. You are breaking through your conceptual, rational mind that has always been trying to control, and you are finding that space in your heart that opens your life to new possibilities.

**Do you mean that prayer is most effective when you are praying for yourself? Or is it also powerful to pray for the benefit of others in need?**



Absolutely, it has the same power for helping others. Prayer can have great benefit when done by anyone who wishes to help others, including therapists, social workers, and even teachers like myself. Before I give a teaching, I pray: "May I be helpful in the way that has the most potential to help those who are here to listen to me." I pray like that; I am open to that. After I finish the teaching or practice, I pray: "May these words be helpful for all who truly need them at this moment in their life." I always begin and conclude with prayers like these.



**Does the effect of prayer depend on one's level of consciousness while praying? During the seminar in Amsterdam you said that on a scale from 1 to 10, most people don't go beyond 3.**

It has to do with how conscious you are of something higher than you, than your ego or sense of identity. Many people have difficulty asking for help from a deity, guardian, protector, or other higher being. Basically, this requires openness and trust in something more than you, something that is not confused, not lost, not in pain, something that is able to help. It is about being open to new possibilities.

**About two years ago I recited the mantra of *The Red Garuda* for three *malas* (324 times) every day for at least half a year. I became more confident as a result. It really changed me, and I don't understand why.**

Until you did that, you were not open. When you are open, things definitely change. There are a lot of people who feel lost and unable to help themselves, but they are not open enough to allow change to happen.

**So, both reciting mantras and praying help one to open up?**

Yes, they both open us to something beyond our conceptual mind.

**What is the difference between the various prayers we recite, such as the *Dedication Prayer*, *Long-Life Prayers*, or *Bardo Prayer*?**

Every prayer has a different function or purpose. Some are more powerful, some are more peaceful. In a way, prayers are like the phone calls or messages we send each other — they can be urgent or they can be more easy-going. Some prayers are for removing obstacles, some are for

dedicating our practice for others' welfare, some are for receiving blessings, some are for retrieving qualities or elemental essences. The *Prayer of Taphritsa* is for awakening the consciousness to abide in the nature of mind. So, there are many different prayers.

**The image of a telephone also came to me. I don't know how a phone works, but when I talk into it and there is a connection, somebody somewhere can hear me. Energy goes from this place to that place. Can you use that analogy with prayers? When you think of someone and pray for them — as we do in the Garuda email prayer list — are you sending positive energy to that person?**

Yes, absolutely.

**Is the *Inner Refuge Prayer* you wrote for *The 3 Doors* a prayer or a poem?**

It is a prayer. But poems and prayers can go together. Most of the prayers are like poems, but not every poem is a prayer.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux  
Edited by Polly Turner**



# PRAYERS IN THE DZOGCHEN TRADITION OF TIBET

During his annual European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explained the role and meaning of certain prayers recited in the Dzogchen tradition of Tibetan Bon Buddhism; and discussed the balance between seeking external and internal sources of help. This is an edited transcript of the teaching.

## The *Guru Yoga Prayer*

The *Guru Yoga Prayer* plays an important role in the Bon tradition. If the prayer is new to you and seems unfamiliar, it is normal to feel a bit shy or resistant about reciting it. It is fine to stay shy for this year's retreat, but for sure not for next year. I know people who are in the same place after ten years' time — they are still unconfident, unsure. So if you want to move forward on the spiritual path, the sooner you break your shyness, the better it will be for you.

The principle of *guru yoga* is very simple: There are beings with higher capacities than we have. They include masters, yogis, and other lineage holders, as well as enlightened beings. Essentially, with the *Guru Yoga Prayer* we are willing to say, "If there is anyone with higher capacities than I have, please help me — I am not too shy to ask you, so please help." There are two aspects here: One is the ability to accept that someone knows more than you do. This can be a bit challenging, but it is good to have this ability. The second is to be open and trusting enough to be willing to ask for help.

In the Dzogchen tradition of Bon Buddhism, we traditionally ask, "Help me to recognize myself — help me to recognize my own true nature." We are not asking for help in finding a new relationship, a new car, or a new job. Of course you can ask for those things, but that is not the primary objective. For, when you have found yourself — when you have achieved self-realization — then you have found everything you need. And without finding yourself, you are less likely to find that new relationship.

That point is not easy to understand. In other



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his son Senghe.

spiritual traditions, people may look outside themselves for wellbeing, protection, or support, particularly when they are in crisis. For example, some may go on pilgrimage to seek help from mountain spirits, others may invoke certain gods or goddesses, visit holy places, or engage in specific healing techniques. We can find support from such external sources, but it is limited. According to the Dzogchen teachings, finding yourself is the answer to everything. So the first prayer, the *Guru Yoga Prayer*, is where we ask our master (and other realized beings) to "Help me to recognize myself." We need to reflect on this, and come to a deeper understanding of how to connect.

## The *Inner Refuge Prayer*

The *Inner Refuge Prayer* is composed of three prayers related to body, speech and mind. This prayer has the same intent and purpose as the *Guru Yoga Prayer*. With it we are asking, "Help me to recognize my inner refuge." The inner refuge is the one true self, one's own true essence. So these prayers essentially have the same meaning.

## The *Invocation of Tapihritsa*

*Tapihritsa* is a principal master in the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* Dzogchen lineage of Bon. As a historical [7th or 8th century] figure, *Tapihritsa* is an external manifestation; but he also embodies our true essence, which is beyond time and space. When you do not have full realization of that essence, you can connect with *Tapihritsa* as a lineage master, as someone outside you from which you can ask for help. But once you have attained full realization — when you are fully merged with that essence — then there is no longer any separation between outer and inner. There is only union. That is the ultimate *guru yoga* practice.





The reason *Tapihritsa* is depicted in his naked form is because our true essence is beyond all conceptual elaboration. When we pray to him while reciting the *Invocation of Tapihritsa*, there is a sense of asking, “Help me to remove obstacles.” We are praying to this master who is here with us, whose energy is alive and committed to helping sentient beings. We can ask him for any help we may need. But at the same time, the only way I can help myself is when I have realized myself — the self that is inseparable from the essence of *Tapihritsa*. It is similar to the process we routinely go through when asking for help from anyone — we may feel help is available, we ask for their help, but ultimately, we know we have to help ourselves. We go between these two aspects; that is the way it is in life.

### The balance between acting and being

I want to tell a personal story of prayer, acceptance, and inner refuge. The last two weeks have been very challenging. I went to Greece on a one-week holiday with my son and my nephew. We had a very good time, but just before we boarded the plane for our return flight, my nephew collapsed with a seizure. Immediately emergency services arrived, and for the next three days I was there on my own with two boys. I did not speak the language, and for the first twenty-four hours I went without

food or sleep. It turns out that my nephew had some kind of viral or bacterial infection. The situation did not improve, so my wife and sister came. We brought him to a hospital in Athens and stayed there for a whole week; he still did not get any better. Then we arranged to fly him to Switzerland. The boy is still in critical care in the Swiss hospital. We pray, and wait, and see.

In a situation like this, you do everything possible. You can ask for prayers from the monasteries in India and from sangha members, and you can say your own prayers. But at the same time, you have to live in the moment. This is life. Similarly, if you know that you yourself are about to die and there is nothing that can be done, putting all your energy in trying not to die is not so helpful; rather, the best approach is to host the dying process, be fully present in that experience, and have no issues with it. That is the greatest practice.

Sometimes we think that ‘going beyond death’ or beyond any other difficult circumstance means that the situation is prevented from happening. Of course we will do our best when confronted by any challenge. But at some point, when we realize that we are doing or have done our best and that nothing more can be done, we need to have peace with what is, without trying to change it. The sooner we can reach that understanding, the more peace we will have. In such moments we have the opportunity to show our openness, generosity, care, and attention. It is an opportunity for family members to support each other. And then, it is an opportunity to discover that the peace we are seeking is within us: a quiet sense of peace and a greater perspective. We find this by going to the inner refuge. From within the inner refuge we can see more clearly, handle the situation better, and manifest a more positive side of ourselves. We can try to do our best at the same time that we are just being with the situation, and not fighting it.



*Tapihritsa.*

In the Bon tradition, we can invoke external entities such as *Tapihritsa* or *Yeshé Walmo*, or we can connect with the refuge within. Both approaches are helpful. They don't contradict each other; rather, they support each other. During a crisis it is important that family members and friends remember to support

and hold each other in the right space with warmth. It is difficult, but at the same time, it can be a beautiful experience of connection.

This balance between doing your best and simply being with a challenging situation is a very interesting and important practice. Even in normal daily life, there may be a lot of things that you wish you could change, but cannot. Acceptance is the best way to find peace. For example, a friend of mine who owned a business was struggling with it for many years, and his business was getting worse. One day I saw him, and he seemed so happy and uplifted that I immediately assumed his business was going well. But when I asked, he said, “No, my business is in the worst possible state, but I have accepted the situation and have decided to give up and let it go.” That sounded wonderful, but perhaps he should have realized this ten years earlier! We are all in a similar posi-



tion —there are many different ways in which we struggle in life, and the single answer is self-realization. Is this truly the one single answer? That is the big question. For me, yes, it is — I trust completely in the inner refuge. But sometimes doubts arise, and this is why we practice. We can try to build some sense of openness, devotion, and trust in *Tapihritsa*, who represents the union of all the masters. All the masters you trust and to whom you feel a connection are embodied in this image of *Tapihritsa*.

### Remembering what is precious in us

When we pray in Dzogchen practice, we continuously ask the same thing: “Help me to recognize myself. Help me to find the sacred space in me that is the greatest protection.” Nothing can destroy that, not even death or sickness. No pain or darkness can obscure that. “Help me to find pure awareness. Help me to find that warmth and bliss, what I am.” That is the prayer. Once you have realized the inner refuge, then any manifestation from that space is likely to be beneficial. If change is meant to happen, you are more likely to find the solution. If change is not meant to happen, then you are more likely to quickly and fully accept what is. In both scenarios, there is peace.



The essence of Buddha is within us. When you look at yourself, you may see someone who is proud, egotistic, or not good enough. But the inner refuge is within you. Churches and temples are important, but can you see that you, too, are important? Most people don't see themselves that way. You carry a precious jewel within you. Sometimes we focus too much on what we have lost — “I've lost a dear friend; I've lost my job.” But we seldom think about how rich we are, how full we are, how complete we are, and about the enlightened qualities that are fully present in us. We don't think so much about how alive we can become, and how kind and open we can be to others. The question is, can we look at life in a different way? Our access to the inner refuge is so valuable, and we all have that access. We are so lucky to have it — and we must remember that.

During the last two weeks, we adults wanted to

help my 11-year-old nephew to wake up and recover, and we were filled with doubt. One moment he was a child laughing, playing, and singing songs with my son, Senghe; the next moment he was having a seizure, and he was gone. The adults experienced doubt and distress, but he did not. He was experiencing moment to moment, and there was nothing wrong in that moment for him. In a way it was a great teaching. We could impute a lot of things on the situation, but the situation itself was not carrying so much — that is the truth. I felt so grateful knowing that whenever I needed peace, the silence was always there. I would enter for a few minutes into the awareness of that silence and find peace. We need to remember what is precious and undeluded in us, and remember that we have access to it. Even at the moment when we are taking our last breath, we have access to it.

I am talking about intense situations here, but for some people, nearly every situation in life is intense. Any challenging time is a good moment to reflect. We can pray: “May I always remember the inner refuge, may I have easy access to it; may I be able to abide there.” That is our prayer. As long as we have access, all is good. No matter how difficult the situation is, it is all good.

For those who are completely new, a simple way to meditate here is to remember the stillness of the body, the silence of speech, and the spaciousness of mind — what we call the three precious pills. The beauty is that help is always there. An ambulance may be delayed, but the three precious pills can be taken in an instant. The more you practice with them, the better and better their effects are and the more you can trust in them. You can instantly cut through the craziness of a situation, enter deeply into the stillness, silence, and spaciousness, and find a sense of peace. Even better, from that sense of peace and warmth, you will know what to say and do and can be more helpful. In many different ways it is a great support.

**Transcript by Ton Bisscheroux**  
**Edited by Polly Turner**





# LONG LIFE MANTRA ACCUMULATIONS REQUESTED FOR HIS HOLINESS LUNGTOK TENPAI NYIMA RINPOCHE

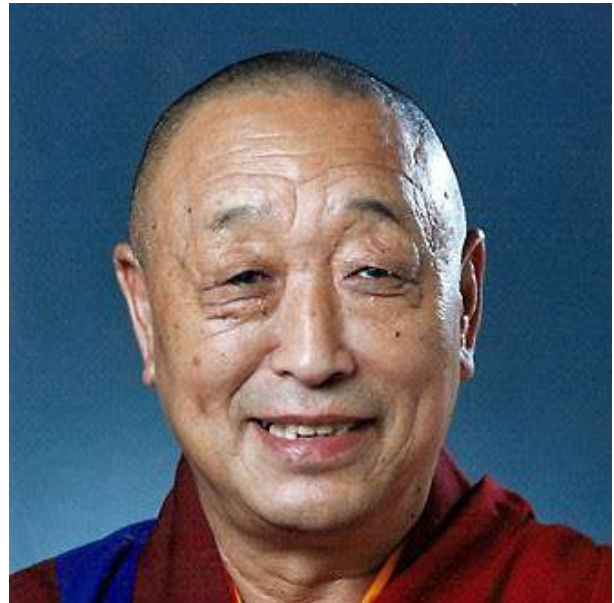
Everyone is encouraged to recite the *Long Life Prayer* and *Long Life Mantra* for the health of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, spiritual leader of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition. Read a letter from Rob Patzig, chair of the Ligmincha International Board, for details.

Dear Dharma Friends:

At the age of 88, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin, serves not only as the spiritual leader of the Bon religion worldwide, but he continues to travel and teach around the world. Recently he has experienced some health issues.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche encourages all of us to accumulate both the Long Life Prayer and Long Life Mantra for His Holiness. Prayer is a powerful healing tool, especially when supported by the collective efforts of many practitioners. Many Yungdrung Bon Centers and practitioners around the world are joining together in this activity.

One can begin a practice session with recitation of the Long Life Prayer three times in Tibetan or your native language, or both. Following the prayer, one can then accumulate the Long Life Mantra. And, of course, at the end of each practice session dedicate the merit to the benefit of all sentient beings.



We are asking each sangha to designate one individual to keep count of its members' mantra recitations. That person can then submit the sangha's total count at the end of each month to Ligmincha International's main office. Soon we will post the email addresses for these designated sangha members. Each month, the Ligmincha International office will then forward this count to Menri Monastery.

If you are unaffiliated with a sangha in a specific location, please submit your monthly Long Life Mantra accumulation count to: [Long Life Mantra for H.H.](#)

Long Life Prayer for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

ཨོཾ་འཕགས་མཁའ་ལྷོ་གསལ་བཅུ་ལྷོ་ཀླུ་པ་སྤྱན་རྒྱལ་གྱི།  
མཆིན་བརྩེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ངོ་ཤོ་གཅིག་བསྟན་པ།  
ཟབ་རྒྱས་གཤེན་བསྟན་སྤེལ་བའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་ཅན།  
ཡུང་རྟོགས་བསྟན་པའི་ཉི་མ་རྟག་འཆར་གོག།

*Rap jam chok chü gyal wa sé ché kyi  
Kyen tsé ye shé ngo wo chik dü pa  
Zap gyé shen ten pel wé trin lé chen  
Lung tok Ten pa'i Nyi ma tak char shok*

The omniscient wisdom of the buddhas and bodhisattvas of the ten directions is condensed in a single essence in you, Highest One. Possessor of the enlightened activity of the profound, expanded, increasing teachings of Tönpa Shenrap, We pray that you, Lungtok Tenpa'i Nyima, shine forever.



We ask that this practice be continued through the end of this year. With our collective efforts we should be able to offer several million Long Life Mantras during this time!

And, as we collect mantras, Ligmincha is also seeking donations to support several animal release efforts, known as Tsé Tar. In the Yungdrung Bon tradition, the practice of Tsé Tar, or Saving the Life of Beings, is a powerful method to

protect and extend the lifespan of both the beings that are freed and those who perform or sponsor the practice. We intend to offer the Tsé Tar dedicated to the long life of His Holiness in the United States, India and Nepal. You can provide financial support to the project here: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

**Rob Patzig**  
President, Ligmincha International

Long Life Mantra

བསྟོན་མྱེ་ཨ་དཀར་མུ་ལ་ཏིང་ནམ་འོད་འདུ་མུ་ཡེ་ཆོ་ནི་ངེ།

*SO DRUM A KAR MU LA TING NAM Ö DU MU YE TSE NI DZA*

SO empty space	TING NAM nectar	
DRUM Long Life Deity castle	Ö DU receiving long life force	NI seed syllable for human realm
A KAR unborn wisdom	MU YE syllable for prosperity	DZA hooks of light
MU LA seed syllable of yogi	TSE long life	

## HEALTH OF HIS HOLINESS IMPROVES, PLEASE CONTINUE LONG LIFE MANTRA

We are happy to share the good news that the health of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin, is improving. Please continue to do the Long Life Prayer and Long Life Mantra for His Holiness through the end of the year.

Menri Monastery and Bon practitioners around the world have been conducting rituals and prays for His Holiness since late August, upon the advice of His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the most senior teacher in the Bon tradition. His Holiness reports that his health is back to normal and that he is resting well at Menri.

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will soon travel to India to visit and spend some time with His Holiness. "When I first heard about His Holiness' health condition, which now seems more stabilized, I felt a wish to visit and spend some time

with him," Rinpoche said. "On September 28 I will travel to India for two weeks. There I plan to offer the practice of *Tse Tar* (life Liberation), and to do long life rituals and prayers for His Holiness. I know that our Ligmincha sangha members worldwide are continuing to accumulate the Long Life Prayer and Mantra for His Holiness."

The heartfelt prayers and practices of everyone for His Holiness's healing are deeply appreciated. Everyone is encouraged to continue to recite the Long Life Mantra and Long Life Prayer for His Holiness and to submit their accumulations at the end of each month to their local sangha or online.

Since the letter was first published on September 6th sangha members from around the world have already accumulated more than two million long life mantras for His Holiness. Eh Ma Ho!

Update from: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)



# TRANSFORMING YOUR LIFE THROUGH MEDITATION

**8 – 13 November, 2015**

The first 3 Doors Europe Academy graduates completed their two and half year program in March 2015. As we plan for the second Academy, which will begin in June 2016, we recognize a need to offer an intermediate length program, in addition to the weekend seminar experiences we have provided across Europe.

***Transforming Your Life through Meditation*** is a five-and-a-half-day residential retreat that allows participants to take time away from their daily lives and fully immerse in a supportive environment to explore the inner refuge, and to reconnect with true inner self. You will be introduced to the stillness of body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind as the three doors that connect you to the transformative power of this refuge.

Through the daily practice of yogas of movement and breath you will explore the sacred architecture of the subtle energy centers and channels. Singing sacred syllables, you can clear blockages and open to the genuine warmth of being. You will be guided to reflect upon challenges that limit the fullness of your life, and learn how to bring these challenges to your practice in order to transform them. Each day will be built upon the previous and will focus particularly on the cultivation of compassion for oneself and for others in our daily lives.

This retreat will be ideal for those who would like to deepen their practices of The 3 Doors. The format of a residential retreat allows participants to fully be immersed and experience the meditation

methods in more depth than is possible in a weekend seminar. It will also be an excellent preparation for those interested in entering into the next 3 Doors Academy.

We invite you to join us for this unique opportunity to deepen your relationship with yourself while being supported by the collective presence and companionship of the group. The retreat is being held at Pauenhof Retreat Centre, near Düsseldorf, Germany. Arrival date is 7 November, and retreat begins Sunday 8 November, ending midday Friday 13 November. For more information, please visit: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org).

Warm wishes,  
**John Jackson and Raven Lee**



Join in this retreat to get closer to who you really are. Join in sharing the space and the warmth with others, who are just as you are: searching for more authenticity in their life. Working with daily obstacles makes you aware of the pain inside and also of the quality that is there to transform yourself. Allowing both pain and the warmth inside makes you feel more and more at home with yourself. The support of the teachers and the group are wonderful to be with, this is the true meaning of the medicine of being human: trusting your own heart, trusting who you really are, trusting the world around you....

**Marlies Cober-Philippens, a graduate of the first 3 Doors European Academy.**





# LISHU INSTITUTE IS A GREAT GIFT

**"We are in the world of Tibetan syllables and geckos while studying Tibetan Bon at Lishu Institute in India." Here is a report from Jacek Trzebuniak and Brita Carmen Sommer on the first residential teaching program at Lishu Institute in India.**

enjoy our classes very much. Sangmo is a great teacher, very kind with a lot of enthusiasm. We have already learnt the Tibetan alphabet and a lot about the different titles of *Tonpa Shenrab*.

This part of the year the weather is very nice: hot but not too much. Lishu Institute is surrounded by



The students at Lishu Institute.

The first residential program at Lishu Institute (India) started 14th September 2015 with six people: Jorge (Mexico), Tal (USA), Brita (Denmark), Daniela (Brasil), Ricardo (Brasil) and me, Jacek Trzebuniak (Poland). Two more people from Hungary (Katalin Jakab, Abel Varadi) and one from France (Tiana) arrived 22nd September. Our teacher is Sangmo Yangri, who has a Ph.D. in Bon Philosophy from Varanasi University. With us here also are: Geshe Thupten (president of Lishu) and Sushi (our cook) as well as several dogs.

We have classes from Monday to Friday and weekends are free. Every morning we do a session of practice, then after breakfast we have two classes: one on the hagiography of *Tonpa Shenrab* and the other is about the first two vehicles from *The Nine Ways of Bon* (from *Central Treasure*). In the afternoon we have Tibetan language classes and we learn about Bon Prayers. In the evening we do a second one-hour meditation session. We

beautiful forests and mountains. It is a quiet area, among small villages. The big city, Dehradun, is around 20 km from here. Nature is very present here, and we see a lot of birds and geckos.



The main building of Lishu Institute.





Mindrolling monastery.

One Saturday our group visited a Tibetan settlement in Dehradun, where several Tibetan Buddhist traditions have their monasteries, for example Mindrolling (main monastery of Nyingma tradition). We visited the big *Stupa* and the huge statue of Buddha. In the end of our trip we visited the Bon Monastery – Za Mongyal (main teacher of this monastery is Kundol Rinpoche).

In October we want to visit Menri (the main Bon monastery), which is quite close to here, around five hours by car. In December there is a break, and from January we will study the second two vehicles of *The Nine Ways of Bon (Mahayana Sutra)* with Sherab Lodro (a teacher from Menri).

The last part of this first year will take place from March to June, and we will study *Tantra* from *The Nine Ways of Bon*. Students can come for one year, but also it is possible to come for a part or two of the year (two and half month each).

**Text by Jacek Trzebuniak**



My impression of Lishu is strongest if I look inward. There are many times in the last three weeks, where I have felt an incredible burning warmth inside. After these days in this strange country far far away, I was settling in and I started to experience deep silence and calm inside. In the *Gompa* doing the meditations I experienced a strong feeling of warmth more and more often. The natural environment around Lishu supports this experience very much. It's like sitting on top of the world up in the temple room. Everything is quiet except the birds, the wind and the other







Our teacher Sangmo Yangri.

animal sounds. Walking up and down the stairs to or from the practice you suddenly feel the greater meaning behind this gift from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Here I am able to get a free space away from the rest of the world and life, just to develop inwards, as a human being to develop my concentration, my connection to my own essence, my compassion, my joy and love of the world.

I feel an enormous gratefulness to the other practitioners that make this unity possible. When they sing *Guru Yoga* with me, the deep power in the room arises and lifts us all. The light from the nature outside fills me with joy and the birds are visiting and singing as they know, what we are doing, and want to give us all their blessings.

At the dinner table one can suddenly feel the warmth inside as well, and walking and talking with the other practitioners is giving me this special feeling of having found my family, my home. There are moments I will keep inside forever as a special treasure. I want to send my most sincere thankfulness to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for making all this happen for us at Lishu Institute.

#### Text by Brita Carmen Sommer

Photos by Brita Carmen Sommer, Daniela Zago and Jacek Trzebuniak



Our group near the big Stupa in Dehradun.



Statue of Buddha in Dehradun.





# CUTTING THROUGH SPIRITUAL MATERIALISM

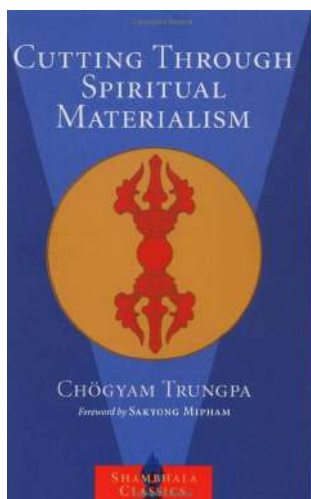
**We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and religions. Ton Bisscheroux shares the pages 13-15 from the first book he read about Tibetan Buddhism. It was written by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, a Buddhist meditation master and holder of both the Kagyu and Nyingma lineages. He was a major figure in the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism to the West, but he was also controversial, because of his life-style.**

We have come here to learn about spirituality. I trust the genuine quality of this search but we must question its nature. The problem is that ego can convert anything to its own use, even spirituality. Ego is constantly attempting to acquire and apply the teachings of spirituality for its own benefit. The teachings are treated as an external thing, external to “me,” a philosophy which we try to imitate. We do not actually want to identify with or become the teachings. So if our teacher speaks of renunciation of ego, we attempt to mimic renunciation of ego. We go through the motions, make the appropriate gestures, but we really do not want to sacrifice any part of our way of life. We become skillful actors, and while playing deaf and dumb to the real meaning of the teachings, we find some comfort in pretending to follow the path.

Whenever we begin to feel any discrepancy or conflict between our actions and the teachings, we immediately interpret the situation in such a way that the conflict is smoothed over. The interpreter is ego in the role of spiritual adviser. The situation is like that of a country where church and state are separate. If the policy of the state is foreign to the teachings of the church, then the automatic reaction of the king is to go to the head of the church, his spiritual adviser, and ask his blessing. The head of the church then works out some justification and gives the policy his blessing under the pretense that the king is the protector of the faith. In an individual's mind, it works out

very neatly that way, ego being both king and head of the church.

This rationalization of the spiritual path and one's actions must be cut through if true spirituality is to be realized. However, such rationalizing is not easy to deal with because everything is seen through the filter of ego's philosophy and logic, making all appear neat, precise, and very logical. We attempt to find a self-justifying answer for every question. In order to reassure ourselves, we work to fit into our intellectual scheme every aspect of our lives which might be confusing. And our effort is so serious and solemn, so straightforward and sincere, that it is difficult to be suspicious of it. We always trust the “integrity” of our spiritual adviser.



It does not matter what we use to achieve self-justification: the wisdom of sacred books, diagrams or charts, mathematical calculations, esoteric formulae, fundamentalist religion, depth psychology, or any other mechanism. Whenever we begin to evaluate, deciding that we should or should not do this or that, then we have already associated our practice or our knowledge with categories, one pitted against the other, and that is spiritual materialism, the false spirituality of our spiritual adviser.

Whenever we have a dualistic notion such as, “I am doing this because I want to achieve a particular state of consciousness, a particular state of being,” then automatically we separate ourselves from the reality of what we are.

If we ask ourselves, “What is wrong with evaluating, with taking sides?” the answer is that, when we formulate a secondary judgment, “I should be doing this and should avoid doing that,” then we have achieved a level of complication which takes us a long way from the basic simplicity of what we are. The simplicity of meditation means just experiencing the ape instinct of ego. If anything more than this is laid onto our psychology, then it becomes a very heavy, thick mask, a suit of armor.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**



# HOTEL CALIFORNIA

In order to introduce the sangha in California, on the West Coast of the United States, Ton Bisscheroux talked with five California sangha members from three practice groups: Bob Anger, Darlene Sessions and Raven Lee from Los Angeles, Maria Soares from San Diego, and Laura Shekerjian from San Francisco Bay Area. Everybody has a unique story to tell. The state of California is larger than Germany, so distance is a big issue they have to deal with when they organize something.

**Ton:** Darlene, can you tell how you are organized in Los Angeles?

**Darlene:** We have a small council of people, Bob Anger, Raven Lee, her husband Tom Ward, Ken Okuno, my husband Tom Sessions and me. While we share administrative activities, we do rely on others within the greater sangha community to help with the annual retreat and other activities. Our greater sangha includes people with a broad range of spiritual and life experience, including experience and involvement in the larger Ligmincha organization. We mostly communicate by e-mail.

Some members of our sangha have been involved in these types of practices for more than twenty



years, and many members are people we have met over time, through affiliation with similar groups. For example, we have teachers from the Yeru Böñ that come here frequently. Latri Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche is the spiritual leader of the Yeru Böñ group. Some practitioners go to both Ligmincha and Yeru Böñ programs, and we try to coordinate our activities, so people can manage in time and place, as well as cost. Part of our coordination with Yeru Böñ, and as requested by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Latri Nyima Dakpa, is an annual joint celebration of *Losar*. This year we hosted *Losar*, and next year will be Yeru Bon's turn to host. One of the teachers in the area does a ceremony, a practice and we share a meal. This year *The Light of the Golden Sun* had just been released, and we were able to watch that. We also



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in Los Angeles in 2008.



listened to the talk that came out of Serenity Ridge that morning.

**Ton: Can you tell about your activities?**

**Darlene:** We have monthly practices. One is in Santa Monica (West Los Angeles area), and one is in Sierra Madre (East Los Angeles area). Although we try to have these practices in areas that are accessible to the larger sangha, the truth is the traffic and parking in these areas is difficult, which results in a relatively small turnout.

I have been the treasurer of the group for some years now, and my primary responsibility for the last five to ten years has been helping to organize the annual weekend retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. For many years we organized that in an offsite location, in a park in the Santa Monica mountains. Over time we found that it was harder and harder for people to travel there, especially when we scheduled a talk for Friday night, and asked people to return for the teaching the next day. Although we used to offer some residential options, the fact is that people generally drive to these events. We have people coming to our annual retreat from Mexico, from throughout the state of California, from the East Coast, The Pacific North West, and other Western states.

Two years ago we made a survey asking our overall sangha a variety of questions, including for instance: what people felt about an annual retreat, what were the main components they were looking for in a retreat, and we asked them everything from the type of teaching, to location, to costs and to the timeframe. And we asked them about the ongoing practices. We got a pretty good response, and from that, one of the things we decided to do was to hold our annual retreat in a more central location, which would be easier to access by car and rail. This year we did that the first time, and we had such a tremendous response that we had to turn people away. That was something we did not want to do. We want to make the teachings available to as many people who would want to receive them, because we think they are very precious. Another interesting thing we learned from our survey was that people want foundational teachings. One teaching program Rinpoche had not yet done in California was *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. Last year was the first installment of that teaching, and for next year we have changed the location to a bigger one in Pasadena so that we can accommodate a larger group. We also learned that people are very enthusiastic about Rinpoche's online programs, because of the ease of access from any location.



John Jackson teaching in Los Angeles 2005. Left to right: Kallon Basquin, Tomas Ward, Raven Lee, John Jackson, Bob Anger, Darlene Sessions, Tom Sessions.





**Ton:** How did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?

**Darlene:** Rinpoche did a program at the Los Angeles Shambhala center, of which I was a member. My husband and I attended his program and were very taken with him, and I remember he was so playful. He had a camera and was wondering through the crowd of about seventy-five people, taking photos. He has such a wonderful personality and way of relating to people that puts you on the spot and yet is not critical. He has a wonderful way of sensing what is happening with the audience, what people are experiencing and doing, and he has a way of pinpointing that with people, whether it is individually or as a group. Plus, Rinpoche is so approachable. He is always right there with us, and he stays there with you the whole teaching. He makes himself available if people want to come up and ask him a question. It is a huge treasure to have that. For me personally it is also an advantage that he is married and has a child, and he understands that aspect too. Actually, I have found that all Bon teachers seem to be very approachable.



**Ton:** Bob, can you tell how the sangha started and how it evolved in Los Angeles?

**Bob:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to California for the first time in September 1994. At that time Alicia White and her colleague Geraldine Takayoshi were doing the administrative work and Rinpoche wanted satellite groups to be known as “Khyung Dzongs,” “Garuda fortress.” At that time we didn't have the name Ligmincha. The name change was decided at the Ligmincha summer retreat in 1998 in Santa Fe, New Mexico. For a couple of years Rinpoche came to Los Angeles over what in the US is known as The Labor Day Holiday. The first Monday in September every year is Labor Day, and he would do a five-day retreat in a hotel. Two years later we held the teachings at the Los Angeles Shambhala Center. In 1996 H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche also taught with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and that was really quite a wonderful teaching and that probably was the year that I started coordinating for Ligmincha. We all were quite enthusiastic students of Tenzin



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaching in Los Angeles 2015.

Wangyal Rinpoche and things were evolving quite well.

Rosalyn L. Bruyere, founder of the Healing Light Center Church, played a huge role in the evolution of Bon in Los Angeles and the West altogether. She is an internationally acclaimed healer, clairvoyant and medicine woman and acknowledged Oracle for the Tibetan Bonpo. She had been doing psychic healing quite some time, and she was channeling who she said was Master Chan, a Bon Lama or Bon Priest. And I guess years of that happening, created curiosity about Bon which evolved from there in California and the US.

In Los Angeles there are students of H.E. Menri Lopon Rinpoche, of Lama Khemsar Rinpoche, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche of course. And the students go where the teachers are. To take care of a sangha in an area of thirteen million people and a huge geographic area – there are hundreds of miles between students – is a significant challenge.

I coordinated Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings once we started at the Shambhala Center. From there we moved on to a Catholic Retreat Center for one year, and next to a Retreat Center owned by the State of California in the Santa Monica Mountains. This place worked well for



about ten years. A couple of years ago Darlene Sessions took over the organization and coordination of Rinpoche's teachings in the Los Angeles area.

**Ton: When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?**

**Bob:** That was at the first retreat he gave in Los Angeles. I had been meditating for a couple of years with a friend with a Zen background, who I met through an ad in our local paper. My background was with the Shambhala sangha, and we had a meditation practice group, basically non-denominational. He heard that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was coming to town so we attended together his five-day residential retreat, which was a wonderful opportunity to get to know Rinpoche and to study and practice with him.

**Ton: Did you go because you were interested in Bon, or was it just because of your friend's invitation to you?**

**Bob:** I studied a long time with Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche and he made me aware of the existence of Bon in his background. I was very curious about the symbols coming from Bon, Trungpa Rinpoche employed in Shambhala training. There was clearly a cultural overlap and interconnectedness between Buddhism and Bon. Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche had passed away and I was interested in seeing what there was to learn and from whom it might be learned.

**Ton: How often did Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visit Los Angeles?**

**Bob:** The first few years he came twice a year, but that pattern did not continue for too many years. I remember Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche while teaching at the Shambhala Center, probably 1997-1998, when he said: "Now that Serenity Ridge is established it is time for you to come there. Traditionally students come to the teacher, the teacher does not come to the students." And he clearly said: "If you do not start coming to Serenity Ridge, I will stop coming to Los Angeles." That summer twelve of us from Los Angeles attended the summer retreat at Serenity Ridge. It was not an issue after that, and Rinpoche has continued to come to Los Angeles to teach each year since that time.

**Ton: Once Rinpoche told us that he really enjoys California. He was one time waiting at the airport**



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching shrine - Los Angeles 2009.

**when his plane was delayed, and he asked himself: "Why don't I come and live here?"**

**Bob:** He likes the spaciousness. Once in Virginia I talked with him about how beautiful the particular place we were was, which was heavily wooded. And he said: "Yes, it's beautiful, but I prefer the spaciousness and big skies of California."



**Ton: Raven, can you share about the practice groups in Los Angeles?**

**Raven:** We usually focus on a particular practice for one or two years, and then we change according to Rinpoche's teachings and at his request. The last few years, we have been practicing *Sherap Chamma*. With Rinpoche's new book and free webinar, *The True Source of Healing*, we are beginning this month to practice the transformative power of inner refuge and *Soul Retrieval* at one of the monthly meetings, while continuing *Sherap Chamma* in the other practice. In addition to our two-hours monthly practice, our vision is to





offer once or twice a year a whole day of *Ngondro* practice for those who have attended the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*.

Los Angeles sangha is spread out over a few hours drive. It is about the size of one third of the Netherlands and more than ten million people live here. From the West side to the East side of Los Angeles it is about a two-and-a-half hour drive. In Europe, you could be in another country. For this reason, we accommodate two practice groups, one on the West side in Santa Monica at Bob's place, and one here in Sierra Madre at our place. Recognizing this distance, the council is wishing to serve the needs of the sangha by having a one-day practice, which might inspire members to make the long drive and come together to deepen and share our experiences and realizations.

You had asked earlier about the size of our sangha. The following few months right after Rinpoche comes to teach, the practice group can be around fifteen to twenty, and then gradually it becomes smaller. Since Rinpoche started the webinar teachings, which has been so supportive of the sangha members, I have noticed less people attending the practice because of the long distance. Yet when they do come, the warmth, the heart connection is there. I have been a Ligmincha *umdze* for almost fifteen years. There have been many changes in our sangha. In the beginning it was mainly the Ligmincha sangha in Los Angeles, but now we have four other Bon sanghas.

**Ton: How was it when the other Bon groups formed in Los Angeles?**

**Raven:** I remember a teaching on the *Six Lokas* and the obstacles of each realm. The greatest challenge for the human realm is change and impermanence. When the new Bon sanghas first formed we had some growing pains. The sangha went through a shift and grew somewhat smaller, as some of our members joined the new groups. It is like when you have a large family gathering, and suddenly an uncle comes, and then some of your cousins move away and go to him. We adjusted to the change. Instead of having a pain reaction that somebody is taking away our members, we viewed it as, "How wonderful that the Bon teachings are spreading and that more Bon lamas can serve the growing needs of the sangha!" The fact we have four Bon sanghas here in Los Angeles is a great celebration.

At *Losar*, all the Bon sanghas come together and we talk and meet the different Bon lamas and there is a sense of camaraderie, a sense of organization. Ligmincha used to be the main sangha in Los Angeles, and now we have this large family with Menri Lupon Rinpoche's sangha, Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche's sangha, and the sangha of Lama Khemsar Rinpoche. It is so wonderful to have a large Bon family. Each time when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche comes to Los Angeles we have a council meeting, and we talk about how to best support the Ligmincha sangha. Rinpoche always says, "Don't worry about making it big, just keep



Los Angeles teaching with Yongzin Rinpoche, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche - Spring 1995.







H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Los Angeles in 1997.

the practice going and have the place available for everyone who comes.”

**Ton:** I saw that the people leading the practice groups in California, they are all very experienced practitioners. In the Netherlands we have the policy that (almost) everybody should be able to lead the practice, when they are committed and when they want to do so.

**Raven:** Yes, that is a wonderful way to include participants to be engaged and involved. There are times we invite people to do a part of the practice, like the *Guru Yoga* or *Dedication*, so there is a sense of involvement. Especially when we practice *Ngondro*, each person can guide a part of the practice, if they feel comfortable doing so.

There are also people who come together to practice informally. For instance, there are sangha members in San Diego who attend Rinpoche's teachings, and they come together as a group to practice. We encourage people to engage in daily practice in any way they choose, and we ask them what kind of support they need from us. The sangha continues to shift over the years, but there is a heart connection and it is always joyful whenever and wherever we meet.

**Ton:** Do you also invite other lamas from Ligmincha?

**Raven:** During the year we have one or two teachings by Bon lamas, such as Geshe Tenzin Yangton and Geshe Nyima Kunchap. Usually about twenty-five people attend, and the teaching is more traditional. Teachings can be about *Yeshé Walmo*, *Zhang Zhung Meri*, or rituals. In the last few years, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been

teaching more about the three *kayas*, the inner refuge, in all his teachings of Dzogchen. It is a blessing for us that the Los Angeles sangha have other lamas who instruct us on the history of Bon, *Yidams*, and different rituals.

We also have a monthly 3 Doors practice. There is a convergence between Ligmincha and The 3 Doors. It is our intention to keep the purity of the teachings with Ligmincha, yet support The 3 Doors practices.

**Ton:** Are the people coming to The 3 Doors practice different to Ligmincha practitioners?

**Raven:** The 3 Doors practice is lead by a graduate from The 3 Doors Academy, and I have been there to participate, and also to clarify. The first wave of Academy was mainly Ligmincha students. In the second wave some people came to The 3 Doors with no prior experience with Ligmincha. It was surprising that in the third Academy there is an increase in those who had never heard of Ligmincha. It's nice that after connecting to The 3 Doors, they started going to teachings of Ligmincha. We are continually growing and sharing together.



**Ton:** Maria, are you in contact with the practice group in Los Angeles?

**Maria:** I met Bob Anger in 2013 when I went to see Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche there. I talked to Bob about whether there was interest in San Diego in a Ligmincha practice group. When Geshe Tenzin Yangton came here, I asked Bob for the



Maria Soares at a cliff, by the Torrey Pines Glideport.





Sangha members in San Diego at the beach with Geshe Tenzin Yangton.

mailing list, and invited a lot of people. Everything was organized on short notice and it was also a holiday, so only a few people came. Yet, It was an honor and blessing to have Geshela here with us.

**Ton: Can you tell about the sangha in San Diego?**

**Maria:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked Geshe Tenzin Yangton to open the possibility to have a sangha in San Diego. In 2013 Geshela came here to visit one time to support us. In that period we also looked a few times at Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's live webcast. It was a short introduction, but with lots of devotion, as at least three of the participants on those meetings became very close to the teachings and lineage after that. Then there was a pause in the San Diego Sangha meetings.

The reactivation of the meetings in San Diego is happening. Since July 2015, every Wednesday morning I give a one hour *Tsa Lung* for everybody who wants to come to the beautiful Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve. I told a friend I wanted to do some *Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement*,

and we found a beautiful spot near a cliff, by the Torrey Pines Glideport. There are a few people coming, sometimes only one person comes, and they found it very powerful. Some people have said that they are interested, but haven't come yet, but I am available. I did not put this activity on a mailing list yet, only on the Ligmincha International website.

I told Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche if people here are interested, I am available, and Rinpoche agreed with me that I started slow. I realized it is more important to be open, and it is not about numbers, but it is about connection, and being available and supporting when there is a need.

**Ton: How did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

**Maria:** Before I met Rinpoche, I regularly went to Deer Park Monastery, a Zen center of Thich Nhat Hanh, in the mountains of southern California. I learned of lucid dreaming, and one day a friend gave me the book *Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. A few things in



the book caught my interest, and at that time my life was challenging, and I had nightmares. Because I was involved in Zen Buddhism, and wanted to stay there, I just choose a few things from the book that might be useful. After I had practiced, I had a few lucid dreams and the nightmares stopped. Then I continued with Zen.



Dawa Gyaltsen.

When the challenges in life became stronger, I felt the need to look for a *Guru* who could give me precise instructions to practice. Because I had a partner and children I didn't want to live in a monastery. After some time I started reading Rinpoche's book again, and I Googled "Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche," and found the teaching of *The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen* on YouTube. I started to use that around the clock, and later I searched for more online teachings and started doing them, like *Sherap Chamma*, *Healing with Loving Wisdom*. At that time I could not go to his teachings, because I felt overwhelmed by my challenges. Next I did a series of three online courses: *The Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement*, *The Sound Healing*, and *The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen* on [www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com) for six weeks each course. After that, I felt the opening that I was able to meet him, and in 2012 I went to see him in Houston, Texas, where he taught *Living with Joy*, *Dying in Peace*. I talked with Rinpoche, shared my experiences, my inspiration and my wish to help him. I asked him if I should study at Lishu Institute in India. Since I did not have much understanding of the Bon yet, he advised me to

follow his teachings first. Then I went to Rome, Italy, near where my sister lives. Together with her I went to a *Dream Yoga* seminar. Finally, in July 2012 I went to New York to the retreat and release of *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. Over there, I met Marcy Vaughan and Rinpoche, and both encouraged me to attend The 3 Doors Academy.

In 2012 I joined The 3 Doors Academy, and then all my doors opened. Now I also go frequently to Gyalshen Institute, a home for me. Over there in the Bay Area, I met Laura Shekerjian for retreats from Ligmincha, or when powerful teachings delivered by precious masters are kindly offered to us. The Bon is like a family to me.



#### **Ton: Laura, can you tell about the practice Group San Francisco Bay Area?**

**Laura:** In general, our practice group focuses on supporting the teachings that Tenzin Rinpoche is currently offering in Berkeley. Right now we are studying the *A-tri* and so we invite people who are following these teachings to participate in our practice group if they'd like. If someone hasn't taken these teachings I suggest that they first attend the next scheduled teaching and then join us. We want people to receive instructions and guidance for these practices from Rinpoche himself.



Laura Shekerjian.







Skygazing with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche during a retreat in San Francisco.

We meet three times a month, twice a month at my house in Berkeley and once a month at a sangha member's house. Over the years our group has been small but recently it has been growing. For our weekday practices we have eight to ten people, which is very good considering how spread out we are in the Bay Area.

We are very informal here and I am the main organizer. There are other people who contribute a great deal, in particular Susan Killian, but I generally take the lead in organizing Rinpoche's events. I am the main *umdze* and have the responsibility to not only to lead practice but also to clarify the practice and teachings based on my understanding of what Rinpoche has taught. We certainly welcome others to start practice groups in their own areas because not everyone can travel to the East Bay where I live, but so far no other groups have formed. I think many people just prefer to do their own practice and I know as well that many people who come to see Tenzin Rinpoche also follow other teachers.

**Ton: Are there other Bon communities in your area?**

**Laura:** There is another Bon lama here, Geshe Chaphur Rinpoche of Gyalshen Institute. They offer many practices and teachings and invite other lamas to teach as well. This is a wonderful way for people to connect and receive teachings. The teachings are more traditional and they beautifully complement what we learn from Tenzin

Wangyal Rinpoche. We are happy to have this center in our area since Ligmincha doesn't have a center here.

**Ton: Do you have other activities?**

**Laura:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches here two weekends a year. In March next year Rinpoche is going to do a residential retreat for five or six days.

We create written transcripts of all the teachings that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gives here. And many years ago one of our sangha members translated *The 21 Nails*, and he and I translated *The Six Lamps* that we used in one series of teachings.

**Ton: How did you meet Rinpoche the first time?**

**Laura:** I wasn't really familiar with Bon teachings but a good friend of mine, Mark Dahlby, who edited a few of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's earlier books, asked me to go to a weekend teaching of Rinpoche here in Berkeley in 1996. When Mark left our area in 2000 he asked me if I would take over as coordinator. So I have been coordinating his events in the San Francisco Bay Area for fifteen years now. It is a wonderful way to serve the sangha and to have close contact with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha California



# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Austria, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and gave internet teachings. Geshes were invited by sanghas and Alejandro Chaoul visited Poland.



## May 1 – 3:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *Awakening the Sacred Art – Discovering Your Creative Potential* in Austria. One hundred twenty participants from different countries attended – Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Belgium, and Austria.



## August 29 – 30:

For the first time in fourteen years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche accepted the invitation to visit Hungary for a teaching. Although we did not have much time to prepare, about three-hundred-fifty people came from dif-

ferent countries: Austria, Romania and Hungary. Many people did not know much about Bon, but they were interested in *Dream Yoga*, and everybody was impressed by Rinpoche's teaching.







### August 10 – 16:

During the European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught Part 1 of *The 21 Nails*. It was a great teaching, with very precise instructions from Rinpoche

how to investigate our mind. Every day we practiced the inner refuge and did the *Invocation of Tapihritsa*, and worked with one of the *Nails*. Every *Nail* is a homage to *Künto Zangpo*, and every *Nail* represents a quality or state that is present in everybody.

When we arrived we received a beautiful booklet with the Prayers and the text of *The 21 Nails*. It is always a pleasure to go to *Schloss Buchenau*, it is such a lovely place, there's plenty of room, any time of year. Everything is organized very smoothly: Klaus, his wife and the staff take good care of us, together with the board and the volunteers of Ligmincha Germany.

On Friday evening we gathered for the feast: first a banquet with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his family, and later the Party. This year the party included nine beautiful (and some crazy) performances.

As every year, we had a lot of fun during the auction on Saturday, where we collected money for the European Center.

Every morning before breakfast we could do *Thul khor*.











### August 18 – 23:

During this week Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught part 3 of *The 21 Nails*, and we celebrated the 20th anniversary of Bon teachings in Poland.

It's hard to imagine how quickly the time has passed, and how much has changed; our personal, social, family and spiritual life.

#### A little history:

In general, Buddhism began to develop in Poland in the 60's and 70's, along with social and cultural movements. Back then we all came together, regardless of tradition and/or the kind of Buddhism.

In 1992, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave the first Dzogchen teachings, and that evoked great respect and support for the Bon tradition. In 1994 the book *Wonders of the Natural Mind* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was published and then the interest in the Bon Tradition reached peaks among a group of enthusiasts. Some of them invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and he accepted the invitation. Not only did Rinpoche give Teachings, but also saw the potential in the Polish Sangha and promised to come back the next year; and that has been continuing till this day.

He offered us not only his valuable time, and put in a lot of work in leading us, but he also gave us the possibility to contact many other Masters

from Yungdrung Bon, which we invited over the years: His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, His Eminence Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, Lhatri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsultrim Rin-poche, Chongtrul Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe, Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, Geshe Thubten, Geshe Lungrig Gyaltsen, Geshe Samten Yeshe, Geshe Nyima Ozer, Geshe Gyatso (who became the resident lama of Chama Ling Poland), and Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima.

Instructors from Ligmincha also came to teach us: Laura Shekerjian, Alejandro Chaoul, John Jackson, and Marcy Vaughn.

At the beginning of the festive dinner together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Bon teachings in Poland, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said: "It's been twenty years, and I want to tell you that I'm ready for the next twenty years!"





### September 18 – 20:

Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen visited Ligmincha Berlin Center and gave us precious teachings on *guru yoga*, *dedication*, as well as exercises in *Tsa Lung Trul khor* and various

meditation methods. Very inspiring was the lecture on Friday evening, when Geshe Lhundup was talking about himself and his personal and spiritual development as a monk in Tibet from his first contact with the dharma teachings until now. The next day started with an introduction in the meaning and practice of *guru yoga* and in the afternoon we learned the five *Ngondro Trul khor* exercises of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle.

The purpose of *Trul khor* is to overcome obstacles, that obscure our meditative state and it is helpful for moments in which silent meditation is

difficult to accomplish. Furthermore we heard more details about the background and meaning of the *Nine fold Breathings of Purification*. After that Geshe Lhundup presented us several methods of meditation, such as *Zhine*- practice with the Tibetan letter A and a meditation with the seed-syllables. This practice we conducted after we went through an interesting test about our own individual breathing pattern or habits. Finally we received teachings about the meaning of *Dedication of Merit* of the practice and exercised a brain challenging practice of *Mudras of the Five Elements*, which was quite complicated and funny at the same time! We were laughing a lot about our trial and error to manage this practice.

The weekend gave us a good overview in the great variability and richness of possible practices in the Bon tradition and was very enjoyable and profound as well for beginners as for experienced practitioners.



### September 26 – 27:

We had a wonderful weekend in Helsinki Finland with Tashi Gyaltsen teaching us Tibetan *thangka* painting.

There were fifteen of us and we started with drawing the Buddha's face and body with a pencil and learning the history of *thangka* painting and the peace, calm and inner joy these paintings represent. It was very calming to draw the outlines of the Buddha and learning about the grid that makes the Tibetan Buddha's look the same through the centuries.

Handling the pencil takes the same amount of

control and letting go as it takes to handle one's own mind and feelings in meditation. Too much grasping and you lose the great perfection, letting go too far and your line or presence gets muddy.







**Free Live Webcast**  
**Overcoming Loneliness:  
Finding the Friend Within**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**August 15, 2015** 21.00–22.30 h. (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 7 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[The True Source of Healing, Part 7: Overcoming Loneliness: Finding the Friend Within](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Nourishing Your Inner Being:  
The Heart of Soul Retrieval**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**September 12, 2015** 21.00–22.30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 8 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[The True Source of Healing, Part 8: Nourishing Your Inner Being: The Heart of Soul Retrieval](#)



**Free Live Webcast**  
**Nourishing Your Inner Being:  
Questions and Answers**  
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
**October 10, 2015**, 21.00–22.30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)  
This is Part 9 of a FREE yearlong course in soul retrieval.  
Learn more at [www.ligminchalearning.com](http://www.ligminchalearning.com)



You can watch the recording here:

[The True Source of Healing, Part 9: Nourishing Your Inner Being: Questions and Answers](#)



# A TIBETAN IN PARIS

**Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen is a resident lama of Ligmincha Institute living in Paris, France. He has already taught a few times in Germany, he has been invited to teach in the Netherlands, and surely he will be invited to teach in other countries, once other sanghas get to know him. Ton Bisscheroux talked with Geshela and two members of the Ligmincha France board who live in Paris: Pierre Clisson and Raphaël Ibanez de Garayo.**

**Ton:** Geshela, I would like to start with some personal questions. Where were you born?

**Geshe Lhundup:** I was born in Tibet in a very small village called Damranji, in Kham, about six hundred kilometers from Lhasa, in a nomad family. When I was about six years old I started to tend the yaks and sheep. At about twelve I went to a monastery. My father was not very much interested in Dharma, but my mother seriously practices the Dharma. My mother said that life in samsara is not easy. It was my choice to become a monk, because I liked to learn. And all my brothers and sisters became monks and nuns. We all went to the Patsang Monastery. Patsang is a very important family lineage. In Yungdrung Bon there are six lineages of important families: Dru, Zhou, Pa, Mey, Shen and Khyung. All those families are important because they keep the Yungdrung Bon tradition from generation to generation; they don't keep the tradition through reincarnation but through the lineage of the family. There are really interesting stories about these families, but they are not yet in detail available in English.

**Ton:** Can you tell more about your life in the monastery in Tibet?

**Geshe Lhundup:** My first master is called Rashitogden Rinpoche, from the Nyingma Lineage. He lived in the Lughug Monastery in Bachen about one-hundred kilometers away from where I lived. The monastery was built by H.H. Menri 23rd Nyima Tenzin Rinpoche. Rashitogden Rinpoche lived in this monastery and he is lineage holder of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche. He spends all his life meditating Dzogchen, and I learned a lot from this master. After that I met a



Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen with H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in Paris.

great yogi, called Berutogden Rinpoche. He lived all his life in the mountains. When I met him the first time he did not sleep all night, he sat in the five point posture in a special seat of meditation. During one year I stayed with him. He taught me Dzogchen and *Tsa Lung*. Then I met my third master called Togden Sherab Phuntsok Rinpoche. There I received, together with about two hundred monks from all over Tibet, transmission of all of Shardza Rinpoche's texts and received *Trul khor* and many important Dzogchen teachings and transmission from Kagyur.

**Ton:** What was for you the reason to leave Tibet?

**Geshe Lhundup:** I never had the idea to go to India to study philosophy. But an uncle, who is a Patsang lama, advised me to go to India to study at one of the monasteries because there the conditions are better than in Tibet. He left Tibet in 1959, together with H.H. the Dalai Lama and came back to Tibet twice to visit his family. When he came in 1991, I was already a monk. When I decided to go it was difficult to get permission to leave Tibet. My uncle said that there was only one way to get to India: go first to the Mount Kailash, and from there I should escape to the Nepalese border. It was very hard





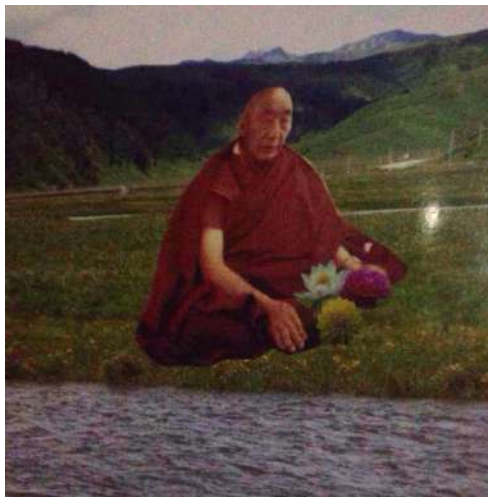
for me to leave Tibet, but I decided to follow my uncle's advice. He also told me that after I would have finished my study I should go back to Tibet to teach there.

**Ton: When did you leave Tibet?**

**Geshe Lhundup:** In 1993 I left with a group of twenty-nine people, of which were four Bonpo monks. We didn't get the proper papers to leave Tibet, so we traveled illegally and without passports through the Himalayas. From Mount Kailash we walked to Nepal during one month. The journey was very stressful because we were afraid to meet the Chinese or Nepalese police, who would have sent us to jail. When we arrived in Kathmandu, Nepal, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche was there and he took care that we could sleep in beds in Triten Norbutse Monastery. After one week Yongdzin Rinpoche said if we wanted to hurry up to study for Geshe, we should go to Menri Monastery in India. In Triten Norbutse they would start to teach one or two years after we had arrived.

**Ton: How was life at Menri Monastery?**

**Geshe Lhundup:** At Menri Monastery I stayed and studied from 1993 till 2009. We got up at 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning. The subject of the study for all the monks is the same: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen, and also Tibetan grammar, poetry, astrology, medicine, mandala painting, yoga,



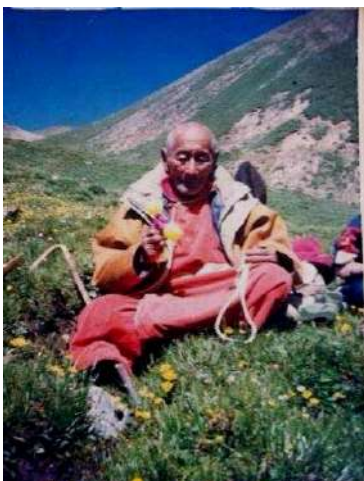
Geshe Lhundup's uncle Patsang Dawa Gyaltsen Rinpoche.

meditation. There are eight levels in the Bon dialect school, and number seven is Tantra and number eight is Dzogchen. When you are in the last two levels you have to meditate one hour in the morning. At 6 o'clock we went to the roof of the temple and meditated for one hour. After that we had breakfast, and in the morning we got teachings by H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and H.E. Menri Lopon Rinpoche. Till lunch time was divided in learning and giving,

that means we also had to teach young monks. After lunch we all came together for study and after a tea break we prayed. Later in the afternoon we learned medicine, grammar, Tibetan culture. After that we studied philosophy, and after dinner we had to memorize texts by ourselves. This we did every day till we reached the Geshe degree. We had two exams every year, and after fifteen years of study we graduated.

**Ton: Why did you choose to go to France when you left Menri Monastery?**

**Geshe Lhundup:** First I went to Dharamsala, India, to learn English. His Holiness advised me to go there, because at Menri Monastery I did not learn any second language like English, French or Hindi. His Holiness does not want to give the lessons in a second language. He wants to keep the study very traditional because if some subjects would be given in English, His



Rashitogden Rinpoche.



Berutogden Rinpoche.



Togden Sherab Phuntsok Rinpoche.







Geshe ceremonies 2008 at Menri Monastery in India.

Holiness expects that many monks would choose the English education, and then the Tibetan language and tradition could be lost forever. After about one year I directly came to France. I had some Tibetan friends in Europe, and they advised me to go to France, because it is a good place for refugees. When I arrived here I quickly got a resident card, and I found a place to live. In the beginning I had mostly contact with Tibetan friends and did not have much contact with French people.

**Raphaël:** In France anyone with a refugee status, without income, can get about € 400-500 a month to help them having a 'decent' life.

**Ton:** In France you have worked for a living. Can you tell about that?

**Geshe Lhundup:** I worked in a bakery for one year. It was nice work for me, because I am a vegetarian and my boss and colleagues were all very nice people. I was sorry I had to leave them, but I wanted to go my own way: first learn French, and then I wanted to teach yoga and meditation. And two years ago I started to

work together with the Ligmincha sangha.

**Ton:** Geshela, how did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

**Geshe Lhundup:** During my study I once had a short conversation with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche when he visited Menri Monastery. At that time I did not have any plans to go to the West, and I always thought I would go back to Tibet. But, in 2008 after my graduation, it was very hard to get a visa to go back, and in 2008 many Tibetan people from different regions protested against the Chinese government. That was a very sad time.

When I was in France in 2010 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche contacted me. For a long time I had been thinking how to start teaching in France, but that was very difficult because I did not speak good French. Rinpoche advised me in many ways and told me that teaching in the West would be different from the monastery. He also offered that we could work together for the Ligmincha sangha. I knew that already many people had fallen in love





Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Geshe Lhundup and members of the board of Ligmincha France.

with Rinpoche's practice and books. So I thought it would be easier to join Rinpoche's sangha than to start my own. Then Rinpoche introduced me to Pierre, Raphaël and the others.

**Ton: Can you tell about the sangha in Paris?**

**Pierre:** When Rinpoche came for the third time in Paris, there was still no sangha, and his teachings were not really living here. It was clear that for them to bear fruits, more was required than a week-end retreat once a year. So we started a small practice group. We practiced *Tsa Lung*, the inner refuge and the *Sound Healing Practice*. At the beginning, five to ten people were participating every week. Now we are about twenty-five people.

**Raphaël:** We first started in a cheap place we rented in Paris, then in my wife's office where she works as psychoanalyst, and recently we have moved to *Sangha Loka*, a bigger and more suitable place, dedicated to yoga and practice, where the Dzogchen Community also gathers on a weekly basis. The first year, we tried to manage a practice group. It was not easy, because we didn't feel legitimate to organize teachings. On each session we tried to agree all together on what practice we would do. Not an easy part, but an interesting one, because we had to get things organized on our own, and all is confronted to different kind of interpersonal issues. The first year we really did achieve some

good practice sessions all together, but at the end we realized that we would really need someone to structure the meetings. We often asked Rinpoche for advice, and two years ago he asked us to contact a Geshela who lived a little isolated in Paris.

**Ton: How did you support Geshe Lhundup?**

**Pierre:** When we met Geshela, his French was not very good, so we helped him with French class, and we found money so he could get French lessons. We also looked for a new place for him to live. Until then he had been living in a six-square meter room in social housing. We had to go through a lot of paperwork before he got a new apartment. Basically we helped him with French administrative stuff, which can be a real burden if you're not used to it. We supported him in a material way, but we received much more than we had given him, because he started to teach and guide our meditation practice.

**Raphaël:** When he stopped working in the bakery he had a right to unemployment wages and we helped him to fill in all the papers because he was lost in that (this happens also to French people!). We also wanted to support him to earn money and we asked him what he wanted to do.

**Pierre:** He said he wanted to earn his life by selling *tormas*. We told him that probably there





would not be enough public to buy *tormas*, so we kindly directed him towards yoga.

**Raphaël:** From my point of view what happened was amazing. We told him that there were many associations and groups of yoga in Paris. He should introduce himself and try to participate in such a group, although we knew it was not easy to enter. And a few days later he took a phonebook and he said "I've called that one." He didn't even speak good French at that time, and on the phone he probably could only have said something like "I am Khorden Lhundup, and I want to teach yoga." To our surprise he was invited straight away for a test and then started to teach there with two classes a week!

**Ton: What changed for the French sangha when Geshela came?**

**Pierre:** Everything started to unlock at that point. Before Geshela arrived, we were 'just' watching Rinpoche's videos and then practicing accordingly. After that we started a *Trul khor* practice group for three hours every week, where we were Geshela's guinea pigs: we helped him develop the French vocabulary of anatomy and to get him familiar with occidental students. In the beginning we were a small group of five to six people. Since September we are in a new place, and we are now about twenty-five. Beside *Trul khor*, Geshela also worked on a one-year meditation program so

people with no prior meditation experience can go from *Zhine* to Dzogchen meditation if they also practice at home. To sum up, the group expanded and we now have a structured program for both Tibetan yoga and meditation.

**Raphaël:** Yes, the presence of Geshela helped a lot. Not only because of his presence, but also because Geshela is a wonderful teacher, direct, friendly and very open to all suggestions, all questions, all needs, and perfectly able to make you feel what he is teaching when he cannot say it yet in perfect French. No matter how his French and English will improve, everybody understands him very well. Although we were not organized, there were a lot of people in France interested in Rinpoche's teachings, and many people have read his books. We have ten sangha groups in France, and Geshe Lhundup is going to teach there. Some of them are informal groups, and the presence of a lama in France, who speaks French, is motivating a lot of people to organize something. We are working on a schedule that this year he can visit all the groups, meet them the first time and teach. Later we will organize more.

**Ton: Geshela, are your teachings more traditional than Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, going through the text?**

**Geshe Lhundup:** Yes, but I am trying to explain as much as I can in the modern way. But that



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in a discotheque in Paris.







Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Pierre Clisson.

does not change the teachings.

**Pierre:** In the beginning Geshela was really following the text, word to word. It is a good thing, and a lot of lamas do it this way. But after a while he started to explain in another way and he started to connect with the occidental way of thinking. I can feel the difference how it was two years ago and now. He is a wonderful teacher, and he really embodies the teachings.

**Ton: Pierre, how did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?**

**Pierre:** I met Rinpoche four years ago during a teaching on the *Sound Healing Practice*, but we didn't really talk at that time. The seminar was organized in Paris, from Switzerland by Nathalie Duchanois – chair of Ligmincha France and romand Switzerland – and I offered my help with the organization and the creation of the website. My main supporting practice since I am a child is *Lucid Dreaming*, but I felt something was missing in our western tradition of dreams where they are merely presented as a fun experience and at best as a psychological support. This conducted me to Rinpoche's book *Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* in 2006, which directed me to Dzogchen. I started to study Dzogchen texts, comparing multiple root-text translations and retreat transcripts from Yongdzin Rinpoche and other masters. I practiced on my own, and I got results, so that gave me trust in the teachings. For this reason, I wanted to give back and help in a way so Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings reach more people in France.

**Ton: Raphaël, how did you meet Rinpoche?**

**Raphaël:** It was about four years ago. I had been following Tarab Tulku Rinpoche's teachings, which had a great impact on me, and after



Raphaël Ibanez de Garayo.

he died I had been looking for several years for someone with whom I would have some kind of catch. I had seen a lot of masters when a friend of mine, much committed in the Dharma, told me I should

attend to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings, which I did. I didn't know him at all, and didn't know anything about Bon either. But I found his way of teaching kind of close to Tarab Tulku Rinpoche's style and approach, although different, and was very moved when I saw him that first time in Paris.

When I listened to the teachings I was really impressed and moved. And I thought to myself: it's just not possible to organize teachings in such a weird place, an old discotheque. Without thinking it over, I suddenly decided to offer my help to find another place. I knew that the teaching was organized from Switzerland, because at that time there was no French sangha to organize things in Paris, so I guessed that maybe they were having difficulty about finding low cost places in Paris. So I proposed my help to Rinpoche and Nathalie Duchanois to find a better place. I was expecting that they might call me three or four months later. But Rinpoche called me the day after, saying that he was taking his plane one day later, and said that if I was ready to find another place in Paris, he was ready too. I was overwhelmed with work, so I spent the night with my wife on the internet trying to find both nice and not too expensive places in Paris, which is not easy. In the morning we had a list, but at breakfast I realized that if we had to visit all the places by subway in Paris it would be awful, and by car it would be a catastrophe, so I proposed Rinpoche to visit all the places with my motorbike. He joyfully accepted, and we did so. And we found a wonderful place in the center of Paris. Later I met Pierre and other members of the sangha.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Ligmincha France



# MEDITATION AS MEDICINE

## Reflections on a New Online Workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

**We tend to view emotional and physical pain as the enemy. A new online workshop with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche reveals why we shouldn't — and shows us how meditation practice can transform our own pain and sickness through the healing warmth of loving-kindness. Polly Turner explains.**

In my year and a half as a volunteer at a local teaching hospital, many of my encounters with patients were mundane. But several were quite powerful.

For example, there was the time I peeked through an open doorway to see a gray-haired, gray-faced woman plastered with tape, gauze, and a maze of wires and plastic tubing. Her head was propped on two pillows. Her hands and arms were bruised from blood draws, and they were tugging reflexively at the lines bringing fluids in and out of her body.

It was almost too painful to watch. I introduced myself, asking if she might like a friendly visit from a volunteer. At her invitation I pulled up a bedside chair.

"It looks like you're having a hard time," I said with a smile.

Thus began our conversation. As she continued to tug and squirm, she told me about her agonizing itching and discomfort, her despair about her condition, and how desperately she missed her home. I listened openly, occasionally offering a tactful question or warm acknowledgement. And it wasn't long before the topic flowed to fond stories about her family.

In time we were sharing humor. Then, we were breaking out in laughter. We started having a good time, like old friends. Suddenly, halfway through a sentence she paused. Her eyes grew wide.

"I don't hurt anymore!" she exclaimed.



All her tubes and wounds had been forgotten. For perhaps ten minutes, she had neglected to tug, scratch, or squirm. She was a completely different person than the one I'd seen from the doorway. She seemed ten years younger. Her face was glowing.

I've witnessed similar transformations among other suffering patients I've sat with in open, caring attention. Nearly all the hospice and hospital volunteers I've met have told me the same. My meditation teacher, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, uses the term "giving a spacious, luminous, warm hug" — when you give this kind of virtual hug to others, spontaneous healing can happen.

But in his teachings, and in particular in a brand-new workshop offered through [GlideWing Productions](#), Rinpoche is not referring so much to what we should give others, or even to what we wish others would give us — but rather, to what we should routinely be giving ourselves.

It's human nature to keep picking at our own physical, emotional and mental wounds. Whether we're sick in a hospital bed or have just woken up on the wrong side of the bed, we tend to self-criticize and punish ourselves for our bad feelings. We scratch at our itches, curse at our arthritis, tug







Without the light and warmth  
of the sun, trees and flowering  
plants will fail to flourish.

Without awareness and warmth  
toward your body, you, too,  
will fail to flourish.

—Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

at our anger and blame our anxiety on others. We busy our minds to avoid depression. Disturbing emotions can even make us sick, or sicker. Western research has shown a powerful link between unhealthy emotions and a weakened immune system, as well as a wide variety of other physical problems.

We do our best to deny or rise above pain. But throughout, pain is the enemy. We seldom give pain our loving attention, simply let it be, and allow it to naturally express itself — as a loving mother would allow her needy child to whimper in her arms. If we can do this, the pain naturally lessens or even disappears, Rinpoche explains. If we don't, physical discomfort or deeply rooted emotional pain is more likely to insist on acknowledgement. It creeps into all our actions, thoughts, and conversations. When not driving our dreams at night, it keeps us awake with racing thoughts.

### **New 'Healing from the Source' Workshop**

Tenzin Rinpoche has been teaching the “spacious, luminous, warm hug” in nearly all his talks, retreats, and webcasts these days, in one form or another. But now he is offering a new online workshop that focuses specifically on cultivating loving-kindness as a means for preventing and healing both physical and emotional pain. Entitled *Healing From the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Body and Mind*, the three-week course begins November 14, 2015.

Based on ancient teachings of Dzogchen from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition, the new course helps one discover the “great healer within.” The core teachings of Dzogchen introduce us to the nature of mind, to our own inner refuge, the true

source of healing. Everyone has access to this source through the ‘three doors’ — the stillness of the body, the silence of speech and the spaciousness of the mind. These ‘three precious pills’ are a powerful medicine you can take at any time, with no side effects, to help divert you from your self-punishing tendencies, clear pain and negativity, cultivate awareness, and ultimately access the healing qualities that spontaneously arise in that space.

The three precious pills serve as the foundation of the main practice in this new workshop. Their healing effects come from resting deeply in the space that opens, then gradually bringing awareness to your emotional or physical discomfort. In that unconditional openness, the pain or discomfort naturally dissolves. In time you may become aware of positive qualities naturally arising within, such as loving-kindness, joy, equanimity or compassion. As you allow those qualities to mature, you can feel their warmth.

Warmth is the active ingredient. You are encouraged to apply it as a spacious, luminous, warm hug to yourself and to the presence of the lingering emotional or physical discomfort. Your pain or illness needs this hug, and it wants it to continue. By acknowledging, accepting, respecting, and connecting through the warmth, you can feel the dissolution of any negativity, self-judgment, or self-criticism you may be harboring.

Nearly anyone who has attended retreats and workshops with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche knows how skillfully and lovingly he guides his meditations, and how clearly and directly he transmits to others — newcomers and experienced students





alike — his own, deep connection with the healing source within. His video-based online teachings are studied and practiced during normal life, so they are an ideal support for applying not only on the meditation cushion, but also throughout your workday, family engagements and personal time.

In the new GlideWing workshop a series of instructional videos are introduced in progression throughout its three weeks. Every few days a new set opens to course participants, allowing them to view and practice on their own schedule. Each teaching session concludes with a guided meditation, along with an MP3 audio version that can be downloaded and kept for ongoing practice. Rinpoche encourages free use of the private, protected discussion forum where participants from around the world can share experiences in writing, discover commonality in their challenges and successes, and support each other in applying the practices.

### **The Best of Who You Are**

As Rinpoche explains in his latest book, *The True Source of Healing*, on which this workshop is based, “Conventional treatments often play an important — even life-saving — role in symptom relief and healing, but if you can harness the power of practices that connect with primordial awareness, you have the potential to go directly to the root of physical pain and illness.”

Through Rinpoche's gentle guidance and support, this workshop has life-changing implications for those who can devote time and space for its prac-

tices. It's not just about easing pain; it's about becoming the best of who you are.

Whatever challenges or pain you face, when you go deep enough into the three precious pills, you can witness that pain dissolving into a fresh, new space. In that space, a new you emerges — one who is more relaxed, comfortable, open, clear, connected and more in touch with the spontaneous joy that comes with that connection.



Polly Turner assists with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's GlideWing online workshops as well as his regular live webcast teachings. A freelance writer and editor, she served as editor for two of Rinpoche's recent books, including *The True Source of Healing: How the Tibetan Practice of Soul Retrieval Can Transform and Enrich your Life*. Hay House, July 2015. The new GlideWing workshop can be accessed at [www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com). You can learn more about Rinpoche and his in-person and online teachings at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org).

### **Text by Polly Turner**

Photograph of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche by Janine Guldener

**This article was also published in the October issue of the *Voice of Clear Light*.**







# WHAT COMES AFTER DEATH?

## BARDO TEACHINGS

from **GESHE CHOEKHORTSHANG RINPOCHE**

**JANUARY 15 – 17. 2016. – BUDAPEST, HUNGARY**

Gese Choekhortshang Rinpoche accepted the invitation of Ligmincha Hungary and he visits Budapest in January again and give us Bardo teachings from the Bon buddhist tradition.

*„We have to integrate bardo with the clear light. This is the tool for achieving enlightenment. During the bardo we should remain in non-dual relation with all the phenomena that arise. We should stay in the non-dual presence with full awareness without deflection.” – quote from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche’s book The Tibetan Yogas Of Dream And Sleep.*

**Venue: Dharma Gate Buddhist College, Ceremony Hall, H-1098 Budapest, Börzsöny u. 11.**

### Programme:

2016.01.15. <b>Friday</b>	18.00 – 20.00	Introduction to Bardo teachings
2016.01.16. <b>Saturday</b>	9.00 – 10.30	Bardo teaching
	10.30 – 11.00	Break
	11.00 – 12.30	Bardo teaching
	12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break
	14.00 – 15.30	Bardo teaching and practice
	15.30 – 16.00	Break
	16.00 – 17.30	Bardo teaching and practice
	17.30 – 18.00	Questions and answers
	9.00 – 10.30	Bardo teaching and practice
2016.01.17. <b>Sunday</b>	10.30 – 11.00	Break
	11.00 – 12.30	Bardo teaching and practice
	12.30 – 14.00	Lunch break
	14.00 – 15.30	Bardo empowerment, questions and answers
	15.30 – 18.00	Blessing

**With prior registration: 40 EUR**

**REGISTRATION:** please send your registration email to [info@ligmincha.hu](mailto:info@ligmincha.hu) and we will send you the account number for the transfer. **Registration is confirmed upon receipt of offering.**

# The Healing Practice of Sherap Chamma - Mother of Wisdom and Love

## AWAKENING THE SACRED FEMININE

A Weekend and a 5 Day Meditation Retreat with Marcy Vaughn

March 11 - 16th 2016, Pauenhof / Germany

For a third time Marcy Vaughn is accepting our invitation to lead an intensive retreat on Sherap Chamma, the Mother of Wisdom and Love. We are very happy to practice together as a European sangha and share our deepening devotion for these teachings with one of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's longtime students from the US! We warmly invite you to join us as we reunite for our annual retreat at Pauenhof in 2016.

### SHERAP CHAMMA: MOTHER OF WISDOM AND LOVE

In many cultures the primordial female energy is seen as the origin of existence and the source of all positive qualities. As such, *Sherap Chamma*, Mother of Wisdom and Love, is the source of wisdom, and her medicine is love and compassion. The teachings of *Sherap Chamma* comprise one of the most important tantric cycles of the ancient Bon tradition. In this retreat, participants will learn a beautiful and simple meditation practice composed by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to enable all to directly connect with the sacred feminine. Within the support of the group, we create an environment to promote profound healing of the physical, energetic/emotional, and spiritual dimensions of your life. With visualization, the sound of mantra, and deep contemplation, we make a personal connection to the universal mother, *Sherap Chamma*, and are guided through this connection to our innate wisdom and the love and compassion that naturally radiate from that wisdom. Those experienced in meditation as well as those who are beginning are warmly welcomed.



### ABOUT MARCY VAUGHN



Marcy Vaughn has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism for 40 years and is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. She graduated in the first class of the master's program in contemplative psychotherapy at Naropa University. Currently a therapist in private practice in Pennsylvania, USA. Marcy teaches meditation classes and retreats and also explores imagery and voice in the healing process. She edited the books *Tibetan Sound Healing*, *Awakening the Sacred Body*, and *Awakening the Luminous Mind* all by Tenzin Wangyal. She helped design and teaches in the The 3 Doors Academy, a two-and-a-half-year training program integrating contemplative practices and everyday life for personal and social transformation.

### Event Details

Join us for the weekend March 11 - 13, 2016, or for the full five day retreat March 11 - 16, 2016.

Venue: Pauenhof, 47665 Sonsbeck Hamb, Pauendyck 1, Germany.

For registration [click here](#). More information you can find on [www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl) or [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de).

Your registration is definite upon payment. Contact us through: [sherabchamma@ligmincha.nl](mailto:sherabchamma@ligmincha.nl).

Language: Marcy will teach in English and a translation to other languages will not be provided.

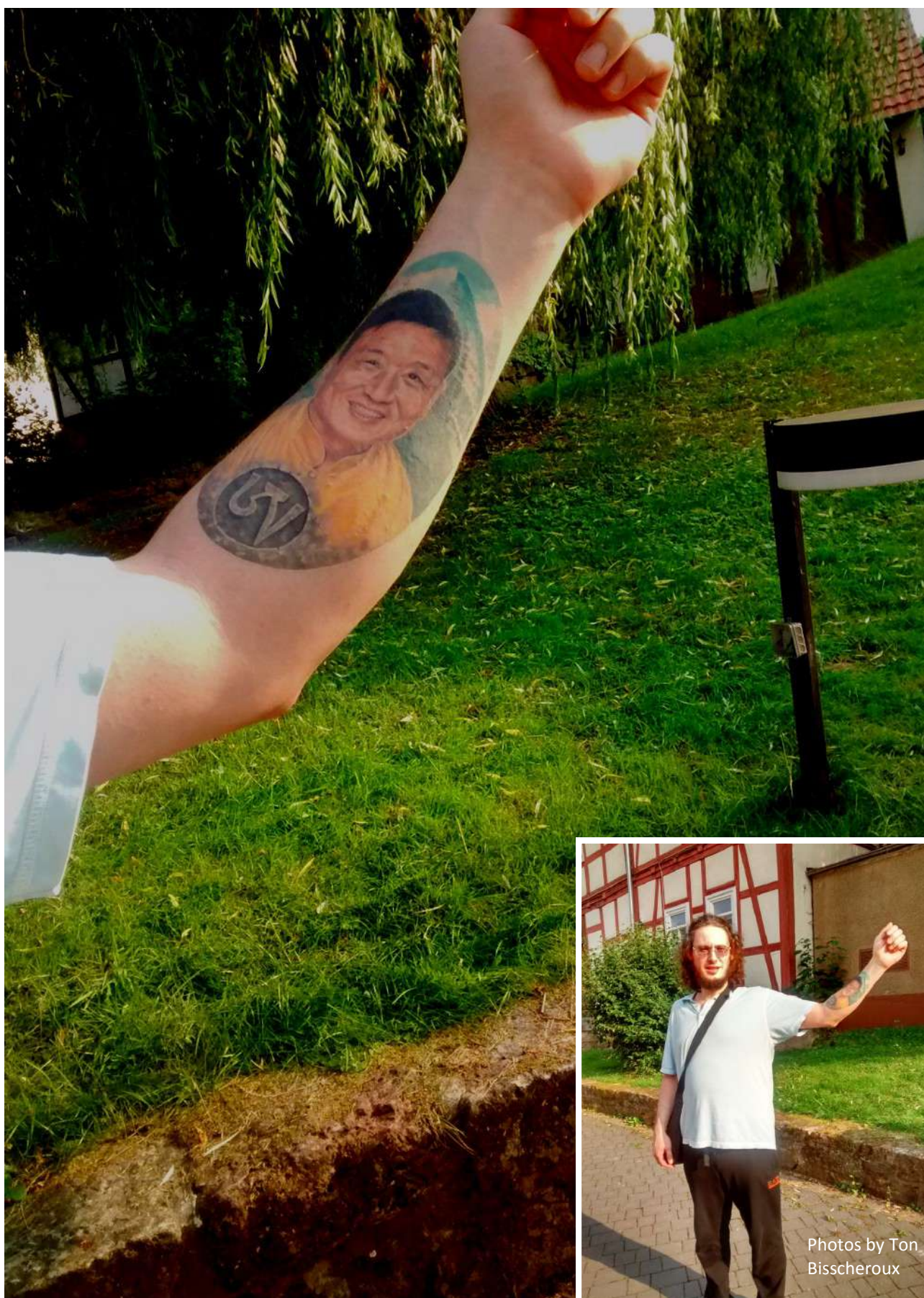
Organized by Ligmincha Nederland and Ligmincha Deutschland



The sangha



## WITH LOVE FROM RUSSIA



# ON DEATH, WITHOUT EXAGGERATION

It can't take a joke,  
find a star, make a bridge.  
It knows nothing about weaving, mining, farming,  
building ships, or baking cakes.  
In our planning for tomorrow,  
it has the final word,  
which is always beside the point.

It can't even get the things done  
that are part of its trade:  
dig a grave,  
make a coffin,  
clean up after itself.

Preoccupied with killing,  
it does the job awkwardly,  
without system or skill.  
As though each of us were its first kill.

Oh, it has its triumphs,  
but look at its countless defeats,  
missed blows,  
and repeat attempts!

Sometimes it isn't strong enough  
to swat a fly from the air.  
Many are the caterpillars  
that have outcrawled it.

All those bulbs, pods,  
tentacles, fins, tracheae,  
nuptial plumage, and winter fur  
show that it has fallen behind  
with its halfhearted work.

Ill will won't help  
and even our lending a hand with wars and coups d'etat  
is so far not enough.

Hearts beat inside eggs.  
Babies' skeletons grow.  
Seeds, hard at work, sprout their first tiny pair of leaves  
and sometimes even tall trees fall away.

Whoever claims that it's omnipotent  
is himself living proof  
that it's not.

There's no life  
that couldn't be immortal  
if only for a moment.

Death  
always arrives by that very moment too late.

In vain it tugs at the knob  
of the invisible door.  
As far as you've come  
can't be undone.

*Wisława Szymborska*

*(The Nobel Prize in Literature 1996)*





# BEING PRESENT WITH THE DYING

**We asked Birgit Bastholm Bune to share her experiences with us from the hospice where she works. Every day she is confronted with death.**

I work as a nurse in a Danish hospice, taking care of seriously ill and dying patients, and their relatives. We have room for twelve patients and the staff working close to them is mixed: nurses, doctors, psychotherapist, music-therapist, priest, cook and a lot of volunteers, mainly taking care of decoration and serving food.

We embrace all kinds of people, high and low, young and old and they all have lived different lives. So as birth is an individual experience, death is also. Some people die peacefully with loving relatives around and other people die with different levels of pain and fear. Most patients have a little time for settling in and the process towards death is mostly about accepting and letting go of everything. Some patients long for leaving their painful bodies and others fight strongly against.

As you can imagine, the staff is often involved with complex suffering on all levels. It is mostly beautiful work and we do all we can to help each individual to die as peacefully as possible. But sometimes it is difficult and impossible to ease the pain, fear and confusion. Let me give some examples.

If the situation is complex and we have tried many different 'doors' to help and the patient is still not relaxed, we might feel powerless and confused. We want to find the 'key' and we often try that by 'doing.' If there is nothing more to do, we only have our personal presence left, trying to hold the pain, the patient and ourselves. Some staff have difficulties in trusting the power of that presence. So they start doubting themselves and maybe feel like running away from the painful situation.

Another example can be when staff is somehow 'hit' into their own unhealed inner wounds. It often happens for nurses because we work so closely together with patients and relatives. It is like mirror-like relationships. Then we begin our pain-speech, trying to explain from conceptual mind, but we don't catch the hidden projections



going on.

I often thought that we need skills to find support and wisdom from inside, in those difficult situations. With Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's words: to be connected with the inner refuge. So after finishing The 3 Doors Academy last year, I started planning a project to teach my colleagues about the three doors to inner refuge. Fortunately my bosses were supporting and paying the whole thing.

To support me I entered The 3 Doors Academy program 'Presenters Path,' so I had Raven as my mentor to help me. Couldn't be better. The Hospice paid my fee and my time.

We started in January 2015, and fourteen members from staff signed in, which is half the staff and a mixed group. I taught three times, four hours. I asked them to read fifty pages from Rinpoche's book *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. It was a great moment for me to see Rinpoche's book at my workplace, I felt so thrilled and also:





"How did I make this happen?" I taught about the nature of mind, inner refuge, how to enter through the three doors, how to identify one's own pain, to stay with it and release from the warmth of the heart. We did the *Nine Breathing* exercise and practiced after my guidance. To support them to practice at home, I made a special cd for them.

After the training I asked them to document difficult situations from work, where they used the skills. Many people have a problem with documentation, but I felt this very important to be able to evaluate the method.

Here are a few examples from those who made the documentation:

*"I am telling a fellow nurse about my reflections from a patient-situation.*

*Her body language tells me that she does not agree. I start feeling insecure and doubting my own judgment.*

*I enter into my heart, looking for inner warmth*

*and support. After some time I feel spacious: it is okay that we have different ideas about the situation."*

+++

*"My patient had difficulties with breathing, starting to panic. I feel this panic entering my own body like contractions in my throat. Feel fear of losing control and not being able to help the patient. Feel a strong urge to escape – find some other nurse to take over.*

*Entering stillness in my body, trying to hold my own fear. Deep breathing. I stay, conscious about my urge to escape.*

*From the stillness in my body comes new creativity, new courage. This is a difficult situation for everybody. I begin to trust my skills and my ability to being present.*

*The patient slowly relaxes which helps the breathing-process. The patient smiles and says some acknowledging words."*







I wrote an evaluation-report about the project after asking all the participants about their outcome. Almost everybody had a good experience and finds the methods very helpful. Of course this has not been on the deepest level, but it is a good beginning. We never had a meditation-circle at hospice before! Not everybody is supporting this project though. Some resistance is there, but I try to be relaxed about it, taking it into my own practice, if I get pain-issues about it.

Next step is more training for this group, creation of a new group and maybe writing an article to describe our project. Maybe we can inspire other hospices or health care institutions. And the best of all: we will start working on how to present inner refuge to the dying patients and their relatives. Imagine to be able to die with less fear and more support and love from inner space, feeling connected and safe, without too much sedative medicine.

**Text and photos by Birgit Bastholm Bune**



# RELATING TO THE SACRED

In the free yearlong, internet course *The True Source of Healing*, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talks about the elements. In the following excerpt (page 5-8) from Rinpoche's book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light* (Snow Lion, 2002), he describes the sacred relation with the elemental qualities.

In shamanism, tantra, and Dzogchen, the elements are considered to be sacred, the underlying forces of existence. Because they are sacred, all that arises from them — and that is everything — is also sacred. External nature is sacred and the body is sacred. The elements without and within arise together, from the same source. The warmth of the sun and the warmth of the heart are different in degree, not in kind. The water of the oceans is not different from the water of our bodies. Our flesh is formed from the elements of the earth and it will dissolve back into the earth. The air in our lungs is the same air the hawk rides. The space in which the universe arises, the space our living room couch occupies, and the space in which our thoughts arise is the same space and is sacred. And all that is in space — substantial and insubstantial, matter and mind — is the elements.

As the elements in the body are sacred, the consciousnesses that arise from them are also sacred. Whether of wisdom or passion, dream or nightmare, the living experience of beings is a display of the pure elements interacting with awareness. The innate awareness, too, is integrated with the elements. It is the purest and most subtle level of the five elements in perfect balance, the quintessence of the luminosity of the base of existence.

Sometime in the history of the West, the sense of sacred relationship was lost for many people. We can witness sacred relationships, or read about them, in the shaman's relationship to the natural world or in the tantric practitioner's relationship

to the deities, but often we don't have such a relationship in our own lives.

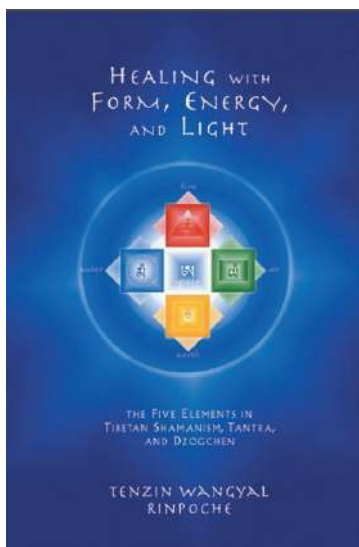
Ask yourself what “sacred” means to you. Are you in any relationship you regard as sacred? If so, is it based in your own sense of the sacred or is it composed of behaviors you learned from others? What in your life do you truly believe to be sacred?

Without a sense of the sacred, it is difficult to have faith in religious instruction. In Tibet it is said that if one treats one's master like a dog, the teachings are as worthless as rotten food. If one treats one's master like a friend, the teachings nourish like fresh food. If one treats one's teacher like a deity, the teachings are divine nectar. Similarly, if we relate to the natural


world as a collection of lifeless mechanical processes, it is lifeless for us. If we relate to our bodies as machines, they are machines to us. If we relate to religion as a fantasy, it is a fantasy to us. But if we relate to the natural world as alive, full of spirits and elemental beings, the natural world speaks to us. If, as in tantra, the body is regarded as a divine palace and the result of great good fortune, as the best possible vehicle for reaching enlightenment, it becomes a vehicle that can carry us beyond death. If we relate to the *dharma*, the spiritual teachings, as

to sacred teachings that will lead us on the path to truth, the *dharma* in fact leads us to truth. Relating to the elements — to the natural world and our bodies and minds — as sacred, they become sacred. This is not just a psychological trick. It's a recognition of our real situation.

Sacred relationships are defined not only in terms of how we relate to what is outside of us. Relating to the sacred also brings us to the deepest sense of ourselves, to what is sacred in us. Shamans connected to earth find in themselves the connection to all life, to the powers and forces that control the world. Tantric practitioners find that devotion to the deities leads to the recognition that their deeper selves are the deities. In guru yoga, the







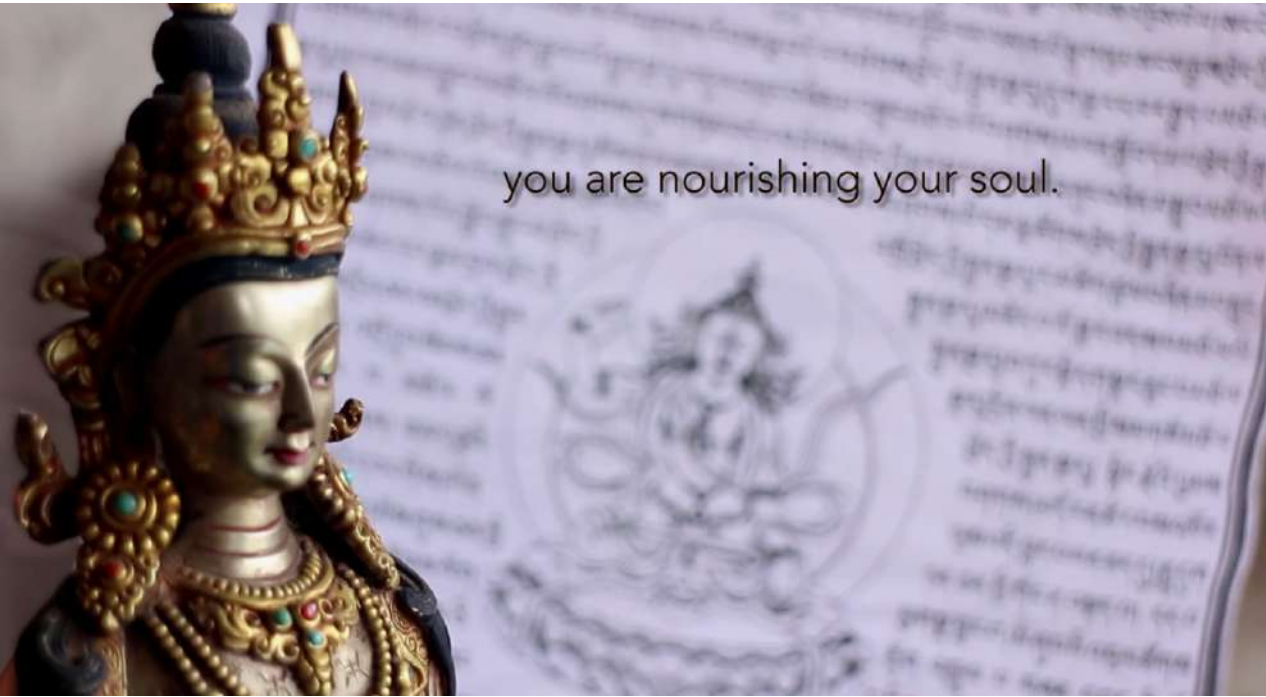
At the moment when awareness dawns  
and illuminates the space of being,

student must find the mind of the master within. Sacred relationship finds something sacred outside, but that which recognizes the sacred is the sacred inside.

We are in relationship with everything. That's what this life is — relationship with everything. We may have many friendly relationships that are nurturing and helpful, and that is good. Those relationships support us and fulfill us as humans. But if we have no sacred relationship to the environment, to people, to religious images, to mantras, and so on, it means the sacred aspect of our

lives is dying, or buried, or hasn't been accessed. It hasn't been enriched or expressed. It doesn't arise in our internal experience because it hasn't found a match in the external world; there is nothing to evoke it or fuel it. So it disappears from our lives and our cultures or becomes an abstraction or is reduced to mythology or psychology.

It's easy to lose the sense of the sacred in the modern world. Many of us live out of touch with the power of the natural world, knowing it as something fenced in parks and tamed in gardens. Behind the reflected light of the city, night is no



you are nourishing your soul.



longer dark and vast. Our houses are temperature-controlled. Many of us have lost faith in religion and live in a world in which life has been reduced to a chemical reaction, the stars are dead material processes, and there is no life after the death of the body. The societies of the West have created wonderful technologies, arts, and sciences, but living in a dead world, relying on entertainment for fleeting satisfaction, is a sad and unnecessary price to pay for those advances.

The lack of relationship to the sacred can be an obstruction on the spiritual path. We learn something — let's say the physical practices in this book — and we feel better. So we treat them simply as something that makes us feel good, like going for a walk or taking a bike ride.

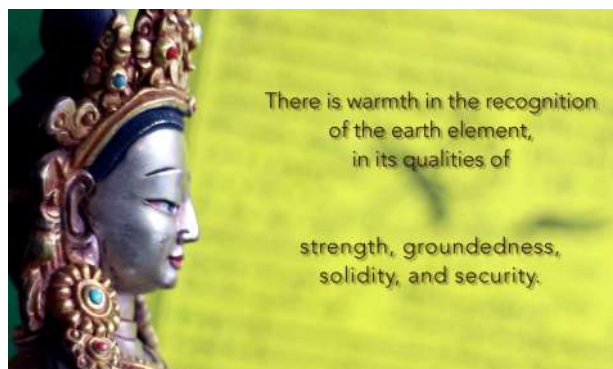
We may interpret the shamanic practices as only symbols used to manipulate mechanical psychological processes. But when we really need help, we don't turn to what we believe is only psychological; this is because it seems smaller than we are in our totality. In a sacred relationship — to the elements, the deities, the master, the holy texts — we turn to something bigger than ourselves, bigger than our problems. We turn to something sacred, of greater value and meaning than our depression or anxiety or self-hatred or disappointment.

If we spend a lot of time in relationships characterized by mistrust, anger, disrespect, and so on, every part of our lives is affected. We see things in a more negative light. When we spend a lot of time in sacred relationships, our life is affected positively. Our painful feelings are not so large. We start to see the sacred core of every being.

Developing faith and gratitude opens the door to sacred relationships. It's good to reflect on the long lineage of the teachings, the men and women who followed the path over the centuries. They traveled far on the path because they recognized it as a sacred journey into the center of themselves and the world. And now it is our turn. We are fortunate to have an inclination to lead the spiritual life and to have found appropriate teachings from a living tradition. Opening our hearts and minds to the teachings, we start to open ourselves in many dimensions. We open ourselves to sacred energies and are healed and blessed by them. Our well-being becomes inde-

pendent of external circumstances. The world becomes larger and all of it recognized as alive. There is no longer the dead matter universe of the nihilists or the impure material world of the dualists. We connect to the sacred, creative energies whose display is existence itself.

How can we develop the sense of the sacred? By remembering that the source of all is sacred, that space and light are sacred. Every appearance is beautiful if we go beyond prejudice and recognize the vibrant, radiant nature of phenomena. Remember that all beings have the buddha-nature. Remember the sacredness of the religious tradition. Spend time in nature, particularly places special to you, and open yourself to the beauty of the natural world. Begin each practice period with prayer and open your heart. End each practice period by dedicating yourself to the benefit of all beings. Engage in the practice as a way to help alleviate the suffering of all those you care about. Spiritual practice is an activity meant to benefit all; it is not only for yourself. Look into the night sky when the stars can be seen, feel the immensity and magnificence of the universe. Think about the complexity of your own body, the mysterious functions that support your existence. Broaden your mind enough and you necessarily come to mysteries that are so much bigger than everyday concerns that to encounter them is to experience awe, to experience the sacred.



When working with the elements, we are working with the ground of the experience and the experienter. To recognize the elements in the natural world, their beauty and interplay, to enter the sacred dance of the elements, is to inhabit a living world full of mystery and potential.

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**  
Photos from: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)





# HOW TANTRA WORKS

With the kind permission of Buddhadharma we are allowed to publish an excerpt of an article on *Tantra*, which Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche contributed to, together with Rob Preece and Lama Palden. The introduction is by Willa B. Miller.

## Introduction

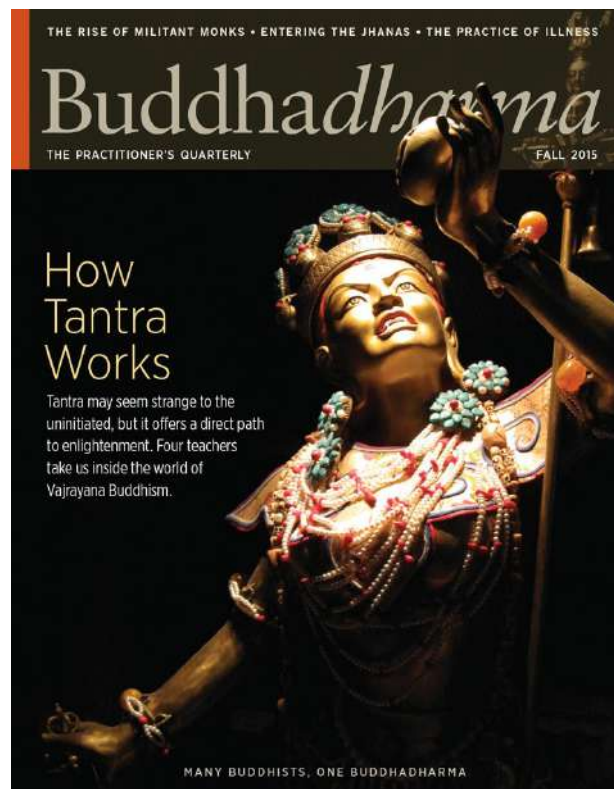
Tantric Buddhism of the Himalayan region, also known as Vajrayana Buddhism, is a rich and esoteric tradition extending initially from a body of texts called the *yoganiruttara tantras*, which began to appear in Buddhist communities around the sixth and seventh centuries in Northern India. Vajrayana, within the tradition itself, is understood to originate from a range of sources, including the historical Buddha, who was said to have expounded tantra during his lifetime at Dharanikota. Some tantras are attributed to primordial buddhas, such as Vajradhara or Samantabhadra, who exist outside the context of time and space. And some, primarily emerging within the Nyingma and Bön lineages, are categorized as *terma*, or “treasure teachings,” that have been unearthed over the centuries by *terton*, “treasure finders” within the Himalayan region.

(...)

To the surprise of many seasoned Buddhists who first encounter tantric practice, no thought, emotion, feeling, or experience is excluded from the parameters of enlightenment. This perspective on human thought and emotion is vividly expressed in the iconography of the Buddhist tantras, which depicts enlightened beings with a range of emotions: joyful, wrathful, peaceful, jealous, loving, passionate. This iconography gestures to a key principal of tantric practice: taking all human experiences on the path.

(...)

In tantric understanding, enlightenment is not merely a cognitive transformation; it is a psycho-



physical transformation. (...) the “mind” – at least when it comes to tantric understanding – is a deeply embodied entity. Therefore, in tantra, the body, sometimes even more than the mind, is revered as sacred: the body is a primary space where the work for waking up occurs.

(...)

This is an historic time when the key features of tantra are being brought into conversation with Western psychological and philosophical ways of knowing and seeing the world. The panelists – all experts who have studied, practiced, and taught tantra for decades, primarily in the West (...).

**WILLA B. MILLER** is the founder and spiritual director of Natural Dharma Fellowship in Boston and a visiting lecturer on Buddhist ministry at Harvard Divinity School. She is a lineage holder in the Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

**BUDDHADHARMA:** According to the Vajrayana teachings, tantra is the shortest and most direct path to awakening. Rather than taking eons to attain enlightenment, with tantra it's believed one



can attain buddhahood in a single lifetime. What is it that makes tantra so powerful?

**ROB PREECE:** Tantra goes to the root of our energetic process and puts us into direct relationship with our innate buddhanature through the potency and vitality of a deity. Because of this, it is sometimes described as the resultant path. Tantra is particularly powerful because it uses desire and transforms it into the process of liberation. Deity practice is usually combined with Mahamudra, meditating on the nature of mind. In this way, we bring the processes of transformation and self-liberation into one practice.

**TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE:** According to the Dzogchen tradition, tantra is not the shortest and the highest path of enlightenment. We talk of three paths: the path of renunciation, which is sutra; the path of transformation, which is tantra; and the path of liberation, which is Dzogchen. So there is one more step beyond tantra.

In tantra, much as a doctor can turn a poison into medicine to cure illness, the negative emotions are transformed into virtues and become medicine to alleviate suffering. With Dzogchen, one goes beyond the notion of transformation to self-liberation. Dzogchen is likened to a peacock that

eats a poisonous berry; that poison actually enhances the color and beauty of the peacock rather than harming it. So tantra transforms negativity, whereas Dzogchen liberates negativity by experiencing it nakedly – as it is.

**LAMA PALDEN:** Tantric practices are powerful because they utilize all parts of our being – body, speech, and mind – in order to transform habitual patterns and clear away confusion, our fundamental ignorance about ourselves, and the true nature of reality. We employ our voice in chanting and other mantras, and with our mind we call upon awakened beings and imagine ourselves into an awakened state.

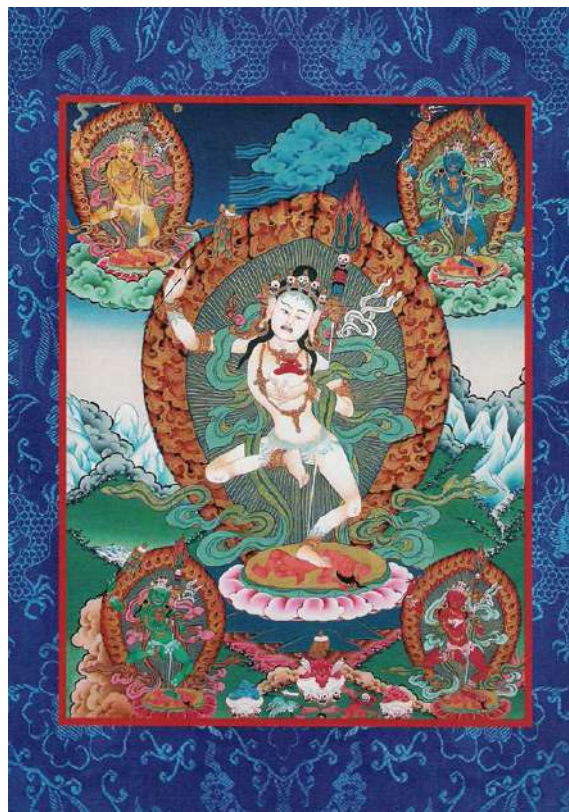
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**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**

Photos from [www.lionsroar.com](http://www.lionsroar.com) and [www.ligminchastore.org](http://www.ligminchastore.org)

If you want to learn what's inside the *Buddhadharma Fall 2015 magazine* go to: [www.lionsroar.com](http://www.lionsroar.com).

You can order a copy of the *Buddhadharma Fall 2015 magazine* at: [www.pocketmags.com](http://www.pocketmags.com).



Khandros of the Five Elements.





# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2015 AND 2016 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

When	Where	What	More information
October 24 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: The Five Elements: Connecting with the Living Universe	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
November 14 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: The Power of Warmth: Physical Healing Through Meditation	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
November 14 – December 6	Your computer	Interactive online course: Healing from the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Body and Mind	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
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	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
<b>2016</b>			
January 1 17.00 – 18.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: Guided Meditation from the Experiential Transmission Teachings, Part 2.	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
January 9 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Live Webcast: The True Source of Healing: Soul Retrieval as a Lifetime Practice	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
April 22 – 24	Paris, France	Weekend seminar: Living with Joy, Dying with Peace	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>
April 29 – May 1	Vienna, Austria	Weekend seminar: Topic to be determined	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.at">www.ligmincha.at</a>
May 6 – 8	Berlin, Germany	Weekend seminar: From Inspiration to Manifestation: Unblocking Your Creative Potential	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>
May 14 – 16	Bulle, Switzerland	Weekend seminar: Bardo and Dream	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.fr">www.ligmincha.fr</a>
May 20 – 22	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Weekend seminar: A-tri, Part 4	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>

**You can also watch on your computer 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week:**

**Free internet teachings and videos on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com), [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org) and [www.oceanofwisdom.org](http://www.oceanofwisdom.org)**

