



Ligmincha Europe Magazine

21 – Summer 2016



Meet the sangha from Texas

Healing From the Source

Ask a Lama for Rituals

The 21 Nails



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THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

We are excited to let you know that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and GlideWing Productions will be offering another free online course from July 9 – 31, 2016. The topic is *Healing From the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Body and Mind*. In connection with the workshop, a team of researchers will conduct a study into the effects of workshop participation on easing physical and emotional pain. As we publish this Magazine, already more than 1.300 people have registered for this course. If you want to be part of the research study, you need to complete the anonymous, confidential pre-workshop survey no later than Monday, July 11. You can find all the details on the next two pages.

In this edition we introduce the sangha from Texas. I love these interviews, because every sangha is unique and there is always something we can learn from them.

Geshe Tenzin Yangton, the resident lama at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center informs us about his background, and about Prayers and Rituals that you can request a Ligmincha Resident Lama to do.

We invite you to visit the new website of The 3 Doors Academy, and read Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen's blogs on Lishu Institute.

Two travellers share their experiences: one went to Tibet, the other went to Menri Monastery in India.



More than 800 people participated in the free two-week online Workshop for beginners, *Focusing And Calming Your Mind*, that Tenzin Wangle Rinpoche and GlideWing Productions offered in April.

And Rinpoche continues with the free online webcasts every month on a subject that is supportive for us all: *Serving Others*. I know from my own experience that it gives great joy and satisfaction to serve others, but when I served with the wrong intention it led to a burn-out. Rinpoche emphasizes that we should serve without ego.

Since you are reading now, it means that you're alive. We offer you excerpts from three books so that you can prepare for the *bardo*.

And last but not least, we asked our new editor, Michaela Clarke, to tell us about Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga. Michaela, welcome to our team!

In Bon,
Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor



MEDITATION AS MEDICINE FOR BODY AND MIND

Free Online Workshop Forms Basis for Research into Pain-Relieving Effects of Meditation

From July 9 – 31, 2016, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and GlideWing Productions will offer a free three-week online workshop on *Healing From the Source: Meditation as Medicine for Body and Mind*. In connection with the free workshop, a team of researchers will conduct a study into the effects of workshop participation on easing physical and emotional pain.

We tend to view emotional and physical pain as the enemy. The *Healing From the Source* 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. Based on ancient teachings of dzogchen from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition, this online workshop helps one discover the “great healer within.”

Normally, a registration fee would be charged for attending this *Healing From the Source* workshop.

However, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and GlideWing are committing to offer the July workshop free of charge in order to accommodate as many participants as possible in the associated study.

Call for Volunteers

As a study volunteer, you are invited to bring to this workshop any form of pain you wish to heal, anything from mild physical, mental or emotional discomfort to severe or deeply rooted pain. The online workshop will provide three weeks of video-based instruction in meditation practices designed to help ease that pain. Throughout, Rinpoche will make himself available to answer questions and offer personal support.

Because many participants will be busy with their normal daily routines throughout the three weeks, it may be a challenge for some to keep up with the recommended practice schedule. However, all participants are encouraged to commit wholeheartedly to themselves by engaging as fully as possible in viewing the instructional videos, practicing the meditations and completing the study-related surveys.



Healing From the Source
*Meditation as Medicine for
Body and Mind*

July 9-31, 2016
Free 3-Week Online Workshop

www.glidewing.com





The recommended level of participation includes:

- View all instructional videos on a timely basis. The workshop is divided into six teaching sessions, with a new session introduced each Saturday and Tuesday of the workshop. There are no set class times, and videos can be viewed on your own schedule.
- Engage in two sessions per day of formal meditation practice, for a minimum of 20 minutes a session.
- Bring the practice informally into your life at least five times a day.
- Complete a two-minute “practice tracker” survey via computer or smartphone each evening during the workshop.
- Complete a pre- and post-workshop survey, as well as a follow-up survey three months after the workshop ends.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary, and all information collected will be confidential and anonymous. Learn more about the research goals and methods below.

[Register for the workshop here](#)

Note: To be part of the research study, participants need to complete the anonymous, confidential pre-workshop survey no later than Monday, July 11.

About the Workshop

A series of instructional videos are introduced in progression throughout the three weeks. Every few days a new teaching session is revealed 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. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche answers questions in a special “Ask a Question” forum, and encourages free use of a discussion forum with participants from

around the world.

About the Research

Goals. In this study, researchers are examining whether meditation can be used as medicine for the body and the mind focusing on loving-kindness as a means for healing both physical and emotional pain.

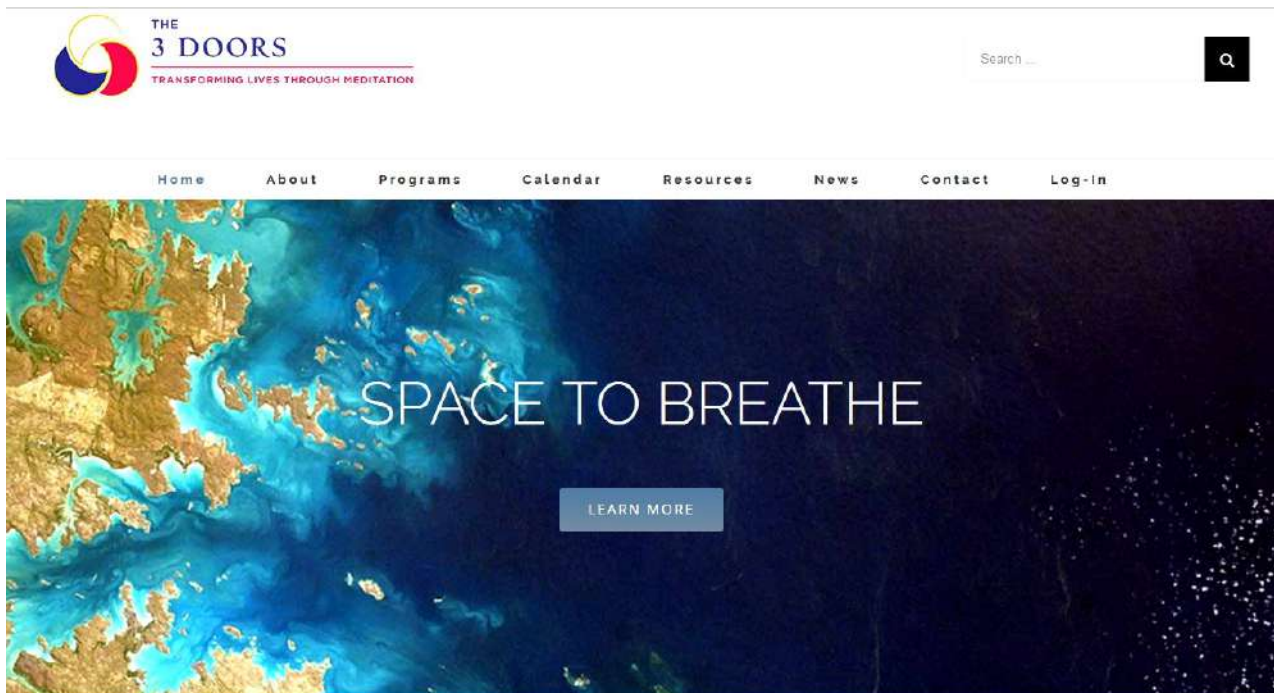
Methods. This course presents a series of instructional videos and guided meditations, introduced in progression throughout its three-week duration. Participants complete surveys before and after the course. The surveys log previous practice experience and assess physical and emotional pain and self-compassion. Participants also use a practice tracker every day to log the teachings used and the types and the amount of practice. The practice tracker also logs physical and emotional pain.

The research team. The three researchers involved in this study – Barbara Stefik, Ph.D., Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, Ph.D. and Claire Clark, Ph.D. – seek to understand the benefits of meditation on healing and transformation. Currently they are also conducting a longitudinal study on the two and one-half-year 3 Doors Academy meditation program, and other meditation programs that support people in the healing profession, people in business and other professionals.

[More About the Research](#)



MEET THE NEW 3 DOORS WEBSITE



Meditation practices for modern life

EASILY FIND EVENTS AND RETREATS

Our new events calendar makes it easy to plan and sign up for your next retreat. We have some exciting offerings to share with you: Senior 3 Doors Teacher Marcy Vaughn is coming to Los Angeles CA and Minneapolis MN in July and to Madison WI in November to lead short retreats on *The Healing Power of the Inner Refuge*. The 3 Doors *Compassion Project* will be underway in the Philadelphia PA area in September.

[Find Events and Retreats](#)

EXPLORE THE NEW LOOK OF OUR PROGRAMS

The 3 Doors is expanding its program offerings to reach more people with stillness, silence, and spaciousness. The description of the 2½ year Academy has been clarified to convey the unique benefits that this rigorous training program offers. This new Academy overview may also be useful in helping Academy participants share a map of their journey with family, friends, and colleagues. A new Academy began in [Latin America](#) last January. This fall we have two Academies starting, one in [North America](#) and one in [Europe](#).

[Explore Programs](#)

STAY TUNED – EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS AHEAD

The new look to the 3 Doors website is just the beginning. This year, our [Resources](#) page will be growing with multiple, free guided meditations to refresh and deepen your practice and share with others. The 3 Doors will also be posting select guided meditations on leading meditation apps to help more people find their inner refuge.



Overview of the Six Academy Group Retreats

1. Finding Inner Refuge and Introduction to Practices of Body and Breath
2. Exploring the Gifts of Inner Refuge and Practicing with Sound and Silence
3. Healing Power of Contemplation: Bringing Pain to the Path
4. Discovering Flow: Spontaneous Expression and the Path of Meditation
5. The Healing Power of the Collective: Hosting Ancestral and Societal Pain
6. Transformation: Dedicating the Fruit of Your Practice for the Benefit of Others



UNBROKEN LINEAGE OF WISDOM

Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen writes regularly a blog on the website of [Ligmincha Finland](#) about her experiences at Lishu Institute near Dehradun, India. Here is an excerpt from one of her post in March 2016.

Studying in Lishu is a rare opportunity that I feel grateful to have had once again. Even though one cannot say it is easy or glamorous, since studying and practicing in this kind of simple, quiet environment with a small group of people for sure has its challenges. However, these kind of conditions are rare to find and beneficial in many ways. For instance, we are living in India, which in itself gives an opportunity to change some of the habitual ways we are used to think and act in the western countries. Things do not work in the same way as in the West, in fact, quiet often they work the opposite way! At the same time, India is a land of great blessings, since so many spiritual traditions are very much alive and a natural part of everyday life here, including the Bon-tradition that we can study, practice and experience in more detail and depth in Lishu.

The teaching as well as the texts and prayers that we study in Lishu Institute are in Tibetan, with translation to English. Together with the formal Tibetan language studies this gives the chance to learn more of Tibetan language, which in turn opens up the teachings in a completely different way than studying them in English only. In a small group of people, with no other activities around to distract us, the teaching and practice is very personal and intensive.



Lishu-group on the way to Menri Monastery (in the background).



Menri Lopon Thinley Nyima Rinpoche giving Mawe Senghe-initiation.

We ended this second trimester of studies by attending Sherab Mawe Senghe Initiation in Menri Monastery, which is the root place of study and practice for many Bon teachers and practitioners. To receive blessings in this way is something very precious and rare. Sherab Mawe Senghe (Manjushri in the Buddhist traditions) is the wisdom aspect of the mind, the sharp and clear mind of intellect that we need in order to understand the teachings. This wisdom deity initiation and transmission comes directly from Kuntu Zangpo and has been passed through all Menri enthronement holders until this day. During the initiation we were also very much blessed to see a crystal statue of Drenpa Namkha that is very rarely displayed to the public.

Due to the health condition of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpa Nyima, who is the head of the Bon tradition and usually giving this initiation, Menri Lopon Thinley Nyima Rinpoche was giving the





Menri Gompa on the initiation day.

Lopon Geshe Gelek Gyatso Rinpoche, together with our teacher Menri Geshe Sherab Lodoe and a school student Kelsang Phuntsok performed Sang Chöd ritual and the auspicious ritual by throwing *tsampa* (roasted barley flour) in the air. We raised prayer flags (*lung ta*) high up between the tall trees and also offered many many colorful paper (*lung ta*) with people's names on them, to be carried by the wind.

initiation to all the monks, nuns and lay people. During his teaching he asked us to fulfil only one commitment for this initiation this time, which usually has many commitments to fulfil. That is to pray and accumulate long life mantras for His Holinesses' health. At the end of the initiation, the white scarfs were passed on from the Master to the monks and nuns and from there on we were all holding each other's clothes. This symbolizes the lineage that reaches all the way to Kuntu Zangpo and is still very much alive today. Through this connection to the lineage one could also understand how important it is to receive and pass on the good qualities from all our ancestors and to allow them to grow stronger in ourselves.

On the early morning of the second day of our visit to Menri, we climbed up the steep hills of a mountain nearby Dolanji to raise prayer flags for increasing life force and prosperity of all beings everywhere, and this time especially for His Holiness.

The abbot of Menri Dialectic school Menri Shedrub Khenpo Geshe Nyima Dhondup Rinpoche and the head teacher of the school Menri Shedrub

Our teacher Sangmo Yangri's mother had prepared a delicious breakfast for us all which we enjoyed together afterwards. What a great way to end our study period!

A group of students will continue their studies in Lishu for the third trimester after a few weeks of holidays. Upcoming third trimester completes the first year of studies, and a longer summer break follows. In September Lishu program continues with the second year of studies. The topic of the studies will be Ma Gyud, Mother Tantra, which is one of the most important texts in this tradition.



Auspicious area for raising Prayer Flags nearby Menri Monastery.





Juniper and different herbs and plants are burned during Sang Chöd ritual.

You can read an interview with Sangmo Yangri, Ph.D., Teacher at Lishu Institute in the [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 20](#).

Learn more about the second year program of Lishu: www.lishu.org.

Apply for the second year program www.lishu.org.

Text by Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen



The Lishu study group and their teachers.



Menri Shedrup Khenpo throwing prayerflags in the air, with loudly saying *KI KI SO SO LHA GYAL LO!*



BONPOS IN LHASA

When Anja Benesch travelled through Tibet she visited several sacred places and met Bonpo families. Here is her travelling report.

Somebody once called me a 'karmic traveller.' I visit many places because of Dharma activities, I enjoy it a lot and am grateful I have been able to do it this much. One of my favorite things about karmic traveling is meeting the sangha. Sometimes it takes a bit of time to overcome language barriers, cultural differences or specific oddities like high altitude sickness, but really it means discovering our shared true nature and common ground of being a practitioner and of holding devotion for the Bon tradition and masters. It is that sense of connection I find wherever I travel. Meeting the sangha was again my highlight when travelling to Tibet in June this year.

Western sangha members helped me connect with Yungdrung Tenzin, a Bonpo living in Lhasa who is close with the Shen lineage family also residing there. He was very friendly and took me to the Lishu Tagring cave, a sacred Bonpo site outside of Lhasa, and to visit Shen Rinpoche and his two sons.

It was my first visit to Tibet, so I was really excited. Last year I went to a concert of Soname, the well-known Tibetan singer. During the concert she introduced her new album, which was inspired by her first visit to Tibet, and projected short movie clips and pictures from her trip in the background. I clearly remember a moment from the video when she was sitting on the stairway up to the Potala Palace, smiling bittersweetly into the camera. The sun was shining brightly onto her face and people kept moving up the staircase. That's when I realized that the Potala is a place one can visit, that Tibet is a place that people actually go to, not just memories depicted on postcards. It may sound odd, but that's the moment I realized I could go. Only a short time after that concert a colleague of mine asked whether I would like to join a group traveling to Tibet with him. All I had to do was say yes.

Bittersweet is a word I use a lot when people ask me how my trip was. There is nothing as heart-breaking as seeing what Chinese architecture does to the land, how once striving monasteries are turned into 'official tourist attractions,' how cold and empty the Lhasa is that welcomes you when you first enter it via the local train station like I did: with military and concrete. And such



First sight of Potala before entering the old part of Lhasa.



sweet movement in the heart when you enter the old part of the town, circumambulating the Jokhang Temple with hundreds of Tibetans turning their *malas*, mumbling mantras, diving into the ancient smell of butter lamps. Such joy when you first see the stream of Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra River) water and Yamdrok Yumtso Lake, mirroring the clear cloudless sky above, embraced by the ma-



Making Prostrations in front of Jokhang Temple.

jestic mountains of Tibet. It is like on the postcards, but so real. Your sense organs and perceptions are flooded by pure beauty. It is so breathtaking that, when combined with high altitude sickness, it makes you feel dizzy and taken head over heels, your heart hammering like when you are thunderstruck by love.

I felt deep sadness and great joy many times during my travels in Tibet. Every once in a while I got away from my group, and always Tibetans would invite me for tea, smile at me or start telling me a story (even though I do not speak Tibetan). Sometimes I would join the big crowd reciting and doing prostrations in front of Jokhang Temple. Merging



Yamdrok Yumtso Lake.





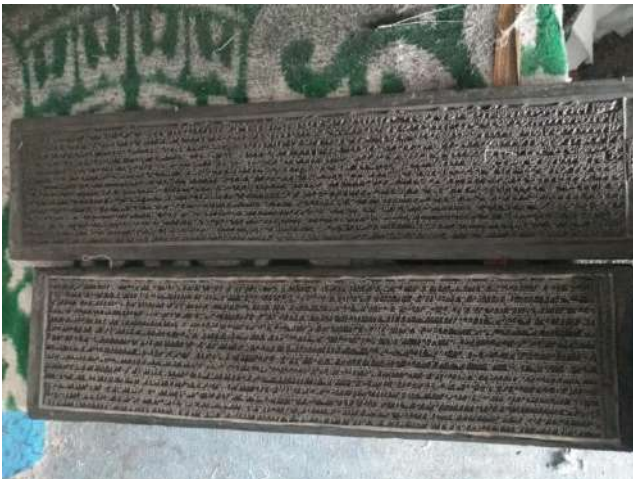
At Lishu Tagring's Cave with Yungdrung Tenzin.

with that field of devotion, upheld by so many in that sacred heart of Lhasa, gave me confidence that things can be different in Tibet one day. It surprised me. There is so much liveliness and strength there.

At one point I met with Yungdrung Tenzin, a 41 year-old Tibetan and Bonpo living in Lhasa with his

wife, son and daughter. In 2009 he guided Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's group for some of their trip in Tibet, visiting Bonpo monasteries and holy places like Bonpo Bon-Ri mountain. Rinpoche had suggested I go visit Lishu Tagring's Cave outside of Lhasa, and Yungdrung Tenzin was kind enough to take me there. We took a few breaks sitting down, looking over the valley and talking openly about





Yungdrung Tenzin's small factory for handmade Prayer Flags and him identifying some of his Prayer Flags at Lishu Tagring's cave (the longest ones in brightest color).

life with only the sky listening. After an hour's hike uphill we enjoyed the marvelous view over Lhasa valley, encompassing some buildings that look like new Chinese factories at the foot of the hill, the city with the Potala at its left and lots of new skyscrapers everywhere, as well as an abundant ocean of prayer flags on the mountains, the whole scenery gently embraced by the unchanging vast sky. It was wonderful to learn about the life of Bonpos living in Lhasa today from Yungdrung Tenzin.

"In 2006 or 2007 I was working as a guide. At that time it was difficult to get a guide license. I did it for almost two years, and then had to stop. So I tried to do some business. I began to do some Bonpo Prayer Flags, handmade. I collected and started to look for wood carvings and carpenters who are carving mantras in wood, and also brought some wood carvings which my family, relatives and friends already had. With those I started to make handmade Tibetan Bonpo Prayer





With the Shen Family in Lhasa.

Flags, and for more than three years now I also have started to import Bonpo statues and religious items from Nepal. That is my business. Now I have a little factory here in Lhasa producing Prayer Flags. Three people work there. All day they print Prayer Flags, and I transport some of the Prayer Flags to my village, Khyungpo Karu in Kham, the same as His Eminence Yongdzin Rinpoche's motherland and birthplace. Some of the village people there also buy the Bonpo Prayer Flags. In Lhasa, there are many Bonpo families, and some people who came from the east side, Chumbu and other places to Lhasa, and some who go to Bonpo Gom-Ri to do circumambulation, and at the same time to see Shen Rinpoche, and many of these families buy Prayer Flags from me."

Yungdrung Tenzin and I also visited the Shen Family, one of five ancient family lineages within the Yungdrung Bon tradition that are said to have originated with the gods and whose descendants have made profound contributions to the preservation and continuation of the Yungdrung Bon tradition throughout history. The Shen Family belongs to the lineage of Tonpa Shenrap Miwoche, the founder of the Yungdrung Bon tradition. Shen Rinpoche rebuilt the Triten Norbutse monastery in Tibet. These days about thirty to forty monks live there. Recently he started building a place in Lhasa with two resident monks where Bonpo families can visit and attend *Pujas*. His two sons study religion at Lhasa University — their study includes all of the Tibetan traditions — and they also study English. Age 21 and 23, they hope to be able to study abroad in the future. Shen Rinpoche is 61 years old. He told me that it makes him happy to know there is a lively sangha in the West, and Yungdrung Tenzin kindly explained a bit more about their role.

"The Shen Family is very important according to the Bon doctrine, they are like life-force, like the heart of the Bon doctrine. Shen Rinpoche was very young during the Cultural Revolution and did not get much education, but nevertheless he is really special, everyone knows. I am very familiar with the Shen Family, I usually meet with Shen Rinpoche and we have tea, and I know his two sons well. Their personality is very wonderful and good. They can speak English a little bit and are getting education at the University now. It is very necessary to get educated, and maybe the Western Bonpo Sangha can help here in the future. Hopefully the circumstances can be changed within the next few years, and then there might be a chance for them to go somewhere and study more. The Shen lineage is like gold. The material is gold, but we have to make it into a very beautiful and wonderful shape, and education is like giving shape and making it beautiful. The quality is always gold, even if the shape is changing. We have got gold material, and it is very necessary to mold it into a very good shape."

Having been able to travel to Tibet and meet Bonpos there has somehow made everything more real, brighter, more firm. I have no other words for my experience. It was like discovering something I had known of before, but now I have seen it with my own eyes: seen the roots, smelled the taste, witnessed the unbroken spirit of our tradition where it originated, the people, our Mother Earth. Not that I thought it had been dead, but seeing it so alive, fresh and well, has given me great confidence. At some point, sitting up on the mountain overlooking Lhasa valley like Lishu must have done, Yungdrung Tenzin said to me: "Whatever happens, as a Bonpo I know I will die happily, it cannot be taken away from me." I looked at him and felt the truth in his words.





The sky over Lhasa valley as seen from Lishu Tagring cave.

To read more about the Shen lineage, visit:
[www.ravencypresswood.com/Direct Descendants of the Enlightened Lord Tonpa Shenrap Miwoche](http://www.ravencypresswood.com/Direct%20Descendants%20of%20the%20Enlightened%20Lord%20Tonpa%20Shenrap%20Miwoche)

[www.ravencypresswood.com/The five Divine Families of Bon](http://www.ravencypresswood.com/The%20five%20Divine%20Families%20of%20Bon)

Text by Anja Benesch

Photos by Yungdrung Tenzin and Anja Benesch



‘Om Ma Tri Mu Ye Sa Le Du’ – the Bon Mantra of Compassion found on the way to Lishu Tagring's Cave.



DO YOUR PRACTICE, ALL IS COMING

We want to share inspiring texts from other Buddhist streams and traditions. Here, Michaela Clarke shares her understanding of the Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga.

‘Do your practice and all is coming’ is one of the more famous saying of Sri K Pattabhi Jois, the late guru of Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga. For most of his students this exhortation offers the hope that one day we may become flexible enough to do the difficult physical asanas required of this system, however, like many forms of yoga, Ashtanga's ultimate goal is to prepare the mind, body and spirit for meditation. As a teacher and student of Ashtanga, I would like to explain how I believe this works.

are the *yamas* (restraints) and *niyamas* (good habits), the practice of which is said to improve your karma and increase your chance of spiritual success. The first *yama*, *ahimsa*, or non violence, was made famous by Mahatma Gandhi. The others are *satya* (truthfulness), *ashteya* (not stealing), *brahmacharya* (sexual and social continence) and *aparigraha* (not grasping). The *niyamas* are *saucha* (cleanliness), *santosha* (contentment), *tapas* (discipline), *svadhyaya* (study of the self) and *Ishvara pranidhana* (surrendering to a higher power).

After the *yamas* and *niyamas*, the next six limbs of yoga are: *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breath control), *pratyahara* (sense-withdrawal), *dharana*



For those who don't know, Ashtanga yoga is a series of increasingly difficult physical postures linked by the breath. Inhaling and exhaling through the nose, a sound is generated at the back of the throat. This clears the nasal passages and balances energy through the right and left channels. This breath, called *ujjayi* or victorious breath, is used to flow gracefully through the Ashtanga sequence and to count time in each posture. By using *ujjayi* breathing in combination with certain body-locks, we develop a strong core, while moving in time to the breath, generates heat. We can also use the breath to release tension in the muscles and let go of emotional blocks.

It's a great system, allowing students to develop a high level of physical strength, flexibility and fitness. This in itself is considered important in meditation – a healthy body allows us to sit comfortably for longer, but when Pattabhi Jois said ‘do your practice and all is coming’ he wasn't just talking about the postures.

Ashtanga means eight limbs. The first two of these

(concentration) *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* (bliss). This is often taken to mean that advanced postures must be mastered and a very specific set of breathing exercises should be practiced before learning meditation. However, a more relaxed interpretation could be that the *ujjayi* breathing we do in our practice, when combined with *dristi* (gaze-point), leads to sense withdrawal and a state of concentration. And it is this aspect of Ashtanga which prepares the mind for meditation.

Of course in many traditions, it is not necessary to do yoga, let alone such a strenuous system in order to meditate. However, in an interesting twist, the *Nine Breathings of Purification* which we often do to prepare for the three precious pills, is very similar to alternate nostril breathing, which is the first of the Ashtanga *pranayamas* and an interesting link between two seemingly unrelated traditions. And while it may take me many lifetimes to master yoga *asana*, I have only been meditating for a few months and already I can feel the benefits. You could say I am doing my practice, and all is coming...



CAN WE PAY YOU IN PRAYERS?

In Europe Alejandro Chaoul has been teaching *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor* for many years, and a lot of people know him from this. Alejandro is also member of the Board of [Ligmincha Texas](#), and for that occasion we interviewed him.

When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the first time?

In 1991 H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche was teaching in New York city, as the five main Heads of the Tibetan spiritual tradition taught, before His Holiness the Dalai Lama gave the *Kalachakra* initiation at the Madison Square Garden. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was there, but I didn't really get to meet him until 1993, when I was with a friend in Santa Fe in New Mexico, and he said, "Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is in Albuquerque, and I know you tried to see him before, so why don't we go now to see him?" We met him, it was *Losar*, and he was teaching principles of Dzogchen; a great encounter. We spoke and he mentioned he would start a seven year program in Charlottesville, Virginia, but I was living in Buenos Aires, Argentina, so I thanked him for the invitation and said that I hoped to see him again soon, and maybe in Argentina. But, things turned differently, luckily, and a few months later I went to learn Tibetan at the University of Virginia (UVA) for a summer program. And a couple of weeks into the program I really made a deep connection with Rinpoche when he came to Charlottesville for teachings in the basement of John and Cindy Jackson's house. Rinpoche mentioned again the summer program, and that Yongdzin Rinpoche was coming too, and told me "You can always learn Tibetan." So, I left the Tibetan language program and started the seven year training. That first year was in West Virginia in the house of an older couple that were students of Rinpoche, Victor and Virginia. The Teachings were in the basement, the garage became the kitchen, and around thirty of us were there with Yongdzin Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Seeing them together teaching, it was clear in my heart that the Refuge Tree was alive, not just a *thangka*, and that I was starting a spiritual path there with both of them.



What kind of training was that summer program?

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche called it the Seven Year Training, and basically we started from the first year to learn Sutra, then Tantra and Dzogchen, also the causal vehicles or the 'shamanic' path and tried to cover as much as possible from the Bon tradition's Nine Ways. And we had written exam questions to show what we had learnt. Anne Klein, a professor in Buddhist studies from Rice University, was there too, and would give talks on some of the philosophical aspects of Buddhism and Bon. Rinpoche would bring every year different teachers, sometimes it was Lopon (Yongdzin Rinpoche), sometimes His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, it was awesome! That continued as what we now know as the Summer Retreat in Serenity Ridge. In the beginning the idea was to have a seven year program, and Rinpoche kept this program open for everybody who was interested, so people joined and left. From the initial group, I was the only one who completed all the seven year program, however, many people joined later, and since then have been for more than seven years too.

Can you tell about the first years when you studied with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

After that first Summer Retreat I stayed in Charlottesville, attending some Tibetan classes, and





H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.



H.E. Lopon Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

living in John and Cindy's basement. After morning class I would meet with Rinpoche, we would cook and eat lunch together and then helped in responding to letters, etc. It was a wonderful experience to learn from being *together* with my teacher. I also accompanied him in traveling to the East Coast and then when my visa expired, I went back to Argentina. I applied for the UVA Masters program in Buddhist studies and was accepted to begin in the Fall of 1994. Besides learning the academic aspects of Buddhism, I was able to learn from Rinpoche attending all his retreats in Virginia, and sometimes travel too. Slowly, he also asked me to guide practices and became the *umdze* for Ligmincha.

How did the center in Houston start?

Rinpoche came to Houston in 1992 when he was awarded a fellowship by the Rockefeller Foundation at Rice University with the support of and in collaboration with Anne Klein. He was then

awarded a second consecutive fellowship in 1993, and they wrote together *Unbounded Wholeness*, based on a unique Bon Dzogchen logic text.

He also taught at Rice University's School of Continuing Studies and at the Jung Center of Houston, and in response to students that wanted a place to practice, Rinpoche founded the Houston Khyung Dzong (Garuda fort) Center. Rinpoche realized that the proximity of the Texas Medical Center and its focus on the medical arts and sciences provided him with a special opportunity. He envisioned a place where the healing arts of Tibet and the traditions of modern western medical science could come together, allowing each to benefit from the strengths of the other. Towards that goal, in 1996, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche organized a medical conference with representatives of the Tibetan Healing tradition, Traditional Chinese Medicine and western medicine, and I attended too — it was my first visit to Houston.



Glasscock School of Continuing Studies at Rice University in Houston, Texas.





Geshe Chapur Rinpoche.

This conference helped to plant the seed of collaboration with the Texas Medical Center, and in particular with Rice University and The University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. From that seed, a tree has sprouted and grown. As a result of these collaborative efforts, and working with Lorenzo Cohen at MD Anderson, we have obtained research grants from the National Cancer Institute providing funding for several studies that are exploring the health and healing benefits of these Bon mind-body practices.

After finishing my Masters program in Virginia, Rinpoche suggested that I continue with my Ph.D. at Rice University. So I came to Houston in 1996, and to conclude my studies wrote my dissertation called *Magical Movements ('phrul 'khor): Ancient Yogic Practices in the Bon Religion and Contemporary Medical Perspectives*. After a year of me being in Houston, Rinpoche said that he could leave back to Charlottesville and that I could continue leading the center in Houston.



Khenpo Tenzin Dargye.

What happened to the center in Houston after Rinpoche left Houston?

In the beginning, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche continued to come to teach in Houston twice a year, and he did this for a number of years. With him being demanded in so many places — Ligmincha now has over thirty-five centers around the world, he now comes once a year to teach in Houston. I have also followed Rinpoche's advise to give teachings not just in our center but also in other places in the community that he had started, like the Jung Center and at Rice University, and also new places like The Rothko Chapel, Asia Society and The Museum of Fine Arts Houston. That has become a great platform to expand Ligmincha Texas.

I feel that Ligmincha Texas is in a unique position and we have unique opportunities and challenges. We are one of the few, if not the only center in the US, that has been able to promote its own place for more than twenty years, with the help of



Latri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche.



Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and Geshe Denma Gyaltzen, blessing the new Ligmincha Texas Center.





Lopon Thinley Nyima Rinpoche.



Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, our resident lama. Geshe YongDong.



our practitioners. In the beginning we were very lucky to have a donor that would give us a place, because her husband worked in the construction and development business. And after a few years she said that we were ready to have our own place and pay for it. That's how it started. Through both the kindness of our sangha members as well as our own programming we were able to sustain our center. We went through different locations and sometimes we rented a room in a yoga studio once a week. But our people were very clear that we wanted our own center where we can come any time we like to, even when we underuse it, using it eight or nine evenings a month.

The other uniqueness is that we have emphasized on the meditation and healing, both in terms of what we do in outreach to the medical center and research, and also what we do in our teachings. Many times we have been organizing teachings about *Medicine Buddha*, *Garuda*, the *Elements*, as well as healing with mantras, healing with breath, etc.

Also, we have been able to attract a variety of Bonpo lamas and Tibetan medical doctors, which has been very useful for people. We have hosted many lamas, from His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in the early years, to Lopon Thinley Nyima, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, Latri Khenpo Nyima Dakpa, Khenpo Tenzin Dargye, Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, Geshe YongDong, Yangton Lama Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche, Geshe Tenzin Yangton, Geshe Chapur Rinpoche, and Lama Khyimar. We are very lucky to have three to four lamas visiting us each year. Because it is hard

to spend time with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche individually, we are happy that many of the other lamas stay a longer time and we are able to schedule people to meet one on one with the lamas. People have individual questions, so we offer them these opportunities.

And since January this year we have a resident lama, Geshe Denma Gyaltsen, who will greatly expand our offerings and opportunities for practitioners. Geshe-la has been here many times before, and it took a long time to get the paperwork done, before he could come to live here. It was a great team work from many in our center and he is here now! He lives in a house nearby the new center, and it is one of our sangha members, Lynn, that has been hosting him for many years. Thanks Lynn!!!

Can you tell about the structure of Ligmincha Texas?

We are a non-profit cultural organization, which means that the mission is the same as Ligmincha International, which is to maintain and promote the cultural and religious tradition of Bon and Tibetan in general.

When we started we were called Houston Khyung Dzong, as at that time all centers were Khyung Dzong and later with Ligmincha's more international view, we changed our name to Ligmincha Texas Institute for the Tibetan Meditative & Healing Arts.

First we had only Officers: a Director, a Secretary and a Treasurer. Now we have a Board of Directors: Rinpoche is the Spiritual Director, and we have three Board members, which are Jackie Cole,



Marta Philippe and myself. I was Director for many years and when we wanted to get more organized, Rinpoche suggested to create a Board, and work with the Officers. Our Officers are Dorothy Matthews, Director, Donovan Earley, Vice-Director, Suzanne Silvers, Secretary and Bart Delatte, Treasurer. There are different ways we make decisions some are made by the officers, and some need the vote of the Board, and whenever we make a big decision we consult with



Fundraising on the Bayou.

Rinpoche. In addition there are other people that help to organize when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche or a lama is coming, as well as ongoing things like the bookstore, website, flowers, etc.

Can you tell about the practice groups in Houston?

The idea of having a center is twofold: we have a place for the sangha to meet weekly, and for people who are really committed to the center use the place for their individual practices any time they want.

Every Wednesday we do *Meditation, Movement, Breathing and Sacred Sound Practices*. And we have three groups meeting once a month: the *Ngondro Practice – Foundational Practices from the Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung*; *Meditation on the Red Garuda*; and *Meditation on Sherab Chamma – The Wisdom Loving Mother*. We are also thinking of doing a Saturday morning introductory session.

How many people come to the practice groups?

On Wednesday evening there are between ten to fifteen people. And depending if there are new people or not we do some of the practices: *Tsa Lung, The Five Warrior Syllables, The Nine Breathings of Purification, Recitation of the Bardo Prayer, The Invocation of Yeshe Walmo*. We always have a list of people who ask for help or healing, or who passed away. We read their names, keep them in our minds and do prayers for them. Sometimes we also recite prayers for

the Long Life of our Teachers.

We have a couple of *umdzes* who guide the practice. Sometimes I lead, other times it is Eddie Philippe on Wednesdays; the *Ngondro* is led by Rosalinda Ramirez and the *Sherap Chamma* practice is guided by Jackie Cole.

How many people come to seminars?

When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is in town about one-hundred people come to the talk, and about seventy five come for the weekend workshop. When we invite other lamas about thirty to forty people participate.

Do you have plans for the future?

We continue to do what we have been doing for many years. We keep on doing our programs, including outreach to Rice University, the Jung Center and the Rothko Chapel. And now that Geshe Denma Gyaltsen is here we are planning a series of monthly teachings that he will give; and sometime that I will give them with him. We are planning to do a yearly retreat led by both of us. Geshe-la will be at the center almost daily, so when people have questions or want to drop in he will be available.

With the blessing of our new center on June 4, 2016 by H.E. Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche we started a new era. In the fall we will have the big opening of our new space. And part of maintaining a center is doing fundraising, well done by Barbara Shreffler and Jackie Cole. Even when we



are shy, and don't want to talk about that, when you have a center you have to maintain it; it has to be viable. When I go to the landlord or an airline, and say "We are bringing this lama or that teaching. Can we pay you in prayers?" they don't accept that, they need money. I once asked a landlord, and he didn't say no, but he smiled.

Can you tell how you attract new people in the sangha?

We do a lot of programs outside of our center. I teach at the Jung Center, at Rice University's School of Continuing Studies, at the Medical Center, and do things in the community. Also Geshe Denma Gyaltzen has started and will be doing more in the community. Many times people say, "I like this talk" or "I like this meditation, and how can I continue?" Then I tell them, "For those who want to continue we have a center." Some people don't want to be in a Buddhist center, but they like to be in a lay center, like the Jung Center or Rice, and prefer to come to classes there. I feel that what is important is to create different opportunities so people find what they are looking for and is useful for them.

Do you get new sangha members from the Medical Center?

Yes, quite a few, patients and caregivers, as well as faculty and staff. However, since we recently

had to change locations, we are keeping it small. As we wait for the new place, we have been hosted by Khan Nguyen, a sangha member who is a doctor at the hospital where I work. Kahn has been very kind to lend us her house, and in the back room is our *gompa*. We get a lot of people who have been attending the classes at the Medical Center, and some stay and some don't. For many of these people it is very different to have a lay setting and to come to a place where there are *thangkas*, an altar and prayers. Some people love that but other people say "This is nice, but not for me."

Do you also offer teachings from The 3 Doors in your center?

We haven't done much of 3 Doors teachings yet, but we are trying to see how to incorporate that in a way that it is supportive to the structure. So far we have kept the center as a Ligmincha center, even though I am a 3 Doors Senior Teacher and we have two 3 Doors graduates, Leslie Abuso and Jan Toyota, who are also very involved and help at Ligmincha Texas.

Thank you Alejandro, in the near future I would like to interview you about your work in the Medical Center and your role as Senior Teacher.

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux



Blessing the new place, June 2016.



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report from what's been happening in the European sangha. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited a few countries and gave internet teachings; and sanghas invited Geshes. About some activities, e.g. from Poland and Austria we will inform you next time.



April 22-24:

We had our yearly week-end of teachings with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Paris, France on a wonderful theme: *Living in joy, dying in peace*. It was fully booked, as usual.



The sangha in France is growing very fast. We have now about sixteen practice groups around France. On this photo is the group coordinators surrounding Rinpoche, with the two Geshes living in Paris: Geshe Khorden Lhundup and Geshe Tenzin Gelek.



May 14 – 16:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came back to Bulle, Switzerland for the sixth time. A lucky and happy

group of about 150 people had the joy of attending his three day teaching on *Bardo and Dream – A Spiritual Relation to Life and Death*.

During the same weekend, Rinpoche gave a live webcast teaching on *Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 4: Service and Spirituality*. It was broadcasted from a small dharma center near Bulle where 25 people gathered from the group that usually comes together to follow the monthly webcasts.





May 6 – 8:
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Berlin, Germany
From Inspiration to Manifestation: Unblocking Your Creative Potential



May 20 – 22:
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Amsterdam, The Netherlands *A-tri* part 4. About 130 people attended this seminar.

June 26:
Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen finished his cycle of teachings on *A-tri* in Eindhoven.





April 28:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave a public talk in Bratislava, Slovakia on *Dream Yoga*.



May 26:

About thirty people came to a public talk on *Tsa Lung* with Geshe Gyatso in Bratislava, Slovakia.

May 27:

An evening talk in Zlin, Czech Republic.

May 28 – 29:

Weekend *Trul Khor* teaching in Zlin, Czech Republic where about 25 people attended.



May 27 – 29:

We enjoyed a visit from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Helsinki, Finland. On Friday Rinpoche gave a public talk at Hanken School of Economics on the topic *Transforming your world through mindful and compassionate leadership* to a full house of 300 grateful listeners. Then he went on to give a three-day teaching on *Awakening the Sacred Body* to about 120 people. Everyone felt very inspired, open and happy.



March 11 – 13:

Geshe Lhundup gave a Chöd Seminar in Berlin, Germany.





May 27 – 29:

Geshe Choekhortshang Rinpoche taught *Dream and Divination in Bon tradition* in Budapest, Hungary. At the teaching Choekhortshang Rinpoche introduced the ancient methods of divination and prediction from dreams.



Free Live Webcast **Enlightened Leadership**

From the Spring Retreat
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

April 2, 2016 21.00–22.30 h. (C.E.T.)

Translations in multiple languages available

www.ligmincha.org



You can watch the recordings here:

[Enlightened Leadership](#)



Free Live Webcast **Generating Compassion**

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

April 16, 2016 21.00–22:30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at www.ligmincha.org

This is Part 3 of a FREE six-month course in service.
Learn more at www.ligminchalearning.com



You can watch the recordings here:

[Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 3: Generating Compassion](#)





Free Live Webcast
Service and Spirituality

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

May 14, 2016, 21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at www.ligmincha.org

This is Part 4 of a FREE six-month course in service.
Learn more at www.ligminchalearning.com



You can watch the recordings here:

[Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 4: Service and Spirituality](#)



Free Live Webcast
Inspiring Others to Serve

with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

June 11, 2016, 21.00 – 22.30 (C.E.T.)

Register for the webcast at www.ligmincha.org

This is Part 5 of a FREE six-month course on service.
Learn more at www.ligminchalearning.com



You can watch the recordings here:

[Transforming Your World Through Service, Part 5: Inspiring Others to Serve](#)



Free Live Webcast

Sleep Yoga

From the Summer Retreat
with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

June 25, 2016 18.00 – 19:15 (C.E.T.)

Translations in multiple languages available

www.ligmincha.org



You can watch the recordings here:

[Sleep Yoga—from the annual Summer Retreat at the Serenity Ridge Retreat Center](#)



TIME IN MENRI, ALWAYS FILLED WITH MANY BLESSINGS

Mirka Janošková went several times to Menri Monastery in India. She had a chance to return to Menri Monastery this year in January. Because the time she spent there was always very special, filled with many blessings, she decided to share her experiences.

The first time I had visited Menri Monastery was in 2008. This time, I was coming to India to meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time. Rinpoche was giving the teaching on *Loving Mother – Sherap Chamma* in Dehradun. Before meeting with Rinpoche, I had spent one month in Menri Monastery, where I had the chance to meet His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and the main teacher Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche. His Holiness is the abbot of Menri Monastery and the spiritual leader of the Bon tradition. He fulfills his role as spiritual leader of the Bonpo admirably well and is always ready to help all who seek him out.

I came back to Menri one year later, for the *Losar* – Tibetan new year – in 2009. During this time, there are many ceremonies and rituals. Sitting in the temple, listening to the chants and prayers, many times, I would find myself crying. The tears of joy, gratefulness, devotion, the feelings were very strong and present in me. Even though, I do not understand Tibetan, sometimes I had a feel-



January 2016 with Yungdrung Tenzin, Geshe Sonam Gurung and Silvia and Lidia from Italy.

ing, that I do, that it is familiar to me. And the presence of His Holiness would bring the sense of being connected to all Masters from the past. The expansion of his heart has no limits, no bounda-

ries, is encompassing everyone and everything. Being so close to him, I feel his immense inner power, and it is an indescribable blessing which I am trying to put in the words. Spending time in Menri had deepened my understanding of the tradition immensely, the teaching and the connection to the lineage and to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche too, because Rinpoche had spend here a very important part of his life. All those experiences are very unique and I feel, they are truly precious gifts, which are guiding me to live my life in a more positive, open and joyful way. I remember some time ago, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was



During *Losar* 2009: His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche with Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche and other Geshes.



encouraging us, his students, to connect with elder teachers like His Eminence Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche or His Holiness. I believe, there is a deep meaning, a deep message for all of us.

I would like to express my deep Gratitude to our Teachers Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, His Holiness, His Eminence Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche and many other teachers. I admire their wisdom and compassion for all of us, the students and followers of the Bon tradition.

Menri Monastery is situated near Solan, in Himachal Pradesh, Northern India, in the little village called Dolanji. Large concrete Tibetan-style buildings have come up to house the new temples, a library, a Bon dialectic school, dormitories, a health center and nunnery as well as other well functioning centers. The nunnery is in a pristine setting across the river from, and in view of Menri Monastery. Called Redna Menling or "Land of Precious Medicine," it is the only Bon nunnery in India and only one of a handful in the world. Girls and women from Tibet and the borderlands arrive here to study and remain as nuns in the Bon culture. Redna Menling is a rapidly growing institution that is a solid reflection of women as leaders and practitioners of the Bon tradition. Menri is a refuge for approximately three hundred-fifty Bon children whose numbers increase each



Losar time: little monks and nuns.

year. The children, some of whom are orphans, are sent to Menri from poor regions in the borderlands of Tibet and Nepal for their sustenance and education.

Menri Monastery is a wonderful place for personal retreat, surrounded by a beautiful nature. You can stay in the guest house, where you get very nice and healthy food. You can take a nice walk, and walking to the nunnery takes about half an hour and the walk is just wonderful. Or you can simply enjoy *Kora*, walking around the Temple. The whole surrounding is of great support for our spiritual practice. The place is filled with beauty and incredible peace. The tradition is so alive, that one feels almost like magic is happening every day.



The view on Menri Monastery. At the very top on the right is the main temple, the blue building on the left down is the guest house.

If you would like to visit Menri Monastery for a longer period, please make sure you had applied for PAP (Protected Area Permit). You can find more information here:

www.menrimonasterypap.com.

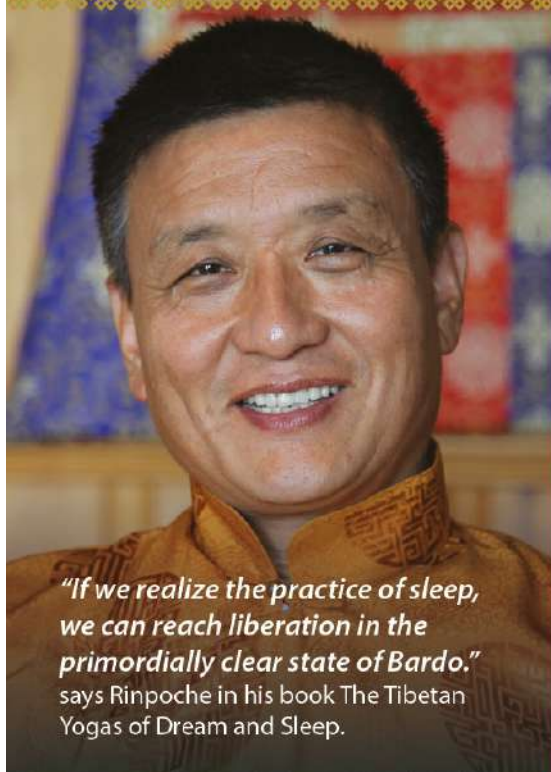
If you have any questions concerning the visit in Menri Monastery, I will be happy to help and provide more details. You can contact me on the email address:

janoskovamirka@gmail.com.

Text and photos by:
Mirka Janošková



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Budapest 3rd and 4th of September



*"If we realize the practice of sleep,
we can reach liberation in the
primordially clear state of Bardo."*
says Rinpoche in his book *The Tibetan
Yogas of Dream and Sleep*.

Sleep Yoga

Let's abide in the clear nature of
the mind during sleeping as well!

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the most outstanding
representative of Bon Buddhism living in the West, will
visit to Hungary again by Ligmincha Hungary's invita-
tion. Rinpoche will teach the practice of Sleep Yoga this
time, a powerful instrument of Awakening which will
help us to abide in the clear nature of the mind in the
period of deep sleep, that we usually spend uncon-
sciously. The teaching will support to integrate the
practice into our spiritual path.

VENUE OF THE TEACHING:

MOM Cultural Center
Budapest H- 1124, Csörsz u. 18.

SCHEDULE OF THE TEACHING:

3rd September, Saturday

9.00 – 18.00 Sleep Yoga teaching and Guided Meditation
12.30 – 14.00 Lunch Break

4th September, Sunday

9.00 – 17.30 Sleep Yoga teaching and Guided Meditation, Blessing
12.30 – 14.00 Lunch Break

**Offering for the course is 60EUR when you register by email and send your advance
payment of 30EUR before 20th August.**

Without prior email registration, the offering is 80EUR to be paid at the registration desk.

Please register at the following link: <http://goo.gl/forms/0zQEp1hRHOXppPvE3>
and we will send you further information for the payment and about catering options.

For further questions, please contact us at info@ligmincha.hu
We look forward to the participation of all those interested at this exceptional event!



BEING A SHADOW OF A SWALLOW



**Being a shadow of a Swallow
Dancing, moving, willing to bow.
Be one with the subtle song of the sun
Where all our existence begun.
So much joy to be together
Our form, growing by feather.
Surrender when darkness comes
Melting into the glow of the sun.**



**Being a shadow of a Swallow
So flexible in how to follow.
Just go and being lead
The warmth of the sun is all we need.
Freedom is so subtle and well
Not feeling an inch of an individual cell.
Just Being, being a shadow
With birthing and dying, just in one flow....**

Tonny Maas



THE CYCLE OF THE FOUR BARDOS

The new and complete translation of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1) was discussed in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 20](#) from pages 36 onto 43. In the *Introductory Commentary* His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama challenged us with his central question “*whether or not there exists a continuity of consciousness after death.*” In this article Frits de Vries elaborates more on this subject.

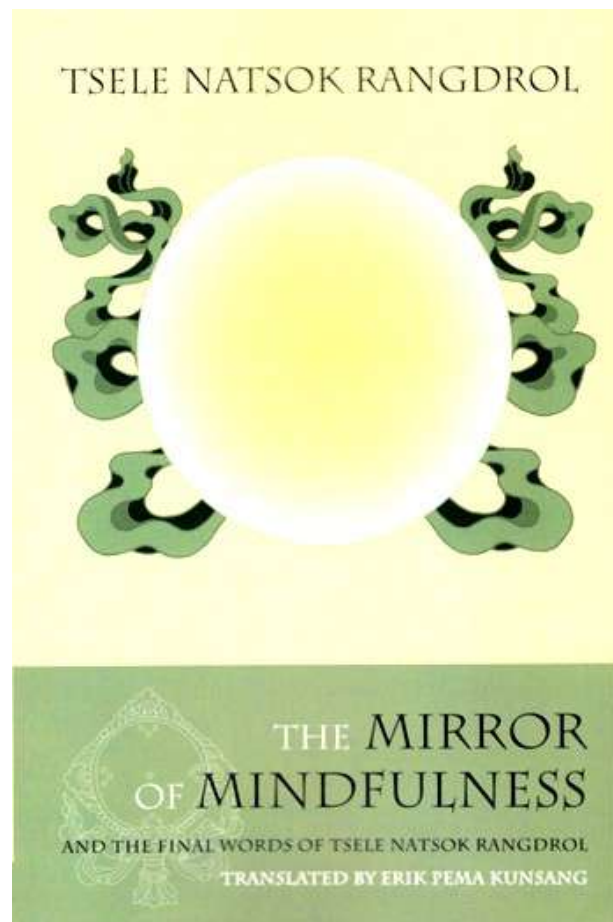
For most Western readers it is not easy to understand the Tibetan Book of the Dead. In the book *The Mirror of Mindfulness* (2), Erik Pema Kunsang emphasizes this as follows in the *Translator's Preface*:

“In order to read this book with an open mind, one must reevaluate the worldview of materialistic nihilism that most Westerners have been brought up with and for the most part simply take for granted. If one decides that a human being is merely one of nature's accidents, a biological organism which is born, tries to survive and reproduce, and then dies, leaving nothing but a corpse of material particles, then there is not much opportunity for spirituality. This nihilistic viewpoint is based on ordinary people's perceptions.” (2, xiii)

Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, encouraged Erik Pema Kunsang to translate the text explaining the *bardos* some years ago. Selecting the text from his collection of five volumes of works by the famous Tsele Natsok Rangdröl, a contemporary of the even more famous Longchen Rabjam, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche considered “*that this explanation of the bardos would benefit everyone interested in the dharma.*”

This book is used several times in the *Tibetan Book Of The Dead* list of citations for *bardo* clarification and also shows up in the Bibliography of this newly *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. It serves as a perfect companion for students who want some guidance in the clarification and explanation of the intermediate states. In the *Translator's Preface*, the previous citation continues:

“An enlightened being like Buddha Shakyamuni,



on the other hand, teaches according to an extraordinary insight into life and reality. This enlightened insight can be tested through one's own experience. The Buddha taught that the physical body is only a temporary abode, an excellent dwelling in fact, but nevertheless not so important as the inhabitant, the consciousness, which is a continual stream of cognition.” (2, xiii)

Consider this as a provisional answer to the central question of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Directly after this, the four intermediate states are introduced to us in a few clear short sentences:

“At present our consciousness is temporarily in a human body. However, this condition of being embodied lasts for an uncertain length of time. This is the first intermediate state, the natural bardo of this life.” (2, xiii)

And then second:

“After being born, growing up, leading a life, and maybe growing old, the body dies but not the



mind. For a certain period the consciousness undergoes a separation from the embodied state and enters a state totally without solid grounding. That is the second intermediate state, the painful bardo of dying.” (2, xiii)

The third and fourth intermediate states are:

“The basis for consciousness is not compounded by material particles and therefore not subject to their change or transformation. Nonetheless, unlike physical space, it has a cognitive capacity which gives rise to manifestation. During the third intermediate state, the luminous bardo of dharmata, one is disembodied, that is, without any physical support whatsoever. The mind is utterly bare and naked; there is only dharmata, “what naturally is.” In this state, it is said, perception and experience are seven times more vivid than usual. Consequently, the opportunity for either confusion or clarity is intensified seven times. The manifestation of one’s basic nature, dharmata, can be experienced either as a nightmare of haunting demons or as a pure realm of divine beings.

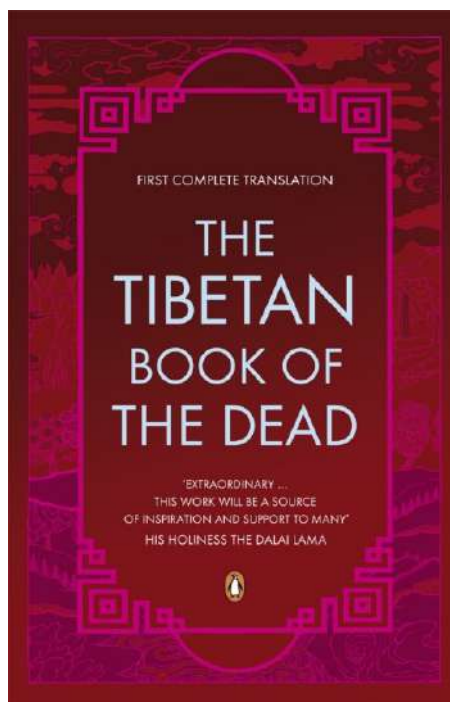
When habitual tendencies of grasping at duality – which stems from lack of insight into the basic nature of mind and are embedded in one’s base of consciousness – regain power after their short lapse, one seeks reembodiment corresponding to one’s karmic habits, which are now ready to ripen. That is the fourth intermediate state, the karmic bardo of becoming.” (2, xiii, xiv)

We are back at the beginning again of the first bardo.

“After a while one enters a new body, not necessarily human, and is again in the first bardo.

This cycle of the four bardos goes on endlessly, unless one is born as a human being and connects with the right teacher and teachings. The goals and aims that are paramount in the first bardo, such as wealth, power, social position, and fame, seem futile and pointless when one recognizes that these mundane attainments are all left behind in passing through the other bardos.” (2, xiv)

In a nutshell the *Translator’s Preface* has given us an overview of the four bardos as preparation for the main text. But the real introduction is given by



Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche in his *Introductory Course*, an excellent eleven pages preparation, with well-known explanations which Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche also uses regularly, the re-connecting analogy of mother and child:

“It is cognizant, non-conceptual, and remains one-pointedly — the union of luminosity and emptiness. That is the ground luminosity, which is like a mother. This means that dharmata, self-existing wakefulness, the sugatagarbha, is like a mother. The recognition of it, which one’s master has pointed out, is like a child. At this moment mother and child unite. The traditional analogy is that it is “like a child jumping into his mother’s lap.”” (2, p. 6)

The main text of Tsele Natsok Rangdröl is chosen for translation by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche because it is easy to understand and it contains all the keypoints of the four bardos. But it also contains sentences that sets you thinking, like the following:

“One is able to travel, by mere thought, to any place throughout the three-thousandfold world-system, except for the womb of one’s future mother and Vajrasana [prob. Bodh Gaya]. One can be seen by people who have superknowledge, and by the bardo beings who are of the same type as oneself, but not by others.

One has suddenly assumed a form such that



although one sees one's dead body, one still doesn't acknowledge having passed away. With strong attachment to one's house, wealth, and belongings, one will try to take possession of them. Seeing one's friends and family members use one's things, one will feel deprived and angry, much more than ever before, but they will not notice it." (2, p. 68)

Why read this book?

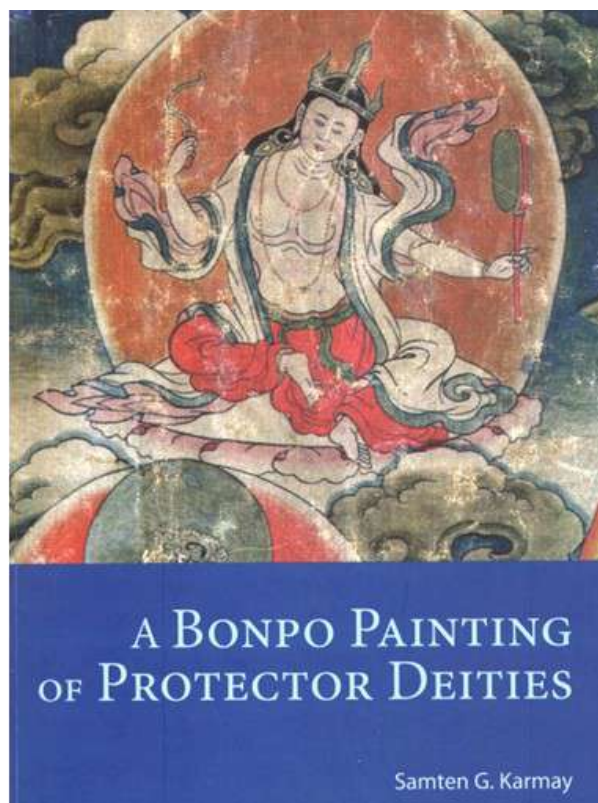
"The Mirror of Mindfulness is not merely an esoteric lesson in the pointlessness and futility of worldly concerns. Tsele Natsok Rangdröl gives key points on dealing with the situation in each of the four bardos — that is, how to face the situation directly and take advantage of the opportunities that each bardo presents, in accordance with the oral teachings of the lineage masters." (2, xiv)

In short, although *The Mirror of Mindfulness* is only presented in the Bibliography and several times in the citations list of the newly *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, it serves as a perfect companion for those who want some guidance in the explanation and meaning of all the *bardos* or intermediate states. This guidance is not only offered by the main text of *The Mirror of Mindfulness*, but also by the *Introductory Course* of Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and even by the *Translator's Preface* of Erik Pema. In the end it serves as a better entry for understanding *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

The Glossary of the new *Tibetan Book Of The Dead* as a resource was praised in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 20](#), but the Glossary of key terms in *The Mirror of Mindfulness* is also a fine contribution to that.

Be aware of different translations of the same Tibetan keywords. For example, the keyword 'od-gsal. In the new *Tibetan Book Of The Dead* this is translated as Inner Radiance, but can sometimes also be translated as Clear Light. Erik Pema Kunsang translates 'od-gsal as Luminosity: Free from Darkness of Unknowing.

Ground Luminosity of the Natural State is Inner Radiance of the Mother, is Mother Luminosity. The experience of Luminosity in one's present meditation practice, while on the path, is Inner Radiance of the Child = Child Luminosity. These are some important concepts to remember.



"However in the Dzogchen view, all states of awareness or consciousness are thought to be pervaded by inner radiance, just as a sesame seed is permeated by oil. Therefore, in Dzogchen, there exist refined instructions which allow the recognition of inner radiance even while all the gross levels of sensory activity are still active." (1, HHDL, p. xxiii)

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- (2) Tsele Natsok Rangdröl, *The Mirror of Mindfulness: The cycle of the Four Bardos and The Final Words of Tsele Natsok Rangdrol*, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, pbk nov 2010, first edition 1987.
- (3) Samten G. Karmay, *A Bonpo Painting of Protector Deities*, Varja Books, First Published 2015. (Content: The Protector Deities of A Bonpo Funeral Rite.)

Text by Frits de Vries



SERVING THE CULTURE AND TEACHINGS OF BON

Since May 2014, Geshe Tenzin Yangton has been the resident lama at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, the headquarters of Ligmincha International, located in rural Nelson County, Virginia, US. In this interview he shares some of his biography and talks about the general information, about what he has been doing for these past two years, including offering rituals and prayers for sangha members who request.

Where were you born?

I was born in 1974 in Chharka (pronounced "Tsarka"), a remote village in the Dolpo region of western Nepal bordering Tibet.

Can you tell us something about your family?

My family is part of the ancient Yangton lineage, said to go back to ancient times. An important Yangton dzogchen lineage master is Yangton Sherap Gyaltsen, who was born in 1077. My family has been taking care of the Chharka Bon Monastery. My grandfather was the head lama of Chharka, and now, Lama Tashi Gyaltsen, one of my uncles, is the current head lama, and I am next in line. The responsibility of the head lama is to teach the children there the traditional way of Tantric practice and support all the village people. I have three brothers and three sisters.

When did you go to a monastery for the first time?

As a child, together with my twin brother and a cousin, I completed the customary three-year retreat at the monastery in Chharka. My brother and I both wanted to become a monk and continue our monastic education. Since our parents needed one of us to stay at home to help them, it was determined that I would train to become a monk while my twin remained at home.

When did you decide that you wanted to become a monk?

In 1989, I traveled with my uncle, Lama Tashi Gyaltsen, to Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal. There, I took my vows as a novice monk from H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. I studied mandalas, writing and gram-



Geshe Tenzin Yangton, his uncle Yangton Lama Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche and H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche (from left to right).

mar, learned many rituals and received teachings and transmissions from Yongdzin Rinpoche. At that time there was no possibility to study for a geshe degree there.

In 1991, I travelled to Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India. In April of 1992, I enrolled in the Bon Dialect School in Dolanji. A few years later while I was still studying for my geshe degree I took the complete vows of a monk. My rigorous schedule included study and practice of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen; reasoning and debate; rituals, art, poetry and astrology; numerous initiations and special events, and long retreats, among other things. In 2006 I attained my Geshe Degree.

What made you decide to become a monk?

Since I was young, seeing what my uncle Lama Tashi, did – wearing a monk's robe – inspired me and I wanted to become like him, and help people.

When did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

When I studied at Menri Monastery I met him there, somewhere in the nineties. When I travelled in 2000 with my uncle, H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche again and had a chance to spend more time and get closer to him. My first visit to the



United States was to Serenity Ridge as the assistant to H.E. Menri Lopon Rinpoche. I also had the opportunity to visit several cities in the United States and countries in Europe.

Why did you choose to come to the West?

Actually, I did not choose to come. Since I was the assistant of my uncle Menri Lopon Rinpoche, I travelled with him. In 2007, I studied English in Houston, Texas with the support of western *dharma* friends and *sangha* members, and I joined the Winter Retreat at Serenity Ridge and worked on a translation project in Charlottesville, Va. In 2012, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked me to come to Serenity Ridge and do some teachings and support Ligmincha International and to become the resident lama at Serenity Ridge. I asked my uncle and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, and after they



Yanggon Monastery in Chharka Village, Dolpo, Nepal.

agreed I went to Serenity Ridge in 2014, because I could not refuse this request by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

I still feel a responsibility toward our monastery, Yanggon Tongdrol Phuntsok Ling (www.yanggon.com) and the Dolpo Tsarga Welfare Healthcare Clinic. I want to continue my work to pre-



Geshe Tenzin Yangton with his uncle H.E Menri Lopon Rinpoche in Budapest, Hungary.



serve the culture and teachings of Bon in general, and the Yangton lineage in particular, in my village of Chharkha and plan at some point to return to the area.

How do you like it at Serenity Ridge?

I like it very much. It is a very nice place, and there are many possibilities to learn and teach and take care of the sangha. I am very happy with my responsibilities here. Sue Davis-Dill and many other people on the staff here make it wonderful to be here.

Wasn't it difficult in the beginning? Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had left, and there was a time without a resident lama at Serenity Ridge?

When I came there was a lot of support, and those in the sangha were happy to have a lama residing here. And even when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche lived in Virginia, he travelled a lot, but when he moved to California some people who lived here felt a little bit lost. And now Rinpoche still comes all the four seasons to teach at retreats here. We also invite other lamas and geshe to teach here.

What did you do after you graduated as Geshe, and before you came to Serenity Ridge?

During that time I travelled with H.E. Menri Lopon Rinpoche, and I volunteered to teach younger monks and nuns, supported the monastery in many ways and continued with my learning. I was coordinator of Yanggon Thongdrol Phuntsog Ling Monastery in my home village of Chharkha, Nepal, the Dolpo Tsaga Welfare Healthcare Clinic and many other projects. I was preparing to move to Dolpo when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked me to come to Serenity Ridge as the resident lama.

I would like to ask you some questions about Bon rituals. Can you tell something about the rituals you do on request?

So far, many people have asked for a *Long Life* ritual and *Soul Retrieval*, others ask for *Sipé Gyalmo Healing* for removing obstacles, and others ask for blessings. There are also requests for the *Five Elements*, or *Sang chöd* offerings for purification, and the *Bardo* ritual when people have died. On the website www.serenityridge.ligmincha.org you can find the list of rituals. When you send a request one of the staff members of Serenity Ridge Lama Committee (sr.lama.committee@ligmincha.org) will respond and inform me, and then I will perform the ritual. People who live nearby sometimes come here in person, but for people who live far away we collect the information and do



Geshe Tenzin Yangton at Serenity Ridge International Retreat Center.



the ritual. People can also read the bio of Tonpa Shenrap or chant prayers themselves, and receive the blessings in that way. There are also water offering rituals, purifying the environment, rituals for the weather, for any situation or condition. Last year I performed a wedding ritual for close friends Susan and William, they both received Bon Buddhist and Hindu blessings.



How about payment for the rituals? Is it a fixed price, or is it up to the one asking for a ritual?

People give a donation. For some rituals there are costs for materials, such as turquoise or tsampa.

To request prayers from Geshe Tenzin Yangton for suggested minimum donations to cover the costs involved in the rituals, or for more information, email the Serenity Ridge Lama Committee (sr.lama.committee@ligmincha.org). For those

who wish to contact the closest resident lama, there are other resident lamas around the world, they can contact the different sanghas.

Does every lama perform the same rituals?

We have a committee of Ligmincha Resident Lamas, and we have agreed to do the rituals and prayers in the same way.

What do you think about the preservation of the Bon-Buddhist tradition in the West?

I think that the Bon-Buddhist tradition is precious and helps people in the West. People are naturally connected, and I feel it is a huge support for Westerners. The Bon teachings are for the whole world, the sharing and the openness are a gift. The Bon teachings are like a medicine, with a lot of knowledge and wisdom, and although in the West people have a different culture, they understand it and the meditation and practice benefits them.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has adapted his language so people in the West can understand the Bon teachings more easily. Do you teach from the texts?

I am trying to teach as Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches. I also follow the original texts. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been teaching in the West for a long time and he understands the students and their culture very well. Often I was present when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was teaching, and





Taking exams at the Nunnery.



Receiving the Geshe Certificate from H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche in 2006.



Geshe Tenzin Yangton with his mother, nieces and uncle.

I noticed that he has adapted the language without any problem, but he teaches exactly according to the original Bon texts.

Is there something you want to say to conclude this interview?

I recommend everybody to practice and feel the connection and support for and from each other. I am happy to be part of this connection and want to contribute whatever I can.

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux



Geshe Tenzin Yangton with his brother Yungdrung Wodser in 2006.



Geshe Yangton with his niece and mother.



At Serenity Ridge.



REQUESTING PRAYERS FROM LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL RESIDENT LAMAS

Geshe Denma Gyaltsen (Texas, US), Geshe Tenzin Yangton (Virginia, US), Geshe Khorden Lhundup Gyaltsen (France), Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso (Poland), Lama Kalsang Nyima (Mexico) and Lama Yungdrung Lodoe (Mexico) are available to perform prayers for sangha members and friends in your home or from their residence, depending on what is requested.

In keeping with longstanding Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition, prayers can be performed to offer blessings and generate merit, remove obstacles, purify negative energy, fulfill wishes, benefit those who have died and heal the living. They can be requested for oneself or for a friend or family member.

From among the direct teachings of the Nine Ways of Bon by spiritual guide Tonpa Shenrap Miwoche, these healing rituals are from the Fourth Way within the group of Causal Vehicles. In this life, according to each individual's faith, devotion, capacity and other circumstances, sentient beings are helped through the performance of religious prayer.

Prayers Offered by Ligmincha International Resident Lamas

Each of the prayers listed below brings merit and blessings, and removes obstacles. The specific emphasis of each prayer is described below.

1. House Blessing (1–2 hours): For either new or established homes. Brings the positive energy of blessings and purifies negative energy.

2. Sang Sol & Lungta, Smoke Offering & Raising Lungta (2–3 hours): Removes obstacles, repairs religious commitments, raises one's energy, and brings good luck and the fulfillment of wishes.

3. Recitation of auspicious texts from the Bon Canon (3–8 hours, depending upon text): Text from the Yungdrung Bon Ka (direct words of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap) can either be recited in your home or from the lama's residence. Recitation of the sacred texts generates great merit and brings blessings to oneself, one's family and the environment. Traditionally, approximately once per year a family will invite lamas to come to



Men-Lha, The Medicine Buddha is a compassionate manifestation of Tonpa Shenrap Miwoche.

their home and recite a sacred text. Geshe-la can help suggest a text. Examples of texts that are traditionally recited are:

- The root text of the Great Mother Sherap Chamma.
- The root text of the Great Mantra OM MA TRI.
- The Shining Precious Golden Light, a text for wealth and prosperity.
- The short hagiography of the Supreme Teacher Tonpa Shenrap Miwoche.

4. Medicine Buddha (2 hours preparation and 2 1/2 to 3 hours for the prayer): The Medicine Buddha is said to be a manifestation of Tonpa Shenrap, founder of the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition. The Medicine Buddha prayer helps bring health and healing to mind, body and the world.

5. Removal of Obstacles (1–3 hours): Obstacles are removed through prayer invoking the Yungdrung Bon protector deities, including Yeshe Walmo.

6. Long Life Prayer (Chi Lu) (1 full day): Prayer to remove negativities and obstacles that interfere with one's lifespan.



7. Soul Retrieval (La Lu) (1 full day): Requested when one feels a loss of soul, weak or full of fear.

8. Long Life (Chi Lu) and Soul Retrieval (La Lu) (2 full days): These rituals are performed together for those with serious, life-threatening illness.

9. Combination of Prayers: Repairing One's Commitments, Long Life, and Increasing Wealth & Prosperity (8–9 hours)

10. The Accomplishment of Red Garuda and Tsok Offering (1 full day): Performed primarily for healing of serious illnesses and strong feelings of being harmed by external forces. Additionally, can be performed for general obstacles and longevity, as well as to generate merit for offering tsok.

11. The Accomplishment of Sherap Chamma (1 full day): Performed mainly to ask for help regarding the eight fears: enemies; rumors and negative speech that threaten one's success; infertility; illness and problems caused by the lu (Sanskrit: naga); attack of one's belief in the Yungdrung Bon with wrong views; errors of impurity in tantric ritual; fear of death; and astrological types of obstacles and negativity. Additionally, can be performed for general obstacles and longevity, as well as to generate merit for offering tsok.

12. The Accomplishment of the Ma Gyü and Tsok Offering (5–8 hours): For practitioners of dzogchen, this ritual is beneficial for praying for success in realizing the correct dzogchen view and attaining realization. Additionally, one generates merit for offering tsok.

Death Prayers



According to Bon teachings, because of the profound power of the teachings, and the loving kind-

ness and compassion of the deities and the lama, these prayers are naturally helpful and comforting to the deceased, regardless of their knowledge of the teachings or belief in other religious traditions.

Regarding counting the days: In general, in the Yungdrung Bon tradition the actual day that an individual dies is not counted. Day 1 is the day after the death day. Day 4 actually begins 'Day 1' of the 49 Days of the Bardo. (It is said that for the first three days in the Bardo, the person who died is deep in the Bardo, unconscious. Beginning on the fourth day, the person starts to become more aware.)

1. Powa (transference and liberation of the consciousness) and recitation of the "Bardo Thodal, Liberation Upon Hearing" (1–2 hours): This can be performed on the day of death or at any time during the 49 days. The practice of *powa* is used to guide the individual's consciousness to either liberation or a higher rebirth depending upon the person's capacity. The recitation of the Bardo Thodal is used as a support to remind the individual of his or her previous practice and connection with the pure teachings.

2. Chang Bu (Liberation from the Six Realms) ritual (3–4 hours): This prayer is performed on the third day after death. The Chang Bu ritual is repeated once each week for 49 days (7 weeks), or can be repeated just on the final 49th day. The Chang Bu practice is used to help the consciousness of the deceased as he or she goes through the many experiences of the bardo before rebirth. This removes obstacles and guides the individual to a higher and positive rebirth.

To request prayers from Ligmincha International Resident Lamas, for suggested minimum donations to cover the costs involved in the rituals, or for more information contact:

Geshe Gyatso at Ligmincha Poland:

info@bongaruda.pl

Lama Kalsang and Lama Yungdrung at Ligmincha Mexico: ligminchamexico@ligmincha.mx

Geshe Lhundup at Ligmincha France: info@ligmincha.fr

Geshe Denma at Ligmincha Texas: info@ligminchatexas.org

Geshe Tenzin Yangton at Serenity Ridge: sr.lama.committee@ligmincha.org



THE 21 NAILS

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been teaching the 21 Nails in Poland for several years, and started last year a cycle of these teachings in Germany. When you want to study these 'nails,' you can read *The Precepts of the Dharmakaya: Advanced Instructions on the Practice of Bönpo Dzogchen According to the Zhang-Zhung Tradition of Tibet*, by John Myrdhin Reynolds. Here is an excerpt from the book (page 41-44). To make the text easier to read in this reprint we left out the Wylie transcript (like: *gZer-bu nyi-shu rtsa gcig*) and the notes.

TRANSLATION OF THE ROOT TEXT, THE EXCEEDINGLY SECRET TEACHING ON THE FRUIT: THE TWENTY-ONE LITTLE NAILS

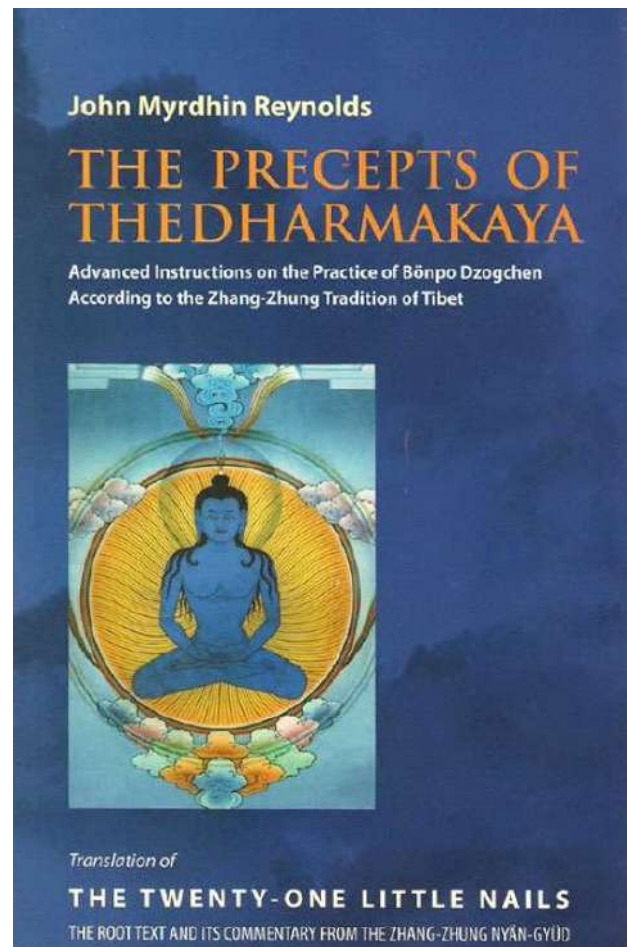
Here is contained the text of "The Twenty-One Little Nails," according to the Oral Transmission from Zhang-zhung for the Great Perfection Teachings.

Homage to Kuntu Zangpo who is the all-pervading and the all-encompassing Great Compassion!

Introduction

In order to send the streams of consciousness of those fortunate individuals (who are disciples) back into the Base, there exists this nectar of the profound Oral Transmission of the unsurpassed innermost Secret Doctrine, which is Dzogchen. These instructions were revealed (by the Primordial Buddha Kuntu Zangpo himself). They uncover the very root of the Base that is the Natural State and represent the highest peak and the ultimate vehicle to enlightenment among all the doorways into Bon. Kuntu Zangpo revealed these Dzogchen teachings, which also represent the very heart of all the Tantras and the very essence of all the Agamas, and taught them as the most excellent among all upadeshas. Truly, they are similar to the eyes of the body.

This Mind Transmission was originally transmitted directly mind-to-mind, whereas subsequently the Oral Transmission was transmitted from mouth to ear with words. Thereafter, these instructions



regarding the practice of Dzogchen were written down (by Gyerpung Nangzher Lödpö at the behest of the Lord Tapihritsa) by using turquoise blue ink on conch-shell white paper. These two individuals, who were actually Nirmitas, or emanations, taught these instructions to those who were karmically suitable as Shen practitioners. Thereafter the instructions were transmitted successively to certain individuals belonging to later generations (in Zhang-zhung and in Tibet).

May these little nails, which represent twenty-one essential points (pertaining to the innermost practice of Dzogchen), strike the targets which are the minds of those fortunate individuals (who are practitioners!) SAMAYA!

1. The Little Nail of Recognizing the Basis of Everything

Homage to Kuntu Zangpo who is one's own Self-Awareness manifestly revealed!



The individual who is terrified from the very depths of one's heart at the prospect of death and rebirth in Samsara, (and is therefore, a suitable practitioner for the Dzogchen teachings), should retire into solitude at a remote hermitage, amidst pleasant surroundings. Having come to recognize the Kunzhi, which is the basis of everything, thereupon one should clearly and definitely decide just what is Rigpa, this being the King that is the spontaneously-born and co-emergent awareness. Being profound, very subtle, and difficult to understand, this Rigpa is indeed very rare and precious. For that reason, the Primordial Buddha revealed a very special method for recognizing it.

The procedure for this method is the making a distinction between the mind and the Nature of Mind. (This is as follows.) The essential point of the body (being the appropriate five-point posture) is held tightly, while the horse of the breath is controlled and the doorways of the lamps (or eyes) remain in their own original condition (that is, the eyes are kept half open).

Then, as for the upadesha regarding the making of a distinction between mind and the Nature of Mind: one does not analyze external (appearances) and one does not examine internal (thoughts), nor does one link them with the past or the future (by way of memories or anticipations).

As for demonstrating the full measure of distinguishing between mind and the Nature of Mind: Having dissolved the impurities (as represented by discursive thoughts) into the vast expanse of the Natural State, thereupon the purity (which is Rigpa, or intrinsic awareness) becomes clearly visible as light. Having removed these coverings of the mind (as represented by negative emotions, discursive thoughts, and so on), thereupon Rigpa arises in its nakedness. Having removed the masses of clouds, which are one's own thoughts, then primordial awareness becomes unobscured and unveiled.

As for recognizing the Nature of Mind as distinct from mind, (there are four considerations regarding the Nature of Mind:)

- 1) it is without thoughts,
- 2) it becomes the basis of everything,



Kuntu Zangpo.

- 3) it is a neutral state (displaying neither virtue nor vice), and
- 4) everything possible originates from it and this is unceasing.

These four (represent the qualities of) the Kunzhi and the Nature of Mind.

On the other hand, whatever arises in terms of memories and thoughts (this representing the mind, or thought process), if one remains relaxed (and does not grasp at thoughts), it will liberate of itself. If one just lets it be, it will merge into the Base (which is the Natural State). This is the quality of the thought process or mind.

As for clearly and definitively deciding upon what is mind and what is the Nature of Mind, (this may be accomplished as follows:)

- 1) By means of the three kinds of vows or bindings, one renounces all activities that represent distractions,
- 2) By way of the three relaxations, the thought process itself settles into its natural condition of rest,
- 3) By way of the three methods of just letting things be, one adheres to the original condition of Rigpa,
- 4) By means of the three non-pursuits, the current of karmic traces is interrupted,
- 5) By way of the three cords, one prolongs the duration of the state which has become now familiar,
- 6) By means of the three methods of concealment, one attends to the uncorrupted meaning,
- 7) By way of the three arisings, phenomena are purified into the energy of Rigpa,



- 8) By way of the three liberations, one definitively decides without duality, and
 9) By way of the three non-obscurations, the full measure of the fruit is apprehended.

The Little Nail of the Recognizing of the Kunzhi is now completed. SAMAYA!

Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches the Twenty-One Nails from August 16 – 21, 2016 in Wilga, Poland, and from August 23 – 28, 2016 in Buchenau, Germany.

The teachings of the Twenty-One Nails are a direct expression of enlightenment — our natural mind. Each nail describes this natural state from a different point of view. The views are called “nails” or “seals” because they stabilize the experiential understanding of the natural state. These teachings are said to have come directly from the primordial buddha, Küntu Zangpo, passed by mind-to-mind transmission to eight successive buddhas, and then transmitted orally to 24 human Bon lineage holders, all of whom were yogis and siddhas. It was first written down by Yangton Sherap Gyaltsen in the 11th century. These teachings have been transmitted in an unbroken succession down to our teachers of the present day: Yongdzin Sangye Tenzin, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima,

Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

The teachings and practices presented at this retreat by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche are an exceptional gateway for new students to experience both the wisdom and practicality of the Bon teachings. For those already connected to Bon, this is a precious opportunity to be with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and deepen your study and practice. We welcome everyone to join us at Wilga and/or Buchenau this summer.

For your information: The registration for these retreats does not require your participation at earlier years.

[Register here for the teachings in Poland](#)

[Register here for the teachings in Germany](#)



BODHICITTA AND COMPASSION

We have chosen two edited excerpts on compassion. The first is from an oral teaching given by H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the second by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, both given in 2004. Reprint from *The Voice of Clear Light*, February 2005.

BODHICITTA AND COMPASSION

The arising of bodhicitta within oneself depends, first of all, on one's development of compassion. Without compassion bodhicitta cannot come. Nowadays everyone knows this word "compassion," and it is a very popular word used today. The way that you will truly understand compassion, though, is first by looking deeply at your actual experience of your own suffering and miseries. Each time suffering arises look deeply at how painful the experience is and see the difficulties that it creates for you. The thought immediately arises, then, "How can I release myself from this suffering and misery?" By truly looking into your own experiences of suffering in this way, you will find that the wish to be released arises when you are eating, sleeping, talking – all the time.

You must realize your own suffering and want to be released from it. This is the basic motivation for practicing and following the teachings, because study and practice are the only method for liberation.

When you are seriously sick or in pain, you naturally long for medicines and for a doctor to make you well. You always think that way when you are sick or injured. In the same way, when we recognize our own deeper level of suffering and misery, we sincerely want to know, "How can I be released? Who can help me? What can I do? What method can I use?"

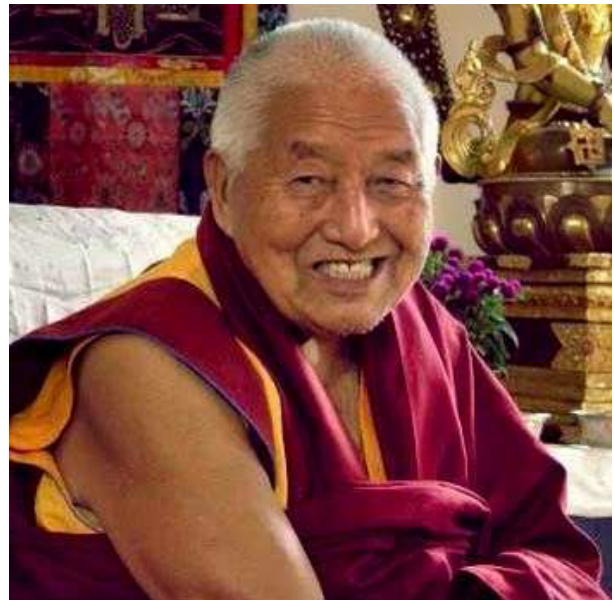
You can also think in the same way on behalf of another person, and then another person, and then another – and eventually on behalf of all who suffer in a similar way as you. You are always thinking the same thing, "How can I help? How can I release them?" This is real compassion.

It doesn't matter if it is an enemy or a friend; you see, any being who has problems similar to yours is wishing to be released from their miseries and suffering just as you are.

Think of it in this way: If right in front of you someone were to cut another person's throat and then come to cut your throat, how would you feel at that moment? You would experience very real suffering.

But the other person, who has completely perfect senses, consciousness, everything, is able to easily kill others. That is completely the opposite of compassion. Compassion is very clear.

Usually we refer to it as recognizing all beings as having been our own mother in a previous lifetime. So, you are wanting this release from suffering for all others just the same as for yourself. The true meaning of compassion is as close as our own experience. If you are able to recognize your own condition, and see that it is the same for others, that is real compassion. That is the foundation of Yungdrung Bon. Yungdrung Bon practitioners must have this compassion.



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

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## AT HOME IN THE HEART

In the Tibetan Buddhist and Bon teachings on compassion, the idea of loving everyone as if they were your own mother is repeated many times. You see, at one point or another, throughout countless lifetimes, everyone has been your mother.

This metaphor, though, doesn't make sense for many people in the West. In my first years teaching here, when I would ask students to view everyone as their mother, people would say things like, "Oh, then that means that I won't be able to love anyone." Or they would wince and say, "You mean everyone has been like her?"

This is very sad to see. I understand that there can be many different kinds of parents – some better and some not so good. But one's own parents cannot be expected to be perfect. You would not expect yourself to be perfect, so in the same way, you cannot expect your parents to be perfect either, can you?

As your parents grow old, and when they are dying, that is the great opportunity, probably the only one, to conclude things with them.

You should! After all, they are the closest people to you biologically, aren't they? You have the opportunity to find out, "Am I able to deal with the issues that I have with them or not?"

I've seen many people go to visit their parents for a weekend to try to help them and then all they talk about afterwards is how hard it was and that their parents never change! But, don't you see, of course they never change! You never change either, do you? No one ever changes like that! Look, they never managed to change you working at it their entire lives! So don't even think about changing them now!

Instead, realize that you have a last opportunity here to love and spoil your parents. So, spoil your parents – but not your teenagers! [laughs] Just let your parents do whatever it is that they do; let them laugh, let them scream, let them do this and not do that. Just be there with your heart open. Whatever they want and however they want to be in their situation, let them be. What do you lose? You don't lose anything. The more you allow them

to be who they are, the more you gain, not lose, because you feel your heart opening and you feel the space to let them be who they are. It's not like you are going to spend the rest of your life with them.

Usually, people are talking about seeing their parents for just a weekend! So what is the big deal about giving up a weekend? Sometimes people sleep for an entire weekend! [laughter]



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

So when you go to visit your parents for the weekend, just allow them to be who they are. Love them as they are. When they say something, just agree with it. What's the problem with doing this? Are you running for president against them as their opponent and you need to defeat them in debate on that issue? It's just a game of words, ideas, egos. And this is not the time to exercise your ego – you have enough of that exercise outside in the world during the rest of the week. Instead, you are supposed to be helping your mother and father who are getting old or sick, who are having fears of dying, feeling hopeless and lonely, and missing your presence. This is the real opportunity to share and to give.

So, I would like to encourage everyone to work with their parents, if there is still an opportunity. Try to change your attitude, and try to do something for them and be with them.

We have been talking during this retreat about being open, feeling this sense of openness, connecting with your essence. So when you are there with your parents, just be yourself – and let them be themselves. In being yourself, you allow the compassion to come.

Recognize their needs. Recognize their age. Recognize their fear of death. Recognize their loneliness. Recognize that you are not able to be there that often. Recognize all of those things and change your attitude, rapidly. Not slowly, rapidly. Change your attitude and start working very differently with them. That would be the real sense of bodhicitta.

**Text selected by Jantien Spindler**





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

| When                                     | Where             | What                                                                                                  | More information                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 9<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)       | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Transforming Your World<br>Through Service, Part 6:<br>Questions and Answers    | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| July 9 – 31                              | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Healing From the Source:<br>Meditation as Medicine for<br>Body and Mind | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 6 –<br>September 4                | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Awakening the Sacred Arts —<br>Discovering Your Creative<br>Potential   | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| August 16 – 21                           | Wilga, Poland     | Retreat:<br>The Twenty-One Nails                                                                      | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.pl">www.ligmincha.pl</a>           |
| August 20 –<br>September 24              | Your computer     | Online course:<br>The Three Heart Mantras of<br>Bon                                                   | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| August 23 – 28                           | Buchenau, Germany | European Summer Retreat:<br>The Twenty-One Nails,<br>Part 2                                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>           |
| September 3 – 4                          | Budapest, Hungary | Weekend seminar:<br>Sleep Yoga                                                                        | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.hu">www.ligmincha.hu</a>           |
| September 9 – 11                         | Moscow, Russia    | Weekend seminar:<br>Six Lamps, Part 2                                                                 | <a href="http://www.garuda-bon.ru">www.garuda-bon.ru</a>         |
| September 10<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.) | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Topic to be announced                                                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| September 17 –<br>October 16             | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Tibetan Dream Yoga                                                      | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| October 1 –<br>November 19               | Your computer     | Transforming our Emotions<br>through the Six Lokas                                                    | <a href="http://ligminchalearning.com">ligminchalearning.com</a> |
| October 8<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)    | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Topic to be announced                                                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| October 15<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)   | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>The Practice of Chöd                                                            | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| November 12<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Topic to be announced                                                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |
| November 12 –<br>December 4              | Your computer     | Interactive online course:<br>Healing From the Source:<br>Meditation as Medicine for<br>Body and Mind | <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>         |
| December 10<br>21.00 – 22.30 h (C.E.T.)  | Your computer     | Free Live Webcast:<br>Topic to be announced                                                           | <a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>         |

