



Ligmincha Europe Magazine

25 – Summer 2017



Meet the Colombian sangha

3 Doors Meditation in a School

Cyber-Sangha Week

Bridging Two Worlds



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THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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

Chief editor: Ton Bisscheroux

Editors: Frits de Vries and Jantien Spindler

Editorial assistance: Michaela Clarke

Proofreaders: Bob Anger, Lise Brenner and Thomas Danalloyd

Technical assistance: Ligmincha.eu Webmaster Expert Circle

Cover layout: Nathalie Arts



GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,

Teaching in the West for more than 25 years, for all these years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been trying to understand us to make the depth of the Bon wisdom accessible to us all. In doing so, he has helped us face all kinds of day to day obstacles, and live a happier, more peaceful and fulfilled life. As worldwide sanghas celebrate 25 years of Ligmincha, every sangha has a different surprise for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

least three times a day, maybe because I don't want to take pills from the pharmaceutical industry. But now, when I think of a white, red or blue sphere of light, I feel a shift. In the interview with Santiago Villaveces we talked about the shadow sides, something I always wanted to avoid, and it touched me when he said that being human is sharing your shadow sides. We have a link to Rinpoche's Conversation Live with Dylan Tuccillo, Jared Zeisel, and Thomas Peisel. They say that they prepare themselves before they go to bed,



Celebrating 25 years of Ligmincha in Buchenau, Germany.

Since this is our 25th edition, we also have a little celebration. For me, it has been a great privilege to be involved in creating the Ligmincha Europe Magazine. And I would like to thank all the people who have contributed: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, the resident lamas, the teachers, the editors, the proofreaders, the sangha members who shared their stories, poems, photos, or assisted in another way.

Hearing the stories of others has affected me deeply, and I want to give a few examples from the articles in this magazine. We interviewed Pilar Revuelta Rivas and Carlos E. Villarreal about the meditation program they initiated at a primary school. They said that they don't use the word 'pill,' but instead 'spheres of light.' I never managed to do the informal practice with the pills at

have lucid dreams, and that they look forward for the adventures during the night. I don't have lucid dreams yet, but going to sleep has changed (when I remember to prepare myself).

In this edition you can also read memories from John Jackson, Santiago Villaveces and Wolfgang Krebs about how Ligmincha started 25 years ago. There is an article that was published in *Voice of Clear Light* about the *Five Warrior Syllables*, and in the section 'preparing to die' you can read a compilation of teachings by Padmasambhava on the *bardo*. There is also news from the European sangha, the Colombian sangha is introduced, and more.

In Bon,
Ton Bisscheroux, chief editor



3 DOORS MEDITATION IN A COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The *Winter 2016-2017 issue of our magazine* presented the Meditation in Education, HECAT (Hermandad Educativa CAT A.C.) School Project in Torreon, Mexico where elementary and secondary students, along with their teachers, staff and parents, apply the 3 Doors meditation practices to their daily lives. In this interview with Pilar Revuelta Rivas and Carlos E. Villarreal, both 3 Doors Academy graduates and authorized 3 Doors Presenters, we learn more about their journey to implement this important and influential project under the guidance of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and their 3 Doors mentor Alejandro Chaoul.

Ton Bisscheroux: Pilar, can you introduce yourself?

Pilar: I live in Torreon, Mexico. I started meditating about twenty years ago, and I had my first contact with Bon-Buddhism about sixteen years

ago. I now serve as an *umdze*, or practice guide, for the sangha at Chamma Ling Torreon, Coahuila. Coahuila is a state that borders on the United States, and whose name in the Nahuatl language means “flying serpent.”

The moment Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had the wonderful idea, this vision from his heart, to create The 3 Doors, I was so happy to engage and enter The 3 Doors Academy. I knew that this way of having the teachings and practices available in an accessible format would benefit so many people. As *umdze* in the Bon-Buddhist sangha, I had the experience that some people approached the teachings and practices and found it difficult to stay because it was a religious tradition different from their own.

I work as a professional psychologist, and I also work in our family business, which is commercial. What really drives me is service, collaborating with charitable institutions. A friend invited me to become involved with a primary school, created in 2011 to benefit children of low income families



Teachers with students. Carlos E. Villarreal and Pilar Revuelta Rivas sitting in the middle.



who live in a vulnerable situation. I got to know the children and fell in love with the project. I connected with the council, the sponsors, and the people who gathered the financial resources. For four years, I was president of the group of sponsors. Currently, I serve on the Board and as a sponsor of the school. Our purpose is to deliver wholesome and first class education and help diminish the violence in Torreon. The school offers bilingual education in Spanish and English, and offers an extended daily schedule for education from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. The children receive three meals during the day, all for free, and participate in sports, arts, and music. We also offer education for the teachers and for the parents of the children.

As I connected with the children, I developed a deep desire to implement a program of meditation that is more accessible for within a school context. There is a quote by H.H. the Dalai Lama: "If we can teach meditation to all children, in one generation we will end violence in the world." My friends say that I am a romantic for believing this, but I want to do this.

KAREN VANESSA, 4° PRIMARIA

Meditation has helped me to concentrate. For example, when I do my homework before meditation, my mind goes to other things, and now I can concentrate more. It has also helped me when I get desperate. I take the silence sphere or use the meditation. I like to go to meditation very much because I get calm.

Jantien Spindler: Carlos can you introduce yourself?

Carlos: I have been meditating since 1992, and fourteen years ago Carlos Madero invited me to join a new group and a new system of meditation. At that time Wojtek Plucinski arrived in Torreon and started teaching *Tsa Lung* in relation to the *Five Elements*. I liked it very much, and since then I have practiced Bon-Buddhist meditation. When Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Torreon my wife Carmen and I connected deeply with him and the teachings, and we see him as our root lama. I joined the first generation of the Latin American 3 Doors Academy. From there, Pilar invited me to guide meditations in the primary school. I was very motivated and thrilled by this

invitation and started to collaborate with Pilar in August 2015.

MARIANO, 5° PRIMARIA

The meditation helps me with my family problems and friend problems. When I fight with my friends or my sisters, I take the pill and meditate (to change the emotions) and relax and feel happy.

Ton: Pilar, how did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

Pilar: I know a couple who live in Torreon, Carlos and Gaby Madero, who learned about Rinpoche by reading one of his books. They already led a Gelugpa group. When they invited Rinpoche to Torreon fourteen years ago, he said that he would come after Wojtek Plucinski organized an introductory course. At this course, eighty people were present, and I was there too. After this, Rinpoche came to Torreon. It was as if life hit me in the head with a brick: I thought "This is it, this is my teacher, this is my future." I couldn't stop crying tears of joy, and decided I would stay with him forever. After Torreon, we followed Rinpoche when he visited Monterrey for another teaching, and a feeling of great bliss stayed with me all the time.

After meeting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Carlos, Gary Madero, and I started a new Bon-Buddhist sangha in Torreon, where I serve as an *umdze* or practice leader. Ever since then, we have followed Rinpoche wherever he goes.

Jantien: How was this initiative to meditate with the children received by the other members of the Board, and by the parents?

Pilar: I was part of the Board, and I was a sponsor. Other members of the Board are my friends, and the first president of the Board, José Antonio Ramos, was also among the first group of Latin American 3 Doors Academy graduates. We had been talking about this project for a long time, and with the approval of the Board, we created a special area in the school for children to meditate. We call this "the silent room." José Antonio Ramos donated the warm wooden floor, and I donated the cushions so the children could sit on the floor to meditate. I invited Carlos, and with José Antonio Ramos, we started the meditation



project in August 2015.

So far, we have taught meditation to 210 children, ages eight to fifteen. We teach each group, along with their teacher, for half an hour a week. Although the meditation project is mainly aimed at the children, we also include teachers, parents, school and administrative personal, counselors, and the Board. The teachers attend a separate one hour meditation session every month. The parents of the children attend a half hour session every month. This is the way we have been working so far.

BRISA MIRANDA, 3° PRIMARIA

Meditation has helped me to focus on what I'm doing and to live in the present. Everything that I've learned, I've been teaching my younger sisters, and they really like it. We meditate together sometimes at our home.

Ton: How do the parents respond to the meditation?

Carlos: We found that the parents are very motivated. Some of the children come from dysfunctional families, with issues prone to anger, rage and violence. The parents have seen the benefits in their children. Sometimes the parents are not able to attend the meditation meetings, and then guardians or other family members, such as grandparents, aunts or uncles, attend. These family members also see the benefits for the children and the whole family.

Last year in November, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited the school, and there was a huge gathering of the children, parents, school personal, counselors, and teachers, and they were all inspired by Rinpoche's presence. At the end of this gathering, Rinpoche also met with the teachers on their own.

Jantien: Can you tell more about Rinpoche's visit to the school?

Pilar: When Rinpoche visits a place, many doors and many hearts open. Most of the teachers commented afterwards that with Rinpoche's presence their hearts opened up, and they felt like crying.

Rinpoche advised us to work more with the teachers. The current approach is to prepare the teachers to guide the children's meditation. The children still see us once a week, and the teachers guide them at the beginning of each day. The teachers are very motivated and happy with this, and we have a meeting with them once a week to follow up and support them. We have noticed that the connection between teachers and the children has become stronger since the teachers began guiding them with the three precious pills, inner refuge, and mindful breathing every day. In addition to all of this, the children are asked to read twenty minutes a day and then remain in complete silence. This way they become familiar with and integrate the experience of silence into their learning.

Ton: How do the children respond to the meditation?

Pilar: The practice with the smaller children is



Children meditating in the "the silent room."



short, about ten minutes at the most, and the older children sometimes sit for as long as twenty minutes. Sometimes the children are very restless. We are sensitive to this, and we adjust the length of the meditation practice to match the mood of the children.

When we surveyed the children, 73 % reported using the tools of meditation in everyday life, in personal situations, in family and in school.

CLAUDIA FERNANDA, 6° PRIMARIA

Meditation is for me an incredible experience because I have been able to apply it to some of my problems. For example, when my father died my pain was really strong, and with time I have made it less painful with meditation. Thank you, my meditation teachers for taking some of your time and coming to teach us new things about Tibetan yoga (Tsa Lung movements). There really has been much change in me. I thank you very much.

Ton: Is there a way that you reward the children after the meditation?

Pilar: We give everybody a silent applause by shaking our hands in the air as a sign of “well done.” After the meditation session, we have a sharing circle where the children report how the meditation was for them and also about the difficulties they experience in their families. For example, they might tell us that they want to punch their brother in the face, remember to take the white pill of stillness, and then are able to hold themselves back. They don't fall into action, instead they recognize the difficult emotion, they take the medicine (stillness), and are able to avoid a harsh reaction. It is good to hear that they use the tools they learn in the practice of meditation in their everyday lives.

Jantien: What are your objectives for doing these practices?

Pilar: We help the children bring the tools of meditation into their everyday life. The children learn to identify their emotions and regulate their response by applying the meditation tools. In this way, their minds are more attentive, they behave with more mindfulness, and they are aware of becoming better people.

Jantien: What you do takes a lot of time and

effort. How can you keep that going on?

Pilar: I do this from my heart, it is my joy, and it takes no effort. They say “Teachers teach and children learn,” but here I experience that we receive so much from the children, and maybe we receive more than what we give. I believe that we are so fortunate, and we receive so much from life, so we have the responsibility to give back to society.

Carlos: I see this as my service. I have received a lot from following the *dharma*, and there is a saying that “He who teaches learns twice.”

Ton: Is it important for the people who do these meditations that there is no religion involved in the way you instruct them?

Pilar: Yes, I do believe that is very important to use this accessible format, because sometimes religion builds a wall between people. For example, the parents of one child did not allow him to attend the meditation class, because they believe it has a religious background, even though we carefully explained several times that the school is not a religious school, and these are practices that are relevant for anyone. This eight year old child was only able to attend one meditation class. After the meditation he said that he arrived to a place within where he had never been before, and that he felt so peaceful.

Jantien: Did the people see Rinpoche as a religious person when he visited the school?

Carlos: When Rinpoche visited the school, some people knew about his Bon-Buddhist background. However, here Rinpoche spoke to introduce the practices as relevant for anyone, and



Carlos E. Villarreal, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Pilar Revuelta Rivas holding “the three spheres.” The educators in HECAT felt that for their students calling it spheres instead of pills was an easier metaphor. And with that metaphor in mind Pilar and Carlos came up with the spheres that you see them and Rinpoche holding in the photo.



everything he said was in accessible words, so people accepted him without problems.

Ton: Was it easy to teach the children and the others?

Carlos: In the beginning it was very difficult to teach the small children, because they were very restless. And when one of them started laughing, all the others laughed too. With the older children, we found some resistance to do the practice in the beginning, and now there are still a few who do not practice.

DANIELA, 2° SECUNDARIA

At first I didn't like the meditation class, I did not like being in an uncomfortable position. Mr. Carlos and Miss Pilar taught the three channels and the pills, and they were very helpful. I started using them as problems came, and that made me see things differently. Over time my practices became better, and the position was not so uncomfortable. At the end of each practice, I now tell my teachers how I feel, and they give me tips so next time I can have a better practice. I manage to hear the silence, and I realize that my mind is focused more on what I am doing. I am starting to feel better about myself, and I like it. Meditation has helped me a lot, and although I do not always have a good practice, consistency is the most important. I feel very happy, and I want to say thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Jantien: Did you publicize what you do? Is there interest in your project from other schools?

Pilar: Yes, there is a lot of interest. The school receives many visitors who want to learn about the meditation project and see the silent room. There is another school for underprivileged children in Mexico which is very interested, not only in the meditation project, but in the whole concept of teaching values in a non-religious context.

Ton: Is it easy to copy and implement your method?

Pilar: Yes, it is easy. Carlos and I believe that any person can do this. But he/she should have experience with meditation and go through a training. Our idea is not to limit this, but instead share it with every person interested.

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

Pilar: There is a [video of Rinpoche's visit](#) to Torreon. On the video you can see what goes on in the primary school project. The children gave beautiful testimony to Rinpoche about their experiences with meditation, and how it changed their lives and their lives at home with their families. Some of these testimonials were recorded in the video and are printed in the bleu squares. It was very moving.

Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux



CYBER-SANGHA WEEK

This October, join us for seven days of online celebration honoring Ligmincha's 25th Anniversary.

On October 22, a [grand celebration](#) will take place at Ligmincha International's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in central Virginia, US, as Ligmincha honors the 25 years since its founding by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

If you can't be at Serenity Ridge that day, you can still participate in the opening festivities from your computer or other device — part of a full week of special online observances — by visiting the [Ligmincha International Facebook page](#). You don't need a Facebook account to participate!

This weeklong event, October 22 – 28, 2017, is known as Cyber-Sangha Week. It's Ligmincha's way of celebrating its teachers, teachings, and traditions, as well as its many worldwide centers and spiritual communities (sanghas). By clicking and viewing, you'll discover how you can benefit from a wide variety of online and in-person offerings.

The week's observances include:

October 22: An opening ceremony will be broadcast live on Facebook from Serenity Ridge. There, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, other Bon lamas, and others will honor Ligmincha and some of the individuals who have contributed in a big way to Ligmincha over the years. Also on that day Ligmincha's other primary retreat centers — Chamma Ling Mexico, Chamma Ling Poland, Chamma Ling Colorado, and Lishu Institute in Dehradun, India — are invited to share live broadcasts, recorded videos, photographs, and more.



October 23–28: Ligmincha sanghas throughout North and South America, Europe, and beyond will be posting and broadcasting online. So far, planned sharings include:

- Guided meditations broadcast live from practice groups around the world
- Live and recorded video tours of practice centers and teaching halls
- Live and recorded greetings from sangha members and Bon lamas worldwide
- Videos of previous on-site teachings around the world by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche
- Photo albums of local sanghas, centers, and events
- Diary entries from travels to sacred Bon and Buddhist locales in India and Nepal
- Announcement of the release of a mobile app designed to support the practice of Rinpoche's teachings
- Video introducing Rinpoche, Ligmincha's vision, and many of the volunteers working to support his efforts.

For updates about Cyber Sangha Week and its schedule, click [here](#).



3 DOORS COMPASSION PROJECT GROWS

The 3 Doors LIVE Online Compassion Project is a 9-month exploration, under the guidance of Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco, into how meditation can support personal transformation and the emergence of positive qualities that empower the capacity to serve others. Registration is open for this first-time opportunity to participate in this program online, accessible from wherever you live. Marcy and Gabriel tell more about this program.

In the 9 month LIVE Online Compassion project, participants are guided to examine the obstacles to compassion and the importance of self-compassion. Building on basic mindfulness, ancient Tibetan meditation practices of body, speech, and mind are applied to our everyday lives.

Founded by Tibetan meditation master Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, The 3 Doors practices have their roots in the Dzogchen tradition of Bon Buddhism.

"We support the people who care for others. By teaching and exploring the practical application of 3 Doors meditation methods, we help people to better serve their patients, students, and clients. Each Compassion Project participant has the potential to positively transform the lives of so many people who depend on them for health, education, and wellbeing."

— Marcy Vaughn, Compassion Project Co-Founder

The pace of modern life can be exhausting. Our busy schedules combined with unlimited access to news about suffering around the world, as well as

our current political climate, are causing many people to feel overwhelmed and unsupported. This is especially true for caregivers who must attend to their own stress and also that of their patients, students, or families. The 3 Doors Compassion Project teaches caregivers practical meditation methods to maintain their motivation and renew their energy, so they can respond to whatever arises in the moment from a natural place of presence.

With over 50% of healthcare professionals reporting symptoms of burnout, the need for self-care practices has never been greater. In the Compassion Project, we explore select practices that support compassionate care and self-compassion for healthcare professionals, educators, therapists and anyone who is motivated by compassion.



Gabriel Rocco and Marcy Vaughn.

Funded by a generous donor, twenty-nine people completed the first Compassion Project 9 month program (2016-2017) in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, hometown of co-founders and Compassion Project teachers Marcy Vaughn and Gabriel Rocco. A



5-week intensive class served forty-one additional people in May 2017.

With 3 Doors meditation practitioners in nineteen countries across Europe, North America, and Latin America, news of the overwhelming success of The 3 Doors Compassion Project is spreading. This 9 month program takes a personalized approach to online learning. [Registration](#) is now open and space is available for up to sixty people. Led by 3 Doors Senior Teachers, this program consists of LIVE online monthly teachings, twice monthly LIVE online small group practice sessions – just eight people per group, a daylong LIVE online retreat, and a virtual resource room of guided meditations. Accessible and relevant to busy professionals, this meditation program provides lifelong practices for compassionate action towards self and others.

The first two Compassion Project programs included a research component, led by Principal Investigator Mike Gawrysiak, Ph.D, to document the effects of these Tibetan meditation methods on compassion and self-compassion, mindfulness, work burnout, anxiety and depression, quality of relationships, and quality of life.

In October 2017, Marcy and Gabriel will be joined by 3 Doors researchers Claire Clark, Ph.D. and Alejandro Chaoul, Ph.D., to present the preliminary findings at *The Medicine of Mind: Healing Physical and Emotional Pain*, the Science and Spirituality Conference hosted by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Virginia, US.



[Explore the 9 Month LIVE online program agenda and REGISTER here.](#) (Early bird registration ends on August 15; the program starts on September 27, 2017).

TESTIMONIALS FROM 9-MONTH PROGRAM, BRYN MAWYR, PA

"I think essentially the Compassion Project is about learning how to hold myself in a space of compassion, and when I can do that, I can hold my clients in a space of warmth and compassion."

"Words can't do it justice. It's being willing to connect with my humanity...with the essence of what it is to be human."

"I have become more integrated, calmer, less fearful, and more confident in terms of having a huge repertoire of skills to deal with stuff."

"What's really powerful is connecting with what is, being with what is at this very moment at this time, and not trying to change it."



Participants of the 9-Month Compassion Project, Bryn Mawr, PA.



WEEKLY GROUP MEDITATION IN AND FROM MY LIVINGROOM

To introduce the Colombian sangha we interviewed Santiago Villaveces. In this interview he shares early memories when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started to teach in the US, experiences in The 3 Doors Academy, and how that deepened his own understanding, trust and depth in his own practice.

Ton: When we ask “How did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?” we always get interesting stories. What is your story?

Santiago: Just picture how likely it is for a Colombian to meet a Tibetan lama in Houston, Texas, make a deep connection and start a spiritual path of over 24 years? So here is the story. In 1991 I went to Houston to do my graduate studies in Anthropology at Rice University. One year later one of my teachers told me, “Tomorrow there is an interesting talk and I think you'd like it.” Although I had never talked about my spiritual interest with her, she thought I would be keen to listen to a Tibetan lama. A good friend of my teacher, Anne Klein, had organized a presentation of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in a big auditorium at the university. Over a hundred people came. There I heard Rinpoche for the first time giving a talk and slideshow that included sky burials. I was mesmerized. At that time Rinpoche was not living in Houston, but just passing by and making his arrangements to come to Rice the next semester.

There was no chance of meeting him then, too many people wanted to talk with him and a lot was happening, but I didn't give up. Next day I went to see Anne Klein, then Head of the Religious Studies Department at Rice, asked her about Rinpoche and told her that I was very interested in Tibetan Buddhism. She encouraged me to take a course she was teaching the following semester on *Tibetan Meditation Theories*. So, I ended up taking it on top of an already full course load in Anthropology. It was the wisest choice I could have ever made.

A couple of months after hearing Rinpoche for the first time, and before starting my course with Anne, one of my teachers, Michael Fischer, was taking a new position at MIT [Massachusetts



Santiago Villaveces.

Institute of Technology]. We decided to meet on an early January day for lunch so we could say goodbye. As I entered the restaurant where we were to meet I saw Mike finishing a lively conversation with Rinpoche! I couldn't believe this coincidence! In five short minutes I told Rinpoche I had heard him a few months back at the big auditorium. Of this short encounter, what I remember the most was that he pulled out from his shirt the turquoise he was wearing around his neck and showed it to me. I had no idea what the turquoise symbolized but again I was captivated. It turns out that among Mike's multiple interests, spirituality is an important one, and in pursuing this he had been interviewing Rinpoche for some time around topics on Tibetan spirituality. Circumstances were brewing my initiation on the path.

A few weeks later I started Anne's class. We were around eight people. After a couple of weeks, I mentioned to Anne that the readings of the course were great and then asked her if we would



ever learn any practice. Anne replied that of course in a traditional monastic setting one would do, but in the university setting she was not allowed to teach practices in an academic course. I asked her if we could learn outside of class time. She was very keen on the idea and next class she asked everybody for their thoughts. Everybody agreed and soon we had a small group practicing every Thursday at Anne's house. She started to guide practices like *Zhine* and a simple sound practice with the *Ah*. A couple of months after our start she mentioned that somebody else was going to lead practice, leaving us for a week in suspense. When the day came it was Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche who took over the group. That is how the Houston sangha started.

Once I started to work with Rinpoche it was clear for me that this is it. By then Rinpoche had been awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship to work with Anne at Rice. Soon we began organizing retreats. From that time I remember downloading to my computer a Tibetan alphabet and helping Rinpoche produce the first handbooks of practices. I remember going to Kinko's (a big chain of photocopy service in the US) late at night to make photocopies of the newly made Bon practices handbooks. We did the first versions of *Six Sessions*, *the Ngondro*, *the Invocation of Yeshe Walmo* and many others.

Ton: Can you share memories from the time Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started teaching in the United States?

Santiago: Yes. I remember we once had a retreat in place a couple of hours outside of Houston. We were a small sangha, somebody had a ranch and we decided to do it there. It was a rainy season. I remember setting up my tent in the garden around the ranch house. It was tornado season. One day the sky started to turn black in the horizon and strange clouds began to form like bulgy tubes coming down from the sky. I had never seen something like that. Before these clouds turned into tornadoes we had to pack everything and return to Houston. That same retreat we had a very dramatic incident with a participant that had stopped taking her medications. She had a psychotic episode at the middle of the night and wanted to kill Rinpoche. We left the next day with tornadoes on the horizon and me driving alone with her to Houston. I was very afraid. Fortunately, she had calmed down and nothing hap-

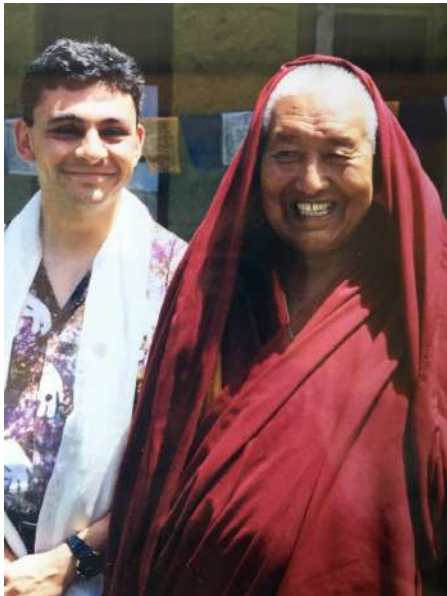
pened. That was strange eventful retreat.

I also recall a couple of retreats in Virginia years before Serenity Ridge. I volunteered to work so I could afford going to the retreats. On one occasion I remember I had to drive a small truck full of food and adornments for the *Gompa*, and then at the end of the retreat make our way back with the adornments to Rinpoche's house in Charlottesville. These were always fun adventures that surrounded the beginning and the end of the retreats.

After these early Virginia days summer retreats were moved to New Mexico. To incredibly amazing places surrounded by the beauty of the desert and by very interesting sites to visit when we had breaks between the three weeks of retreat. In one occasion, we had the great fortune to be with H.H. Lungtok Tenpa Nyima Rinpoche, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the whole three weeks! It was a memorable retreat. I also remember that in one of the days where we had a break, a group of us went with Rinpoche to a place where they had hot mud baths. That was twenty-one years ago! Sometime this year I received a message through WhatsApp from Rinpoche. He sent me a couple of photos without a text. One of the photos was of a guy covered in mud with his hair with something that looked like horns. I didn't understand. "Who is this guy?" I kept asking myself. Maybe Rinpoche made a mistake and send me a photo that was meant for someone else? A couple of days passed until I realized the guy in the photo was me! It was taken by Rinpoche the day of the mud bath in New Mexico!



Another funny story comes from a retreat in Jemez Springs, in New Mexico the following year. In that occasion, I met Antimo, an Italian in his sixties from Naples. A wild, funny and beautiful human being. Rinpoche was teaching the complete *Chöd* practice with the dance, the *damaru* drum and bell, and the singing. We would gather around after teachings to practice. In the teachings he explained that traditionally the practices were done in scary places like cemeteries, so that one could confront one's own fear. One night, close to a pool of the hot springs, that where inside the property, we began practicing. Antimo was very serious and intense with his practice. He was dancing very determined to step on the fears and obscurations when he lost his balance and fell into the spring. In no time he was screaming, thinking that some ghost had grabbed him by the feet!



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Santiago in 1994.

During my early years in Houston, I also had the privilege to meet Yongdzin Rinpoche in Houston. As with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche my connection was instant and very profound. I had a dream a couple of days before I met Yongdzin Rinpoche in which I saw his face looking at me and smiling. Since then, I have tried to meet him as much as possible. When I was living in Indonesia between 2001 and 2007 I visited him in the Triten Norbutse Monastery several times. I specially remember the times when the political situation in Nepal was very unstable, the King had been killed and the Maoist rebels had taken strongholds in many areas of Nepal. During that time, my visits to

Yongdzin Rinpoche where a mix of receiving his blessings and teachings and conversing with him about the Nepali political situation. He was always so keen to hear about local politics and the possible developments that could unfold in such unstable times.

When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had the idea to start Lishu Institute I was living in Sweden (2006-2013). At that time, I thought it could be interesting to explore the possibility of tapping into international assistance aid through the development agencies of governments. I knew the Norwegians were very close to H.H. the Dalai Lama and with Rinpoche's blessing I started inquiring. The first requisite the Norwegian government had was an official endorsement from H.H. the Dalai Lama's office. So, I joined John Massie and Candace Byers to a trip to India that took us from Delhi to Dehradun and McLeod Ganj, the suburb of Dharamsala where the Tibetan Government in exile has its headquarters. Thanks to the good offices of Geshe Thupten Negi we managed to get two signed letters endorsing Lishu, one from the private secretary of H.H. the Dalai Lama and one of the Minister of Culture. In the end the Lishu project did not fit the profile for international assistance but we managed to secure an endorsement that otherwise we hadn't thought about. (You can see the letters on the website of [Lishu Institute](http://LishuInstitute.org).)



Jantien: When did Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visit Colombia?

Santiago: In 1994 Rinpoche came for the first time to Colombia. We had a four-day retreat in the country side in a 450 year old colonial house that my grandfather owned. For me it was a very important retreat, it was the first time I could bring my teacher to my home country and it was a beautiful opportunity for my family, whom I had talked about several years before about my teacher and the teachings, to meet and converse with him. Dzogchen and Bon had never been heard about in Colombia until then. During Rinpoche's visit we also had the opportunity for him to give a talk that was aired on TV. Rinpoche has the video tape of that occasion. I remember seeing the video with him many years later in the company of Tsering. Since then Rinpoche has visited Colombia three or four times more.



Empowerment by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 1994.

Ton: Can you tell about the sangha in Colombia?

Santiago: After years outside of Colombia I returned in 2013. By indication of Rinpoche I started forming a sangha in 2014 after he asked me to start teaching. So it is a very young community of practitioners, many of whom have met Rinpoche only once but have kept their

commitment to the practice and the teachings. Since then we have done several retreats, public talks about Bon and the benefits of its teachings and practices over our lives, and we have established a routine group practice in my house every Tuesday evening. We use the living room in my house and we offer the possibility of participating either in person or through Zoom, so people that cannot physically come can still have the benefit of group practice. Our weekly meditations are literally in and from my living room! Now there is a committed core group of practitioners who are taking on their own the responsibility of organizing talks and retreats. This is a very promising seed of starting a solid sangha. But sure, it takes time.

Ton: When did you start to teach?

Santiago: Rinpoche asked me to start teachings after a retreat in Colombia in 2013. I was driving back to Bogota with him and as we talked about many things including my experiences at The 3 Doors Academy in Europe. Here is an interesting anecdote. Since the early years of my exposure to the teachings I had a strong desire to teach myself one day. It was always present in the back of my mind. Someday I would like to be a teacher also. The funny thing is that one of my transformations while doing The 3 Doors Academy was to let go completely of that idea. I told Rinpoche about it because it had stroke me how powerful the practices are and how I liberated a desire that was coming from my ego. I felt I had no need or wish to become a teacher anymore. It was then that Rinpoche asked me to begin teaching! This really took me truly by surprise.

I started teaching in 2014. I did a teaching plan and shared it with Rinpoche and have been following it since then. Of course, everything depends on the pace of people who are interested in retreats and teachings and the frequency of these. Since then I have been increasingly more involved in Rinpoche's projects and helping him in whichever ways he sees fit. Today I have responsibilities with the Colombian and Brazilian sanghas, with TWR LIVE and with a couple of other of Rinpoche's projects.

I feel a deeper sense of service manifesting in my life and I love it. It all comes when you finally feel you are not important. Then the sense of selfless service arises with an immense joy, this is what I



have discovered. I believe the connection to the lineage, my respect for my teachers, The 3 Doors Academy and my own growth into the practices has brought me to this point. When it's not about you being important, or about power, things flow very naturally and easy. I see this very clearly with the team Rinpoche has put together for TWR LIVE. In our team everything just flows, in a respectful, joyful, playful and creative manner. I feel that in our daily life we can manifest beautiful things thanks to the work we have done within ourselves. It all boils down to the last line of the dedication: "In liberating my own being may I benefit others."



Ton: Can you tell about the structure of Ligmincha Colombia?

Santiago: Ligmincha Colombia was launched in January 2015 after a visit by Rinpoche. Starting a sangha is always a big challenge. The core group is now about ten people that come to practice every week. Slowly people are taking responsibilities to organize retreats, and are discovering the joy of working in joint projects. We have a representative in the Ligmincha Mandala Council and are now more interested in building up a solid community of practitioners rather than a fully-fledged organization. Not least because that has tax and legal implications in Colombia that would add an unnecessary financial burden to the group. When starting a sangha from scratch you must be willing to put a lot of effort and energy: organizing retreats, taking care of food and lodging, taking care of finances, making provisions for unforeseen events, etc. At the beginning it was a one-person organization, but with the right attitude and effort people slowly begin to assume responsibilities and I can delegate all operational issues and concentrate on guiding practice and teaching. As Rinpoche says, growth comes best when you work through challenges. Helping form a sangha and establishing a functional Ligmincha chapter in a country or a city is a great opportunity.

Jantien: Can you tell more about the retreats?

Santiago: We started doing local retreats in Colombia in 2014 with the generous help of another sangha in Bogota called Karma Kagyu. They have always been very keen on receiving teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and from the Bon tradition; in fact their founders attended the first retreat with Rinpoche in Colombia back in 1994. As soon as they learnt that I was authorized to teach they offered me their facilities in a beautiful location some forty kilometers outside of Bogota. Since then we have done the retreats there on themes ranging from the *Inner Refuge*, *Tsa Lung* and *The Five Warrior Syllables*. In 2015 we also managed to bring John Jackson to Colombia to teach on the *Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen* and on the *Inner Refuge* and *Creativity*. This year we are planning to do two retreats one for deepening the practice and understanding of the *Inner Refuge*, and another on the *Practice of Sherap Chamma*, this last one is a follow up to the empowerment and *lung* that Rinpoche gave for the Colombian sangha in February this year.

Jantien: Do you think the TWR LIVE teachings are a support for a young sangha?

Santiago: Absolutely. Very few people here miss them; they are all very engaged with them. I feel TWR LIVE has been a wonderful opportunity for people to understand the depth of the teachings, the infinite types of practices and how they touch upon different aspects of our lives. TWR LIVE is an invitation for people that are interested to contact a sangha and start their own path of discovery. I feel also that is not only a great support for a young sangha but for all sanghas, old and new, and for that matter for anyone outside a sangha. It's an open invitation to anyone outside Rinpoche's followers, outside of Buddhism to explore the depths of Being. Independent of religious or other labels.

For some TWR LIVE has become a chance to explore more the teachings and deepen their own experience and understanding by seeking retreats, or going to weekly practices in a nearby sangha. For others, TWR LIVE is enough. Whichever it is it's fine. So back to our sangha in Colombia, of course some people come and go, some people feel they get what they want only from TWR LIVE, so they stopped coming to Tuesday practice. Others have gained more interest and knowledge about the depth and scope of the teachings, so



they are more involved now and want to take the lead in organizing retreats where they can deepen their practice and experiences. Whichever is the case it is fine. When things flow is an important indication that the energy is in the right place.

In addition to the transmissions through TWR LIVE it also helps enormously that we have simultaneous translations to the videos, so people from over seventeen languages can have access to the teachings without the barrier of language. In the case of the Spanish language usually we are in capacity of posting in a designated Spanish speaking YouTube channel a translated and edited version of the video a week later after it appeared in TWR LIVE.

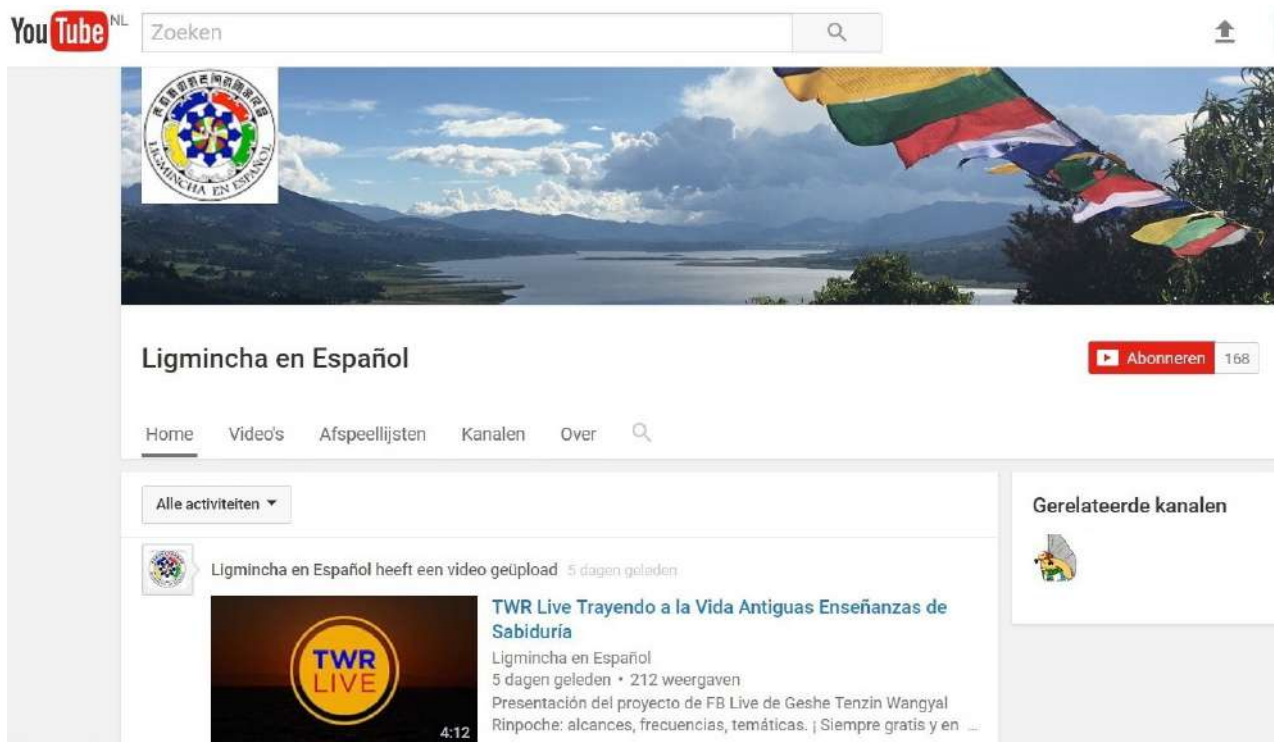
We rely on the generosity of people to translate, edit and post the videos. Lourdes Hinojosa from Mexico has been a relentless support in translating audio. It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of translating and have all these precious teachings available in as many different languages as possible. For the Spanish speaking world we have two platforms available: a Ligmincha in Spanish YouTube channel called [Ligmincha en Español](#), and a language dedicated Facebook page called [Ligmincha en Español](#). These platforms are benefiting practitioners from Spain and the Canary Islands, to Mexico, Central and South America.

Ton: Do you collaborate with other countries in Latin America?

Santiago: At the beginning of this year Rinpoche asked the Brazilian sangha to contact me. I started collaborating with them three months ago. We meet every fifteen days over Zoom where I guide a meditation on Inner Refuge and answer questions from the participants. The Brazilian sangha is very big and has a lot of fire. They are incredibly active, very responsive and full of ideas. They have practice groups in many cities, and I think they were the first sangha who started to work with a Zoom platform to break physical distances and practice together. I feel honored and very happy to be able to assist that sangha. I have a particularly warmth connection with Brazil. I lived there from 1998 to 2000, learnt the language and love the culture. For me this has been a beautiful opportunity to reconnect to a country that I love through the teachings I so much nourish.

Jantien: When you participated in the European 3 Doors Academy did that give you a chance to deepen the contact with other sanghas?

Santiago: Not specifically with other sanghas, but with other people. At that time I lived in Sweden, so for me it was a great opportunity to participate, because we met in Germany for the retreats. I connected on a deep level with the other participants, and I am still in contact with most of them.



Ton: Do you want to share your experiences from The 3 Doors Academy?

Santiago: For me it was a turning point in my practice and my understanding of the teachings. The 3 Doors program bridged something that I was not able to bridge before: the connection between teachings and practice with my own emotional and mental blockages as they manifest in daily life. I feel that The 3 Doors program made the teachings available for me in a more personalized manner (me working through my practice with my own angers, attachments and ignorance). In doing so, and after completing the three years of the program, I felt that the teachings were inside me, were part of my being. The teachings became embodied in me. For me, the most amazing gift was not only the work with my own blockages, the transformations that came about, and the deeper understanding of myself, but most importantly the feeling that the teachings are alive inside me. Nothing or no one can take away this.

I managed to recognize and work through difficult issues that I carried all my life, experienced their transformations and felt how these shadows began to be liberated. This I feel comes from a deeper understanding of the practice together with a deeper observation of my own emotions, obstacles, reactions, fears, anxieties, anger and frustration. Overall the transformations are profound shifts in the way we related to all these inner worlds as well as how we relate to the people and environment around us. Everything then changes. It is beautiful to have the experience of how in fact when one changes from within the world changes.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Santiago in 1995.

All these experiences inspired me to interview Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the complementarity of the 3 Doors with the traditional ways of receiv-

ing teachings and doing practices. You published this interview in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 20](#).

At the time, some people were skeptical about The 3 Doors Academy as it did not really correspond to the traditional way of teaching. In the interview with Rinpoche we addressed these issues. For me there was never a contradiction, it is just a different vessel. The 3 Doors taught me a method to continuously apply in my life so I can be more open, it taught me a way of bringing my practice to life. Now I feel a deep ripening inside myself that is more conducive for receiving, understanding and benefiting from higher teachings. The questions I asked Rinpoche in that interview came from my own experience, and how I understood the teachings and other practices better. For example, my practice of *Sherap Chamma* was more than the practice I had done before. It became something else. It is hard to say what, because that something else comes out of the experience, and it's the fruit of developing more trust in the teachings and deepening my connection to the lineage. It is all experiential.

Ton: Before I started with The 3 Doors Academy I read your article. What helped me was that you wrote that you discovered shadow sides you were not aware of. I also became aware of a shadow side that had been hidden very deep all my life, and suddenly it popped up during a retreat. Can you say more about the shadow sides?

Santiago: Recently I discussed this issue with friends who follow the spiritual path from the Advaita Vedanta tradition. When people go to retreats, they want to appear very celestial, very pure and blissful, like everything is wonderful and perfect. But our lives are not like that: we are full of suffering, we have deep emotions, we have entrenched fears that can be overwhelming, and we sort of put them in a box when we go to a retreat so they seem not to exist. But in a retreat what is most useful is to see those things, to address them, to recognize them; these are the concrete manifestations of the three poisons in our own life. The three poisons are not abstracts, but very concrete manifestations in our mental and emotional makeup. Our work with the shadow is understanding those concrete manifestations, and hosting them with compassion and openness in our practice. Then the practices become personal and so incredibly profound and



significant. Then you don't have to pretend that you are all peace, love and happiness.

Ton: For me the most surprising was that I discovered blockages I was completely unaware of. There was a trauma from my early childhood that came up. Sometimes I could feel I was letting go of something, and not being able to give words to it.

Santiago: Yes, it is amazing, all the things you begin to uncover.

Jantien: I discovered that some habits come from survival strategies. And in The 3 Doors I was able to work with the fear lying underneath, and letting go of the survival strategy. It is wonderful that now I am able to experience my true self and act in another way. In the refuge I feel a safe place to look and work with all these aspects, and life changes.

Ton: Can you give an example of how you worked with your shadow sides in The 3 Doors Academy?

Santiago: Rather than giving you an example of when I was participating in the academy, I will tell you about a very disturbing experience I had very recently. And I would like to do this to emphasize that The 3 Doors gives you a method to apply for the rest of your life. In early July I was diagnosed with a bronchitis and I was medicated with some inhalators and corticoids. In the days after I began to feel my nervous system going amok and in no time, I developed an anxiety disorder. Something I had never experienced before in my life. This went on for a month. The biochemical imbalances that the medications created together with the physical implications (pressure on the chest, insomnia) and erratic thinking boosted emotional responses of panic, more anxiety and more fear. It was overwhelming. So, what did I discover through this experience? I discovered a very primordial fear of dying, but because of everything that was going on physically, emotionally and mentally I could not deal with the experience. It is always better to work with your shadows when you are ok, healthy, contained in a group that can host you.

The game changer in this whole process I am sharing with you was reaching out to people and asking for help. This created a community of people around me, a circle in which each person in their

own way was hosting me be through therapy, acupuncture, homeopathic work or with the simplest gesture of spending time with me and letting me know that they were there for me. This support helped me regain space inside and trust that I could work through these overwhelming feelings and sensations. Slowly I began to develop the confidence to understand better everything that was going on inside: the feelings, the panic, the physical sensations. I began to have the space within to talk my brain out of a vicious circle by repeating to myself that I was not under any threat, that I was not dying, that the world was not against me, but rather it was supporting me. Having this external support from friends and professionals alike created a space of connection, contention, support and warmth.

When we share our own humanity, we share not only our hopes but also our suffering, we share our shadow, and we receive the warmth of those who hear us. This is why the work in The 3 Doors Academy is so powerful, the circle of warmth and compassionate listening joins us together in a single whole. And this is the best support to work with your shadow.

Jantien: When I listen to the recordings from The 3 Doors retreats I can feel the support. And also when I watch TWR LIVE, I can feel the support of the sacred cyber sangha.

Santiago: Yes, it is quite amazing when you feel that over the internet.

Jantien: I heard about a research where students listened to their teacher in the classroom, while their brainwaves were registered. When they all gave their attention to listening to their teacher it appeared that their brainwaves synchronized. I suppose this also happens when we listen to Rinpoche. Thank you Santiago, for sharing your personal experiences.



Interview by Jantien Spindler and Ton Bisscheroux



TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE TRIES TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE DON'T UNDERSTAND HIM

Wolfgang Krebs is one of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's most senior European students. He met Rinpoche more than twenty-five years ago and he has been studying and practicing the Bon teachings since then. In a previous interview in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 4](#) Wolfgang spoke about the Ligmincha sangha in Germany. In this interview he recounts some memories from the beginning, and we talk about guiding practices.

Ton: How did you meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

Wolfgang: In 1989, before meeting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Germany, and was deeply impressed by his knowledge. For the first time I heard an explanation about the Nature of Mind, openness and clarity, and found it very interesting. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche talked about Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen, and how they are different paths in the Dharma. I was impressed by what he said about our existence, and how we can learn to develop.

In the winter of 1989 I went to a retreat in the Dzogchen Community Center of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Merigar in Italy. In the afternoon Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave initiations for special groups, while Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave teachings for the rest of us. This was the first time I heard him explaining the Dzogchen texts. This was exciting as, at the time, there were a lot of people with no understanding of what is called the Nature of Mind. Rinpoche chose his words carefully while teaching and listened when we didn't understand.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche encouraged his students to study with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and in 1990 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was invited by the German Dzogchen Community for a one-week retreat in the Black Forest. There Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche did not teach in the way that he was trained by the monastery, instead, he combined the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche with



Wolfgang Krebs.

his own ideas and knowledge from the Bon tradition. For example he used the letter A to focus on the Nature of Mind, just like Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Later, he started to teach more in his own way. Of course he still uses the letter A when he teaches Zhiné.

At the retreat in Germany Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's students from Austria invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to Austria. There we decided to alternate one year in Germany and one year in Austria. At the first retreat there were about fifteen people. A year later, in Austria, there were almost thirty people – initially, only students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Because Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was really close to the students he always tried to figure out why they didn't understand him. In these early



Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.



times I witnessed the developments Rinpoche made year by year. Maybe the students did not develop so much, but Rinpoche began understanding the Westerners better and better: how they function, how they think, how their psychology works, and so on. In the second year we started with *The Twenty-one Nails*, and Rinpoche came to teach that until 1995 alternating in Germany and Austria, except for the year 1994 when he had problems with his Green Card.

Ton: Was that the beginning of Ligmincha Germany, or Bon Garuda Germany – as it was called then?

Wolfgang: No, we had no association for Rinpoche. It was the Dzogchen Community who invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. After the first year, some people in the German Dzogchen Community said that the way Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught was not what they were used to from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and they didn't want to invite him anymore. So, in 1991 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was invited privately by students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. In the first part of the nineties students were mainly people from Germany and Austria, and later people from Denmark and the Netherlands came too. In 1993

people from Poland came, and that was more or less the start of the Polish sangha.

In 1991 Rinpoche went to live in the US and got an invitation for a Rockefeller with the help of Anne Klein, but he didn't forget us. Every year he has been coming to teach in Europe.

From 1996 on we only met in Austria, because it was easier to invite Rinpoche there. Then we started with the *The Experiential Transmission* which continued until 1999. During the last retreat in Austria, Rinpoche said that the people who came were not active and committed, so he could not finish *The Experiential Transmission*. Instead, he wanted people to organize a retreat for themselves. So in 2000 a group of fifteen people from Germany and Austria held a retreat at the same place where the meetings with Rinpoche took place the previous year.

In 2000 German psychologists, who had been to the US, invited Rinpoche to teach three weekend seminars in Germany which our group knew nothing about. So, having heard about it from somebody in our group I went to one of these weekends with a friend. There, the people who invited



Only few people were blessed to receive the complete cycle of the *21 Nails*. Rinpoche fulfilled his promise from 1991, to come for sure until it was finished. Photo: Höfen, Germany, August 1995.



Rinpoche wanted to build an organization where they would invite spiritual teachers from all kinds of different traditions and also psychologists. I had the feeling that this was not really what Rinpoche had in mind. So I wrote Rinpoche a letter to suggest that we discuss it during the next retreat. Rinpoche agreed, but some of the foundation members were very upset and left the group. Nevertheless, the association was founded, and we started the German Bon Garuda group. In Europe Rinpoche called the organizations 'Bon Garuda' until 2011. Then the names changed to Ligmincha.

Ton: Can you tell how the sangha evolved in Germany?

Wolfgang: In 2001 we had the first retreat organized by Bon Garuda Germany. The first two years were near Frankfurt, and the third retreat was in Buchenau where we still come every year. In the beginning the accommodation was very elementary, but every year it gets better because the owner has been renovating the whole place. For a long time we had teachings in an old barn, but for the last few years we have a big hall which we can set up as a beautiful *Gompa*.

In 2007 Rinpoche started with a sangha group in Berlin. He purchased an apartment there and the Berlin sangha grew bigger and faster than the sangha in the rest of Germany. At that time Rinpoche wanted the Berlin sangha to be set up as an association separate from the German sangha

association. During the past years Rinpoche came also to other cities in Germany for weekend seminars to interest more people, like Frankfurt, Munich and Saarbrücken. For the last two or three years Rinpoche has been talking about joining the Berlin and German sangha associations.



Wolfgang Krebs.

Ton: Was the first Bon Garuda Foundation founded in Germany?

Wolfgang: No. I think the Polish sangha was the first in Europe. In the Netherlands the Bon Garuda Foundation was founded in 2000. In Germany Bon Garuda was established in 2001.

Ton: During the European Summer Retreats in Germany you have been guiding practices. Can you tell about this role, and how it evolved?

Wolfgang: I was always interested in working with the texts – transcribing them. That has been my main work up until now. Rinpoche never talked about being *umdze*, or something like that. When we first met as group we thought that everybody should do the same thing and that everybody in the practice group should be able to guide a practice. There was nobody there who knew more than the others.



The annual Summer Retreat in 2002, Kapellenhof, Germany.



In the second part of the nineties Rinpoche asked me to guide the *Tsa Lung* practice for one hour during a retreat, so he could take a break. Then, in 2000, Rinpoche didn't come to Germany. Instead, he asked me if I could guide the group, and gave me some practical advice as well as sending a letter to our group, letting them know that I would be guiding them during that week. In the European Summer Retreats in Germany after 2000 when we met for one week, Rinpoche also asked me to lead practices, like *Rushen* or *Tsa Lung*. Later, he also asked me to lead *Tantric* practices as well as *Tummo* and *Inner Refuge*, although I never had any training. Now, during the Summer Retreats in Buchenau I regularly lead the practices that Rinpoche gave us that day for an hour in the afternoon and in the evening.

In 2008 or 2009 Rinpoche once said that I was the instructor for the German group, but I did not know what that meant. He never talked with me about it. So whenever the discussion came up who is allowed to guide a group, or to be an *umdze*, it always surprised me a little bit. Now there is an International Practice Committee, where we discuss the role of an *umdze*, and what they should know when they guide people. I never looked at it this way, because I am not taught in that way. For me to guide a group is the same as guiding myself. When you practice you have to know, to read, to remember and listen how you do it. Whenever I guide, I need my notes to give instructions that people can follow and I still need Rinpoche's words and guidance.

Sometimes it feels a little strange to me that this has to be strictly organized, and that people get a license to do this or that. But I understand; there are examples when people do crazy things during guided practices. For me it is clear that that should not happen. Also here in Germany we had examples that people used too much personal fantasy for advices in the practice. It is good to control that a little bit. When you guide a practice responsibly as well as you can, everybody should be able to do it.

Ton: In the Netherlands we regularly practice together and comment on each other's way of leading a practice. It is always looking for a balance between using Rinpoche's words and one's own words. That way we learn from each other. What is your role in Germany?

Wolfgang: First thing as member of the council of Ligmincha Germany I am responsible for questions of Practice and Teaching. That means to elaborate and provide texts and practice materials for retreats or seminars with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche or other invited teachers in Germany and other countries with German language. I transcribe the teachings and practice sessions of the annual retreats with Rinpoche in Buchenau, summarize the main points, translate it, and provide it for participants and newcomers. That's normally enough work for a whole year until to the next retreat.

Once a year I go to the Berlin sangha where we repeat the teachings of the last Summer Retreat. I prepare that very deeply and carefully, and I also repeat in a summarized way the teachings, not only the meditations. People like that very much, and we have good discussions, where people ask, "I always understood the teaching in this way...", and we discuss it. I think this is what Rinpoche means an 'instructor' to do. Sometimes people ask me to give a teaching, and I answer, "I can't give a teaching, I repeat Rinpoche's words." When we discuss it I get spontaneously very good ideas and it is opening for me as well. Sometimes I surprise myself by recognizing that I understand more than I think.



In 2017 in Berlin repeating the teachings of the last Summer Retreat in Buchenau.

Ton: Is there something you want to say to conclude the interview?

Wolfgang: All my gratitude belongs to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. For sure it is the biggest and most important thing in my life to have met him. And as I personally conclude internally every teaching and practice session, "Rinpoche, I want to say: Thank you!"

Interview by Ton Bisscheroux



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN EUROPE

Here is our report of what's been happening in the European sanghas. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Europe, teaching in person and on the internet. The sanghas celebrated Ligmincha's 25th anniversary. Some sanghas invited *Geshes* and other teachers.

May 19 – 21:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught in Berlin, Germany on The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen. At the seminar we performed the “25 voices” to express our gratitude and let Rinpoche know, how the teachings and the practices change our lives.



January 27 – 29:

A practice weekend with Wolfgang Krebs to repeat the teachings of the Summer Retreat 2016 in Buchenau and to practice together.





May 5 – 7:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught Sleep Yoga in Vienna, Austria, where about 125 people from 15 countries participated. We enjoyed, in particular, the guidance of Rinpoche, who sang Mantras to support us going to sleep. It was an amazing experience.

We also celebrated Rinpoche's birthday, 10 years since first coming to Austria and the 25th anniversary of Ligmincha; we met at a restaurant with more than 50 people and a birthday cake. As Ligmincha Austria, we donated a dharma gift (gold coin) to Rinpoche to express our gratitude and heartfelt thanks for these precious teachings.

Rob Patzig, President and Board Chair of Ligmincha, came from the United States to meet people from the different sanghas.



May 18 – 19:

Weekend seminar where we practiced *Zhine* with Geshe Lhundup Gyaltsen in the Buddhist Center in Vienna.





April 28 – 30:

In Paris, France, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *The Five Elements*. There were about 200 participants. We made a surprise for Rinpoche, inviting a Tibetan singer for a little performance during the teachings.



© nathalieeno

May 12 – 14:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *A-tri* in Amsterdam, the Netherlands to about 120 participants. The Dutch sangha offered Rinpoche more than 600.000 *Long Life Mantras*, a book with personal thanks from sangha members and a gold statue made by a Dutch artist and sangha member.





August 7 – 13:

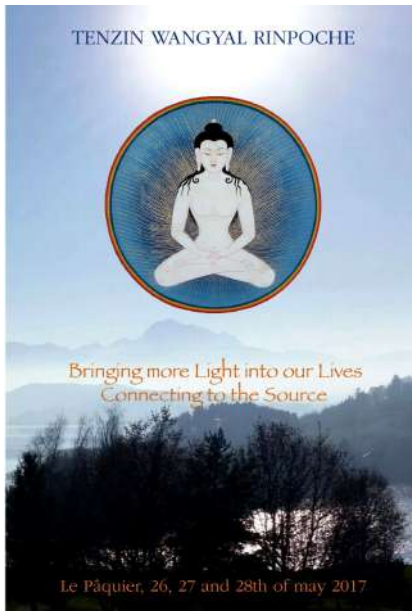
The European Summer Retreat, in Buchenau, Germany, had about 150 participants who were there to study *The 21 Nails*. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said: "Thank you to Ligmincha Germany for this beautiful day at the close of our summer retreat, including the dinner and many surprises, especially the show by the amazingly talented young artist from Hypnotica. I so much appreciate this special celebration of Ligmincha's 25th anniversary."





May 26 – 28:

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's was invited for the 7th visit to Bulle, Switzerland. A group of over 180 people had the blessing of receiving his teachings on the topic *Connecting to the Source*. The sangha is growing stronger, and we've seen a regular increase of about 20 new participants every year for the last few years. Rinpoche and the organizing team also enjoyed a wonderful time together on top of the highest mountain in the area (see also photo on the cover).



July 1 – 2:

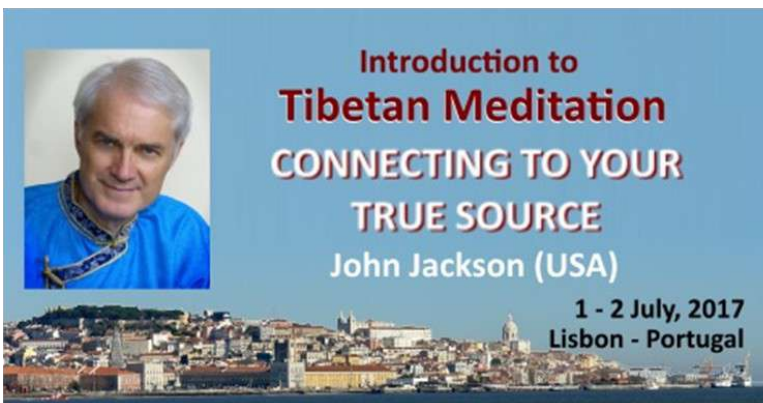
Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso taught *Tsa Lung* in Bratislava, Slovakia. Many new people came, and the strong connections among everyone attending created great atmosphere.





June 16 – 18:

John Jackson presented on *Dream Yoga* in Cork, Ireland. There was a free public talk on Friday evening and a workshop on Saturday and Sunday.



June 30 – July 2:

For the second time in Portugal, John Jackson was in Lisbon, where he gave a free public talk on Friday evening, titled *Connecting with your Inner Peace and Wisdom*, and on Saturday and Sunday he led a workshop *Introduction to Tibetan Meditation*. The topics covered, included the *Origins of the Teaching from the Tibetan Bon lineage*, an *Introduction to the Inner Refuge and to the three doors* (body, speech and mind), *Guru Yoga* and *Dedication*. Participants can continue to practice in the future by listening to the recordings of the guided practices and teachings.



June 24 – 25:

John Jackson led a weekend course in Zurich, Switzerland on the topic *Finding New Balance and Resilience in Life*. He was invited by 'Breathe..! – Meditation for You,' a non-profit association in Zurich. Assisted by Walter Hofmann, who led the meditations in German, ten participants focused on breath and movement. The association, started by four 3 Doors Academy graduates and current participants, is now organizing weekly meditation classes to bring relief to people's busy lives. More information:

www.breathe-zuerich.ch



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

The Sleep of Clear Light
How Falling Asleep with Awareness
Can Change Your Life

April 11 - May 11, 2017
Tuesdays and Thursdays at 19.00 h (C.E.T.)

Live at: www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche

FREE & LIVE ON FACEBOOK

 Bringing Ancient Wisdom Teachings to Life





Detailed schedule at: www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live


Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche


DREAM YOGA
Deepening Your Awareness Night and Day


June 6 - August 8, 2017
Tuesdays at 19.00 h. (C.E.T.)

Live at:
www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche

FREE & LIVE ON FACEBOOK

 Bringing Ancient Wisdom Teachings to Life





Detailed schedule at: www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live

You can watch the recordings here:

Preparing Your Mind for Sacred Sleep
April 11

Preparing Your Mind for Sacred Sleep: Q&A
April 13

Meditating on Clear Light While Asleep
April 18

Meditating on Clear Light While Asleep: Q&A
April 20

Daytime Practices to Prepare for the Night
April 25

Daytime Practices to Prepare for the Night: Q&A
April 27

Who Are You as You Fall Asleep?
May 2

Who Are You as You Fall Asleep? Q&A
May 4

Sleeping with Awareness, Dying Without Fear
May 9

Sleeping with Awareness, Dying Without Fear: Q&A
May 11

You can learn more about TWR LIVE and view the full schedule of upcoming free teachings at www.ligminchalearning.com/twr-live

You can watch the recordings here:

Introduction to Dream Yoga
June 6

Conversation Live with Dylan Tuccillo, Jared Zeisel, and Thomas Peisel – June 13

Dream Yoga Foundational Practices
June 20

Dream Yoga: Lucid Dreaming and Lucid Living
June 22

Healing Through Lucid Dreaming
June 27

How to Transform Recurring Dreams
July 4

Healing Through Lucid Dreaming: Q&A
July 10

Dream Yoga: Overcoming Obstacles
July 10

Dream Yoga: What Is Real, What Is Illusion?
July 18

The Hidden Symbolism of Dreams
July 25

Awakening in Your Dreams: Modern Technology Meets Ancient Practice – August 1

Dream Yoga as a Lifetime Practice
August 8



TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

DREAM YOGA:
Benefits of Lucid Dreaming



**A Conversation with
Thomas Peisel, Jared Zeizel
and Dylan Tuccillo**

co-authors of 'A Field Guide to Lucid Dreaming'

FREE FACEBOOK LIVE BROADCAST
Tuesday, June 13, 19.00 h (C.E.T.)
www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche


TWR LIVE Bringing Ancient Wisdom Teachings to Life

Learn more at: www.ligminchalearning.com/conversations-live

You can watch the recording here:
Conversation Live with Dylan Tuccillo, Jared Zeizel, and Thomas Peisel

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

DREAM YOGA:
Lucid Dreaming and Lucid Living



**A Conversation with
Andrew Holecek**

teacher and author of
**Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through Lucid
Dreaming and the Tibetan Yogas of Sleep**

FREE FACEBOOK LIVE BROADCAST
Thursday, June 22, 19.00 h (C.E.T.)
www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche


TWR LIVE Bringing Ancient Wisdom Teachings to Life

Learn more at: www.ligminchalearning.com/conversations-live

You can watch the recording here:
Dream Yoga: Lucid Dreaming and Lucid Living

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

Awakening in Your Dreams:
Modern Technology Meets
Ancient Practice



**A Conversation with
Stephen LaBerge**

founder of The Lucidity Institute
author of Lucid Dreaming and
Exploring the World of Lucid Dreaming

FREE FACEBOOK LIVE BROADCAST
Tuesday, August 1, 19.00 h (C.E.T.)
www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche

TWR LIVE Bringing Ancient Wisdom Teachings to Life

Learn more at: www.ligminchalearning.com/conversations-live

You can watch the recording here:
Awakening in Your Dreams: Modern Technology
Meets Ancient Practice



You can watch the recordings here:
Answering the Question: 'Who Am I?'
'Who Am I?' Part 2



You can watch the recording here:
The Mantra of Great Perfection





Tibetan Sound healing and long life practices *in Budapest!*

by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche – 8-9-10 September 2017

For the first time in Hungary participants have the opportunity to experience the practice of healing with sacred sounds – a practice that is well-known and loved in Bön Buddhism, the ancient tradition of Tibet and the Zhang Zhung Empire. This weekend we are able to get to know this meditation and through common practice experience the direct benefits of the sacred sounds' powerful vibration. Practices are led by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, best-known Bön teacher in the west.

This unique occasion Rinpoche introduces participants to the practice of long life by Tsewang Rigdzin, the 'King of Long Life'. This practice not only helps us in living a longer, but a more meaningful life for all sentient beings. The teaching concludes with the transmission (lung) of this practice so that all participants will be able to continue practices at home or at our community's regular practice sessions.

Location: **MOM Cultural Centre,**
18 Csörsz Street, Budapest, 1124, Hungary

Registration and more information:
www.ligmincha.hu



The Living Universe:
The Five Elements in the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet
with **Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**
Rome, September 1,2,3, 2017

According to the ancient Tibetan spiritual traditions, our planet is alive and sacred; and the five elements of earth, water, fire, air, and space are not just natural resources but can be considered fundamental aspects of a living universe. In fact, every experience one can have, from the sensations of one's physical body, to the emotions, to the most fleeting of thoughts, is said to be composed entirely of these five elements in interaction.

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will guide us in connecting with the external elements to support us to internalize the essential vital qualities of the elements. By bringing the five elements into balance, we contribute to our own well-being as well as the health of our planet:

According SHAMANIC teachings, on a physical level, the ongoing destruction and pollution of our global environment can be said to provoke the spirits of nature, causing wide-scale natural disasters, disease, energy disturbances, and mental obstacles to arise. By harmonizing with the natural elements, we harmonize our relationship with these spirits.

According TANTRIC teachings, on an energetic level, the raw elements of nature represent subtler, more fundamental aspects of the primordial energy of existence. As such, the five elements play an essential role in emotional and psychological healing. For example, too much earth element can make us feel dull, drowsy, or lazy; but when earth is balanced in us it supports us to feel connected, secure, and confident.

According DZOGCHEN teachings, on the level of mind, retrieving and connecting with the elemental essences can support the practice of contemplative meditation. For example, the water element brings comfort and joy to experiences of open awareness; when fully developed in spiritual practice, it is mirror-like wisdom.

Information about the teaching: Ligmincha Italia <https://www.facebook.com/woserpalmo2/>
Email: lcasat@hotmail.it



Friday September 1st, 2017, (20-21,30) Free Public talk

at Cripta di Santa Lucia del Gonfalone, Via dei Banchi Vecchi 12, Roma,

Saturday 2nd (10-18,30) and Sunday 3rd (09-18) September 2017, Seminar

at Casa Internazionale delle Donne, Sala Lonzi, Via della Lungara 19, Roma.

Cost 140 euro; "early bird" registration within July 15th: 120 euro.

Booking and registration uniquely at Libreria Aseq, Via dei Sediari 10, Roma. Tel. 06 6868400, email: info@aseq.it.

INSIDE OUT VIEW: TREES

In the air I breathe
With the help of trees
Reminds me
of a dream landscape
In a nighttime day

Where are the roots
Of the leaves I see?

Awaking dreams
In a daytime walk,
Evoke the seeds
Of my conscious view
from where it springs
The creative flow

Still
as a picture
Shot out of time
Superpose and fuse
All plans, all times

One shot,
Wrap the show.

Guido Freddi



SO-CALLED DEATH IS YOUR OWN THINKING

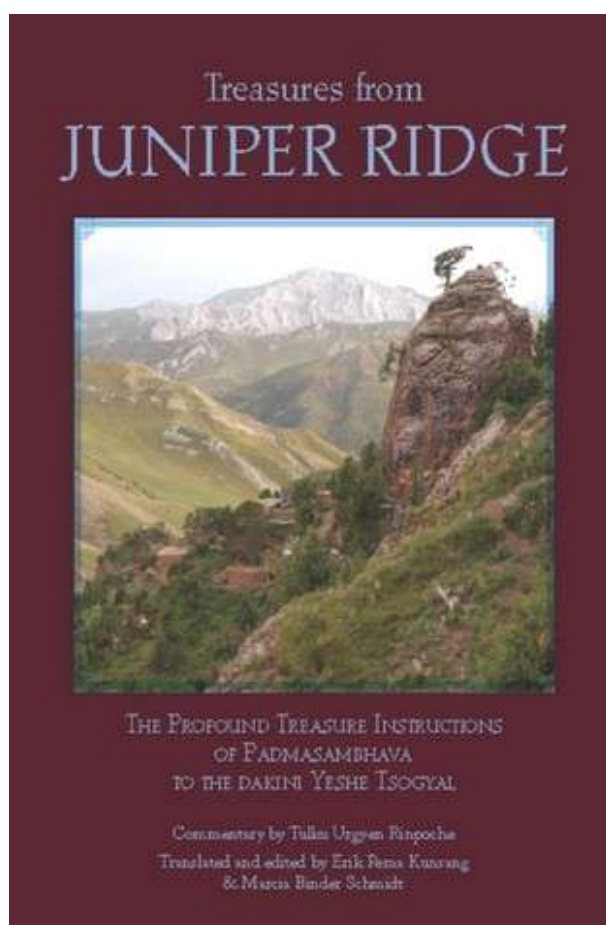
In this article Frits de Vries shares the book *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*. This book is a compilation of discovered teachings and revelations by Padmasambhava for all levels of practitioners. It also explains aspects of practice as non-conceptual meditation, recognizing the mind nature, but in this article Frits focuses on the aspects of death and dying.

Padmasambhava (lit. “Lotus-Born”), also known as Guru Rinpoche, was an 8th-century Indian Buddhist master. In Tibetan Buddhism, he is a character of a genre of literature called *terma*, an emanation of Amitabha is said to appear to *tertöns* in visionary encounters and a focus of guru yoga practice, particularly in the Rimé schools. The Nyingma school considers Padmasambhava to be a founder of their tradition. (1)

He attained ‘the rainbow body of great transference,’ in which form he later went to Tibet. In this subtle light body, great masters such as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra can remain, without dissolving into the *dharmakaya* for as long as there is service to perform for sentient beings. (2)

The compilation of teachings by Padmasambhava called *Treasures from Juniper Ridge* (3) includes several chapters of direct interest for active Dzogchen practitioners. Including among these are the *The Twenty-one Vital Instructions*, and also the twenty pages long *The Crystal Garland of Daily Practice*, with plenty of instructions for daily practice. As Padmasambhava himself says closing up the twenty pages: “These were the *dharmakaya* instructions in the nature of mind that is in essence free from conceptual attributes and beyond every type of construct.” (3, p. 61).

Also included are instructions on the basic meditations of *shamatha* and *vipashyana*. Active practitioners need signs of progress and that is why Padmasambhava left us a short and compact chapter entitled *Signs and levels of Progress*, preceded by an introductory poem in which he emphasizes the importance of this subject (3, p. 129):



“Homage to the blessed wisdom deity of awareness.

Without these signs and levels of progress on the path

That surely show when results have been obtained,

*In Great Perfection's innermost and total freedom,
You are no different from an ordinary person and
your practice is wasted.*

*Since your diligence wanes when signs of practice
fail to appear,*

This text describing them is of utmost importance.

My child, here are the signs of the path

For the person who trains in dharmata.”

In this poem you can see an example of the direct and clear way Padmasambhava expresses himself. More examples of this direct style can be found in the chapter *The Five Bardos*, which follows.



The Five Bardos

Most of these chapters express their teachings as dialogue between Padmasambhava and Lady Tsogyal, the Princess of Kharchen, who followed and served Padmasambhava as attendant. Usually a short question by Lady Tsogyal is followed by a long answer by Padmasambhava. The chapter on the Five Bardos starts with the following question by Lady Tsogyal:

“How many kinds of bardo states are there?”

The master gave this instruction: Tsogyal, the sentient beings of the three realms of samsara have not cut through the bardo states, therefore they take rebirth and circle throughout the three realms. During the five kinds of bardo states you should:

- *Recognize the ultimate sphere during the bardo of this life, like a lost child reuniting with his mother.*
- *Clarify what is unclear by recognizing your nature during the bardo of samadhi, like a vain girl looking into a mirror.*
- *Connect habitual tendencies [with samadhi] during the bardo of dreaming, like the flow of a river.*
- *Continue experience during the bardo of birth and death, like reconnecting a broken water pipe.*
- *Connect with residual karma during the bardo of becoming, like lighting a lamp in a dark room.*

Unless you cut through these five bardos, you will find no chance to sever the root of samsara.” [3, p. 143-144]

After each instruction on a bardo state another, more detailed question by Lady Tsogyal follows. The master provides fairly long answers to her questions on the bardo of this life and the bardo of samadhi. However, he gives shorter answers on the bardo of dreaming and the bardo of becoming; the shortest answer is on the bardo of birth and death. The central message is: by training you can cut through the bardo states, and that by cutting through the bardo states you can cut through the cycle of endless rebirth, the cycle of three realms (desire, form and formlessness) and be liberated.



Padmasambhava.

Next is a reprint of all the questions of Lady Tsogyal and Padmasambhava's replies on the last three bardos: bardo of dreaming, bardo of birth and death and bardo of becoming. The long answers on the bardo of this life and the bardo of samadhi are not included or reprinted in this article.

The bardo of dreaming, the bardo of birth and death, and the bardo of becoming

Here is the complete text from the book on the bardo of dreaming, bardo of birth and death and bardo of becoming. (3, p. 151-155)

Bardo of dreaming:

“Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of dreaming, how does one connect habitual tendencies [with samadhi], like the flow of a river?”

The master replied: This is the instruction in the conduct. Like the example of an unceasing river, it is the instruction in mingling into one your present state of samadhi with the mind at the time of dreaming. For this, there are three points:



- mingling by means of instruction,
- mingling by means of activities,
- and mingling by means of the elements.

First, for mingling by means of instruction, train in experiencing sleep as bliss and emptiness indivisible. This too has three points:

- Focus the awareness by drawing it in.
- Focus the body by bending the four limbs.
- Focus both, during the swarm of habitual tendencies, by never separating the confusion of dreams from the experience of blissful emptiness. When uninvolved in habitual tendencies, never separate the experience of being asleep from the experience of meditation training.

When that is the case, you have mastered this bardo.

For mingling by means of the elements, when you first approach sleep, this dissolution is earth dissolving into water. When consciousness begins to go under, it is water dissolving to fire. During this time, train in blissful emptiness.

When consciousness has become hazy, it is fire having dissolved into wind. At this time as well, train in bliss indivisible from emptiness.

When sleep has completely taken over, wind has dissolved into consciousness. At that time, train in the indivisible state of bliss and emptiness.

When there is tranquility without dreams, it is consciousness having dissolved into lucid wakefulness. That is the time when you remain as serene blissful emptiness, as the non arising state free of thinking. When that is the case, you have mastered this bardo.

For mingling by means of activities, focus intensely on the intention that "I will recognize the dreaming as being dreams!" Also while practicing during the day, keep the notion of everything being dreamlike. Accept that all phenomena are dreams and that all pleasure and pain is delusion. Bring to mind the previous meditation experience.

Now, when your training has developed to the point where there is no difference between dreams and waking, then, since dreaming is similar to the bardo, you will be able to cut



Yeshe Tsogyal.

through the bardo states by having trained in the above meaning.

Moreover, just like the flow of a river is uninterrupted, continue the training without break during daytime, dreams, and at all other times. This was stating the instruction on conduct during the bardo of dreaming.

Thus he spoke."

Bardo of birth and death:

"Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of birth and death, how does one continue one's remaining karma like reconnecting a broken water pipe?

The master replied: The instruction in continuing one's remaining karma during the bardo of birth and death like reconnecting a broken water pipe has two parts – being reminded by another incidence and the realized one reminding himself.

The former is that one's master or Dharma friends give the following reminder:

Mind-essence neither takes birth nor dies; it is your own mind. While earth is dissolving, your body cannot support itself and feels heavy. While earth dissolves into water, your exhalations are



protracted and inhalations withdrawn. While water dissolves into fire, your mouth and nose dry out. Your exhalations and inhalations are both brief. While fire dissolves into wind, your consciousness grows unclear. While wind dissolves into consciousness, your breathing stops. This is the time when you should remind yourself to support your attention. Thus, concentrate both body and mind so as not to be overtaken by circumstances.

So-called death is your own thinking. Though you part with the body of flesh and blood, mind is not something from which you can ever part. Remind yourself of the meaning of your former view and meditation training.

This is the time when, like reconnecting a broken water pipe, after the former moment has passed, the power of your training will reconnect you with the following moment.

That was the instruction on experience for continuing your familiarity with practice during the bardo of birth and death.

Thus he spoke.”

Bardo of becoming:

“Lady Tsogyal asked the master: During the bardo of becoming, what is the instruction in connecting with residual karma that is like lighting a lamp in a dark room?

The master replied: For this, if you are someone who has trained in a deity of Secret Mantra, you will appear in the form of the deity during the bardo and thereby attain the level of a Mahamudra knowledge-holder. If you are someone who has trained in the unmistakable nature of dharmata, you will recognize the thought-free state as being dharmakaya and thereby attain dharmakaya for yourself and others by manifesting as sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya to benefit beings.

Moreover, the bardo of becoming is similar to dreaming after having fallen asleep; when your breathing stops, your consciousness immediately arrives in the bardo. In this case, without changing the bardo state, your former tendencies make you think that you have a body, so that – unless

brought to an ultimate realization – you fall into the abyss of the six classes of beings.

If you do interrupt the bardo, whether you bring a deity or dharmata to mind through the power of your training, you will blockade the cities of the six classes of beings. As you have no senses of flesh and blood, you will become whatever is brought to mind and thus disrupt samsara.

Like the example of lighting a lamp in a dark room, whenever the yogi's mind parts from his body, he will not remain in the bodily form of the previous life, but instead, the very moment his mind separates from the body, attain dharmakaya, which thus is known as awakening to buddhahood in the bardo.

Furthermore, the six superknowledges appear; the five disturbing emotions are abandoned and dawn as the five wisdoms; the 84,000 Dharma doors are simultaneously manifest; and you act for the welfare of beings through sambhogakaya and nirmanakaya. Just like lighting a lamp in a dark room, you will awaken to buddhahood in a single life, which is known as the spontaneously perfected fruition.”



This was the instruction on the five bardos given by the master Padmasambhava to Lady Tsogyal. May it meet with the destined one with the karmic link!

It was written down at the Juniper Ridge of Crystal Pearls, on the second day of the last autumn month on the Year of the Snake.”

References

(1) from Wikipedia:

wikipedia.org/wiki/Padmasambhava

(2) from Rigpawiki:

www.rigpawiki.org/Padmasambhava

(3) *Treasures from Juniper Ridge*, The Profound Treasure Instructions of Padmasambhava to the Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal, translated and edited by Erik Pema Kunsang and Marcia Binder Schmidt, Rangjung Yeshe Publications, 2008.

Text and text selection by Frits de Vries



JOHN JACKSON: STUDENT, TEACHER, AND WALKER ON THE PATH OF LIFE

We are going to interview the lay teachers of Ligmincha, and started with John Jackson. We also asked him to share his memories how Ligmincha started twenty-five years ago. We had a long conversation, and we will publish in the next magazine the differences between the traditional Bon teachings and The 3 Doors program.

Ton: John, what do you remember of how Ligmincha started twenty-five years ago?

John: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche told me that in the eighties, before he founded Ligmincha, he spent some time in Europe. After he left the monastery he went to Norway to work on a Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Oslo. He had known Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for many years, who had a position at a university in Italy, where he did academic research on the early history of Tibet. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche had established the Dzogchen community in several countries by that time. When he decided to take a year off and go to Tibet to do additional research, he asked Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to teach at some of the Dzogchen communities while he was gone. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught at his request in several European countries and the US.

In the early nineties Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was invited to the US, where he met Professor Anne Klein, a Tibetologist at Rice University in Houston, Texas. She invited Rinpoche to come to Rice University and she got a Rockefeller fellowship for the two of them to work on a book together. At Rice University Rinpoche was teaching through the continuing education program. It was not a standard degree program, but there were courses for the general public, who wanted to learn about meditation and Buddhism. While he was teaching in Houston he came to Virginia and connected to some of the students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in Richmond, the state capital in Virginia. It is not clear for me why he decided that Virginia was the place where he wanted to begin his own organization. Students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche filed



John Jackson.

the necessary paperwork to create Ligmincha as an non-profit organization.

At that time I was associated with and on the board of a Gelugpa center in Charlottesville, Virginia. One of my colleagues in that group got a copy of the first issue of the *Voice of Clear Light*, and he told me that there was a new young lama that had started to teach in Richmond. When I looked at it, I saw there was a retreat coming up on *Sleep Yoga*. I didn't know anything about *Sleep Yoga*, but my wife and I went there. It was in a house – in a living room – and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught for a while and then we took a break. I went outside with my wife, and Rinpoche came out and said, “I have heard that you are from Charlottesville. I want to set up a center there, and would you like to help me?” That was the first conversation we had. So we started to look and see if we could find some place, and within a few months we had located a place, and rented the upper floor of a house. Rinpoche moved to the place bringing everything he owned on a trailer behind a car, and most of his possessions were books. The upstairs of the house had three bedrooms, a living room and a kitchen. One of the bedrooms was the library where he kept all his books, another room was his bedroom and one room was the office of Ligmincha. The sitting room was his residence and at the same time our practice space.



In 1992 we started to offer four retreats a year in Virginia, and Rinpoche continued to teach in Europe and in other places in the US. The students of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, who were involved at the beginning, left the organization after we moved to Charlottesville, because they felt more connected to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche than to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Ton: You got involved with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche as a student, and that changed when you became a teacher. Can you tell about that process?

John: When we first created Ligmincha Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche travelled a lot, and I was in a role of an *umdze*, leading the practice group in Charlottesville, and giving new people instructions in the basic practices. In the very beginning I acted as an instructor. At that point I had already been meditating for about twenty-five years. My meditation and practice started when I was nineteen, but most of my practices were from other lineages.

Rinpoche came up with an idea of a seven year program of summer retreats that covered Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. If the topic was *Ma Gyu* or *Twenty-one Nails* Rinpoche didn't want to teach *Tsa Lung* in each of these retreats. He asked me to give instructions to new people on the basics, such as *Tsa Lung* and *The Nine Breathings*, and the basic prayers like *Guru Yoga*, *Bodhicitta* and *Dedication*. Almost from the beginning, because there was nobody else, I started teaching in this way as a kind of assistant teacher in these retreats in

separate sessions for new people.

From the beginning Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche began inviting his teacher H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, to teach here during retreats. Every summer we had a three week long retreat and most were led by one of these two great masters. Usually Yongdzin Rinpoche or His Holiness taught in the morning, and in the afternoon Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gave a commentary on what was taught on in the morning.

In 2001 Rinpoche asked me to begin teaching on a regular basis through longer courses. I taught courses such as *Dream Yoga*, *Healing with the Five Elements*, *The Six Lokas*, *Heartdrops of Dharmakaya* and others in Charlottesville, and classes typically met once per week for a couple of hours over six to eight weeks.

Around 2005 Sue Davis-Dill, now Director of Ligmincha International, went to France for a retreat with Yongdzin Rinpoche. When she came back, she told me that she had a message from Yongdzin Rinpoche for me: "He said you should be teaching more." I asked "What did he specifically say?" and Sue said "That was all he said." Then I started to teach more, but I had to discover for myself how and where to do that. At first I began teaching at our other centers in the US and then later expanded into teaching at our centers in Europe.

Frits: How could you combine your Gelugpa background with the Bon teachings?

John: At that time I didn't know enough to see any problems with it. I used to study with a senior Gelugpa Lama, Geshe Thardo, who lived in Charlottesville. He finished his Geshe in Drepung Monastery in Lhasa before the Chinese invasion in Tibet. When Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche moved here, they were great friends; they hung out with each other, joked with each other, and when Geshe Thardo died Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche did the death rituals. I never felt any animosity between them, or between the two traditions. Before I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I studied for three years the Gelugpa *Lam Rim*, which is similar to the *Ngondro* in the Bon tradition, with Geshe-la. And I felt that had prepared me to actually connect with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and with his teacher Yongdzin Rinpoche. And although



I have received more teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, my root lama is Yongdzin Rinpoche. I recently visited Yongdzin Rinpoche in France; he is now ninety-four years old, and he is in good health and his mind is still sharp and clear.

Ton: Can you tell about your involvement in the Ligmincha organization?

John: From 1992 until 1997 I was on the board of Ligmincha, and managed it. Then I burned out from overwork and stepped back. We reorganized it in a way that the organizational responsibilities were shared by several people, which was a lot better because we were growing rapidly.

In 2001 the opportunity came up to get a grant of land to create a center in Colorado, through a friend of mine who was on the Board of Directors of the Manitou foundation. We talked about this with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and we agreed to do it, and Rinpoche asked me to establish and lead that center. At that time we had no sangha in Colorado, and Rinpoche asked me to focus on practitioners on the Western half of the US, and go for it. Now it is a thriving center. Although I am still the Director of it, I share most of the responsibilities, so it is mainly run by people in Colorado and New Mexico. It is a completely different center from Serenity Ridge. Though we do host several teaching retreats each year, it is not so much a teaching center, but a place where people go for long term retreats. We have four cabins for dark retreats and a community house. We are fully equipped to support people in their dark retreat, although the dark retreats are a minority of what we offer there. We are one of the few centers in the world that offers this possibility. Most people come for a long term retreat. You can read more about Chamma Ling Colorado in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 19](#).

I am also the manager of ligminchalearning.com. My professional training is in instructional technology, primarily in developing online courses. During a personal retreat in the mountains in 2008, I was sitting on my cushion, and then I received the whole vision, describing everything I had to do to create ligminchalearning.com. At that time there were no wisdom teachings available online. When I shared the idea with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and told him how it came about, he said, "Yes, let's do it." Rinpoche is usually the teacher in the online course recordings, and I typically answer the questions from the participants.

Rinpoche wants to build ligminchalearning.com to a greater extend. We want to create three levels: an introductory level, an intermediate level and an advanced level of courses. We are also going to use the platform for delivering instructions for *umdzes* and instructors.

More than half of the people taking the online courses are from Europe. We just started a new course on *The Six Lokas*, and now 80 % of the participants are from Europe. We still need to translate these courses into Spanish and other languages. Most people in Latin America don't speak English, and we have a shortage of translators.

Frits: Are there Ngondro programs planned?

John: We are taking the recordings from the last time Rinpoche taught *Ngondro* in 2014 at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, and we will turn that on into an online course. We hope it will go online early 2018. It will be a paid course because it takes a lot of time and effort to build this lengthy course, and support the people taking it.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Tibetan Meditation website. At the top, there is a header with the title "Tibetan Meditation" and the subtitle "Online Meditation Instruction from Ligmincha Institute". Below the header is a navigation bar with links: Home, Courses, Planned Curriculum, Free Teachings, About Us, and Contact Us. The main content area features a portrait of Tenzin Rinpoche on the left. To the right of the portrait, there is a text block that reads: "Ligmincha International offers excellent online meditation instruction drawn from the wisdom traditions of Tibet. Each meditation courses is crafted by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and senior teachers working with experts in educational technology to provide clear and authentic experiences of Tibetan meditation. Courses feature beautiful video teachings, guided meditations, readings, journal writing activities, and the opportunity to interact with senior mentors and classmates from around the world." Below this text, it says: "Explore Tenzin Rinpoche's teachings through our free Teaching Stream, or subscribe to our online newsletter filled with teaching extracts and descriptions of upcoming events. Or best yet, sign up for an upcoming online course or attend one of our retreats." On the right side of the page, there is a search bar and a section titled "Free Teachings" which lists: "Taming Oneself", "Refuge and Being Free from Fear", and "Making Decisions from the Space of Awareness".



Frits: Can you tell about your professional background?

John: My Bachelor's degree is in photography and film making, so I have always produced educational films. I have a complete set of professional video recording and editing equipment and shoot and edit most of the films you see on ligminchalearning.com.

When I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche I had a position at the faculty of the Virginia Medical School. My Masters degree is in instructional design, meaning the development of educational programs and materials based on educational theory and best practices. I joined the University faculty in 1990. Initially my role was to help the teachers to be better teachers, and also integrating technology in the teaching. Over the time my responsibility increased and I became Director of Educational Technology, and had a group of eight people working for me. We put the whole medical curriculum online, and I was involved in many aspects of curriculum design, evaluation and implementation in the medical school. The last six months I served as assistant Dean at the school, and I retired in 2013.

Frits: How could you combine that with your Ligmincha activities?

John: As a faculty member I had a pretty good amount of leave time. I had six weeks of leave plus the holidays. So I was attending retreats,

organizing and later teaching on my leave time.

In 2006 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche asked a group of sixteen of his most senior students to study with him in a new program and perhaps become teachers. This group met with Rinpoche two times a year for retreats for four years, and out of that program evolved The 3 Doors program. Of the sixteen who started twelve finished, and then he asked six of us to lead the three 3 Doors Academies in the US, Latin America and Europe. He asked Raven Lee and I to lead the European Academy.

Ton: When did you start teaching in Europe?

John: In 2009 I began teaching in Europe on a regular basis. The first time was when Erik Robbemont from Ligmincha Netherlands and Nicolas Gounaropoulos from Ligmincha Belgium asked me to teach *Sang Chöd* and *Sur Chöd* at Pauenhof in Germany. At that time I was returning from a pilgrimage to Mount Kailash in Tibet. On my way home I made a stop in Europe to lead the retreat.

Ton: How did Erik and Nicolas get to know you?

John: It was through Ligmincha Learning. I meet a lot of people through these online courses and we have many dialogues.

Frits: How often have you visited Europe?

John: Two or three times a year I visit Europe and



Sang Chöd and *Sur Chöd* practice weekend at Pauenhof in Germany, 2011.





John Jackson at Mt. Kailash in 2011.

each trip I usually teach two or three retreats. I just returned from a trip, where I taught *Dream Yoga* in Ireland, and then I went to Switzerland and taught a program on resilience and stress management, and then I went to Portugal and taught an introduction to Tibetan meditation for a Ligmincha group that is just getting started. The next trip will be to Germany to teach *Sang Chöd* and *Sur Chöd*, and *Dream Yoga*, and I am discussing with the Swiss sangha about a program. In April I did two retreats in Poland, one was an in depth program on *Tsa Lung* and *Nine Breathings*, and the second retreat was for the *umdzes* in Poland.

It is Rinpoche's wish to improve the preparation of the *umdzes*, standardize their level of training, and develop a program for new *umdzes*. Up till this point in time Rinpoche said to people "You're an *umdze*," or "You're an instructor," and he gave them permission to teach one or two practices. So far there has not been a training program to prepare these people beyond the normal teaching retreats. But now we are creating a standardized training program for the *umdzes*, and when we finished that, we will work on the instructors training program. We have been working on this program in the International Practice and Training Committee since March, and now there is a proposal that Rinpoche has approved.

Ton: I would like to ask some questions about you being a teacher. Are you a 'senior teacher?'

John: That's a good question. In The 3 Doors the teachers who lead the Academies are called senior teachers. Within Ligmincha we don't have a clear agreement about the terminology. It was part of the discussion I had with Rinpoche and Rob Patzig, but we did not come to a clear

resolution on that yet. In Ligmincha we have instructors that are people who are given permission to teach *Tsa Lung*, *Nine Breathings*, and another practices.

We have created a new level that is called a 'Host.' This is somebody who hosts a practice group, but does not necessarily have a lot of training. Sometimes people get very enthusiastic about the internet teachings, and they want to share it in their town. Yet they don't have a lot of training to do this, so we came up with the idea that these people can host a group. They don't lead the practice, but we will give them a set of recordings they use in the practice group. And we will give them instructions for how to set up a shrine, how to create an environment where they host the group, and how to cultivate the proper motivation. That is a introductory level before the *umdze*.

Umdzes actually lead the practices in their groups, rather than use recordings, and they are expected to have a very good understanding of these practices and the history of the tradition, so they can knowledgeably answer questions about the practices. *Umdzes* should have at least three years of experience practicing and studying in our lineage, and annually attend teaching retreats.

Ton: In the Netherlands we have those hosts already, where people invite others to watch the internet teachings by Rinpoche and practice together.

John: Around the world there are many places where we have hosts, and now we are going to give them structure, training and guidance on how to be a good host.

Ton: What is your position in Ligmincha called: are you a teacher, a senior teacher or a senior student?

John: I am both, I am a student and a teacher, and we have not yet come up with the language to describe my level of teacher within Ligmincha. So far we focused on the level of host and the *umdze*, and we still have to discuss about the instructors and (senior) teachers. Rinpoche has discussed as many as five levels, with a level associated with each element.

Frits: Can you say something about the role of the root lama in Dzogchen?



John: I think that the role of the root lama is similar in both Dzogchen and Tantra. The root lama is someone you feel a deep heart connection to, and you trust completely that they can guide you on your path. They may not be enlightened beings. In fact if they claim to be enlightened they probably should not be your root lama. You have confidence in them because they are so much further down the path than you are, that you know that you have a life-time guide, and that he or she can give you the all techniques and guidance that you need to achieve your own liberation.

There is a saying that in the beginning you take refuge in the Lama, in the middle you take refuge in the Dharma, in the end you take refuge in the Mind. In the beginning of your path you are very dependent upon your teacher. Your teacher is your guide and sets the boundaries. As you practice longer you get more confidence in yourself and in the path. You develop confidence: I can do these practices, I can recognize the wisdom. I can realize these practices, and I have to do it on my own. You can study the texts, you can realize the meaning of the texts, and you can realize the meaning in your own practice. In the final stage your refuge is just resting in the Nature of Mind. And you realize that everything is in that.

They say the sick man drops away his cane after being healed. There is no need for any other support beyond resting in the Nature of Mind. You still feel this very strong connection with your lama, but your lama can't do it for you. The only person who can walk your path is yourself. At a certain stage you have to take refuge in the Nature of Mind. In the Tantric view you would take refuge in your *Yidam*. Because in Tantra the ultimate stage of realization is that you become your *Yidam*, you completely transform into the *Yidam*. The *Yidam* is a *Sambhogakaya* manifestation of the Buddha, an enlightened body.

The role of the lama is that he is your guide, but at some point you develop the strength of your own practice and confidence in yourself that in the final stages you can do it on your own. They show you the path, but you have to walk the path. It is wonderful when you have questions about your path, that you have a person you can rely on, because of their deeper experience. They may have experienced some of the problems that you are facing on their own path. But they can't tell



A market in Kathmandu, Nepal.

you what's right or wrong. You have to come to that realization yourself. And that part of the path is usually not black or white, there are many subtle shades of grey.

When I was twenty-seven I went on a trip around the world, and it was a long pilgrimage and in which I went to many sacred sites all over the world. I remember arriving in Kathmandu, Nepal, and I walked into the main open air market place – it is one of the most exotic places you can image – and I felt more at home there than any place I have been during my life. I felt immediately that I had come home. I know I have a long karmic connection with these teachings and tradition, and I am returning back to it again. I feel very fortunate that in this lifetime I have connected with my teachers and lineage again, and to continue my work on myself, and to be able to help other people on their path. It is a great blessing to do this, and it is a lot of fun. I enjoy it deeply.

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

John: Confidence and the realization of impermanence is a good combination. At a certain point you can recognize that everything is impermanent and that you don't have any control of your life and you surrender. Whenever you surrender to life as a path and you trust that everything on your path is your teaching, then it gets a lot easier. You never know what your path holds but you recognize: this is my path, everything is my teaching and everyone is my teacher. That makes life a lot more rich, meaningful and enjoyable.

Interview by Frits de Vries and Ton Bisscheroux



BRIDGING TWO WORLDS

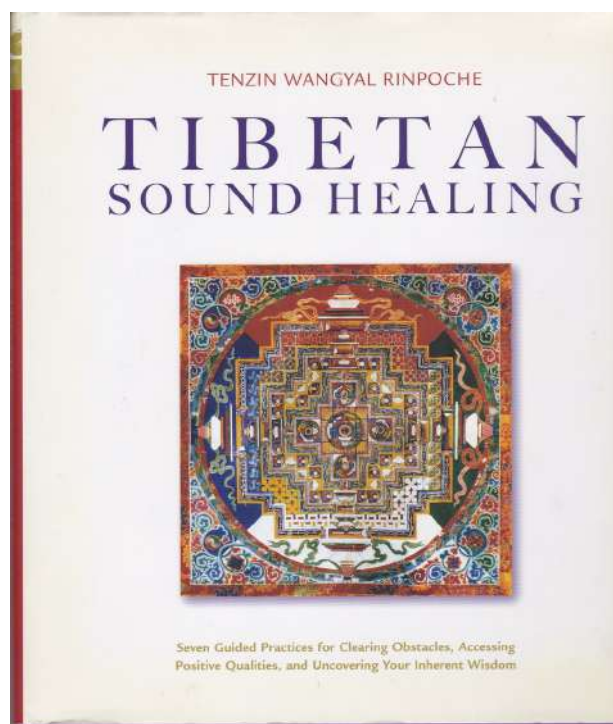
We reprint a conversation with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about the book *Tibetan Sound Healing*, published in *The Voice of Clear Light*, January 2007.

An excerpt from *Tibetan Sound Healing* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:

"Our fundamental awake nature is not produced or created, but is already there. In the way the vast expanse of the sky is present but may be obscured by clouds, we too are obscured by habitual patterns that we mistake for ourselves. The practice of the *Five Warrior Syllables* is a skillful means that can support us to release our negative and limiting behavioral patterns of body, speech, and mind, and make room for a more spontaneous, creative, and authentic expression. In this practice, we recognize, connect with, and trust what is already there. In a relative sense, we begin to practice loving kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity, qualities that bring great benefit experienced and expressed in our relationship with self and others. Ultimately, the practice brings us to the full recognition of our true self. In the teachings, the metaphor for this experience is a child recognizing her mother in a crowd – an instant, deep recognition of connection, an experience of home. This is referred to as the natural mind, and that mind is pure. In the natural mind, all virtues are spontaneously perfected."

Voice of Clear Light: We've been enjoying your new book *Tibetan Sound Healing* and the accompanying CD of guided meditations for each of the chapters of the book. It seems like a very direct way to present these wonderful teachings to a modern-day audience. What drew you to writing this unique book?

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: With all of the Tibetan Buddhist and Bon teachings coming to the West, it seems that in general people are still having difficulty truly accessing them. Wonderful teachers from all of the Tibetan Buddhist schools are now living here in the West or visiting very often, yet the number of people who are actually able to find benefit from the teachings in their daily lives seems to be low. I think that much of this has to do with the fact that these wonderful



teachings are being presented within the boundaries of the time and place of the ancient culture in which they first took root. So, I've tried here to communicate important and essential teachings of this tradition in a way that would overcome those cultural boundaries and be an effective means of bringing their direct benefit into one's everyday life – into one's being, into one's thinking, into one's feeling, into one's planning, into one's action, into one's work. My hope is that my book will be a bridge between the ancient wisdom of the Bon Buddhist tradition and all aspects of modern life here in the West.

VOCL: You've said that doing the five warrior syllables practice can change one's life.

Rinpoche: Yes, there's no question that it can change one's life, but whose life is that? The person who is willing to understand the depth of these teachings, the person who is willing to find support for doing this practice, the person who is willing to commit to doing this practice, and to do it to the end - not simply start doing it and then stop. For those individuals, there's no question that it can change their lives in many ways.

VOCL: Would you explain more about how the five warrior syllables practice works in doing that?



Rinpoche: For example, let's say that you wanted to bring more of a sense of love into your interactions with society, or into your family life, or into your relationship with just one other person, or simply to bring more of a sense of love within yourself. Your ability to actually manifest that increased sense of love will be greatly affected by how many traces of anger there are within you, either on the surface or residing in a very deep place within you. Or, those traces may even be totally hidden from your consciousness. These different levels are similar to the different stages of a disease, whose traces may be immediately apparent, or exist deeper within the body, or they may even lie hidden and undetectable yet one day be the cause of a sudden heart attack or stroke.

This practice begins with gaining clear recognition of these traces within you that keep you from having more love, say. The focus is not so much on a general wish one has – “I want to live my life in a more loving way.” Of course, that recognition is very important, but what you actually have to do in order for that greater sense of love to manifest is not just simply to want to have it, dream of having it, or wish or pray to have it, rather you need to trace your lack of love back to its fundamental core seeds and conditions within yourself. Those causes and conditions are not the particular ideas you have, such as “Oh, I'm not able to love my wife,” or “I'm not able to love my community.” These thoughts are only labels describing the effects of your lack of love. The root cause has nothing to do with the intellect. It has to do with traces of anger that are abiding in a deeper sense within you.

Through this practice, once we have identified those traces and connected with them, we then use sacred sound to clear them and create more space internally. As we sing the sacred warrior syllable A (“Ah”) again and again, for example, our awareness connects with the primordial purity of that seed syllable and its vibration in a very direct, nonconceptual way. The syllable A itself has a spacious, clearing quality. Sounding it helps us clear the root of our troubling situations and experiences better than through any other means. A short half-hour of this practice works on a far different level of effectiveness than, say, if you were to talk with a friend for hours about what is at the root of your anger.

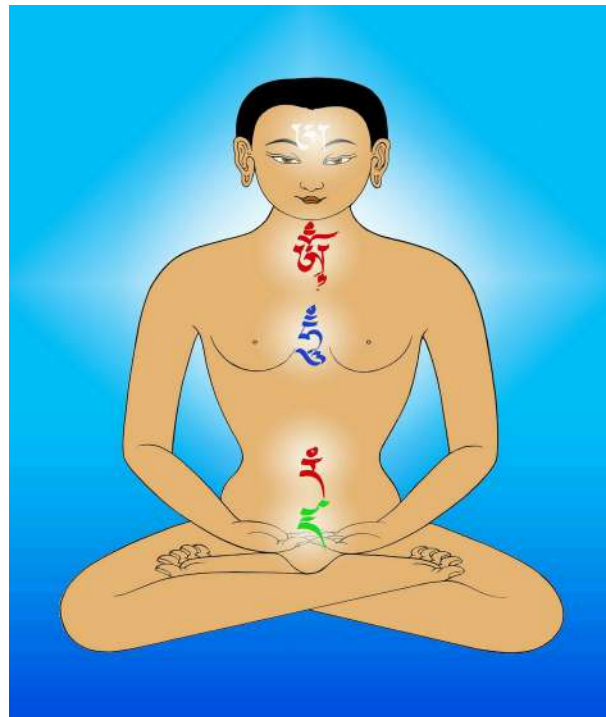


Diagram of the *Five Warrior Syllables* from the Bon Buddhist tradition of Tibet.

VOCL: As practitioners, even though we try hard to manifest our good intentions it's not uncommon that we fail to do so when we encounter certain situations in daily life. We're thrown off balance despite even years of developing a compassionate attitude, say.

Rinpoche: Yes, whether it's about developing a loving attitude or the willingness to understand others, or feeling a sense of peace or compassion – all of these good intentions, again, depend on one's going back to the root. Either you have a good sense of love within you or you don't. If you do, then there is no way that others will not experience a sense of kindness in every word that comes out of your mouth. Kindness is expressed spontaneously in everything you do because that's what is there within you. If it's not there then the question becomes, how can you help to bring out that quality in yourself?

VOCL: Before we go into how the five warrior syllables practice works to do that, why are these syllables considered sacred?

Rinpoche: According to our tradition, the five warrior syllables originated from the first Buddha, the first enlightened being. They are the original source of all the letters of the Tibetan alphabet, of all the teachings, of all of our knowledge. So naturally these sounds are considered very sacred.



They are called warrior syllables because they conquer negativity at every level – at an external level, at an internal level, as well as at a subtler level to conquer the deepest obscurations of mind that obscure wisdom.



VOCL: Each syllable, then, conquers a different level of negativity – can you explain further?

Rinpoche: Yes, going back to the example of love – which is a quality that exists in every being, is cross-cultural and the foundation of every religion – the absence of love can manifest in a relationship at several different levels. It can manifest in clearly perceptible ways, such as through physical fighting, through speech, through attitude, through thought.

Two people can have so much animosity and be giving each other such a hard time that they almost kill each other. Therefore, you can say that for them, manifest anger is clearly the enemy; that is the obstacle, and that is what needs to be conquered.

In another relationship a couple may not fight because for whatever reason they are good at suppressing their anger – maybe they're afraid of fighting. But that does not mean they have resolved their problems; the anger just hasn't manifested so clearly yet. But their level of animosity for one another may be the same as it was for the first couple, it's just that they are holding it in a place within themselves. Instead the anger manifests in a more subtle way within each of them, as charged-up energy, stress, loneliness, isolation, and so on. Those traces are the enemy, or the problem that this couple faces, and that is what needs to be conquered here.

Now imagine another couple with the same intense negativity, but the traces of anger remain at a much deeper, subconscious level within them. The result is that anger manifests more as a sense of depression. Each person does not consciously experience bad feelings toward the other, or perceive the other to be bad, rather they hide

their feelings even from themselves. They repress it all, so that it doesn't even manifest as form or language. It becomes hidden within sadness or depression. Those hidden traces are the obstacle for this couple, and that is the enemy to be conquered.

These three examples point to three of the five different levels in which obstacles may arise that prevent us from, in this case, living in a more loving way. Each of the five sacred warrior seed syllables works to conquer one of the five levels of enemy or obstacle that could keep this wish from coming true. That's why these syllables are called warrior seed syllables, and that is why they are considered sacred.



VOCL: With regard to the power that these warrior seed syllables have in our daily lives, you say that the syllables don't begin with transforming a given external obstacle in our life, but rather they begin by transforming our relationship to that obstacle. Would you say more about that?

Rinpoche: Sure, I'll clarify this point, continuing with the same issue of loving-kindness, which I think is something that we all need to develop more of. Let's say that you're having particular difficulty with someone regarding this simple issue of love. Specifically, you feel that this person doesn't acknowledge you, doesn't see you, doesn't thank you enough, and just doesn't love you. Everything negative about them, you perceive as having to do with their inability to love you. That becomes your clear object of focus. You end up feeling then that he or she is the obstacle to your developing loving-kindness toward them, right?

As a result, you become unwilling to see things from the other person's perspective. Maybe that person is seeking exactly the same thing from you that you want from them. So somebody probably just needs to take the first step here – the one who has a little more blessing, a little more awareness needs to take the first step and change their view of the other person. When one person



takes this very first step, then both people may find they are immediately and magically transformed.

But if you don't change your view, your world will not transform, and that person forever will remain an apparent obstacle to your developing loving-kindness toward them. Then, even if that person happens to change in many ways as an individual, from the perspective of your unchanging view of them they still won't appear to have changed at all.

What does this example show? That when you change your view, the whole world can change with it.



VOCL: As dharma practitioners, it's not uncommon for us to have an improved life on the cushion and yet still live a second more troubled life out in the world. How can the five warrior syllables practice serve as a bridge between the meditation cushion and our everyday lives?

Rinpoche: That is a very important question, because I feel that building a sturdy bridge between those two worlds, the one on the cushion and the one out in one's worldly life, will be the key to successfully bringing the benefits of Buddhism into Western culture.

If that bridge is not built well, then Buddhism will not have much of an effect. Not only are most Westerners unfamiliar with the world of the cushion, but between meditation sessions practitioners themselves often become stuck in the material world, where they are living out most of their lives.



VOCL: And how does this practice help us bridge those two worlds?

Rinpoche: You see, all of the negative emotions and negative thoughts we have, and all the many experiences and situations that arise in our world from those negativities, are like the many branches on a tree, but they all come from the same root. We use the metaphor of there being many different doors leading into a castle but they all lead to the center of the castle, and there is only one center. So, no matter which branch it is that you recognize as a problem or an obstacle in your life at this moment, either external, internal or secret, you see it because you have the ability to recognize that particular level of problem. With this practice, when you find one of these secondary causes, these branches, manifesting as specific problems in your life out in the world, then you can use it as a means to trace your way back to its source or root. And not just back to the negative traces as a source – all the branches always trace back, ultimately, to the source of all, to the space that is commonly found on the cushion during deep meditation. So, by first starting with a particular branch of worldly situation or experience that bothers you, and that you would like to resolve, the practice works to bring one's awareness back to the luminous space within the heart. Through addressing that specific issue that makes your worldly life tough, and clearing the traces that cause it, you are able to find your way back to the ultimate root of all of your worldly issues. When you create more space there, all aspects of your life will be affected in a positive way.

My wish is to strengthen this bridge between one's practice and daily life through the guidance I offer in this book and the accompanying CD on the five sacred warrior seed syllables practice. I hope this practice continues to be of help to many people in making that connection for a long time to come.



VOCL: Often we find ourselves caught in what are really just different variations of the same negative situation in our lives. And we've



become used to struggling with each branch or situation as it ensnares us as something separate or unique. Would you explain further how turning one's focus away from these various branches and toward their root affects a transformation of all the many branches?

Rinpoche: Sure, I'll go back to the example of love. Let's say that I'm trying to be more loving to someone and I'm not able to because I have deep traces of anger. So, I start thinking to myself, "I want to love this person. I want to love this person this weekend, so I will take this person to a movie, because that is my idea of what being loving is. On Monday I want to take them out to dinner, because that means I am being loving; and next week I want to give them a gift."

Somehow, I now have a long list of things to do – not of how to be or to feel, but of what to do – to express that love. We complete the list or we don't, and we still find ourselves in the same

place. And then we repeat the process in another way with the same results. We fail very often by doing different variations of those kinds of things. In this particular case, if I instead effect a change at the root level by tracing back to my deeper obstacles of anger rather than simply trying to change my actions, then not only will I change what I originally intended – my being able to better express love toward this person – but I am also discovering the ultimate source of anger, the open luminosity from which all experience arises. This is the same source from which love arises, and not only love but also joy, equanimity, and also compassion – all of the four immeasurables come from there! So the obstacle of anger in this case has given me a great opportunity to go back to its source and find all the immeasurable qualities naturally perfected there at the source.

Text selected by Jantien Spindler

If we spend a lot of time in relationships characterized by mistrust, anger, disrespect, and so on, every part of our lives is affected.

We see things in a more negative light. When we spend a lot of time in sacred relationships, our life is affected positively. Our painful feelings are not so large. We start to see the sacred core of every being.

—Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

www.ligmincha.org



PITH INSTRUCTIONS OF TIBETAN BON BUDDHISM

New TWR LIVE Series Begins September 6

From September 6 through November 29, 2017, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will offer a free, 12-week series of Pith Instructions, broadcast each Wednesday live [from his Facebook Page](#).

Pith instructions are an extraordinarily simple and direct way to receive and connect with the ancient Tibetan teachings, which can sometimes seem a bit complicated, in part because of how students think about and relate to them. In this series of TWR LIVE teachings, Rinpoche will draw from his own years of personal reflection on the heart-essence teachings of Dzogchen.

Each Wednesday at 19.00 h C.E.T. (1 p.m. New York time), Rinpoche will offer a new pith instruction live on Facebook. Rinpoche will present each teaching in a way that is as simple and accessible as possible; and students will be encouraged to reflect on and experience its wisdom as directly, openly, and immediately as possible.

Each pith instruction will be based on one of three different categories: base, path and fruition.

- **Base:** four weekly pith instructions that help us to understand our true nature – September 6, 20, and 27, and October 4.

- **Path:** four weekly pith instructions that support us in directly realizing this truth through meditation practice – October 11, 18, and 25, and November 1.

- **Fruition:** four weekly pith instructions that help us to fully realize, with confidence, who we really are, the truth that is already within us, and to fully manifest this realization in our life for the benefit of others – November 8, 15, 22, and 29.

Between Wednesday sessions, Rinpoche will offer occasional scheduled or unscheduled TWR LIVE sessions to elaborate on previous sessions or answer viewers' questions, plus special [live conversations](#) on related topics with invited teachers of the Bon or other traditions.

All broadcasts are free and open to all — you don't need a Facebook account to view them. To access the viewing screen, [visit Rinpoche's Facebook page](#) at the time of the broadcast.

All TWR LIVE sessions are [recorded for future viewing](#). For the latest schedule updates related to this series, [click here](#).

- ◆ [View introductory video](#)
- ◆ [Learn more/access real-time translations](#)



THE TRUTH THAT SETS YOU FREE

New GlideWing Workshop with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche begins September 30

From September 30 through October 22, 2017, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will offer a new, three-week workshop through GlideWing Productions entitled *The Truth That Sets You Free: Discovering Your Inner Wisdom Through Practices of Waking and Sleeping*.

With Rinpoche's personal guidance, you will learn contemplative meditation practices of the day and *Sleep Yoga* practices of the night — powerful methods for liberating yourself from fear and other disturbing emotions, so that you may live more fully and genuinely in all aspects of life. Ultimately, these practices are about achieving final liberation, or enlightenment.

Nearly all of us feel strongly attached to our physical body and to our sense of identity as a professional, spouse, son or daughter, for example. But our genuine self is far simpler, and more profound, than any of these. Through the practice of sleep yoga and other guided meditations, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will help you to discover the truth of who you are: a sense of spacious awareness that is beyond the ego-based identity and which is eternal, changeless, indestructible, and serene. Realizing this truth is what liberates us from the fear and negative emotions that have trapped us in suffering. It can help us overcome fear even during the most challenging moments, including the time of our own death.

Learn more and register www.glidewing.com.



Salgye du Dolma: *Khandro of Sleep Yoga*.



GlideWing

MERGING SCIENCE, METAPHYSICS AND SPIRITUALITY

Teacher-Guided Online Workshops for your
Well-being and Spiritual Awakening



TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2017 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ONLINE TEACHINGS

When	Where	What	More information
August 15 – 19	Wilga, Poland	Retreat: Dream Yoga	www.ligmincha.pl
August 20	Warsaw, Poland	Seminar: Dream Yoga	www.ligmincha.pl
September 1 – 3	Rome, Italy	Seminar: Connecting to the Living Universe: Teachings on the Five Elements	www.ligmincha.it
September 5 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: A Conversation with Michael Gawrysiak, Ph.D.	ligminchalearning.com
September 6 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 1	ligminchalearning.com
September 8 – 10	Budapest, Hungary	Seminar: Tibetan Sound Healing & The Long Life Practice of Tsewang Rigdzin	www.ligmincha.hu
September 13 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: A Conversation with five Tibetan medical doctors	ligminchalearning.com
September 20 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 2	ligminchalearning.com
September 27 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 3	ligminchalearning.com
October 4 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 4	ligminchalearning.com
October 11 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 5	ligminchalearning.com
October 13 – November 26	Your computer	Interactive online course: The Five Elements, Healing with Form Energy and Light	ligminchalearning.com
October 18 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 6	ligminchalearning.com
October 25 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 7	ligminchalearning.com
November 1 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 8	ligminchalearning.com
November 8 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 9	ligminchalearning.com
November 15 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 10	ligminchalearning.com
November 22 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 11	ligminchalearning.com
November 29 19.00 h (C.E.T.)	Your computer	Free Facebook Live Webcast: Pith Instruction # 12	ligminchalearning.com

