



# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*Special edition # 1 – # 10 Spring 2011 – Autumn 2013*



Meet the European sanghas

Lishu Institute

The Three Doors

Poetry in the sangha

The Teacher and the Dharma



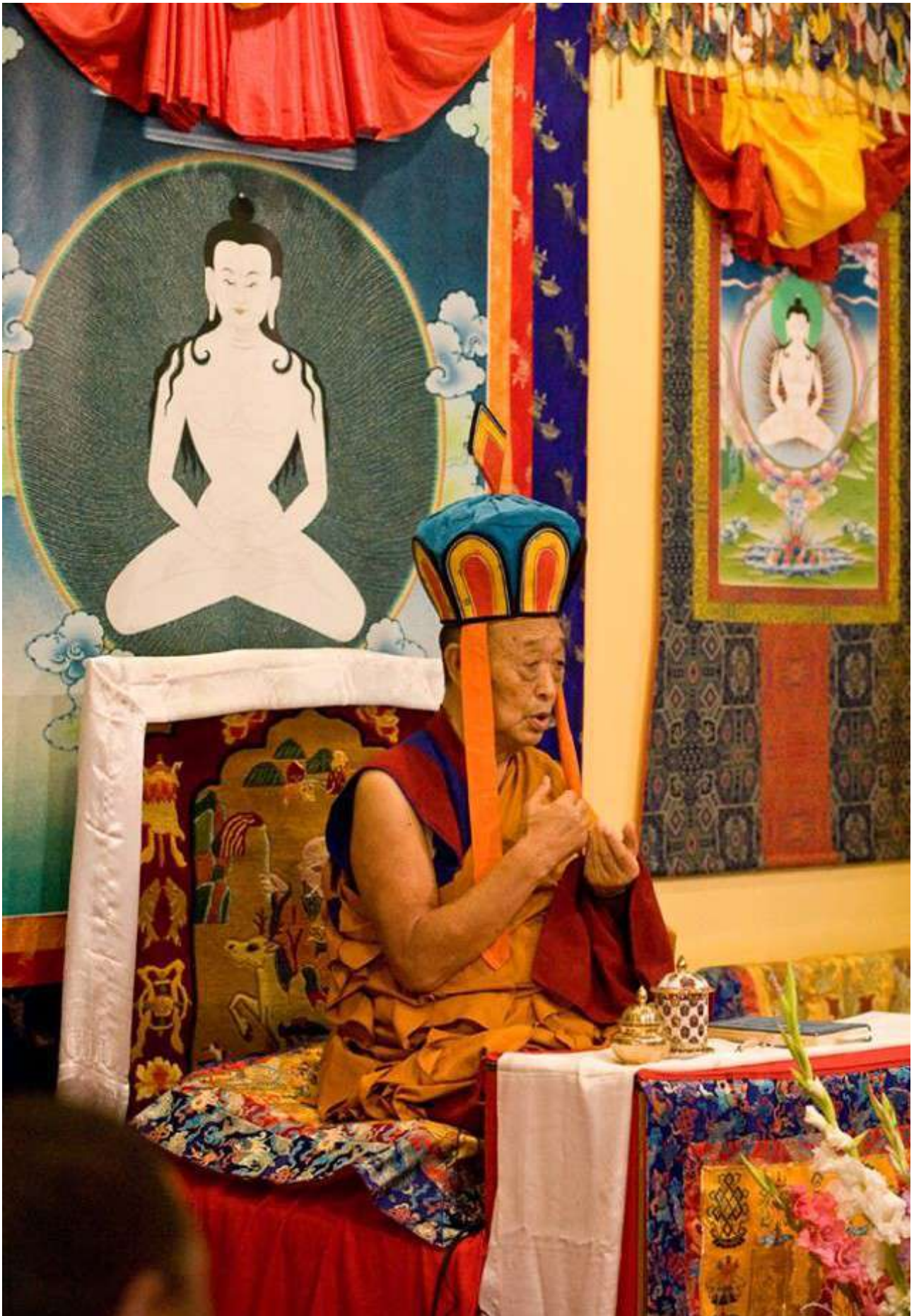


We dedicate this book to our Masters of the Yungdrung Bon Lineage.





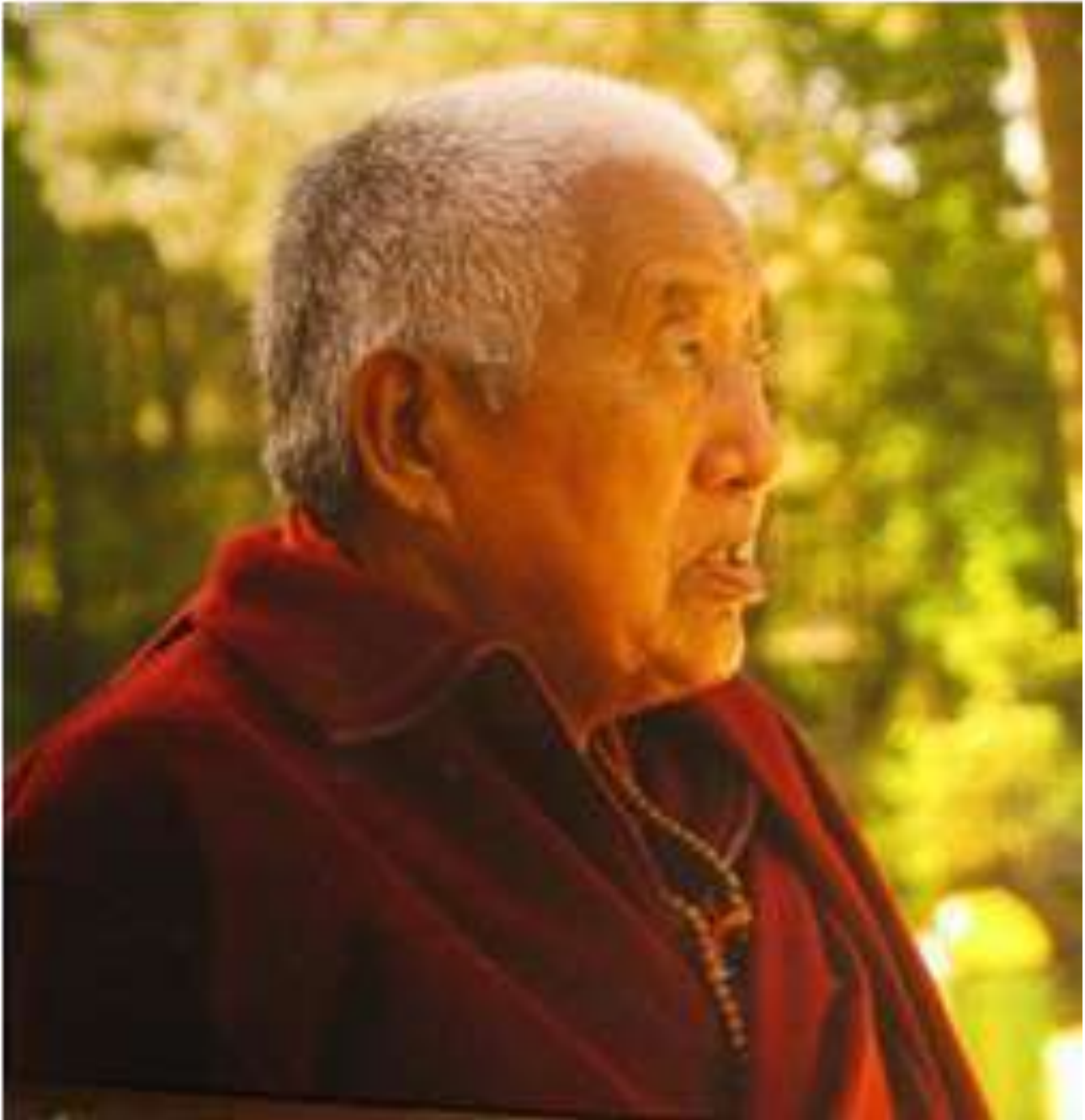




His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin.







His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche.







Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.









Tapihritsa.

# PREFACE

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

In 2011 we issued the first Newsletter for the European sangha when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche celebrated his 50th birthday in Nepal with sangha members from all over the world. We then called it the *European Bon Garuda Newsletter*. In the following months many things changed. The layout of the newsletter changed. We decided to call it *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*, since Rinpoche had decided to change the names of the organizations in Europe from 'Bon

issued, by writing articles and poems, sharing photos and experiences, proof-reading, editing, transcribing interviews, putting it on the internet, giving feedback, and so on.

And last but not least, I want to thank the sponsors who made it financially possible that we put the first ten issues together in a book form and gave it to Menri Monastery, Triten Norbutse Monastery, Serenity Ridge, Chamma Ling Poland, Chamma Ling Colorado, Chamma Ling Mexico, Lishu Institute and the European Center.



The Refugetree of the Bon tradition.

Garuda' to 'Ligmincha'. And instead of two issues a year, we were going to publish a new Magazine every three months.

With this Magazine we hope to contribute to Rinpoche's mission to 'Preserve Bon Buddhist Wisdom in the World.'

For me it always has felt as an honor to contribute to this Magazine, because Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the other teachers in the Yungdrung Bon tradition have been giving us so much with their teachings and their blessings. And it is also a wonderful sangha, because many people in the sangha make it possible that this Magazine can be

Here are the names of the sponsors who gave € 108:

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Anneke Dekkers (Netherlands)

In Bon,

**Ton Bisscheroux**

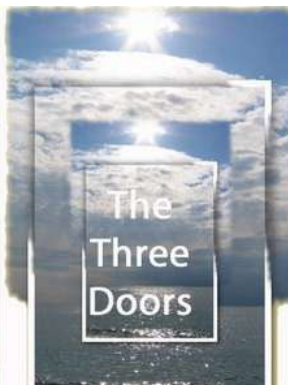
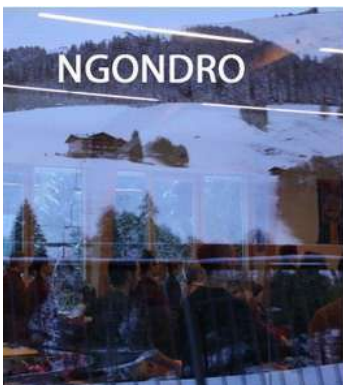




# European Bon Garuda Newsletter



*Number 1 - Spring 2011*



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The **European Bon Garuda Newsletter** is a joint venture of the community of European students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Its creation has been encouraged by Rinpoche and the Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation.

Ideas and contributions are welcome at [newsletter@bongaruda.eu](mailto:newsletter@bongaruda.eu)

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## Greetings

***Dear members of the sangha,***

Our European Bon Garuda Newsletter is born and we, as the Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation, are very happy to share this with you. We are convinced that the newsletter will enhance our communication with sangha members from all the different countries and help to keep you updated about our projects and activities. The European newsletter will help us to become an international community of students of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, supporting actively our teacher in his efforts to preserve and cultivate the ancient wisdom of Bon in Europe. More as readers than as the Board, we are looking forward to finding here many interesting articles, interviews and pictures about events taking place on local and also on the European level. We wish every success to the editors and we thank everybody who has contributed to this first issue.

***Gabriele Penders, Vice-Chairman of the European Bon Garuda Foundation***

***Dear readers,***

Since Rinpoche likes the Dutch newsletter, which has already been published for more than ten years, Jan Dinkelaar, Chairman of the Board of European Bon Garuda Foundation, asked me to be responsible for creating a newsletter for the European sangha.

After forming a team of editors we started to work on it in September 2010 and now, the first issue is ready. We publish the newsletter in English, but we think it would be nice to have it translated into German, Polish, Russian and other languages so that more people can read it. We will support and guide anybody willing to take on this task.

We hope you will enjoy this first issue and we would be happy to receive any kind of suggestions and contributions. Come and create the newsletter with us! The next release is planned for autumn 2011.

The newsletter is also meant as an expression of the gratitude that we, as editors, feel toward our teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



For the Rinpoche's upcoming 50th birthday, we collected congratulations in the various sangha's languages. We know that all the sanghas have been accumulating long life prayers and mantras for him in the past months. I do it as well, by reciting them and also by turning on a special prayer wheel. I built it inspired by what Rinpoche once said during the Bardo retreat in Amsterdam. "After somebody dies," he told us on that occasion, "you do the recitation of the Bardo prayers as many times as possible. You can read it by yourself and you can also turn a tape on for twenty-four hours for three or four days in a row."

That time the idea came to me to build a prayer wheel working off an electric current. I printed three long life mantras and three long life prayers and used a fan from a computer to rotate them. I put the prayer wheel on my shrine and I turn it on every time I meditate. Since it goes round several times a second, I calculated that it must have rotated now at least 333.333 times. Three prayers per rotation make one million in total. Long life to you, Rinpoche!

***Ton Bisscheroux, Chief Editor European Bon Garuda Newsletter***

*February 15, 2011*



## ***The start of the European sangha 2.0: the Ngondro retreat in Austria***

*The term Web 2.0 is used to describe a new way of approaching the internet: instead of just passive viewing of content people now use it for sharing information and interacting in social media dialogue. The first retreat of the five-year cycle of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud teachings which took place in October 19-25 2010 in Austria was a kind of a generation 2.0 for the European sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche: a start of building a community. The event that allowed us to taste pan-european energy, was planned and organized by a group of Austrian students of Rinpoche. The heart of the group is Karoline Seltenheim. She had been preparing the field for this event to happen for years and it was a fruit of her care and work. We asked her to talk about the 'genesis' of the retreat and about her impressions from it.*



“Actually, the story is quite interesting. Somewhere in the period of 1996-99 Rinpoche was already teaching a dzogchen cycle in Austria, to a group of around sixty to sixty-five people. I was one of them, but not the organizer. I was quite a newcomer to all this environment and teachings at that time, a greenhorn, I would say. Then, in 2000 Rinpoche could not come and he asked us to have a practice retreat without him. And we had one, a wonderful one, in an area near the place where the retreat in 2010 was held. But out of those more than sixty only twelve people came and following that, Rinpoche's decision was not to continue teaching the cycle in Europe. Every year, when I met him at weekend retreats around Europe or at the annual retreat in Germany, I asked him whether he would give the teachings here in Europe again and I offered that I would organize everything. And until 2008 it stayed like this, he was smiling but there

was no concrete outcome from these talks. In 2008 I started to look for a place. I was thinking that when we would have a nice place it would be easier to convince Rinpoche to come.

It was Volker Graf who told me about the place where we decided to stay in the end. He had a retreat there once with another lama. The sport and relaxation center seems built specifically for our needs. It is located in Maria Alm, quite a well known touristic place, one thousand metre above the sea, in a charming spacious landscape at the foot of the Alps. Rinpoche said to me that spending days in such a place, seeing the open sky and snow on the mountains, was like taking a deep breath for him, like being in Tibet for a while.



The center is used by sport teams, ski instructors, basketball players for their training and really nothing is missing there. This was my thought – to find full comfort so that we are not distracted by anything like bad beds or water not running well. And the place was full of light. This light was entering into the dining room and the room that we used as a gompa from huge walled windows and pouring in on us. And the center has an enormous



gym with a very high ceiling as well. When I saw it, it glimpsed through my mind: here we might do prostrations. And we did, together with Rinpoche. He told me that it was one of the most memorable moments for him, doing prostrations with his students and with so much space around – and inside – all of us.

But let's go back to the preparations of the event. With the place found, one day Rinpoche said: yes, let us do it. And I began to organize it.



I made a reservation of the center and took some risk on myself because I had to pay quite a lot of money beforehand with no guarantee to fill the capacity of one hundred and thirty people. I put an announcement of the retreat on our web site and we made some leaflets but we actually didn't do much promotion for it. I don't know how people got to know about it but in May, five months before it would begin, all places were gone. I booked some more places in a hotel nearby – and at the end one hundred forty-two people from eleven countries took part. They were coming from Finland, Germany, Austria, Denmark, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and USA. Some people from Turkey and Bulgaria were interested too.



The atmosphere of the retreat was wonderful. It is not only my impression. Many other people told me this. We all agreed that the energy circulating there was unique. It was different from other retreats. It was a feeling of growing together as sangha of a new generation.

I felt so relaxed and confident about all the organization and actually everything went very smoothly, as if people had been very familiar with all things that they had never done before. Like the Tsok, for example, the food offering ceremony. I was so calm and confident also because I felt Rinpoche's support, and his joy and kindness.

I think those days were like taking a deep breath for all of us."



**Karoline Seltenheim**

*The next five-year cycle of the Ngondro will start in 2012, also in Austria.*

## ***Participants reflecting on the Ngondro retreat***

“Actually I don't know if I would have been talking about connecting and openness so much before the Ngondro. Something really changed there. I think of Rinpoche saying it is good to share with other people, and even if there are some ego-related fears, I am willing to get to know other people, being aware they for sure have been dear to me in a previous lifetime even if my ego today is scared of them or something else. And I am less scared of telling people about myself, which I have been more before. It is all just stories, as Rinpoche says, and beyond them we find a strong sangha full of wisdom and love if we allow it to manifest.”

***Anja Benesch, Germany***

“I registered for the Ngondro retreat because of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, whose personality has deeply impressed me. He raised my self-confidence hence I had the strength that I can and shall give my spiritual development a structure. Free from the daily pressure and the necessity to react to everyday life circumstances, I was open to Rinpoche's teachings. His presence and his words revealed to me other dimensions of being. I felt comfortable during the retreat, connected with myself and with my surroundings. Now I try to integrate the sound of silence of the retreat in every moment of my life and to extend it through the daily Ngondro practice. Thank you very much for your teachings, Rinpoche, and thanks to all participants of the retreat for sharing this beautiful time. See you in October 2011!”

***Bogusia Dausend, Spain***

“To take part in the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Ngondro with Rinpoche had been my wish since I came in connection with him. Now it's possible, quiet easily and very comfortably in Austria, so I am very very happy and grateful for this!!! Being with

about 150 people is a bit of a challenge for me, as I usually live a more reclusive life and I love to be silent. So in between I often felt the need to withdraw a bit. But when I got all the photos I felt really warm-hearted towards everyone I saw, almost had the feeling we are still together and it will be very soon October again! The teachings and practice really changed my focus of life. I feel less lost inside, have more positive energy for my work, and the relationship to my husband seems to be going through a time of healing. These things were on my mind before, but the decision to really get into it now and practice daily has a birth giving power! Thanks to this precious lineage, our wonderful master and the whole sangha!!!”

***Ida Bujok, Germany***

“It is hard to say in a few words what we have learned during the October retreat. Rinpoche's teachings feel like a defining experience of our lives, not to mention the fact that the practices we were taught have fantastic effects on both ourselves and our lives, they initiated spiritual development. We decided to follow this path and go through it. We are thankful for this to both Rinpoche and the Tan Kapuja Buddhist College (Gate of Lore Buddhist College) that helped us – as its students – to participate in the retreat,

and our teacher Katalin Jakab who also helped us by being our interpreter. Thanks for the staff of the event. We enjoyed such a harmonious environment during the almost week-long retreat, it grabbed us out of our everyday lives, thus helping to concentrate on the teachings and practices. We really loved the sangha, we met people who we still love to recall. We are looking forward for the next event, to receive the next session of Rinpoche's five-year teachings in the loving atmosphere of the sangha.”

***Kata Bertók and Péter Tongori, Hungary***





## Falling in love with the Ngondro

**One lama said: The Ngondro is 100.000 opportunities to do the practice once with full concentration and faith.**

Many teachings in Bon and Buddhist tradition begin with the Ngondro, or so called preliminary practices. The first part of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud cycle of teachings that Rinpoche gave last year in October in Austria was dedicated to the Ngondro. The Nine Practices included in it – Guru Yoga Prayer, Hundred Syllable Mantra, Great Mantra, Bodhicitta Prayer, Refuge Prayer, Prostrations, Mandala Offering, A Kar A Mé Mantra and Sa Lé Ö Mantra – should be repeated one hundred thousand times by anybody wanting to receive further teachings of this cycle. This is what the tradition specifies. This will probably be a hot topic for many people: how to deal with the numbers, not neglecting them, and not getting obsessed with them either? How to find a balanced relationship with these practices or even – how to fall in love with the Ngondro? Learning about how the Ngondro is approached in monasteries perhaps can help. Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, a young lama who took his geshe degree at Menri monastery in 2008 and has been currently doing his Ph.D. in Prague, talked to us about this.

“Many monks coming to Menri from Tibet for the Dialectic school have already done the Ngondro in their monasteries in Tibet. And so, in one class at Menri monastery, there are monks with different ‘study histories’. Anyway, at Menri you will not hear anything about the Ngondro before the seventh or eighth year of your studies, before you are twenty or twenty-five years old. It is only then, when you start learning tantra, that you are introduced to the Ngondro practices. Before that, you study logic and cosmology and sutric teachings, but nothing about the Ngondro. From this point of view, the Ngondro is quite high teachings, even if it is called preliminary or foundational. You also have to take all the monk’s vows, they are two hundred and fifty, and become fully ordained (*drang song*) before you start entering the tantra class.

Then the students are taught the Ngondro, and they begin to practice it. Usually, everybody does it individually. Nobody is there to check. Our class decided to do it all together. But we had no time during the day or even in the evening, and so we started to do it every day before breakfast. Practicing in a group helps but, of course, slowly, slowly, some people were dropping out, because they were busy with some other things. You go on,

but slowly. Even if you dedicate half an hour a day to prostrations, you can do a maximum of two hundred and you will not finish the required amount before one year and a half – and this is only prostrations.



You can’t receive the main practice – we called it ‘ngoeshi’ (*dnegos gzhi*) – before you at least begin the Ngondro. Such a main practice is Powa, for example, and of course dzogchen. Actually, according to the tradition you should finish the Ngondro before receiving the teachings of Powa but for many monks the case is that they start and go on but they are not finished by the time they receive Powa or even dzogchen teachings. Some monks even became geshe before finishing their Ngondro. There are some good excuses that can be accepted by their teachers –

a necessity to use all their time for studying may be an example. But they know that they are supposed to finish it during their lifetime. It is a kind of debt that you have. You can have some delay of payment, but still sooner or later you should pay it back.”

**Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang**

## ***Ngondro: purify yourself through practice***

*If you want to read more about the Ngondro, we can recommend the book 'Opening the door to Bön' by Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche, published by Snow Lion. From chapter four, titled 'Nine Preliminary Practices', we have selected this text.*

The Ngondro practices presented here provide beginning practitioners with the necessary foundation that opens the door to the vast world of the Bon teachings. Traditionally practitioners do the Nine Preliminary Practices one-hundred-thousand times. After gaining an understanding of compassion for all sentient beings as the heart of the practice, many students then ask their teacher to describe the philosophical basis of the teachings and give further instructions for deepening their own experience. These next steps occur through the actual practices, which include the Powa and Bardo instructions, as well as the introduction to the Natural State of Mind. Once students have trained thoroughly with a well-qualified teacher in all these practices with pure motivation and compassion for all sentient beings, they are well along the pathway to enlightenment.

The student's mind needs to be prepared in order to take the first step into the practice, the nine preliminary practices (the Ngondro). After having opened your mind to receive the teachings, you have examined your motivation and gained some awareness of the five poisons and their pervasive influence. You have contemplated the rareness of the perfect human body and its nature of impermanence, and the suffering of this cyclic existence. You have increased your awareness of the law of cause and result. You are now ready to begin the Ngondro.

Each of the following nine preliminary practices will help you to understand more deeply the qualities of the practice and how to apply them to your day-to-day life. These methods will help you to gain stability and confidence in the practice. The six practices and the three recitations that comprise the nine preliminary practices are as follows.

### ***Preliminary practice 1: Generating the mind of enlightenment***

The ultimate goal of the practice is to achieve enlightenment and be liberated completely from the suffering of this cyclic world. It is important to understand the sources of suffering of all sentient beings and know the ways to overcome them.

In order to be able to generate the mind of enlightenment toward all sentient beings, the key is to create a good foundation by practicing the Four Immeasurables: limitless compassion, limitless kindness, limitless love, and limitless equanimity. You visualize Shenla Ödkar, great masters and protectors of the Bon. They will protect and support you

in your practice. Then you realize that all sentient beings have once been your mother, and now you have the responsibility to take care of them. Finally you dedicate all your virtuous deeds for the benefit of all sentient beings.



### ***Preliminary practice 2: Taking refuge***

The purpose of taking refuge in the Three jewels is to receive blessings and be protected from the suffering of this cyclic existence. In order to seek refuge you have to realize truly the suffering of this cyclic existence. Refuge also depends on your trust and faith in the Three Jewels. Accordingly, you will receive protection and blessings from them. Trust is the key to opening the door to Bon and its wisdom.

### ***Preliminary practice 3: Confession***

The purpose of the practice of confession is to purify the negative deeds that you have cultivated in the past, present, and future, not just the ones from this lifetime. We sentient beings are continuing to be reborn, life after life, in this cyclic world. During all this time, with and without intention, we have cultivated limitless non-virtuous deeds. Their negative energy will continue to grow and obstruct us from developing our practice and realization unless we purify them.

To purify yourself from negative deeds, it is essential to accomplish the four powers of the practice of confession: the power of the witness, the power of regret, the power of commitment, and the power of the antidote. Think about your non virtuous deeds that you regret. From the core of your heart, feel sorry about them and experience your regret. You commit to not repeating similar non virtuous deeds again. The antidote is engaging in practice and reciting prayers in order to purify your deeds from the past.



### ***Preliminary practice 4: Mandala offering***

The purpose of cultivating merit by offering a mandala is to make yourself more spacious and open, and thus be able to absorb and digest the valuable teachings without any obstacles to your practice. We human beings in our temporary state with this physical body depend on many circumstances – especially our good fortune – to receive the teachings, which is not something that is common to all. This only occurs based on the great efforts of your good merit in the past. It is still important to cultivate more merits in order to fulfil the goal of practice, especially two important merits: the causal merits of fortune, which is compassion, and the fruition merits of wisdom, which is the wisdom to realize the true nature of mind.



### ***Preliminary Practice 5: Connecting with the teacher***

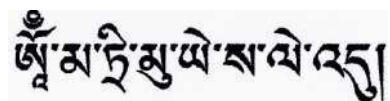
The essential aspect of the preliminary practice of connecting with the teacher is to open your inner wisdom. It is very important to receive blessings from your teacher to support you. Whatever teachings you may receive, even the shortest recitation prayers or oral transmissions, will depend on your teacher; all the teachings have to be transmitted from the teacher. No one in the past has ever achieved enlightenment without following the instructions of a teacher.

By viewing your teacher as the real presence of the Buddha or the enlightened ones, you will receive blessings, powers, and teachings like nectar. If you view him as a businessman, his blessings and teachings will affect you more like an object for sale. And if you view him as an ordinary person, accordingly, all his blessings may just be like food.

### ***Preliminary practice 6: Prostrations***

Prostrations mainly involve movement of the physical body. The main purpose of prostrations is to purify the non virtuous deeds and negativities of the body. One does prostrations in front of a statue, in a temple, in a holy place, in front of one's teacher, and so on.

The most important aspect of this practice is again one's pure intention.



### ***Preliminary practices 7-9: The three essential recitations***

The Three Essential Recitations are the Recitation of the Enlightened One of Compassion (Sa Le Öd), the Recitation of Dhe Chog Rinchin Dolma (Ma Tri), and the Recitation of Ngensong Dong Tuk (Dhu Tri Su).



## ***The Three Doors: Transformative Practices for Body, Speech and Mind***

*The Three Doors is an educational organization developed in response to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's desire to open Bon-Buddhist practices to a world-wide audience. With headquarters in the United States, the organization is headed by an international team of senior students who have been trained by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to teach The Three Doors Transformative Practices to future teachers and to the general public.*

*The Three Doors will offer a special three-year training program to those sangha members in the United States, Europe and Mexico who are interested in working deeply with these practices. If certified at the completion of the training, the attendees will be authorized to then share these practices with others. This training program is called The Three Doors Academy. There is also a program, offering the practices to the general public, called The Three Doors Seminars. The first European Academy three-year training program will be held in Germany.*

### ***Profound teachings for today's world***

***Kallon Basquin, Director of Operations, discusses 'The Three Doors'***

#### **How and when did The Three Doors program start and how did you become involved?**

About fifteen years ago, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started thinking outside the box of the traditional training he received. He realized planting the dharma in the West was going to require a different approach. He had a series of dreams which he saw as the first signs of what is now called The Three Doors program. Over the past five to ten years he spoke often with His Holiness and Loponla seeking their support and encouragement in developing his vision of opening the teachings to today's world. About four years ago, he selected a group of senior students to begin practicing privately with him to explore a new way of doing selected practices. Out of that experiment, many aspects of what is now The Three Doors training naturally evolved.

I became more deeply involved with manifesting The Three Doors when, about two years ago, Tenzin Wangyal asked me to meet with him. I'd been studying with Tibetan masters for over thirty-five years and with Tenzin Wangyal exclusively for the last fifteen years. Because of my background, when Rinpoche told me about his idea of opening the doors of the teachings to the general public, I understood what a radical act that was. He explained he'd been having dreams of me and asked me: "Would you create a program around my vision?" We didn't know what the exact form would be, but Rinpoche's vision was instantaneously apparent to me. As details of the structure, focus, and curriculum of the programs emerged for me, I began taking notes. Then I would meet with Rinpoche to get his corrections and clarification. Finally, he encouraged me to write up all the notes

as proposals. These became the basis for The Three Doors Public Programs, a rigorous training called The Three Doors Academy, The Teachers Manual, and The Trainees' Practice Journal.



In terms of the organization itself, we are currently working on securing non-profit status. The Three Doors International will then be the vehicle through which we'll present Rinpoche's vision to the world.

#### **Who is helping to develop the programs, curriculum, and structures of The Three Doors?**

Rinpoche asked me to be responsible for the creation and direction of the organization, training programs, and curriculum. I worked with Marcy Vaughn (Rinpoche's practice leader and recognized teacher within the Bon lineage) and Gabriel Rocco (Rinpoche's Chief Adviser and Chairman of the Ligmincha Institute Board). Together, we revised my initial proposals to create the manual and curriculum for The Three Doors Academy. We were guided by Rinpoche's desire to create a rigorous teachers training program, one that would require the discipline, devotion, and intensity of



commitment and transformation necessary to produce 'carriers of tradition'.

Everyone in the group of senior students Tenzin Wangyal selected as the first training group participated in bringing the organization and programs into form. Many people in this group have backgrounds in psychology. Working together, incorporating that element, we explored applying the practices in ways which go beyond their traditional monastic applications. As Tenzin Wangyal intended, the training program became a psycho-spiritual exploration for modern people, a way of freeing ourselves from the shadow-selves which limit our full awareness and compassion. We focused on transforming what Rinpoche calls our Pain Body, Pain Speech, Pain Mind, Pain Quality, and Pain Action. We (Rinpoche and the group together) developed other psycho-spiritual techniques, processes, and methods that will be used in The Three Doors Academy training.

As a group, as we shared and deepened our trust of one another, we went deeper into our unconscious blocks and issues. Rinpoche himself did the practices with us. The student/teacher relationship dissolved on many occasions and Rinpoche turned us loose to go as deep as we dared, or dreaded. It became apparent that Rinpoche trusted our relationship to the practices to both free us and train us. Because of the group context, our individual transformations also supported our collective transformation.

During our last meeting, Rinpoche empowered many of us to teach. His trust continues to unfold. In private meetings with him, he has told me he thoroughly trusts the members of that training group to speak with his voice. Many of these senior students feel as though they have been practicing their entire lives to prepare for The Three Doors. Almost everyone agreed that using The Three Doors practices to complete sixty-three transformations was harder than any Ngondro they'd ever done.

We are still working on the syllabi for four weekend programs for the public. These Public Programs will be taught by the graduates of The Three Doors

Academy and will constitute the completion of the circle of Rinpoche's vision to offer the teachings to the western world.

Other people helped give form to the organizational structure: the administrative structures were developed by the tireless work and skill of Tharina Crafford (in South Africa). She works with Lutz Dausend (in Spain) to build our website and the basis of our functioning as an organization. Anja Benesch (in Germany) is The Three Doors Coordinator for Europe and Laura Calderon is the Coordinator for Mexico. Rose Najia (in Taiwan) also contributed to fleshing out the organization. Mary Ellen McCourt (in New York) developed The Three Doors logo and other designs for the organization.



### **What are the current plans, perspectives, and next steps for The Three Doors?**

Tenzin Wangyal sees the next step as 'training the future trainers' in Europe, Mexico and the United States. To that end, we are planning to offer the three-year training program called the Three Doors Academy in the those areas. After certification, trainees may become teachers of The Three Doors. A teacher is a manifestation of courage and love

that gifts the world with enlightened activity. Rinpoche's vision is for the Three Doors Academy to be a place where people will be transformed by the training and the practices themselves in order to carry these teachings to today's world. The training will support the deep, individual and collective processing of the soul as it exists in the 21st century western world. In a way, the Three Doors Academy could be described as a modern Bodhisattva training.

The application deadline for The Three Doors Academy training in Europe ends in March 2011.

*For more information, visit the website:*

*[www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org), or contact:*

*[info.europe@the3door.org](mailto:info.europe@the3door.org).*

*The Three Doors will start soon publishing on its own You Tube channel:*

*[www.youtube.com/user/the3doorsacademy](http://www.youtube.com/user/the3doorsacademy)*

# Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's Heart Drop: The Three Doors

## Introducing the Three Doors Academy and its Teachers for Europe

*"Since coming to the West over twenty years ago to share the teachings of Bon-Buddhism, I have witnessed many people benefit in their personal, relational, and professional lives from Bon's legacy of wisdom and compassion. Over those two decades I have continually worked on how best to present the teachings coherently and effectively in a cultural context so different from my own. Almost without exception, the teachings and practices healing Body, Speech and Mind (The Nine Breathings of Purification, Tsa Lung, Five Warriors Syllables, and Fivefold Practice) have been the most useful and transformative."*

*These are the words of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche describing his vision for the Three Doors.*

Now this vision is coming true: beginning in August 2011, sangha members in Europe will have the opportunity to take part in The Three Doors Academy, a three-year in-depth meditation program and training that has been created with the blessings of Yongdzin Rinpoche and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. The Three Doors is Tenzin Rinpoche's 'Heart Drop', his gift to us, and he considers it to be a 'Western way to enlightenment' in one lifetime. Tenzin Rinpoche has stated that The Three Doors Academy empowers trainees to become 'tradition carriers' of his Heart Drop. You learn not only how to transform your own life using the Three Doors Practices, but also how to present these practices to others. Graduates who get certified as official teachers may then choose to take these teachings into the world in their individual ways and settings. While maintaining the authenticity of what they've been taught, they can provide teachings in public programs, hospitals, educational organizations, or business environments. It will be up to the participants to determine where to take the fruits of their Academy training.

Raven Lee and John Jackson, close US students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, were chosen by him to teach the Three Doors Academy in Europe. They have undergone an intensive three-year training with him and will represent and realize his vision authentically. Both Raven and John have expressed their wish to let the European sangha know of their profound joy in being able to be with us for the

next three years. They feel blessed and honored to share what they have learned.

John Jackson expressed what The Three Doors means to him: "I feel that this has been the richest training and practice experience of my life. These practices reached the source of issues that I had never been able to fully resolve through psychotherapy or other meditation methods. The Three Doors have touched me to the core. I am pleased and excited to be able to share these practices and support others so that they may discover for themselves the richness of these gifts. I am especially thrilled to be asked to work with our communities in Europe, a place close to my heart, where I have travelled many times for business and pleasure. I look forward to getting to know more people there, and sharing the wealth of our tradition."

And Raven explains: "Being part of the Three Doors training over the last three years has been a phenomenal experience. I thought I had understood the practices, but the Three Doors program took me deeper in a very direct and intimate way. I connected to a subtler level of my pain body, speech and mind, and dissolved patterns that had eluded me. I also realized that the Three Doors is Rinpoche's precious gift from his heart essence, and am grateful for his vision in bringing these teachings to all of us in this very accessible way. Having spent ten years in Scotland and in Germany, Europe has been like a second home to me. I am excited to be able to participate in the EU programs and share this transformative training with others."



## ***A chance for radical transformation***

***Rose Najia, one of the senior students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, talked with Jitka Polanská about the Three Doors training***

*Rose is one of eighteen senior students invited by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to be part of a deep psycho-spiritual training under Rinpoche's guidance. The purpose of the training is to prepare these students to teach the Bon-Buddhist practices to the general public. One aspect of the training was the students' commitment to exploring practices known as The Three Door practices. These are Tsa Lung, The Nine Breathings of Purification, Five Warrior Syllables and The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen, and the Inner Refuge of Stillness, Silence and Spaciousness. Each student did these practices as part of a transformation process leading to deeper states of self-awareness.*

*Talking with Rose about the training made a strong impression on me. Before our conversation, I already felt the program was very useful and important. But now I see why the training is such a rare chance for a radical transformation.*

**When you were invited into the program, was it difficult to say yes?**

No, I felt honoured and thrilled. The idea that I could offer myself as a bridge between the deep spiritual teachings and the general public is something I've been interested in for a long time, interested to the point of feeling a personal calling. I am an awareness teacher now. I focus on training gestalt therapy practitioners, teaching nature awareness, and other healing approaches. My work puts me in a good position to share The Three Doors practices with people who are interested in awareness but who are not Buddhists. But without the training from Rinpoche, I wouldn't have gained the deeper knowledge of the specific practices that I got from being part of the training group. So, of course, it was very easy to say yes to the invitation even though, at the time, I had absolutely no idea what the training would consist of. I just knew I wanted to do it.



**What did your training involve?**

We all did the practices together and shared our experiences. Sometimes Rinpoche met with us. Marcy Vaughn led us in practice sessions. Rinpoche asked Kallon Basquin, who is an experienced practitioner, therapist and teacher, to lead our training group and Kallon worked closely with Rinpoche to create and facilitate our program. We were all doing the practices in a very focused and disciplined way and sharing what we were discovering. Out of that sharing, our mutual support began to grow. Our main learning experiences was selecting and writing about the sixty-three transformations we were all committed to making in our lives, using the practices. This took three years and some of us are still working on them. Some people completed all sixty-three transformations two or three times. We did what Rinpoche teaches to all his students to do – we selected issues, problems, and limitations in our lives and then used the practices to transform them. There were three categories for the transformations – personal, family and relationship, and work – twenty-one transformations in each category. We kept journals of how we were applying the practices to these sixty-three issues we chose to transform. I was inspired by Rinpoche's visits to our group and him speaking to us in a very personal way. He communicated from his heart about his idea of opening the access to these practices that have helped so many people within the sangha. I could see it was a radical step on his part to take this risk, to go against the centuries of monastic tradition and open these teachings to the public. I think all of us in the training group could



feel his commitment, so I felt a great desire to support him in that.

### **How did the training affect your everyday life?**

Most of the time, I woke up an hour earlier than usual to do my practices. When I joined the program I was doing the Ngondro practices so it was challenging for me to find time every day to do both the Ngondro and The Three Doors practices. After a while I realized The Three Doors training was a kind of Ngondro practice itself – doing the work of transforming my moment to moment experience and consciousness. In a way, the training was a Ngondro practice that was even more direct than the traditional Ngondro.

### **Since Rinpoche set the goal of sixty-three transformations, you had to find sixty-three things about yourself to change. Was that difficult?**

Well, probably any of us could look at our lives and immediately find, say, ten things we'd really like to change: what is disturbing me in my work, in my body, emotions and attitudes, in my relationships? It's easy to find ten problems right away. But to find sixty-three issues, I needed to look at myself at a different way. I had to begin to notice how thoughts and feelings were arising in me and how they were affecting me and the people around me. I had to notice things like – every time I hear the harsh way my friend talks to her little girl, I feel really angry. What's going on with me in this case? How can I transform the root of that anger? By doing the transformations, I started to become aware of things while they were arising instead of only after they were deeply entrenched. And I became aware that even very superficial irritations have deep, deep roots. I gained a lot of clarity.

### **Can you share some other results?**

OK. Regarding my body, for about five years I was in constant pain. I couldn't walk well, my joints

were stiff, I was overweight and tired all time. This had been going on for so long I thought, OK, now that I'm getting older, I guess it's just going to be like this. I'm probably never going to feel really good again. After I started the training program, I decided to see if the practices could help me lose weight and improve my health and energy. It took time, but after about a year of working with the practices in relation to these issues, I was completely restored to pain-free, flexible movement, pleasure in dancing and hiking, and I lost twelve kilos. I felt totally rejuvenated. The practices helped me change deep suffering within me that was manifesting as physical pain and limitation.

Another big change was my relationship with my sister. We hadn't spoken to each other for eighteen years. I thought, I wonder if the practices can heal my broken relationship with my sister. I began working with my resentment, fear, pain, anger; so many deep and stubborn emotions and memories. After about three months, I suddenly felt like contacting her. I sent her an email which she responded to with kindness and openness. Since then our relationship has been developing and growing again after an eighteen year silence.

Let me tell you too about one overall thing that changed my life in a big way. I used to think that certain things about me or painful things about my life were just going to be that way forever, that they were impossible to change. I just needed to resign myself to accepting them. But The Three Doors training revolutionized that idea of resignation. Because I completed the sixty-three transformations, I experienced, I understood, I had even enacted the fact that actually everything can be changed. Because the practices gave me the tools and the training gave me the

support and the discipline, my whole view of life changed. I realized I could transform my relationship to anything, and my experience of



anything if I made a commitment to doing that. I have to tell you, that was such an exhilarating and freeing discovery.



**That's interesting. All these practices were available to you before that as well, so why did the changes come only when you were engaged in the training?**

Yes, that's such a good question. Maybe we all feel we have the tools to change our lives but most of the time, we don't use them. Maybe we don't have enough support, or we don't have enough trust, or we don't have enough motivation. For me the motivation came from my desire to share the teachings with others. If I wanted to teach the practices, I had to use them to transform myself first. I also felt accountable to the group I was studying with and to Rinpoche's trust. That external accountability helped me focus and persist. Frankly, sometimes it was so difficult and challenging I really wanted to escape. If I had been doing it alone, I probably would have given up. It's too bad I couldn't respect my essential self enough to make such a powerful commitment before, on my own. I just wasn't able to be that focused by myself. The consistency and depth of my practice came from being in the training program and from realizing that the other people in my group were struggling

to face themselves in similar ways. That support brought forward new levels of determination and strength in me. I really needed that because, like everyone else, I have many layers of defences against seeing myself. So much pain, fear, shame, anger. I naturally resisted facing those things in myself. But in the context of the training, I couldn't avoid myself. Even if I choose some superficial thing to transform, the practices would carry me deeper, into the root of that superficial thing. So I had to look at my shadow-self, see things my personality would rather not admit to. It was very challenging.



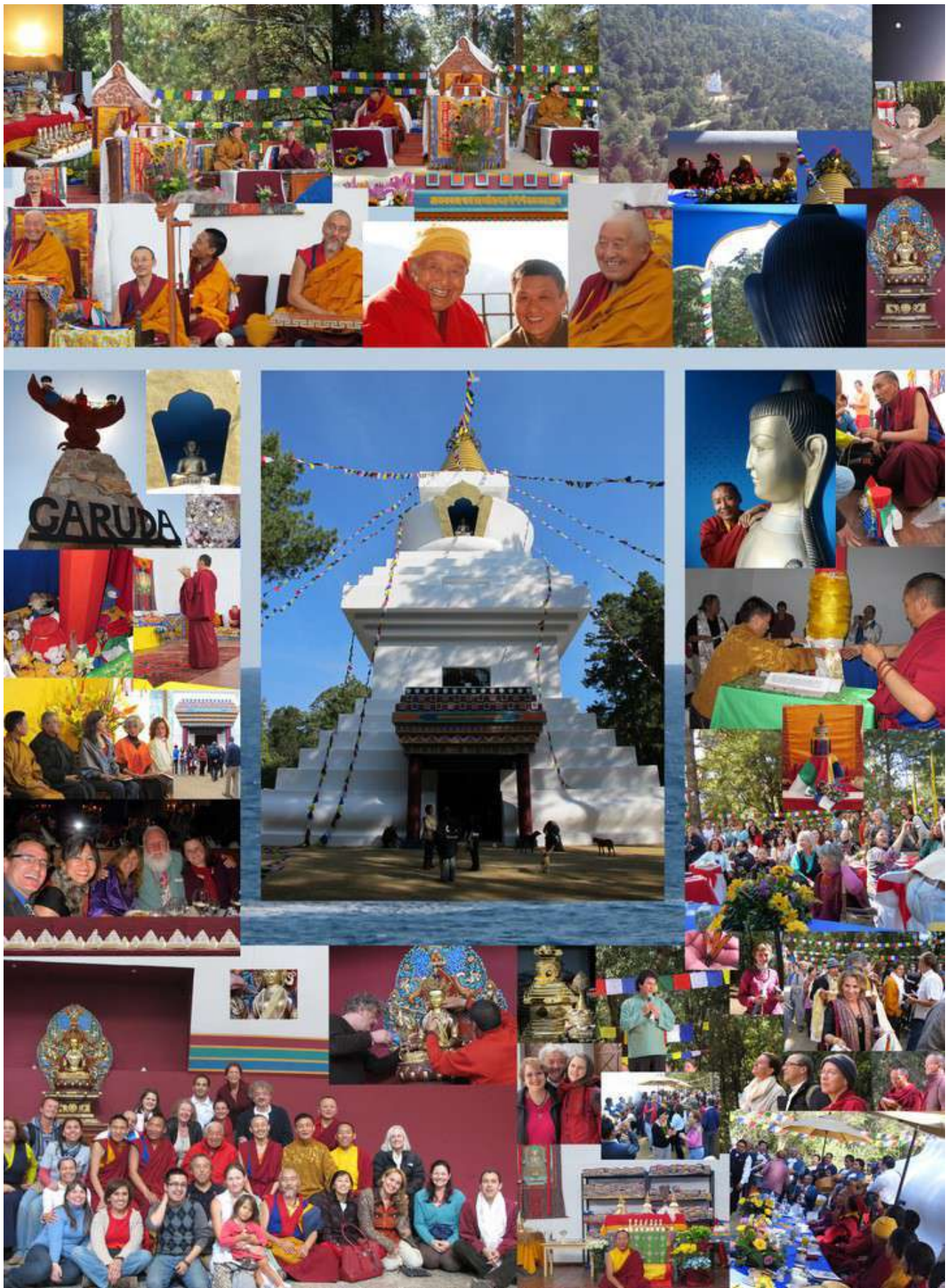
There were some periods when I couldn't practice because I couldn't stand to look at myself so closely. Over time, the support of the group and the inner refuge got me through those difficult and 'foggy' times. I was also very motivated by being part of something I felt was important on a very large scale, something much more important than my own fear, laziness, or avoidance. I'm sure I wouldn't have been able to reach the deep levels of self-observation and transformation without the context of the training group. For me, that was the container that made everything possible. The training lifted me out of my ordinary life and planted me in a different place of more confidence, self-knowledge, freedom, clarity and celebration of my innate flexibility and wholeness. And it gave me a gift I can share with others.





*Refuge tree*





*The Great Bon Stupa for World Peace*



## Stupa in the jungle

### *A report by Anja Benesch of the Consecration of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace*

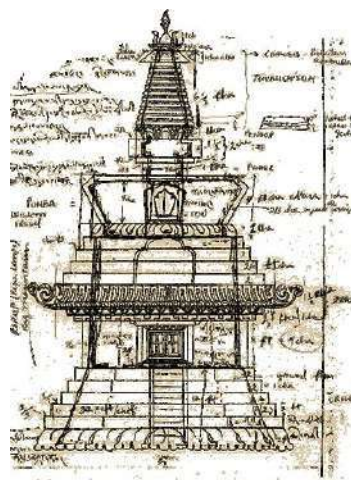
The silent humming of distant mantras, the heavy sweet smell of woods, caramel-coloured sand. And then, amidst the sand on top of the mountain: something very, very big, shimmering in bright white colour in the sunlight. These are my first impressions of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace in Valle de Bravo, Mexico. The Stupa radiates profound calmness and groundedness, and yet seems to be floating in time and space.

My dear host in Mexico, Lola, her long-time friend Ani Sherab Wangmo, a Mexican Bonpo nun, and me, were rushing to the site of the Stupa from Mexico City and arrive just in time before the lamas finish their day of blessing rituals for the Stupa.

At about 15 degrees it is quite warm in Mexico, but as we enter the Stupa, it feels rather cold. I only catch a glimpse of the ground floor which is still quite empty: marble-like stones on the floor, the walls half-painted in dark red with thin yellow, green and blue stripes, and a mildly smiling golden Shenlha Ödkar statue opposite the entrance. The three of us rush up a high twisted staircase. Taking the last angle, clearly hearing mantras now, I discover who is singing: Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the beloved teacher of our beloved teacher Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Next to him, almost hidden by a huge hanging drum, sits Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, and then Geshe Samten and Lama Sangye Monlam.



After doing prostrations, I realize that rice mixed with beans and sweets of many kinds gets thrown all over the place by around twenty members of the Mexican and international sangha who are joining the lamas for these blessing rituals in the Stupa's library two days before the official program will start. Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima, a well-known thangka painter who has been working at the Stupa for many years, is moving a lot as he offers tormas to the deities, pours fluid into different vessels and lights incense on the altar. The altar is beautifully decorated with flowers in the five colours, and placed on top are three aureate miniature Stupas in front of shelves full of sacred bonpo-scriptures. My two friends and I sit down and melt with the group for an hour. Finally, the chanting stops, and Khenpo-la breaks into a broad smile and loudly says: "Finished!". Everybody starts smiling and laughing, joy and happiness are very present, and Yongdzin Rinpoche seems utterly happy.



For a Buddhist practitioner, a Stupa supports the faith. On Ligmincha's website it says: "It is a structure invoking peace and whose purpose is to awaken the practitioners, as well as to support them in their devotion and motivate them to

acquire the qualities of the enlightened mind. For others, it is a support for connecting to the Buddha mind. Those who come into contact with or see a Stupa have a seed planted in their stream of consciousness. Eventually, their suffering will be relieved, their disturbed attitudes will become clear, and the continuity of the Buddha mind will develop within them."

I am very happy I brought around eight kilogrammes of semi-precious stones from the European sangha, and that Wojtek, a dear old friend of many Mexicans, brought an amber

necklace for the Shenlha Ödkar statue as a gift from the Polish sangha – how wonderful that all these donators get in touch with the Stupa now!

Khenpo-la advises me to give the treasure vases with the stones, collected at the European Ngondro-retreat in Austria lately, to Geshe Tenzin Yeshe quickly before the blessings in the upstairs room will take place. The stones have been put into a small Tibetan treasure vase from Nepal and a fictile jar painted with mantras, covered in five-coloured clothing – including a small suitcase, basically my hand-luggage on the flights from Berlin to Mexico City.

In the upstairs room we find four small altars with more scriptures in the four directions, leaving space for treasures that get put around a giant red pole, painted with golden mantras. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche comes up with many other lamas and his wife Tsering, they are whispering mantras, throwing blessed rice, and bundling katas around the pole. The semi-precious stones from Europe will rest there, right behind the giant golden Taphritsa statue on top of the Stupa.

A lot of pictures are being taken, and this continues on the ground level, when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche sits down with his teacher Yongdzin Rinpoche in the big empty Stupa. Suddenly, more and more people gather around these two, first more and more monks, cameras clicking all the time, until Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche invites everybody to join the group while the sangha members take turns in taking pictures with about twenty cameras. It is a very happy moment.

Completing the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace is a long-time dream of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. It started coming true about 14 years ago when his student Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had just started teaching in Mexico and was searching for an appropriate space for the Stupa. He found it in Mexico. Of course, many obstacles appeared, but the commitment, hard and enduring work of the Mexican sangha, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and monks from the Bonpo tradition made the vision come true. The Stupa is dedicated to the Venerable Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, teacher of Yongdzin Rinpoche and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Born in Mexico and being a teenager now, his reincarnation Tulku Jorge Rene (on the photo on the right side of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche) lives near the Stupa now.



Besides Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima, who with the help of other artists did the paintings in the Stupa, Geshe Tenzin Yeshe is somebody who has worked at the Stupa since 2005 when the actual construction of the Stupa began. Back then, after the land had been donated by Nizzo Bejar, people started cutting trees, taking measurements, calculating costs and considering all necessities. Sometimes money was missing, sometimes manpower, sometimes trucks with huge material on board got stuck on their way up the hill, because there were no streets back then. Geshe Tenzin Yeshe tells me that they prepared a forty meter long pole in the ground with mantras on it. And that mantras for deities and protectors are everywhere in the Stupa, although you cannot see them. As well as remains from lineage holders of the Bon tradition and blessings collected from H.H. Menri Trizin, H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and about one hundred masters from Tibet, which makes the Stupa even more powerful. There are many prayers which have been blessed by the lineages of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen masters. And also many mantras of different Tantra levels, namely Jagyu, Choegy, Yeshe and great Yeshe in the Stupa. And there are some special mantras for long life, prosperities, reputations, luck, good fortune, Zambalha and powerfulness.

Lola, my host, used to live near the Stupa for a year, helping as an architect with the basic construction. She tells interesting stories about how to get a governmental permit for building a thirty-six meter high Stupa in Mexico, nagas living near the Stupa site, and rain appearing just when you need it with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche coincidentally being there. A lot of rituals have been performed throughout the years so that the protectors of the lineage are present.





Something that touched me extraordinarily, however, was meeting members of the international sangha, e.g. Bob, who first learned about Tibetan Buddhism at Woodstock and loves to be Santa Claus for kid; Gabriela with her great Mexican hospitality and a wonderful meditation space on her terrace; Alejandro, who impressed Mexican doctors during a lecture with Rinpoche at the Instituto Nacional de Cancerologia in Mexico City; Marcy and Gabriel, who look fabulous with blue tongues after eating wedding cake; Lola, who is the best person to be with when you want to get somewhere in time or get sick; Blanca, who speaks six languages and loves living in Brazil; Lourdes from Monterrey, Mexico, who is a dedicated translator for Rinpoche and most likely will never do any horse-riding again in her life after trying it to see the butterflies in the valley of Valle de Bravo. And of course my newly-found European family: Lidia from Italy, who starts every morning with yoga and black tea, and Wojtek from Poland who used to live in Mexico and made me laugh really hard so many times.

I am very thankful I could spend this precious time with all these people, because I realized that it is all true, that we are connected, that there is only one sangha in the world, that we are all part of this universe and that we, just as all beings that exist, are related through time and space, and therefore somehow you, dear readers, are all with me while I bring your gifts to the Stupa and get in touch with all these wonderful people.

The Stupa is 'placed in the middle of the jungle', as Yongdzin Rinpoche called the nature around the Stupa in the valley of Valle de Bravo in his Consecration speech, appreciating that many

people took the effort to come all the way to visit this Bon Stupa for World Peace. Geshe Tenzin Yeshe emphasized how important it was that many different sanghas come together to experience this feeling of international connectedness: "I hope it happens a lot more in the future." As the Stupa represents the enlightened mind of the Buddha, Yongdzin Rinpoche asked the audience to treat it with the greatest respect possible at all times and to protect it. And Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains that now that the blessing has been done, there is soul and life in the material, and the energy and the qualities of the Stupa will be radiating everywhere. It will bring peace not only to Mexico but to the whole world and every practitioner.

However, there is still a lot of work to be done. "Now that the Stupa is alive, it should not be left alone," Yongdzin Rinpoche told my friend Lola after the Consecration. The Mexican sangha has put a lot of work into the Stupa over the years. Now some more work inside the Stupa needs to be done, with the main focus on the painting of the mandala. Two painters are coming from Nepal and India: Gyaltsen already lives in Mexico and started working in January. All help for the final work is welcome: the painters will need support, such as assistance with transportation, buying materials, cooking for them, and there will be many other things that need to be done. If you are interested in helping, please write to Carlos Madero, the Director of Garuda Mexico, at [garudamex@yahoo.com.mx](mailto:garudamex@yahoo.com.mx). He and the Mexican sangha will be happy to learn about your skills and organize teams to work with in a specialized area. You can also contact him if you wish to donate money, because the Mexican sangha cannot go ahead without financial support.

At many occasions Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche expressed his hope that the Stupa will be a place for meditation, experiences of peacefulness not only for Bonpos but also for people from other spiritual groups and other backgrounds. In about two years, the 'inner Consecration' of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace will take place. The Stupa is located about two hours west of Mexico City, nearby is a beautiful lake, and I wish for everybody to be able to go there and see and experience for themselves. The Stupa is there for everyone – including: YOU.

If you wish to learn more about the Stupa and the Mexican sangha, please visit [www.garudamexico.org](http://www.garudamexico.org) or [www.ligmincha.org/donate/stupa-for-world-peace-valle-de-bravo-mexico.html](http://www.ligmincha.org/donate/stupa-for-world-peace-valle-de-bravo-mexico.html)



རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལགས། འཁྲུངས་སྐར་ལ་བྲག་ཤིས་བདེ་ལེགས།

## Happy Birthday Rinpoche!

Vše nejlepší k narozeninám, Rinpoče! Tillykke med fødselsdagen Rinpoche! Gefeliciteerd met uw verjaardag Rinpoche! Joyeux anniversaire Rinpoche! Hyvää syntymäpäivää Rinpoche! Alles Gute zum Geburtstag Rinpoche! χρόνια πολλά Ρίνποτσε! Boz születésnapot Rinpócse! Buon compleanno Rinpoche! Wszystkiego najlepszego urodzin Rinpocze! С Днем Рождения Ринпоче! Feliz cumpleaños Rinpoche! Vše nejlepší k narozeninám, Rinpoče! Tillykke med fødselsdagen Rinpoche! Gefeliciteerd met uw verjaardag Rinpoche! Joyeux anniversaire Rinpoche! Hyvää syntymäpäivää Rinpoche! Alles Gute zum Geburtstag Rinpoche! χρόνια πολλά Ρίνποτσε! Boz születésnapot Rinpócse! Buon compleanno Rinpoche! Wszystkiego najlepszego urodzin Rinpocze! С Днем Рождения Ринпоче! Feliz cumpleaños Rinpoche!

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



## ***Finland has a strong connection with Bon***

### ***Portrayal of a sangha by Jitka Polanská***

#### **Love at first sight**

There is one truly amazing thing about the Finnish sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. It was founded and already prospering before the teacher ever came to Finland. How come? "We had been looking for a lineage, a teacher, a sangha for quite a long time, a few years maybe," said Tommi, the founder. "My cozy dream was to find and join a well established Buddhist group, with their nice web pages done and practices running regularly, but somehow, it wasn't happening. Then one day Soili, my wife, read an announcement in the Snow Lion newsletter, about the Rinpoche's upcoming teachings on Tummo in Germany. It was in 2007. And we went there." With this decision, they finally found the teacher. "It was just a few minutes after I saw Rinpoche that I knew this guy would be the right one. He even didn't speak yet, he was just making some funny faces before starting to teach. But I knew it was him," says Tommi. The second day of the teachings Tommi and Soili went to ask Rinpoche whether he would come to Finland. "Well, let's sleep on it," was Rinpoche's answer, remembers Tommi.



#### **The trust to the teachings made things moving**

It was only three years after, in 2010, when Rinpoche finally came to Finland. What he found there was a fully blossomed sangha, with regular practice groups meeting once or twice a week in five towns: Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Turku and Vaasa. "In our town, Kuopio, we had been practicing as a group before meeting Rinpoche, doing mainly Zhiné and Tonglen. And we tried to attract more people to the group, but they just came and went, it wasn't growing. But things changed rapidly after we met Rinpoche. People began to get really interested in what we were doing. We didn't expect anything like this happening, and were pretty much in awe. Maybe people felt and trust our confidence in what we were looking for and found in the Bon teachings," says Tommi. "Maybe they also had a connection to Bon and it just clicked when they met it," adds Anna-Kaisa, the umze of the Jyväskylä practice group. "Maybe Finland is a promised country of Bon, who knows?" Tommi says, laughing.

#### **Fortunate encounter**

Five to ten people in each of the five towns meet weekly or even two times a week for the practices of Tsa Lung, Zhiné, Five Warrior Syllables, and The Nine Breathings of Purification. More than one hundred pages of teaching materials translated, eight articles published in various Buddhist and other magazines, well done web pages, a guideline for the practice being finalized – all evidence that the encounter between the teacher and the students was the fortunate one and destined to last. When Rinpoche came to teach the Dream Yoga this summer, he found a hundred people waiting for him.

"We are northerners and Rinpoche might have expected gloomy, serious faces. But the atmosphere at the seminar was warm and open and I think he was pleased by that," says Matti, another 'old' member of the group, who is now responsible for the international communication in the sangha.

Right there, Rinpoche decided to come next year again. Logically: the Finnish sangha seems quite sure indeed about the way to take.



## ***Connecting Europe: letters from our sangha***

### ***Support from the University in Budapest***

Our perspectives really broadened a lot since Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche announced the five year training in Austria. Before that we went to meet him in Wilga in Poland several times, that nice center near Warsaw and also met him in Vienna.

Being a teacher at the Budapest Buddhist University (original name was: The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College) I was able to give seminars on the basis of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's books (two of which have been translated into Hungarian) and some of my seminar students are genuinely interested in the Bon Buddhist tradition. They, my students, were able to join me for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's retreats in Poland and Austria due to reasonable fees allowed by Rinpoche for our members. The College also was able to help financially with the costs, so I was able to buy the train tickets for the whole group. We were also able to further support with the five year training as the college was also able to provide the students with half of the travel costs. So we were eleven lucky people who were able to join the first group of the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyu course with Rinpoche in October 2010. Perhaps some more will be able to join the second part in 2012.

Now about something else. I am writing this article one day after His Holiness the Dalai Lama's visit to Hungary on the 18th and 19th September 2010. It was an amazing event! Ten thousand people from seventy countries on both days were in his presence in the auditorium and fourty thousand others followed on webcast! It was such a good feeling to experience that so many people are genuinely interested in His Holinesses profound teachings and Tibetan culture!

**Katalin Jakab (Hungary)**



### ***Important teachings for our western mind***

I was once again delighted to host Rinpoche in Cork and as always gain so much from the teachings that he presents. But I will say that it is not only the teachings, which I have attended many, but also the way in which Rinpoche teaches and presents these profound and important teachings for our time and most importantly for our western mind. It is as if sometimes he is voicing what he sees as the

obstacles in my mind and practice. Always humerously and compassionately. I continue to try to bring more awareness, not only to the dream and sleep time, but to all activities of daily life. As always I am profoundly grateful to Rinpoche and look forward very much to hosting him once again in Ireland next September 2011.

**Mary Sky (Ireland)**



### ***Teachings require constant guidance***

For me it is difficult to write something about last seminar. It is good that Rinpoche came to visit his Tradition's community and to give Bon teaching here in Ireland. Because many people are interested in eastern spiritual traditions in the whole world and it was a good opportunity to meet the renowned Rinpoche of the Bon tradition and to receive the oral teachings of the yogas of dream. It is somewhat different from just reading books on this subject because Rinpoche's presence strengthened the opportunity to realize the essence of such a teaching and he also represents the energy of this Tradition. But mostly it depends on the person and his ability to percieve these teachings and apply them to daily life. The information Rinpoche gave was similar to what is published in his book, but oral teachings and Rinpoche's blessings work on some unconscious level. So it was very useful to be there and receive this blessing and transmission. But the most difficult thing is to realize all this in ones own practice and to maintain awareness in daily life and night time. Rinpoche put much effort into explaining the principles of dream yoga and he was very kind and thoughtful to bring these teachings to all those people who listened to him and asked questions. It was a good seminar, but I am not happy that it is a very rare that Rinpoche comes to Ireland and that people do not have enough of his support here. Such teachings require constant guidance from a teacher because I believe it is not that easy to realize it fully without constant meetings with Rinpoche. But I have his books and am constantly trying to be aware of all aspects that Rinpoche brought to us. Hope he is coming soon again.

**Maris (Ireland)**

### ***A spiritual teacher of great clarity & wisdom***

Rinpoche Tenzin Wangyal whom I met for the first time in Cork totally justified his reputation as a spiritual teacher of great clarity & wisdom. He teaches what is practical and relevant to peoples lives.

At times serious at times humorous he draws from a deep font of spiritual tradition & deep experience. He has walked his talk and continues to do so. At the weekend in Cork he elucidated on the spiritual practice of dream yoga & how to develop the practice in our lives, so we live more intently and purposefully 24/7 while simultaneously getting bodily rest and recuperation.

Seems to me like a very good strategy.

### **Anraí Ó Ruadhain (Ireland)**



### ***Dream yoga seminar in Copenhagen***

Remember that your life is like a dream. When people start to talk about taking something seriously I have noticed that its a means that they are putting a lot of suffering into it. This is approximately the words of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche when he was doing a seminar about dreamyoga in Copenhagen 5-7th November 2010.

Some of us react with slight fear to the wisdom of these words, because we think that not taking something seriously means to give in. You should stay and take your part of the suffering together with your compatriates. But with what do we contribute, then? Alas my love! We take part in the chorus of lamentation. Try to listen to your inner silence. Shut down the applications running around in your brain. What is here this moment? Come, arrive here in this very moment, contemplate your inner space and silence. Listen. Not only some answers come from here. It is the very source of wisdom in your life.

It has nothing to do with being weak or fleeing away from things. It is extremely powerful.

Like for instance these two sisters who were competing and conflicting for a lifetime. The younger sister came too late for a family party, and the older started to flip out and yell at her. The younger sister had the nerve to go into her inner silence, and instead of yelling back she just

answered: "You seem very stressed out, do you want a massage?"

She said yes. A great victory, a change of karma. However small or private your victory seems, be enthusiastic and happy about it! These are things that change our lives.

What we want before going to sleep is quite simply to shut down all your little stress-applications running in your brain, make a ninefold breath purification, and take refuge to the dream-dakini Salgye Du Dalma and your inner silence. In dreams we reproduce our karmic confusion, and to be aware that you are dreaming can make you change your prana, your life force.

In the moment you are conscious that you are dreaming you have a chance to free yourself from suffering, to drive your car up in the air and look at the confusion from a greater horizon, a horizon in which you can forgive old friends, loosen up conflicts and be aware of what you are doing instead of just reproducing suffering and confusion. The more clarity and consciousness you succeed to have in dreams, the more wisdom you can draw out from them. They can tell you about your strength and possibilities, and maybe make you aware of conflicts you should handle with care. Some of the great masters had dreams of clarity in which they grounded practices such as chod. And some were simply abiding in the clear light of non-duality while sleeping.

Rinpoche was listening to the dreams and experiences of the guests at the seminar with interest, and with his usual great sense of humor. This humor which made us feel that life indeed is not dead serious, it is flexible and wonderous and spacious like clear light. He made us feel present, and opened up gates to light that healed old sadnesses and wounds. I can only speak for myself of course, but I saw and felt the joy spreading among people.

Here from Copenhagen, a heartfelt and sincere thank to Rinpoche for spreading light in the unconscious and conscious part of our lives!

### **Aviaja Larsen (Denmark)**



## ***The European Bon Garuda Foundation***

*Gabriele Penders, Vice-Chairman and Secretary of the Board of European Bon Garuda Foundation, talked to us about how the European sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's students is developing a common and flexible structure.*



**Gabriele, can we trace back the starting point? Who came up with the idea to create the European Bon Garuda Foundation and what is it?**

During the summer retreat in Buchenau in 2005 Rinpoche was talking to a group of people from Switzerland, The Netherlands and Austria about his dream of a European sangha working together to preserve the Tibetan culture and to support the Bon teaching's in Europe. Jan Dinkelaar, who is now the Chairman of the Board of the European Bon Garuda foundation, then invited about ten people from different countries to meet that same year in October in Frankfurt, Germany. We spent a weekend there, meditating together and exchanging ideas, trying to get in touch with the vision and to understand how we could realize it. The initiative of a European Bon Foundation began to come alive. At the next meeting in Spain we practiced together in order to approach the realization of the dream, working closer together with the other European countries. In Spain in 2006 we prepared a practice seminar for Rinpoche's students from different countries, with guided meditations and we also made some preparations for Rinpoche's upcoming seminar in Buchenau on Dream and Sleep Yoga. In this way, we were

exploring our capacity and ability of working together, getting a clearer picture of what we could do together as a team. From the beginning of 2009 we also started to meet on skype regularly.

In the Summer of 2009 at our retreat in Buchenau we had some meetings with the goal to create a European foundation/organization. This was initiated by Jan. With the whole group from eight different European countries, a European Board with Jan Dinkelaar from the Netherlands as the chairman was chosen.

At a meeting with Rinpoche we presented to him the other board members: Johan Smith, Karoline Seltenheim and I, Gabriele.

**What is the function of the board?**

As the board of the Foundation we are responsible for the conceptual content, organization, text and training of the international European Bon sangha. Based on Rinpoche's vision. We formulated our tasks, visions and goals for the next three years e.g., a structure for the organization, creating a website, booklets for beginners, advanced practitioners and more.

A job of the future, for example is that all board members will work together with Rinpoche to compile a list of authorized umze's in Europe. The positions of the Board members except that of the President, rotates every three to five years.

Early enough the five Board members help to find together with Rinpoche, new board members out of the European sangha as a suggestion for an European wide election.

**Is the Foundation a legal entity, an organization? What are the ways of operating now?**

From the beginning we planed to construct a legal entity. For this reason we chose to have the head office of the organization in the Netherlands, because it seems easier to have it there. Therefore Jan Dinkelaar asked Anneke Dekkers from the Dutch sangha to become our fifth board member as



the treasurer of the European Bon Garuda Foundation.

### **How do you operate now?**

The Board has a regular Skype meeting every month, with Rinpoche joining us every four months. We have been keeping up our discussions and elaborations for the best system of ruling this organization. The great challenge was to develop a structure clear and firm enough to be a support for the national sanghas initiatives and common projects as well as for the international ones. At the same time it should be open and flexible, 'spacious enough', with common structures on European level.



Rinpoche recommended us to implement the structure of Ligmincha Institute. And so, besides the Board, different councils were conceived. These teams have each a different specialization and task to accomplish. We already have a council for practices and teachings, one for sales and a bookstore, and the production team of this newsletter is also considered to be a council. We also plan to have a volunteer management in the future. In the next issue of the newsletter we would like to present all the councils and the people who lead them in more detail, so that sangha members who have the desire to help and skills to offer will know who to contact.

### **What are the main meeting places for the European sangha?**

The summer retreats organized by the German board, with Rinpoche in Buchenau, have become more and more of an international event.

And for the past five years we have our European sangha practice weekend in Buchenau as well. This year it is planned for March, the 18th – 20th. I

would like also to mention the cycle of teachings from the Zhang Zhung Nyam Gyud that started last October in Austria, as lots of people from many different countries have taken part in it and got know each other. The Board held its presentation there as well, and people were also acquainted with the upcoming Three Doors program as a huge international sangha's project starting this year in Europe.

The Board has also been promoting regular monthly Skype meetings for representatives of sangha from each country. At this time there are fifteen people, one from each country, who take part in these gatherings: Karoline Seltenheim from Austria, Nikolas Gournaropoulos from Belgium, Jitka Polanská from the Czech Republic, Johan Smith from Denmark, Matti Tuliharju from Finland, Gabriele Penders from Germany, Janos Kazsoki from Germany, Katalina Jakab from Hungary, Ton Bisscheroux - and usually Jan Dinkelaar - from Netherlands, Ann-Marie Jakob from Switzerland, Lutz Dausend from Spain, Pavel Kuzmin from Russia, and Wojtek Plucinski from Poland. Recently we invited Lidia Castellano from Italy to join us. Thirteen different European countries are represented at this time and we will invite someone from Ireland. These meetings are open also for guests as much as the capacity of the Skype connection will allow. We share information at these meetings about events in each country and about common initiatives, helping each other to support the development of the national and international sangha.

### **In Berlin, in May 2010, Rinpoche encouraged the European sangha to look for their own retreat center. Is this part of the current plans of the Board?**

We were very inspired about this Vision of Rinpoche to create a European Retreat Center in Germany. Together with the German sangha members and with the German board we discussed some ideas. Rinpoche gave us this impulse to be able to create a vision, that can grow to a reality in the future.

### **Are there any common project running now that you would like to mention?**

Yes, I would like to highlight the plan, which is actually a work in progress: to build a common European website for the European Bon Garuda foundation. Johan Smith who is responsible for the

realization asked Lutz Dausend, a sangha member who works as a professional web designer, for support with this task.

At the Retreat in Austria Rinpoche asked Lutz to create a Europe-wide communication platform. Lutz Dausend is working on this, with the support of Oliver Wirtz, head of the German sangha; Wojtek Plucinski, main teaching instructor of the Polish

sangha; and Wolfgang Krebs from Germany, the other instructor of the European sangha along with Wojtek. We are very happy with the development of such a comprehensive and special internet platform of a European sangha.

And of course, I want to say that I am happy about this European newsletter. I am sure it will help us to make of the European sangha a lively community.

## **The members of the Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation**

### ***President: Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche***



Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is founder and spiritual director of Ligmincha Institute, an acclaimed author as well as a highly respected and beloved teacher to students throughout the world. Fluent in English, Tenzin Rinpoche is renowned for his depth of wisdom; his clear, engaging teaching style; and his ability to make the ancient Tibetan teachings highly accessible and relevant to the lives of Westerners.

### ***Chairman: Jan Dinkelaar (the Netherlands)***



Jan is a psychologist. He represents the Board and the Foundation. He also coordinates communication between the President, the Board and the Councils.

### ***Text and Study Manager: Johan Smith (Denmark)***



Johan is a teacher. He is responsible for practice and study.

### ***Secretary and Communication Manager: Gabriele Penders (Germany)***



Gabriele is a psychologist and breath-therapist. She is in charge of administration, organization and external communication. Currently, she is also Vice-Chairman.

### ***Program and Event Manager: Karoline Seltenheim (Austria)***



Karoline is a social and lifecouncillor. She is in charge of the organization of program and events.

### ***Treasurer: Anneke Dekkers (the Netherlands)***



Anneke is a psychologist. She is responsible for the budget of the Foundation.

## ***A common European Bon Garuda website***

*Lutz Dausend together with his wife Bogusia created the web page of Lishu Institute ([www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org)). Lutz is also the co-author and webmaster of the website for The Three Doors program ([www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)). The next challenging task waiting for him – and for all of us – is building a common web site for the European sangha. In this article he and his wife Bogusia talk about it.*

“While searching for more detailed information about Bon-Buddhism we found many different national Bon Garuda websites. Many of them have the same information, but others have extra information, for example practice descriptions, Bon Masters, Bon of rituals, etc. We were fortunate to find on the Polish website enormous archives with teachings, but these are available only in Polish.

Europe with its rich history, many nations and many languages is characterised by a cultural variety, but also a tendency for a proud national demarcation.

However we all are pupils of our beloved Master Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and thereby we form an international sangha; a spiritual community, which brings us nearer to the dharma,

accompanies us on the path of our spiritual development and assists us to maintain a vivid connection with Rinpoche. The sangha is also a union of friends, who obligate themselves to bear responsibility for common goals. From this perspective arose the idea to create a common web space for all European Bon Garudas, which would provide a forum for exchanging information more easily. It is also the wish of Rinpoche to connect the national sanghas in Europe more, with respect of the uniqueness of the individual groups, since only their different qualities together create a beautiful Mandala.

In co-operation with different members of our sangha the common website is now under development. It should be a basis for a ‘brotherhood of sanghas’, as Wojtek Plucinski

stated. We hope that the first part of the website will be on-line in spring 2011.

The European website shall provide a platform for each national sangha to publish information about their organisation, events, local centres, practise schedules, etc. in their own language, and any other language that they would like to maintain

as well. The Board of the European Bon Garuda Foundation will have its section here and their news will be published in all languages. The dharma section shall be shared by all sanghas and enable fruitful exchange of knowledge. A common European teaching schedule will provide a better overview of Bon teachings in Europe under the guidance

of Rinpoche along with other Bon teachers. Photo galleries and publications will also be presented and shared. The European newsletter will find its ‘online home’ in the News section and it will have an archive on the web. It's also planned to have a registered section for sangha members only where more internal information and teachings will be shared. A common forum will be an external addition later on.

May the common European website be a manifestation of our support for the ongoing efforts of our Master Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. May it contribute to stabilize the Bon Garuda sangha and support our practice, thus ‘to recognize our own true nature as a Buddha’.”

***Bogusia and Lutz Dausend***





## ***Introducing the editors***

***We are here just to keep the door open – for you to enter***

### ***Ton Bisscheroux, the Netherlands***



Being an editor gives me a new opportunity to work with the Five Warrior Syllables. We start with space (empty pages have to be filled with words). Then there is light and openness; the space is full of potentiality (connecting to the potential of the sangha). The

next step is working with the Four Immeasurables: love, compassion, joy and equanimity (these qualities arise when we receive articles, discuss them, or when we write them ourselves). The ideas have to ripen and become more concrete (how are we going to use the material we have?). Finally we do it, we finish the project (we make a newsletter and distribute it).

### ***Jitka Polanská, the Czech Republic***



I have been a student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for five years. My favourite saying of Rinpoche is “all stories are similar in a way and definitely less interesting than what we find going beyond them”. But I happen to be helping with this newsletter and I wish it

be full of our stories – individual and collective ones.

Because it is through sharing stories that we can get to know each other and become a real community.

### ***Anja Benesch, Germany***



Having wandered through samsara, I always felt a little lonesome and alienated until I started studying with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. For three years now I am happy to discover a family with all its beautiful goddesses and formidable enlightened beings,

and also grateful to connect to more and more ‘karmic guests’ as our European sangha grows. Let's have a party and share the fruits of our practice in a nourishing European project made of words and letters!

### ***Mary Sky (O'Sullivan), Ireland***



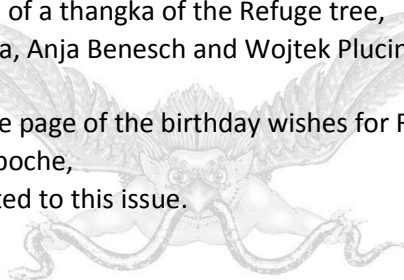
I am one of the Irish sangha of practitioners based in the south of Ireland. Cold wintery Ireland at the moment. I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about eight years ago after studying within the Nyingma tradition for many years before that. Finding Bon was,

for me, like being plugged into the mains.

Something about Bon resonated very very deeply and continues to do so. The Tsa Lung body-based practices of yoga are a god-send after many years of sitting practice and oral teachings. My body was crying out to be included in this wondrous journey called our life.

### ***We would like to thank:***

- Marianne Holitschko, Martin Schröder, Oliver Wirtz and Sarah Edgehill for the photos of the Ngondro,
- the Danish sangha for the photo of a thangka of the Refuge tree,
- Geshe Tenzin Yeshe, Tenzin Jinpa, Anja Benesch and Wojtek Plucinski for the photos of the Great Bon Stupa for World Peace,
- Bogusia Dausend for creating the page of the birthday wishes for Rinpoche,
- Maria Kulik for the photo of Rinpoche,
- and all the others who contributed to this issue.



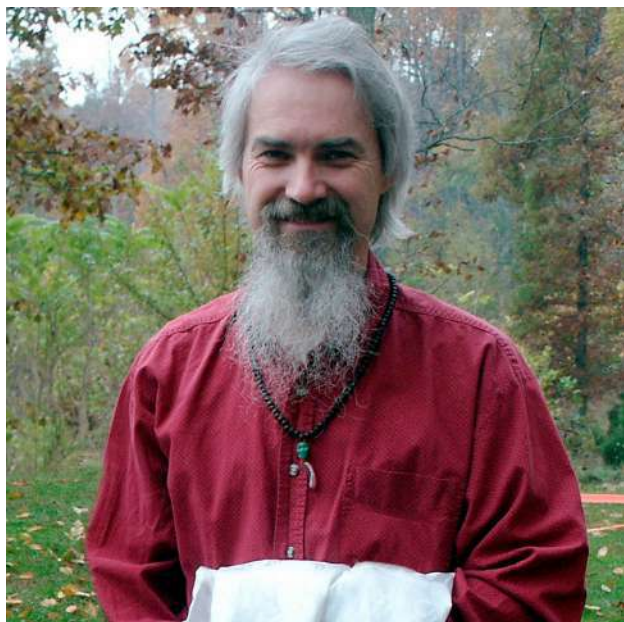
## Healing the earth, healing yourself

*The ancient Bon tradition of Tibet has its roots in a deep connection with the environment that surrounds us. Practices like Sang Chod - smoke offering - or Sur Chod - burnt food offering - have been used for centuries to develop and maintain a meaningful relationship with nature. This year, we will have an opportunity to experience and learn these practices here in Europe. A weekend meditation seminar titled 'Healing the earth, healing yourself', will be held by one of the senior students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and a long time Bon practitioner John Jackson, who has been invited to come by Nicolas Gounaropoulos from Belgium.*

We will explore how to develop awareness of and relationship with the energies of streams, mountains, trees and stones, along with the enlightened ones of the Bon-Buddhist lineage. Through the practices of Sang Chod, the Five Elements, and Sur Chod, we will explore how to relate more intimately with the world in which we live. The result will be a new-found respect for and a sense of integration in our environment.

Most sessions will take place outdoors in a rich natural setting, weather permitting, where we will perform the rite of Sang Chod, the Elements, and Sur Chod, with many opportunities for sharing and working with personal issues.

The retreat is open to everyone interested in developing a closer connection with the elemental essence of the nature.



John Jackson, who will lead the retreat, is a long-time student of the Bon tradition. He has worked with the practice of Sang Chod for 17 years, under the guidance of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. John Jackson is the

director of the Chamma Ling solitary retreat center in the mountains of Colorado ([www.chammaling.org](http://www.chammaling.org)). He will also be teaching The Three Doors training program in Europe.

The retreat will be held in Pauenhof Dharmasala in Germany, 3-5 June 2011. Pauenhof is located near to the German border and the Netherlands and Belgium. We expect it to be an European event.

**Nicolas Gounaropoulos**

*For registration and questions, contact Nicolas Gounaropoulos at [gounaropoulos@gmail.com](mailto:gounaropoulos@gmail.com).*



## ***The ancient Bon practice of Sang Chod***

*"The flow of life has its ups and downs. When the flow is upward it's not a problem but when it's downward we need some kind of solution, and these practices are that solution," says Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in an interview about the ancient Bon practice of Sang Chod, published in the Voice of Clear Light in March 2006. Since Bon students in Europe have the opportunity to learn these practices this year, we reprint a part of the interview.*

### **Rinpoche, could you give us some background on the practice of Sang Chod that you'll be teaching in April 2006?**

The Sang Chod text I will be teaching from draws from various sources in the ancient Bon Buddhist tradition, particularly a text entitled 'Sang', by the 14th century master Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen, the first abbot of Menri Monastery. Sang Chod is originally from the Cha Shen Thegpa (The Vehicle of Prosperity), the first causal vehicle of the Bon tradition. Nearly all Tibetans know about the ancient practices of the Cha Shen Thegpa and use them often in their daily lives.

Sang Chod and many of the other practices of the causal vehicle are very much about developing and strengthening the healthy energies we all need in order to be at our best in life. In the Sang Chod we focus mainly on our vitality or life force, our soul, our fortune, and our personal and inner power. When these forces are balanced within us we have a more stable foundation for whatever we want to do in life, including our spiritual development. A yogi who is practicing toward enlightenment needs to reinforce that kind of energy. A family can need that energy. One's business can need that energy. Even entire communities and countries need that kind of force and energy.

The practice of Sang Chod is a form of communication with nature and the nature spirits. In Bon as in many indigenous traditions, it is considered very important to live in harmony with the spirits of nature, to harmonize the elemental forces in the environment, to harmonize our own relationship with these forces, and to harmonize these forces within ourselves. It is believed that frequent physical illness, interpersonal difficulties, loss of energy, financial difficulties, etc., can

indicate an imbalance between ourselves and the spirits of the environment. As a remedy we communicate and work directly with those spirits using offering rituals that include prayer, mantra and smoke purification. Through these rituals we can uplift our own fortune, personal power, life force and spiritual vitality, as well as those of the environment and its spirits.

### **How could one incorporate this practice into everyday life?**

If you look at the cycle of one day, we generally have more energy in the morning, we get a little tired by the afternoon, and by late at night we have

no energy at all. Each month or year has a similar cycle. People often think of starting new projects at the beginning of the month or year. In the West you have the idea of New Year's resolutions, for example. Every beginning has certain uplifting positive qualities, but these are not necessarily maintained.

The flow of life has its ups and downs. When the flow is upward it's not a problem but when it's downward we need some kind of solution, and these practices are that solution. It is important to know and

to trust that one can reinforce what has declined; and that a lot of support is available to help us in this purpose. There are very clear, very ancient, and very effective ways to shift and change that downside - whether it is related to the environment, our health, or personal or business issues.

If we align ourselves more with the natural rhythm of the world then we will strengthen the upward momentum right from the beginning. If we create the right circumstances and the right energetic flow at the right time, we are more likely to be successful.





## ***Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teaching program in Europe in 2011***

### **March**

18-20	Italy	Rome	Awakening the Sacred Body
25-27	Austria	Vienna	Soul Integration and strengthening the life force

### **May**

13-15	Netherlands	Amsterdam	The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen
20-22	Germany	Berlin	Healing Through Love and Wisdom: The Sherap Chamma Practice
27-29	Russia	St. Petersburg	Tummo: Part 2

### **June**

11-13	Switzerland	Zurich	The Clear Light of Awareness: The Practice of the Six Lamps (Part 1)
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### **August**

02-07	Poland	Warsaw	The Practice of the Six Lamps
08-14	Germany	Buchenau	The Pith Dzogchen Teachings of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters
26-28	Finland	Helsinki	Dream Yoga

### **September**

02-04	Russia	Moscow	Sleep of Clear Light: The Practice of Sleep Yoga
09-11	Ireland	Cork	Awakening the Sacred Body

### **October**

14-16	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Soul Retrieval
18-23	Austria	Maria Alm	Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud: The Experiential Transmission, Part 2
28-30	Germany	Frankfurt	To be announced

***For more details look at the website: [www.bongaruda.eu](http://www.bongaruda.eu)***





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 2 – Autumn 2011*



Travelling with Rinpoche  
The Dharma in the West  
A portrayal of a sangha  
Poetry in the Dharma



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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](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu). You can also visit [www.ligmincha.eu](http://www.ligmincha.eu) or Facebook: Ligmincha Europe.

We want to thank all the people who contributed to this issue!

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# A GREETING FROM TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

Dear sangha,

I would like to use this opportunity and say a few words about our common European project and to let you know about its current developments and changes.

I agreed, together with the members of the European Board of Directors to dissolve the board. I arrived to a conclusion that there is no real need for it for the time being. If the need arises in the future, I'm open to discuss forming another body. In relation to this, I want to say how much I appreciate and thank Jan Dinkelaar and the other members of the board. They were engaged and worked to bring together valuable ideas and closeness among the sanghas in Europe. I also want to thank each of them for their continued engagement in the teachings and for the commitment to preserve Bon within their own countries. The sanghas in the different countries are now connected and exchange information mainly through the monthly international Skype meetings. I hope that we can develop this communication further.

Secondly, I would like to explain the reason why we have chosen to change the name of our worldwide centers from Bon Garuda to Ligmincha. In the beginning, the names of the centers and sanghas were not so well thought through. For example, some were called Garuda, others Bon Garuda, and still others Garuda Bon. After reflecting for a long time on this, I have decided to standardize the names, similarly to other networks of international centers and Dharma groups such as Rigpa or Shambhala. From now on, all organized sanghas will be named 'Ligmincha' followed by the geographic location, as for example Ligmincha Houston or Ligmincha Germany. In addition, all current and future residential retreat centers will be called Chamma Ling, also followed by the name of the location, as for example, Chamma Ling Colorado or Chamma Ling Poland. The only exceptions are Serenity Ridge, our retreat center in Virginia, and Lishu Institute in India, both of which will keep their current names.

I also would like to mention the development of

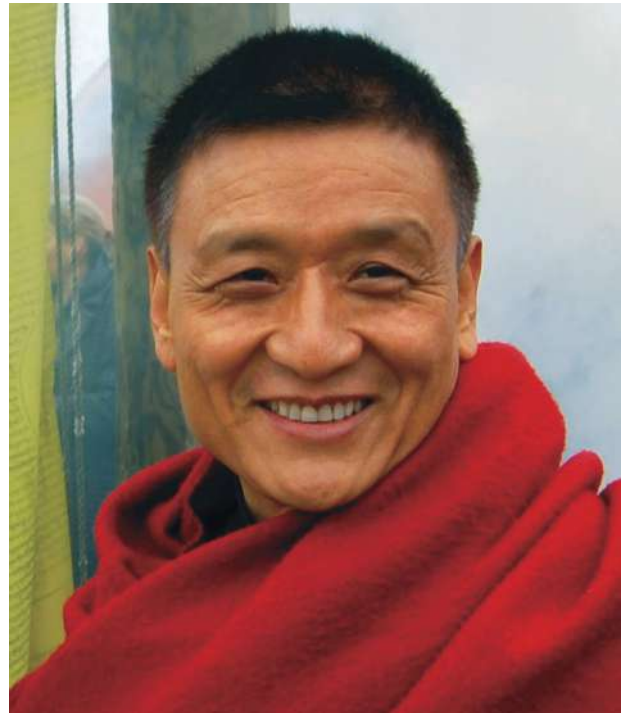


Photo by Stephen Ledyard

our worldwide website, the project headed by Lutz Dausend. I want to thank Lutz and Bogusia Dausend who volunteered to create and maintain not just one, but many of our websites. They also came up with the idea to have one Ligmincha website for all the countries. I know that many of you have been supporting the project a lot and I hope that everyone works on it with openness and clear communication. I'm looking forward to seeing the result, a website with information from different sanghas and with easy access from different locations.

My wish is that our sanghas expand in a cohesive way so that we can continue to connect with and support each other in the best way possible. As we all know, the teachings are a very powerful support for our growth. Many of us have experienced how the teachings have helped to transform our lives. Our purpose should be to share this gift with others. One way for each of you to share it is to focus on your own country, making a commitment to support the local sangha and help to bring the Bon teachings where they are needed. I request that you all do this.

With my love and blessings,

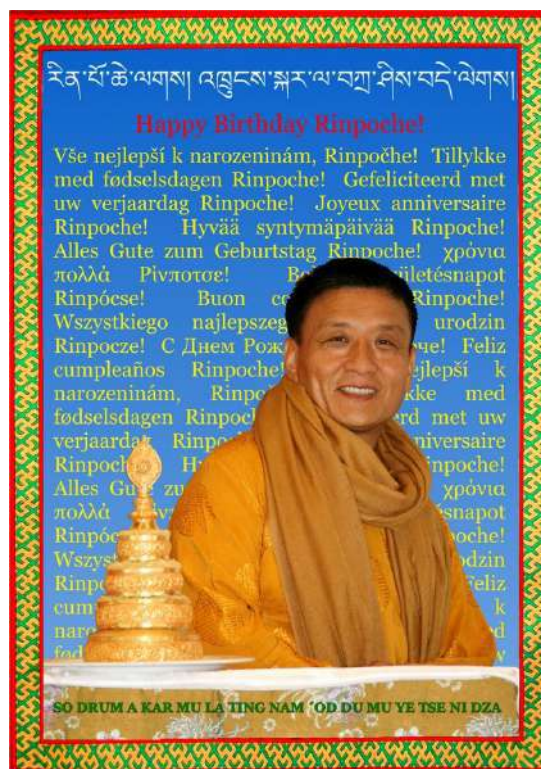
**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**



The idea came last year in Amsterdam when Rinpoche was talking to Jan Dinkelaar. Jan wanted to organize a second trip to Lishu. Then Rinpoche mentioned that he would turn fifty in 2011 and the idea was born to combine the two events. Organizing it took about seven months, contacting a travel agency who would give us the best deal, talking to people, writing a flyer.... It was a lot of work. Sue Davis-Dill, Veronique Leenders, Wojtek Plucinski, Laura Caldaron, Bob Anger and Karoline Seltenheim supported me.

We decided to follow a western practice of making the fiftieth birthday a special event. We don't have a tradition celebrating birthdays and many Tibetans don't know their exact birthdays. That is why they take as their date of birth the 6th of July, which is His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday.

We did not want to take any gifts or money. Instead we wanted to do an animal rescue and release of fish or birds (*Tibetan: Tsethar*). Then Bogusia and Lutz Dausend came up with that wonderful idea of inviting the sangha to do recitations of one million Long Life prayers for Rinpoche. That was an everlasting and priceless gift. Four million prayers were recited by the worldwide sanghas. On the evening of the birthday celebration, Bogusia and Lutz gave Rinpoche a post card with his photo on it and birthday greetings in Tibetan and thirteen other languages. We have a copy of the photo and every time people come here I show it to them.







### **What was the highlight of the two weeks for Rinpoche?**

It was being together. Rinpoche said: "Normally I am always teaching people or people come to have books signed, then they leave and do their practice. This time there was also a practice, but afterwards we were in the bus as friends. We were very open to each other, not just as master and student." Rinpoche also said that he'd like to do this more often, not always being the teacher but also just being together and going to different places. Rinpoche was especially happy to take people to the Menri Monastery and share memories from his youth at the house of his teacher, Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche.

### **What did you enjoy most during the trip to India and Nepal?**

The most important thing was being together with sanghas from so many countries. Normally I just hear people's names, Rinpoche tells me what they do and shows me pictures. This time I actually met the people.

### **Would you talk about the places you went?**

We spent two days in Delhi where people went shopping and to Hindu temples on their own. They loved it.

Then we went to Lishu which was a seven hour bus ride. The road was much better than two

years ago and the buses this time were nicer. We had seen photos from Geshela of the Lishu Institute construction site, but we never imagined that the whole thing was done. Two years ago there was only a hill there. Geshela and the team did such a nice job: the shrine room was ready, tea and snacks awaited for us. We raised prayer flags and Rinpoche gave a small teaching. There was also a Geshe from the Kagyu center who was helping there.

Geshela worked hard to get permission from the Indian government to legally receive financial support from the west. Normally that takes four years but Geshela did it in a year and a half.

### **People on the first trip to Lishu two years ago mentioned they saw children working there.**

I saw the children too. I went to their huts and found out that the kids belonged to the laborers working there. When a contractor is involved he brings a whole crew. If it is far away from the city, they live there with their families till the whole construction is finished. And it is quite normal in India that a child helps its mother by getting water or breaking little rocks in to pebbles.

### **After visiting the Lishu Institute site, where did you go?**

We had planned to visit a Nyingma monastery and a Tibetan Settlement but the travel agent didn't







know about a new rule from the Indian government which required a permit for westerners to visit Tibetan settlements or monasteries. So when we were driving from Delhi to Dehradun, we heard from the travel agency that we could not go, because the hotel where we were staying had informed the police where we were going. The travel agent told us that if we went there, people would get into trouble with New Delhi immigration when they went back to their countries. So we did not go. Instead, Rinpoche took people to Hadiwar, a Hindu place on the Ganges. The people who went there enjoyed the offering of a candle on a leaf which they floated in the river.

When we went back to Lishu for the closing ceremonies and to thank everybody, the German and Dutch sangha gave a surprise donation for the Lishu Institute.

At the Menri Monastery we went into the new yogi temple where we all had tea with His Holiness. Later he gave a little teaching and a transmission of Sherab Chamma. The monks did a short debate just for us.

We visited the nunnery which is close to Menri Monastery. The nuns were ready with tea and we asked for a Chöd practice.

Seventy nuns did a beautiful practice for us with the drums. Generally, in Tibetan traditions, nuns are trained only in Chöd practices, clearing obstacles prayers, but they are not given the opportunity to go any further. It was very special to hear that His Holiness opened the door for nineteen nuns. I was so happy to hear that they were officially admitted to become Geshe. After many people showed interest, I started trying to figure out how people can make donations to support a Geshe nun. After the Chöd practice we gave the head nun twenty-five thousand rupees we had collected for them from our sangha's.







**Is there anything you want to say to the members of the European sangha?**

First of all: a long life for everybody. I want to thank them for their cooperation and the beautiful heart and very joyful energy. I feel very fortunate to spend time with them, talking and joking with them. I will cherish these memories.

**Your son Senghe was recognized as a**

**reincarnation of a former Abbot of the Menri Monastery.**

**And then you went to Nepal to celebrate Losar and Rinpoche's birthday.**

Yes, on Losar on March 5<sup>th</sup>, we went to visit Tritten Norbutse Monastery and met H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung. The monastery cooked a beautiful lunch for more than three hundred people. The next day was the bird rescue and release in Godavari an hour drive from Kathmandu city. We preordered twelve-hundred birds. After Rinpoche released a pigeon, then all the sangha members and Lamas released as well. It was a beautiful moment.

The next day morning we went for a two and a half hour drive to Pharping. It is a place where people go to raise prayer flags and do pujas. We went there, put prayer flags up, and did a Sang Sol (smoke offering).

At the inauguration of the Great Stupa last November in Mexico, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche one day called Rinpoche and gave him the names for Senghe. He asked him to request a big puja in Menri Monastery and one at Tritten Norbutse Monastery. So we requested a thousand Yeshe Walmo puja and one thousand Drenpamankha Tsog offering. In February we went two weeks earlier to Nepal to have some family time. They did the pujas and then H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche recognized Senghe as a reincarnation of the 15<sup>th</sup> Abbot of the Menri Monastery, Kundun Yungdrung Tshultrim.

In the evening we celebrated Rinpoche's birthday with more than eighty people. The birthday party was outside in the garden of the hotel. We did a mandala offering.

Lutz and Bogusia Dausend offered the accumulated mantras from the worldwide sangha. Patricia Guerlin from Mexico offered in Tibetan the Tapihritsa invocation. We had dinner in the garden and a band sang some Tibetan and Nepali songs.



**The enthronization took place the day after Rinpoche's birthday was celebrated.**

Yes, on March 7<sup>th</sup>, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung told us, "Tomorrow afternoon we will do the enthronement." It was a big surprise, because we knew it was going to come, but not so fast. So we did not have much time to prepare. Normally Senghe is very busy, but on that day on the throne he was very still. He immediately changed when he sat on the throne. I was afraid that he would jump while sitting on the throne, or play with articles on the table, but he didn't.



**Will Senghe be the next Abbot of the Menri Monastery?**

Some people in Nepal said: he will be the next His Holiness. That is not true. They misunderstood the message. It is up to the people of the monastery to decide. Traditionally there is a special ritual to appoint an Abbot in a monastery.

**How was it for you when you heard the news?**

There was a happy moment. But I also thought: "If I have seven or eight sons and daughters, than giving up one is ok. But giving up your only son is a little hard." In the end it is up to him if he wants to go to the monastery. Now we are thinking of moving to Nepal in a few years, and we already went to see regular schools, because we want him to receive western education. And we want to be near the monastery, so whenever there is a ritual in the monastery we will let him go there.

When Senghe was younger he had all those phases. He always wanted to play with drums and bells. Every time we went to see a friend, Vicky, who lives in Charlottesville, he asked her to take out all the pots and pans and he played them like drums. When he was with my mother, who was living in Nepal just below the Triten Norbutse Monastery, he always wanted to go to the monastery. When he went there the monks were

playing with him and looking after him instead of singing mantras. Senghe was not happy about that kind of attention. He thought that maybe if he wore something similar to them, he would be accepted. So he wore a white towel wrapped around him and went up and wanted to debate with the monks. Then people called him the yogi

lama, and teased him with that. We never attached much importance to it but many people said we should look into it. They told me: "Ask him who his master is and he will reply." But I was just laughing. One day a Tibetan lady

named Pema Saldon asked him, "Where is your monastery?" Senghe said "Nepal," and we were laughing. So all these traces were there, but we never thought he would be the incarnation of an Abbot.

**You are a mother, wife and president of Lishu Institute. Do you find time to meditate?**

I have time to meditate, but I don't meditate like sitting cross legged. My way of doing it is a little different. I get up early in the morning and after washing my face, I don't go to the coffee machine, but I go to the shrine room. I offer water, candles and incense. Then I recite prayers and do prostrations. Then I prepare breakfast. I don't talk for half an hour and recite long life prayers, Sherab Chamma mantras and three Heart mantras. When I get a chance during the day, I try to recite some prayers. In the evening it is hard to meditate because people come and I have to make sure that Senghe gets to bed on time.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux, edited by Rose Najia**

Photos by André van Diejen, Bogusia Dausend, Joop van Spronsen, Martin Schröder, Sangmo Yangri

If you want to watch videos of this trip go to [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org)





# THE MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS OF THE TRIP

We asked sangha members who went to India and Nepal with Rinpoche to tell us about their most memorable moments of the trip. These are the impressions of Gabriele Penders from Germany and Katalin Jakab from Hungary.

## Lishu Institute: already a tangible project

What a huge difference between the big city of Delhi with millions of people, the amount of impressions and noises and then to be on this bus ride through the smaller cities of northern India and finally on the streets that wind up farther and farther into the mountains, coming closer to the Mussoorie mountains, this green, fertile and calm area that was also used before by the British as a green recreation area.

In this special environment, on a plateau – surrounded by the Mussoorie mountains with a clear view into the valleys – the Lishu land is really impressively situated.

The opening and closing ceremonies were performed in the main building which had three levels over two days, and were led by Rinpoche supported by others, including Geshe Yungdrung Tengyal and the monks. Outside in the open, all participants celebrated the Sang Sol ritual together and hung up the prayer flags in long lines from one tree to another.

In this special atmosphere, being one with the elements and in that deep connection with the spirit of the Bon tradition, we also were offered some wonderful Indian snacks and typical butter tea. All these experiences have been so impressive that there was no question about wanting to come back and to go deeper into the teachings and to stay there for a longer time.

How wonderful it is to have such a great opportunity in the near future!

The money that was donated before was used for the construction of the main building. As the secretary of the Lishu Institute Geshe Thubten Negi, who lives in this place, has been in charge of the affairs here. And, of course, further donations are needed for the Lishu project to be fully realized.

Donation cheques from the Netherlands and Germany, which were handed to Rinpoche at the end of the ceremonies, were a further contribution to support Lishu.

And, of course, as usual it is possible for anyone to donate money to a bank account or directly at one of the retreats. For more information and pictures visit [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

**Gabriele Penders** (text and photo)



## “It felt as if Rinpoche jumped back in time”

First thing that struck me was when I saw the building of the Lishu Institute with the roof already on a site, where there was nothing as only a year before. I feel very connected to this project because it will give more opportunities for us, the European sangha, to spend longer time staying in one place to study and practice. We then looked at the beautiful view of the mountains around and Rinpoche said: “Just imagine us sitting in meditation in the caves of that mountain as we get older.”

The second moment was when Rinpoche sat on the stairs of the Lupon's house near the Menri Monastery, in the same place where he used to sit as a young man, in the same position, looking in the same direction. It felt as if he jumped back in time taking us also back to that situation. It was a vivid experience for me.

**Katalin Jakab**



# A TRUE JOURNEY, DAY BY DAY

During the pilgrimage Ryszard Adamiak, a Polish student of Rinpoche, kept a journal. We asked him to share a part of his reflections with us about how it all started.

Here we go! I had so many ideas about what to do during this pilgrimage, but the closer the departure got the more scattered my ideas were getting. In the end, they were replaced by space in which I could see shapes of the true journey. Since I was a child I have been fascinated by Buddhism. Every time I saw a Tibetan or a Mongolian Buddhist monastery my heart would beat faster and a good energy would spread through my body. I was brought up in Christian tradition and yet I remember myself as a little kid explaining to another child why reincarnation exists. I was five or six years old at the time.

Only a few hours of flight separate me from my beloved Asia. Isolated places and hermitages, monasteries and caves, sacred mountains, stones, floating prayer flags, lamas, yogis, practitioners. Ordinary people to whom I dedicate this journey. Thank to the many nameless practitioners the Tibetan spiritual tradition survived – and also thanks to great masters.

Hurray! We flew out of the cold zone. There is no more snow, only earth – clean and green. We left a mountain range behind us – maybe it's the Alps, maybe the Carpathian mountains.

The essence of Buddhism is the understanding that loss is an inherent part of life and happens to everyone. It's not that we have 'bad luck' when somebody close to us dies. When others lose something, we aren't hurt by it. But our loss, even

the smallest one, hurts us badly. It's the grip of our ego.

I'm very happy that for many years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been bringing me down to earth. (How true this sentence is when I have my ears clogged up and we are getting close to the clouds). I'm happy that I can be his disciple for all these years. They were difficult years, very difficult for me and also for Rinpoche. Yet he has never told me: "I have had enough of your drowsiness, sluggishness, lack of awareness and your always bringing me a bag full of problems". He never said that. On the contrary, he showed me new ways: if it didn't work out with this



Elwira Łuczek and Ryszard Adamiak with their Teachers

method, try another one. Don't just try. Do it. Now. Don't sleep through your life. Wake up. Right now. Thanks to him, year after year, month after month, week after week, day after day I walk a path he has shown us all. I walk it and I'm getting happier every day.

This process does not have an end. Every day I'm a different man. Today I am flying to India, which I wouldn't even dare dream about before. We are landing now, my stomach is in knots, we are flying right above the clouds. Now we are inside them.



We are getting close to the airport in Istanbul. The engines changed their tune. We feel the change in altitude, we are close to the ground, I can see the enormity of the multi-million city.

Waiting in the boarding hall at the airport in Istanbul I'm able to see through the glass wall the enormous plane we are taking to Delhi.

The majority of people that is travelling with me is very tired. It is hot in the boarding hall. In Poznań, my town, it was below 0° when we left.

A new stage in my life is beginning today. I'm getting closer to the source of those Teachings, to the Masters bringing them alive in uncertain and unstable times. I will stand face to face with a deep message of the Ancient Tibetan Tradition of Yungdrung Bon. I'm deeply touched – my life has come to a point when I'm going to India and Nepal.

The plane is circling above Delhi. Dreams are becoming reality – the plane touched the sacred land of Buddhism. Today, February 23, my foot touched Indian soil for the first time. I'm breathing the Delhi air. How different it is to European.

Today, February 24, I just did Trulkhör exercises! I have also made a practice of sending good vibrations in the form of light to all suffering beings. I saw many of them on the streets of Delhi yesterday. Poverty here is enormous. Stray dogs are walking on the streets, jumping into the trash picking leftovers, because they aren't getting any food. They are dirty and similar everywhere – as Małgorzata, who flew from Warsaw with Kasia and Elwira noticed. This is our 'Polish Four' taking part in the pilgrimage.

Małgorzata has already been to India before – she told us about Calcutta in the time when poverty and hunger where limitless. Walking

on the streets of Delhi I believe strongly in the truth of her words.

In the meantime many good things happened!

Rinpoche asked the Polish sangha to sit near him during the dinner, so we felt rewarded and honored. The rest of the day was also wonderful – we drove with Bogusia and her husband to the Tibetan district, where we had a great time. It was pleasant to look at Tibetans from different traditions and we found many interesting shops and purchased many good things there.

Today we had to wake up very early – quarter to five. I feel it and it is possible that I will sleep on the trip. While I was falling asleep I was very awake. It was difficult for me to let go and relax – I was still conscious and I fell asleep that way (at least I believe I was sleeping). I woke up before the alarm clock rang at 4.45. Now we are riding in a bus and the streets of Delhi are slowly filling up. I can still feel the ubiquitous energy inside of me.

**Ryszard Adamiak** (text and photos)

**Ryszard wrote his journal throughout the whole journey. We could publish only a part of it, and you are welcome to read more at <http://10thway.blogspot.com>**



"I'm very happy that for many years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been bringing me down to earth."





# IN SEARCH OF A CHANGE — ‘THE FIRST LISHU TRIP’

On October 19, 2008 Wojtek Plucinski, a long-time student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, left Krakow in Poland for the first International Meeting in Lishu Institute. The trip also included a visit to the Menri Monastery. “I really wanted to go there together with my teacher and see the places he had talked about so often through his eyes and perspective,” Wojtek says. With the following text, he takes us there with him.

and crossing borders. It was a kind of magical portal to go through behind which some incredible things were concealed, things I could only conjecture but not see. Meeting the whole group of fellow travelers was amazing. I could not fathom how many nationalities there were, how many languages were mingling there, how wide the age gap was – from teenagers to retirees, or how many cultures there were: Americans, Germans, Dutch, Czechs, Slovaks and Latin blood of Mexicans and Italians. Despite all this diversity, we were all under one umbrella of Dharma, guarded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

## **1<sup>st</sup> scene: Delhi**

### **Outer experience**

The beginning was hard. At the airport I tried to get into a taxi from the right hand side, with an almost maniacal determination, which totally took the taxi driver aback as he must have thought I was going to drive his taxi. I was discovering again that my habits were stronger than me and my awareness was even smaller than usual and finally I understood: this place is different, let it go, be open – and finally I let him drive his taxi. I was amazed by the uniqueness and beauty of many sights in Delhi. To avoid too many spiritual experiences, at least at the beginning, I balanced them out with shopping, dining and trying the extreme sport of getting around the city by a tuc-tuc. But somehow everything was coming back to my practice.

### **Inner experience**

This stage of the journey was about adaptation

### **Secret experience**

It was recognising one's self in others' diversity and the diversity itself in the unity. Everything began to fit perfectly, new hues, flavours, fragrances, languages, countries, expectations, emotions; the journey started. Openness was the key.



## **2<sup>nd</sup> scene: Dehradun**

### **Outer experience**

A beautiful hotel, a beautiful garden, a spa (with an incredible Ayurvedic massage), meals prepared specially for us buffet style – a piece of heaven in the mouth.



What is more, we arrived at Dehradun at the time of the Diwali festival, which was the climax of our stay. Our senses were awakened, our wallets were poorer since we went to the Diwali celebration while there was a market of all sorts of things one could imagine and we were caught in the shopping trap (at least some of us).

### **3<sup>rd</sup> scene: Lishu Institute**

#### **Secret experience**

I realised that our teacher's dream was coming true, that the practice was becoming real. When space exists, there is readiness; when clarity manifests itself, conditions appear, when there is determination, everything matures. We were witnessing our Teacher's practice bearing fruit.



### **4<sup>th</sup> scene: Dolanji**

#### **Inner experience**

I was looking as if Dolanji was a three-dimension mandala, the orphanage and the school at the foot, the doctor's office, the chemist's store and grocery shop a bit higher, the next was the guesthouse (with access to the internet), higher than this was the monastery complex, and at the heart of it was the gompa and the Yeshe Walmo temple.

On my way to the monastery, I encountered a dog from my dreams. Once I had seen the same dog in similar circumstances in my dreams – I was wondering whether it would recognise me, but it

was sitting there in the middle of the road and did not show any interest in me whatsoever. The more I walked, the greater the tension and expectation became, and finally when we met: the dog wagged its tail casually. My dream wagged its tail – that was a good sign, was it not?

### **5<sup>th</sup> scene: Menri**

#### **Secret experience**

Rinpoche once said that if we want to change something in our lives we should offer this intention and effort to Yeshe Walmo. My visit to Menri was supposed to support a change, healing in me – that was the plan. I had a big problem with the hungry ghosts realm. I believed that coming to the source of tradition would change something, that I would find support for the changes. I was looking for determination, strength and clarity, the refuge in this place would be the beginning of a change. On the last day of my visit to Menri I dared to approach the temple of Yeshe Walmo and offered her all of my efforts... And it worked! My attachments disappeared and never came back. Emotions and mind have been quiet and peaceful since then. But something went wrong with the body – I'm putting on weight! Rinpoche said that for this problem I should do the practice of prostrations!

#### **Conclusion**

Krakow, Warsaw, Moscow, Delhi, Dehradun, Dolanji, Delhi, Moscow, Warsaw, and Krakow, all these cities visited in 16 days. There were almost as many days as cities on the way. It soon turned out that time lost its inexorability, stretched itself out like rubber, and contained immense amounts of impressions, emotions, teachings and experiences. I did not return victorious like Gaius Julius Caesar, and I should rather have said as Victor Hugo paraphrased this famous maxim: "Veni, vidi, vixi"; I came, I saw and I lived it.

The real journey has just begun then.

#### **Wojtek Plucinski**

Photos by Maria Kulik

**You can read the whole story with all the inner, outer and secret experiences of the five scenes at <http://10thway.blogspot.com>**



# THE NUNNERY REDNA MENLING AND THE STUDY OF BON

Sangmo Yangri is studying (Bon) Buddhism and joined the group visiting the Lishu Institute and Menri Monastery with Rinpoche. In Rinpoche's words, in the future Sangmo will teach Western students at the Lishu Institute. Gabriele Penders asked her for an interview.

## **Please can you tell a bit about yourself?**

My name is Sangmo. It is my official given name, although Yangri is the nickname which my late father lovingly gave me. I was born in India. Up until the eighth standard, I did my schooling at the Central School for Tibetan in Dolanji. Dolanji is my home village, where I was brought up. I did my tenth standard at Kullu open school. I then went to the Varanasi Tibetan University, where I did my Shatri (B.A), Acharya (M.A), and M.Phil. I am currently working on my Ph.D. there.

## **How long has the nunnery been in existence?**

Redna Menling was built across the river from Menri Monastery, the Bon monastery with which the nunnery is twinned, in the Solan district of Himachal Pradesh. The name 'Redna Menling' means 'Land of Precious Medicine'. It is the only Bon nunnery in India and one of only a handful in the world. It was completed in April 2001. Girls and young women from Tibet and the borderlands arrive here to study and live as nuns in accordance with Bon teachings. Redna Menling is a rapidly growing institution that fosters and encourages women as leaders and practitioners of the Bon tradition.

## **What areas do the nuns come from?**

Most of the nuns are from the Nepal border areas,

such as Dolpo, Tarab, Tsarga, Samling, Tsophung, and Bale. There are six Tibetan nuns at Redna Menling, and they are from the regions of Kyungpo and Tromtsang.

## **What does the typical day look like for the nuns? What are their daily practices?**

A brief outline of a typical day is as follows: the nuns wake up at 4.30, and start learning scripture until 6.00. From 6.00 to 7.00 is morning prayers, and from 7.00 to 9.00 there is a morning philosophical debate. From 10.30 to 12.00 they have philosophical teachings, from the philosophical masters of Menri Monastery at Dolanji. They have lunch at noon, and a break from 13.00 to 15.00. At 15.00 they do prayers, and then there is a study period from 16.30 to 17.30. A second philosophical debate session takes place from 17.30 until 19.00. Dinner is at 19.30. They

also hold weekly debate sessions, where two senior nuns answer philosophical questions posed to them by the student nuns, one by one. Once a week there is a day off. The day off changes every week, as it is dependent on the lunar calendar.



Sangmo Yangri, Shedup Lopon Geshe Nyima Dhondup, H.H. the 33rd Menri Trizin Rinpoche, Geshe Sonam Gyaltzen and Geshe Nyima Woser.

Recently two senior nuns went to attend a workshop on female empowerment, held at Dharamsala in India.

## **Do younger students also go to regular schools?**

Young nuns, under the age of fifteen, attend the Central school for Tibetan in Dolanji. There are forty-six nuns still attending school, and nineteen philosophical nuns. School is from 9.00 to 15.00. The nuns that are still in school are exempted from the philosophical teachings, unlike the more senior nun students, in order to complete their schoolwork.





### **Who are the teachers of the nuns in the nunnery?**

There are four philosophical masters who teach at Redna Menling. They are Menri Ponlop Thinley Nyima Rinpoche, Shedup Khenpo, Geshe Shenten Rabsal, Shedup Lupon, Geshe Nyima Dhondup, and Geshe Gelek Gyatso. These masters are in charge of the daily philosophical instruction.

### **You are studying (Bon) Buddhism in Varansi, can you tell a bit about your study? What is the difference to the Geshe study?**

I received the same scripture teaching as a monk in the monastery, but I also had a more classical education. Aside from traditional teachings, we studied English, Sanskrit, History, Computer Science, and Economics. A Geshe degree from a monastery is very different from its university equivalent. Monks are awarded their Geshe degree through vocal debate, a traditional monastic approach. For a Ph.D., as it is abroad, one must write a dissertation, which is a long, arduous process.



Regarding my university education, I did my Shastri (B.A), Acharya (M.A), M.Phil. at the Central University of Tibetan studies in Varanasi. At present, I'm pursuing My Ph.D. degree. It's a research project, focusing on Bon and Buddhist Abhidharmakosa. It will be a comparative study. Some of my articles were published in Bonpo magazine, and (only in Tibetan) on the website: [www.theyungdrungbon.com](http://www.theyungdrungbon.com). I wrote an article on Drenpa Namkha, the great master of dzogchen and author of 'Bon Abhidharmakosa'. I also wrote about Vasubandhu – the author of 'Buddhist Abhidharmakosa'.

For my M.Phil. thesis, I wrote about the differences between Bon and Buddhist nuns. An excerpt was published in the Bonpo magazine. Unlike a Buddhist nun, according to Bon tradition, a Bon nun can take Bhikshuni vows. Those who

have three hundred sixty Bhikshuni vows are called 'Gelongma', or 'Dangsongma' in Bon tradition. There is a lot of controversy among Buddhists regarding this Gelongma status being given to nuns. I wrote in detail on this issue for my thesis.

There are at present three Gelongmas in the Redna Menling nunnery at Dolanji. Their names are Yeshe Jama, Sherab Palzin and Samten Palzin. They are the first nuns in this century who have taken this Gelongma vow.

### **When did it become possible for a nun to study for a Geshe degree? Where and for how long can a nun study before receiving this degree?**

The teaching of philosophy at the nunnery commenced on 22nd December, 2010 under the guidance of His Holiness Menri Trizin Rinpoche. He provided equal teaching to nuns and monks alike. There are nineteen philosophical nun students. They are the first ever philosophical nun students of Bon. They are able to receive a Geshe degree, just like a monk. And they have to study for twelve to thirteen years in order to get a Geshe degree, just like monks. A lay woman cannot receive a Geshe degree, to do so she must be ordained as nun.

### **How are they financially supported? Are basic living costs able to be met? In what ways are we able to support these women from abroad?**

His Holiness takes care of all financial matters relating to the nuns: food, housing, education etc. It would be very helpful to give donations to the nuns of Redna Menling. Donations from abroad should be given through His Holiness Menri Trizin Rinpoche.

### **Interview by Gabriele Penders**

Photos by Sangmo Yangri



## “I LIKE TEACHING HERE, BUT THEY NEED ME BACK IN TIBET...”

At the winter retreat at Serenity Ridge in 2008 Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe was showing the present sangha members how to perform the mandala offering ritual. He mentioned that he had done all the one hundred thousand times of building and dissolving the mandala in six weeks, in the monastery. It was in winter time, it was very cold and when he finished, his hand were bleeding.

**As western practitioners, we are curious to know how people practice Bon in Tibet. How do lay people receive teachings there and which teachings?**

People go to monasteries for a period of time, for example when they have a vacation, maybe for two to three months, and they ask a lama to teach them. They may be preliminaries, or some teachings from tantra, or even dzogchen teachings.

The Ngondro is the base for us. It is like a key to the door of teachings. If people don't have time to do all the Ngondro, lamas can tell them to do just Boddhicitta for example, or only some of the practices from the Ngondro. But if they want to go to a Tummo retreat or receive Powa teachings, for example, the lama usually tells them to complete the Ngondro first.

**Do lay people have one root lama or do they go to different lamas?**

It depends. Some of them go to one lama all the time, others ask for teachings and blessings from more than one lama.

**How popular is the Dharma and meditation among Tibetan people nowadays?**

Young people in cities are not very eager to practice. They enjoy the modern life-style and are not interested in listening to teachings. They have devotion and trust, but they don't study. It is different for village people, they want to study, to practice something. Usually not as much when they are young, but in their fifties, sixties, seventies everybody does some practices.

**In 2004 you started to travel to the West and met non-Tibetan Bon practitioners. Were you surprised by anything?**

It was very interesting for me that people in the West have many activities. They like to do many things, both work and hobbies. Tibetans are less active. I appreciate this very much and I would advise it to people in Tibet, even in my village. On the other hand, family relations are not so good here. Family members don't care about each other as we do. And many children don't like their parents and they say it. We never argue with our parents even if we disagree with them. We show a lot of respect to them. If you don't do that, other people think that you are not a good person.



Photo by Ula Deręgowska



**What about the difference in the approach to the Dharma, did you notice any?**

Sometimes people in the West say “I finished my Ngondro”, but when you ask them if they really completed 100.000 prostrations they say “no”. When they say “finished”, they mean receiving teachings, not so much practicing. People in the West don't practice enough. The most important thing for them is to receive teachings and practice is less important. People also change practices quite often. They like to try something new instead of sticking to what they have. And sometimes they don't give a chance for a practice to develop, to sink in deeper.

**You went to Mexico, US, Poland, France – what distinguishes practitioners from those countries?**

Mexicans have lots of faith, devotion, deep connection to the Dharma. Polish people are similar in this to Mexicans. They also like purification rituals and healing practices. When they have some difficulties, they come and ask me to pray or to perform some ritual, they have trust in it. Here in France, or in the US, people don't ask me that, ever. In the US, people are also interested in the Dharma, but it seems to me it is more like they wish to have proper knowledge, a good idea about it.



**Do people in the West approach the teacher differently? Some say they ask many questions...**

I taught young monks in monasteries as well and they ask lots of questions too, when they study dialectics. But it is true that lay people in Tibet don't ask lamas any questions. They just listen to them and see that as blessings. They never ask questions.



Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe was born as the oldest son of a nomadic family in the region of Kham in Eastern Tibet. When he was 18 years old, he became a monk, despite his family's disapproval. “I realized that if I stayed with them I would have the same life as they had: many children, hard work, and no opportunity to help anybody outside the family. I wished to get an education and more possibilities to be active in the world, to help people. For that, I had to leave.”

After taking the vows he studied with different lamas in Tibet for five years. In 1991, at the age of 23 Tenzin Yeshe went to India and continued his studies at Menri Monastery. In 1995 he went to Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu in Nepal and got his Geshe degree there in 2003, after 13 years of studies. In 2004, he started to travel to Mexico, USA and Europe, offering teachings in the centers founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his students.

This year, he is going to teach in Poland and Germany in August and September. But his future is in Tibet where teachers of the Dharma are badly missed. “For me, this way of life is good, but they need me there and they asked me many times to come back. I am going to do that, to help. But I hope that I will be able to travel to the West and teach here too, occasionally.”

People in the West ask a lot, and that's a good school for the teacher. The teacher can make sure that people really understand. With lay people in Tibet you never know if they understood. I like teaching here. As teachers, we can learn from western students.

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**



## “THESE TEACHINGS CAN UNIFY US”

**Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, the main teacher of Menri Monastery, has extensive experience teaching the Bon to Tibetans and Westerners. We asked him to explain to us how their approach to the teachings differs. He was very kind and responded to our request immediately.**

**Tibetan Bon and Buddhist teachings have spread in the West in the last decades. How is this reflected by lamas when they talk about it among themselves? Did you expect that something like this would happen?**

According to my view and my experience with western students, the westerners are mostly interested in antique things. Technology is very advanced in the West, and life can be very tiring there. Technologies are beneficial for the external part of life, but internally, in the inner life of people, there are problems, suffering, deficiencies. And so the westerners look for something that would help them to be free from this inner suffering. Bon and Buddhism attract them as very old, very ancient wisdom. My students from the West are very interested in my teachings and in the culture it comes from, and they have lots of questions about it. And since I am a Geshe, I love to answer their questions. But it is not my goal to bring my culture to the West. I am trying to help those people to solve their inner problems. Actually, I never thought that Bon or I would come to Europe.

**The presence of Bon in Europe – is it something that you and other lamas see as useful for the Dharma?**

I think it is good to not keep the teachings secret, but to disclose the meaning, the purpose of it to other human beings. This is how the teachings continue to benefit this world.

**Did your teachers encourage you to go and teach in the West, in Europe?**

No, my teachers never said this. It were my western students who invited me to come.

**In the West, teachers have to deal mainly with lay people, unlike in Tibet, India and Nepal,**

**where the core of the Dharma is cultivated in monasteries. In your opinion, how does this influence the teaching and the Dharma itself?**

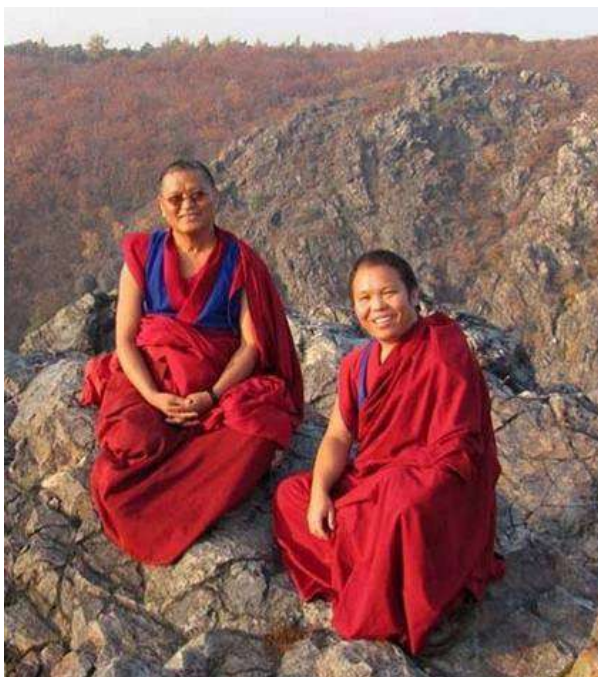
Actually, in the place where I was born and grew up, in the Himalayan region of Nepal, there are no monks. There are only lay people and tantric practitioners. Even in early times there weren't many monks in that area. We do give teachings to lay people in the East.



**How does the contact with the western students influence Dharma teachers and the way of teaching?**

In the West, I mostly try to help people in their present life. In the East, I usually give teachings and advice for the next life. This life is not so important in the East from the point of view of the Dharma. There are also more interactions in the West between the lama and the students. Eastern people generally have great faith and trust in their spiritual guides and say “yes, yes, yes” to whatever the lama says. In the West, people are more educated and don't believe so easily. They ask more questions. Another difference is that western people don't have so many vacations and they expect to get the teachings quickly. Once,





Menri Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche with Geshe Nyima Woser

one westerner visiting my monastery came to see me. He asked me: "Can you give me dzogchen teachings?" "How long will you be here in this monastery?" I asked him. He said: "A very short time, my taxi is waiting for me, maybe five minutes." "I'm very sorry," I told him, "You don't have time to receive teachings. Dzogchen teachings are not like coffee or an object. I can't just put it in your hand in a minute. It takes a long time." People like short teachings and they like to think about powerful energies being there, available for them – they always say something about "energy, energy".

**How has your personal attitude toward western students developed with time? Did you have to adapt your way of teaching to them somehow?**

In the beginning I taught in a very detailed way, like in the monastery. Later I realized: "Oh, these details take a long time," and I could see that some people were becoming tired of all these details. Then, I took the essence of the teachings and taught this.

I also don't teach so much on impermanence in the West. In the East, in the Himalayas, when I teach I say: "We are getting old, we are impermanent, we have to do practice," and all these kinds of things. In the West when I say it, people get worried and they become upset. I realized that western people don't want to hear

about suffering. And so I try to be more joyful with them.

**In your opinion, what is the future of the Dharma in the West?**

Right now the Eastern spiritual teachings are in fashion in the West. If these teachings truly benefit people here, it can have a long life, it will keep growing and developing. I believe this.

**Do you think that there are some new qualities arising from the union between the eastern and western mind in the Dharma, in spiritual development?**

The two cultures and traditions are different, but the main quality of the teaching is beneficial for both of them. All human beings don't want to suffer and seek happiness. These teachings that can cleanse and purify the obstacles to happiness can unify us.

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos by Tenzin Yangton, Alena Klozarová

**H.E. Menri Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche was born in 1962 in the small Himalayan village of Tsakha in the Dolpo region of northwest Nepal. Many years ago, the Dolpo region was a part of the Zhang-Zhung kingdom. In 1979, Ponlop Rinpoche came to study at Menri Monastery, the main Bonpo monastery, and obtained his Geshe Degree here in 1989. In 1992, His Holiness and H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche appointed Trinley Nyima Rinpoche as the main teacher of Menri Monastery, giving him the title of Ponlop. Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche occasionally visits the Dolpo region of Nepal to give teachings to thousands of lay people, monks and tantric practitioners. He also regularly visits the United States and Europe where he enjoys teaching to Western practitioners.**



# IN SEARCH OF THE RIGHT PLACE TO BE

## Traditional practice and The Three Doors

The Three Doors, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's non-traditional gift to Western students, will start with the first European three-year Academy in August of this year. In 2010, Tenzin Rinpoche also started teaching the cycle of five-year Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud, the deepest dzogchen teaching in the Bon tradition. How do we know which one is right for us? How do we know what is the right place for us to be? In a seminar held on the fivefold teaching of Dawa Gyaltsen in May 2011 in Amsterdam, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche addressed these questions and talked about how one can relate to both the traditional way of practicing and to the Academy training.

"All the teachings I have been doing lately are part of The Three Doors program. This program is an opportunity to go deeper, a way of engaging your life to create more sharing and more opportunities to share. It is a way to have more commitment, almost like a way to 'speed up'. Of course, you only want to speed up if it is something that you really feel drawn to, something you feel a connection with. Only then does it make sense. 'More commitment' could mean different things. Traditionally, commitment means committing to teachings, practices, sadhanas. For example, reciting mantras or reading texts is one way to commit, a more traditional way of connecting. Clearly it's one opportunity, one possibility. But it might not be a

possibility for everybody because of one's own conditions, limitations, upbringing, and so on. If it's not for you, it's not for you. One shouldn't force that. But then what does it mean to go deeper into the teachings? If this traditional form is not for you, then what is? It's important to find this out. You cannot just say "I don't know". That's not a good answer. "I am not doing it" is the worst answer. So you have to find out what this means for you.

The idea of The Three Doors was to create another possibility. I saw and felt the need to provide this opportunity both for individual transformation and also for the larger sense of collective transformation. But this transformation is still based on the principles of the teachings: The Nine Breathings, Tsa Lung, Five Warrior Syllables, and the Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen. It is supported by the books 'Awakening the Sacred Body', 'Tibetan Sound Healing', and 'Awakening the Luminous Mind'.



The Three Doors: Rinpoche's heartdrop for the West.

In this training program, I gave eighteen people a personal invitation. I said to that group: you have to do sixty-three transformations in your life, twenty-one in three areas: personal, family and professional. I want to see sixty-three things that you have changed and I will be the one judging whether they count or not. You cannot come to me and say: "I meant to fix my car for five years and now I finally

did". That doesn't count. The ones that count are the deeper, personal shifts. This is what I wanted to see. And it's been an incredible experience for me. It's thousands of pages and a lot of work for me but it's my commitment to them. Each person has eighty to ninety pages. Everybody almost has





a little book that they wrote about their life. It was very inspiring, very moving. I learned so much from them. And they did change. I'd like to see this kind of transformation happening everywhere. I'd like to see it on a social and professional level. I'd like to see it in the way we teach, in the way we do business, in the way we interact with each other, and in the way we die. This is very important for me.

So it feels important to bring these teachings to help people make those changes on a very personal level. This is something I admire very much with that first group. They were willing to do that. It took a lot of time but they did it. And some of them said it was the most rewarding experience they ever had in their spiritual practice, and also the most challenging. So we started this program and I trained the first group of people. I personally don't train the next generations. It's just impossible for me to do. So these people will go to different places. It is like the branching of a tree and I hope it will go everywhere. The first one started in the US, the second one will be in Europe, and the third one will be in Mexico. From there hopefully it will go to more countries."

**Student: "How do you relate The Three Doors to other traditional practices such as the Ngondro and other dzogchen practices that also lead to enlightenment?"**

"I am very happy to answer that question. One simple statement is that at any given moment in your life there is the opportunity to deepen what is there. This is a question I want you all to look at. What is important to you at this time in your life? What opportunities do you have to deepen your growth? If you've been following the teachings you can see these opportunities and can be more committed to going deeper but only if you feel you are in the right place to do so. If you are not in the right place then it is a good time to find that out. You might need to work on that and be able to trust and commit.

You mentioned Ngondro. I don't teach this lightly and do not believe in teaching it everywhere. Over these past twenty years, I've prepared people to receive the Ngondro. I teach it when people feel

they are ready, when they can commit to it and do it. It is a great opportunity to go deeper. I tell my old students, especially those who are in the role of teaching, to finish the Ngondro first! So that's one opportunity to go deeper. In the US, I finished only one cycle in the last twenty years. We started in Europe last year. It is serious for me. I teach it and expect people to do it, particularly those who have been with me for a long time.



So that's one way to commit. If anyone has a problem with traditional forms such as prostrations or reciting of mantras, I respect that. If it's a problem, it's a problem. You have to acknowledge that. Then you host it. That's my principle. I don't say "You are in the wrong place.

Get out of here!" No. The whole idea of The Three Doors is hosting a problem, acknowledging a problem. In this practice nobody can

have an excuse. The only excuse is your own laziness and ignorance. We don't have any form. Even the first time I went into our shrine room I did not sit on my throne. I said I don't want any throne. I don't want anybody to do prostrations here. I want you to take my pictures off the shrine. I don't want you to look at me. I want you to look at yourself. I'm just a messenger and a mirror. No more. Then if there is any problem it's not me, it's you! (*laughter*) This was my way of getting out of the problem.

So we say in The Three Doors: no shrine, no images. The syllables are there, the sounds are there, but there are no images. It is very personal. It is very direct, clear, fresh wisdom. I did not really know at first how everything was going to work out. I am really so happy that people taste this wisdom. I can see that. One of the students came to me and said "I've been practicing all these years to find space and awareness and can really feel the space coming alive now". I was happy to hear that. In our morning session of practice I was talking about the refuge place. That space, that awareness, that bliss, is not outside in the shrine; it's in you. It's not hidden; it's everywhere, even in your pain. That's what you discovered this weekend. If you look at your pain more closely than you ever have before, you discover space there. You discover awareness

The Three Doors Academy Europe will be open for applicants to step in for the second group training retreat in March 2012. Check the application process at [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org). Applications will be accepted until January 2012.



there. You discover some quality there. It's just a taste but imagine extending that more and more: discovering more space, discovering more awareness, discovering more qualities. These things will change your life. So don't create a beautiful shrine outside. You *are* a beautiful shrine. In every channel, every location, you create a shrine: you create space, you create awareness, you create that quality.

Throughout the next months, The Three Doors will provide free online sessions with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Marcy Vaughn to give people a taste of what is happening throughout the Academy Training. More information at [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)

The Three Doors and more traditional practice complement each other very well. One is more informal and one formal. I recommend that everybody who follows the Ngondro and the teachings more seriously in the traditional way do The Three Doors as well. But doing it the other way around is the question. For those people who do not feel like doing the traditional form don't do it! That's the whole idea. You will find your own forms. If you are Christian, you will find your own forms. If you are Muslim, you will find your own

forms. If you are not particularly following any kind of religion, you will still find your own forms. But the formless essence of the teachings is important. That you cannot skip. I feel the same thing in my own life. I am so happy with all the forms that I have in my life: I feel enriched but

know it is not the main thing. And yet I notice that if I'm feeling very happy I cannot but see beauty in this cup. If I am open I cannot help but see openness in

somebody I'm encountering in my life. Whatever form I find, wherever I express my inner realization, is valuable for me. But for me it is wrong to say this is the only right form. It's important to allow other forms for those who need other forms. Ultimately, each person needs to understand what their own forms are and then commit to using them."

**Edited by Anja Benesch & Laura Shekerjian**

Photo by Henk Scholten

## THE THREE DOORS FIRST GRADUATION CEREMONY

Raven Lee is one of the 12 people trained by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche who graduated at a ceremony held in June 2011 at Serenity Ridge. She has been chosen as a Three Doors Academy teacher and will be teaching at The Three Doors Academy Europe along with John Jackson. Here is what she shared with us about the ceremony.

"Sitting in front of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, I was filled with boundless gratitude and humility to be part of this first graduating group. During the remarkable three years of training, I came to realize the profundity of Rinpoche's vision and understood that the program was his heart essence and gift to us all. As I listened to His Holiness's acknowledgment of Rinpoche and the Three Doors, my appreciation and awe deepened. His loving and inspiring words became a seal of recognition and a direct connection

to the lineage. With each blessing of body, speech and mind that he conferred, I felt the strength of the immense kindness and wisdom of my precious teachers. Filled with unwavering trust and unshakable confidence, I eagerly step forward and share the jewels and heart drops of Rinpoche with my European sangha brothers and sisters."

**Raven Lee**

Photo by Courtesy of Ligmincha Institute



# MONKS FROM THE MENRI MONASTERY CLOSE TO US

Thirteen monks from Menri, the main exile Bonpo monastery in India, spent almost three weeks in May and June of this year in the Czech Republic. They came to show the cham dance and other elements of Bon cultural and spiritual heritage to the broad public. Most of them had never been in Europe before. It was a great experience for them, and also for the people who took care of them during the visit.

I heard about them for the first time two years ago. A group of monks from Menri were supposed to come in Prague already in 2009. They were even mentioned on the posters promoting the *Tibet of the Mind* festival in Prague that year, but in the end, they didn't show up. The right conditions and circumstances – the organizers' possibilities, sponsor funding, tiny support from the Prague government and so on – came together this spring. But it was an adventure until the last moment.

A couple of days before the monks' departure it seemed they would not come this time either. Czech authorities refused to give visas to half of the ensemble – those with the refugee status in India – and the journey seemed to have finished before it started. It was the Minister of Foreign Affairs

himself who had to convince the officials of the Ministry of Interior that the risk of illegal immigration is not so great to justify ruining a cultural event Prague was waiting for.

In the middle of May the group finally arrived. For most of them it was the first trip outside India. Some came from Tibet directly to Menri and didn't travel at all. But watching them you wouldn't say that. They found their place naturally anywhere they went. You can see it from the pictures.



We were happy to spend time with those charming and clever guys. You feel very lighthearted in their presence. When you have a taste of it you will know what I mean.



I hope they will come to Europe again. They told me that they would like to see other countries too. Now, it is up to us to make it happen.

If you want to know more about the journey and see more pictures please contact the leader of the group Sonam Gurung at [asonam@rediffmail.com](mailto:asonam@rediffmail.com), or on Facebook.

**Jitka Polanská**

Photos by Šárka Koliášová, Jiří Růžička





## MENRI MONKS: “WE ARE HAPPY TO MEET BONPOS IN EUROPE”

Triyungdrung Marnangtshang, the editor of the Menri Monastery website and one of the horn blowers of the ensemble, and Rinchen Tsabtsa, the Yeshe Walmo performer, came to Menri from Tibet and had never traveled outside India before this journey. We asked Geshe Sonam Gurung and Geshe Tenzin Yangton – leaders of the group who can speak English well – to translate for these two young men, and we asked them what they liked most about Europe, about the Czech Republic. This is what they said.

introduced us to them as students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche he felt a strong connection. Meeting Bonpos here meant very much to him. “It is not like meeting other people, it is different,” he said. Bon in Tibet suffered a lot, he said, but he could see that thanks to our masters it could be preserved and spread.

They were happy because they could see that the Bon teachings have gone as far as Europe and took root here. Those clever guys got over all the distances so easily. They could clearly see that no distances exist.

Jitka Polanská

They liked the clean streets here, they said (everything is relative, they haven't been to Germany), they noticed how much we care about nature, the environment (sure, comparing to India it's true), and also good quality materials like wood used in houses and apartments.

Castles and cathedrals impressed them too. They said they could feel the power of protection they emanate.

And they enjoyed and appreciated the warm welcome from the local people. Triyungdrung said that when he comes back to the monastery he would tell everybody there about the friendly people and their big and sincere interest for Tibetan culture and religion.

He also said he had been writing poems every day of his stay here. Seeing Bon sacred objects treasured here and meeting Bon students touched him.

Rinchen Tsabtsa said that since the very beginning, when Geshe Nyima who lives in Prague



Photos by Šárka Koliášová, Jiří Růžička, monks



# ABOUT BON CHAM DANCE

At the beginning, the cham dance may seem monotonous and boring. But when somebody unveils the symbolic meaning of the gestures and stories in the background of various dances, it becomes fascinating. Otherwise, you just get beyond the boredom with time, as the dance guides you to a special state of consciousness. We asked Geshe Nyima Choekhortshang to tell us a bit about the cham dance.

## What is the cham dance about?

Cham is a sacred dance, a dance with a religious meaning in Bon. Sometimes when we want to emphasize the sacredness of cham we call it by a longer name – *gshen gyi gar 'cham*, which means

performed there. Dancers re-enact the actions of the protectors, for example they play out Yeshe Walmo cutting negativities with movements of a sword. And there are some other dances – such as the lion or the yak cham – which we classify as 'indetermined'. They may be related to some rituals and texts, like the skeleton dance does. Eight offering goddesses is another dance of this third group.

## When is cham usually performed?

At Losar, the New Year celebration. It takes up the whole day and still, not all dances are performed. There are some other important occasions when a cham show takes place, usually as a shorter version, but the most important festival takes place at Losar.



the dance of the *shen* – a Bon priest in ancient times. One group of the cham dances is related to Tonpa Shenrap, the founder of the Bon teachings. These dances show the story of Tonpa Shenrap's life. Other dances are connected with protectors of Bon, such as Yeshe Walmo, who is the main protector. But some monasteries have their own protectors who can appear in the cham

## What happens at the festival?

There is a precise sequence of dances performed. At Menri Monastery we start with the dance of the main protector – Yeshe Walmo, who is an emanation of Sidpa Gyalmo. After that, the offering goddesses come and make offerings to Sidpa Gyalmo. Then another protector enters the scene.





**Who are the performers? Does every monk go through training as a cham dancer?**

No, cham dancers are chosen among those who can dance well. The word *cham* refers to coordination of movements of hands and legs. It



distinguishes cham from other ancient Tibetan dances, like the 'gar' where you move only hands and arms, or, on the other side, the 'dro' which you perform mostly with legs. In cham, you dance with both hands and legs, which is not easy. So, the cham dancer has to have some talent, a good sense of body balance, flexibility. At first, more monks are admitted to the cham classes. They are taught some basic steps and the rhythm of the dance, which they should familiarize themselves with and learn how to count. We have to learn rituals related to the dance as well, so we read and memorize some texts. Then, we learn some simpler dances. There is one dance representing the cosmology of Bon. There are twenty-seven entities tamed by the protector Sidpa Gyalmo and forming her retinue now. So, you need twenty-seven dancers for this dance and their role is quite simple. Then, if a dancer is good, next year he is chosen again and he learns a dance which is more difficult. Not everybody advances to higher classes. Gradually, only the best ones remain and these are taught the most complicated dances.

**Do you know what the monks are going to perform here in Prague, during the public performance?**

I think it will be Sidpa Gyalmo dance and another one which is called the black hat dance or also the Mother Tantra dance because it is related to this important Bon text.

**Have you danced?**

Yes, I did. I performed almost all the dances, except for two which require too much jumping and swinging on one foot. Only a few monks were able to perform that and they had to train for it for years.

**Do monks want to be cham dancers? Is it prestigious?**

Yes. Not every monk who wants to do it is allowed.

There is a selection. First, good dancers are selected. Then, if there is somebody among them who belongs to a lineage of teachings or is a reincarnation, he is considered to be the first choice. If the dancer is special, coming from a family of lineage holders of teachings or being a tulku, we believe that the protectors are pleased with it and the dance has more power. So, in the end, only a few monks from the whole monastery get the chance to become first class cham dancers.

**Did you do a tour in Europe when you were part of the dance ensemble?**

No, there was no such opportunity at the time.

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos by Jiří Růžička





## BON MET WITH AN ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE IN HUNGARY

We asked Hungarian students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to tell us the story of their sangha.

In Hungary many people are interested in Buddhism. In Budapest, we even have a college specialised in Buddhism – The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College.

I attend this college. The story of Bon in Hungary started there. One of the founders and teachers, Katalin Jakab, met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 2002 and became his student right away. She says that his teachings charmed her from the very first moment.

Rinpoche taught in neighbouring countries and so she started to travel to follow his teachings. She

also introduced her students to Bon. She translated some of Rinpoche's books and thanks to them Bon became known in this country. Many people felt that the teachings spoke to them and began to look for ways to come in contact with the teacher. Katalin and the school sponsored interested students so that they could take part in some retreats abroad, for example in Poland. Many young people joined the sangha as a result. Vienna is very close to Budapest and we went there for the Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen the first year, and Five Element Soul Retrieval this spring. We also listen to Rinpoche's online teachings, with translation.

Eleven people from our country entered the five-year cycle of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud in Austria last year. Katalin helped many of us to get in there and we are grateful for that. As Rinpoche said, it is

a long-term personal commitment. But it was also helpful to build a sangha – Ligmincha Hungary. Now we have a framework for our functioning and for organizing programs.

The first event was held this spring, during Easter holidays. Katalin, encouraged by Rinpoche, invited Karoline Seltenheim, an Austrian long-time student of Rinpoche's and a prominent figure in the sangha, to Budapest.

During the weekend seminar, Karoline focused on Tsa Lung and Nine Breathings of Purification as explained in Rinpoche's new book, *Awakening the Sacred Body*. Karoline is a nice person and a good teacher. Participants were inspired by her simple and accessible teaching style with many practical examples. Newcomers liked Tsa Lung

right on the spot and those who were already familiar with the teachings deepened their understanding. Everyone drew a lot of inspiration for practice in daily life. We formed a practice group led by Péter Tongori. We meet every week in a place that the college offered to the sangha. For the time being there are nine practitioners but we are growing.

We are planning to organize listening sessions of Rinpoche's online teachings with translation. We would be grateful if Karoline visited us again, to deepen the relationship between Austrian and Hungarian groups. And of course we would like to host Rinpoche in this country.

**Kata Bertók**

Photo by Hungarian sangha



# HOW I BECAME A BONPO

Péter Tongori from Hungary was introduced to the Bon by his grandmother. Here is the story of how he became a follower of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.



My first encounter with Tibet's oldest spiritual tradition – the Yungdrung Bon – happened in 2003. My grandmother gave me Rinpoche's book *Healing with Energy, Form and Light* with the words: "you should read this". She knew that I was interested in these kinds of things. We talked about the Bardo Thödol and other Tibetan Buddhist teachings and stories. Grandma also liked Alexandra David-Neel's books very much, which spoke about many unknown aspects of Tibet.

Reading the book was very exciting for me. It gave a good summary of the nine paths of Bon in theory and practice. In the part describing the shamanistic way I read about elemental spirits called *tsen*. The book says that they like cliffs and don't like if somebody blocks their routes. If this happens, they can cause heart disease as revenge to that person. When I was reading these lines I recalled a family story and I realized the bigger picture at that moment.

When I was a child, my father closed a path running through our property. This place is on top of the hill. After a few years, while my grandfather was gardening there, his heart began to hurt. Later on he had a heart attack and he had to leave this place and his hobby due to the illness.

Nobody recognized the secret relationship between his problem and the *tsen*. After reading these lines I went to my grandmother instantly and shared with her what I thought might be the reason for my grandfather's illness. She agreed and she told me that a year before, during a stormy night, when she and my grandfather were sleeping in the house, she had a terrible dream. A dark man appeared to her and ordered her to leave this place. When she tried to object, the stranger got angry and my grandma felt a hand grabbing her heart. She woke up terrified and gasping for air. She asked me not to try to scare this creature away, because she was afraid of me getting hurt.

I promised her I will do no such thing – I already had another plan in mind. I decided to help the ghost with dedications and food offerings. After a few days I went to our property alone and I made offerings following the instructions of Rinpoche's book.

I didn't know these practices very well, but I really wanted to help the *tsen* and my grandfather. Since then, every time when I am there I do food and mandala offerings to local spirits. And we haven't had issues caused by that angry mountain spirit since then.

These events convinced me that Rinpoche is an authentic and authoritative teacher. From that time on, I wanted to meet him and receive the blessing of his teachings. This opportunity came last spring in Vienna. With our Mentor, Katalin Jakab, we participated in the Five-fold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltzen held by Rinpoche. The Gate of Dharma Buddhist College in Budapest sponsored our stay there. It was a wonderful meeting and my dream came true. In times like these you can really unite with the Lama in your heart.

**Péter Tongori**

Photos by Miklós Gaul and Maria Kulik



# IRRESISTIBLE ATTRACTION OF THE SANGHA BOOKSTORES

During retreats, we can find more and more items to buy, and we actually buy more and more: books, cards with Bon icons, statues, thangkas, calligraphies and many other sacred and ritual objects related to Bon. Veronique Leenders has been working closely with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on coordinating and developing the sangha bookstores within Ligmincha Europe. Veronique is a very suitable person for this task; she has been involved in the book trade for almost 40 years. She has worked for a publishing house, as a freelance editor of children's books, as a librarian and as a buyer for a big bookshop.

**Veronique, let's tell the story from the very beginning. When and how did you start your selling career within the sangha?**

It was eleven years ago. Since Rinpoche started coming to Holland we have been selling his books at retreats. I have a seller's eye and I quickly noticed that people like to come and see if there is something interesting to buy, and we started to think of how to enrich our merchandise. The idea was to raise some money for the sangha this way. We started to produce recordings of the teachings to sell to participants, as well as prayers on CD, or cards with sacred images that we produced ourselves. And gradually, our horizons expanded. When somebody travelled to India or Nepal or Tibet, I asked them to bring some items for the shop. And of course, from the very beginning, many things were arriving with Rinpoche.

**Now your responsibilities have become 'multinational'. I could see you running the shop in Vienna and in Berlin too...**

Yes, two years ago we started trying with Rinpoche to bring more of a system and coordination into the business. He asked me to supervise the shops in Berlin, Buchenau, Vienna, and also at the retreats of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud teachings in Austria. My experience helps me understand what people like to buy and what we should order from Nepal. This way, we are more successful, we can give more work to the craftsmen who produce the items and we can

please the buyers as well. The volume of the things sold during retreats has been growing. Now, we are trying to coordinate with the publishers of books we sell in Europe and with Ligmincha Institute in the US.

**How does it feel, keeping a shop during seminars? What would you say to people who would like to help you?**

If you like to be in the center of things, the shop is the right place for you. I think there is no participant who would not come and see what is in the shop. You get to talk with many people there. But you have to keep in mind that you can find yourself in situations of total confusion and you have to be able to just go along with them. Flexibility is needed. There are many things to take care of – listen to people and answer their question, mark down the sold items, take the money and give change back, display and order the goods, but the most important thing is to remain calm and to go with the flow. Some people cannot bear all those impulses coming to them. But when the team has the right attitude, then there is lot of joy and fun.

**If people want to buy something in between seminars can they contact you?**

Yes, I can send them a book, or other things by mail. It's possible and I have already done it. They can contact me by e-mail: [leenders6@hetnet.nl](mailto:leenders6@hetnet.nl).



**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photo by Cristina Vadala





# AWAKENING A SANGHA

**Lidia Castellano is an Italian student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. His guidance and wise example led her back from India to Rome where she didn't feel at home before. Now she tries to build Ligmincha Italy.**

**Lidia, when I met you for the first time in 2008 you were leading a tranquil and contemplative life on your own in India and it didn't seem you would ever want to go back to Italy. Now, a bit more than two years later, you are talking to me from your apartment in Rome and I know you are very active in building a community of Tenzin Rinpoche students in Italy. What happened in between?**

Many things happened. But all was set in motion even before we met. I had felt somehow out of place in my city, Rome. I have spent many years of my life in India. I fell in love with the country when I was twenty and since then I would come and go for many years. The place got into my blood. Then, due to family and health problems, I couldn't continue going there till 2002. That year, I started attending a course for yoga instructors in Rome. I was studying yoga and related things such as Indian philosophy and suddenly it flashed through my mind: why am I studying about India here in Rome, when I can experience it myself? So I went there again after twenty years. Since 2004 I almost settled there, enjoying peaceful retired life. But in 2007 Rinpoche broke into this peace. His book *Tibetan Yoga of Dream and Sleep* landed in my hands in a bookstore. I was always attracted by those stories from ancient times about spiritual seekers meeting true teachers, their gurus, and feeling immediately a strong urge to follow them. I had been wondering if this was still possible in these times. I personally met many good teachers in my life but I never felt a strong bond. But after reading the book I wanted very much to meet the author. I found out



he would be teaching about dream yoga in Spain in only two months. I went there and after that I decided to join him and a group of his students on a trip to the Lishu center and to Menri Monastery. This was in October 2008.

**We were sharing a hotel room in Dolanji, where we were visiting the monastery. I remember one evening you were telling me about your meetings with the Abbot of the Menri Monastery, H.H. Menri Trizin Rinpoche. You were very impressed by what he told you.**

Yes, but this was already my second time meeting him. I had already gone to the monastery two months earlier. I wanted to see the place where my newly found root teacher, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, used to study.

But that's true, meeting and talking with Menri Trizin was an awakening experience. He was quite hard on me, actually, asking: "What are you doing

all the time, spending your life going here and going there, it's not useful for you and for anybody else. You should stay here, instead, for some time". I took what he said seriously. It made me think. I was thinking about it every day during those two months between the two visits. And the last day of my second visit to Menri I went to him and I told him that yes, I accept his

invitation and I would come back soon. I couldn't stay right then, my visa was about to expire.

**And did you come back?**

Yes, I came back after some time and spent two months there. I was in retreat most of the time. His Holiness gave me some practices to do and he also told me not to talk. It was a very strong experience. I found out how many useless things we say every day, and how much of a waste of energy it is. I found out that in silence I could focus much better on what I do. This silence was giving me such a big sense of freedom! But after a few weeks I started to talk again because I noticed



that I started to hate people who were talking and I didn't want to build a sense of superiority.

After two months I was ready to leave. For as much as I liked it there, it wasn't my place. A monastery has its own purpose and program which I don't fit in. When I left, I kept on living my usual life, travelling to Europe mostly to prolong the visa and coming back to India as soon as possible. Then, the rules for obtaining Indian visas changed and you now had to have bigger breaks between stays. I couldn't come back so quickly.

This started to keep me in Rome for longer periods of time. But I still felt disconnected from the city, from people here. There were a few months when I was having a hard time, thinking "and now what?" And even if I was considering settling there it seemed difficult for me to make a living. Then I started to understand that the problem is not Rome, but my attitude, my resistance to the situation. All the time when I was here, instead of living it I was

planning to escape to India, and this doesn't let anything good to happen. I felt I had to stop doing this. And I stopped quite radically. I cancelled my flight to India which was paid already and I lost the money.

#### **And how did things change for you exactly?**

Yes, opportunities started to manifest, besides yoga teaching I started working as a guide. I didn't give that a chance before, my mind wasn't there. Now I am trying to follow the example of my teachers – to be open to what life is asking me to do, and not create more conditions by wanting something else than what it is.

#### **In March of this year you organized a seminar with Rinpoche in Rome. He came to teach there after many years. How did you feel, being the only organizer?**

Rinpoche's accepting my invitation was one of the things that confirmed to me that I was going in

the right direction. I asked him to come teach in Rome when I met him in Madrid the year before. I asked him out of blue, very spontaneously. I had no idea what I would do if he said yes. Then, of course, preparations kept me busy for quite a few months, and it was a new experience for me, a new role. But everything went well. Rinpoche came for ten days and had his vacation here and I could spend some time with him, going to see him in his apartment, having lunch with him, in a very family-like atmosphere.



#### **I can see you are very active on Facebook, posting all the Dharma related information there, you founded a group 'Ligmincha Italy'. Is building a sangha your priority now?**

You know, in one of the webcasts Rinpoche gave I realized I was the only Italian present and I was thinking that's not right, that I would like to change that. There are other Bon dzogchen practitioners in Italy, but they are scattered, there is no community. Of course, some of them may prefer it that way, but personally I feel very much that it's important to connect with a teacher in the Dharma, and with people following the teacher. I was always a person on my own, but now I see the beauty of sharing what I have with other people, with a sangha. And since there is no sangha in Italy for the time being, I have to create one, so I am not lonely here. (laughing)

#### **Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos by Anja Benesch and Mirka Janoskova



# MY LOSAR IN PRAGUE

**Floor Van Orsouw from the Netherlands came to see how Losar is celebrated in Prague, and wrote a lively article about it.**

On March 5<sup>th</sup> the New Townhall in Prague, Czech Republic, was decorated with colourful prayer flags and gave way for the public celebration of Losar; Tibetan New Year. The start of the year of the iron rabbit, the year 2138, was a day of cham dance, meditation and yoga workshops, music performances, film presentations, a market with books and Tibetan products, and even a wedding ceremony led by Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, Bonpo monk, teacher and researcher who currently lives in Prague.

Last year was the first time I felt part of the collective Tibetan New Year's joy thanks to all the Losar wishes of my Facebook friends. This year Jitka Polanská invited me to come to her hometown for the annual Losar event, organised by the



Jitka Polanská, Geshe Nyima Woser and Floor van Orsouw

Dzogchen fellowship; students of the Tibetan lama Chogyal Namkhai Norbu. Together with Jozho, another student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, we arranged a stand with several of Rinpoche's books, a slide show with pictures of Menri Monastery, information about the weekly practice group in Prague and a pile of European newsletters. In the afternoon we gave a presentation about Tsa Lung and Rinpoche's book *Awakening the Sacred Body* to a group of people. An interesting experience: meeting all kinds of obstacles from technical to personal and yet feeling the joy of sharing something that is so meaningful in our lives.

The Losar event in Prague started in 2003 as a non-profit beneficial action for the international charity organisation A.S.I.A. and even as the event has grown over the years, it is still on non-profit base and gathers funds for projects in support of Tibetans.

The entire medieval building was breathing a multicultural Losar atmosphere. Tibetan products in every corner, the smell of Indian food, Czech sweets and Italian coffee, the sounds of bells and prayers according to a tight schedule. In between activities in the main hall there was a photo display of the first annual Lishu trip. How wonderful to see His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, Rinpoche, Tsering, Senghe and cham dancers from Menri Monastery projected on the wall of that big hall!

Traditionally in Tibet Losar was celebrated during fifteen or even more days.

For Bonpos the first month of each Tibetan year is considered a holy month, since it is the birth month of Tonpa Shenrab and Nyame Sherab Gyaltsen.

In India the celebrations take three days. Smoke and food offerings, purification rituals and cham dances are being performed, and new prayer flags are being hung out.

The Losar event in

Prague is a result of the cooperation of various Czech Buddhist groups and it attracts not only Buddhists, but also a big general public. This is quite unique I think.

Several activities of the program were led by Geshe Nyima: a meditation workshop, a short meditation session and a wedding ceremony. It was a memorable moment for me to softly sing along with him the dedication in a hall full of people at the end of the ceremony and at the beginning of a new year.



**Floor van Orsouw**

Photos by Maan Rokaya





# EXPRESS YOUR EXPERIENCE – POETRY IN THE DHARMA

Lately, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has emphasized the value of creative expression for spiritual growth – and of its sharing. Floor Van Orsouw asked Kalsang Norbu Gurung who studied at Menri monastery and received a doctorate at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands about basic notions of the Bon poetry tradition.

Many of us would like to be more creative, but are somehow unable to unlock their creative potential. Last summer, during the Three Doors retreat in Buchenau, Rinpoche spoke about expression through writing. Throughout history yogis express their deep experiences in poems and songs. Certain poems, called 'nyam gyur' in Bon and Tibetan Buddhist tradition, are even able to give the reader the same experience the writer had. So, a poem or a song may be a gift we offer to others. "It boils down to the way you see yourself, feel yourself. We focus on the outcome, not on who is creating," Rinpoche explains in the recorded webcast of his talk *Discovering Your Creative Potential* that he gave on April 20<sup>th</sup> this year.

## *Poetry in the Bon tradition*

*Poetry that we know in the West is not quite the same as poetry in the Bon tradition. In Tibetan culture there is not such a phenomenon as a 'professional poet'. Poetry mainly consists of so called songs of realisation written by masters and monks. Part of the education program in the monastery is a poetry course in which the monks and nuns learn to compose poetry in all the existing traditional forms. Like in Western poetry there are traditional and modern ways of writing poems. In the traditional way each line consists of the same amount of words or syllables. If the first line has seven words, the other verses should also have seven words. Each verse usually has four lines. The number of verses is undefined. The traditional forms are used more often than the loose modern form, especially when it concerns a poem that is written in praise of one's lama.*

Two sangha members share their poems in the following pages: enjoy them, and send us your poetry and other creative work. We will publish them in the next issue of the magazine.

**Floor van Orsouw**

Because of Teacher's great compassion  
In extracting essence from that heart's center,  
Scripture which explains by way of blessings  
Is scripture of knowledge, the single effortless one:  
This is the king of all scriptures  
Powerfully piercing, like the great Garuda  
Leaping strongly like the lion  
Extending everywhere like the sky.  
Moistening everything like the ocean.

Poem by A. Klein & T. Wangyal (2006), *Unbounded Wholeness*, p.291; photo by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Designed by Anja Benesch



## ZHINÉ

Silence . . . . . confusion  
silence . . . . . blockages  
silence . . . . . how do I judge?  
whom do I see as myself?  
through whose eyes do I watch?

Silence . . . . . the wind is lying down  
silence . . . . . thoughts fluttering  
silence . . . . . appearance of space  
like the clouds breaking open in the sky  
discovery of myself

Silence . . . . . there is consciousness  
silence . . . . . there is no self  
silence . . . . . where am I?  
as finding a for long times hidden treasure  
the purity of the child . . . . . tears of being touched

**Marlies Cober-Philippens**



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## Praise of slowness

I brought a blue khatag  
from my last trip.  
I put it on the shrine.

Isn't it beautiful  
in the morning light?

Water is slower than air,  
I can't rush so much,  
I have to slow down.

It's like walking in water.  
I feel so slow now.  
Slow, fluid,

a bit dumb...



## The Buddha mind

*remembering the monks from Menri*

There was something special about them,  
I can't say what exactly.  
Somebody asked me to spend some time  
for them and I said yes, as a part of my  
service, just to help.

But the duty turned into pure pleasure soon.  
It did. They were like the cloudless sky.  
I don't know if this is the way they always are,  
or just on holiday, but for me, they were this.

I couldn't perceive any side thoughts around,  
and so there was nothing to think about,  
except for the organization.

Serving them was beautiful,  
it was like flowing in the sky.

They were just open.  
They were the Buddha-mind.

## The heart mantra

*for all the masters represented by Tapihritsa*

The door out and the door in,  
the main distraction from any phenomena,  
an everlasting reminder to be present  
in a dream-like reality.  
Very simple to remember:  
*I love you.*

**Jitka Polanská**





# “WE CAN TRUST WESTERNERS”

Triyungdrung Marnangtshang, one of the monks from Menri Monastery visiting Europe in May and June 2011, writes poetry and he did so during the trip as well. We asked him to share a poem with us. He chose one and our part was to face the challenge of delivering its meaning in English. A precise and poetic translation of a poem written in a traditionally structured manner and playing with metaphorical expressions is not an easy task at all and it would be quite hard to find somebody who can spend time on it. Geshe Namgyal Nyima who lives in Berlin kindly worked on a rough translation with us, consulting it with the author and explaining us nuances of the poem .

In the first three verses, the poem speaks about the author's background; the second half of it is related to the journey to Europe. At the beginning, Triyungdrung mentions three places where his life has unfolded. “Due to my previous good karma I was born in Tibetan land,” he says. He made his first cry, leaving his mother's womb, in a nomadic land, in high mountains. Later on, he moved to live in a valley. Then, his karma has brought him to a distant mountainous area in India where he is living now.

Then Triyungdrung is describing qualities and influences that he gained from the four main directions of the world – north, south, east and west. In the north, in his native Amdo region, in the area of lakes called Kokonor, he gained speech. In the south, in India, in the village of Dolanji where the Menri Monastery is located, he was introduced to the dialectic and philosophy. From the east, troubles come for monks caused by the current wild rulers of his land. The west, the place of hectic life, is a source of many distractions for his young mind.

And what are the forces uplifting his life? Affection for Tibetan culture and people, a result of his karmic traces; encouragement and inspiration given him by others; his loyalty to and love for the Yungdrung Bon which keeps him pursuing the monk's path; and the ability to write

poetry: pleasures and joys granted him by his creative mind and confidence of speech.

The second half of the poem is dedicated to the overwhelming experience of the journey to Europe. The flight in a plane that brought them here was a strong experience that evoked lots of thoughts and ideas in the author's mind. This machine, a powerful invention, lifted him on metal wings to the sky; crossing the space, they met clouds, sun and moon. Looking from the sky to the ground made the author think about the ancient wisdom texts which say that above the four continents that constitute the earth the sun arises and sets at the same time. But this was clearly contradicted by his direct experience. Bon cosmology also came to Triyungdrung's mind. According to it, all people in origin were ‘black-headed’ – but in the West, people have fair hair.

Following this, the author is indirectly referring to Gendun Choephel. Gendun Choephel, a monk who became a famous Tibetan opinion leader of the last century, and who said that Westerners lack compassion. But Triyungdrung says: “Wait a minute, let's examine this matter a bit more before we accept this judgment as true – it doesn't look like this.” According to Gendun Choephel, Westerners are not trustworthy people: if you ask them where to go, they may point out the wrong direction to you. Triyundrung doesn't agree with that: “There is no ground for thinking like this, let's not be suspicious,” he says.

Gendun Choepel admired technological skills of Westerners. He compared the intelligence of western scientists to an electronic torch. Tibetans always see sources of light – symbolized traditionally by butter lamps – as sources of wisdom. Triyundrung, fascinated by the remarkable progress of technology visible in the West says, at the very end of his poem: “Maybe it is even more than that”; implying maybe that the intelligence driving the progress may be compared to even more powerful source of light.

**Translation of Geshe Namgyal Nyima,  
in cooperation with Jitka Polanská**



# Europe . . .

through his eyes



Triyungdrung Marnangtshang

## ནུབ་ཕྱོགས་ཡུ་རོབ་<sup>EUROPE</sup> ཟློན་དུ་སླེབས་པའི་ཚེར་སྐྱབ་ཐན་ཐུན།

ཕྱོན་པས་གསལ་བསོད་ནམས་རྒྱ་རྒྱུན་སྒྲོན་པ་བསེལ་ཐུན་ཁ་བའི་ཡུལ་དུ་བཏང་བས།  
 མོག་མའི་རིགས་ཞེན་དུ་སྐྱད་བཅད་པོ་མཐོ་སྐྱབ་འགྲོག་ཐང་རི་ནས་མཆེད།  
 གཞུགས་གཞིའི་ཡུང་པོའི་འཆར་ལོངས་རིམ་པ་དམའ་མོ་རོང་བའི་ཡུལ་ནས་བྱུང་།  
 མི་ཚེ་ལྷ་མའི་གོང་ཐང་དོན་པོ་ངེས་མེད་རིལ་བརྒྱལ་དགོས་བྱུང་།

བྱང་གི་ཁྱི་གཤོག་རྒྱལ་མའི་ངོགས་སུ་ཨམ་སྐད་ཆོན་པ་དག་ལ་བྱུར།  
 མོ་ཡི་ཚེ་བའི་རྒྱབས་ཀྱི་ཁོད་ནས་རིག་ལམ་ཐར་ཐར་ཡིད་ལ་བྱུང་།  
 བར་གྱི་ཆང་གི་བཟེ་ཁ་བཅན་ངོས་རིལ་རིལ་མགོ་པོར་རྒྱག་ངལ་བྱིན།  
 རུབ་ཀྱི་ཡོ་ལང་རྩ་ཚོགས་ཁོད་ནས་རྒྱང་རྒྱང་སྒོ་ལ་གོམ་ཁ་སྒྲད།

བག་ཆགས་ཤིག་གིས་ཀུན་ནས་བསྐྱངས་ཏེ་རིག་གཞུང་ཞིག་ལ་དུངས་ཀ་ཟེལ།  
 རམ་འདྲེགས་ཤིག་གིས་རྒྱལ་ནས་སྐྱོར་ཏེ་སེམས་པའི་ཁམས་ལ་ངར་ཤུགས་བརྒྱན།  
 ལ་རྒྱ་ཞིག་གིས་འདུན་ནས་བཏེགས་ཏེ་ངང་འགོས་གོམ་རྒྱང་ཤུགས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱོད།  
 སེམས་པའི་ཚེར་སྐྱབ་སྐྱོན་པོ་ཞིག་གིས་རིག་བྱེད་དག་ལ་བདེ་སྐྱབ་འཛོལ།

རིག་གསར་རིག་པའི་ཅུམ་གྱིས་བསྐྱེད་པའི་ཚུགས་བྱའི་གཤོག་འཇུར་དབྱིངས་སུ་ངོམ།  
 ཨ་ཕྱོན་ནས་མཁའི་མཐོངས་ལམ་གཤག་ནས་དོག་མོས་རུ་ལྷད་མོར་ཉུལ།  
 ཕྱོན་པའི་བང་རིམ་ཐོལ་གྱིས་བརྟོལ་ནས་ཉི་ཟླའི་ངོགས་སུ་མགྲོན་ལ་བཅར།  
 ཉིན་འགྲངས་ཤིག་གི་ཡུན་ལ་བསྐྱོད་མཚམས་ཐང་ཆེན་ཞིག་ལ་དལ་གྱིས་བབས།

ཟློན་བཞིའི་ཉིན་མཚན་འཆར་རུབ་མཉམ་ཞེས་མཛོད་ཀྱི་གཞུང་ན་གསུངས་མོད་ཀྱང་།  
 བར་གྱི་ཡུལ་དང་ཉིན་མཚན་མི་མཉམ་ཉིན་དགྲང་གཉིས་ཀའི་གོ་རིམ་ཐོག།  
 སངས་པོ་ཟློན་པ་རྒན་པོའི་དག་ནས་མགོ་ནག་མི་ཞེས་གསུངས་མོད་ཀྱང་།  
 རུབ་ཟློན་འདི་ཡི་རྒྱང་གཉིས་འགོ་བ་མགོ་སེར་རིགས་ཀྱིས་བྱལ་བ་འདུག།

གཞན་པན་སྤྱི་ཆེའི་རྩམ་དང་བྲལ་མིན་ཡུན་གྱིས་བརྟག་བྱའི་ཡུལ་དུ་ཡིན།  
 རིག་འཇུག་ཐབས་ཤེས་སྒྲོག་གི་སྒྲོན་ལས་མི་ཆད་སེམས་པའི་ཁོ་ཐག་ཆོད།  
 དངས་པོའི་མི་ལ་འཁྱོག་ལམ་སྒྲོན་མིན་དུ་བྱང་སེམས་ལ་སེམ་ཉི་ཡོད།  
 རྒྱ་ལ་སེར་པོའི་རིགས་གཏོགས་ཀུན་ལ་དོགས་ཐོན་མི་དགོས་རིགས་མཐུན་ཚོ།



# AWAKENING THE SACRED BODY – A BOOK ABOUT LIFE

*Awakening the Sacred Body* is the latest book of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche published in January of 2011 by Hay House. Translations are about to be released. In the book, Rinpoche shares with us his understanding of the practices of Tsa Lung and Nine Breathings of Purification, and shows us how by applying these precious ancient methods we can 'move forward' in our lives. We bring you parts of his preface to the book believing it may bring a strong impulse of inspiration to your daily practice.

"The particular teachings we will explore together in this book have helped me to move forward in my life, to deepen loving relationships, to expand creativity, and to support me in contributing more fully to my students and my lineage within the indigenous Bon tradition of Tibet. The meditation practices described within have been treasures for me and for my students. They are simple, direct, powerful methods suitable for anyone who is willing to reflect upon his or her life, and can support each of us to recognize and release familiar patterns that no longer serve while embracing the fresh and spontaneous possibilities available in each and every moment.

It is very important from time to time for each of us, as individuals, to reflect upon and take stock of where we stand in terms of our personal development, our commitments to our relationships and to our society, and our spiritual aspirations. When we are willing to look directly and honestly at where we actually find ourselves in life, the very limitations that we identify become the doorways to greater potential. (...)

I was educated in India as a monk in the Bon tradition from the ages of ten to twenty-five. I

have great love and appreciation for my teachers and respect for my training, which was rigorous and unceasing. I have continued reflecting upon these teachings and bringing them into the life I now live as a husband, father, and teacher. In the past, I used to carry my books with me and read from them constantly. I have stopped doing that. It is not that I don't read at all anymore, but now I focus on bringing alive the teachings I have received and studied. This is what is challenging for me – to apply these teachings in all situations of life. This is the place where my life has energy, and this is the place from which I am inspired to write this book.

Life gives us so much opportunity to work spiritually. And I feel very thankful for the difficult situations I have encountered in my life because when I face something that is difficult and bring it to my practice, I can see real change. Every time I teach on these topics it is very lively

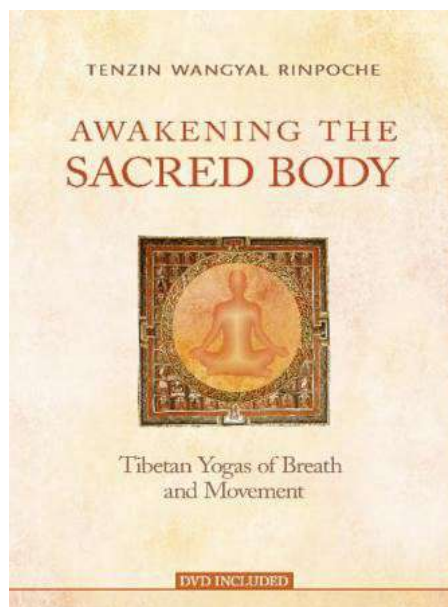
for me. I am teaching them not as an expert but as one who is on the path. I feel that what I know is small, but the possibility to realize is vast. There is much of value in these ancient teachings, and as we learn to apply them, the creative possibilities of life present themselves ceaselessly.

I sometimes fear there is a danger of losing this precious knowledge that has come from a tradition of deep reflection and heartfelt commitment from teacher to student

through thousands of years. I can already see how much has been lost from my teachers' generation to my generation. I can also see the possibility of what might get lost in the next generation, and so this also motivates me to bring this knowledge forward.

It is my hope that this book will guide and support you (...)."

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**





# FROM A HANDFULL OF ASHES

A story about the origin of the Five Warrior Syllables as it was told by Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang during his very first teaching to Western students in Berlin, in February 2011.



According to the traditional Bon account of its origins, many thousands of years before the birth of the Buddha Shakyamuni, the Buddha Tonpa Shenrab Miwoche came to this world and expounded his teachings in three successive cycles. At first, he taught the 'Nine Ways of Bon'.



As it happens, this was also the topic that Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang chose for his very first teaching to Western students in Berlin in February 2011. It was an enriching experience for both the Berlin sangha and Geshe Nyima. One talent of Geshe Nyima became very clear to us: he is a great storyteller! Among others, he shared with us the background story on the Five Warrior Syllables.



"The Five Warrior Syllables are very powerful, so powerful that they can destroy your negative emotions, attachment, anger and jealousy. No other thing can destroy those negativities like the Five Warrior Syllables. And there's a story in the Bon tradition that tells of their origin.



The story says that Tonpa Shenrap's palace was attacked by demon Khyapa Lagring and his servants. They stole his horses, they kidnapped his daughter, and they burned his 'kadrom', the box with sacred scriptures used in ancient times. The demons wanted to destroy Tonpa Shenrap's power to attract so many followers to his teaching.

Yiky Khyeuchung, one of Tonpa Shenrap's main disciples, came in and saw all the damage. He rushed around and looked here and there. When

he found out that 'kadrom', the precious box, was burned, he reached inside the box to see if anything was left. He took out just a handful of ashes. But when he looked inside the ashes, what did he see? The Five Warrior Seed Syllables."



In his book *Tibetan Sound Healing*, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains: "There are Five Warrior Syllables — A, OM, HUNG, RAM, and DZA — and each syllable represents a quality of realization. They are referred to as 'seed syllables' because they possess the essence of enlightenment. These five syllables represent the body, speech, mind, virtuous qualities, and actions of enlightenment, respectively. Together, they represent the true and fully expressed nature of our authentic self. (...)

We begin the practice of meditation more familiar with our suffering and confusion than with the purity of our being. The problems that we bring are the energy or fuel that will power our path. The clearing of our blocks through engaging the power of the Five Warrior Syllables offers us the opportunity to glimpse the open sky of our being. The dissolution of these blockages reveals wisdom and makes positive qualities available. This is the warrior's path."

Anja Benesch (text and photo)



# MASTERS OF THE ZHANG ZHUNG NYENGYUD

For the next three years the topic of the teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at the summer retreat in Buchenau will be the *Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu Masters*. In the book *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud* the heart teachings of the ancient Bonpo dzogchen masters are reported and commented on by H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, the supreme lineage holder and teacher of Yungdrung Bon. The book, edited by Carol Ermakova and Dmitry Ermakov, carries not only words of instructions and stories but also blessings, and as such it can become a key to unlocking the doors of our mind, a guide on the path to realizing the true Nature of Mind. Here we publish the section where H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche explains how to approach the Dharma nowadays: *A word on practicing in modern times*.

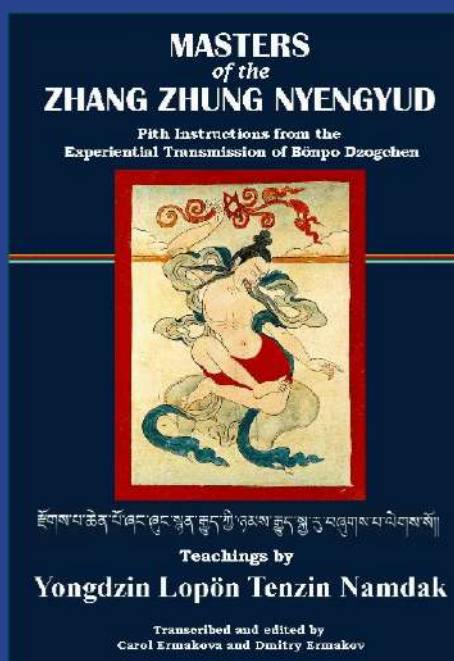
“Sometimes I read you the biographies of the Lineage Masters who spent their whole life in a cave. So maybe some of you think of cutting off your living conditions and going and living like that. But that is not possible in modern times.

It is important to understand this. According to the times we live in, usually, don't think that you should go away from some certain place to search for solitude or something. You can read history or biographies of the early Masters, but that time is over. You have to think: we are now in modern society. It is not easy. In early times, especially in Tibet – although not all Tibetans were practitioners, not at all – some people would first study and gain knowledge, and then realize, and then practice. They would spend their whole life in solitude. In those days, if someone went into solitude seriously then anybody nearby who saw them staying in some cave somewhere would

immediately serve them and help them. The local people knew that the practitioner was a living person who needed simple things like firewood, food, tsampa or some simple things. They would serve the practitioner willingly. He would not be living in luxury at all, but he would not be starving, so in that way he could spend his time practicing continuously. Those practitioners were real, living people but they didn't care about their worldly conditions. I mean, they didn't expect or prepare any living conditions at all because they already knew someone would help them, in those days. But that time is over. The texts are still there, the system is still the same, it is written here, but if you do this nowadays, you will starve if you don't prepare anything, you see. Follow the teachings but don't follow what these Masters did. If you try to, you will be starving or freezing!

In modern times it is better for practitioners to prepare. I am always talking about our two conditions. Whatever you are doing in your lifetime to ensure your living conditions, you should carry on with that, but don't have too high expectations or go after a reputation: that doesn't help very much. But you have to do something to earn a living. Otherwise, we call it *Ngejung* – you collect many different teachings, you listen to many different Masters and suddenly you think: “Oh, this life is no use!”, and you stop everything and try to concentrate on practice for a little while. But your property, possessions and facilities won't last so long. If you go back and try to carry on with your job, relationships and so on, afterwards it is really hard to find work. So it is better to carry on continuously in a simple way, not doing anything special, not having too high expectations, not expecting luxury, but just living in a simple way.”

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

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**Interview with TWR**  
**Bon practices in prison**  
**Meet the Polish sangha**  
**Dark retreat: a place to go**  
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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

We are happy to present you the third issue of Ligmincha Europe Magazine! This publication gives everyone an opportunity to connect to the European sangha and we hope that it brings you interesting news and inspiration to your practice.

The first issue, released in Spring of 2011, was called the European Bon Garuda Newsletter. With the second issue in Autumn 2011, we changed the name into Ligmincha Europe Magazine. And from now on, we want to make the magazine quarterly. Therefore, you can already expect the next issue in the spring. With this, we are in tune with the current proliferation of activities within the European sangha of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

Newcomers from France have brought in lots of enthusiasm and initiative. By providing simultaneous translation and subtitles to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's internet teachings, they have inspired other sanghas to follow them.

There is another project worth mentioning, led this time by the Austrian sangha: a basic practice kit is being prepared, including descriptions of main practices and prayers which will serve as introductory material for newcomers. A similar guidebook is already in use in the Finnish sangha. Now, it will be available in English for translation into other languages. In the next issue, we are going to update you on these and other ideas and activities.

There are changes regarding this magazine we

want to let you know about. Anja Benesch resigned from the position of editor, so she can dedicate her time fully to the work for The Three Doors Program. Among other tasks, she is now in charge of preparing The Three Doors International Newsletter, already published twice and available online. We want to thank Anja for all the ideas, work, and enthusiasm she brought to the team.

Floor van Orsouw from the Netherlands supported us with the preparation of this issue, and from the next issue on, she will be a regular editor.



We want to thank all the other people without whose help this magazine could not exist, above all our proofreaders. We also want to invite everyone with ideas and the energy to realize them, to join us in creating this magazine. There are a lot of things to be done: finding topics, writing and editing articles, promoting the magazine, building a database of pictures, and checking the content and names for

consistency. The nice part of it is that from creating the magazine for others, you profit in the first place, learning a lot of new information and connecting with interesting people.

We also want to use this space for corrections. In the last issue, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Anne Klein were erroneously listed as authors of a poem attributed to Lishu Taring. Our apologies to Lishu Taring.

Enjoy reading the Ligmincha Europe Magazine!

**Ton Bisscheroux and Jitka Polanská, editors**



# WE NEED OPENNESS AND COOPERATION IN THE SANGHA

Through his teachings and by example, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been inspiring thousands of people on their spiritual paths. What's more, he encourages everyone, not only meditation practitioners, to live to their full potential. As editors of this magazine we credit his spiritual leadership of the project with lighting our own creative spark. We asked Rinpoche about his current thoughts and his plans for the future. As this publication is a European project, we also asked for his perspective of today's European sangha.

**You have been doing so many things: you are the founder of Ligmincha Institute, Lishu Institute, The Three Doors program, the Prison Project. You write books, you travel around the world to give teachings, and much more. How do you manage all that?**

It is true that there is so much happening around me. But I cannot take all the credit. I am just trying to be aware of all the possibilities, create a space for them to happen, and continually inspire others. I put all the links together so these things can manifest without much struggle. I am lucky that there are so many people around me helping to bring these things into reality.

**You engage very much in your work, but it does not seem to cost you much energy.**

When you can create the space, work does not have to drain you. You are left with more energy to do more things. But when you are in the wrong space, one small problem may be enough to discourage you from doing anything at all. For example, when you are on a treadmill at the gym you may notice a small voice that says: "When is it going to be finished? I want it to finish!" That mental resistance is much stronger than the actual physical resistance you are experiencing. As long as you listen to that voice it's very hard to get anything done. I just feel very open and adventurous, with no expectation that everything will work out as I want it to. If something doesn't work, I try to spend as little time as possible thinking about the problem, and instead move on to something more interesting and productive.



**In recent years you have changed from a more traditional way of teaching to a more Western way. Can you tell us about this?**

I have not changed what I teach. The message is exactly the same as the traditional message. But I have changed the way I teach. As the times change, as the culture changes, as people are different, it is important to communicate in a way that people can understand well. So instead of giving examples of yaks or of butter, I am giving examples of computers and cell phones. And rather than putting lots of time and energy into emphasizing all the complex points of the ancient text, I am trying to go to the most essential part of the core teaching and communicate that to the person in the most simple and accessible way possible. There is only a limited amount of time for people to learn, and what they need is some solid experience that shifts their energy and their understanding.

I try to understand where each person is coming





from — what is happening in the person's life, what challenges the person is facing — and then offer the form of teaching that might be most beneficial for that moment in the person's life. It is very natural and spontaneous for me to do that, and I feel it is a gift I have. Many times, people from the audience come up to me after the teachings and say the same thing: “You have been talking about exactly what's going on in my life!” That is very gratifying for me, because it tells me I am touching their lives and their hearts.

Some teachers teach Ngondro without first checking the students' experience and level of commitment or preparation. I feel it's also important to know the readiness of the people you are teaching. If I find people who are ready, then I want them to make a full commitment to the practice, and only then will I teach Ngondro. As many of you know, after our retreat in Austria many people are engaging with the Ngondro practices and completing the repetitions. That is the traditional approach.



**You grew up as a monk, and now you are a husband and a father. Has family life changed your way of teaching?**

Family life changes the way I teach, and what I teach I try to bring into my family life. I talk about The Three Doors with my family and work on my

own personal transformations. Being a father brings up certain qualities and emotions. The affection for your child is incomparable. It is a very beautiful experience, special and enriching. But it also is an opportunity to work with attachment. Attachment to your child is much deeper than any attachment you can have to your possessions.



**Creativity has been a focus of your recent live internet teachings. Can you say something about your current projects?**

My latest book, *Tibetan Yogas of Body, Speech, and Mind*, came out in October. *Awakening the Sacred Body* came out in March. *Awakening the Luminous Mind* will come out in June. I just finished a one-hour documentary film about Bon. We are working on a book about soul retrieval. I would like to engage people more with live webcasts. There are many possibilities for enhancing access to the teachings.

In some sense, everybody is engaged in creativity most of the time, one way or another. Art can be a pure expression of inner realization, of your true self. If your art expresses sadness it can help you to heal. If it expresses your inner joy, it can enrich and complete your joy. Creativity allows you to fully realize what you are in the process of realizing, by expressing it in form, sound, or images. Sometimes expressions of art can also be dark and negative. If their purpose is to clear the darkness, then hopefully the space in which you create the art has a more illuminated quality. And hopefully you feel better after completing it.

In the Western world, we see so many products of a dead creative process, almost as though they are made by machine. These kinds of products are not going to last. A problem is that people tend to associate creativity with its end product, with the result. It is true that the product may be helpful to





others, and even benefit future generations. But for the creator, more important than the product is the liveliness, the joy, the flow of energy that comes during the creative process. The expression of thoughts, images and energies can be such a wonderful experience. It is like breathing. It gives you life, purpose, and meaning, it makes you feel complete, full, joyful. It's an expression of yourself. When you can experience that sense of creative flow, the result comes naturally.

#### **How do you see your projects in five to ten years?**

I would like to see more open communication between all the international sanghas, a warm and sacred bond between them. A new international website is being created as a doorway to all the sanghas and their activities around the world, and this will help. I also would like to see the organization as a whole become self-sustaining for the long term, with clear guidelines and consistent practice materials available for all the practice groups and centers. As an organization we are going through some changes. For now, each country needs to focus on nurturing its own sanghas, activities and projects.

#### **What qualities do you see in your Western students?**

People from the West are generally very open to exploring new things and new ideas. This openness is one of their best qualities. I find that many Eastern students do not easily shift their attention away from what they know, and they tend to learn through repetition.

My wife and I are impressed by the dedication of my students who return year after year to listen

to the teachings, try to understand them, and practice them. We also are often amazed by their generosity. I am lucky that the people I have attracted are service oriented: they do not only receive from me, but they also give back.

#### **And what obstacles do you see with Western students?**

Sometimes they are too open, continually shopping for the dharma and for new teachers. There is a question of loyalty, consistency, and stability in relationships, including marital relationships. These are the defects of too much openness.

#### **When people ask you how to deal with their unique problems, you often respond with the same message. For example, the *Nine Breathings of Purification*, *Tsa Lung*, *Inner Refuge*. Is it that simple?**

Yes, the answer is not complicated, the questions are. What helps people most is not so much a new and different answer, but one that they are able to hear and immediately relate to.

The light of wisdom does not change; light is light. And no matter what kind of darkness it is — darkness in a bottle, darkness in a room or darkness under a bridge — darkness is darkness.

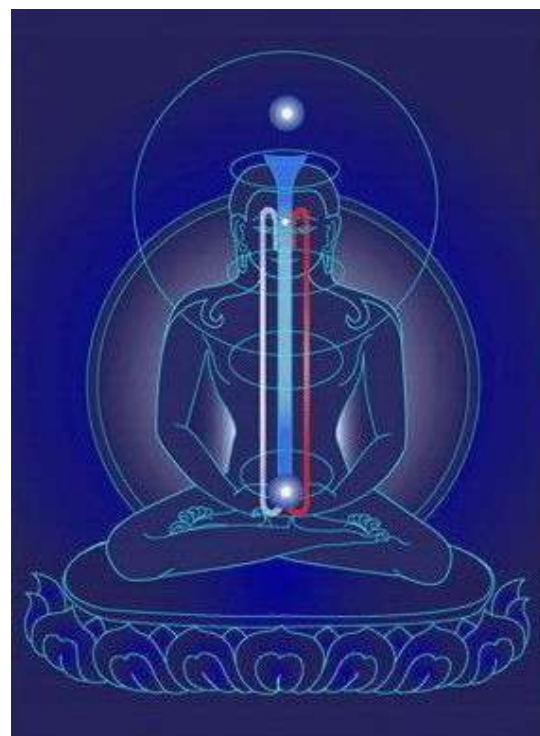


Illustration by Timothy Arbon







But everybody sees their own problem as unique, as more special than anyone else's. So I give them light for their specific problem.

#### **What is your dream?**

I want the teachings of The Three Doors to be universally accessible: through health care, through social services, through educational institutions. My other dream is that the teachings, which have been passed down unbroken for thousands of years, will be learned by a group of Western students as best as possible in the original form. Lishu Institute is helping to make

that dream possible.

#### **Is there something you want to say particularly to the European sangha?**

The worldwide sangha has matured over the years and is quite strong, but it needs a little more direction and connection. Each local center and sangha has grown in its own way, without much communication with the others. When we do the live webcast teachings, we can feel ourselves in one space, the cyberspace. Everybody says how wonderful and amazing it is to feel connected all around the world, listening together, practicing together. People cry. I think this feeling of connection is very important to have not only online but also offline. People sometimes travel to other countries to receive teachings. You make the online magazine. People in Spain work on the international website. That kind of oneness and cooperation is what we need more of. I encourage everybody to work on that bigger sense of sangha, to engage more in that direction.



#### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux, edited by Polly Turner**

Photos by Bogdan Waszut, Bogusia Dausend, Cheyenne McQuilkin and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





# TSETHAR CEREMONY: FISH RELEASE IN BERLIN

On 21st September 2011, the United Nations International Day of Peace, thirty-three people in Berlin had the unique opportunity to experience the ancient Tibetan ceremony of *Tsethar*, conducted by Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe. *Tsethar* is Tibetan for life liberation. Everyone received blessings, and about eighty happy fish swam off to their destinies. A report from Sarah Edgehill.

With helpful and friendly guidance from the Fisheries office in Berlin, we took utmost care to release fish which enhance the biodiversity of Wannsee lakes area.



compassion to other living beings. What a great simple solution, and it's all about life.



For me personally, it has also proven to be a great practise of the joy of giving, letting go, and enjoying openness. We as humans love to control, and by doing this simple ritual it comes down to having trust in the enormous potential of our mother nature that the right things happen if we let them in the natural way. International scientific environmental conferences in 2011, have identified regeneration as one of the top solutions for solving problems in the environment.

This was the first official ceremony of its kind in Berlin. These mirror carp fish can live up to one hundred years of age, so the inspiring thoughts that came to me with the ceremony were mixtures of intrigue and wonder about the potential lives and destinies of those fish. And perhaps the sea eagle population also benefits from the fish in three or four generations to come.

My foremost intention of the fish release is to generate a mighty ocean of positive energy for ourselves and our children, while simultaneously contributing to the renewal of life in our waters and oceans.

It is a great method of activating hope for our children, by introducing them to the experience of generating waves of





Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teachings are constantly reminding me of trust and openness, and the fish are a great practise of trust in the natural cycles of life. The openness follows automatically with the joy and appreciation of nature's amazing qualities.



We see the fish shortly, then they are gone, but we know they are there somewhere doing whatever fish do ... and that might be funny for some of us, but not for many fish at the moment. So it's great to do something positive for a change, and see fish swimming in water and not only dead on a plate. It's a simple small step to make a positive change for our mother nature, but it has enormous potential. So let us put the fish back into water where they belong.

I want to give Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe thanks for his blessings of this new project. With his dedicated support and appreciation for this great action, he has lit the fires of inspiration in many of our hearts, and I am truly honoured that he was part of the beginnings of such a beautiful ceremony here.

The *Tsethar* ceremony in Tibet consists of purchasing an animal that is intended for death and releasing it into its natural habitat.

### A letter from a guest:

"To bring fish back to nature is such a great thing. But to do this with a Tibetan ceremony, it was a blessing. I felt a very deep happiness. I think, if we could see how fish are smiling, we could have seen many big smiles yesterday. And the energy behind this action, giving living creatures the freedom and space for their free existence, was so enriching. This world could be such a peaceful place if each one of us lives with this energy. Power does not come from taking life, it shows itself in giving life. I learned a Tibetan wisdom on that day: "By giving life to someone else you enhance your own life time."

### Text by Sarah Edgehill

Photos by Catarina Jacques, Kerstin Heller and Wolfgang Reichert





# WHEN WAS TONPA SHENRAB BORN?

The birth of Tonpa Shenrab and other interesting topics were discussed at the recent conference *Bon, Shangshung and Early Tibet*. The conference was organized to celebrate fifty years of Bonpo Studies in the West. Jaroslaw Kotas, a researcher at Wroclaw University in Poland and a Bon practitioner, kindly prepared this report.

In September 2011 a remarkable meeting took place in London: *Bon, Shangshung and Early Tibet*. This event was organized by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in cooperation with the Shangshung Institute. Twenty-two scholars were invited to share their knowledge of Bon, Shangshung and Early Tibet and for two days these experts presented their findings to the international group of about a hundred in attendance.

## Most Prominent Speakers

The most notable of those presenting at this conference were H.E. Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Tenzin Namdak

Rinpoche was not able, due to health concerns, to attend in person but his recorded lecture on *The Nine Ways of Bon* was viewed.

## Kalpa Group and its Field Work

One of Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche's closest disciples, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, along with Charles Ramble, a Bon expert at the University of Oxford, presented a paper titled *Kalpa Group in Bon Studies*. This paper comes from the excellent field-work the Kalpa Group did in the village of Lhu-Drak. The Kalpa Group funds a range of projects that represent and uphold the diversity of the Bon religion of Tibet, as well as supporting communities where the Bon religion is still practiced.

## When Was Tonpa Shenrab Born?

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche shared the highlights of his newest book, *The Light of Kailash* in which he revealed an unusual perspective on the research being done on *the history of Shangshung and the early dynasties of the Tibetan kings*. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche presented information which was previously unknown to many researchers such as the age of Songtsen Gampo, the Tibetan king at



Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche's presentation





## The Eight Topics of the Conference

1. Forms of the Four Ways of Cause in the Bonpo tradition (Ramble, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Samuel, Sanders and H.E. Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche)
2. Cosmology (Samten Karmay, Zhaba)
3. Shangshung language (Martin, Blezer)
4. Bon in relation to other traditions (Ermakov, Rossi, Mayer)
5. Bonpo lineages (des Jardins, Tsering Thar)
6. History of Shangshung (Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche)
7. Old Buddhist scriptures and arts (Cantwell, van Schaik, Yoeli-Tlalim, Dotson, Heller)
8. Funerals and mortuary practice in pre-Buddhist Tibet (Aldenderfer)

the time of his marriage to the Chinese princess, Wen Chen which he asserts was fifty-six years rather than thirteen years. Professor Namkhai Norbu also introduced his calculation of Tonpa Shenrab's birth date as 3927 BC.

Professor Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is the founder of The Shang Shung Institute (SSI) in 1989 which cosponsored this conference. SSI was established in Italy and now has branches around the world.

### Queen of the World

An iconic figure in the field of Bon studies, Samten Karmay, delivered a lecture on Sidpai Gyalmo titled *The Queen of the World and Her Twenty-Seven Daughters* which is based on a text discovered by Bonpo Master, Shechen Luga in 1017. This ancient text was found in a ruined Buddhist chorten in Ghatang in southern Tibet and published in Lhasa in 2007.

### Monpas Priests in India

Professor Fabian Sanders of The Università Ca'Foscari, Venice, Italy and a researcher for The Shang Shung Institute presented my personal favorite portion of the conference. He focused on the presence of Bon priests, *pramis*, in Arunachal Pradesh, India. This is where some of the ethnic group, Monpas, live. In my research I found Monpas living in Ladakh as well. These people are no longer within the caste system but in the

distant past they were likely to be emissaries of Buddhism in this area. Professor Sanders described the activities of the *pramis*, the Monpas priests.

I hope that this conference was the first scientific gathering on Shangshung and pre-Buddhist Tibetan history. There is a 'treasury of knowledge' of Bon waiting to be revealed as Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche mentioned in his lecture.

**Text by Jaroslaw Kotas**

Photos by Sarah Edgehill and Barbara Kotas



### Jaroslaw Kotas

is a researcher and teacher at the Institute of International Studies, Wroclaw University, Poland. Dr. Kotas researches ancient Tibetan traditions, Bon history, practices and philosophy as well as other subjects. He has studied and practiced with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for eleven years and occasionally with H.E. Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche.



# I JUST GOTTA BE THERE

**Sarah Edgehill was one of the participants in the conference *Bon, Shangshung, and Early Tibet*. Full of enthusiasm to help, she was able to see the event from the backstage.**

## **How did you happen to go to the conference, Sarah?**

I was in Shenten Dargyé Ling at the beginning of July, for a couple of days. And there, outside the gompa, I saw an old looking leaflet hanging on the wall with the key words written 'BON', 'CONFERENCE', 'SEPTEMBER 2011', 'LONDON'. I thought immediately: I have to go there!

I come from New Zealand. If I was there, it would be near impossible to go for two days in London, but Berlin is only a couple of hours away. "I gotta go, look and see," I told myself.

You know, the conference is one of those things that complete the picture for me — the picture that I started to discover over twenty years ago. I travelled a lot then. I did a kind of *kora* around Tibet, visiting most countries in the Himalaya region, but I have never been to Tibet.

## **You took part very actively, helping with the documentation of the whole event. Did you know anybody from the staff before coming?**

No, actually, I just contacted SOAS and asked for permission to film the conference for any interested member of the European Bon community. The organizers replied that the conference would be fully documented with the production of a dvd as well.

They gave me contact details of the person responsible, Alex Siedlicki. He works with the Shang Shung Institute of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and they are doing all sorts of interesting things like making documentaries on ancient Tibet, organising art exhibitions etc etc. I told him I'd be happy to offer my help and he said why not, yes. And so I became a kind of assistant to him and his colleague Pieter Kiewiet de Jonga.

## **What did you do?**

So, Alex and Peter were filming the conference as well as making interviews with some of the prominent speakers. My task was to inform the speakers at the registration about it and ask them if they were willing to give an interview. It was a great opportunity to meet them. Until then, I knew faces of only one or two of them. So, I had to approach them asking: "Excuse me, are you..?"

During the interviews I had the not so fun job of keeping the place quiet — not so easy in a conference coffee break — and so I couldn't really listen much to these incredible interviews with people like Samten Karmay, or Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung in discussion with Professor Charles Rambles. That was tough for me, as you can imagine. Some of the speakers are life long scholars of ancient Tibet and Shang Shung which is what I am so fascinated with and so, being there was a unique opportunity to get even deeper into this mysterious ancient tradition that I feel so much connected with.





Prof. Samten Karmay, from the Centre de recherche sur les civilisations de l'Asie orientale, CNRS Paris talks about the *Queen of the World and her twenty-seven daughters*

I was fortunate to learn a whole lot in a really short space of time and was lucky to have a great spontaneous interview with Professor Charles Rambles about the ancient Tibetan ritual of *Tsethar* – freeing fish. My interest in this ritual became a project already and we realized the first *Tsethar* event in Berlin, on Wednesday September 21st. But that is another story. Anyway, the interview was one of my biggest delights of the conference.

Shang Shung conference was fantastic, a real mass of inexhaustible treasure of Bon – huge fusion of ancient, modern, scholar, spiritual, absolute and relative and miles of great smiles in between...

**Interview by Jitka Polanska**  
photos by Sarah Edgehill

**You can find more information about the *Bon, Shangshung, and Early Tibet Conference* at:**  
[www.soas.ac.uk/chineseStudies/events/bon-shangshung-and-early-tibet](http://www.soas.ac.uk/chineseStudies/events/bon-shangshung-and-early-tibet)

### Sarah Edgehill

arrived in Berlin in 1986 with the trans-Siberian train at the age of twenty-two. She went there to study art and settled there. Sarah was married thirteen years to a Rastafarian from Barbados and has two beautiful children. Since 2002, she has been filming reggae musicians and researching about spirituality in music. Recently, she has been working with youth in film projects on world change and environment consciousness themes. During her life, she completed many meditation courses and travelled to many temples throughout Asia. But she found her teacher in Berlin, where she met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche two years ago. "I never imagined before that I would have a spiritual teacher to whom I would feel so much love and devotion, but now it's absolutely the right thing for me."





# IT'S LIKE PEELING AN ONION

In August 2011, The Three Doors Academy Europe kicked off with its first Group Training Retreat at Finkenwerder Hof in Northern Germany. Anja Benesch shares with us what it is like to be a trainee.

When you join The Three Doors program, how do you know what you've gotten yourself into? Well, you can't really know until it finally happens, and the experience is sure to surprise you with its depth and intensity. For about a year I have been supporting Kallon Basquin and The Three Doors organization to create the first European Three Doors Academy. When he and the Academy Teachers, Raven and John, arrived in Berlin, the journey I had yearned for began. We left the capital city of Germany to abide in stillness, silence, and spaciousness, within the beautiful natural setting of Mecklenburgische Seenplatte, in a place called Finkenwerder Hof.



Twenty-four people from nine different European countries joined the first Group Training Retreat. After the first day of sharing our suffering and joys, I felt like diving into the safety of this circle which was so capably protected by what Tenzin Wangyal likes to call “the invisible firm hand” (speaking of Kallon).

During the first retreat, we abided in inner refuge for long periods of time, and the space into which all our pain and happiness dissolved got bigger and bigger, moment by moment. As it says in the teachings, it felt boundless, like the sky, and all that was needed for our qualities to ripen was the warmth of the sun – our own

awareness of the limitlessness and openness within us and amongst us. Through the gift of the group's deep listening and awareness, the more we openly shared, the more the refuge space we created expanded to embrace these unique, heart touching experiences. My confidence that anything could be hugged, healed, and dissolved in boundless space, deepened considerably during that week. What was new to me was the dimensions of boundlessness I discovered being in that group. I was struck by the power in this collectively held space, the depth of trust, and the directness with which we witnessed one another and our own minds. The fullness of our giving and receiving, allowing and opening, created a truly sacred space. I had known for a long time that I wanted to go on this journey, but I never expected how much I would like the trip!

Of course doing the Three Doors Academy is not like going to Disneyland and finding peace-and-happiness-ever-after. You are getting naked. You are looking at your anger, your dark sides, your behavioral patterns, your addictions, and the way you reject and avoid daily experiences. Sometimes I think I'm going nuts. But then I remind myself that this is just one of my smart egos engaging in pain speech, and I take the red pill of silence. I take many of the red ones these days. I used to be great at creating problems by thinking all

day. Now I am confident there is another state in which I am not constantly disturbed by the inner chatter that makes me go crazy.

Raven and John, our humorous and fearless Teachers, guided us well in discovering the benefits of the *Nine Breathings of Purification* and the *Tsa Lung* exercises. In the middle of the week, we were given instructions on how to choose the issues we wanted to transform in our training and get started on the famous ‘sixty-three transformations.’ In small groups we discussed how to identify the ways in which our issue is connected to the root poisons, so we could get a clear idea of what to focus on when



doing the purification breathings with the channels. We also discussed the levels on which the pain can manifest – body, speech and/or mind – and the ways the issue is related to the chakras. I am telling you: this sounds easy to do but once you're really doing it every day, it can get totally complicated. At least, it gets complicated if you think and talk a lot about it, which is what you're doing when you write down your experiences in your 'transformation journal.' John once explained that going through the process of transformation was "like peeling an onion."

You take one skin off and find another layer. And after peeling that one, you find another and then another, and the closer to the core you come, the trickier it can get. The onion's sharpness might make you sob more or laugh harder but the heart of the onion will be beautiful and soft, and after taking off that last layer there will be nothing left. And that's what we're doing, step by step: peeling, until nothing remains. No more hurt ego crying for shelter or untamed inner child craving a sweet taste while your empty body rebels on a rotten karmic cushion and your monkey-mind jumps up and down urging you to go somewhere else – anywhere else – and do anything other than hold this experience. For the moment, peeling the outer skins of the onions is fine. This is about taking our daily hassles, worries, and sufferings – and let's not forget our joys and happy experiences – into our practice. It is about transforming seemingly little things: Saying "Hi" to my wife early in the morning despite the fact that I am a 'Morgenmuffel' (not-a-morning-person); opening my heart to my father whose choleric outbursts used to make me turn away; giving up being shy with unfamiliar people out of fear; letting somebody know I have a crush on him despite my fear of being rejected; allowing myself to stop working so much and facing the feelings of unworthiness and sadness that bubble up as soon as I do so. As for what gets transformed and how thoroughly things shift, a spiritual friend in the training group reminded us of this question from *The Matrix*: "How deep down the rabbit hole do you wanna go?"

I am so grateful for The Three Doors program that

was envisioned and shaped by Tenzin Wangyal for the western mind, and is now being presented by these wonderful Academy Teachers who clearly speak with his voice and help us take these powerful practices into our bones. And I just love my buddies on the journey! Within six weeks of leaving Finkenwerder Hof in early September, approximately one-hundred-fifty emails have been exchanged on the group mailing list. We're sharing our experiences and asking each other to "Please host me" if we're in pain. We're sharing our dream work, our poems, and the results of practice in daily life. Life is so much richer now. "Be aware of the great gift you've given to yourself," Raven used to remind us after meditation practice.



What will be left of me once I lift the veil of all these identities, scratch off the emperor's new clothes, and be nakedly seen by everyone around me? I certainly do not know. I'm not always sure what I have gotten myself into, but I am so, so curious to find out. "Let's walk in beauty," John said in the beginning of the retreat. And so I begin to walk.

**Text and photos by Anja Benesch**

### **A taste of The Three Doors program**

Over the next several months, The Three Doors will provide free online sessions with Tenzin Wangyal and Academy Teacher Marcy Vaughn in order to give people a taste of what is happening in the Academy Training. For further information, check out the website: [www.the3doors.org/academy-curriculum/free-online-sessions-en.html](http://www.the3doors.org/academy-curriculum/free-online-sessions-en.html) or write to: [info.europe@the3doors.org](mailto:info.europe@the3doors.org)



# LISHU INSTITUTE IS LIKE A NEW PLANT

Geshe Thupten Negi is secretary of Lishu Institute, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's retreat and study center in India. Geshela visited Europe last summer together with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche where many sangha members had an opportunity to meet him. Geertje Bloemers recently went to Lishu Institute for a personal retreat and asked Geshe Thupten for this interview.

## **Please introduce yourself.**

My name is Geshe Thupten Gyaltzen Negi. I am from the Northern part of India, district Kinnour, Himachal Pradesh. I was born 20 December 1975. My father's name is Tenzin Premie and my mother's name is Sita Mani. I have three brothers and three sisters. Our family belongs to the astrological lineage. Beginning with my great grandfather and passed on to his son and then to my father we publish the Tibetan Astrology Almanac every year as we have for one hundred and ten years. Since my father passed away this is a project I have taken up.

My primary education was in my village of Lipa in Kinnour, to the seventh grade. I was fifteen years old when I first came to Menri Monastery on 11 May 1988. It was then that I met the Menri Abbot. He sent me to the English school in Dolanji which is a school for Tibetans. I learned English and Tibetan reading and writing. After that I joined the Bon Academy of Philosophy, and twelve years later in 2004 I received my Geshe degree. During my years of study I did social work with orphaned boys and newly arrived monks from Tibet.

## **Please tell us something about the beginning and development of Lishu Institute.**

I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche at Menri Monastery and he had the idea of creating Lishu Institute in India. Many of his Western students want to study more deeply. Rinpoche considers India the best place to do this because it's a nice place and Westerners like India. It's an economical place, and it is easy to come and go. Therefore it was decided it would be India.

Rinpoche told me to find the land. I looked in different places but I could not decide which place

was the best for us. Rinpoche came and together we spent ten days looking for land and finally we found this place. There was a very good sign on this land. An auspicious flower that grows in Tibet and the Himalayas is growing here. It is known from the time of Tonpa Shenrab. This flower grows all over the Lishu land so we decided to buy this land.

After six or seven months we received the status for Lishu Institute as a non profit society to promote religious, charitable, educational and scientific activities. We composed a board of fifteen people with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's wife Tsering Wangmo as president. We then needed foreign financial contributions. In February 2010 we received permission to receive money from Ligmincha Institute in the United States. Rinpoche and I made plans for the building and in May, June we began construction. It took a year and six months and now it's there, a comfortable place for Western students.



Geshe Thupten with the traditional Kinnour hat

## **What has been your role so far and what will it be in the future?**

From the beginning until now I was general secretary. I have to look after all government affairs. I supervise the construction, communicate with the contractor, check the measurements, taking care that everything is going correctly, many different things. I am one of the Lishu Board members and I give my full day, all of my full time to Lishu. In the future I hope that I will continue as secretary. I will always support Lishu. If Lishu needs me, my contribution will always be for Lishu.







Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen, Dmitry Shumov and Geertje Bloemers

### What is your motivation to do this work?

My motivation is to bring peace to the world. Lishu Institute is like a new plant. The plant will grow up, with leaves. Then later on comes the flower. After that comes the fruit. Then the fruit will ripen and eventually we will use the food and people will enjoy the fruit and be happy.

Lishu Institute is like sand. I am one person. With the people on the board we are fifteen persons. More people will come and one day we will be all over the world. Different people in different places with a good education, serving different nations. Promoting peace and enlightenment in the world. I hope it works this way, I am working for that.

### What place does Lishu Institute have in the international Bon sangha?

The worldwide Bon sangha, from many different countries, will come to Lishu Institute to study and practice the Bon teachings. These students will return to their homes, share what they have learned and apply it to their own lives.

### Why do you think people would choose to study at Lishu Institute instead of monasteries like Menri?

Because Lishu Institute has a special view. From this view teachings will be given specifically for Westerners. The monasteries are more for Tibetan people, for how they want to go, where they want to go, what type of way they want to learn. The teachings in the monastery are in Tibetan language. But here we are teaching in the Western way. Here we are teaching in English, easy to understand. What people want, that's

where they will go. To Bon or Buddhist monasteries or to Lishu Institute. Like in the market where there are many vegetables. People choose what they like.

### Can you tell us something about the program for the next few years?

In 2012, from October 13 until November 9, we will have a one month retreat. The teachings will be: *Rigdruk Rangton (the Six Loka's)* and *Phowa*. The teachers will come from Menri Monastery and also from Varanasi University. At the moment we are preparing for this retreat: how to do the transportation from Delhi, how many people will be in the building and how many in tents, how we will serve the daily food, etc. Hopefully it will be successful.

And in October 2013 we will start the full time program. We are now developing the curriculum, under the direction of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The teachings will be *the Nine Ways of Bon, Ngondro* and other teachings. Teachings that are important for our life, for what people need. The texts that will be used have not yet been finalized. Students will come for the time of six months to three years. Depending on how much time people have to be here.

### Do you have a message for the European sangha?

I wish you all the best, all who are contributing to the Bon sangha in Europe. I had a very good experience during my visit in Europe. It was very nice. Thank you for your kindness.

### Interview by Geertje Bloemers

Photos by Geshe Thupten Gyaltzen Negi and Geertje Bloemers

"My retreat at Lishu Institute is a healing experience. Being at the peaceful blessed land. View at the mountains... Practising in the beautiful, spacious, comfortable building. Being with Geshe Thupten Negi: open, warm, active, tirelessly working for Lishu, always there supporting and guiding my practice. I am so grateful to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for offering us this wonderful place to deepen our practice and study."

Geertje Bloemers



# LEARNING PEACE IN STRESSFUL ENVIRONMENTS

Hannah Lloyd is coordinator of the Ligmincha Prison Project in the United States. Once a week, she herself teaches Bon meditation practices – *The Nine Breathings of Purification*, *Tsa Lung* and *The Five Warrior Syllables* – in a prison. Ton Bisscheroux interviewed her.

## How did you get involved in the project?

Three years ago Rinpoche asked me if I wanted to get involved in developing a project for prisoners. I was very happy to do that. My basic responsibility is being coordinator of the international project. Initially I sat down to create the instructors handbook, so that we have structure to go by. That included the basic practices that are used in the project and distilling them into a secular form. We removed a lot of the dharma language, so it is available to anyone who is interested in learning these practices, which are very powerful.

## What is the idea behind the Prison Project?

Rinpoche wants to make the practices available for prisoners, both for those who are currently in prison and may be there for a long time, and those who are initially preparing for release soon to the general community. The reasoning here is that if they are interested and willing to practice, they will be able to settle in the nature of mind. From this space we all make better decisions. We will help them to develop skills for stress reduction, both those who are incarcerated, and those who return to their communities. Returning to the communities is a high risk time for prisoners. The recidivism rates are very high. That has to do with not having changed their inner process and not having had tools and skills available, to develop a lifestyle that will take care of them when they return to the community.

## Is it easy to contact prisoners in America?

No, it is not easy. Here we have an entire protocol, and having worked with the prison systems for a couple of years in our local prison in Charlottesville – a maximum security prison – I had a little bit of a better sense that I need to be mindful that the administration there see their job as security. I don't want to do anything to interfere with that to give them any problems.

**So, it is not that simple that you make an appointment, walk in and start your teaching.**

No, we first need to establish a relationship with the administration. We need to let them know what we are doing, and also who we are. So they can check us out, and be sure we are not going to be a security problem for them. They need to train us to their protocol, their rules and regulations for visitors and instructors coming into their system. Most prisons have a volunteer program. So if they decide that they want us to come in and do this, then we have to learn the volunteer's instructions. This consists of what they expect from us, what to bring and what not to bring, what to wear, what to say. When we are allowed in, they can fingerprint us and they can do criminal background checks and they need a certification letter from Rinpoche, saying that we are ok to teach.



When we go to a prison system we point out to them there is research backing these practices that show that prisoners who participate are much easier to manage, and that makes the guard job easier as well. There is less fighting and aggression. We can give something valuable to the prisoners and to the prison system at large.



### **Do you give prisoners a DVD with recorded instructions from Rinpoche?**

The first time I went there I said: “You have so much equipment here, that’s wonderful, can I show them a DVD?” and they said: “Oh, no.” We cannot legally distribute it or leave it in the prison systems, but we give people the handout from the inmate package, with all the instructions for the practice. We tell the inmates that they can get online and do the practice with Rinpoche on YouTube, because he is there. And the book *Tibetan Sound Healing* is also very helpful.

### **Do prisoners come for meditation?**

Sometimes they just come because there is something to do. They are honest with you about that. Sometimes they had experiences in the past, and they say “I am very glad that it is here.” Sometimes it is just curiosity. But most respond to the idea that it is to learn something that is an opportunity to reduce stress. Many find it very stressful to be in custody.

### **Do they ask questions after you gave instructions?**

Yes they do, and some I do not have answers for. Sometimes I tell them “I will ask my teacher”, or I go to the vast store of information and translation centre and look for answers. At the end of a practice there is time to share their experiences.

### **Is the Ligmincha Prison Project also active outside of the United States?**

Yes, in Mexico City, and Morales in Mexico. Szymon Jablonski has been doing it in Poland for quite some time in Warsaw, way before we started the Prison Project. He supported us and let us know how things worked for him. Several other sanghas in Europe, like Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, Finland, France, Denmark and Switzerland are working on translations of the handout. The handout contains an instructor’s packet and an inmate packet with text and images of all the practices. It also tells the benefits of the practice, like anxiety reduction, anger reduction, reduction of negative thoughts, improved relationships with staff, and many more.

### **Do you have a title for your program?**

We just call it *stress reduction*. We were also thinking of a name for the entire Prison Project, but so far we haven’t come up with anything. So if

somebody has an idea, let us know.

### **If our readers get interested in the Ligmincha Prison Project, can they contact you?**

Yes, my email is: [hannahlloyd@mac.com](mailto:hannahlloyd@mac.com).

Eventually my goal is to identify coordinators in each country, so people can contact the person who is in charge in their country and get the information, get the material and get started. For the European sangha the coordinator is Nicolas Gounaropoulos, email [gounaropoulos@gmail.com](mailto:gounaropoulos@gmail.com).

Working for the Prison Project is quite a commitment in time, energy and is a great service. Each prison system is different, and also in each country the laws and regulations are different. Some places are very easy to enter and they make you offering for the instructor to come in on a regular basis and that they are expected at that time, and establish a relationship with the administration of that prison system.

Rinpoche wants to be sure that every instructor just does the basic instructions. We are not qualified to teach anything else. The method in which you present the teachings is something that should reflect the essence of the way in which you received these practices yourself.

### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photo by Cindy Jackson

#### **‘Prison project’ in Belgium**

“In 2011 I was teaching Bon meditation in two jails. For a three month period I was visiting weekly a group of women and I was teaching a male group – also on a weekly basis – for seven months. We practiced *The Nine Breathings of Purification, Tsa Lung, Five Warrior Syllables* and *resting in the nature of mind*. During that time I realized more than ever how Rinpoche’s teachings are accessible and totally adequate to our modern society in all conditions and places. The inmates entered directly in the practice and were talking with me about the positive effects they experienced. Now I am planning to create a project of teaching these practices to prison guards.”

Nicolas Gounaropoulos





# SISTERS IN BON

**Lidia Castellano during her last visit to Menri monastery, in the summer of 2011, went to see how the nuns from Redna Menling Nunnery – which is a part of Menri – were dealing with a quite radical change in their monastic lives: the studies of philosophy and dialectic school being open for them since December 2010.**

Dakinis and female goddesses play very important roles in the Bon tradition. Bon has great female meditation masters and dzogchen teachers who attained rainbow bodies. Even the famous Lishu Taring, a great sage and master of the past, is said to have been a girl who later changed her gender and the first nun ordained in the Bon tradition was Tonpa Shenrab's daughter. Women are recognized as having the same opportunities and potentialities as men, and can also follow the complete course of dialectic studies in the monastic system, which is not common in other traditions. In December 2010 the Menri Monastery, following this tradition, finally gathered the necessary resources and opened the philosophical studies programme to the nuns of Redna Menling Nunnery which is a part of the monastery. It means the nuns from Redna Menling can follow the twelve or thirteen years long course of studies that concludes with the Geshe degree just as their male counterparts of Menri do. During my last visit to Menri, in the summer of 2011, I was curious to see how the nuns were getting along with this quite radical change in their monastic lives.

Redna Menling is situated on the other side of the valley, across the river, as tradition requires, at half an hour's distance from the monastery. One fine morning, myself, Sangmo Yangri, a young woman who grew up in Dolanji and is now studying for her PhD at Varanasi Tibetan University, and my friend Patrizia, left the guesthouse of the monastery and walked through the valley to the nunnery. When we reached it, we were welcomed by most of the nineteen adult nuns living there. They willingly sat down with us to talk. Sangmo's translation from Tibetan was a great help in our conversation. Thanks to the warm friendship that I developed with her I could talk to the nuns with ease.

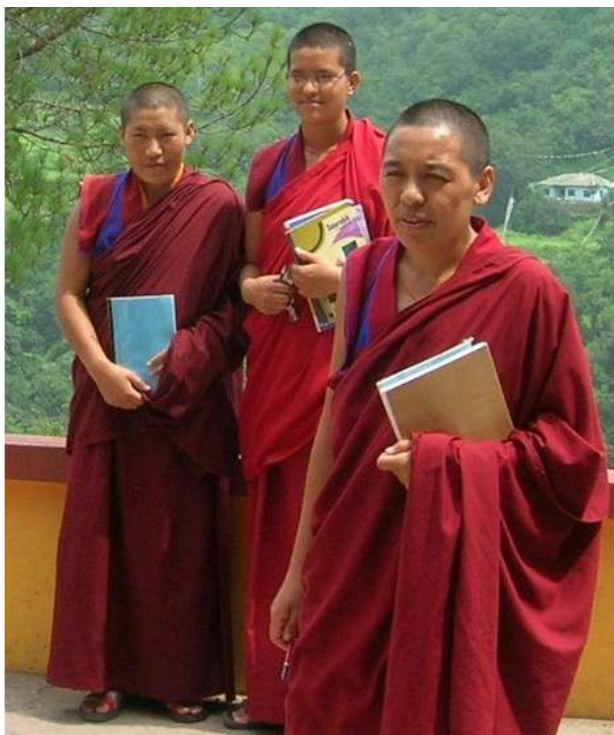
We were offered tea and biscuits as we sat in front of the Temple, moving every now and then to follow the shade to stay cool. Yeshe Jamma, a soft spoken but very determined woman of thirty-four, offered to tell us her story. She came from Tibet together with two friends to follow the spiritual path. As she told us, even as a young girl her warmest wish was to be a Bonpo nun taking the full ordination of three hundred sixty vows prescribed for women. She had grown up in a small village in Tibet, where her main occupation was tending the family animals, and she could not go to school.



At the age of twenty-two she had taken the first twenty-five vows in Tibet, but she strongly wished to receive the full ordination from the main authorities of Bon, H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and H.H. Menri Trizin Rinpoche. To accomplish this she had to leave her home. She went through many difficulties before finally reaching Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal, where she and her two friends took the twenty-five vows again with Yongdzin Rinpoche, later to be followed by the three hundred sixty vows. But first they had to make up for their lack of schooling; in the five years that they spent there, they learned to read and write and received the entire basic education. There is no nunnery in Triten Norbutse, so they were waiting for the chance to move to Menri Monastery in Dolanji in India, where the nunnery



was being built. The journey to India again was not an easy one for the inexperienced young women, but finally they managed to reach the monastery and settle at Redna Menling nunnery.



Other nuns living there come mostly from the Nepal-Tibet border areas and some Himalayan valleys in India. Mostly they have taken the twenty-five vows for the moment. The average age for taking vows is around twenty, and the choice is made with full awareness and self-responsibility. The girls who grow up here and receive shelter and education will also be able to choose whether to stay on as nuns or leave. For the moment, they wear nun's robes and shave their heads in homage to the Monastery which is hosting them.

We were invited for lunch in the dining hall. After lunch we resumed our talk with six of the nuns, asking them about their studies. They shared their difficulties in following the subtle and complicated subject of philosophy. They found it difficult, they said, but also very exciting. It is something very new for them and at the same time something which they had strongly wanted: hard and challenging maybe, but making them discover and realize all the unsuspected potentialities of their minds! So much so that when I asked about their dreams for the future, some told me they wanted to become meditation or philosophy teachers and

to help other women to get the same opportunity as they were enjoying.

While we were waiting for the girls to return from school, I invited the nuns to ask me some questions. They did: all of them concerned my spiritual and mediation experience in Bon, the practices I do, and how I got to know the monastery and the teaching.



When they went to pray in the temple we joined them, delighted by the sweet sound of their singing. One by one the girls returning from school appeared: we greeted them with some sweets and they accepted them smiling. Then each one rushed off to change from school uniform to their robes. It was their snack time. We all sat down for tea. When we finished our tea we left our sisters in Bon with happiness and warmth in our hearts.



**Text and photos by Lidia Castellano**



# GO FOR YOUR DARK RETREAT IN THOGAL HOUSE

One of the very few places in Europe where you can do the dark retreat in the Bon tradition is Thogal House in Shenten Dargyé Ling in France. We asked Geraldine Dubreuil, who is currently in charge of this munkhang, about how dark retreats in Thogal House are organized.

## Aldine, when did you open Thogal House?

In September 2010, after His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche blessed it.

## How many people can stay in?

We have three rooms, two small ones and one big room, thus three practitioners can stay at the same time. Each room has its own toilet and shower, and meals are served through a special serving hatch, always in the darkness.

## How are practitioners assisted?

I am the current *munkhang* assistant for the practical matters such as warm meals, hot water thermoses and other small items. For the spiritual guidance we have one Geshe and one Lama available all year long. They perform a blessing ritual at the start and at the end of every dark retreat and can be consulted at any moment.

## How many people have you hosted already?

Twenty-seven up to now, and they stay for an average of a seven-day period. Khenpo Tenpa Rinpoche advises to start slowly, up to seven days straight.

## What would you recommend to bring and to keep in mind?

Bring your own thermoses if you really drink lots of hot drinks. This practice is a very deep purification on many levels. We are here for practitioners to give them all kind of support and advice depending on their mind and specific circumstances.

## What are the costs of the stay?

The daily current rate for the small room is € 38, for the first two weeks. Then the price decreases to € 32 a day for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week, € 24 a day for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> week, and € 18 a day for the 7<sup>th</sup> week. It includes two warm meals a day and hot water service. 25% discount is available for people with the monthly income below € 1.200.



## Interview by Jitka Polanská

Photos by Shenten Dargyé Ling



As a student of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche Geraldine (Aldine) Dubreuil has been affiliated with the Yungdrung Bon tradition for

twelve years. She translated from English to French some volumes of the Healthy Mind Interviews by Henry Miles Vyner. She facilitates interactive workshops based on the Bonpo tradition. She has been elected in SDL's Board of Directors until July 2013. At this time she has practised in Shenten's *munkhang*, dark retreat twice.

You can write her for more information at: [contact@shenten.org](mailto:contact@shenten.org)





# MY SHENTEN DARGYÉ LING

Château de Modtais at Blou in the Loire Valley was purchased by a philanthropist and researcher Loel Guinness and donated by him, as a project of his Kalpa group supporting the Bon tradition, for use as a retreat and research center. It is the European seat and the summer residence of His Eminence Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and it is run by a group of long term Bonpo students supervised by him and by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, abbot of Triten Norbutse Monastery.

Jitka Polanská who went there in August 2011 for the first time shares here her impressions from the place.

France has probably many places like this: a big mansion of white stones fringed by an alley (were they linden trees?), the old glory slightly run down by impermanence, genius loci hanging around or maybe dwelling in that one hundred and fifty year old pine in the park...

But I haven't travelled through France and so, for me, Shenten Dargyé Ling was quite a unique place: all shining with whiteness of its walls, illuminated at night by the moon and by falling stars. And throughout the week of my visit, light was also coming from the spacious minds of the lamas who were there.

B u d d h a

Lamas' presence changes our presence. When my mind meets another mind deeply, it dives into spacious silence. That's why, I think, I am such a bad reporter during retreats. Before I arrived to 'Shenten' I thought of asking Yongdzin Rinpoche for an interview for the magazine. And it was perfectly possible: there was an opportunity a few times to ask him for an appointment. I could see how available he was for anyone approaching him. But I lost my desire to do that. I was drawn to come closer when I saw him sitting outside, in the freshness of some evenings and mornings. But it was enough, more than enough, just to be there with him, together with the others, in silence. "Who cares?" I would have answered to the voice in me who had planned to bring back an article – if the voice had ever risen up in my head. I was even slightly surprised when my colleague editors reminded me of my intention after I was back home. Did I really plan it?



Empty moments in Shenten, with a smile





## Sangha

Sangha supports us on our spiritual path as well, showing us where we are standing right now, in terms of the mind's stability and peace. At lunch time, my mind got sometimes wild and whirling with questions, mainly of two kinds: "Why did they say this?" and "Why did they do – or didn't do – this?" It was taking my inner silence away but I could clearly see that what was outside was also inside.



The rear of the Lamas' wing



From the place of the evening practice

So, it was a kind of practice, the lunch practice. When my mind was able to keep spacious, the questions dissolved into the mind that didn't feel the need for answers, and inner silence wrapped every misunderstanding into harmony. Silence is full of potential. It opens space between people, sometimes it even opens space within the speech of others.

Silence is magic.







## Dharma

When I was just about to leave, waiting for the car to take me to the train station, I saw Yongdzin Rinpoche sitting outside on his bench. I dropped my bag and walked toward him to say goodbye. It was like flying into his embrace. He opened his hands, raised them slightly up, and I touched them with my face. "I'll come back soon," I said. I don't know why. The question is what does 'soon' mean. I think it was more like giving another kind of promise: "I know what you mean by all that and I won't let it out of my sight. With your blessings, I'll go where you are. Soon. In this lifetime."

Many beautiful things happened in Shenten Dargyé Ling, within the infinite space of mind. I want to thank all those people who were there with me and who made it possible for us to be there. I didn't come to be happy, I was already happy. But heaps of happiness were there for me. Go and see.

**Text and photos by Jitka Polanská**





# HOW GARUDA FOUND HIS NEST IN POLAND

**“This is a story of a great Teacher, his infinite love and compassion and far-reaching vision, patience and determination,” says Wojtek Plucinski, a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and a prominent person in the sangha. Wojtek's article chronicles the development of the Bon community in Poland.**

In August 1995 a Tibetan lama, Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, visited Poland for the first time. He was full of energy and joy, and he opened the gates of the Bon tradition to the group of people awaiting him.

Rinpoche's teachings began with an introduction to Dzogchen and to a six-fold practice, a simple but an extremely valuable program of traditional practices that all of us have been doing to this day. The six-fold practice consists of *The Nine Breathings of Purification*, *Securing Boundaries*, *Guru Yoga*, *Refuge*, *Boddhicitta*, and, of course *the Dedication of Merit*, which is the only proper way to finish each practice session.

After the six-fold practice came *Zhine*, the practice of calm abiding that grows from the silence without which it is not possible to enter the world of meditation. Then, we went further, to the practices of *Rushen* and *A-Khrid Ngondro*. Rinpoche also taught from the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*, the lineage transmitted to him by Lopon Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche. We also learned the practice of the *Six Lokas* – a journey within through an ocean of emotions, with much to work with...

In 1998, Rinpoche began a series of teachings on Bon ‘shamanism’ and Tantra. Rinpoche lifted the curtain to reveal the exceptional richness of the

teachings related to external phenomenon, internal emotion and mental process and he showed us the means are easily within our reach.

We started to study *Ma Gyud* in 1999. At that time we learned *Chöd*, *Dream Yoga* and *Sleep Yoga*, *Bardo* and *Phowa* as well as the *Practice of Elements*. We learned *Tsa Lung* and Rinpoche introduced us to the *Ma Gyud* dakinis and the six gates of *Ma Gyud* were opened. In the same year Rinpoche taught on the sacred syllables: *Ah*, *Om* and *Hung*.

Throughout these years, his teachings were increasingly focused on those aspects that would help us practitioners in our daily lives. Rinpoche gave us meditation tools to make us better practitioners, better students and better people.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in a Polish folk costume

The practice of *Sherab Chamma* soon became the main practice of the Polish Garuda. Then we deepened *Rushen* practices from the *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya*, *Life Force Retrieval practices*, *Five Seed Syllables*, *The Three Doors*, *Six Lamps*, *Tummo*, *Five Verses of Dawa Gyaltzen* – all these extremely valuable methods gave us an opportunity to discover secrets of our soul and to experience healing. Only then we could see the depth and endlessness of the nature of our mind. Rinpoche was tirelessly returning, sharing his time, knowledge, love and faith with us.





The Polish sangha during the summer retreat in Wilga; Wojtek Plucinski in the first row

The year 2000 marked the beginning of a new period when Rinpoche began to invite extraordinary Bon teachers, lamas and Geshe. Some of the most important personages of Bon and great Teachers honored us with their presence and teachings. His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche blessed our new center and His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche visited us three times giving his priceless teachings and blessings.

Thank to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, other precious Bon lamas started to bring teachings to Poland. Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche has been coming to Poland already for seven years. Both he and Chongtrul Rinpoche have their own sanghas now in this country. The Polish sangha is fortunate to receive teachings from Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche and His Eminence Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche who both come every year. Khenpo Thenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche comes every year since 2006. His teachings are related to the *Yetri Tasel* and *Namkha Truldzo* series. H.E. Menri Lopon Trinley Nyima Rinpoche focuses on Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud.

Among other monks who visit us I would like to mention Geshe Lungring Gyaltsen, Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe as well as Lhari-la Kalsang Nyima and Geshe Namgyal Nyima. A master of *Trul Khor* Alejandro Chaoul has been coming to teach us for seven years, and so we have been given a unique opportunity to learn the 'magical movements'

from one of the most senior students of Rinpoche and a person to whom we owe a lot. Laura Shekerjian, another *Trul Khor* teacher, has followed him. It is unique opportunity to learn from students of Tenzin Rinpoche who continue his teachings.

Today, sixteen years after Rinpoche's first visit, the Polish sangha has nine centers in the main Polish towns: Warszawa, Krakow,

Sopot, Wrocklaw, Poznan, Katowice, Lodz, Bydgoszcz, Andrychow. And we have Chamma Ling – our retreat center in Wilga near Warsaw.

Each practice center has the same teaching schedule. We organize practice groups, but also film shows, lectures and open meetings, thus continuing the activities of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

The main hero of this story is our Teacher, showing us infinite possibilities in our lives. But he is surrounded by many practitioners who made all this possible throughout the last sixteen years of his teaching in Poland. Their commitment produced visible results and is a living example of the fact that, even though the Garuda's nest is located in the infinite space of our mind, it is much easier to find it among friends and among people dedicated to the same cause. We dedicate all our efforts as merits to all sentient beings, as Rinpoche does.

**Wojtek Plucinski has recently moved to Mexico where he had spent a big part of his life. He is currently dedicating his energy and creativity to the Mexican sangha.**

**Text by Wojtek Plucinski**

Photos by Maria Kulik and the Polish sangha's archive





# CHAMMA LING - THE LAND OF THE WISDOM LOVING MOTHER

Chamma Ling, a retreat center founded by the Polish sangha in Wilga near Warsaw attracts many people to return. Bogdan Waszut lives there together with his wife Ula and their two children. He speaks about his experience of moving there as a typical urban resident, about what he has found and what we all can find by spending time there.

This is the place where we experience unique states of mind from our contact with the teachings, teachers and others who stay in this space so different from the one we are used to. Time spent here motivates us to action, inspires us to persist in practice, and wakes hope for changes in our life. The Land of the Wisdom Loving Mother allows us to perceive our own wealth. My challenge is to make this place more accessible and available to all of us.

In the beginning there was the vision of our Teacher, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. From there, ideas, plans and projects grew. Many people were involved in the search for the right place. After several attempts the idea came up to purchasing the place that we had been renting since 2003.



Chamma Ling – the Land of the Wisdom Loving Mother – is located in a beautiful area in the middle of a forest where people from Warsaw traditionally come to spend their holiday. It is close to the river Vistula and lakes and only fifty kilometers distance from Warsaw so it is easily reachable from the Polish capital. The majesty of its trees, the clarity of sky, and the pervasive silence allow us to hear the beat of our own hearts.



However all those wonderful qualities were overshadowed by lack of money: we were short of funds. At this point we began to rent cabins to practitioners in an effort to raise funds but it would not have been enough to buy the place. Then something extraordinary happened! After Tenzin Rinpoche made an appeal to the German Sangha, an anonymous donor offered us 30% of the what we needed! From that moment everything began to take shape. In the Spring of 2004 we became the owners of the *Land of the Dharma*, land of great potential. With this, a new chapter opened in the history of Ligmincha Poland. At this moment, when hopes becomes reality is like a big blue sky, while everyday's life prose is like white clouds floating init.

Our next challenge coming our way was the modernization and







Five years spent at the Land of the Wisdom Loving Mother have changed me in the way I consider others and myself. Chamma Ling is like a white screen on which you can see the projection of your own mind and a pure land of limitless potential.

There remains plenty to do. The new Gompa is emerging step by step, through many challenges. It is already capable of seating two hundred practitioners and I deeply trust that it will be completed

development of the Center. Where to start? What is the highest priority? We decided to raise funds for a Stupa. During the Summer retreat of 2005 Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche indicated the place where our Stupa should have been built and it was finished within a year.

soon. An action arising from a pure intention must be successful. The idea of the Chamma Ling didn't originate from ego, but from the need to create a holy place of practice for all Bonpos.

**Text by Bogdan Waszut**

Photos by Kate Dańko and Klaudyna Luna Kopala

2006 brought the visit of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima. That year we laid the corner stone of the new Gompa and I became the administrator of the Center. My first night was scary for me, a city dweller with the solitude and the darkness in the forest. Those days were really tough, but I will skip the details. Our only support was the practice and hard work from dawn to dusk.



The profit from the auction, held during the European summer retreat in Buchenau in 2011, was granted to Chamma Ling in Poland. The money is being used to repair the roof of the kitchen.





## IMPRESSIONS FROM ZHANG ZUNG NYENG GYUD RETREAT 2



Each October in Austria the five year cycle of teachings on Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud takes place, which is quite an event for the European sangha. Pictures by Joop van Spronsen and Péter Tongori and a text by Heide Mitsche try to communicate what it was like to attend the second part of the cycle – dedicated to *'the Introduction into the Natural State of Mind'*.

Boundless blue sky, sun shine, snow and mountains all around us – I deeply breath fresh, pure air and focus on the horizon until I feel inseparable with that spaciousness, silence and stillness...



... I almost forget that one hundred and fifty other people are sharing this experience of sky gazing with me – the bell and the prayers bring me back to the mountain, the Hochkönig. It is my first experience of sky gazing and I experience deeply how this meditation allows me to open up and to connect with inner space.







Full of this intense experience, laughter and happiness accompany us back to Maria Alm, where we are staying for five days to receive teachings on *'the Introduction into the Natural State of Mind'*.

The wonderful hostel, located in the middle of the Austrian Alps in Salzburg, offers all facilities for a comfortable stay and allows everybody to enjoy the stillness, silence and spaciousness around and within us.



From that wide, open space and the warmth of the sun outside we went into the darkness of our rooms to meditate before going to sleep. This was again another amazing experience as we are not used to looking at the darkness and to enjoy it.

**Text by Heide Mitsche**

Photos by Joop van Spronsen and Péter Tongori





# EUROPEAN SANGHA PRACTICE WEEKEND

For many years, following the wish of Rinpoche to practice under the guidance of experienced practitioners, we have offered sangha practice weekends in Germany. These weekend retreats are held at the Castle Buchenau near Bad Hersfeld and are open to practitioners from all countries. The next European sangha retreat will take place, for the first time, during Losar, February 24-26 2012. The emphasis will be on two general practice topics:

- exercises from the summer retreat: Pith Realisation of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters,
- additional exercises from the Ngondro and Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Part 2

For those who may not be familiar with these practices, the retreat will also include exercises such as *Tsa Lung*, *The Nine Breathings of Purification* and *Zhine*.



For further information please contact [gabriele.penders@ligmincha.de](mailto:gabriele.penders@ligmincha.de) or visit the website [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de)

**Text by Gabriele Penders**

Photo by Joop van Spronsen

## SACRED SONGS: CONNECTING THROUGH MUSIC

Last autumn in Utrecht, The Netherlands, an intercultural festival was organized. The festival was intended as a small countermove, in a period in which contrasts rather than similarities between spiritual traditions tend to be highlighted. Various local groups were asked to choose and perform a song or dance from their spiritual tradition, related to the theme of giving, sharing and generosity. All the songs would be woven into one composition by a professional voice artist. The songs would then be known as 'Sacred songs'. The idea was that those listening would not need to distinguish between the various traditions, but would merely 'undergo' an experience of interconnection between all the different traditions through the common thread of spiritual art.

Our Bon Buddhist practice group was approached

by the organizers, and invited to join in this venture. As we liked the idea of contributing and were curious to meet the other musicians and dancers four of us decided to join. In total there were some fifty participants, among them a Gregorian choir, an Alevitic dancing group, a solo singer from the Coptic church, a Jewish rabbi, an Evangelical church choir and a Gospel singer from the Evangelical church. As an ultimate gesture of offering our group chose to sing part of the Chöd sadhana. The result was a beautiful composition of Sacred songs in which could be felt this shared source and interconnection of many traditions of many different styles.

**Text by Willemijn Cuijpers**

Photos by Jeanneke den Boer



# HOMeward JOURNEY FROM BUCHENAU

View from the train window  
into sky and SPACE  
oh, what a travel companion  
the rainbow  
followed that evening  
by a silver circle  
of full moon

*Diana Huppert*

Photo by Natalia Borza

# A THOUSAND NEW THINGS

Animating each cell  
eliminating the lie  
that dwells inherent...  
stagnant memories,  
the sleeping self awakens.  
Dissolves.  
Past, no more  
only open present.  
Held by skies  
by galaxies  
worlds within worlds.  
Realizing the mystery  
within ones own self  
Breath traverses  
a thousand new things  
moments swelling ecstatic.

*Cielo (Mary O'Sullivan)*

Photo by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche





# BIRDS IN THE MORNING

A vibrant blue and green bird, possibly a Blue-crowned Motmot, is perched on a thin, brown branch. The bird has a bright blue crown, a black face, and a long, deeply forked tail. Its body is primarily green with blue accents on the wings and tail. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting a forest setting.

Bird chirp flown out of my ear.  
Out, like a bird leaving through the hole of a birdhouse.  
First one, then two.  
Like colour blobs thrown onto a canvas.  
What is it like, when I return the bird?  
Or even the whole flock of birds?  
Back to the starting point?  
To be all ears, the loop closed?  
What is it like, when starting point and endpoint touch each other?  
When the endpoint discovers the starting point  
and the starting point the endpoint?  
What great bird chirp show,  
without bird, without chirp, without ear, without morning?  
In the morning.

*Angelika Krone*

Photo by Jose Soto  
FB: Rainforestbirdingexperience Gamboa





# TIBETAN YOGAS OF BODY, SPEECH, AND MIND

Published in November of 2011 by Snow Lion, *The Tibetan Yogas of Body, Speech, and Mind* is the latest publication by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Some translations are also available at this time. In the book Rinpoche shares with us his understanding of the stillness of the body, the silence of the speech, and the spaciousness of the mind as the three doors to enlightenment. We bring you parts of the Preface and Introduction, believing it may help to deepen your practice while engaged in your daily life.

“The teachings and practices of Bon permit direct experiential insight into the human mind. Ultimately, Bon offers a complete path to enlightenment. As Bon Buddhist practitioners, we practice meditation not only to relieve mundane suffering and conflicts but also as a spiritual path for this lifetime and for beyond this life as well. Practicing meditation is a means of liberating not only ourselves but all beings from all the causes of suffering. This is why we recite a prayer of compassion at the start of every meditation session and dedicate the merits of our practice to all beings at the close of each session.

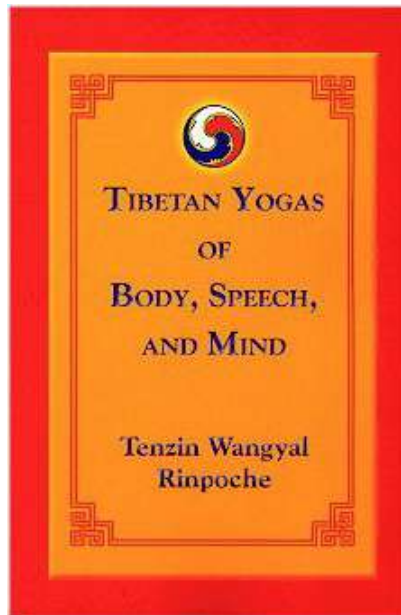
Everybody is looking for happiness and the causes of happiness, and everybody wants relief from suffering and the causes of suffering. Yet we usually look for happiness and relief of suffering in all the wrong places and in all the wrong ways. The root of suffering is the self-grasping mind from which attachment, aversion, and other afflictive emotions arise. Every negative action of our body, speech, or mind that is based in this self-grasping mind creates a seed of karma, a habitual tendency that traps us from one lifetime to the next in a cycle of suffering known as samsara. To help reveal an end to this cycle, this book draws on a vast system of knowledge to show the many ways

that body, speech and mind can instead be utilized as doorways to happiness, contentment, better health, and ultimately liberation. (...)

Is it possible to have genuine experience without going through many years of intellectual training? The answer is yes. The process begins with receiving the wisdom teachings known as the dharma. But hearing or reading about the teachings is not enough. Neither is reflecting on what you have heard or having good intentions to practice meditation. Many people feel that because they go to retreats and accumulate knowledge they are good practitioners, but the teaching cannot ripen in you until you actually practice it and your practice begins to deepen. Your ability to experience the great bliss that comes from recognition of your true nature depends on nothing but practice.

By helping you discover a deep source of knowledge and wisdom, meditation practice can bring you to the sense of connection, completion, and fulfillment that you yearn for. Ultimately, it can help you arrive the more profound sense of peace and happiness that comes only from connecting with your deeper essence.

Ideally, you should be open to the infinite possibility of intellectual learning but not get lost in it. Through study combined with practice, you can gain direct experience of the truth in the simplest of places: your own body, speech, and mind. (...)



“Whether physically, energetically, or psychologically, we experience ourselves mainly through our pain. It is hard to recognize *rigpa*, the enlightened nature that is our self, the nature that we share with the deities. The small self is more familiar to us. The small self is the one through which we express our pain, and because it is so familiar, it becomes an important door through which we may discover our bigger self - and through this discovery, release our pain. (...)

Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux



# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S TEACHING PROGRAM IN EUROPE 2012

## March

15	Italy	Montepulciano (Siena)	Public Talk: The Essence of Dzogchen Meditation in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet
16 - 18	Italy	Rome	Dream Yoga
23 - 25	Russia	St. Petersburg	Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltzen
31 - April 1	France	Paris	Tibetan Sound Healing

## April

6-8	France	Grenoble	Awakening the Sacred Body
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## May

4-6	Germany	Berlin	Living with Joy, Dying in Peace
9	Poland	Szczecin	Public talk: The Three Doors
10-13	Netherlands	Amsterdam	Awakening the Luminous Mind
16 - 17	Switzerland	Bulle	The Practices of Tsa Lung & Five Warrior Syllables
18 - 20	Switzerland	Zurich	The Practice of the Six Lamps, Part 2

## July

17 - 22	Poland	Warsaw	The Practice of the Six Lamps, Part 2
24 - 29	Germany	Buchenau	The Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters, Part 2

## August

31 - September 2	Russia	Moscow	The Chöd Practice
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## September

7 - 9	Finland	To be announced	Tibetan Sound Healing
14 - 16	Germany	Frankfurt	Awakening the Sacred Body

## October

16 - 21	Austria	Maria Alm	Dzogchen teachings: The Experiential Transmission, Part 3
26 - 29	Spain	Barcelona	To be announced





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

# 4 – Spring 2012



**Triten Norbutse celebrates  
Meet the Austrian sangha  
20 years of teachings  
Taste of The Three Doors  
Losar in Buchenau**





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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

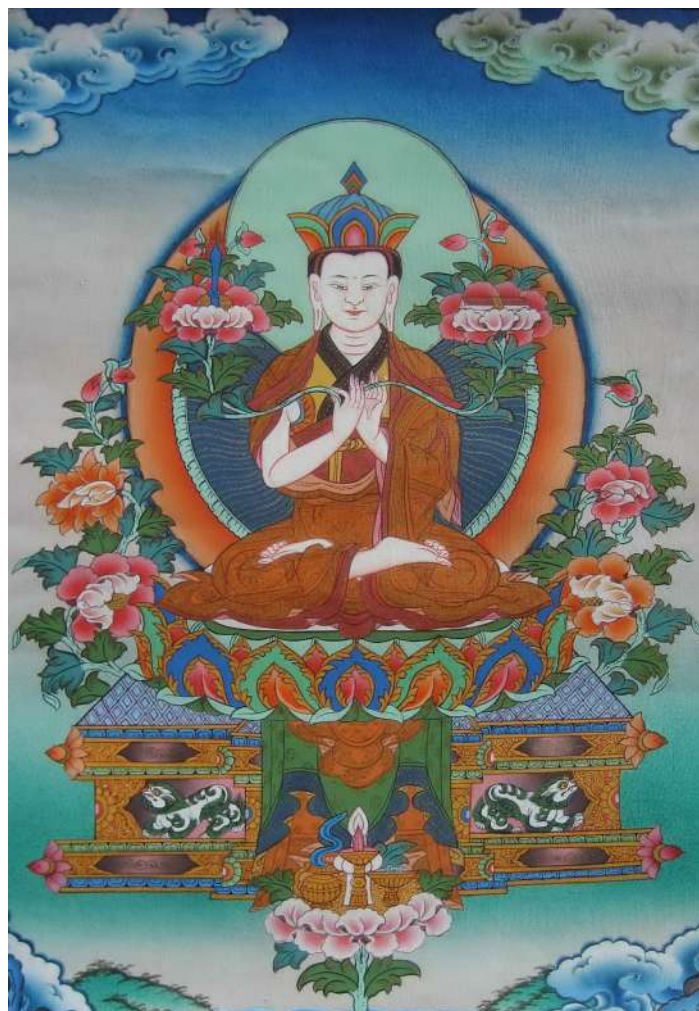
**Dear Readers, Dear Practitioners of Bon,**

We are happy to present you the fourth issue of Ligmincha Europe Magazine!

We would like to highlight the interview with Khenpo Tenpa Yundrgung Rinpoche. He looks back at twenty-five years of existence of Triten Norbutse and expresses his gratitude toward Yongdzin Rinpoche, the founder. Floor Van Orsouw, the author of the interview, went to Triten Norbutse in February and took part in the Losar celebration there. Part of the festivities was the celebration of Nyame Sherab Gyaltzen's birthday.

Floor also gave our magazine to Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yundrgung Rinpoche. She then visited Menri Monastery and had an opportunity to meet his Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche. He showed a vivid interest in our initiative praised the Ligmincha Europe Magazine.

Another article that we recommend is the account of Wolfgang Krebs on twenty years of practising Bon with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche as well as the changes that the sangha has gone through in that time.



Nyame Sherab Gyaltzen, founder of the Menri Monastery

Wojtek Plucinski, a long term instructor originally from Poland, who now lives in Mexico.

We also continuing to take part in regular monthly Skype meetings, held since 2009, with representatives of the European sanghas. These gatherings allow us to stay informed about news in local sanghas and to coordinate common projects such as the European website and translations of internet teachings. If you wish to take part in these meetings write to [skype@ligmincha.eu](mailto:skype@ligmincha.eu) and we will contact you.

We are also very pleased to welcome Patti Char to our small team. Patti has been one of our proofreaders for some time and she is about to become a member of the editorial board.

The upcoming summer issue will include an interview with Geshe Gelek Jinpa about his recent trip to Tibet, an article about the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ligmincha Institute, a report from the conference 'New Dialogues Between Buddhism and Science' and news from Lishu.

Enjoy reading the Ligmincha Europe Magazine!

We would like to inform you that a practice manual for the sangha is being prepared by

**Jitka Polanská and Ton Bisscheroux, editors**



# LAMA, YOU HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I NEED

Wolfgang Krebs is one of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's most senior European students. He met Rinpoche twenty-two years ago and since then he has studied and practiced the Bon teachings. Wolfgang's personal account of his development guided by Rinpoche and of the growth of the community of Bon practitioners in Germany is a truly interesting story of an authentic adventure.

"I grew up in a Catholic family and my parents were deeply devoted people. Undoubtedly, this influenced my life but I started being critical toward Catholicism while quite young. I had the feeling that the priests didn't have any real experience of the spiritual dimension of life but I didn't lose my interest in religion and philosophy. I read many books about comparative religion, I was keen on Tibetan Buddhism. I remember I was very impressed by the knowledge and wisdom found in the Tibetan Book of the Dead. I was looking for a broader view. At the end of 1980s I needed to take another step by meeting a living teacher, a lama. It was in summer of 1989 that I went with a friend to my first retreat and heard the teachings of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in the southern part of Germany, in the area called Black Forrest. For the first time I heard something about the nature of mind.

*"When life becomes a spiritual path,  
That is called The Journey Home."*

Alex Pappas

These teachings attracted my attention and made me even more curious and so I took the next opportunity and at the end of the same year I went down to Italy to Namkhai Norbu's center *Merigar* in Tuscany, for more teachings. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was present at the retreat, assisting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. While Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was giving initiations to groups of participants, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche was holding teachings for the rest of them; there were around five hundred people altogether. That was when I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time.



Wolfgang Krebs



August 1990, Schwarzwald

The first one week summer retreat with Rinpoche was held in Germany at Todtmoos, Black Forest. Above his head is a photograph of a thangka – believed to have been lost – of the protector of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud teachings, Meri.

While completing a Rockefeller Fellowship at Rice University in the U.S., Rinpoche found this thangka in a museum in Charlottesville. He was very happy and he took it as a sign that he should settle there. He then founded the Ligmincha Institute to begin his work for preserving and spreading the precious Bon teachings in the West.







#### Juli 1991, Hochkönig

The second retreat with Rinpoche brought the teachings to Austria. Rinpoche showed us his sense of humor when we tried to pull him into overly intellectual discussions on absolute and relative truth.

Tenzin Rinpoche was quite new to the West at that time. Invited to Italy by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, he had a job at the ISMEO (*Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente*) in Rome and spent lots of his time with Dzogchen students of Norbu Rinpoche's community.

Many of the students understood Dzogchen in a way that was rather shocking for Rinpoche and I remember this clearly. Their approach seemed to be driven by a combination of anarchy and pride: "You can do anything, be free and above any restrictions." This is what people largely took from Dzogchen. Years later Tenzin Rinpoche called it the danger of "wild Dzogchen". Nobody really knew what the Nature of Mind was but everybody felt liberated. Rinpoche understood then that the highest teachings reach a different audience here and started to be careful about it.

I remember him saying often: "You have to make sure where you have to work in yourself. And you have to verify it with your experience."

Dzogchen teachings were not very clear to me either that time. I had no clue what emptiness and clarity meant. But it was still interesting enough to keep my attention and for me to continue. I started to attend a small group of Dzogchen practitioners in Frankfurt where I live, and to practice with them. We did Guru Yoga, some pujas and tantric practices. But somehow, often my impression was that the meetings were gatherings to chat more than to do real practicing.

In the summer of 1990 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Germany at the invitation of the German Dzogchen Community and gave teachings from Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud to a group of fifteen people or so. We did Zhiné practice and contemplative breathing with him and I felt this is something close to what I had been looking for. So, I started to practice it when I was back at home. So, for some years in the 90ies as for sangha activities and practices I was connected to Norbu Rinpoche's Dzogchen Community while my personal practice at home was more and more based on the teachings of Tenzin Rinpoche.

A year after, when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche had already moved to the United States, having obtained a fellowship at Rice University in Houston, we invited him to a highland in Austria where he began to teach us the text '21 Nails'. There is nothing higher than that text and I was rather lost in it, but I trusted him. I already felt



#### August 1992, Kapellenhof

In this year in March, the Ligmincha Institute was founded and Rinpoche was accompanied by some of his American students and supporters. As in the previous year, some of Rinpoche's Italian friends and students also came to Germany.





### 1996-1998, Garanas

For four years, Rinpoche taught The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud, parts 1–4 in our summer retreats. In 1996, 1997 and 1998, we gathered at a far away place in the deep south of Austria, Garanas.

### 1999, Hochkönig

The last teachings of this cycle were received in 1999 in the beautiful Hochkönig Mountains.



that trust and respect for the knowledge and pure intentions expressed in the reverential “Lama chenno”: Lama, you have the knowledge that I need. In the next three consecutive years he completed the teaching even though he realized that we didn't understand it properly.

In 1996 he started a new cycle of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud but he discontinued it in 1999. The group of participants was very unstable with people changing to a big degree from one year to another. The group of regularly attending people was getting smaller and smaller and so he decided to stop. Since then he put Dzogchen teachings aside in Europe and he taught more from Mother Tantra with practices related to transformation and prana. It was very helpful for me. Before that, all the knowledge was mainly in my head, now, with clearing the prana I was able to open my body to experience it. Strong emotions, especially anger, were my focus much of that time. I got angry very easily. Even when somebody got in my way or obstructed a passage on a street, I used to get very upset: “give me space”, I used to silently comment to myself, angrily. Funny: I requested space from them, instead of finding it in myself. I remember that I could not see how so many complicated emotions I felt could be reduced to the three root poisons.

I witnessed that from year to year Tenzin Rinpoche found new points and new words leading us to connect with the teachings. It was also ten years of development for Rinpoche and very much for me as well. After ten years of practicing, I started to experience changes in myself. I recognized a bit more of what the teachings talk about, which was not really clear during my first ten years. I think we sometimes expect changes to arrive too quickly and don't keep on enough to experience them. If things ripen an experience can occur at once, but ripening is necessary. We should be patient.

We cannot achieve the opening of our deep inner nature just by our willpower, we cannot force it, we have to allow it to happen. In my experience it is a very soft development in which we learn to release wrong and often unconscious identifications, to accept things as they are and to calm down our mind. We have to go with our conditions and circumstances,







**August 2003, Buchenau**

Since 2003, the annual summer retreat in Germany takes place at Buchenau.

patiently, through ups and downs, not losing direction, keeping the contact with the heart. It is everyone's individual path, not a race, and nobody can really tell you what to do. Many people seek mom and dad in lamas, but they can't be that for them. A lama is a wise guide instead, a guide who makes you work with yourself.

The presence of the teacher is very important for many individuals and for the sangha as well. People need the living inspiration around to nourish their motivation and support them in perseverance. When the teacher doesn't come, a sangha usually grows very slowly or doesn't grow at all, people come and go and their motivation fades.

But for me personally it was and is not so important that a teacher is always available, physically. After the summer retreats I knew what I should do and new practices kept me busy enough for a year as I got familiar with it. But for building a sangha the presence of the teacher seems to be much more important. In the late nineties I stopped attending the meetings of the Dzogchen group of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and we started a small Bonpo group here in Frankfurt. For quite a long time we weren't able to build a stable sangha of Tenzin Rinpoche's students either in my town or in Germany altogether.

In the last decade Tenzin Rinpoche's activities in Europe have changed and developed. In Poland and Netherlands sanghas grew and things in Germany also changed. Due to retreats in different locations in Northern Germany and in Berlin, where Rinpoche started teaching from 2007, a growing number of people were interested in Bon teachings.

The big retreat held by Tenzin Rinpoche in summer 2001 about one hundred kilometer northeast of Frankfurt was probably a slow start toward building a community. In 2006 Rinpoche made Berlin his second home, buying an apartment there. This undoubtedly gave strong boost to the development of a Berlin Bon center and the German sangha in general. Things are coming together. Since 2003 the German sangha's main annual summer retreats take place in Buchenau, near Frankfurt. Finally the time arrived for Rinpoche's wish to manifest a Bon retreat center in Germany.

And I am still here, one of the three German students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche who were there at the very beginning of his presence and teaching in the West. Grateful for all what I have received."

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos: courtesy of the German sangha



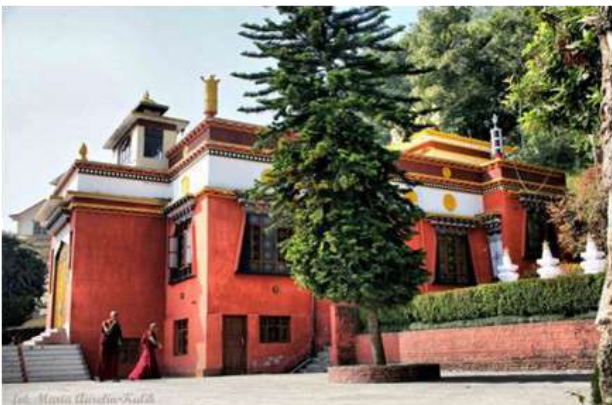


# TRITEN NORBUTSE AT THE MILESTONE

**Triten Norbutse, one of the two main bon monasteries in exile, celebrates 25 years of existence this year. We talked with the Abbot of the monastery Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche about this important milestone.**

**Rinpoche, what are the specific responsibilities of the Abbot of Triten Norbutse nowadays?**

I take care of both the spiritual aspects and the administration of the monastery. In the past, the Abbot was the spiritual leader of the community. At Menri Monastery in Tibet, after a new Abbot was appointed he would go into retreat for a long time; this was how he exercised the spiritual guidance of the monastery. The administration was done by a team of monks. Here in exile things changed. Everything had to be started from the beginning. A few monks that undertook the challenge to build a monastery had to take on all kinds of responsibilities, both spiritual and administrative. That's how His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche built the new Menri Monastery in India and how Yongdzin Rinpoche founded and developed this monastery in Nepal. So, coming back to my responsibilities, I help Yongdzin Rinpoche in this endeavor. He is very elderly, but still very active. Assisting him, I take care of the administration of the monastery and also of spiritual matters, under his guidance.



**Could you give an example of the spiritual side of your work?**

One of the main spiritual responsibilities of the Abbot is to ordain the monks. Besides this, he gives transmissions and initiations. I also teach. I used to teach monks in the dialectic school four hours every day. In the recent years I haven't been teaching so much anymore, because I have to travel and when I'm here, I have to take care of administration.



## **Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche**

**After being awarded the Geshe degree at Menri Monastery in India, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche went to Triten Norbutse in 1994 to continue his studies of Tantra and Dzogchen under the guidance of Yongdzin Rinpoche. In 1996 he was appointed as the head teacher (Ponlob) at the Yungdrung Bon Academy of Higher Studies. His Holiness Menri Trizen and Yongdzin Rinpoche appointed Rinpoche as the Abbot (Khenpo) of Triten Norbutse in 2001. Khenpo Rinpoche is in charge of both Triten Norbutse Monastery and Shenten Dargye Ling in France. Besides these responsibilities Khenpo Rinpoche teaches in Europe, USA and Mexico.**

**(source: <http://shenten.org>)**



**Triten Norbutse started with a few monks and now there are two hundred of them. What are the main changes related to this growth?**

The whole atmosphere of the monastery is changing, and also its physical structure. We have to extend our facilities more and more. There are lots of changes in our regular programs too, changes in a positive way: there are more active people and this brings better, more flourishing conditions. On the other hand it may sometimes be challenging for the quality of education. The growth of the population has good and bad sides: it brings new opportunities, but also limitations and challenges to overcome.

**What are the main highlights and events of the celebrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Triten Norbutse which will take place this year?**

The main reason of the celebration is to express our gratitude to Yongdzin Rinpoche and all lineage masters: they have done so much for us. During these short twenty-five years we have achieved a lot of things. Many geshees have graduated, and many monks have completed the meditation programs and their education. These are the main achievements of Yongdzin Rinpoche and the main purpose of the establishment of the monastery.

By celebrating this 25<sup>th</sup> year we look back and appreciate and acknowledge all the activities that Yongdzin Rinpoche has done. It is also a historical moment for Bon tradition. In Nepal, the Bon tradition has existed for thousands of years, but this monastery is the only and first one in Kathmandu.

During the celebration we want to perform *Mendruk*, a ritual ceremony of blessing herbal medicine done for many centuries. Externally, distributing the blessed medicine can be helpful for healing the whole atmosphere. Also, it can help people to heal from diseases. Through this ceremony we can also find true medicine in ourselves: our knowledge, wisdom and qualities.



The very beginning of Triten Norbutse Monastery at the foot of Nagajuna Hill in Kathmandu in 1987.



Yongdzin Rinpoche at the foot of Triten Norbutse's first building around 1988.





#### **When exactly the ceremony will be held?**

The main *Mendruk* ceremony will start December 14<sup>th</sup> and last until the 29<sup>th</sup>. One week before there will be three days of teaching when we will explain the ceremony to all the people participating. Everyone is welcome to join us in the precious moments. Occasions like this are very rare. Nowadays it takes place a bit more often, but traditionally it was held once every generation. We will do this in the presence of Yongdzin Rinpoche and hopefully also His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.

#### **In general, what possibilities are there for Western students to come to practice or take part in the life of the monastery?**

From time to time people come, do personal retreats and practices, sometimes they join the teachings or request teachings from Yongdzin Rinpoche and other teachers. It would be very good to continue in this way. So far we don't have the facilities to receive our friends and sangha members properly. Space is very limited in the monastery: four or five monks are crowded in one room and more and more children have to sleep in the shed below. But our guest practitioners understand the situation and don't mind that our facilities are not good. I appreciate that very much. But still I hope that in the future

we gradually can improve the conditions here and share all the facilities of the monastery with our sangha, including the Western students.

#### **And how can Western students help?**

In the first place by spiritual support. Another way is through volunteer work. And if we are talking about the physical conditions, it comes to finances. As our monastery doesn't have a permanent financial source, we always rely on the donations from individuals or groups. Traditionally we do a lot of prayers in the monastery and people give donations when they request for prayers. These requests come mainly from Tibet. Now the communication with Tibet is a little better than before. So in this way we get support. Support also comes from the Western students through the sponsorship of individual monks, and as the money comes on our bank account, it is shared with everyone. Sponsoring specific projects is also a possibility. We are now working on the kitchen extension and the temple extension, for example.

Traditionally, participating in these kinds of actions is considered as practice of generosity. If one is a practitioner, then this is a good chance to participate. Let me give you an example: if you have one spoon full of water and keep this to yourself, it will just dry out within a few days. But if you put it into a big ocean, then this water will be totally integrated with the ocean and will not be exhausted until the whole ocean is dried out. It's like investing your money into the stock market, but without risk of losing. If you invest your small merit in the bigger virtuous action, one's merit would never be lost.

#### **Would you like to add something at the end of this interview?**

I wish everybody good practice and good health and good aspiration for their practice and their life. And I hope there will be practitioners from Europe taking part in our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

#### **Interview by Floor van Orsouw**

Photos: courtesy of Douglas Arellanes, Gerd Manusch and Maria Aurelia Kulik





# LOSAR AT TRITEN NORBUTSE MONASTERY

The Tibetan New Year celebration is a big event, especially in monasteries. At Tritten Norbutse the whole period lasts ten days, including purification, preparation, celebration and Nyamé Sherab Gyaltsen's birthday ceremony. From February 18 to 27 Floor van Orsouw was there to witness Losar. Geshe Gyatso Choekhortsang explained the many rituals. The pictures on this and the next page give an impression of this special time of the year.



During the last three days of the year many purification rituals, so called *Gutor*, are being performed. Some are open to the public, like Cham dance and blessing water offered by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. The purpose of these rituals is to not continue the bad things of the old year in the new year.

Then there is one day in between the old and new year: this day is preparation time for Losar. The special Losar offerings – stacks of dried, fried



cakes, called *derka* – together with sweets and fruits are being prepared. Traditionally in the families, the first day of Losar is 'lamas-Losar', the second day is 'leaders-Losar', and the third day is 'deities-Losar'.

On the fifth day of Losar, the birthday celebration of Nyamé Sherab Gyaltsen, an important Bon master who founded Menri Monastery in 1405 AD in Southern Tibet, takes place. Many prayers are being offered to him, monks and guests walk around the monastery – a procession called *kora* – accompanied by ritual music, and prayers flags are raised. When it becomes dark at the end of the day, which is also the end of Losar at Tritten Norbutse, the offering of lights begins. The whole monastery is illuminated.







Text and photos by Floor van Orsouw



# THE STRENGTH OF PURE INTENTION

Mirka Janošková entered The Three Doors and has engaged in its practices to purify herself and to thereby help others. She talks about her experiences in an open, sweet and sincere manner, giving us a very personal perspective.

**Mirka, we met for the first time in October 2008 on the first trip to the land of Lishu Institute. I remember that you were very attracted to the study program when it opened. However, you applied for the Three Doors Academy instead. Why was that?**

Yes, originally I was very interested in the program at Lishu. I changed my mind because of practical reasons. It would require leaving all my work opportunities while attending a program in Europe allows me to earn money and pay for it. So, taking part in The Three Doors was more financially doable for me. But now that I am in The Three Doors Academy, I think it is better for me than a traditional course in all aspects. It gives me all the tools necessary for living a good life as it is here. It leads me to remember the tools and to use them every day, every moment. A more sequestered training affords less opportunity for contact with people, family, society – the real ground where we experience all of our limitations and challenges.

**What is the main difference for you between retreats and seminars guided by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and The Three Doors Academy?**

It is probably the sharing of experiences with other trainees and the development of mutual support among us – which is an emphasized component of the program. At usual retreats people are more introverted, I would say. The Three Doors is not only about learning the techniques, it is a bit like spiritual psychotherapy, bringing and offering our pains to the whole group. I feel a very strong connection to the whole group as well as to the teachers. Of course, I had to overcome some shyness at the beginning. At the first seminar, we were asked to share what we want to transform in ourselves, what is the issue we were working with. And it was not easy for me to express this in front of all the other people and to reveal to them my pain



**Mirka Janošková**

**“I heard about the Bon teaching in 2008 for the first time. One day my very good friend Lidia told me about Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book *The Wonders of the Natural Mind* and *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*. While reading these books I felt a strong connection to Rinpoche. At that time I lived in Mexico and decided to visit the Mexican sangha there and I had the opportunity to attend a teaching given by Ani Sherab Wangmo. Her initiation was amazing and I could not wait any longer to meet with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. The same year I flew to India for the First Lishu Retreat to meet with him. And that was it...**

**I come from Slovakia, and I travelled and lived in other countries for a long time: many years in United Kingdom, Spain, Mexico and other countries of Central and South America. A year ago I decided to come back to Slovakia. Now one of my biggest wishes is to bring the teaching here.”**







and suffering. However, without sharing our pain others cannot host it. The Three Doors is very much about offering and hosting each other's pain.

**How is The Three Doors Academy structured, during the retreats and outside of them?**

The schedule of retreat is very similar to other retreats. There are blocks of teaching combined with practice, starting at seven in the morning and finishing at 8:30 pm with a practice. We have these retreats twice a year for a week. Each year we learn one of the main practices of The Three Doors: *Tsa Lung*, *Five Warrior Syllables* and *Fivefold Teaching of Dawa Gyaltsen*. As well we have a group teleconference once a month, about sixteen of us in each group. We also keep in touch through emails which is a great support for all of us. All of us have individual contact with our mentor – one of the teachers. Each month we send them a record of our transformations.

**Can you do all the transformations you planned to?**

Well, the plan was to do ten to eleven this half a year and I did ten so – yes, more or less I am successful.

**Can you share an example of a transformation?**

I wished to change my relationship with my dad and it has indeed changed. I can see him now without judging him, while before a real connection with him was obstructed by my inner chatter full of criticism. When this stopped I started to see him differently and now I even cannot say what irritated or hurt me so much. He is fine, more than fine, he is just himself and I am able to accept him and love him for who he is. This is the beauty of our work. There is space for natural love between us now. I feel much closer to him and I am very thankful for this change. Working on this issue, for the first time I was able to perceive the changes in others too, the way it is connected is just amazing. Changing myself I am helping others. Many people – not Buddhists – may think that meditation is a kind of separation from others, something introverted and excluding others. But I would say it is the opposite of that. Through my transformation I can bring new qualities into my relationships. That is a gift I can give to the people in my life.

**People say there are challenges in the process they go through in The Three Doors. Have you**





The Three Doors retreat location

**experienced any? If so, what was difficult for you?**

Yes, I had some very difficult moments. I didn't expect it would be so hard at times. You know, you meditate every day and you expect things will go smoothly because of that, you have this kind of expectation. But going deeper in your meditation results in the perception of more subtle things in you, more subtle energies, and so, paradoxically, what you get sometimes is a merciless mirror which shows you all your shadows. I found out for example that I judge others for something that is in me, but I don't see it. I could also see that even if I deeply wish to help others this wish is still driven by my ego. Another challenge was inviting my own fear into my practice – this was one of my biggest steps forward. My whole life I was trying to avoid it, I was too scared to face it. But with every change I accomplished, starting with an easy one, my confidence to deal with my fears grew. One day I knew I was ready to invite the more difficult issues of my own fear. What happened surprised me. I would have never believed that one is able to undergo such a huge change as overcoming my fears in such a short time. Now I really believe that through this teaching we have the potential to transform any pain into a great bliss.

**How do you see yourself in your life after you have completed the program?**

Well, I would love to give to others what I have received. I don't know in which form exactly but truly, looking at John and Raven, at the way they communicate the wisdom of this teaching to us, I can see wonderful possibilities and potentialities for myself. I think they are beautiful and inspiring examples for all of us. The most important is one's intention.

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos by Bogusia Dausend

**About The Three Doors**

The emphasis in The Three Doors training is to transform and heal limiting patterns of body, speech, and mind and bring forth positive contributions in relation to oneself, one's family, and one's greater society. Through reflecting upon your life and bringing that reflection directly into meditation, positive change manifests. Sharing and witnessing this process with others greatly enhances the power of meditation as a means to connect with the gift of being fully present and alive to the infinite possibility of each moment of life. More information at: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)





# A TASTE OF THE THREE DOORS

The Three Doors introduces its approach to personal transformation to the public in the form of weekend programs that allow people to have a taste of the practices in the Three Doors Academy training. Academy teachers Raven Lee and Marcy Vaughn taught the first public weekend-program 'A Taste of The Three Doors' in Los Angeles in early March 2012. Here is what Raven Lee shared with us about it.

## How was your personal experience of the 'Taste'-weekend?

It was an amazing experience. The Three Doors program is designed to support our connection with our authentic being and to be with the challenges of our life and our pain such that we don't get overwhelmed. We can't change something we are not aware of. At the beginning of the 'Taste'-weekend we talked about the difficulty of recognizing our pain and how at times pain would come and we would not know what to do with it. In the afternoon session we went into small groups to discuss our experience of the practice of connecting with ourselves and beginning to understand and experience the sense of being that is bigger than the pain. Participants felt the elation of "Wow! By connecting to the unbounded experience of myself I can shift this pain." I was very touched by how open people were and how deeply they responded to the safe place we cultivated. And it was a blessing to have been there with Marcy. We had a great time sharing the unbounded space of being.

## You already pointed out a little bit what people can expect if they would go to a 'Taste'-weekend. Can you say a little bit more about it please?

The Taste of The Three Doors is about having a glimpse of one's authentic self. And that authentic self is so solid, so lacking in anxiety and judgment, that the glimpse brings a sense of warmth, joy,

and openness so that people are not as identified with their pain. We introduced the inner refuge accessed through the door of the stillness of the body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind. Then through the vibrations of the syllables A, OM, and HUNG we helped people connect to a sense of the open space within them, the luminous awareness that knows that space, and the warmth that naturally arises from that. It was very exciting to see people's responses. We were giving them a taste of how deep they could go in The Three Doors three-year program.

## Can you remember your own very first taste of The Three Doors?

When Tenzin Wangyal first introduced this program, it was like "Oh, what is this?" So many people like myself had already learned these Three Doors practices and there was a confusion as to how this program added anything to what we already experienced. For me, the clarity and unshakable confidence occurred when I was meditating on Tenzin Wangyal's prayers of the inner refuge, and suddenly I realized the profundity of the training, and there was no going back. I know what I need to practice and how to practice for the rest of my life.

To have a sense of the three doors within ourselves gives one tremendous confidence. As a therapist, I feel that the Three Doors provides additional help to a lot of my patients who can see their pain as an actual doorway. And that is the gift of the 'Taste' of The Three Doors and of Tenzin Wangyal's vision.

The Three Doors 'Taste'-weekend-programs will be scheduled for Europe throughout the next months. If you are interested in hosting a 'Taste'-weekend in your city, please contact Kallon Basquin (the3doors@gmail.com). More information: [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org)

## Interview by Anja Benesch

Photo: courtesy of Raven Lee





# GROWING TOGETHER

Heide Mitsche, member of the core team of the Austrian sangha, tells about their practice weekends and the structure of Ligmincha Österreich.

*“Johanna is already here. For her it is not far, only entering the next room where the altar is already prepared and cushions are waiting. Several times a year we gather together at Johanna's place near Graz for a common practice. This time we will practice Ngondro, Sherap Chamma, Zhiné, and Warrior Syllables. These practice week-ends are also a great opportunity for the core team of Ligmincha Österreich to meet and discuss any issues concerning our sangha. The core team composed of Hanna, Heide, Bertl, Christine and Renate was created in October 2011 with the blessing of Rinpoche.”*

Johanna is 79 years and one of the oldest members of our sangha. She met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 1997 and she regularly invites a small group of people for a week-end practice in her home. Bertl and Hanna are also long term students of Tenzin Rinpoches and it was Bertl who met Rinpoche when he first came to Austria in 1991 to teach “the introduction to the nature of mind” at the Hochkönig in Salzburg. The following years Rinpoche was teaching in Germany and Austria alternately before he started the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Cycle of teachings in 1996 in Austria. After four years of teaching this cycle he stopped coming to Austria. There was a little group of very interested and motivated practitioners left, who continued with the practices and as Rinpoche continued to give the

teachings in Germany they would go and receive the teachings there.

*“Eva and Bertl – both long-term students of Rinpoche and part of this little group – are arriving. They have only a thirty minutes drive from Graz to Johanna's place. Their car is full with food for all of us for the week-end.”*

In 2007 Rinpoche began once again to come to Vienna and teachings took place once a year in the springtime. He gave wonderful teachings on the *Warrior Syllables of sound healing, healing with the five Elements, Nine Lungs, Dawa Gyaltsen* and *Soul retrieval*. We all feel deeply blessed that we are able to receive these teachings and particularly blessed with regard to Rinpoche's ability to make us Westerners familiar with these precious ancient Bon teachings so that we can integrate them into our daily life. We are particularly happy as he will come again to Vienna in March 2013 to teach on “Awakening the luminous mind”!



Renate, Johanna, Heide, Hanna, Eva, Bertl and Christine

*“Another car just arrived – Hanna, Robert, Heide coming from Vienna. Robert, with two big plates of ‘Apfelstrudel’: we definitely won't starve this week-end. Tea is ready and we sit together at Johanna's Terrace and enjoy the wonderful view*





Hanna prepares the altar

*into her big garden, trees and bushes in full blooming."*

Many times we have asked Rinpoche if he would be ready to re-start the five years cycle of the Oral Transmission of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud in Austria. In October 2010 he finally agreed and the first part of the cycle started – in a lovely place, near the Hochkönig, close to the same venue that we had at the very beginning of Rinpoche's teachings in 1991. Karoline Seltenheim is the main organizer of this annual event – supported by the Austrian sangha and also members of other European sanghas. We all feel very blessed and grateful to Rinpoche that this cycle is being held again in Austria and that so many people from other European countries and also from the United States are able to participate and benefit.

*"Christine and Klaus, Renate and Gerhard have also arrived in the meantime. Now the core team of Ligmincha Österreich is complete – Hanna, Heide, Renate, Christine and Bertl."*

'Ligmincha Österreich' was created in 2011 when Rinpoche asked his worldwide sangha to standardize the names of the different centers. A team of five people has been designated to take on the responsibility of any issues that may arise concerning Ligmincha Österreich and the sangha here. The main focus of Ligmincha Österreich is to provide practice opportunities for long-term students and also for beginners; we as a core

team also emphasize to deepen our own practice, learning from each other and sharing experiences. The sangha became a family. We feel a growing trust and a tremendous mutual support when it comes to solving problems, wherever they appear. This can be in our relationships, in the sangha, in our work or in our personal development. With the teachings we have received, we are

learning to transform these problems as they arise.

Practicing together is so much more powerful and deepens our own personal experiences. We have a weekly practice group in Vienna which includes the *Nine Breathings*, the *Tsa Lung* yogas, the *Warrior Syllables of sound healing*, *Dawa Gyaltsen* and *Ngondro*. There is also a group in Graz, in Upper Austria and in Vorarlberg, where people have met regularly for quite a long time now. Four times a year we offer a full-day of practice.

Ligmincha Österreich is now also responsible for organizing the retreats in Vienna and relies on a support team of about fifteen people. It is wonderful for all of us to see the sangha growing, seeing the practice deepening and being with and having the support of such a wonderful teacher. Practicing together and sharing our experiences is like coming home for us all. We have gained a family not only in Austria but worldwide.

*"We all are grateful for this private atmosphere at Johanna's place and we enjoy practicing together. Time to start with the practice!"*

E MA HO!

**Text by Heide Mitsche in collaboration with the core team**

Photos by Klaus Polzhofer





## SUMMER RETREAT IN BUCHENAU

**In 2011, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche began teaching a three year program on the Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters. Even if you missed the retreat last year, you are welcome at the annual European summer retreat this year from July 24 - 29 in Buchenau.**

The Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud (Oral Transmission from Zhang Zhung) is the oldest and most important Dzogchen text in the Bon-Buddhist tradition. All of the masters who are described in this text achieved the rainbow body, where they dissolved into light at the end of their life, signifying the highest level of realization.

Of the vast number of profound teachings of the Bon-Buddhist tradition, Dzogchen is the highest, and this series of teachings contains some of the most subtle explanations within the Dzogchen tradition. The Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud was



Lhabön Yongsu Dagpa

traditionally very closely held, and passed from only *one* master to *one* disciple for twenty-five generations. As each of the masters approached the end of his life, his disciple would ask for him to relate a brief biography and the essence of his lifetime of practice and realization. The result is a series of poetic pith teachings that point out the subtlest of all realizations.

We are fortunate to have Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to explain these rare essential teachings, for he has a special gift to make teachings clear and understandable, and relate them to our everyday lives. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche began studying the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud with his master Lopon Sanghe Tenzin when he was only a boy, and has continued to make them a central focus of his practice and teachings in the West.

Information and registration:  
<http://retreat.ligmincha.de>

## SPECIAL AUCTION FOR EUROPEAN CENTRE

As part of this year's summer retreat in July in Buchenau, an auction will again be held. With the proceeds of this annual auction, we have the chance to contribute to many great projects of our beloved teacher, especially the Lishu Institute (noted under [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org)).

Now, together with Rinpoche and all the sangha members, we want to realize the dream of building a European retreat centre in Germany, which would complement Chamma Ling Poland. To realize this goal many conditions must be met. For this purpose, we need to collect a considerable



amount of money, and this auction is a possibility for sangha members to contribute.

We request all sangha members to participate within their capabilities at this year's auction by providing Dharma objects (ritual objects, books, etc.) for the auction or to support the auction with their bids. Sangha members who are not able to participate in this year's summer retreat can still support the project, and should contact us at: [fundraising@ligmincha.de](mailto:fundraising@ligmincha.de)

**Text by Elke Rung**  
Photo by Oliver Wirtz



## EUROPEAN PRACTICE WEEKEND IN BUCHENAU

In the weekend of 24 to 26 February we met in Buchenau for the annual European practice weekend. It was the first time that we came together in the week of Losar. We practiced and celebrated the Tibetan New Year. Twenty people registered for the weekend, and fourteen were present from Austria, Germany and the Netherlands. Here is a report written by the participants.

Some of us knew Buchenau only from the summer retreat, as a place with between one hundred and two hundred attendees. So, some were initially surprised by the small number of participants and felt slightly unsettled. But soon everyone enjoyed a very pleasant, warm and family-like atmosphere.

After a few introductory words of welcome from Oliver Wirtz, the practice weekend started on Friday afternoon with the *Guru Yoga*.

Saturday was dedicated completely to the *Practice of the twenty-four Masters*. In the afternoon, we had a skype meeting with Rinpoche for half an hour. We saw a relaxed and joyful Rinpoche and Tsering in a homey atmosphere. Rinpoche did not give a teaching, but he talked about his family situation, and the preparations to move to the West coast. They chose to move to a small town called Albany CA, because he found there the best conditions for the school education for their son Senghe. We received Rinpoche's blessings and good wishes for the New Year.

It was a very inspiring weekend for practitioners of all levels. Experienced practitioners such as Wolfgang Krebs and Gabriele Penders guided us well, and answered our questions. The weekend provided a chance for connecting, growing and expanding in a warm, relaxed way.

As always, Klaus and the people from Schloss Buchenau cared for us in an comforting way. They made us feel at home. There was a new cook, who prepared wonderful food and Klaus showed us the new meditation hall, where we will practice during the summer retreat, pure



space and light.

Being with the European sangha was a wonderful feeling, especially after hearing about Rinpoche's plans for a new Western European center that will come in the near future to Germany. It will be a place where we can practice and study together, and be with Rinpoche and other teachers.

On Saturday evening, we discussed how we can support each other in the European sangha. We saw a slideshow from last year's summer retreat, and photos of potential places for the proposed European center. And, we watched a video about the correct performance of the *Invocation of Yeshe Walmo*.



On Sunday, we celebrated Losar and had a wonderful *Sang Chöd* ritual. With branches collected from the surrounding forest, we started a fire. With the offerings, purification and prayers, we let go of the old year and welcomed the new one.

**Text by the participants of the weekend**

Photos by Ton Bisscheroux





# I DON'T USE DRUGS, I MEDITATE

During the 2011 summer retreat in Buchenau there was a young Tibetan with a French name: Samdup Allier. Anja Benesch and Ton Bisscheroux wanted to know more about him, and asked him for an interview. Here is their report.

**You are Tibetan and you speak fluent French and English. Can you tell us about your background?**

I was born nineteen years ago in Sikkim in Gangtok in northern India close to the Tibetan border, to a very poor Tibetan family. My father was a tailor and my mother was not working, so they did not have the financial means to take care of my education. My grandfather – who lived with us as the head of the family – was a Bonpo practitioner, and wanted me to be adopted to get a good education. He knew that all the great masters live in the West. So he asked one of his closest friends, the Abbot of the Bon monastery in Sikkim, to arrange an adoption by a Western family. When the Abbot first asked Martine and Michel Allier they did not want to adopt a Tibetan child, but when asked again a year later they agreed. It was written in my Tibetan father's astrology that he would lose something very precious, and in mine it was written that there would be a great change in my life when I was three years old. That was the age when I was adopted by my French parents.

**What is your nationality?**

That is a very good question. Well of course I'm feeling French, because I was raised in France. I have many friends who are French, but actually I would say I am from both cultures. Tibetan culture is more dominant in me. When I am with Tibetan people I feel like I am at home. Sometimes I feel a little bit split between my two cultures.

I miss India and my Tibetan family a lot, but I also realize that I need to be a real Westerner, and I need to keep my Tibetan roots too. It's somewhat like being a bridge between the Tibetan culture and the French culture.

**Can you tell us something about your education**



**in France?**

I want to thank my French mother, who spent a lot of time with me in dharma centers when I was young. When I was very young she explained the teachings to me in children's terms and we often visited Plum Village to stay with Thich Nhat Hanh. Later I studied with Sogyal Rinpoche. Five years ago I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and I think that he is really my root teacher.

In my worldly life I am studying political science and international relations in a French graduate school. I know that I won't be able to change the world even working in a humanitarian situation, but I think that by simply practicing, as Rinpoche said, we can really plant some positive seeds. I aspire to be like Yungdrung lama from the Bon monastery in Ravangla (Sikkim), whom I met several times; he is really a model for me. Simply the way he behaves, the way he is. For me he is really the embodiment of the Dzogchen teachings.

**Is it a challenge for you to do both the Buddhist studies and the political sciences?**

I would not say that it's a challenge but sometimes it is very hard to sort out my priorities. Like here, right now, I need to study international relations for my September exams, and I would



like very much to practice in the afternoon but I don't have the time for it. I could say for me it is impossible to study without practicing. Without practicing I would not be able to work properly. Practice is my life and study is my life. They go together.

### **What is your favorite practice?**

I practice the *Tsa Lung* very often because I really feel the energy inside me. It helps me, for instance, when I am studying to have a clear mind.

### **Do you also want to become a bridge in politics or in human rights?**

Yes, not yet, but it's really my aim in life. I know that I will have to train myself to improve myself and become a better human being in order to be useful to the world. I know the Western mind but I am also very imprinted by the Tibetan culture and I see among my French friends there is a real thirst for spirituality. Knowing and being from both cultures can be an asset but right now those are just words. I mean, I need to learn, learn, learn.



Samdup with his mother Martine Allier

### **What does the dharma mean to your friends?**

I am always surprised that not more young people are attracted to the dharma, and come to the dharma centers. I wish that people would discover this. In Grenoble, the city where I am studying, there is thirst for spirituality among the students. But many of my friends who are very bright, relieve their tensions by attending parties, where they smoke and drink. I can see that they are looking for something beyond smoking and drugs. It makes me sad when I see them behaving this way. We all want to find a way to escape from the daily pressure, but it is quite sad to see many people disconnected from their body and their energy.

### **Do you go to discotheques?**

No, never, because being raised in the Buddhist

wisdom tradition, I learned to respond to my problems in another way, and I always knew that it's not by smoking that I will feel happier. It's not by hanging out with friends and going to a party that I will find happiness. Instead, I get high on meditation.

### **Are you different from your friends of your age?**

I can't share my feelings with them or my involvement with Buddhism and I don't share their passion for drinking and drugs. I found my best friends in Dharma centers. When I see people often I feel that their life is empty. Sometimes seeing that makes me sad. I think that everybody has his own karma. I know that's why, sometimes, I don't talk so much with others because I feel that it would not be very helpful for them. The few friends I have in my school are quite broad-minded people. I feel a kind of connection with them and talking about Buddhism or spirituality is natural.

I also have some Tibetan friends who are not very interested in Buddhism. It's not that they are not interested in Buddhism, because their culture is really imprinted

by Buddhism, but they don't follow a master and maybe they are looking for something else: the western world.

That's why I feel I am very fortunate, because I'm both a Westerner and a Tibetan. I can see what we are in the West. I have everything I want and that makes me realize that all these things won't make me happy. I need something beyond, which I can only find in Buddhism, and that is more important. I really feel that Dzogchen is something very powerful, because it goes beyond comprehension and ordinary mind.

**Interview by Anja Benesch and Ton Bisscheroux**

**Transcription by Hilly Lokken**

Photos by Joop van Spronsen





# THE JOY OF LIVELY MOVEMENT



**From fear of being a victim of submission  
I am moving to being totally devoted to you.**

**From fear of not being capable of loving  
I find myself totally in love with you, with all my heart.**

**From insecurity of who I really am  
I find my self free-falling in curiosity, watching particles of me dissolve  
into the pure joyous process of being.**

**Fall and dance with me  
into bliss, my love**

**found and lost simultaneously  
I am happy to face all our daily hassles.**

***Anja Benesch***



# CAVE OF KNOTS

Endless being  
emerging from this cave of knots.

I have discovered myself  
discovered myself.

Alive  
and well  
contrary to all stormy  
insistances to the contrary.

Alive to love  
to passion  
energy, boundless  
connected as it is to the  
infinite generator.

The Vast Unknown  
the No-thing  
and the everything.

Shadowy knots  
Foggy pathways  
give way

to endless being.  
Endless curiosity.  
Endless life.

*Cielo (Mary O'Sullivan)*

Painting by Danielle de Warem





# RECONNECTING WITH OURSELVES

In the article *Finding Freedom From Our Negative Patterns*, published in *Buddhadharma* in summer 2011, was a contribution by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on liberating the mind from painful habits, addictions, and repetitive thoughts. It's about opening fully, even in difficult situations, and finding the freedom within awareness. Here we reprint the text, which is also published at the website:

[www.thebuddhadharma.com/archive](http://www.thebuddhadharma.com/archive)

"In order to heal our painful habits, says Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, we need to turn our attention inward and reconnect with our experience through stillness, silence, and spaciousness.

Through the negative, habitual patterns of distraction and restlessness, we frequently disconnect from ourselves. As a result, we are often depleted, for we do not fully receive what life offers, what nature offers, or what other people offer, and we don't recognize opportunities to benefit others.

You may be sitting on a bench in a beautiful park, yet not be seeing the trees, hearing the birds, or smelling the blossoms. Perhaps you are distracted with your cellphone or worrying about something, and though you are breathing you may have no actual relationship to your body, your speech, your mind, or to the park. I refer to this as sitting on a rotten karmic cushion.

This can happen anywhere – in a business meeting or at the family dinner table. You may even be at a lovely party, but your mind is not part of the celebration. Caught up in thoughts about some problem, we strategize solutions, but this never brings satisfaction because it never reconnects us to ourselves. In truth, our thoughts and strategies are the imaginations of our pain body, pain speech, and pain mind – the ego or identity we mistake as 'me' simply because it is so familiar.

Trying to improve ego does not bring liberation from suffering; it only reinforces the disconnection.

It is very important to acknowledge that suffering exists and to have the proper relationship with it. The root cause of suffering is ignorance, the failure to recognize the true nature of mind, which is always open and clear and the source of all positive qualities. By failing to recognize our true nature, we search for happiness outside ourselves. This fundamental disconnection from the actual source of positive qualities within, and the restless search for satisfaction outside ourselves is something we do habitually, yet we often don't even experience this as suffering because it doesn't seem all that dramatic.

Until we recognize this pain identity and truly acknowledge our own disconnection, there is no path of healing available and we will not realize our full potential in this life. So acknowledging

suffering is the first step, and a beautiful one, because it is the first step on the journey to awakening the sacred body, authentic speech, and luminous mind – which is who we truly are when we are fully present in each moment.

## Discovering Inner Refuge

We begin by acknowledging the habitual patterns that arise from our disconnection from ourselves, which I refer to as pain body, pain speech, and pain mind. We may experience this

disconnection in a variety of ways, such as irritation, boredom, restlessness, sadness, or an underlying feeling that something is missing. If we are to heal or awaken from these patterns, we need to generate a caring relationship with the evidence of our disconnection. Recall how you feel supported when you are with a friend who is simply present, open, and nonjudgmental, and bring those very qualities to your own experience. The silence containing this fullness of the presence of another is always there within you



and always beautiful. So that is exactly how you need to experience your pain. Connect with stillness, silence, and spaciousness, which enables you to observe, allow, and feel whatever you experience without judgment.

So often we identify with our pain – I am so sad. I can't believe you said that to me. You hurt me. Who is this *me* that is sad, angry, and hurt? It is one thing to experience pain; it is another thing to *be* pain. This self is ego and the fundamental suffering of ego is that it has no connection to what is.

In the middle of a confused or disconnected experience, or even at a seemingly ordinary moment, draw your attention inward. Do you experience the stillness that becomes available? It sounds easy and therefore may not seem very convincing as a remedy for suffering, yet it can take years or even a lifetime to make that simple shift and discover what becomes available when you do. Some people may not make the shift and may always perceive the world as potentially dangerous and threatening. But if you're able to make that shift again and again, it can transform your identity and experience. Being aware of a moment of agitation or restlessness and knowing there is another way to experience it – to turn one's attention inward and connect with the fundamental stillness of being – is the discovery of inner refuge through stillness.

When you turn your attention inward, you may notice competing internal voices. Turn toward the silence. Simply hear the silence that is available. Most of the time we do not listen to the silence but listen to our thoughts – we negotiate, we strategize, and we are pleased when we come up with a good solution, confusing this with clarity. Sometimes we try not to think about something and push it out of our mind and distract ourselves with other things. This is all noise, and considered pain speech. When we listen to the silence that is available in any given moment, whether we are in the middle of a busy airport or sitting at a holiday dinner table, our inner noise dissolves. In this way we discover inner refuge through silence.

When you have lots of thoughts, turn toward the spacious aspect of the mind. Spaciousness is always available because that is the nature of mind – it is open and clear. Don't try to reject,

control, or stop your thoughts. Simply allow them. Host them. Look at thinking as it is. It is like trying to catch a rainbow. As you go toward it, you simply find space. In this way you discover inner refuge through spaciousness.

It is important to neither reject nor invite thoughts. If you look at thought directly and nakedly, thought cannot sustain itself. If you reject thought, that is another thought. And that thought is only a smarter ego: "I am outsmarting that thought by observing it. Oh, there it is." And there you are, talking to yourself, holding on to the credential of being the observer of thoughts. The mind that strategizes is itself the creator of our suffering, and no matter how elegant or refined our strategy, it is still a version of the pain mind. So instead of coming up with a winning strategy, we must shift our relationship with pain mind altogether by hosting our thoughts, observing our thoughts, and then allow the observer to dissolve as well.

What is left you may wonder? You have to find out by directly and nakedly observing. The mind that wonders what is left if we don't rely on thinking or observing our experience can't discover the richness of the openness of being. We need to look directly into our thinking, busy mind to discover the inner refuge of spaciousness, and thereby discover the luminous mind. Fortunately, others who have gone before us have done so and provide pointing-out instructions and encouragement for us.

### **Transforming Painful Habits Through Open Awareness**

When ego is the result of disconnection, awareness itself is true connection. Awareness that is direct and naked is described as the sun, and the warmth of awareness dissolves the solidified pain identity the way the sun melts ice. So whenever you feel the pain of being disconnected from yourself, be open to it and be with it. Host your pain well with presence that is completely open, and most important, nonjudgmental.

Can you be open with your pain – still, silent, spacious? There is nothing better than open awareness for transforming pain, and that tool is within you at this very moment. The method of



transforming pain into the path of liberation has no conceptual aspect, it is simply being open. In open awareness, everything is processed. There is no unfinished business.

Another beautiful thing about open awareness is that it is like light. And light does not recognize the history of darkness – how long, how intense, or how complex the darkness is. Light simply illuminates darkness. Like the sun, it is not selective, and the moment it shines, darkness is dispelled. The moment you are aware, your negative patterns are dispelled.

### Finding the Closest Door

Stillness, silence, and spaciousness bring us to the same place – open awareness. But you go for refuge through a particular door: one through the body, one through speech, one through mind. Once you arrive, which door you entered through is no longer important. The door is only important when you are lost. If you are lost on the eastern side of the mountain, it is better to find the eastern path because it is the path closest to you. When we fly we are always reminded by the flight attendant that “the nearest exit could be right behind you.” The closest entrance is right here with you. The tension in your neck and shoulders could be your closest entrance. Your Inner Critic could be your closest entrance. Your doubting, hesitating mind could be your closest entrance. But we often overlook the opportunities right in front of us and take the farthest possible route. It is interesting how often we don't value that which is closest.

If open awareness is so simple, and any given moment of distraction, irritation, or anger is our doorway, why do we not turn toward our discomfort and discover a deeper truth? We are simply not very familiar with openness and we don't trust that it is sufficient. Turning our attention inward seems like the easiest thing to do, yet we don't do it.

### A Prescription for Inner Refuge

How is it possible to become more familiar with inner refuge? If we are ill and are given a

prescription for medicine that we've been told is absolutely necessary for our recovery and well-being, we are motivated to take our medicine. So perhaps we need to think of turning toward inner refuge as taking the medicine that will release us from our habit of disconnecting from the source of being. You have three pills to take: the pill of stillness, the pill of silence, the pill of spaciousness. Start by taking at least three pills a day. You can choose when to take stillness, when to take silence, or when to take spaciousness as your medicine. Actually, if you pay attention, opportunities will choose you. When you are rushing, you become agitated. Your agitation has chosen you. At that very moment say, “Thank you, agitation. You have reminded me to take the pill of stillness.” Breathe in slowly and go toward your agitation with openness. Your stillness is right in the midst of your agitation. Don't distract yourself and reject this moment, thinking you will try to find stillness later or somewhere else. Discover the stillness right here within your agitation.



The moment you hear complaint in your voice you can recognize this as the time to take the pill of silence. What do you do? Go toward your complaints. Be open. Hear the silence within your voice. Silence *is* within your voice because silence is the nature of sound. Don't search for silence, rejecting sound. That is not possible. Likewise, don't look for stillness, rejecting movement.

It is the same with the door of the mind. When your mind is going crazy with thoughts, take the pill of spaciousness. Remember, don't look for space by rejecting your thoughts – space is already here. It is important to make that discovery, and to make it again and again. The only reason you don't find it is because it is closer than you realize.

So that is my prescription. May the medicine of stillness, silence, and spaciousness liberate the suffering experienced through the three doors of body, speech, and mind – and in so doing, may you benefit many others through the infinite positive qualities that become available.”

**Interview by Stephen Ledyard (Buddhadharma)**





# AWAKENING THE LUMINOUS MIND

In 2011 were published: *Awakening the Sacred Body* and *Tibetan Yogas of Body, Speech, and Mind*. With *Awakening the Luminous Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche completes a series of three books that present meditation instructions and practices to help you discover the treasury of the natural mind. This book will be available from June 2012. We bring you parts of the Introduction.

"Inner refuge is the recognition of your true nature, which, according to these teachings, is the open and clear space of being. This is the nature of your true identity: open and clear. This nature is often referred to as the natural mind. It can be directly perceived, but not by the moving, problem-solving mind; only pure awareness can apprehend it. The awareness of openness is the source of all healing as well as the source of creativity, joy, love, compassion, and all other positive qualities.

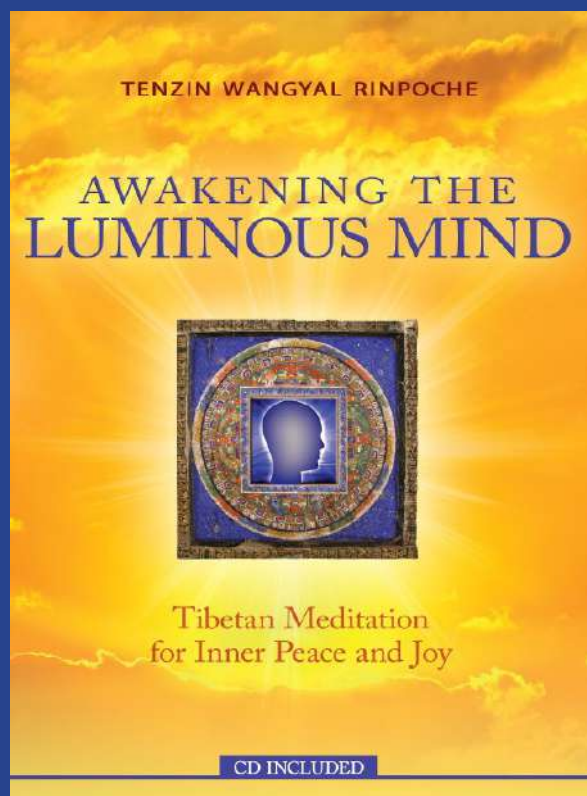
To discover this source within, this inner refuge, you must shift your focus or attention from the perception of a problem to the awareness of *being* itself. This book provides specific guidance on how to do this, on how to recognize what is true in the midst of confusion. It will guide you to bring awareness to the ordinary experiences of everyday life, for these experiences, which may appear bounded and limited, can become doorways to experiencing the magic of infinite possibilities. It is not a matter of the technique of this meditation or that meditation, although there are many useful and skillful techniques to help

you. More than any technique, what is important is your relation to yourself. Changing your life is a matter of connecting with places in yourself you may have never fully connected with, and understanding things you may never have fully understood or trusted. Do you recognize and honor the *space of being*, the truth of who you are, in the life in which you find yourself? This space within yourself is not a passive place where nothing happens. The whole universe arises, rests, and dissolves in that single space. Everything in your body arises, rests, and dissolves in that space. Surely we can trust that there is a deeper intelligence at work than the intelligence of ego with all its plans and proposals. Solutions will come naturally from the connection with the open space of being, which is boundless and infinitely full of potential.

If you follow the principles in this book, guidance and creativity and intelligence will naturally and spontaneously arise as you recognize and connect with the openness of being fully present. You will see changes happening in your everyday life. Trust that openness is the source. Discovering this is not a passive experience; it is lively and participatory. As you come to know the liveliness of connecting to the infinite possibilities of each moment, you will experience an inherent

sense of worthiness and richness. Your actions will spontaneously arise from the warmth of connection and will bring benefits and blessings to yourself and others."

**Text selected by Marcy Vaughn**  
Cover design by Tricia Breidenthal





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 5 – Summer 2012*



Meet the French speaking sangha

Who was Khyung Tul Rinpoche?

Buddhism & Science

Prayers supporting people



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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

We present to you our summer edition 2012, again with a variety of articles. You can read about internet research done by Jacek Trzebuniak on Khyung Tul Rinpoche, a great Bon master who lived from 1897 till 1955. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been recognized as a reincarnation of this famous master, who was a renowned meditation master, teacher, scholar and healer. Scott Clearwater explains how physical reality relates to the *Fivefold Teachings* of Dawa Gyaltsen. Geshe Gelek reports from his search for discovery of the spiritual culture of Zhang Zhung. John Jackson

presentations of their national organisations and had discussions with Rinpoche, Gabriel Rocco and other directors of Ligmincha Institute.

Regarding this magazine, we want to let you know that Jitka Polanská resigned from the position of editor, and we are happy that Jitka is willing to contribute in the future by writing articles. We want to thank Jitka for all the ideas, work, and enthusiasm she brought to the team. Without her contribution, the Magazine would not be what it is now. More than three thousand people have found this Magazine on the internet.



The Ligmincha Europe bookstore in Amsterdam, May 2012

shares with us a scientific report which proves that prayers support people in their recovery, and invites readers to sign up for the *Garuda mailing list*. Here, members request prayers for themselves or others. For readers who are not experienced surfers on the internet we gathered interesting sites where you can find Rinpoche's teachings. In addition to other interesting articles, you will find a review on the book *Heart Essence of the Khandro* with teachings from the ancient female lineage holders of the Bonpo.

In our next issue, you can read more about a vivid and interesting meeting that took place in June at Serenity Ridge. Representatives of many countries celebrated the twentieth anniversary of Ligmincha Institute. They gave

When we started publishing this Magazine in 2011, we wanted to make a contribution so that sangha members could get to know more about, as well as to learn from each other in Europe. Personally, I also learned a lot. At that time, I had never interviewed anyone, I didn't use Skype or Facebook, and I didn't know about the Dropbox, or the program Issue.com which we use to present this Magazine on the internet. Through my work on the magazine, I've also gotten to know some of the many warm-hearted sangha members. So, if you want to grab that opportunity too, you are welcome to join our team. Just send an e-mail to [magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu).

**Ton Bisscheroux**  
chief editor



# KHYUNG TUL RINPOCHE: A GREAT MASTER OF IMPARTIALITY

A renowned Bonpo meditation master, scholar and healer Khyung Tul Rinpoche (1897-1955) was a contemporary of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche (1859-1935). In terms of the development and promotion of the Bon religion in the first half of the twentieth century, these were the two most prominent Bon lamas. The great legacy of their achievements is still strongly felt in the Bonpo community. Jacek Trzebuniak researched available internet resources on Khyung Tul Rinpoche and summarized findings in the following article.

Born into a family of Amdo Gargya aristocratic lineage, in the nomadic Bonpo kingdom of Hor,

he had no objections in joining the Buddhist community of Dzogchen practitioners established in Namkha Khyung dzong under the guidance of Dechen Gyalpo in the Ngari region in West Tibet.

Khyung Tul Rinpoche spent a large part of his time as a Buddhist pilgrim visiting most of the sacred sites of northern India, Bhutan and Nepal. Journeys to India combined extensive pilgrimages to Buddhist sites with visits to Delhi in order to publish ancient Bon and Buddhist texts and also the complete works of Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche. Khyung Tul Rinpoche was not as prolific a writer as Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen Rinpoche, but his literary output was still substantial. He wrote on astrology, Tibetan grammar, and Tibetan medicine. He was also a skillful painter and poet, and wrote ten volumes of religious songs.



Khyung Tul Rinpoche Jigme Namkha Dorje in a photo taken around 1935.



Tulku Geshe Tenzin Wangyal – here in a photo taken around 1977 in Dolanji – was recognized as his incarnation.

Khyung Tul Rinpoche showed a great will to devote his entire life to religious activities from a very early age. The whole of his spiritual life was inspired by the Rime movement, making no distinction between Bon and Buddhism, as he constantly asserted in his poems. Thus, he received his full *drang srong* vows in the Bonpo scholastic tradition of Menri Monastery, but later

At the same time Khyung Tul Rinpoche was the instigator of the return of Bonpo traditions to the ancient land of Zhang Zhung in Ngari. Very significantly, he showed a particular interest for the remote Kinnaur valley, where he was to spend long periods of his life undertaking the difficult task of eliminating the deeply rooted, ancient traditions of offering blood sacrifices to the local





Khyung Tul Rinpoche in a photo taken by Giuseppe Tucci in 1935.

deities (*yul lha*). According to Bonpo historical accounts, this region was the centre of the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung from where the Bon religion originated. In an attempt to reestablish Bon in the area, Khyung Tul Rinpoche founded the Bon monastery of Gur Gyam, close to what he believed to be the location of Khyunglung Ngulkar ('the silver Garuda fortress'), the capital of Zhang Zhung. The monastery is situated next to a cave associated with the eighth century Bon master Drenpa Namkha. Khyung Tul Rinpoche and his principal medical student Tenzin Wangdrag meditated and consulted with patients in this cave.

It seems that most of his time at Gur Gyam was spent on construction work, and on preparing books for publication. The monastery took thirteen years to build and was finally completed in 1948. However Khyung Tul Rinpoche did find time to write his own works, as well as to practice and teach medicine. His knowledge of medicine was famous and many patients came to consult with him. He also completed his large four-volume medical commentary, known as the *Khyungtul Menpe*, in 1949.

Khyung Tul Rinpoche also had a considerable impact on a number of Westerners that he met during his life. This was the case of Giuseppe Tucci who had several occasions to meet the pilgrim in Tibet. Thanks to these meetings we have interesting descriptions of him (together with a few pictures) that help us understand his rich

### On the Khyung Tul Rinpoche hagiography

In accordance with his last wishes, after his death two close disciples, Palden Tsultrim and Khachog Dorje were entrusted with composing his *namtar* (hagiography). It was published in 1957 in Delhi. Fifteen years later, Menri Monastery in Dolanji (India) published another copy. This is the edition that has served as the basis for studies about the life and works of Khyung Tul Rinpoche published in the West. However, in the twenty-first century a new manuscript of the biography surfaced in Khyunglung (Ngari). The text had managed to survive the Cultural Revolution and was published in 2004 in Lhasa.

Khyung Tul Rinpoche's biography provides a very rich account of the first half of the twentieth century in Tibet and in its neighboring countries and it offers a portrait of the cultural history of these Himalayan regions. The Bonpo lama met some of the most powerful men of religion (both Bon and Buddhism) and politics of his time. The list is long and includes the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Twenty-eighth and the Thirtieth Menri Trizin, the Ninth Panchen Lama, the Sixteenth Karmapa, the First Dechen Gyalpo, the first Bhutanese king, the last king of the Princely State of Bushahr and several provincial governors of Ngari, among many others. At the same time, his biography also provides a unique source of information regarding the traditional toponymy and onomastics of remote and isolated regions including Hor, Kinnaur and Ngari.







Gur Gyam caves at upper Khyunglung Ngulkar. Established as retreat place with monastery below by Khyung Tul Rinpoche in 1936.

biography from a variety of different angles and viewpoints.

Khyung Tul Rinpoche died in 1955 in Drenpa Namkha cave, and with his death, a chapter in the history of Tibet was closed.

#### **From the Khyung Tul Rinpoche hagiography**

Before Khyung Tul Rinpoche was born, his parents had many dreams. Once, his mother had a dream in which she found a few flowers and jewels with which she made an ornament for her head; then a ray of light, brighter than the rising sun and moon, suddenly shone. On one particular night, a ray of light emanated from a small golden statue of a lama, the size of a thumb, lighting up the crown on her head.

While still a child, he saw on more than one occasion bright religious images similar to those found in thangkas and when shrouded in darkness he could point out rainbows to his mother. She could neither see nor hear anything but believed

them to be bad omens. She visited the lama, Gyalwa Tsultrim, who told her that in his past life her son might have been a lama or an excellent being devoted to the cultivation of virtue and so she had no cause for worry.

Because his family was rich and religious they invited many lamas to their house. From early childhood Khyung Tul Rinpoche was receiving many teachings and initiations. For example when he was three or four years old (1899-1901), Paton Nyima Bumsal, a sublime lama of Yetha Sog in Lower Hor, visited Upper Hor and was invited to Khyung Tul's home, where he gave all kind of initiations to the boy.

From early childhood Khyung Tul Rinpoche wanted to become a monk, but he was the eldest son (he had six brothers and one sister) and for few years his parents would not agree. In the end his parents conceded to their son's wishes, but they asked him that if he should decide to take on the monk's habit that he should never abandon them.







Monastery Donag Drag Gye Ling situated below Gur Gyam caves at upper Khyunglung Ngulkar, a place associated with Drenpa Namkha.

After study for few years with different Bonpo teachers in this region he decided to start a long pilgrimage in Tibet. His lama advised him to go to the West; spend some time in Menri Monastery, visit Mount Kailash, Lake Manasarovar, Khyunglung Ngulmkha and support Bonpo practitioners in Ngari. When he was leaving his homeland he had a dream in which Dorje Gradul appeared on horseback wearing his ornaments and weapons, followed by a multitudinous entourage. He bade farewell to all those deities who told him that they would accompany him on his journey to Namtso Lake. Nevertheless, Khyung Tul Rinpoche begged them to stay and protect the local people and their religion. The deities replied claiming that they would always be ready to help him if he was in need.

#### Resources:

[www.facebook.com/pages Naldjor](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Naldjor)  
[www.himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk](http://www.himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk)  
[www.bodyhealthreligion.org.uk](http://www.bodyhealthreligion.org.uk)

**Text by Jacek Trzebuniak**

Photos: from the websites

#### Jacek Trzebuniak

"I work on my Ph.D. at Jagiellonian University in Cracow, Poland, focused on Tibetan death rituals. I have been practicing Bon since 2007. I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche first time in summer 2008 and I immediately felt that this is my teacher. When I met him I only heard that he is the reincarnation of a famous Bonpo master. At the end of 2008 I was with Rinpoche and his students at First Lishu Trip in India, where the Abbot of the Nunnery in Dolanji told some stories about Khyung Tul Rinpoche. In 2011 Geshe Thupten Negi visited Poland and he spoke about this master because his grandfather knew Khyung Tul Rinpoche. In 2012 I found on Facebook a short film where Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche speaks about Zhang Zhung and Khyung Tul Rinpoche. This time I felt that I wanted to find more about him. Now I am working on a longer article about Khyung Tul Rinpoche and I plan to translate his biography into Polish. I am working on this because of two reasons. Firstly I have this scientific mind, I want to know: Who? Why? When? Secondly when I read these texts I feel more connection and devotion to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the Bon tradition."



# BUDDHISM & SCIENCE CONFERENCE AT SERENITY RIDGE

**Can the results of meditation be measured by scientists? An interesting question which cannot be easily answered. In the *New Dialogues Between Buddhism and Science Conference* scholars explored this field of research. One of the participants gives us an impression of those two days at Serenity Ridge Retreat Center.**

On February 18-19, 2012, Ligmincha Institute and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche hosted the *New Dialogues Between Buddhism and Science Conference* at Ligmincha's Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in Virginia, bringing together scholars whose work includes areas of common interest with Buddhist practices. The goal was continued engagement with researchers who value the insights that contemplative practices have brought to studies of human consciousness, behavior, and health. More than sixty members of the community attended, many participating in the lively discussion sessions which followed presentations.

The attendees were welcomed by Alejandro Chaoul-Reich, known for his work in documenting and teaching practices of *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* within the Bon tradition. Further welcoming introduction was made by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche himself, who expressed his supportive interest of the importance of this dialogue in the

modern age of information and the value wisdom traditions offer to modern humanity's state of disconnection and distress. He then led everyone in a brief meditation.

In two sessions nine scholars held presentations concerning their field of expertise. Amongst them Scott Clearwater, Ph.D., physicist and head of The Three Doors Research Committee, who examined the models of interaction between mind and reality in modern physics research and thought experiments, and the goals for collaborative research within the Three Doors Program. The first day concluded with a moving group meditation led by Rinpoche.

The following morning, everyone gathered for extended discussion of the exciting potential for new understandings that the synergy of Buddhist practice and cognitive frameworks might bring to fruition. While many challenges and hurdles were identified, and an acknowledged consensus that as Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche so concisely put, there would never be a quantifiable measure of the degree or benefits of 'open-heartedness,' that nonetheless the potential positives of future collaboration and future research offer much promise. All participants agreed that the dialogue is a rich one, and likely to bring benefit to beings for many years to come.

**Text by Rob Dorsey**

Photo by Polly Turner





# REALITY IS A CREATION OF THE MIND

In the *New Dialogues Between Buddhism and Science Conference* one of the presenters was Scott Clearwater. He talked about physical reality and how it relates to the *Fivefold Teachings* of Dawa Gyaltsen, and explains to us how modern science and ancient knowledge meet.

## How did you experience the conference?

Most of the talks were about physiological changes resulting from Dharma practices. Zoran Josipovic from New York University showed fMRI images of people before and after different kind of meditations. For me it was interesting to see that people who claim to be in *Rigpa* could actually be detected in different brain states.

I think the reason we have these Buddhist and Science conferences is because in the West our kind of religion is science. Many people look to science for what is real and what is believable. And because of that people look for scientific validation of everything, whether it is a new kind of medicine, a new physical law or a new particle. In this case we are trying to validate some very ancient traditions. We saw that Dharma practices can lead to scientifically measurable results, and I think that is very beneficial for the Western world.

## What subject did you present?

I talked about physical reality and how it relates to the *Fivefold Teachings* of Dawa Gyaltsen. Its first line *Vision is Mind* means for me that that reality is a creation of your mind. It is not out there independently from you, but it is you creating that reality. In a psychological sense you can understand that. For example when there is a personal relationship you can say something good or bad about that person, and everybody may have a different opinion. That is one kind of reality.

## Vision is Mind

- 'Vision' or appearances or experiences arise from the mind. Mind in the broader Buddhist sense, not as a brain state.
- We know experiences are subjective from a psychological viewpoint.
- Historical quantum physics experiments point to reality itself as being subjective.



**How do you explain *Vision is Mind*? For me it is quite difficult to understand that line. I know that that my mind creates my own reality, but I don't know what non-dual reality is.**

It is easy to say this line, but to really realize the essence at a deep level we have to do the practice. I claim that by doing these very subtle physics experiments we can touch that reality and the practices internalize what is shown in the laboratory. The hard part for us it is to be really in that state.

**When Rinpoche explained the lines of Dawa Gyaltsen I started to think about it instead of experiencing it.**

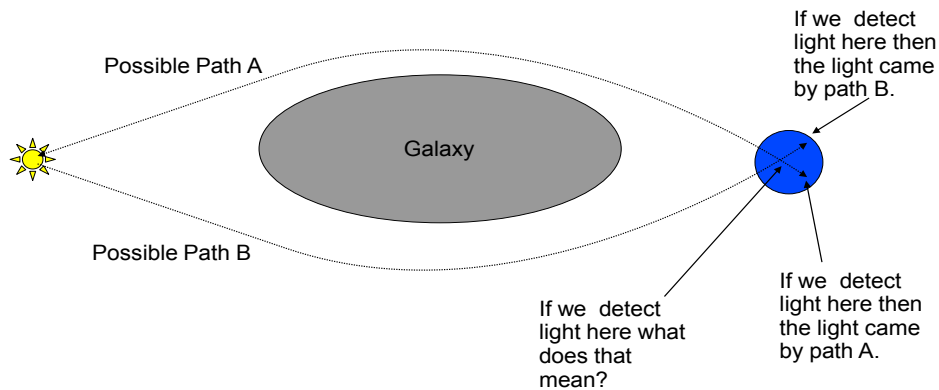
That is a problem most people have. The beautiful thing about the meditation we do is for me, coming from a science side, it is like a physics experiment, wherein I am the scientist, the phenomena and the apparatus, all in one. I'm sitting in a meditation, as an experimenter and allowing the phenomena – the experiences – to come out, and the Nature of Mind comes up and undergoes the experiences. Setting up the conditions for where the phenomena or experiences occur, that is what a scientist does. Then afterwards analyzing and understanding and moving forward. Hopefully there is a realization in that meditation or experiment, because then you can integrate that in everyday life and make progress.



## Which Choice?

To reach us light must go around the galaxy, either 'above' or 'below' it.

We don't know which path the light took until we measure it.



When you do a Dzogchen meditation you are working on a level that is prior to making any assumptions. When you let go of your assumptions, that is when you can discover new things. It is also with quantum mechanics that we discover things people in the nineteenth century didn't know about, and in the twentieth century started to appear. And for ourselves, having progressed more deeply in the practice, we also discover new things. They were always there, but we didn't know about them till we did the proper experiment or practice, just as with physics.

### **Can you tell something about the Mind in Dzogchen terms?**

It is open awareness and it has certain qualities like being non-conceptual. It doesn't have a literally physical location, but in terms of practice the physical heart is the place where we focus on the mind. It would also be an interesting area of research: what would the physical beating of the heart do, or other changes when you are in a *Rigpa* state or in anxiety? That would help to establish that there is a sense of mind in the area of the physical heart.

### **At the conference you stated that on the physics side the support of a lot of Buddhist and Bon views of reality are already established by experiment. Can you tell more about that?**

Yes, that's what I claimed. What's missing is the interpretation of those results, in the context of something like Dawa Gyaltsen. I talked about

actual physical reality that you touch. I gave an example of a physics experiment that showed how the choice of a conscious being determines the history of an event in the present time that should have happened in the past. For example, consider light traveling from a distant star to the earth. The experiment is set up in a way that there are two choices. There are two paths that the light can take. And depending on the location of the measurement the scientist chooses, that determines what path the light takes even though the light has presumably already gone in one direction by the time it gets to the scientist who measures it. The path of the particle is not defined until you measure it. The experiments have touched on the fact that there is a created reality; it is created by the experimenter, which is a mind.

That is my interpretation of the line *Vision is Mind*. I used physical reality rather than a psychological or neurological kind of measurement. The experiment I described has been replicated in the laboratory in a tabletop experiment where all the conditions are very precisely controlled. The concept has been tested in the laboratory, and the concept with the stars is a way of explaining it.

### **You say the observer determines the outcome of the experiment. Do I understand that correct?**

Let's use the starlight example. A star is one thousand light years away and there is a galaxy in between the star and us. The light could go around the left or the right before it reaches us. This light has been travelling for a thousand years



before it reaches us. And five hundred years ago it reached that galaxy that it had to go around. In our conventional way of thinking it had to go around in one of the two ways, and when it reaches us we can tell which way it goes. But when you look at the physics of it, depending on the way you measure it, you determine which direction it came from, after it supposedly had already gone there. A thousand years ago the light was emitted. Five hundred years after it passed the galaxy, and now you decide about that past history in the present. That's a mind boggling thing. It does not agree with our normal view, but it does agree with the Dawa Gyaltsen view, that *Vision is Mind*. The entire math works out, and experiments have been done, and it agrees with the theory. The after the fact measurement itself determines the historical path. There is no pre-defined path. It is another way of thinking. We think: it must have gone this way or that way, but in the quantum physics world that is not the case. My interpretation of the theory is that this is a support of *Vision is Mind*, because the mind is creating the history for something after it has supposedly already happened. So the whole notion of history and time is subjective and not objective. That is what I think Dawa Gyaltsen is saying.

#### **Could the light have gone both ways?**

Yes, if you measure it in a certain way you get a measurement that says "yes, it went both ways." That is another kind of strange contradiction of our normal way of thinking. How could one particle go on two paths? In reality it does, and that is I claim another support of Dawa Gyaltsen's *Vision is Mind*. So in essence, both quantum theory and Dawa Gyaltsen's *Fivefold Teaching*, the theories and the experiments, or meditations, say the same thing.

#### **Did people understand what you said?**

It provoked a lot of questions. I wanted to bring in the perspective that physical reality is also mind created, not only a psychological thing. Not everybody got it, but it was meant to be thought provoking, and make people think about it. For example, there was one person who had a poor relationship with another person for a long time. And after using the Dharma practice they were able to heal their relationship. The person said that was like changing the past because the bad part of the relationship no longer existed for them. I didn't agree, because that past relation-

#### **Scott Clearwater**

is a consultant in Silicon Valley, where he does scientific and technological problem solving, and uses his analytical skills to do market trading. He is head of *The Three Doors Research Committee*. Scott co-authored the first two books on quantum computing. He thinks there is a relationship between computation and the Dzogchen view of reality: "Sometimes very strange things happen when you do quantum computation, a kind of machine where they use quantum physics as a basis for its computation. When you do that you have some kind of *Vision is mind* behavior coming out of computation." He is currently writing a book explaining the similarities between quantum physics and Dawa Gyaltsen's *Fivefold Teaching*.

All his Ph.D. work he was involved in particle physics and used his quantum physics understanding to help him understand the Dharma. He says: "Each meditation is for me a science experiment, a possibility to discover the greater Self. When you wait for something to happen, then you are not going to get it. There must be patience in your waiting. Allow it to happen."

ship really did happen and was recorded in their memories. You can change your view of it, but you cannot change how it happened after the fact. In the experiment with the light, the path was never recorded until the measurement by the scientist. These are two different phenomena.

#### **In the Dzogchen practice you have the advantage that you can discuss your experiences with a Dzogchen master, and he can tell you if you are on the right track. Is it easier than science?**

Yes, there are teachers who have experienced it and know it. It's a huge advantage to be able to validate your experience. In science somebody gets a result and someone else has to go out and measure it again to verify it. They need a replication of what was found. As practitioners we are fortunate that all the masters have done all that work for us. They give us instructions and we have to follow it. That's easier than science where you don't know where you are going.

#### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photo by Polly Turner





# TRACKING THE ORIGINS OF MY SPIRITUAL TRADITION

You may know Geshe Gelek Jinpa from the documentary *In the search of Zhang Zhung* as an insightful pilgrim travelling together with an American photographer and a group of Nepali shamans to witness what remains of the ancient civilization of Zhang Zhung — and realizing finally that what is alive of it is already in his possession as the wisdom of the Bon teachings. Geshe Gelek's passion for the discovery of the spiritual culture of Zhang Zhung continues. Recently, he spent six months in Tibet.

**Geshe Gelek la, what did you do during your last journey to Tibet?**

I went mainly for research. This is my big and continuous interest, searching for origins of Tibetan culture which are rooted in Zhang Zhung. I really want to do that more and more. It was my fourth journey to Tibet after I left it. For any research, you need to spend time at the place. During a five day trip you can't do much. So, longer stays are needed. How I do: I go to a place and try to find somebody who is considered knowledgeable, usually an old man or a lady, no difference if Bonpo or not Bonpo. And I ask them questions. Any research requires being at the place I think. Reading books and thinking about something is totally different from being really at the place where the culture originates.

Nowadays, I can see that Tibet more than ever has been discovering its ancient history and culture. You know, in the past, research was very much influenced by the view that the very cultural and spiritual development of Tibet started only with Buddhism coming from India and that before the 7th century there was nothing much valuable there. Lately, this approach had been replaced with recognition of the value and richness of the original ancient culture of Tibet and its source Zhang Zhung. This time, I met many young Tibetan scholars in Tibet deeply focused on Zhang Zhung, learning the ancient language and appreciating what they were discovering so much. It is really amazing.



**Geshe Gelek Jinpa**

was born in 1967 into a family living from farming and keeping yaks in the Khyungpo area of Kham, Tibet. Already as a child and as a teenager he was instructed in Bon by Lama Bon Nying Rang Drol (a disciple of a disciple of Shardza Rinpoche).

After a visit of His Eminence Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche to his village in 1986, Geshe Gelek at the age of nineteen became a monk and entered Thongdrol Ritrod Monastery. After a second meeting with H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who visited Tibet again in 1992, Geshe Gelek decided to study for Geshe degree. For this purpose he had to leave Tibet.

In exile, he studied under H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in Triten Norbutse Monastery in Kathmandu, where he obtained a Geshe degree in 2001.

Since obtaining his Geshe degree, Geshe Gelek has been teaching in Triten Norbutse and, increasingly, in Europe. He has taught in Italy, Austria, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania and the United Kingdom, and regularly teaches courses in Shenten Dargye Ling in France.





The place where Rase Dawa Tapa took the rainbow body

**You were born in and grew up in Kham in Eastern Tibet, while Zhang Zhung was located in Western Tibet. During your research trips, do you have the possibility to visit your family?**

I always try to visit my mum, otherwise she becomes sad. When I went to shoot the documentary *In Search of Zhang Zhung* in 2003, I could not leave the crew and go to my village. But what happened? By coincidence I met some monks and nuns from my native place in pilgrimage to Mount Kailas where I was at the moment. When they came back to my village they told my mum that they saw me in Tibet. She was so sad about it: I was in Tibet and I didn't come to visit her! So, when I could I took a one month visa and went to see her. This time I went to my village but during the stay there, I got really sick. It is situated in high mountains and my body is not used to it anymore. I got terrible headaches. So, I thought that I had to go somewhere and I took the opportunity and went to visit Shardza Rinpoche's place and also the place where his close disciple Rasi Dawa Tapa took the rainbow body — even before Shardza Rinpoche himself. I also went to the birth place of Nyammé Sherab Gyaltsen and to his original monastery Yungdrung Lhateng.

I saw many memorable places in Eastern Tibet in this time.

**I read in internet that you were one of the monks examined by a team of scientist while practicing *Tummo*. How was it?**

Yes, it was right after my Geshe graduation. We received that request from Western researches and Yongdzin Rinpoche and Khenpo Rinpoche told me, Lama Sangye Monlam and another monk to undergo that experiment. And so we went to France, for the first time. It was in 2001. We did *Tummo* practices and the doctors were



Monastery of Yungdrung Lhateng







Shardza Rinpoche's Ritrö

trying to detect changes in our blood pressure, body temperature and other physiological processes. They found something, but of course, the real meaning and purpose of the practice they could not find. They had no tools for that. In Tibet, traditionally, there is also an examination after (during) the *Tummo* retreat which is usually held for one hundred days. You have to dry wet sheets put on your naked body, by the power of the practice. It is done outside, in the early morning, in freezing temperature. But it was easy compared to the scientific test. You know, the researchers put all the kind of things on you and you had to do the practice while they were watching you. At moments, a thought came: oh, they are watching me, and that was distracting. The practice needs really good concentration and focus.

**Western practitioners sometimes find it difficult to develop the concentration of mind that Eastern meditators have. Is the Western mind handicapped due to the Western life style?**

I think that Western people often don't put all of themselves in meditation. They just prefer thinking and analyzing things. Always searching

for information, they don't find what they look for. Because they are too intelligent, things become more complicated for them. But if you put 100 % of yourself into practicing, the result will come surprisingly easy. People try this and that but don't dedicate themselves fully. They believe that meditation is something to be found, but meditation is right here, everything is meditation. So, it is simply a matter of approach, nothing else. If somebody meditates, the results will come. The teaching is for everybody. The important thing is take everything from the easy side. If you take it from the heavy side, even moving this book from one place to another can be very difficult. I like the English expression 'take it easy'.

**Will you keep on teaching in Europe?**

I teach mainly in Italy or in Shenten, in France, and I like teaching here very much. But I also want to dedicate more time to research, as I said though. I want to go back to Tibet already this year. You know, being there is very inspiring to me. Even just listening to stories of great meditators gives you so much inspiration. I saw many, many Bonpos in regions where I went during my last trip. They paid so much respect







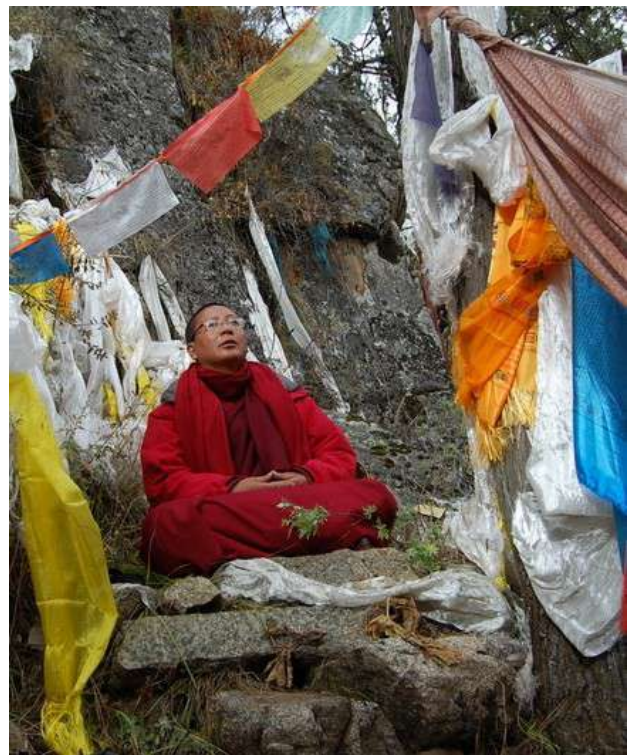
Monastery of Khyungpo Tsedruk

to us. They know that we received teachings and transmissions directly from H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche and His Holiness who are recognized everywhere in Tibet as the leaders of Bon school.

Now, there are quite a lot of Dzogchen practitioners in Tibet: monks and lay people as well. My eldest brother is a monk and he also wants to dedicate his life to meditation. Now he wants to join a monastery in Eastern Tibet, called Khyungpo Tsedrug where many good meditators gather.

**How do lay practitioners in Tibet organize their lives so that they can dedicate themselves properly to their practice?**

Of course, they have to care about their families and households but they support each other. Once the father of the family goes to retreat, the mother takes care of the household and brings food to him. Then they change places and the mother goes and the father supports her. And then, when they are at home, they practice every day. So, they integrate their practice into their lives. This is what Western practitioners also try to do. It is perfectly possible.



Geshe Gelek practising *Thögal*

**Interview by Jitka Polanská**

Photos: courtesy of Geshe Gelek Jinpa



# DEVOTION IS OUR DRIVE

We wanted to introduce the French sangha. But, when Ton Bisscheroux interviewed Nathalie Duchanois, he discovered that Ligmincha France & Suisse romande is a collaboration of two close sanghas: one is in France and the other is in the French speaking part of Switzerland.

## Can you explain the name *Ligmincha France & Suisse romande*?

We work in two border countries: France and Switzerland. That are two different sanghas but we have many links as the fact we are French speaking brings us together. I live in 'Suisse romande', the French speaking part of Switzerland, but I often practice in dharma centers in France. In the beginning I was working on my own to organize Rinpoche's teachings, and the past three years Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche brought people spread all over France and Switzerland together. So now we are a team and have a Facebook page [Ligmincha France & Suisse romande](#).

## When did you meet Rinpoche the first time?

I met Rinpoche in a very informal way in Nepal a couple of days before New Year 2000. I was studying Dharma and Tibetan in Boudhanath, Kathmandu. I was then with an Italian friend in a tiny typical Tibetan restaurant; when Rinpoche heard her talk Italian he started a conversation with us. First I didn't know he was a Rinpoche as he was dressed as a Tibetan in a casual way, not as a monk. At that time he was there to write a book and to study with his master. During several weeks, I regularly met Rinpoche at the *kora* around the Boudhanath stupa and we had friendly and humorous conversations. You can imagine how surprised I was when I discovered he was a Rinpoche and such an extraordinary master! Then I started following his teachings and discovered the Bon tradition, even though I had been a student of Bokar Rinpoche (Karma Kagyu lineage) for several years. I've always found both the Bon and Kagyu traditions complement and enhance each other beautifully.

## How long has Rinpoche been coming to Switzerland?

In Switzerland there have been teachings for



about twelve years in Zurich, organized by Ann-Marie Jakob. Because the teachings are translated into German, I asked Rinpoche many times to teach in the French speaking part of Switzerland. Two years ago Rinpoche agreed to come and asked me to organize the seminar together with Guy Desbiolles. Both in May 2011 and 2012 about ninety persons came to the teachings of Rinpoche in a cultural center located in the little city of Bulle, near Fribourg.

## How about the teachings in France?

Rinpoche always wanted to teach in France, but he didn't want to interfere with his teacher, His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who teaches regularly in Shenten Dargyé Ling in France. There are many students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in France, most of them know Rinpoche through his books.

Three years ago Rinpoche was invited by the Institute Karma Ling, a wonderful Kagyu center founded in the eighties by Kalou Rinpoche, in the mountains near Grenoble. The Institute is very open to other traditions and invites regularly another Bon master, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The 2009 seminar welcomed about two hundred and fifty students who had the great opportunity to practice the *Five Elements* in a gorgeous natural site, outside around the Institute.

Many years ago Rinpoche did teach in Paris. Since then, people kept asking if Rinpoche would come back, and finally Rinpoche agreed to come this spring to Paris for a seminar about *Tibetan Sound Healing*. We were amazed that about one hundred and eighty people came to the teachings and the place was too small...





>CONTACT:  
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# invitations

## Tenzin wangyal Rinpoché




université rimay

**Les 4, 5 et 6 septembre**  
**LE POUVOIR THÉRAPEUTIQUE DES CINQ ÉLÉMENTS DANS LA TRADITION DU DHARMA DZOGCHEN BÖN**

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoché, l'un des rares maîtres de la tradition Dzogchen Bön à vivre en Occident, nous ouvre les portes d'un monde tout à fait extraordinaire, celui des cinq éléments : dans un premier temps dans la vision chamanique Bön, où ils sont appréhendés par le biais des pouvoirs bruts de la nature et des êtres immatériels qui l'habitent, puis dans le cadre du Tantra, qui les considère comme cinq types d'énergie corporelle qu'équilibrent exercices de yoga et visualisations ; enfin dans la perspective Dzogchen, qui regarde les éléments comme le rayonnement de l'être.

Cet enseignement de Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoché, en lien avec son ouvrage « Guérir par les formes, l'énergie et la lumière », offre au pratiquant, dans une optique thérapeutique, des méditations et des pratiques yogiques correspondant à chacun de ces niveaux. Il propose de remplacer une identité anxieuse, étroite et mal à l'aise par une autre plus vaste, paisible et compétente. Le monde aussi se transforme, passant de la matière inanimée et de processus aveugles à un paysage sacré, rempli d'une variété infinie de forces et d'êtres vivants.

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoché est l'un des principaux héritiers de la tradition du Dzogchen Bon ayant pratiqué avec d'éminents maîtres Bon et bouddhistes.



Announcement in *Garuda*, the newsletter of the sangha Rimay, May 2009

Thanks to the French students enthusiasm, Rinpoche has decided to come back to Paris in September 2012 for an evening talk on *Awakening the Luminous Mind* and in March 2013 for a seminar on the *Dream yoga*.

At Easter Rinpoche was also invited by the Center of Buddhist studies in Grenoble, another historic Kagyu center founded by Kalou Rinpoche and 16<sup>th</sup> Karmapa. The director of this centre is Lama Tcheuky Senghe, an eminent translator who founded the famous *Claire Lumière Editions* where many of Rinpoche's books are published in French. The Grenoble sangha enjoyed Rinpoche's powerful teachings with his modern direct style.

#### Can you tell something about the structure?

In both countries the organization is informal, because Rinpoche said we should wait before creating an association. We are beginners, working with devotion as our drive, and we are happy that it works. Last year Rinpoche told me to contact Jean Ory, Dominique Mongardé and Martine Allier. Together, we formed the *essence team*. We also got precious help from Guy Desbiolles, Claude Bonjour, Gilles and Phap. Their common point is that their dedication is wonderful! As we live far away from each other, we started to work over telephone, e-mail, Skype and we tried to organize things the best we could. Every three months we send a newsletter to our French speaking sangha, and also through e-mail and Facebook, we inform the students what's going on.

We are organizing groups in Paris and in Grenoble to practice *Tsa Lung*. In Paris we will start in

September for a full day, and if people are interested we will also organize full weekend retreats. Nicolas Gouranopoulos from Belgium will lead the group with my assistance. In Grenoble, I've been invited by the Center of Buddhist studies to lead a *Tsa Lung* practice group about three times a year on a week end. Grenoble is a convenient location as many people from the south and north of France and from Switzerland come.

#### **You are a young, but also very active group with good ideas. On the monthly European Skype-meeting I heard about the translations of Rinpoche's teachings and videos on the internet.**

Jean Ory started to translate Rinpoche's teachings on Facebook, and Rinpoche noticed how he was involved and contacted him. He's now very active translating the Rinpoche's written teachings, videos and even organized online teachings translations, together with Dominique Mongardé. There are other people helping with the translations, who I never met before! I translate Rinpoche's seminars into French and I work on translations of Rinpoche's books for the *Claire Lumière Editions*.

By the way, Jean never met Rinpoche in person, and the first time will hopefully be in Barcelona this autumn. I consider all these different people's dedication and links are a wonderful expression of the lama's grace, aren't they?

#### **Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Nathalie Duchanois





# PRAYERS SUPPORTING PEOPLE

Sangha members pray for people in need on request of sangha members. When Ton Bisscheroux heard this he wanted to know more, and interviewed John Jackson, who is administrator of the *Garuda mailing list*.

## What is the *Garuda mailing list*?

The *Garuda mailing list* was originally for discussion of meditation practices in the Tibetan Bon tradition, but now it is mostly used for prayer requests. About 90%, or perhaps even more, of the messages that go to the list now are related to prayer requests. Three or four years ago there was a very vigorous discussion whether the list should be split in a two parts. A clear majority decided to keep it all combined together. The discussion ended with an agreement that there is no significant difference between talking about practice experiences and doing the request for prayer for someone who died, for healing, or whatever.

## When did this initiative start?

It started in 1995 after a retreat where His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche gave a teaching on *Dream Yoga*. It was Mark Dhalby, the editor of the Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's *Dream Yoga* book, who suggested to give rise to the *Garuda mailing list*. We created a list for people who participated in that retreat to share their dreaming experiences and ask questions about the practice. It turned out that most people would rather read about other people's experiences than share their own. We never publicized anything about this mailing list. But when people attended retreats, mainly in Virginia, we talked about it, and anybody in the international sangha can participate. The group gradually grew over time, and now there are three hundred and fourteen members.

## How does it work?

People on the list have the option to receive the

messages in two different ways. One is what's called a 'daily digest list'. That means if ten messages are written to the list in one day they get one message including all ten messages within it. But if people prefer individualized message format, every time someone writes to the list, they immediately get that message.

Beside the messages, Dean Grantham keeps track of all the prayer requests and once every month he sends a summary of every prayer requests in one email. They just have their name, one line summary the reason why that person has requested the prayer. In this list there are also the date when the forty nine days will be completed for the Bardo prayers when someone died.

When you are a member of the list, and you want to write something – e.g. a request for a prayer – you send it to a specific e-mail address and it will be forwarded automatically to everybody on the list.

## What do you do when you get an e-mail request?

The initiative is meant to be entirely open. So it depends on what the request is, and it also depends on what your practice is. Usually people do not request a specific prayer or a specific practice. They just ask: "This person is having this difficulty, please keep them in your prayers." Most of the requests are for someone who died, as well as for physical healing or emotional healing. And

then it is up to anyone's own interpretation what to do.

## Do people also send a picture of the person they ask the prayer for?

People can do that, and a lot of people who do the practice feel that it helps them to hold somebody in their own mind, but it is not required. Often people don't have a picture, because it is somebody they know, like their neighbour. Only about 5% send a picture.



### Are there many requests?

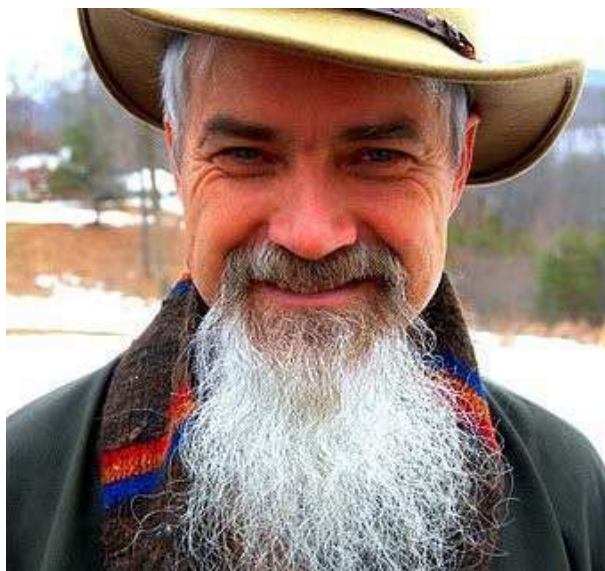
It varies from one per day to as many as sometimes ten or twelve per day, and the daily average is four or five messages. It seems to be really meeting peoples need. Otherwise it would not continue as long as seventeen years now. The nice thing about it is that it really builds a community across borders, because it is a very diverse international group.

### Can you tell something about the effects of the prayers?

Many times the people who have requested the prayers wrote back after some time and thanked the group. They told how much they appreciated it and how they could feel the very positive energy falling in their life from the rest of the group.

Several years ago there was an interesting research article published in a medical journal, *The Archives of Internal Medicine*. The researchers had nine hundred people with serious heart problems in a cardiology hospital. None of the patients were aware that they were being part of a study. The researchers divided half of these people into a group that received anonymous prayers from a group who had agreed to pray for the healing of these people. And the people who volunteered for this study came from all kind of different traditions. They were not given any instructions what to do, other than pray. And if they agreed they would do that every day for each person they were focusing on. And they tracked these nine hundred people over quite a long period of time. The patients involved had no idea that this was taking place. The researchers found that the people who received the prayers had improved more quickly, and had better outcomes than those who had not. The result was statistically significant. It was a rigorous study, because they knew there would be a lot of very close examinations of the results, and there would be a lot of criticism because it is not 'true medicine'. The authors of that paper said that they had no idea what the mechanism was. "All we're doing is reporting the effects, and we're not saying anything beyond that." This work has been published about six or seven years ago and a lot of people looked at it very closely and nobody found any faults with the method or the data.

The conclusion of this research — *A Randomized,*



### John Jackson

is a long-time student of the Bon tradition. He is the director of the Chamma Ling solitary retreat center in the mountains of Colorado. He is also one of the teachers of the Three Doors training program in Europe.

*Controlled Trial of the Effects of Remote, Intercessory Prayer on Outcomes in Patients Admitted to the Coronary Care Unit* — was: "...we found that supplementary, remote, blinded, intercessory prayer [praying for others, ed.] produced a measurable improvement in the medical outcomes of critically ill patients." This article is available at [archinte.jamanetwork.com](http://archinte.jamanetwork.com).

**I once experienced it, when a Buddhist monk prayed for me. From that time on I didn't experience any longer a daily slump, caused by a disease. I don't know how it works, and I can't rationalize it, but I experienced it.**

It is certainly a mystery, but learning to accept mystery is part of life.



**If our readers want to participate in the *Garuda* mailing list, can they contact you?**

If people want to become member of the list, they just sent an email to [red.garuda@gmail.com](mailto:red.garuda@gmail.com), and I'll put them on the list.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of John Jackson and Oliver Wirtz



# THE FLOWER OF LISHU WILL BLOSSOM AND FLOURISH

Lishu Institute in Northern India is a retreat center for Western students to experience long-term, in-depth studies in the Bon tradition. There is also the opportunity to study or practice for shorter periods of time. We talked to Bob Anger, the Executive Director of Lishu Institute.

**Is the site now completely ready or is it still under construction?**

The long-term plans for Lishu Institute call for several more buildings so the site will see more construction in the years to come. One new three-story building on the Lishu campus is finished and it provides meditation practice space, classrooms as well as lodging for teachers and students. Lishu Institute will open in October 2013.

**Can you tell us something about the people who have already visited Lishu Institute?**

There have been several international students who have done an individual retreat at Lishu Institute. The feedback from those students has all been very positive, and especially appreciative for Geshe Thupten's support and guidance.

Geshe Thupten continues to be the cornerstone and lifeblood of Lishu Institute. He is a dear trusted friend, and colleague of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He was the first Tibetan-Indian to become a Bon Geshe. He coordinated and supervised the construction of the new building and he is also a gracious and nurturing host for his guests.

**What are the costs for a student to do an individual retreat at Lishu Institute?**

The cost for an individual retreat at Lishu Institute is US \$15 per day, or US \$ 450 a month. Those who would like to attend Lishu Institute should contact me ([robert.anger@fox.com](mailto:robert.anger@fox.com)) and Geshe Thupten.

**The third international Lishu retreat, scheduled from October 13 through November 9, 2012 was cancelled because not enough people registered. Do you have an idea why?**

This is a difficult question to answer. The cancellation was a disappointment and surprise for us. It seems likely that the current global economic con-



ditions limit the financial resources available to students for travel and retreat. Another factor may be that other programs and teachings competed with this retreat.

**What are the plans for the near future?**

At this time the plans are to proceed with opening Lishu Institute to students beginning in October 2013. Students can study and practice there and get an intensive education in the Bon teachings. Rather than a three year or five year program the schedule of study will be in nine month segments with three month breaks between. When students have completed four of the nine month practice and study sessions they will receive a three year certificate of completion. Kurt Keutzer, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley is currently developing the Lishu Institute curriculum.

Rinpoche's vision is clear, open and flexible. He will celebrate the blossoming of the flower of Lishu Institute in which ever form it takes.

Students who are interested can find the latest information at: [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photo by Rob Wilson-Anger





# MONDAY

On Sunday I missed that secret door;  
that precious feeling wasn't there.  
A grey blank instead. Disconnected.  
On Monday it came back though.  
I woke up with it.  
I can't say what it is exactly.



It's like treasuring words of love  
someone told you, in your heart,  
but actually nobody did.  
It tastes like a promise, but of what?  
It counts only now, but you are  
not interested in the future anyway.  
Lightness of being, given for granted.  
You look around and you can't get upset.  
You just can't.

*Jitka Polanská*

# A BUSY BEE

Busy as a bee  
Happy and unfree  
No attention for poor me  
Only the branches of a tree  
Flying fled and flee  
Yes, my very busy bee  
The queen is controlling me  
Quickly, hurry up you little bee  
Bring every lovely honey to me  
Even your idea and everything you see  
Will be gathered for me



Busy as a bee  
Happy and unfree  
No attention for poor me  
Swinging, singing, thinking as a bee  
No matter how hard it can be  
Hurrying, hurrying no time to be free  
The queen will be dying at me  
Don't go with strangers little bee  
Dying, dying you will see  
Desperate in the jungle I guarantee  
Just fly, fly for me

This little bee  
a lost minute on a tree  
heard the sun on her flee  
sorrows fell into the sea  
rest came into this little bee  
left to be a VIP  
a deep sight made her see  
oh my little bee  
there is no have to flee  
can offer from your honey tree  
feeling inside this sunny-me



***Tonny Maas***

Photos by Hania Berdys  
[www.gardensafari.net](http://www.gardensafari.net)



## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S CLOUD

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche always looks for modern ways to reach people, and so he uses the internet Cloud. Detailed information on his teachings and insights on Bon Buddhism is easily available through the internet. Access to some of this information does not even require user registration or user fees. A summary of some useful internet resources to Rinpoche's teachings is provided here.

### Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's cyber-home

The main website to access Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings is the Ligmincha Institute's homepage [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org). Rinpoche's upcoming teaching schedule is available through this site, including details about his live webcasts. The site is frequently updated, for example with a new video series from the twentieth annual Ligmincha retreat on integrating practice into everyday life. For Europe we have [www.ligmincha.eu](http://www.ligmincha.eu). From that website you can link to all the European national websites. In the near future one website for the worldwide sangha will come.

### Live webcasts with Q&A sessions and recordings

Information about how and when to access the live teachings and meditations is provided on [www.ligmincha.org/retreats/live-webcast.html](http://www.ligmincha.org/retreats/live-webcast.html). Some webcasts are of public talks, while others are broadcast from retreats. During some webcasts, participants are invited to submit questions — an incredible opportunity for practitioners from throughout the world to interact with Rinpoche. From this page, visitors can also find links to previously recorded webcasts on a range of topics, including *Inner Creativity* and *Transcending Fear*.

### Register for online classes with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

In addition to offering many seminars and classes throughout the world, Rinpoche also makes his teachings available through online classes. For example, a four week online *Dream Yoga* class is scheduled for September 15 — October 14 2012. Information about this and other upcoming online classes can be found at [www.glidewing.com/twr/soundhealing\\_rinpoche.html](http://www.glidewing.com/twr/soundhealing_rinpoche.html).

New classes are being developed and these include: *Foundations of the Path*, *The Causal Vehicle*, *Sutra: Path of Virtue*, *Tantra: Path of Transformation*, and *Dzogchen: Path of Clear*

The screenshot shows the Ligmincha Institute website. At the top left is a portrait of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. To his right is a quote: "The heart of the spiritual path is the longing to know and to be your true and authentic self." followed by his name, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Below this are four red buttons: "GlideWing Home", "Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche", "Online Workshops", and "Workshop Registration". Underneath these buttons is the heading "About Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche". On the left side, there is a vertical menu with blue buttons for: "About Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche", "Awakening the Sacred Body", "Tibetan Sound Healing", "Tibetan Dream Yoga", "Tibetan Meditation", "Finding Refuge Within", and "Ligmincha Institute". On the right side, there is a video player showing a man in a meditative pose with the title "The Tibetan Yogas of Breath and Movement".







*Light.* The internet is a convenient way to stay updated and to receive information about registering for these classes as they become available.

### More teachings on video

The Ligmincha Institute maintains a channel on YouTube, which is regularly updated with new videos, primarily from Rinpoche's teachings: [www.youtube.com/user/ligmincha](http://www.youtube.com/user/ligmincha). For example, a seventy-five minute video on the *Five Element Practice* was added in May. Currently, eighty videos are available for public viewing. A number of themes are presented, including an eight part series with Rinpoche's explanation of the Dzogchen *Heart Teachings* by Dawa Gyaltzen, to help guide practitioners to the True Nature of the Mind.

Other individuals and groups, including sanghas, have also uploaded videos of Rinpoche's teachings on YouTube. Viewers have the option of subscribing to favourite channels, to receive email updates when new videos are added.

### e-Newsletters and e-Magazines

*The Voice of Clear Light*, a bimonthly and free e-publication from the Ligmincha Institute is a primary source for information and updates of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings and schedule. It also includes interviews with other Bon masters and news from the worldwide sangha. Subscriptions can be easily made at the [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org) website.

Other e-newsletters and e-zines are available online or through subscription from the different institutes, centers and sanghas founded by or associated with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. For example, the Chamma Ling newsletter, [www.chammaling.org](http://www.chammaling.org), is available online or through subscription.

### Avatars in the social network

Although Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche does not have a public personal website, he does maintain a personal Facebook page. His avatar or online representation shows a photo of Rinpoche with

his young son, and both are smiling and beaming. You can find this page, with his personal posts, comments, and photos as well as official updates from a senior student, at [www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche](https://www.facebook.com/tenzinwangyalrinpoche). During his July internet teaching, Rinpoche invited everyone to become his friend on Facebook.



The Ligmincha Institute as well as related groups (e.g. Ligmincha Texas, Chamma Ling Colorado, Ligmincha Europe, to name a few of the pages) also share updates through Facebook.

### The Three Doors

The Three Doors is an educational organization developed in response to the desire of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to open up the gift of Bon Buddhist practices to the secular world. In Europe the first group started in 2011. If you want to learn more about it visit [www.the3doors.org](http://www.the3doors.org).

### Lishu Institute

If you want to go for a longer retreat and you want to study Bon intensively, Lishu Institute in India is a place where you can go: [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org).

### Do you have suggestions?

Web resources can be useful for Bon practitioners of all levels. And, if you know of or find other good sources for information on Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings, consider tweeting, digging, or posting — maybe even on the Ligmincha Europe Facebook page — to spread word about these valuable online resources.

**Text by Patricia Char**



# HEART ESSENCE OF THE KHANDRO

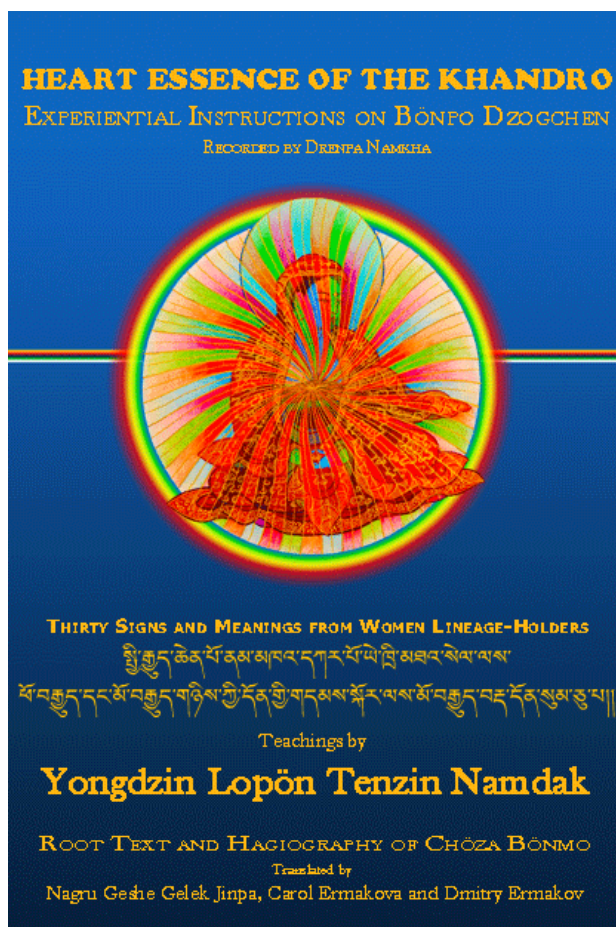
Invitations to strengthen one's personal practice come in many forms. The recently published book *Heart Essence of the Khandro: Experiential Instructions on Bonpo Dzogchen* is one such invitation — elucidating wisdom commentary by H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche on the teachings, but also teachings from the ancient female lineage holders of Bonpo Dzogchen, the Yetri Thasel Mogyud.

This is a lineage of strong women, each with a practice pure enough to achieve Buddhahood in a single lifetime. Each woman shared the essence of her experience with a single female disciple, continuing the lineage. Thirty of their stories, as well as their particular lessons and signs on their journeys to the rainbow body, are shared in this book.

That these teachings are now available is invaluable. This information is in an English publication for the first time. It is also a tribute to the effort by Bon practitioners over so many generations to save these teachings from being burned, tossed into rivers, or simply lost and forgotten. The section on Chöza Bönmo's life, a Tibetan Mogyud lineage holder in the eighth century, compiled by Nagru Geshe Gelek Jinpa, describes some of the hardships faced by those carrying on the Bon traditions.

Such cultural oppression has contributed to the dearth of existing information about the Mogyud Khandro. Few texts have survived and thangkas of these Khandro are rare. To remedy this, a new thangka was specially commissioned and, after much research, created – based on descriptions of the Khandro from various texts. The thangka is 'unveiled' in this book and its compelling images help modern day practitioners further their connections to the heart teachings from the Mogyud lineage.

The book includes a summary of the Dzogchen teachings from the male and female lineages of the Yetri Thasel, with commentary by Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak. The Tibetan text and translation from some of the root teachings and



prayers are also presented.

Regardless of level or gender, any practitioner open to the heart teachings of the Khandro can benefit from this experiential and beautiful book.

Here we share the teachings of Namkha Nyima Wödenma, on page 90, in the book:

*“Namkha Nyima Wödenma transmitted the teachings to Nyima Tongkhyabma.*

*The symbol is the three miraculous mirrors one after the other.*

*The meaning is as follows:*

*When you look back towards a thought, nothing remains – no trace, nothing. Leave it as it is. Don't think anything about what happens after thoughts disappear. Remaining in this way is called 'keeping the Presence of Emptiness.' But if you are thinking that this Nature is empty, that means you are kept in the prison of emptiness.*







Namkha Nyima Wödenma

*If, instead of liberating your thought completely and allowing it to disappear, you are still thinking something; however subtle, such as: 'Nature is like this' or 'Nature is like that'; then this is like being unable to purify some sickness which you have inside your heart or some other inner organ. That is the example. You can discover this through the Shining Sun of Wisdom. No thoughts can disturb Wisdom, so no matter what kind of thoughts arise, just leave them. Don't follow them, don't try to stop them. If you don't do this, they will disturb your wisdom.*

*Don't think that followers of Dzogchen count the Ten Bhūmis and the Five Paths, trying to climb up to Buddhahood using this system. If you do this, your Awareness Wisdom will set like the setting sun.*

*All kinds of emotions and defilements come, stay a while and disappear, and so they are something like a helper for recognizing the Nature. If you think that they are disturbances and judge them as something not good, then that means you have to follow evil again, that you have fallen down from the very narrow path.*

*In other words, you shouldn't try to recognize any kind of emotions or thoughts which arise. Just let them come. Don't follow them, don't try to stop them, nothing. You yourself try to remain as stably as possible in the Nature."*

#### **Text by Patricia Char**

Photos are from the book, reprinted with the kind permission of the editors





# DISCOVERING THE TRUE NATURE OF MIND

In July 2012 during the European summer retreat in Buchenau Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches from the Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters. Rinpoche talked about one of these Masters, Dawa Gyaltsen, in *Shambhala Sun* in May 2004. Here we reprint the article, which is published at the website: [shambhalasun.com](http://shambhalasun.com)

“Geshe Tenzin Wangyal teaches us a five-stage Dzogchen meditation that begins with contemplating our worst enemy and culminates in the discovery that mind is empty, clear and blissful.

*Vision is mind.  
Mind is empty.  
Emptiness is clear light.  
Clear light is union.  
Union is great bliss.*

This is the heart instruction of Dawa Gyaltsen, a Bon meditation master who lived in the eighth century. Bon is the native, pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, which has incorporated many Buddhist elements. This teaching is a direct introduction to the nature of mind and is not elaborate with ritual. The pith instructions of these masters – their heart advice to their students – are often only a few lines, but these few lines can guide the fortunate practitioner to recognizing his or her own true nature as Buddha.

## Vision is mind

How do we work with Dawa Gyaltsen's instruction, which begins, “Vision is mind”? Vision includes everything we perceive, but I suggest that you use what bothers you as an entrance to this practice. Do you have a famous person in your life? The famous person is the one who seems to be born to create a problem for you, as if that were his or her number-one mission in life.

Sometimes we feel there are people like that. Such people can make trouble for you not only with their presence, but with one single postcard sent to you. When you see the postcard with their handwriting on it, you are immediately disturbed.

So we begin our meditation practice with this famous person as our starting point. Create a protected environment and sit in a comfortable upright position. Now invite the image of your famous person to come into your awareness. They always come anyway, but this time you are inviting them so that you can look more deeply into this experience. What exactly is this famous person composed of? See the image of the person, the character of this person who bothers you so much. Sense the energetic or emotional presence of this person. When your famous person was born, he or she did not show any physical signs or marks of what you now see. And not all people share your view of this person. What you perceive is your mind, your karmic vision, which is more karma than vision.

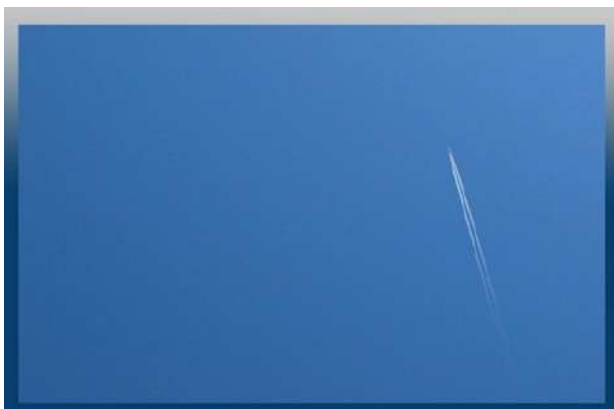
So in this moment, instead of looking out and focusing on that person, look inward. Step back and let the experience come in. Do not step forward but step backwards. Don't go to your office and make phone calls and send emails. Just sit and close your eyes and reflect on this person, and experience what you're experiencing at this very moment. This is your vision. It is very much in you, in your mind. That famous person is now an image or a felt

sense. Perhaps you have a sense of being contracted, closed or agitated in the presence of this person; feel this fully, not simply with your intellect. Sit with the image of your famous person, and with the resulting feelings and sensations, until you recognize that this experience is in you, and you conclude, “Vision is mind.”



## Mind is empty

The next question is, “What is this mind?” Look for your mind. Look from the top of your head to the soles of your feet. Can you find anything solid? Can you find any permanent color, shape or form that you can call your mind? If you look directly, you come to the conclusion that your mind is empty. Some people come to this conclusion very quickly; for others it requires an exhausting search to discover this clear awareness. But this is what mind is. You can obviously pollute that clarity in any given moment, but by continuing to look directly, you can discover that mind itself is just clear. Clear means empty. ‘Empty’ is a philosophical term, but as experience it is clear and open.



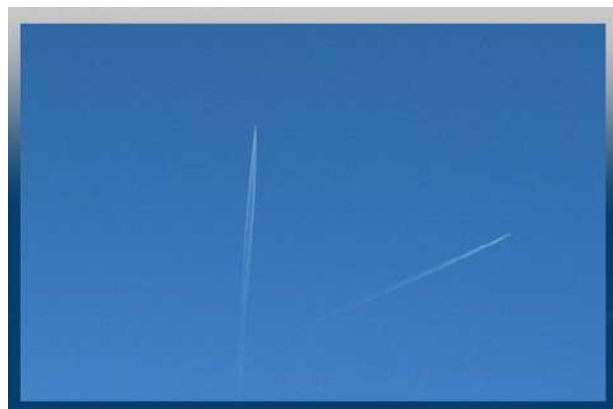
So what began as the famous person is now clear and open. If this is not your experience, you are grasping the image and holding on to the experience in some way. Just be. Relax into the experience. Simply be. Mind is empty. When we arrive at the experience of emptiness and vastness through the doorway of the famous person, it is possible to have quite a strong experience of emptiness.

## Emptiness is clear light

Our next question is, “What is this emptiness?” Sometimes emptiness is scary to the point where someone may prefer even their famous person to this nothing where one experiences the absence of self. But this experience of open space is essential. It clears the identity that creates the famous person. In order to clear the obstacle of the famous person, you have to clear the identity that creates that famous person. There is an expression, “The sword of wisdom cuts both ways.” Don't be scared by this. Remember:

“Emptiness is clear light.” It has light. It is possible to feel the light in the absence of the stuff.

Usually we accumulate a lot of stuff in life. Then we have a big yard sale in order to get rid of that stuff. For a moment we might feel “Ahhh . . .” – a sense of relief at getting rid of our old stuff – but soon we are excited again about all the new stuff we can accumulate to decorate and fill the open space. In your meditation, when things clear, just be with this. Don't focus on the absence of the stuff, but discover the presence of the light in that space. It's there. I'm not saying it's easy to recognize and connect with the light – clearly it will depend on how much you are caught up with appearances and with the famous person. I'm not talking about the clear appearance of the famous



person; I'm speaking of the clear appearance of the space.

So when you look at appearance and discover it is mind, and then discover that mind is empty, clear light emerges. When you look for the mind, you don't find the mind. When you don't find anything, the Dzogchen instruction is to “abide without distraction in that which has not been elaborated.” What has not been elaborated is that space, that openness. So you look for mind; you don't find anything. What you don't find is pure space which is not elaborated. So don't do anything. Don't change anything. Just allow. When you abide in that space without changing anything, what is clear light. The experience or knowledge of emptiness is clear light. It is awareness.

Clear light is the experience of vast emptiness. The reason you have a famous person in the first place is that you experience yourself as separated from the experience of the vast, open space. Not recognizing the vast space, not being familiar with



it, you experience visions. Not recognizing the visions as mind, you see them as solid and separate and out there – and not only out there, but disturbing you and creating all kinds of hassles for you that you have to deal with.

Perhaps you say, “Well, I am very clear about the direction in my life.” Here, you are clear about something. The clarity Dawa Gyaltsen points to is not clear *about* something; it is clear in the sense of being. You experience your essence, your existence, your being as clear. That clarity is the best. Through experiencing that clarity, you overcome self-doubt.

open *is* that clarity. The two are inseparable. Recognizing this is called union.

This means that our experiences do not affect our relation to openness. It is usually the case that experiences affect our connection to openness because immediately we get excited and attached. Then we grasp, or we become agitated, conflicted and disturbed. When that doesn't happen, when our experience spontaneously arises and does not obscure us, that is union: the inseparable quality of clear and light. You are free; you are connected. You are connected; you are free.



### Clear light is union

From this experience of vast emptiness we say, “Clear light is union.” The space and the light cannot be separated. *Clear* refers to space, and *light* refers to awareness; awareness and space are inseparable. There is no separation between clear presence and space, between awareness and emptiness.

We have a lot of notions of union: yin and yang, male and female, wisdom and compassion. When you pay close attention to the experience of emptiness, you experience clarity. If you try to look for clarity, you cannot find it – it becomes emptiness. If you don't find it, and you abide there, it becomes clear. The experiences of clarity and emptiness are union in the sense that they are not separate. Clarity is the experience of openness. If you don't have the experience of openness, you cannot be clear. What is clear *is* that openness, the emptiness. What is empty and

This combination experience, whether in deep meditation or in life, is rare. Often, if you are ‘free,’ that means you are disconnected. So this sense of union is important. Having the ability to do something and the ability to feel free, having the ability to be with somebody and still feel a sense of freedom, is so important. That is what is meant by “clear light is union.”

### Union is great bliss

If you recognize and experience this inseparable quality, then you can experience bliss. Why is bliss experienced? Because that solid obstacle to being deeply connected with yourself has disappeared. You can have a strong experience of bliss because you have released something. Bliss spontaneously comes because there's nothing that obscures you or separates you from your essence. You have a feeling that everything is complete just as it is. So you begin with the famous person, and you end up with bliss. What more could you ask for?





This is the basis of the whole Dzogchen philosophy in a few lines. The famous person you project is great bliss, but you must understand this as your mind, and that very mind as empty. From there, emptiness is clear light, clear light is union, union is great bliss. You can experience this in an instant. The moment you see the famous person, you can instantly see light. But sometimes we have to go through a longer process to see this. It is a question of ability. So this progression, this process, is our practice. It takes time. But there is a clear map.

guides you directly into the essence, to the root of yourself. It always amazes me when people fight with one another and say, “Oh, that terrible person. We have been good friends for a long time and I always thought that person was so honest. It took me a long time to discover that that person is really terrible.” So your conclusion is that that person is terrible. Have you heard people say things like that? This is not really a healthy solution. It's like going to therapy and realizing, “My dad was really a bad guy. Now I feel much better.” Of course, you might realize some



These five principles can be applied in daily practice. You can do this practice anyplace, in any given moment, and especially when the famous person is bothering you. When a difficult circumstance arises, of course you could just live with it, or you could try to find one of many solutions. But as a Dzogchen practitioner, this practice of the Fivefold Teachings is what you do. Perhaps you lost a business deal and you feel bad. What does ‘lost’ really mean? You look at that; that is vision. Whether fear-based vision or greed vision, you look directly at that experience. Be with that experience. Then you realize it is mind, and you look at your mind and discover that mind is clear – just clear. Even when we have a lot of problems, the essence of mind is always clear. It is always clear. There is always the possibility to connect with the essence of mind rather than the confusion aspect of it.

### How we conclude

I love this practice very much. On the one hand, it is so practical. It gives you a tool to deal with a very specific situation. On the other hand, it

difficult aspect of your situation, but realizing that is not the conclusion. You need to conclude into the essence, conclude into the root, to come to the place in yourself where you realize your mind is clear and blissful and the image that was bothering you has finally dissolved through your meditation.

What is the conclusion here? The conclusion is bliss. “Union is great bliss.” What better conclusion would you want than that? And it will be like that if you open your mind to learn, trust with your heart, and pray. It's really important to pray, and to pray for a deep experience. Because if what you think is not that deep, the result won't be that deep either. Through prayer, you open your heart and receive the blessings of effortlessness. The quality of effortlessness is a quality of heart, and devotion and prayer open the heart. So praying is wonderful. It sets up the intention and puts you in the right direction, so when you do the practice of meditation – of directly looking and being with your experience – it will work.



I encourage you to practice this heart advice of Dawa Gyaltsen, to look directly into what is disturbing you and discover the nature of your mind. Through the profound simplicity of these five lines, not only can you heal your day-to-day life and make it lighter and more pleasant, but you can recognize and connect with your innermost essence, the nature of your mind as Buddha.

### Questions and Answers

**Question:** In terms of the experience of “vision is mind,” it seems that our grasping mind, our small mind, is different from the natural state of mind which is clear light. I don't know how to bridge the gap between the grasping mind and emptiness, because the grasping mind doesn't seem empty.

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** It doesn't seem empty, but it is. If you look at the ocean you might find it calm and peaceful, or with small ripples, or bigger ripples, or small waves, or bigger waves. All these appearances – from calm to ripples to waves – have the quality of wetness. All are water in every appearance. The appearance of the ocean can never be anything other than water, no matter how terrible or peaceful the ocean appears. In the same way, no matter what vision appears, it is always empty. The essence is always there. The only question is, “Am I able to see it or not?”

**Question:** It is wonderful when the famous person dissolves, but I still have an obligation to him or her, a responsibility. He or she is my child. So the ‘famous person’ situation may keep recurring. Do I keep dissolving in the same way?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** Sure. The famous person can still be famous without disturbing you as much. The reason we call him or her ‘famous’ is that they really bother you. Do they really need to bother you? No. He or she can be as they are or they can be different, but they don't have to bother you. We have expectations that things need to be a certain way. Do they really have to be a certain way? No.

Let's take a situation in which I'm trying to help my child. How am I trying to help? I want him to go to school and study well. So what's the

problem? Well, the child has some difficulty learning. O.K. So I'm trying to do the best I can under the circumstances. If I'm doing that, then what am I worrying about? Some people learn faster, some learn slower. Right?

But the problem is not about the child learning too slowly; it's that I can't accept the situation. It's not about the child; it's about me. I have some fixed idea about what would be good for my child. This is usually the case. I think, “What I want is good for you.” The child probably doesn't agree. He might be interested in a completely different thing than I am. But I feel like I'm the boss, and of course I am: I have a moral responsibility and so on. But there is someplace where it is just fine. I need to realize that.

**Question:** Is it just the lack of practice of recognizing that “vision is mind” that makes me feel there is a hook that draws me back to, “Yeah, but that famous person really is mean”?

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche:** I am not suggesting that this is the only way to deal with life. This is one of the Dzogchen ways. It is not a samsaric way, and sometimes we have to deal in a samsaric way. If somebody is trying to cheat me, of course I don't like that. If somebody asks me for something, I don't mind giving. But if somebody is taking something from me, then I don't want to give. If that aspect of me seems to be who I really am in this moment, then I will fight or do whatever needs to be done. It's not a question of one approach being more valid than another. Who I am and what realization I have determines how skillfully I am able to work. In the end, the real sense of victory is the practice. But in the conventional sense, we do whatever we have to do. We naturally defend and we fight. Sometimes, you defend, you fight, and you still lose. Then maybe you don't have any other choice but to see it as emptiness! That is a forceful way of discovering emptiness.”

**Text by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche**  
Photos by Sarah Edgehill



# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2012 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

## August

31 - 2 September	Russia	Moscow	The Chöd Practice
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## September

6	France	Paris	Evening talk: Awakening the Sacred Body
7 - 9	Finland	Helsinki	Tibetan Sound Healing
12	Germany	Saarbrücken	Awakening the Sacred Body
14 - 16	Germany	Frankfurt	Awakening the Sacred Body

## October

16 - 21	Austria	Maria Alm	The Experiential Transmission, Part 3
26 - 28	Spain	Barcelona	Awakening the Luminous Mind

## LIVE INTERNET TEACHINGS

### October

10	01.00 – 02.30 CET (CET = Central European Time)	To be announced
13	21.00 – 22.30 CET	Awakening the Luminous Mind

### December

30	21.00 – 22.30 CET	The Chöd Practice
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## ONLINE WORKSHOPS

07/08 till 21/08	3-Lesson Series on Tuesdays	Awakening the Luminous Mind
15/09 till 14/10	Four-week interactive online course	Dream Yoga
10/11 till 02/12	Interactive online course	Tibetan Sound Healing

You can find more information about the teachings and workshops on the websites: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org), [www.ligmincha.eu](http://www.ligmincha.eu), [www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com) and [www.hayhouse.com](http://www.hayhouse.com).







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

# 6 – Autumn 2012



'Ligmincha International' meeting

Meet the Danish sangha

Online course with Rinpoche

Magical movements of *Trul Khor*



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## THE LIGMINCHA EUROPE MAGAZINE

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

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

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

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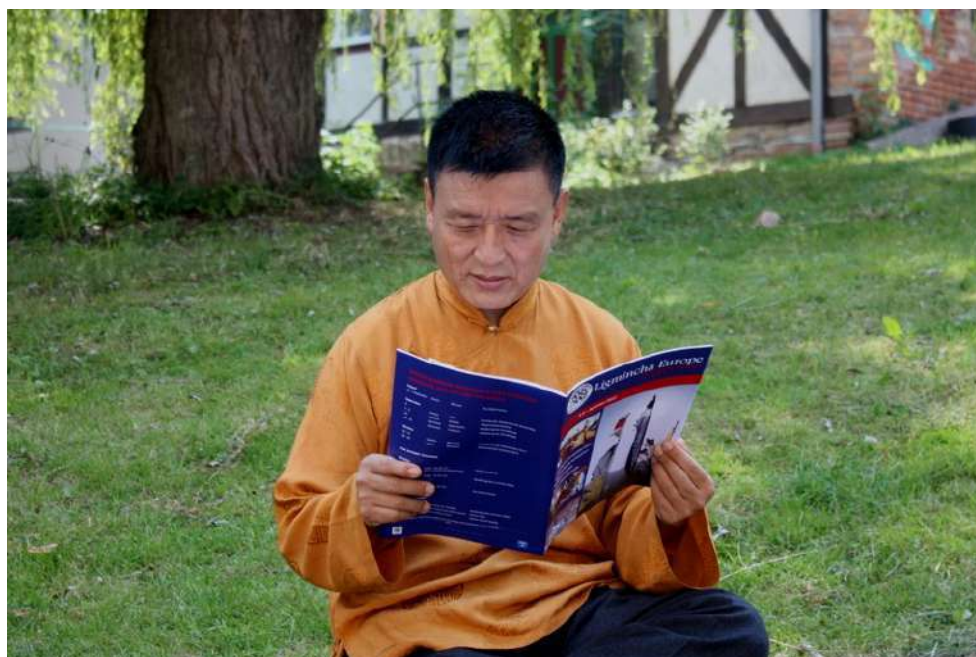
# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

We had been surprised and also happy to see an announcement for the release of the fifth Ligmincha Europe Magazine on the homepage of [Ligmincha.org](http://Ligmincha.org). Maybe, it is not so surprising, as now, with the release of the sixth Ligmincha Europe magazine, we are glad to report on the *First 'Ligmincha International' meeting* at Serenity Ridge. Representatives from all over the world discussed the future of 'Ligmincha International' with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

reading his books. The translators are doing a great job of supporting Rinpoche's work and in helping the growth of the worldwide sangha.

Although for many people, reading one of Rinpoche's books was their first acquaintance with Rinpoche, some people met him in another way. Nathalie Duchanois told us last time how she met him, and this time Johan Smith has an interesting story. If you want to share your story, please let us know.



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Buchenau (Germany), July 2012.

World wide we are growing more and more to one organisation. In this Magazine, we give sangha members the opportunity to interact with each other and to share their experiences. The internet makes it accessible to everyone at any time and place.

The internet also proves to be a good medium for teachings. Many of you have probably seen Rinpoche's internet teachings, but there are also online courses, held over a period of weeks. In this issue, you can read about the experiences of one of the participants in a recent online course.

At the seminar in Amsterdam, in May, people were asked about their first encounter with Rinpoche. Many answered that it was through

Some readers asked us about our publishing dates. Our ambition is to publish a Magazine every season, and the exact date depends on when we can meet Rinpoche at a seminar. In spring Rinpoche comes to the Netherlands, in summer is a retreat in Germany and in autumn in Austria. The Winter edition will be published in January, although Rinpoche does not visit Europe during that time.

In the next issue we hope we can tell you more about the European Center and the developments of the new website of 'Ligmincha International.'

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





# FIRST 'LIGMINCHA INTERNATIONAL' MEETING

Representatives from Rinpoche's sanghas from around the world gathered and shared ideas during the first week of the Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge. A report by Lidia Castellano, from the Italian sangha.

Rinpoche had invited all worldwide representatives to come Serenity Ridge to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ligmincha Institute and also to get to know each other. Representatives from Austria, Brazil, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Mexico and the U.S. were present.



As Rinpoche pointed out, he knows each one of us very well, but often we don't know each other, and especially for us Europeans, we don't know our American counterparts. During the first week a series of meetings and occasions to get together had been scheduled, both formal and informal, with Rinpoche, Ligmincha Institute's chairman Gabriel Rocco, the international representatives, Ligmincha Council's members and Lishu Institute's and Chamma Ling Retreat Center's coordinators.



First of all Gabriel Rocco gave us an account of Rinpoche's view about Ligmincha's past, present and future. He showed how the institution is the result of so much hard work by himself and many dedicated persons, and how this should be maintained and become a truly international and self-sustaining organization, based on openness, warmth and mutual understanding. A "Ligmincha International" has been envisaged, a worldwide organization that, though based in the U.S., should not be considered as only American. Everyone who participates in it has a place, with each one's specific qualities and creativity. Moreover, Rinpoche has expressed the wish that Ligmincha Institute should continue its activities in connection with other events and teachings besides his own (as it has started doing), with everyone's contribution.

We have been asked to briefly introduce ourselves for everyone's benefit and to share our experiences with our working on organizing Rinpoche's teachings, the practice in our countries and our hopes and expectations for the





future. The same questions are being asked by email to all those who were not able to be present, and in the near future regular Skype meetings will be scheduled to keep in touch with each other and to continue our sharing and exchanging of our skills and competences.

Meeting personally with our American and world-wide counterparts has been fundamental, and there is nothing like personal contacts to develop and strengthen the bond that is already present in our worldwide Dharma family. To this end, the



progress of the Ligmincha International website project is fundamental.

Rinpoche has also announced that there will be a Ligmincha Europe International Retreat Center in the near future, about which more information will be available in the next magazines.

From my personal side, it has been a beautiful experience. It was my first time at Serenity Ridge, and I had the feeling of being in a sacred place, such as I felt when visiting our Bonpo Monasteries in India and Nepal. At my arrival I was welcomed and hosted with warmth and kindness, made to feel at home.



The natural setting at Serenity Ridge is wonderful, and spending some time there with Rinpoche, the Geshes, and so many brothers and sisters from all over the world has been a great experience. Living side by side for some days, sharing experiences and establishing personal contacts, taking all part in the teachings and daily practices, has been a rich and warm present!

**Text by Lidia Castellano**

Photos courtesy of Ligmincha Institute





# TRUL KHOR: CONNECTING WITH THE MISSING LINK

For many years Alejandro Chaoul has been visiting Europe to teach Tibetan Yoga. Last June he led retreats in Poland and Finland and held a public talk in Berlin. What is this kind of yoga, called *Tsa Lung Trul Khor*, and how can we benefit from it? Here you find edited excerpts from the transcript of Alejandro Chaoul's public talk, where he explained about these magical movements.

## The missing link

"What we call Tibetan Yoga is called *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* in Tibetan. One way of translating this could be: the magical movements that incorporate or use the channels and vital breath.

Most of you are more familiar with Indian yogas, where we have *asanas* in the realm of the body, and we have *pranayam* for the breath, and we have a kind of meditation for the mind. *Pranayam* being breath (control) exercises, and *asana* being postures of the body. Many times in the West we see that a lot of the yoga is focused on the *asanas*, on the body, and much less on the mind.

In the practices that comes from Tibet we see more mind practices. There seems to be – at least at a certain level – not much of a connection to the body in the Tibetan practices, and to a certain extent even a dismissal of the body. In fact, I know many people in the U.S. who study Tibetan meditation or another tradition for the mind aspect, and to connect to the body they do Indian-based yoga practices or *Tai Chi* and *Qi Gong*.

At the hospital where I work we have a category called 'mind-body practices'. These are practices where mind-body are coordinated in some way. When they talk about mind they mean the brain. The mind affects the body, and when things happen in the body it affects the mind.

In the Tibetan tradition and in other traditions of yoga they have a category that unites the mind-body. Sometimes I call it 'the missing link' between mind and body. In Tibetan it is called *tsel*, and sometimes we translate it as 'energy'. But it is not really this kind of esoteric way of thinking about energy. What they mean is, in a



## Alejandro Chaoul

is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Under the auspices of Ligmincha Institute, since 1995 he has been teaching Tibetan meditation and Tibetan Yoga throughout the United States, Latin America and Europe. He also serves as the director of research for Ligmincha Institute and is on the Board of the *Ligmincha Texas Institute for Tibetan Meditative and Healing Arts*.

He is an Assistant Professor at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center's Integrative Medicine Program and is the author of *Chöd Practice in the Bon Religion* (Snow Lion Publications, 2009) as well as author or co-author of various articles focusing on the role of mind-body practices in integrative cancer care and research, and on Tibetan meditation and ritual practices within religious studies, humanities, and the intersection of humanities, spirituality and medicine.







Alejandro Chaoul teaching *Thrul Khor* in Poland in 2012.

way, both the field of interaction of mind-body and how it expresses itself, particularly in it's ways as speech and breath. Thus, for these yogas we can say mind-breath-body.

### **Mind-breath-body practices in Tibetan Buddhism and Bon**

In the year 2000 the Yoga Journal wrote an article about Tibetan Yogas and called it 'Into the Mystic'. These yogas are not taught very openly, and if you look into the curriculums of Tibetan mind-body practices, both in monasteries or even with yogis, these practices come later in the studies. They are always at the end of many of the instruction manuals of meditation.

When I started studying Tibetan Buddhism, there was not much talk about Tibetan yoga until I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Until then, most of the practices that were spoken about and taught were in terms of meditation and mantras, or basically mind and speech.

Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche taught Tibetan Yoga and called it *Yantra Yoga*, as a kind of re-translation into Sanskrit from *Trul Khor* (Tib.), and using the word 'yoga' in the West, because everyone had some idea of what that means. Many other Tibetan teachers criticised Namkai Norbu Rinpoche for bringing forth so openly these yogas. Yet, many people benefitted from them,

and I was lucky to be one of them. When I met *Yantra Yoga*, after having studied *Hatha Yoga* and *Qi Gong* and *Tai Chi*, I said: "Oh wow, these go really hand in hand with the same kind of teachings for the mind that were taught, so I don't have to practice mind and body, I can actually start practicing mind-body." And then, I was very fortunate that, during a retreat in Nepal with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, I went to visit one of my other teachers, H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who was also teacher of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. When I went to his monastery, Triten Norbutse in Nepal, he asked: "Why are you not living here? Come here." So I moved to the monastery for some time. There I met a monk coming from Amdo in Tibet, who knew about this *Trul Khor*, this Tibetan yoga. The abbot of the monastery, Khenpo Nyima Wangyal, asked him: "There are some foreigners who want to learn Tibetan yoga. Maybe you want to teach *Trul Khor* to them?" There were four of us and luckily one was a French woman who took notes and made drawings, and we copied them.

One of the wonderful things of these yogas was they were close with the Tibetan teachings that I was receiving. I was very fortunate to stay for another month with the meditation group that was practicing in the monastery and receiving teachings from H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. The main teaching was *Trek Chö* –





Students doing *Trul Khor* exercises in the early morning during the Summer Retreat in Buchenau, July 2012, guided by Karolina Seltenheim.

cutting through the conceptual mind – and trying to stay in that meditative state, one of the main practices from the Dzogchen tradition. The way they practiced was particularly useful to me. Usually in Tibetan practice they start with some prayers, and then they would stay in that meditative state. But acknowledging that after a while the mind wanders, or falls asleep, there are tools to re-energize you when that happens. So, after about twenty minutes of *Trek Chö* practice, Khenpo Nyima Wangyal would stand up and do a set of the *Trul Khor* that we had just learned, and then again sit and continue the *Trek Chö* meditation.

### Teaching *Trul Khor* and *Tsa Lung* in the West

I realized that these were very powerful exercises to reconnect to that state of mind. And it was interesting that they worked both when I was tired and when my mind was all over the place. So, coming back to the U.S., I went to my teacher, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and I told him that I had learnt these Tibetan yogas in Triten Norbutse and was practicing and finding them very useful. We met every morning at five, and we would go over what I had learnt, what he had learnt, and we discussed doubts and continued practicing. At that time, during our Second Summer Retreat, 1994, Rinpoche asked me to start teaching this *Trul Khor* to the group of people that were in the Summer Retreat. They were very receptive and could really connect and feel a sense of grounding in the body, not just in the mind.

The *Tsa Lung* practice, that Tenzin Wangyal

Rinpoche teaches, comes from a text called the *Ma Gyu* – the Mother Tantra – and is simpler than the *Trul Khor*, and yet very profound. It is a subtle way of connecting with the body, the breath and the mind in a very deep way.

When I was doing my PHD in Tibetan studies, I could see in the text how the *Tsa Lung* was the basis

for the *Trul Khor*. So it was that basis that everyone needed who wanted to go into the Tibetan yogas.

Another thing that I learnt later is that each of those *Tsa Lung* movements are named and work with one of the five kinds of breath that are mentioned in the Tibetan medical texts as well as the Indian and Ayurvedic texts.

The *lung* – subtle breath – is the subtle circulation of the body, which is guided by the mind. So by balancing the five kinds of breath you are balancing the circulation of your whole body and therefore affecting your state of mind. *Lung* becomes the crucial link between mind and body.

It is interesting to note that when Tibetans talk about the mind they don't point to the head but to the heart. In Sanskrit the word is *citta*, in Tibetan *sem*, so it is a kind of heart-mind that is also connected to the body. And the breath helps us more in that sense of connectedness. In the *Tsa Lung*, using the body in this simple way, and using the breath with the mind, it is really a beautiful harmonious way of having mind-breath-body.

### Transformative practices

Rinpoche noticed that as he started teaching *Tsa Lung* all over the world, it impacted across cultures, including the Tibetans. It is interesting to see how he has been teaching the *Tsa Lung*, within the Bon Mother Tantra tradition. But he also realized that they could be useful for anyone without the religious context of the tradition. So



many people benefit from it!

In one of Rinpoche's books, *Awakening the Sacred Body*, he brings it in a very secular way. It is basically activating or awakening the body component of this mind-body practices that the mind is there and its important, and it is also crucial to acknowledge how through the body we can affect the mind with the breath. Whether we

are practitioners of a particular tradition or just human beings, we want to transform certain aspects of ourselves. Whether it is physical, emotional, mental or spiritual, these practices can be really helpful in that transformation.

There are two Tibetan words that can shed some light here: one is *Gegsel*, which is clearing away obstacles. The other is *Bogdon*, enhancing the meditative practice. And these two go very much together in all these Tibetan yoga practices.

### **Clearing away obstacles and bringing the enhancement to your meditation practice**

The methodology of Tibetan Yoga is a little different to the ways in Indian yogas. Even though there are practices of the body, practices of the breath and practices of the mind; they work in a little different way. For example in the *Tsa Lung*, after calming the body and being able to guide and connect to the breath you actually hold the breath in a particular chakra or energetic point. And with a particular body movement of that area, you are opening that chakra thanks to the breath. So the breath that is there is supported by the mind, the body now is supporting a movement that opens up or clears away the obstacle, and once you exhale, it allows one to release that obstacle and let the mind be in a more relaxed and aware state of mind.

So in this method, holding the mind and the breath and being able to work with the body in that particular active way, then, as you exhale, you come back to that stillness of the sitting body, and still allow the mind to now sit but in a little more open way. And for those who feel that they need more body activity, the *Trul Khor* actually provide a much more energetic aspect of the activity, and you are still holding the breath while



Instruction book for the *Trul Khor*

you are doing what they call 'magical movements'. And in these, the exhalation is much more active. On the one hand you still exhale through the nose, but then you also have this strong exhalation and make the sound of *Ha* and *Phet*. And as you do that you stay in that more clear state of mind. So, it is a very lively practice and yet very meditative. Partly it is because you still maintain the mind and breath component as part of the body. In Tibetan there is a saying that goes something like this 'if you are just doing the body part it is like children playing'; it can be a lot of fun, but the meaning is not really there. So, the mind is crucial and the link of the movement and the mind is the breath.

There was recently a study in the U.S. that said that 48% of the time we are not where we are. Maybe in Europe it is different. In any case, the mind is not where our body is. And, during the majority of that time we are engaged in negative thoughts and emotions.

Since you are all already meditators, hopefully your mind is here in your body. If you notice how you feel after even a short practice, you can feel that we can transform the state of mind from the way that we usually are. The transformation is magical in the terms of inner transformation. Part of these practices of the magical movement is that we feel the magic. Again, the magic is not this esoteric thing but it is actually opening your heart. Of being seated emotionally, mentally and spiritually, not just physically."

**Transcription by Sarah Edgehill**

**Edited by Floor van Orsouw**

Photos by Joop van Spronsen, Sarah Edgehill and courtesy of Polish sangha





# ONLINE COURSE EXPERIENCE

**Following transformative teachings without having to travel? Many of you are already familiar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's online broadcasts. But did you know it's also possible to participate in online courses which can last a number of weeks? Geertje Bloemers signed up for an online class in the summer and reports.**

This summer I participated in the online course *The Five Elements – Healing with Form, Energy and Light*. I got so inspired that I would like to share my experience.

In spring it became clear I wouldn't be able to attend the Summer Retreat in Germany, Poland or any other. Visiting the Ligmincha website there was an announcement for the online course of *The Five Elements* in July and August and I immediately recognized: this is it, what a wonderful opportunity to learn and to practice! And it was! And I could afford it in this financially difficult time in my life.

It was the first time that I participated in an online course, and I was a little scared about all the computer challenges, but I trusted there would be support in the difficulties to come. I experienced all the support in the world. For instance, at the beginning we had two weeks time for tuning into the course.

About thirty-five people from various European countries, the U.S., Canada, Mexico and South America participated: a wonderful international sangha. Some of us were Rinpoche's students, some for whom this was a first encounter with Rinpoche. People from different backgrounds shared in this seven week learning process.

In the course, first of all, there was a written explanation and instruction. Every week we worked with a new element and received new teaching and instruction videos of Tenzin Rinpoche. And we continued to have access to the part we had studied and practiced before.

John Jackson was the mentor, giving us access to the different *Khandros*, giving instructions and



**About fourteen years ago I was completing a course in terminal care with Jan Dinkelaar and Claar Dirksmeier as instructors. Jan invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to the Netherlands. And I was at this first seminar. Being with Rinpoche, I felt a deep connection and from that time on I have attended many retreats and seminars both in the U.S. and Europe.**

inspiration, answering questions, sharing his own experience.

The course was clear and complete. Everything was there for me to understand intellectually how everything, the whole world, is composed of the elements by Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space. Their qualities and interaction. To learn to see and experience the play and dance of the elements. To recognize deficiencies and imbalances within myself, in other people, in the situations that I engage and how to balance these.

We worked with the forces of nature, with the elements within *Tantra* and within Dzogchen. At the level of body, speech and mind. Studying Rinpoche's book *Healing with Form, Energy and Light*. Doing formal practice and informal practice every day and practicing in nature several times a week.

Rinpoche and John gave us various instructions for



reflection and keeping a daily journal. There was audio of the guided practices and the element mantras available as a help for the practices.

We were invited to communicate on three levels. First with oneself by writing in the journal, second with a buddy (sharing experiences and supporting each other), and third with the other participants in the Forum – a place where everyone could start discussions, react and pose questions. There was a lively interaction in this Forum. People shared with words, poems and pictures. For me one of the wonderful things of the course was the space there was for every person to be him/herself. There were lots of opportunities and invitations, always in an open and free way. I never felt pushed to do something that wasn't comfortable for me. So much space and so many methods for practice. So complete. So very Rinpoche!

One discovery was that in the Space I need to balance the Water Element the most.

Something I wrote in my journal:

***“How does the water element manifest within me?”***

*Unbalanced:*

- *as a restlessness, always going on and on, not rounding up, not enjoying the fruit*
- *as pressure, stress, perfectionism, rigidity*
- *being overwhelmed, unclear, drifting, uneasy*
- *being shaky, sadness, lethargy, delaying, pleasing*
- *feeling a victim, seeing things as black and white*



If I got stuck with formal practice there was informal practice to do or be in nature or start communicating, so the flow always found a way to go on, which was a very joyful experience!

A big advantage of this online course was that I was doing it within my daily life, so integration was hard to avoid... I recognized how I can apply the different methods in my life more clearly than ever before.

*Balanced:*

- *being at ease, allowing things to happen, people to say things without me*
- *grasping*
- *it opens me, makes me flexible*
- *I have more understanding, feel the needs of others*
- *feel happy being me,*
- *connection with myself, with others and my work*
- *if I have enough water I don't lose earth...”*



A last part from my journal:

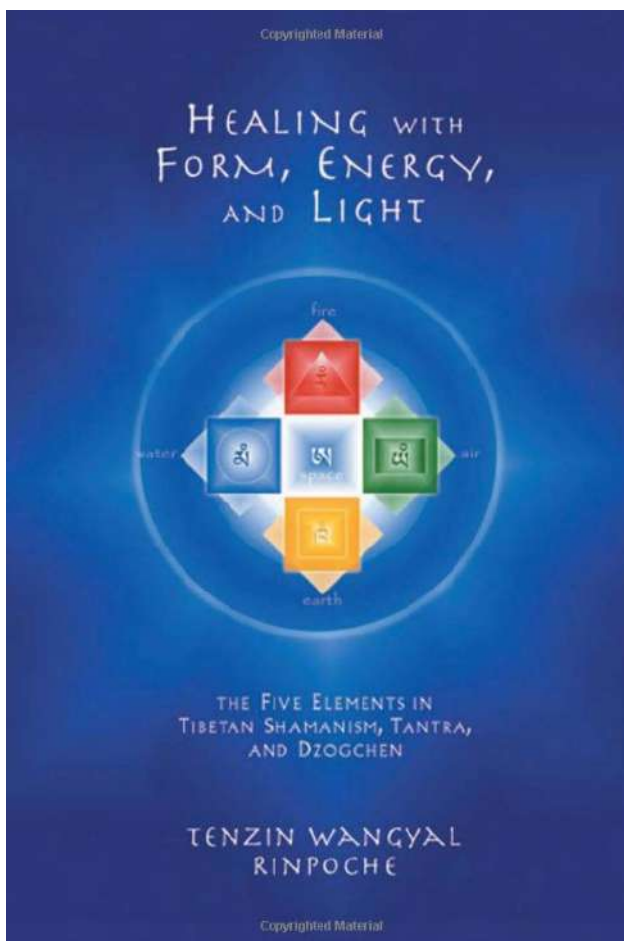
*"This course is the beginning of something new. Like what Rinpoche once said: round up and move on! And what you (John) told me: Life is good! I will go on practicing as I have done for the last seven weeks. Exploring more and more how the elements work in me, in other people, in the world. I feel excited about it.*

*The new connection I made with this practice feels very natural. There is not much effort, I like doing the different ways of formal, informal and nature practice. I will study the book along with the practice. And learn to keep a more accurate journal."*

Thank you Rinpoche for this wonderful opportunity to learn and practice, thank you John for your open and kind support.

If you are interested in an online course look at:  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org) or [www.glidewing.com](http://www.glidewing.com).

**Text and photos by Geertje Bloemers**



The following poem was written by Birrell Walsh, a participant from the U.S.

### ***That Wind Talks***

I look across your prairie valley

and I ask again:

“What could someone do who loves you ?”

and thirst says, “Just a little rain.”

“Not mountain, and not rivers

and not wide skies, bright as glass:

I have those all. Now what I need

is rain, for my grass.

For the fibered stalks

that when the wind walks

through them, that wind talks

of thirst within the clod

of roots down-reaching for the breath of God,  
moistering the sod:

Let it come again,

You who love me

just a little rain.”

***Birrell Walsh***





# RINPOCHE FELL ON MY HEAD

Introducing a sangha is always a story full of surprises. This time we interviewed Johan Smith from *Ligmincha Danmark*, an organisation of one person and with more than one hundred seminar participants.

## When did you meet Rinpoche the first time?

I met Rinpoche in 1995 in Denmark. In the beginning of the nineties Rinpoche gave summertime teachings in Denmark. That year he was teaching on the *Twenty-one Nails*. When I went there, I didn't know anything about Bon. The reason I was there was because, during my Easter vacation in London, in a bookstore I tried to get a book about astrology from the bookshelf, and then a book fell from high above and hit my head. The book was called *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, written by somebody called Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. I bought the book because I was a bit superstitious, and read it in the evenings in London. And when I came home there was an invitation in my mail, asking if I wanted to go to a retreat from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. I thought "That is no coincidence, I have to go." At that time there was a group of students of Namkai Norbu

Rinpoche who invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to Denmark. They had met him in Italy.

## Do you know when Rinpoche came the first time to Denmark?

I don't know exactly, but before 1995 he had visited Denmark two or three times. After 1995 Rinpoche didn't visit Denmark often. The next time was in 2010, when I organized it. And next year, September 2013, he will come again to

Copenhagen, to teach *Living in Joy, Dying in Peace*.

## Can you tell us something about the sangha in Denmark?

I don't know how big the sangha is because we are not organized. But at the last seminar, there were more than one hundred people. Only a few people come to my place to practice and meditate once a month, for a whole day. As far as I know there are no other practice groups, but there are many people practicing on their own. We tried to start a practice group in Copenhagen after the last visit of Rinpoche. The first time there was only me and another person practicing at my place, so we gave up. It is difficult to get people to come together here. I live in the



countryside, more than an hour drive from Copenhagen. Most people feel that is a long, long drive.

When I lived in Copenhagen, more than ten years ago, we had a practice group there. That was more successful. I have tried several things, but I haven't found a way to reach more participants for these splendid teachings. People visiting the teachings are also interested in other directions of





Buddhism. Two years ago when Rinpoche was here, he was happy to see people from the old days and people he also knew from other groups.

When I invited Rinpoche for next year, I told him that I would understand if he would not come, because we could go and see him in Germany. He said that I should not think that way, because he wants to be in contact with all those Buddhist people in Denmark.

**I also saw people from Denmark visiting the seminars in the Netherlands, but most people go to Germany?**

Yes, for many years people went to the Summer retreat in Buchenau in August. But since they organize it in July many people can't go anymore for different reasons.

**Can you tell about the Prison project in Denmark?**

I have approached prisons, but it was difficult to get inside. The people who are in control of the prisons show little interest. And because I have so many things to do, we have not succeeded to

start with this project. Now I focus on the practice group.

**Are Rinpoche's books translated into Danish?**

The book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* is being translated now, and will be here for sale soon. We have plans to translate more books.

**How is Ligmincha Denmark organized?**

I am the 'organization', the chairman. We are an open organization, where we just practice together. Everybody can lead the practice, we don't have *Umzés*. We don't like generals here in Denmark, we like people to be equal in every aspect. But, if more people would come together we would need more structure.

Some people who are interested in Bon participate in *The Three Doors* program. And next year in the fall, we will organize a '*Taste of The Three Doors*', with teachers coming from the US.

**Interview by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of Johan Smith





# THE SOUND OF ENLIGHTENMENT IS STILLNESS

Thomm Möslers, a long term student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, has done several dark retreats in the last ten years. He is the first to share his experiences with us and we hope that more students will share their dark-retreat experiences.

I consider a dark retreat as an amazing opportunity for self-development, recognizing and transforming one's habits, perceptions, points of view and actions.

For me darkroom retreat is similar to what Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche said in the seminar in Berlin – 4-6 May 2012 – about the *Bardo* and impermanence:

*“Regardless of whether you let go or not, whatever you are attached to will go at the moment of death. But as a practitioner, you are given the opportunity to learn to let go. The bardo prayer guides you to let go of attachment to family, possessions, and even your identity during the process of dying. When someone is going through the dying process, we pray that they may be able to let go of their attachment to family, possessions, and identity. As well as praying for others, try to feel this process of letting go in your own life. We all have a sense of self created by our ideas, status, wealth, and our nationality. These conditions will not stay forever. So what is beyond all that? What is beyond our sex, our status, our nationality? What does it feel like beyond all that? Our identification with our family is the same thing. This identification we will have to let go of as well. Looking nakedly at our own death gives us the opportunity to see who we truly are.”*

Especially in dark retreats, I realised the truth of the saying: “The sound of enlightenment is stillness.” Nevertheless, I hope Dzogchen practitioners will share their dark retreat experiences so we all can learn from them. May it be useful and helpful to all beings!

The majority of our experiences are not conceptual and each of us has our own conceptual reality and linguistic interpretations. I recorded my thoughts concerning my experiences on paper.



Thomm Möslers

is a German neurologist and teacher of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy at the University of Erlangen-Nuernberg. He has attended many retreats with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and with his teacher H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche during the last ten years. Under their guidance, he did several dark retreats. He tries to go every year for at least three weeks to a dark retreat. His last stay was in Shenten Dargyé Ling, France. For more than thirty years he has been practicing Clinical Thanatology, which is psycho-therapeutic assistance of severely ill people, dying people and bereaved persons. Thomm is integrating the Bon teachings daily in his work with patients and as a teacher.

My relation to dark retreat is constantly developing and unfolding. The aftereffects are continuously increasing, at least as far as my morning and evening sky gazing is concerned, which I try to do every day.

I want to divide my experiences roughly into two categories: self-awareness and spiritual awareness. Further, I want to mention that the follow-





ing records of my experiences are just a selection of a few of my experiences in dark retreats within the last ten years. Each dark retreat was totally different from all the others, depending on what I identified with, what my energetic constitution was, and whatever karma arose. The development appeared to be unpredictable.

### **Self-awareness: everything was and is self-awareness**

I realized the absurdity and haphazardness of my own thoughts and feelings, especially the negative emotions connected to inner uneasiness.

Often darkness was filled with countless tiny luminous spots, which in some parts of the room combined to form blurs of light. Initially there was a reoccurring uneasiness followed by a bombardment of thoughts and feelings, through which my own, everyday, underlying behavioural patterns of experience and conduct became evermore apparent.

For example I would like to share my experiences of anger towards different people who, seemingly for no reason at all, appeared in the darkness in front of me. Once I was angry at the person, what seemed like hours, I experienced all the physical symptoms of inner turmoil, like heat and the movement of negative energy in my senses. After some time the feeling changed, (following the law of the fickleness of all appearances and experiences) in the same way it came, namely without reason, into something like love. Again energy ran through my body, but this time it felt like positive energy. In the process the negative emotions seemed to lead to exhaustion whereas the positive emotions seemed to have a nurturing aspect. The light was not judgemental but led to clarity inasmuch as what still needed to be cleansed or redeemed. This had nothing in common with conceptual moralising, this experience seemed to pervade my entire mind and my whole body was thoroughly shaken. I saw the guidance I had given to someone going through the process of dying many years ago, and the light made it absolutely clear that I had gone too far. Regardless of what is the yardstick for the light (be it the 'All-Good' as with Kuntu Zangpo or Life itself, Unity) it became unmistakably clear, what kind of acts should not be repeated again, and it actually resulted in the disappearance of the corresponding intent to

repeat such actions in my everyday life.

In earlier dark retreats, I became aware of many negative actions that I had done towards animals (insects etc.) when I was a child, and which I was then able to cleanse by buying such insects in larger quantities in pet and angler's shops and then setting them free. Thus the highly regarded experiences did not reoccur in the dark retreats that followed. It obviously has nothing to do with conceptual belief (in Christianity, if I have understood it correctly, the killing of insects is not such a big deal) but is more connected to one's own bodily experience, which leads to inner solidification or tightness due to negatively experienced actions, which in a dark retreat lead to a shaking in my body that I was unable to influence. After having cleansed such negative experiences a few weeks after the dark retreats, I could clearly feel a corresponding lightness in my body.

These experiences with the light, which were very closely connected to my body I did not experience as dual, but it went deeper. I had the feeling that they could lead towards unity even though it became clear that the phenomena that still had to be cleansed were keeping me away from the experience of unity that sometimes seemed to break through (see "Obstacles" further down). I became more and more certain, that many experiences emerged from the body sense, which normally I did not perceive or permit to the same extent in everyday experience. Usually I can't feel the distraction, that goes along with negative actions.

I noticed a big difference between the order in which my experiences took place in the dark retreat and the usual everyday appearances. In everyday life the chronological order for me seems to be, that a stimulus from outside causes a concept which is in turn followed by a feeling (i.e. aversion or attraction). In a dark retreat the order of events seems to be the other way around. Here, I was in a deep state of inner peace and contemplating on light, when suddenly and apparently autonomously appeared an inner agitation (which I now understand to be 'karmic winds' or the sequence of just ripening habitual patterns) and then the negative surge (as described above) started to appear. Then a carousel of thoughts emerged, made of old negative





Dark retreat in Shenten Dargyé Ling.

experiences and fears of the future. It seemed as if I was searching for an appropriate victim on the outside onto whom I could project these experiences. And I did actually notice a gliding into patterns of perception towards these people in my fantasy that were tainted by aggression and fear. This was either depreciation or an enhancement.

In spite of the insight, that everything is the inner mirror and that there is nothing out there, there was still the occasional feeling of being at the mercy of these behavioural patterns which were first and foremost taking place in the body sense. The most striking thing for me in a dark retreat is that – contrary to the lucid state in a dream, which to my experience is even more difficult to attain – it was easier for me to be aware that what I was seeing and hearing was self-created. When the clarity of everything being self-created diminished during the dark retreat, contradicting feelings of aversion and attachment towards one and the same object alternated completely autonomously. For me this experience became a healing recourse in everyday life, where, unless one is lucid, it is exactly the same: everything is dependent on one's own point of view.

The really surprising thing that became clear to me was that the people were not the cause for

the activation of my negative emotions. In other words the cause for the activation was not out there, but within me.

In a nutshell this means: first there was the inner disturbance, the agitation, the concepts arose – something that is not so apparent to me in everyday life, when situations or other beings seem to lead to a cascade of agitation, feelings and concepts. This realisation led directly into a deep feeling of compassion toward all beings, who are completely at the mercy of their experiences, and also toward myself in relation to my unwholesome earlier life. Within the scope all those thoughts and feelings, egoistic indulgence in guilt self-reproach or accusing others of having traumatised me, did not arise. Instead there was an insight into the so called dependent arising of countless circumstances that have caused all these experiences and appearances. This led to a profound feeling of connectedness with everything and everybody. And in a second phase I lived through the experience, that each person I have ever met, constitutes an old karmic connection, together with the opportunity to continue it in a positive or negative way. The feeling of connectedness with these encounters was overwhelming and extended to all beings, including animals, etc. In this phase I also had encounters with bright light appearances, which seemed to







Sky gazing during the the second cycle of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* in Austria in 2011.

be alive and which after about ten days very vividly changed into the perception of a life sized personification which seemed to be a huge black insect which noticeably radiated cold and which I perceived as an equivalent of death. Once I accepted everything, the coldness and the figure disappeared.

I have noticed that other people also feel at the mercy of their habitual patterns, which have possibly gone on for many lives, at the mercy of their perception and the feelings that follow, without being able to free themselves unless they have had the relevant teachings. I want to thank our wonderful teachers!!! The second effect was, that I myself, inasmuch as I could retain the lucidity (clarity) did not take any 'attack from outside' in everyday life personally any longer.

### **Spiritual experiences: everything was and is a spiritual experience**

These experienced situations, independent of whether they had just been made up or came from memory, seemed to be directly projected into the room by a projector that seemed to be in my eyes and I could see partly three dimensionally, whatever I imagined (this did not occur in all

the dark retreats). These experiences were so vivid, that they reminded me of the reports on near death experiences and the retrospection of one's life. The light that lit up the space made clear beyond words, what was and is negative or positive, or in other words what would lead to persistent agitation and what would lead to peace and equanimity or inner bliss.

In longer contemplation with the light, a deep knowledge evolved, that the light in the dark retreat with all its appearances is the same that evokes dreams but also all appearances of everyday life. A realisation I also felt indescribably in the body sense.

### **Obstacles**

I also felt that something prevented and still prevents me from keeping and deepening these realisations – but also, that they can definitely be deepened further. I also felt that something was and is still impeding me and I believe that this is caused by the so-called dark sides (agitation, disturbing emotions, thoughts connected to negative actions, etc.) which also tend to continuously arise in my daily contemplations hindering my progress.







H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, with Maximilian and Thomm Möslers.

These habitual patterns are all stored in the body sense and I had to cleanse and dissolve them before going further, something that became especially evident to me in one dark retreat. After some time (and this only happened in a few dark retreats) the visions and experiences became calmer and the space in front of me widened. During this process I slowly lost the feeling of time and space.

During one of the dark retreats my body sense and body feeling slowly dissolved, leading to a feeling of lightness, and all negative sensations and physical pain dissolved. I then experienced an unconditional acceptance by space. The corresponding feeling of perfection came close to what I had heard about the experience of light, that people with near death experiences talk about: an encounter with a light of love and compassion. Letting go completely, I dissolved into space. The feeling transformed into the most blissful state I have ever experienced so far, exceeding any previous experience made through drugs or of sexual ecstasy. 'The essence of the totality of unconditional love,' might be the best way to describe it. In this phase, that is to say from the viewpoint of space, I gained the clear insight that the experi-

ences of dream, dark retreat and everyday life – just as it is described in after death experience – are not really any different from each other. I was abiding in the experience of unity, free of concepts.

These experiences are difficult to put into words, and people who are more eloquent and versed than I in every aspect, have had problems in describing them. But, my experiences are continuing to evolve.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Yungdrung Wangden Kreuzer from the Bon tradition, without whom these experiences would not have been possible.

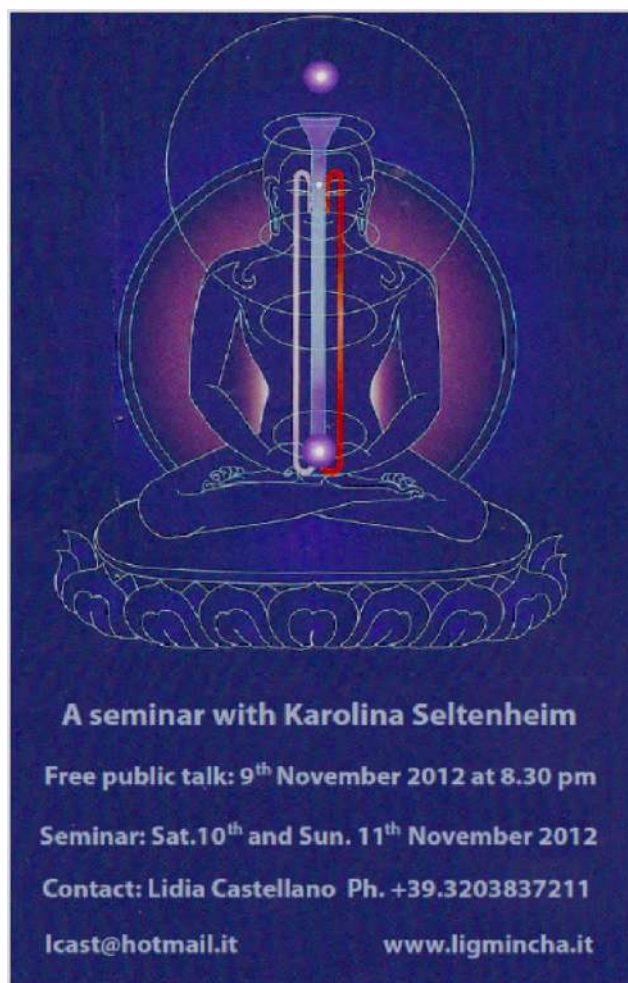
#### **Text by Thomm Möslers**

Photos: courtesy of Shenten Dargyé Ling, Thomm Möslers; Joop van Spronsen

**You are invited to share your dark retreat experiences. Please send them to:**  
[magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu)



# THE TIBETAN YOGAS OF BREATH AND MOVEMENT



**Ligmincha Italy organises a seminar with Karolina Seltenheim, according to the teaching of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.**

Karolina Seltenheim, an Austrian Yoga Teacher and social counselor, is a long time student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. In this weekend she will introduce meditative mind/body techniques to support our experience of the Inner Refuge: the *Nine Breathings of Purification*, the *Tsa Lung Movements* (channels and vital breath practices). This is an ancient Tibetan practice that brings together the mind and the vital breath (*prana*), with specific body movements that clear and open one's energetic centers (*chakras*). These movements relate to the qualities of the five elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air,

and Space) and can help you to connect to your inner wisdom and achieve a relaxed yet aware state of mind both on and off the meditation cushion.

## **Free public talk:**

Friday 9 November 8.30 pm

At: Libreria Aseq, via dei Sediari 10 Roma, Rome

## **Seminar:**

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 November 2012

At: Associazione Mandala Viale dei Quattro Venti 47/A, Rome

**Price seminar: € 80,00**

**Registration: lcast@hotmail.it**





# PARTY IN BUCHENAU

On the last evening of the summer retreat in Buchenau, there is always a party where sangha members can show their creativity. Here are a few photos from the party in 2012.



Rinpoche enjoys the show.



A young writer, reading parts from his first novel.



Five *Dakinis* dancing round a Lotus Flower.



The Refugees show there is a difference between *Refuge* and *Inner Refuge*. You can see that the meditator — being distracted — is not yet in the *Inner Refuge*.



Four ladies singing an Irish lullaby.

Photos by Joop van Spronsen





# PLAY

I want to play  
Play with the plants  
So courageous and beautiful  
Grow by everything in their surrounding

I want to play  
Play with the animals  
Vulnerable and fully willing  
To live as long as they're able to

I want to play  
Play with human beings  
So cloudy and funny  
In forgetting their own pure nature

I want to play  
With the sun, so bright  
And the moon so secret and touchy

I want to play  
In sunshine and rain  
In warmth and coldness

Because I want to be  
To be with you and you

Because my heart  
Is feeling so happy then

*Tonny Maas*

Photo by Marlies Cober-Philippens



# PURIFYING THE MIND WITH MANTRAS

On February 11 and 12 2012, Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang gave special teachings on the three *Heart Mantras* of the Bon tradition — mantras that are to be recited in the framework of *Ngondro* or preparatory exercises. Ulrike Bross-Kurat gives us impressions from a Weekend Seminar with Geshe Nyima in Berlin.

Although commonly known as the three *Heart Mantras*, the more precise Tibetan concept is of the *Three Essences*, which emphasizes their special role within the Dharma teaching context. One of the lesser known structures until now brings each of the three mantras in relation with one of the three *Kayas*.

Never before was it so clear to me, as through this experience and practice led by Geshe Nyima, that the mantras are highly compressed ‘essentialized’ forms and instructions which also include descriptions of the processes along the spiritual path. Through their frequent repetition and accelerated recitation during the session, it is possible to delve into their meaning until a sense of mental familiarity occurs, deepening more and more into a sense of fusion.

Geshe Nyima also showed us how important the associated visualizations are for the overall success of the practice. They are mostly done before but also executed during the mantra recitation.

For me, it was especially gratifying, meaningful, and exciting during this weekend to directly experience this form of spiritual practice, because my understanding of the recitation — despite long and various attempts and efforts to practice, even with the *Ngondro* practice — had not been very stable.

As I would like the teachings of the *Three Essences* as taught by Geshe Nyima to be well established, I was happy to summarize a few key points. I hope that some of the freshness and clarity that we enjoyed over the weekend comes through in this text.



Geshe Nyima begins by referring to the nine accumulations in the *Ngondro*. His remarks show that there are these nine only in Bon, and not in the other schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In other words, the three additional accumulations exist only in Bon, the three *Heart Mantras* that are part of the cleaning practices. These mantras cleanse the practitioner's mind to receive sacred teachings of Dzogchen, like pure water cleans a vessel to conserve precious nectar. (This explanation is slightly different from the one which we learned in the *Ngondro* retreat in 2010 with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, but this is not essential and Geshe Nyima gave an overview of the different explanations.)

And then on to the individual mantras.

**A-OMe-HUNG, AH A-KAR SA-LE WOE A-YANG OM-DHU**

The first mantra that Geshe Nyima discussed with us is the mantra of Shenlha Okar, as it is generally known, but called *Mantra of the Dharmakaya* in the context of this teaching. The first three syllables, *A-OMe-HUNG* are not counted. The meaning of the mantra is associated with the





Nature of Mind and clarity and thus with Dzogchen. Geshe Nyima explains the structure of the nine syllables, beginning with the syllable *A* repeated three times. The first *A* is pronounced as a long *Ah* and is the base or unchanging essence in which a seed, not yet implemented, may be placed. The second *A* is the clarity or potential which arises from the base, as waves arise in the ocean. The third *A* is the Nature of Mind, unity, and emptiness which have now been reached. All three *A* syllables are thus connected to the Nature of Mind by a process of development.



Matri Thangka, with Tonpa Shenrab with his consort Sherap Chamma and the deities of the Six lokas

In the middle syllables, *KAR* is the white or wisdom that recognizes the whole. *SA LE* is illuminating, translucent, and clear, and *WOE* is light. These syllables represent the path, the practice of meditation and stand for the strength and the understanding gained through the practice. Through the recognition of the Nature of Mind, one can

become one with it and all concepts and thoughts are dissolving. The moment in which this happens is *WOE*, or light.

The last three syllables *YANG OM DHU* stand for the experience, the fruit of the practice, whereby the last syllable *DHU* is for the tigle Nyakchik, the unity or sphere by which the wisdom wind (*Yang*) is initiated. *OM* represents the five wisdoms. The visualization preceding the recitation is as follows: We visualize on our heads the *Sambhogakaya* deity Shenlha Okar with peaceful Ornaments. Out of his heart emanate

beams of light, which illuminate every syllable of the mantra. From here, it shines onto us, and thus we experience the blessings before we begin the recitation session.

The mantra is also important for the *Trek Chö* practice (self-recognition through the *A*), during which it can be recited. Its main benefit however, is for the improvement of the mind.

<p>ཨ་ཨྲྀ་ཧྲྀ། ཨྲྀ་ཨ་དཀར་སལེ་ལོད་ཨ་ཡང་ཨྲྀ་འདུ།</p> <p>A-OMe-HUNG, AH A-KAR SA-LE WOE A-YANG OM-DHU</p> <p>ཨྲྀ་མ་རི་མུ་ཡེ་སལེ་འདུ།</p> <p>OM MA TRI MU YE SA LE DHU</p> <p>ཨ་དཀར་ཨ་མད་དུ་རི་མུ་ནག་པོ་ཞི་ཞི་མལ་མལ་སྒྲུ།</p> <p>AH-KAR A-ME DHU-TRI-SU NAG-PO ZHI-ZHI MAL-MAL SO-HA</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------







Geshe Nyima with members and guests of the Berlin Sangha.

### **OM MA TRI MU YE SA LE DHU**

The second mantra is a deeper exploration of the main mantra in Bon of eight syllables, comparable to the *Om Mani Padma Hung* mantra of Tibetan Buddhism. With the exception of the first two syllables *OM* and *MA*, each syllable symbolizes a further manifestation of the *Nirmanakaya* Buddha Tonpa Shenrab, to alleviate the suffering of beings in the six realms of existence through specific antidotes. For example, the field of hungry ghosts is purified by generosity, which is taught as an antidote or quality of the deity responsible for this area. According to the interpretation of Shardza Rinpoche, this mantra is connected to the *Nirmanakaya* level. We begin the mantra with the visualization of the *thangka* in which Tonpa Shenrab (symbolized in the mantra by *OM*) is in the center, in union with his consort Sherap Chamma (symbolized by *MA*). Other manifestations of Tonpa Shenrab are shown in the lower portion of the *thangka*, with the different colors, forms, and attributes depicting the qualities and antidotes that they represent.

In the visualization, we imagine in the heart of Tonpa Shenrab, on a moon disc a counterclockwise-rotating *OM*, and in the heart of Sherap Chamma on a sun disk a clockwise-rotating *MA*. The light emanating from the two deities facing each other and the rotating syllables passes on to the deities especially the ones of the *Six Lokas*, illuminating from here the six realms of existence, thereby purifying them from the poisons of the mind. Our corresponding mind-state is, that through this mantra, everything is transformed.

Geshe Nyima finds this mantra extremely helpful if someone dies or suffers, and it is also good for animals. The primary benefit of the mantra is to clear karmic traces.

### **AH-KAR A-ME DHU-TRI-SU NAG-PO ZHI-ZHI MAL-MAL SO-HA**

Geshe Nyima calls this the mantra of *Sambhoghakaya* or the so-called light body. It

is especially useful for dealing with external obstacles, such as to ward off or to overcome disease.

The first four syllables represent the top four Bon deities, Sherap Chamma (*AH*), Shenlha Okar (*KAR*), Sipa Sangpo Bumtri (*A*), and Tonpa Shenrab (*ME*). The next three syllables *DHU TRI SU* are for the lower realms to be cleaned, with the following syllables *NAG PO* for cleaning of the three higher realms, and *ZHI ZHI MAL MAL* collectively understood to be the antidote to karmic obstacles. ('Everything dissolves into happiness when all obstacles are overcome.') The final two syllables, *SO HA*, are 'very so wrathful' with the power to overcome all negative external forces. Interestingly, the two syllables *SO HA* have the same meaning in Hindi and in Chinese.

The short form of the visualization that we can make before the recitation (there is also a longer one) is as follows:

1. All I see is in the form of the four deities.
2. All I hear is the sound of the mantra.
3. All I think is the same as the thought of Kuntu Zangpo, the purest form of the mind.

Thank you, Geshe Nyima, for the so content-rich and joyfully given teaching, as well as for the blessing ritual for our *malas*.

**Text by Ulrike Bross-Kurat**  
**Translated by Patricia Char**

Photos: courtesy of Geshe Nyima; Sarah Edgehill



# OPENING THE DOOR TO BON

On the back cover of the book *Opening the door to Bön* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche says: "I strongly recommend this excellent guide-book for practitioners and for anyone else who would like a window into the view and practice of Bön. The practices of *ngöndro* are very important, because they provide the firm, stable foundation one needs for engaging in any of the higher practices of the Bön Buddhist tradition, including *Dzogchen* practice. Readers will benefit from the high level of clarity, depth and detail that *Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche* offers regarding all aspects of these wonderful and essential teachings."

With this book, Latri Khenpo Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche succeeded in writing about complicated matters in a simple way. And despite the simple words, when I read the book, I could feel the depth of these teachings. Several times I had the feeling that what he wrote was obvious, but reading it was very inspiring, and made me have a look at my daily conduct.

In chapter one he writes about the origin and history of Bon. In chapter two he explains how we can receive the teachings in a proper way. In chapter three he describes the fourfold practices to train one's own mind. In chapter four he gives instructions for the nine preliminary practices, also known as the *Ngondro*.

We bring you parts of chapter 2, *The Proper Way to Receive the Bön Teachings*.

*"To develop inner awareness and wisdom, it is necessary to develop the right view toward the teachings. This will not be possible if the practitioner has a wrong attitude about the teachings. Before learning the basic teachings or the preliminary practices, one must establish a solid foundation for future growth and a deep understanding of Bön. Without a good and proper foundation, one's practice will not be stable and reliable. Therefore, it*

*is very important to start with a good understanding of the basics of proper practice.*

## PURE ATTITUDE OF TEACHER AND STUDENT

*Before receiving the teachings, it is essential to prepare oneself by having a pure attitude (motivation) and genuine compassion from the heart.*

*As an example, in order for a farmer to expect a good crop, it is important to have fertilized the soil. When there is good soil, one can plant and things will grow. If the soil is not good, then whatever one plants will not grow. In the same way, the student's motivation has to be very pure and proper in order to increase positive energy, understand the wisdom of the teachings, and benefit all sentient beings. (...)*

## PROPER MOTIVATION OF STUDENTS

*The essence of the Bön teachings is based on compassion, love, non-violence, and kindness. If you practice accordingly, you will obtain a better understanding of your own nature, and the nature of all phenomena.*

*In other words, the ultimate goal of practice is to discover your natural state of mind and to achieve enlightenment. Discovering your true nature is essential to purifying your negative thoughts, which are influenced by the five poisons: anger, attachment, ignorance, jealousy, and pride. The ability to generate pure thoughts helps you to be of benefit to other sentient beings and gives a meaningful purpose to your life.*

*As an example, we can be like a lotus flower, which is beautiful even though it is growing in the mud. Its beauty is never affected by its surroundings. As we are born into the miserable conditions of this cyclic existence, we need to emphasize how to overcome or free ourselves from suffering. By applying the teachings to our everyday practice,*



*we are not affected by the poisons of this world.*

*The teachings of Bön are like a mirror that is able to reflect the appearance of objects. In the same way, through practice, you will be able to notice and realize the influence of negative thoughts and the five poisons, and therefore mindfully control and subdue them. Use the practice as a mirror to reflect your inner self. The more you are able to overcome or subdue negative thoughts, the more you will improve your understanding and the level of your practice.*

#### QUALITIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS

*Two sets of characteristics are required of practitioners: qualities to avoid (the three faults of the container and the nine faults to avoid), and qualities to achieve (the knowledge of holding, the knowledge of understanding, and the knowledge of realization). (...)*

#### QUALITIES TO BE CULTIVATED BY THE TEACHER

*In order to achieve enlightenment, we need to practice meditation. In order to meditate, we need to realize the nature of our mind. To realize the nature of our mind, it is important to have instruction and guidance from a teacher. There is no history of achieving enlightenment without following a teacher.*

*Without a guide, a person who does not know a particular country cannot make a proper decision about where to go. In the same way, we sentient beings have no knowledge of how to enter the path of enlightenment without a teacher. In the past, the great masters, scholars, and translators of Zhang Zhung and Tibet followed their teachers' instructions and achieved enlightenment. In the eighth century the great master Denpa Namkha followed 108 teachers to achieve enlightenment. We sentient beings need to have a qualified teacher who can guide us and tell us what to do and what to avoid.*

*It is important to find a qualified Bön teacher who has received the transmission of the Bön teachings through an unbroken lineage and can lead us in the right direction. He must have knowledge of the Bön teachings in general, and have his own experience of realization of the nature of mind through meditation. He must*

*also be fluent in the particular subject he is teaching and have the wisdom and knowledge to guide his students. Without discriminating among his students, he needs to be enthusiastic about teaching them tirelessly for the benefit of all sentient beings. (...)"*



#### **Lha-Tri Khenpo Geshe Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche**

is the Abbot and lineage holder of the Lha-tri monastery in the Derge area of the Kham region of Eastern Tibet. His father was a lama of the Te-Wa monastery in Tibet and the third reincarnation of Tsultrim Phuntsok, a great Bon practitioner of Eastern Tibet.

Born in Tibet in 1959, he grew up in Nepal at Dorpatan, the first Bonpo refugee community. At age six, he started his religious studies under the guidance of his father and from Tsultrim Nyima Rinpoche, the Abbot and founder of Dorpatan Monastery.

He is the founder of several Bon Centers. In Europe there are centers in Vienna, Minsk (Belarus) and Moscow. He travels regularly to these centers to give teachings.

**Text by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photo from website: [www.ligminchatexas.org](http://www.ligminchatexas.org)





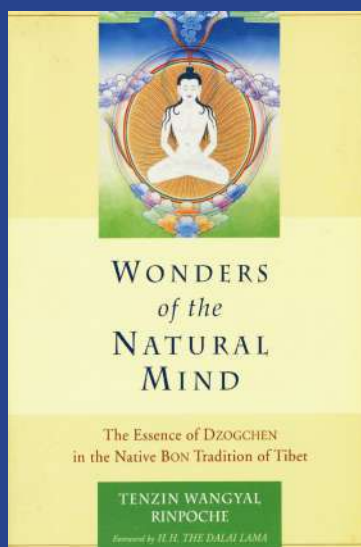
## ADVICE ON DEVELOPING AS A DZOGCHENPA

In October 2012, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches in Austria the third cycle of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud: The View, Meditation, Behavior, and Result of Dzogchen*. We have selected text from chapter 8 of the book *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, where Rinpoche talks about integration.

“It is very important to discover through self-observation which level of integration we are capable of practicing and to apply that level, otherwise there will be a gap between the Dzogchen teachings and our aspirations as Dzogchen practitioners. When my master Lopon Tenzin Namdak gave teachings on the Zhang Zhung Nyan Gyud in Italy in 1989 he said, ‘The teaching is Dzogchen, we are not Dzogchen.’ He was speaking about the gap between the explanation of the state or base given in the teachings and the dualistic condition in which we live in our conceptual mind. We can easily see if there is this gap when a passion such as anger arises. When we receive teachings, we learn about integration and self-liberation, but very often there is no functional relationship between what we have learned from the teachings about passions and what happens inside us when a passion such as anger arises. That means the teaching is not working and the anger we feel does not correspond to the anger we speak about according to the teachings. In practical terms, this is the gap my master was talking about. The moment a passion arises, we forget all explanations. To eliminate this gap when we try to apply integration, it is important not to follow blindly what the texts tell us about self-liberation, but rather first look at our own condition and determine at what stage of practice we are, what level of practitioner we are, and then apply the appropriate view and practice. It is as if we are sick. We have to find out what illness we have and what kind of medicine we must take. So the first step we must take towards integration is to determine what

level we have to work on, and not try immediately to apply the highest view of the teachings on integration and self-liberation, otherwise the gap will arise between the teaching and our capacity to apply it in the way we live. In this way, integration is one thing, and what we do is something else. We must connect what we learn about liberating the passions in the teachings and what we actually experience when we feel the passions arising.

If we find we are unable to integrate our passions, this is probably because we are confused about our level. Instead of applying the appropriate practice, we are trying to apply the superior practice while we are still on the inferior level. This might cause us to interrupt or even give up practice saying, ‘This teaching does not work,’ when in fact we are not applying it in the right way.



In fact, it is best to start with the lowest level of practice, of mindful attention to all our actions of body, voice, and mind. At times we can observe how we only notice the actions of our body after having performed them. For example, I may get up to walk out of the shrine room and accidentally kick somebody, then curse someone else for being in my way, and finally think badly of both people, before even stepping outside the door! I have performed these negative actions of body, voice,

and mind with distraction, and this creates problems within myself. In fact, if I kick someone, I am kicking myself, as in the Tibetan saying, ‘If you hit a stone with butter, the butter loses; if you hit butter with a stone, the butter loses.’ In the end it is always I who loses. Often, we do negative things not because we have bad intentions, but because we are inattentive, but the effect is the same. So when we start to practice, we must first develop mindfulness, that is, effortful attention to the actions we perform, as a kind of base.”

Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 7 – Winter 2012/2013*



Ligmincha Europe Retreat Center

Meet the Czech Republic sangha

Taste of The Three Doors

Journey to Mustang



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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM RINPOCHE



## Ligmincha Institute for the Study of the Religions and Cultures of Tibet

Dear European Sangha,

I hope that this letter finds you all well, happy, and very engaged with your own personal and spiritual development.

I am very happy and excited to inform you about some wonderful news. We are moving forward to finding and establishing a Ligmincha Europe Retreat Center.

All of you know our other retreats centers: Serenity Ridge in Virginia, Chamma Ling Colorado, the two Chamma Lings in Mexico, Chamma Ling Poland, and Lishu Institute in India. All of these centers are doing well and continuing to develop.

For years I have felt a need for a European center where all of the European sanghas can gather together, a place that is easily accessible, and comfortable. As the aim of the Ligmincha Europe Retreat Center is to especially support all of the European sanghas, members of the different sanghas will be on its Founders Circle, and involved in all administration and decision making.

As we are at the beginning stages of this project, we need a place and people so we can begin the process of looking for our new center. I am thrilled with the current Board of Ligmincha Germany, which includes Oliver Wirtz, Florian Bruckmann, and Gabriele Penders. They have been working very harmoniously together, with a lot of enthusiasm and inspiration. Because of this, I have directly asked them to initiate the process of looking for a retreat center. Although I've asked the Ligmincha Germany Board to look for a place for this center in Germany, I want to highlight that this is not a "German" retreat center, but one where all of the European sanghas will participate, as I already mentioned.

To create this center is a big task and it will bring a big benefit for all of us. We will need a lot of support from all of you – financial support, skills, labor, and your prayers and wishes. Please communicate your views, thoughts and suggestions directly to Oliver.

I am truly looking forward to teach at our new retreat center, spending time there, and inviting other teachers there. I look forward to creating this place so that it will support all of you in your personal and spiritual development.

With my love and many blessings,

A handwritten signature in gold ink, which appears to read "Tenzin Wangyal".

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

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# PRESENTATION OF THE 'LIGMINCHA EUROPE RETREAT CENTER'

During the Summer retreat in Germany in July 2012, and during the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud teachings in Austria in October 2012, Oliver Wirtz, chair of Ligmincha Deutschland (Germany), presented Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's plan to create a center in Europe for training, meditation and study. Rinpoche, who asked the German board to look for a place to realize his dream, was also present to answer questions.

Rinpoche said that the European center is a place where two lamas are going to reside. It will take a great effort to realize this project, and the other sanghas in Western Europe were invited by Rinpoche to support this project. Rinpoche's letter, printed on page 3, was sent to the European sanghas in November 2012.

There are two important conditions for the center to be met. It must be easily accessed by car, plane and public transport. In addition, it should be a center, which can be used on a short-term basis for the training of The Three Doors Academy as well as the European Summer Retreat. It must also serve for long-term use when we, for example, want to build a Stupa there.

To give us an overall impression, Oliver showed us some photos of places he found on the internet, which could be suitable for the center, like a youth hostel and a farm built around a courtyard.

Although there is no building presently, Oliver showed us the gifts he received at Serenity Ridge from Rinpoche for the European center: a *tangkha* of Sherab Chamma (see photo on the next page) and a Tibetan book with the text of *Zhang Zhung*

*Nyen Gyud*. And to supplement the inventory he asked us if twenty-nine other people would kindly contribute € 20 so he could buy a statue of *Tapihritsa* in the European bookstore for € 600. More than thirty people responded immediately, because it really was a once in a lifetime chance. The proceeds of this years' auction at Buchenau – a great event – which raised approximately € 8000, will be used to finance the center. An initial rough-estimate is that the center may cost round half a million euro.

There are many steps to be taken moving forward. First, under the supervision of Rinpoche, a "Founder's Circle" with representatives of the European national sanghas will be formed to ensure the connection between this wonderful project and the existing sanghas. The chairs Heide Mitsche (Austria), Anna-Kaisa Hirvanen (Finland) and Anneke Dekkers (Netherlands) responded immediately during the retreat in Austria and gave their support to Oliver during his presentation. And so, it really has become a European project, where every sangha, if they want to participate, can send one representative to this 'Founder's

Circle'. This is an open invitation and there is no obligation to participate. Nobody should feel under pressure and this is in no way a reflection of one sangha's potential or commitment over another.

Next to the 'Founder's Circle', a committee will be formed with all kinds of experts,

such as lawyers, architects and further skilled members of the European sanghas, who want to contribute making this project a dream come true.

On the pages 6 and 7 you will see slides of the Powerpoint presentation done by Oliver.

**Text by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Ton Bisscheroux and Florian Bruckmann







Sherab Chamma





Tenzin Wangyal  
Rinpoche's  
European Vision

"Draft 1.2" for the  
European Sangha  
developed by



## Chamma Ling Ligmincha Retreat Center in Europe



- Draft 1.2 (Excerpt) -

October 19, 2012



### The Vision – what is Chamma Ling Europe for?

- A home for the Ligmincha Sangha within the Yungdrung Bön tradition in Western- /Central Europe
- A place which offers a rich taste of the uniqueness of the Yungdrung Bön tradition in order to preserve Bon Buddhist Wisdom in the world
- A space that hosts activities of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche including the annual summer retreats and the „The Three Doors“ trainings as well as those of visiting teachers of all traditions



### The Basis – a Sangha for the Retreat Center and vice versa

A European Retreat Center, which offers a broad scope of opportunities to enhance one's spiritual development needs the potential of the European Sangha.

To support the practitioners close to their everyday life through local sanghas, embedded within national sanghas is a critical success factor for offering further services which can only be maintained by a Retreat Center.

And vice versa a Retreat Center can only be maintained by practitioners, who feel like giving something.





## The Search of the Land

The land still has to be found. However I set up various criteria:

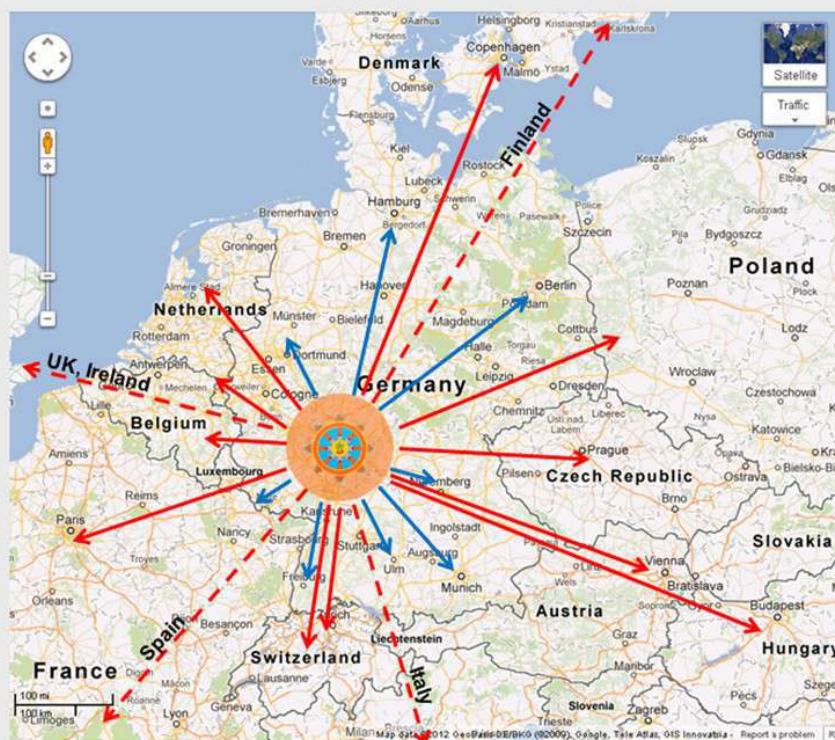
1. The land should offer both short term and long term opportunities
2. It should rather be offshore than within a city or village, but easy to reach by also public transportation
3. As Germany seems very central for all countries within the Western European Sangha, the retreat center should be located somewhere in the middle of Germany (as seen on the next pages)



*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*



## The Land



# THE HEALING POWER OF THE INNER REFUGE

In 2013 Marcy Vaughn, senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, will be teaching *'Taste of The Three Doors'* in several countries throughout Europe. Anja Benesch talked to Marcy about this two-day seminar, Marcy's role in The Three Doors, and her personal experiences as a teacher.

**Marcy, you are a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Can you please share a little bit about how you met him and how your relationship as student and now teacher evolved?**

It was actually my husband, Gabriel Rocco, who first encountered Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. While I began pursuing Tibetan Buddhism in earnest in 1974, I didn't meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche until about fifteen years ago. I was engaged in study with a Nyingma teacher at the time when Gabriel received a flyer in the mail from Ligmincha. He wrote to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and traveled to meet him and they formed a strong connection from the first meeting. Meanwhile, I had a dream in which I was walking in the woods along a stream and came upon a Tibetan man seated by the stream. He introduced himself as Tenzin Wangyal, and we had a cordial meeting and pleasant conversation. Upon awakening I had the thought, "Oh my husband's teacher is such a nice person." On two occasions I had this same dream. Then one day I was in our meditation room and looked over at Gabriel's table where a book I had never seen before lay. I picked it up and opened it at random. My eyes fell upon one line in the text and I exclaimed out loud: "Oh my, this is it!" It was one line from the commentary on the *Twenty-One Nails* and it spoke to a very specific experience I had when I was younger that I had never received an explanation or teachings about. There it was, in one line. So I knew I had to meet Tenzin Wangyal and luckily he was giving a seminar that very weekend in Virginia. We drove the six hours to Charlottesville, entered the studio where the seminar was to be, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came right over and took my hand and said, "Welcome. I have been waiting for you." I cried on and off the whole weekend, it felt like such a homecoming. I was and still am overwhelmed in a positive sense with the generosity of the Bon lineage teachers and particularly with the warmth



**Marcy Vaughn**

has been a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon for almost forty years and is a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. She graduated in the first class of the master's program in contemplative psychotherapy at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. Currently a therapist in private practice in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, Marcy teaches meditation classes and also leads retreats to explore the uses of imagery and voice in the healing process. She has worked closely with Tenzin Wangyal and edited three of his books: *Tibetan Sound Healing*, *Awakening the Sacred Body*, and *Awakening the Luminous Mind*. She is the Director for Practice and Programs for both Ligmincha International and The Three Doors. She helped design and teaches in The Three Doors Academy, a two and a half year training program that brings contemplative practices to a secular world.

of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

So I continued to attend every retreat offered by Ligmincha, and somewhere along the line Rinpoche asked me if I would be the *umdze* (practice leader) at the retreats he taught at Serenity Ridge. I had done this for my previous teachers and enjoyed doing it. So our relationship developed over time in this way — for four retreats a year, including the three-week summer retreats, Rinpoche would teach and I would guide the practice based on what he taught. I also transcribed all of the teachings and edited them,





so I became quite attuned to Rinpoche. As our relationship continues to evolve, I always find Rinpoche encouraging, and sometimes provocative in a good way. I never feel he puts any kind of a lid or restriction on me. I truly feel supported to mature in my practice and I have benefitted greatly from the powerful gift of his trust.

**As a teacher, are you meeting challenges that you have been working on?**

The first time Rinpoche asked me to teach I went down to Charlottesville and taught the *Tsa Lung* practices for a weekend retreat. I was nervous, but I felt positive about doing it because the *Tsa Lung* has been such a wonderful practice for me. When I entered the shrine room, Sue Davis Dill had set up a microphone and a small recording device on my table. I turned to her and said decisively, "Oh no, we are not recording this!" Although confident to teach, I clearly didn't have the confidence to be recorded! I thought to myself, "What if I say something stupid or wrong and it is frozen in space forever!" Half-way through the teaching when we were engaged in the fire-like *Tsa Lung* I realized the lack of stability in my practice that simply seeing the microphone triggered, so of course I hosted this experience in my practice. There was one person at the retreat who asked if she could have the recordings (which we didn't have), for she lived far from any other practitioners. That woke me up to realizing my lack of confidence led to a lack of generosity towards another. So from then on I hosted my self-consciousness as a pain identity and again and again trusted the openness of my practice. I have often used the pervasive *Tsa Lung* to keep opening as Rinpoche asks me to travel more and more. Teaching has been a continuous process of trusting the practice and becoming more familiar with being present and available to others, and it has been transformative for me as I tend to be introverted and more comfortable with being alone or with one or just a few other people at a time. Of course having Rinpoche say, "Just do it!" is motivating.

The practices we use in The Three Doors support the development of direct, open, intimate communication that I have never experienced anywhere else. I didn't realize how shocking these simple practices can be until I was invited to present at a conference of elders from wisdom traditions around the world, and particularly

Native American elders. At first I protested to the organizers saying, "I'm just a white American woman," but they persisted in their invitation and encouragement so with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's blessing I presented and guided the *Warrior Seed Syllable* practice to a group of about one hundred and twenty people. The result was astonishing. It was so powerful to come together in that way. This was the first time most present had heard of the 'inner refuge' and encountered this healing sound practice. The resulting silence was palpable. But what was more shocking was I realized these teachings bring one directly to openness and to naked awareness, and this was a unique and unusual thing to do so quickly among people whom you have never met before. It was disarming and brought with it expressions of great appreciation from many present, for while we had laughed together and listened to each others' stories we had not brought our awareness to the collective presence of ourselves and the group through the three doors of stillness, silence, and spaciousness. It deepened my appreciation for the power of our practices and for their potential in healing collective pain.

**In 2013 you are going to travel a lot in Europe and will be teaching many weekend seminars in Europe called 'Taste of The Three Doors.' Are you excited?**

I am. I started to teach abroad by going down to Mexico where I do not speak the language and had to work with a translator. Truthfully, more and more I realize that even in the English language where we all assume we are speaking the same language, many times we are not. I mean, everyone is speaking a different language, and the more you come into form, the more diverse and divergent people are. So when I don't understand the language, I have to opportunity to listen to people in a deeper way, as I am not distracted by their story but feel them as they are speaking... it is only later that the translator delivers the story to me! I realize more and more our connectedness is in the spaciousness and the warmth that arises from recognizing this. Language is simply an ornamentation of this. This has been very instructive to me to discover a deeper interconnectedness. Where do we meet directly? Of course, I am also grateful for the translator!

Additionally, The Three Doors is an international organization, and if I just stayed in my country and



area of familiarity I wouldn't have the benefit of learning from diverse people in diverse cultures. I learn so much through the willingness of practitioners to share their experiences. I am very grateful to the people I meet who open to the practices and share their experiences. It is probable that I will be learning more than the people coming to the seminars.

**What happens at a 'Taste of The Three Doors' seminar?**

For someone who has been involved in meditation, it can be very refreshing as The Three Doors methods are very direct and naked. We all develop habits in our meditation practice, like getting a bit cozy or sleepy or even habits of agitation and excitement with appearances, all the stuff that is arising. Sometimes it is quite helpful to come into a fresh environment and hear instruction that may not be completely familiar to you. It can refresh your meditation practice.

For someone who is newer to meditation, the seminar is designed to introduce you to how meditation can benefit you. What happens when you place your attention in certain ways? Can you harness the power of naked observation to come closer to your authentic nature? Can you come closer to what is alive in you, creative, and intelligent in you? Can you directly encounter your life free of all the filters of conceptual bias? Many of us would say we are not as fully alive or as present or as creative as we would like to be.

Some may realize we are not giving to others what we could give to others. For anyone who is interested in exploring and opening beyond their sense of habitual boundedness, this is an opportunity to do so.

**After getting a 'taste' of The Three Doors, how can people continue with their practice? Will there be more Academies in Europe in the future?**

When we gather and experience the power and beauty of practicing together and feel how the presence of others supports each one of us to stay connected longer and more deeply than we might

otherwise do on our own, that wakes up the desire to continue to do more. So of course we want to create ways that people can continue to connect. Perhaps people would like to gather once a month or more, and want to form small practice groups to do so. We will continue to offer opportunities to enter the larger structure of the Academy, but there needs to be more immediate ways to support each others' practice. We need to bring creative intelligence to explore how people can be supported to continue their practice.

**What is your role in The Three Doors organization?**

In the structure of The Three Doors, I am on the newly-formed Board of Directors. My area of responsibility is practice and program development. I am also the Director of Practice and Programs, and I am a teacher in the Academy. I feel it will be helpful to me to experience different places and hear from different people what their practice is

like to develop a sense of how to be more supportive and responsive in program development. The Three Doors seeks to encourage the maturity and ripening of every practitioner in order that each person can bring forth and express their personal gifts in their particular life. So not only will I want to support the development of teachers and presenters of The Three Doors, there may be many diverse and creative ways that people will express themselves through the support of the practices and we want to encourage this as well.



**Is there anything you want to share with the readers of the Ligmincha Europe Magazine?**

I truly look forward to the opportunity to explore being together through connecting with the healing power of the inner refuge. Practicing together is my favorite way of experiencing people, for when we take the opportunity to share sacred space and feel the power of the collective silence, we can experience the healing of personal and societal wounds. This is a necessary adventure in maturing and evolving as human beings.

**Interview by Anja Benesch**

Photos: courtesy of Marcy Vaughn





# THE THREE DOORS

*Transformations of Body, Speech, and Mind*

## ***Taste of The Three Doors***

is a two-day seminar offering a 'taste' of simple, direct meditation practices of body, speech, and mind. As we bring attention to the stillness of the body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of the mind, we discover an inner refuge. Within this supportive environment, we reflect on our everyday experiences and learn to see personal challenges as oppor-

tunities for transformation. The jewel that is hidden in ordinary experience becomes revealed and the profound gifts of this inner refuge — spaciousness, awareness, and warmth — bring healing and benefit to you, to your relationship with others, and to the greater world. The seminar offers an introductory experience for beginners and advanced practitioners alike. Everyone is welcome.

[www.the3doors.org/the-taste-of-3-doors](http://www.the3doors.org/the-taste-of-3-doors)

## **'Taste of The Three Doors' in Europe**

### **Austria**

May 11-12, 2013 in Vienna

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact - [seltenheim@aon.at](mailto:seltenheim@aon.at)

### **Finland**

May 18-19, 2013 in Helsinki

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact - [lena.kunelius@gmail.com](mailto:lena.kunelius@gmail.com)

### **Netherlands**

June 8-9, 2013 in Sittard

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact - [3doorsnederland@gmail.com](mailto:3doorsnederland@gmail.com)

June 15-16, 2013 in Exloërveen (Drenthe)

Presented by Marcy Vaughn

Contact - [3doorsnederland@gmail.com](mailto:3doorsnederland@gmail.com)

### **Germany**

September 14-15, 2013 in Frankfurt

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact - [g.ajhar@gmx.de](mailto:g.ajhar@gmx.de)

September 21-22, 2013 in Berlin

Presented by Marcy Vaughn

Contact - [anja@the3doors.org](mailto:anja@the3doors.org)

### **Switzerland**

November 9-10, 2013 in Zurich

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact - [walterhofmail@gmail.com](mailto:walterhofmail@gmail.com)

### **Denmark**

November 16-17, 2013 in Copenhagen

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact - [birgit.bastholm@gmail.com](mailto:birgit.bastholm@gmail.com)





# A MAGICAL PLACE CALLED MUSTANG

In 2012 Lidia Castellano travelled in Mustang together with a Bonpo Geshe, Sonam Gurung who hails from that area, and a small group of westerners. Here is her report from that journey.

Mustang is a valley in Nepal, close to the Annapurna range and bordering with Tibet, and also home to the ancient Bon tradition. Our journey started in Kathmandu, where we visited Triten Norbutse Monastery and met with H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche, receiving his blessing.

After spending a few days in Kathmandu, visiting the ancient stupas and beautiful monuments of Nepal's capital, we proceeded to Pokhara, located on the Phewa Lake and shadowed by the mighty Annapurna Range. From there, we took a hair-raising but spectacular flight aboard a small twin propeller plane, to reach Jomsom, the district capital of Mustang, at an altitude of 2800 meters. Here the landscape drastically changed, from the greenery and forests of the lower hill country to the high altitude desert. Mustang is dry and barren except for those areas where water coming from the snow melts is available, where barley, buckwheat and fruit trees are a pleasure to see. The houses of the village are in Tibetan style, with the flat roof used to store wood and dry the harvest. Brightly coloured prayer flags are everywhere in sight. The food we enjoyed was also in Tibetan style, mainly *tukpa* (vegetable and noodles soup) and *momos* (steamed dumplings). Surely we did not have much variety in our meals, but the food was always homemade, fresh and very wholesome since no chemicals are used in agriculture here.

On our first day we visited an old Bonpo temple in Jomsom itself; a family who lives in the surrounding house is in charge of it and has taken care of the temple for many generations. Geshe Sonam appeared lively and joyous, breathing the air of his native country after three years since his last visit, and with great enthusiasm started describing and explaining everything we found in the temple, with its statues, paintings, symbols and history.

For me, it was very moving to see, for the first time, an old temple belonging to the tradition that is so precious to me. In the following week we would see a few more old Bonpo and Buddhist temples, and with Geshe-la's explanations they seemed to come alive under the clear and open skies of Mustang, making me feel the tradition



Mirka, Silvia and Lidia with H.E. Yongdzin Rinpoche

strong and lively. Snowy, crystal-like peaks overlooked the valley and the river that has excavated its course through it, and here and there crossed by suspended metal bridges, that swinging with the wind and our passage, giving us a very intense feeling of impermanence!





Geshe Sonam on the bridge to Pangling

Geshe Sonam took then us to visit his family's house, near the small village of Pangling, across the Kali Gandaki. They are farmers and herders, one of his brothers taking care of the fields, the other being most of the time away in the mountains with his herd of goats. Here we were received as honoured guests and offered tea and snacks sitting in the family shrine room. We were then invited to the orchard to have our fill of the delicious apples hanging from the trees!

Moving around through the valley with Geshe Sonam was such a rich experience; rocks and caves would come alive with the stories of ancient yogis who had dwelt there, or of demons and *nagas* who had been subdued to the service of Dharma.

And also, we had the chance to learn that the ancient kingdom of Zhang Zhung also extended to this area in the

past, as it is testified by place names: each place has a Nepali, Tibetan and Zhang Zhung name. One of the most remarkable places we have visited is Lubrak, a village with a population who is entirely Bonpo. In ancient times a stupa was erected to protect the village from floods, and it still stands there. This beautiful village is home to two temples, one which is currently used and well kept, the other, a very ancient one, which would definitely need care and restoration. Lubrak is also surrounded by caves and

Drempa Namka is said to have resided in one of them, high up above the village.

We moved through the valley by walking and sometimes driving on one of the sturdy local jeeps, the only kind of vehicle that could manage the rough road, strewn with rocks and gravel, and dug in the mountain's side or river bed at times. By one such ride, we reached Muktinath, at 3800 meters, a famous holy spot for Hindus, Buddhists



Mani Wall in Kagbeni







Lubrak school children

and Bonpos. Here, amid trees and greenery which is amazing to find at such altitude, a complex of Hindu and Buddhist temples welcomes the many pilgrims, and sacred holy water from the above glacier springs from 108 fountains; visitors and pilgrims bathe and drink the water for purification and healing. We also followed the custom, and did a prayer ceremony at the spot where natural fire is burning. Later we strung prayer flags accompanied by prayers for peace and well being of all sentient beings.

After eight days in Mustang it was quite a shock to get back to the lower altitudes of the Kathmandu Valley and the city's noise and confusion. The mountains, the clear skies and their treasures of Bon have struck me deeply and I am planning to travel to Mustang again.

**Text and photos by Lidia Castellano**



Lubrak Village

### Geshe Sonam Gurung

is a Bonpo monk from Menri Monastery, where he grew up, studied and took his Geshe degree. Over the years he has been engaged in many tasks at the monastery: one of those has been as guest master in charge of visitors. For many years he has had the dream and the wish to support the local population of his native village in Mustang, Nepal, and help to improve education, living conditions and to conserve and uphold the Bon tradition in the area. That dream has started coming true with the making of a documentary *Bön: Mustang to Menri*, and with Lidia Castellano organizing tours to Mustang to discover and get in close contact with the tradition in one of its native areas.

Geshe-la is working on a project to support culture and education in his homeland. You can watch the documentary at YouTube [Bön: Mustang to Menri](#). Our journey would also contribute to that project.



### Lidia Castellano

is a Bonpo practitioner from Rome, Italy. In 2008 she met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for the first time. Then she visited the Bonpo Monasteries of Menri and Tritten Norbutse. At Menri Monastery she met Geshe Sonam Gurung. She has been travelling extensively in the Indian subcontinent for passion and as a freelance tour guide. Currently she is attending The Three Doors European Academy and organizing seminars and practice groups in Rome for Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.





# A SMALL FAMILY WITH A STABLE FOUNDATION

Interestingly enough every sangha has its own characteristics, partly defined by the culture of its country. Czech practitioners seem to be more secular than those of some other European nations. Jozho, one of the founders of *Ligmincha Česká republika* (Czech Republic), tells us what this means for their sangha. He also talks about the start, current activities and future plans of their group.

**Autumn 2012 a weekend of *A-tri Trul Khor* (Tibetan yoga) was organized in Prague, can you tell us about this event?**

We asked Darek Orwat from Poland to teach us *A-tri Trul Khor*. Darek is a very experienced practitioner, who could answer all of our questions. Twenty-five people joined this three-day retreat in Prague and they were all satisfied at the end! We want to continue to practice the *A-tri Trul Khor* we learned on a weekly base. We intend to organize a follow up retreat with Darek in March 2013.

**How did *Ligmincha Česká republika* come into being?**

In the summer of 2010 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Prague to teach *Tsa Lung* and *Tibetan Sound Healing*. After the seminar Jitka Polanská, who was the organizer, invited all participants to meet one another to practice together. I was one of the people who was interested in forming a practice group and helped organizing the first meeting. Since then weekly group practices have been held in Prague. For some practitioners Prague was too far from their home, and so in two other cities – Zlín and Bílovec – practice groups were founded.

**How did you encounter Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

After reading all Rinpoche's books that were translated into Czech at that time – *Healing with Form, Energy and Light*, *The Wonders of the Natural Mind*, and *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* – I heard he would come to teach in Prague. I liked his books very much and was curious to know what Rinpoche and his teachings



Jitka, Jozho and Lucka

would be like. While attending the teaching, I realized that I finally found what I was searching for.

**Can you give us an idea of the organization of *Ligmincha Česká republika*?**

Jitka, Lucka and I have been organizing group meetings and seminars, but there is no official organization structure. We know each other personally. At least once per year all Czech groups meet in Prague. And there are also occasional invitations of Prague's practice group from the other two groups during the year. At the moment there is one group practice a week in Prague, in which about five people participate. The Czech sangha is much bigger, though. Many people prefer to practice individually. This has partly to do with the fact that 80 % of the people are atheistic. Because they don't like religion, they don't feel comfortable with practices which include the visualization of deities. A practice like *Guru Yoga* seems strange to them. This applies especially for newcomers. Newcomers often prefer to 'just practice and solve problems.' *Tsa Lung* and *A-tri Trul Khor* seem to be helpful for many. At this time *Guru Yoga* and the *Dedication*





Czech sangha in Poland

*Prayer* are part of the group practice and we want to keep it this way. At the earlier mentioned retreat with Darek everyone was familiar with *Guru Yoga* and *Dedication prayer*.

**Do you think The Three Doors training could be a solution for people who want to practice in a more secular way?**

Yes, I think a next step would be that a few Czech people will participate in The Three Doors training, so that a 'Three Doors practice group' could be established for the practitioners who prefer to meditate in a purely secular way.

**To conclude: what are the intentions of Ligmincha Česká republika for the future?**

We are a very young, still developing sangha. We are a small family, but with a stable foundation. For the purposes of group practice, we want to keep and develop *Tsa Lung* practice. On the level of individual

practice, we want to be a good support to each other. After the publication of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's next book translated into Czech, we hope Rinpoche will come to Prague again. Until that time we continue to go to other countries, like Austria, Germany and Poland, for retreats.

**Interview by Floor van Orsouw**

Photos: Anna Šolcová and courtesy of sangha Czech Republic



A-tri Trul Khor weekend in Prague





# EUROPEAN LOSAR SANGHA PRACTICE-WEEKEND

Following the wish of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to practice under the guidance of experienced practitioners, Ligmincha Deutschland offers in February 2013 for the seventh year a European sangha practice weekend in Germany.

You are welcome to participate in the practice weekend in Buchenau, Germany, from February 8 - 10, 2013. This weekend offers the opportunity to either deepen your practice or be introduced to practices as taught by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche under the guidance of experienced practitioners.

The costs are € 98 for two nights, with all meals inclusive.



Castle Buchenau

For further information and registration visit the website [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de) or contact: [info@ligmincha.de](mailto:info@ligmincha.de).

## THE HEALING PRACTICES OF THE RED GARUDA

John Jackson will come to Buchenau, Germany, to lead the 'Healing Practices of the Red Garuda' retreat from March 22 - 24, 2013.



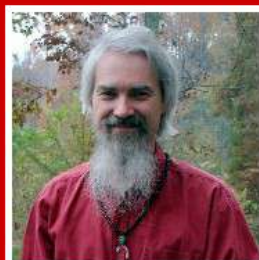
Mythologies throughout the world recount the story of the eagle-man, the one who transcends and rises above mundane existence to connect with the spacious, luminous sky. From the western Himalayas, across India, to the Mongolian plains, to the Indonesian archipelago, the Garuda represents

this transcendent quality present in all humans, that which empowers and removes all obstacles to our spiritual development. The Red Garuda is especially known as a healing practice for emotional and physical problems, both for ourselves and others, for the fiery strength of enlightened energy quickly burns away all obstacles. It also is known for its ability to resolve issues related to

disturbances of the *nagas*, the beings of the waters. Please join for a weekend and connect with the power, strength and wisdom that lie within our innermost being.

The retreat fee is € 95. The costs for accommodation is € 98 for two nights, with all meals inclusive.

For further information and registration visit the website [www.ligmincha.de](http://www.ligmincha.de) or contact: [info@ligmincha.de](mailto:info@ligmincha.de).



John Jackson is a long-time practitioner of the Bon tradition, having studied over twenty years under the guidance of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche,

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche. He is the director of the Chamma Ling solitary retreat center in the mountains of Colorado ([www.chammaling.org](http://www.chammaling.org)), co-leader of The Three Doors Academy for Europe, and leads retreats throughout North America and Europe.





# A-TRI TEACHINGS IN AMSTERDAM



## Introduction to Dzogchen with Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

We are happy to announce that Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche will be teaching from the A-tri Dzogchen cycle in Amsterdam, from 2013-2015. Tenzin Rinpoche's teachings have humor and clarity, and are practical and relevant for everyday life. These teachings not only are a great introduction for beginners, they also complement study of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyü cycle; currently taught in Austria.

### A-tri Dzogchen teaching cycle

One of the spiritual training cycles in Bön Buddhism is called dzogchen, translated as 'great perfection'. 'Great perfection' refers to our deepest nature, which is pure and complete in its essence. Dzogchen training enhances the recognition of our true nature, the open and clear space of being. The awareness of this openness is the source of all healing, of creativity, joy and love. This capacity exists in each of us. It is our nature. Looking directly and intimately within ourselves, we can discover this source in our ordinary experiences. In Bön Buddhism, several transmission lines exist for the Dzogchen teachings. One of these teaching cycles is called A-tri:

'the teachings that guide you to the primordial state'. They present very simple, clear and direct instructions for integrating spiritual practice in everyday life.

### Seminar May 2013

The first seminar in this series will open with a public talk on Friday evening, May 10 2013, and continue with a weekend retreat on May 11 and 12. During the weekend, talks and explanations will be alternated with guided meditation practices. Teachings are in English. Standard fee: €180,-. Foreign participants: €120,-. Students: €50,- (on presentation of a student card). Registration by e-mail at [seminar@ligmincha.nl](mailto:seminar@ligmincha.nl). Payments preferably in advance through account number 328900710 of Bön Garuda Foundation Holland, Papendrecht (IBAN: NL14 RABO 0328900710 / BIC: RABONL2U). Please mention your name and 'seminar May 2013'.



Info: [www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl)  
Date: May 10-12, 2013  
Location: Posthoorn Church  
Haarlemmerstraat 124-126, Amsterdam



# HUNG: SEED SYLLABLE OF ENLIGHTENED MIND/HEART



From the body of the unborn essence (Consciousness) arises the sphere of light,

and from that sphere of light arises wisdom.

From the wisdom arises the seed syllable

and from the seed syllable arises the complete Mandala,

the deity and the retinue.

*Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*

© Tenzin Wangyal



# WITH DAWA GYALTSEN IN THE SKY

Vision is mind:  
Experiences of all kind,  
Impressions and emotions,  
Fragrances of thoughts and spicy lotions.  
All around and all within:  
Experiences of all kind,  
Vision is mind.

The Mind is empty, but not empty the mind.  
Fully aware, not dull and blind.

The aeroplane starts, it's winning speed.  
Faster and faster runs the greed.  
Than it takes off, just one moment more;  
Than vision is shown as in the window of a store.  
All within space and space all around:  
No speed anymore, not even the ground.

All lying still, in space unbound.  
Mind is empty: spaciousness all around.

Higher and higher the aeroplane climbs:  
More and more empty gets the mind.  
A clear blue sky above the clouds:  
Emptiness is clear light, without any doubts.

We look outside to see the sky,  
But we cannot see it without the light.  
Is it the light we see, or is it the sky?

It is the union, clear and bright.

Together we enjoy the flight.  
Together we see day and night.  
The happiness of being a living part  
Of all creation, natural and art.  
We feel this union and its bliss:  
So grateful for all, for all that IS.

*Hille Huigens*

Photo by Hille Huigens

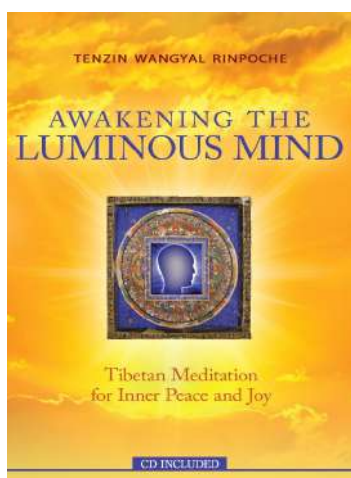




# INNER REFUGE AND DISCOVERING THE SACRED SELF

In his book *Awakening the Luminous Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talks about Inner Refuge. We have selected excerpts from the second chapter.

"I wrote three verses as a teaching on the inner refuge to encourage my students to honor and respect our ordinary body, speech, and mind as the doorways to discovering our inherent positive qualities. The first verse corresponds to the refuge of the body, the second to the refuge of the dimension of speech, and the third to the refuge of the mind. When pain body, pain speech, and the pain mind are acknowledged and hosted in the stillness, silence, and spaciousness, they naturally dissolve and release. Through this, we discover the enlightened or sacred dimensions of body, speech, and mind. I refer to these sacred dimensions as the body of emptiness, the body of light, and the body of great bliss. (...)



## FIRST REFUGE: THE BODY OF EMPTINESS

The body of emptiness can be accessed through our experience of the physical body. In general we can focus upon the body as a whole and discover the experience of stillness. As we are still, the stillness is the doorway through which we can experience the unbounded, unchanging space of being. We can also focus on the space within our heart or upon a more elaborate "sacred architecture" of the body using three channels (internal channels for the flow of subtle energy) and five chakras (energy centers), and discover the unbounded space there. By focusing clearly and finding stillness, we can discover an experience of unbounded spaciousness.

Space can be experienced in this body, in these chakras, in these channels, and particularly in our heart. So we draw our attention to our own body, our physical body. "The mandala of one's own body" is

## Inner Refuge

ཙཱ

རང་ལུས་རྒྱལ་བའི་དགྲིལ་འཁོར་དབུས།  
ཡོན་ཏན་མ་ལུས་འབྱུང་བའི་གནས།  
ཅུ་གསུམ་འཁོར་ལོ་ལྷ་ཡི་གློང།  
སྤང་པའི་སྤྱ་ལ་སྤྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

### Body

The center of the victorious mandala, one's own body,  
The source of all positive qualities without exception,  
Is the expanse within the three channels and the five chakras.  
I take refuge in this body of emptiness.

སྤྱང་།

སྤྱག་བསུལ་ཕུང་པོའི་སྤྲོན་ཆོགས་ཀྱིན།  
ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱུད་གིས་རབ་སལ་ཏེ།  
ས་བཅོས་ཀྱི་དག་ནས་སའའི་གློང།  
འོད་གྱི་སྤྱ་ལ་སྤྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

### Speech

All the gathered clouds of suffering and misery  
Are completely cleared by the wisdom wind,  
Revealing the unelaborated, primordially pure expanse of the sky.  
I take refuge in this body of light.

ཐིག་ལེ།

ཡེ་ཤེས་འོད་ལྷའི་གྲུ་ཁང་ནས།  
གཉིས་མེད་ཐིག་ལེའི་འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲོས།  
ས་རིག་སྤྲན་པའི་དྲ་བ་སངས།  
བདེ་ཆེན་སྤྱ་ལ་སྤྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

### Mind

From the pavilion of the five wisdom lights,  
Rays from nondual spheres of light emanate,  
Clearing the webs of the darkness of ignorance.  
I take refuge in this body of great bliss.



not a metaphor, but refers to this very body that we have – this physical body. Every aspect of our physical body is sacred. What determines whether we experience the “ordinary” body or the “sacred” body depends upon the perceiver. If the perceiver is the thinking, moving mind, we will experience ordinary pain and pleasure. If we engage the experience of *being*, nakedly and directly, we will discover the sacred body, the body of emptiness. Whether we use awareness of our whole body, or five chakras, three channels, or our heart to host the awareness of this sacredness, there, in that internal space, the body of emptiness abides. That is who I am, a being of stillness. I am the body of emptiness. When I experience that body of emptiness, I take refuge in my true being. I am the refuge. (...)

## SECOND REFUGE: THE BODY OF LIGHT

The second refuge states: “I take refuge in the body of light.” The body of light refers to clarity or luminosity, consciousness, awareness – awareness of that indestructible space, awareness of the first refuge. Awareness is supremely important. It gives birth to whatever quality is needed in any given situation and provides much more than the ego could ever imagine. The awareness of space *is* knowing. This awareness is not awareness of an object, but awareness itself, awareness without author or owner. It is the vividness and liveliness of each moment, nakedly perceived.

“All the gathered clouds of suffering and misery” in the second verse of my refuge poem is a metaphor for the result of failing to recognize the clear and open space of being. The open, clear, and spacious sky is a metaphor for your being; the

light that pervades the sky is a metaphor for awareness of being. In the natural world, clouds obscure the sunlight, and when the sunlight is obscured, whatever needs light and warmth will not flourish. Similarly, without the awareness of the space of being, we do not receive the nourishment we need in order to flourish as human beings. (...)

## THE THIRD REFUGE: THE BODY OF BLISS

The third place of refuge is in the body of great bliss. When awareness arises, something happens. From the space in your heart, from the light of awareness, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled, and a sense of great bliss manifests. Great bliss is simply the joy of being. It is not the joy of accomplishing or the joy of having or the excitement or expectation of having. You are, and at

this point you know you are, therefore you are joyful. You are joy. You don't have to feel joy because you are joy. You don't have to look for joy because you are joy. You don't even try to give joy because you are giving already. You don't have to share because you are already giving by being. The more you *try* to give, the less you are able to give. The more you *are*, the more you give. You are fully present. You are that bliss; you are that joy; you have that recognition and you don't have to try to do anything. That sense of joy is where we go for refuge. It is possible that we might not have

connected with such joy, or we might only have glimpsed the experience, but nevertheless it exists in us. Therefore, we take refuge in the presence of joy in us. (...)

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**

Illustration by Timothy Arbon



The three channels and the five chakras



# THE FIVE WISDOM LIGHTS

**During the Summer Retreat 2012 in Buchenau, Germany, one of the students asked a question about the Inner Refuge Prayer. We want to share Rinpoche's answer with you.**

**Question:** In the first sentence of the third part of the Inner Refuge Prayer, it says “From the pavilion of the five wisdom lights.” Does that refer to our own body, or do the lights come from outside?

**TWR:** Everything in this refuge prayer is inside; there is nothing outside. That is why it is called the Inner Refuge Prayer. “The pavilion of the five wisdom lights” is a metaphor. For instance, you can see rainbow lights shining around the image of Taphritsa, and these lights are like a tent or pavilion that shelter him. The rainbow is a sense of beauty, the ornament of the five elements, the magical display of the five elements in the sky. The sky has no color, so the rainbow is the color and the experience of the sky.

Internally, “the pavilion of the five wisdom lights” refers to the five wisdoms. They are independent of cultural meaning and beyond cultural tradition. Among the five wisdoms, mirror-like wisdom is the non-judgmental quality; the wisdom of emptiness is the grounding quality; all-accomplishing wisdom is the perfected quality. In experience, we feel unshakable, boundless, fullness or completeness. These are experiences of the five wisdom lights. All this occurs in that space which is free from forms.

When someone experiences this, it is an incredible experience. And your experience is important. You can experience the five wisdom lights, but it also could be one. It is the experience that is important, not the form. The experience is the wisdom. We can talk about full wisdom or not full wisdom, but those are just details. When you experience a sense of inner freedom, that freedom is wisdom. At that moment, from deep within that inner space, light is shooting to every part of your body. It is a feeling of liberation, of freedom. The rays of non-dual light emanate wisdom from that experience. They clear the webs of

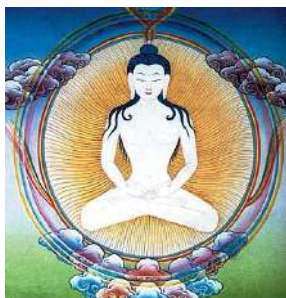
the darkness of ignorance, which is the experience of being caught up in limited conditions. So you feel free from that darkness. And deep within that experience of radiated light there is the joy of being free. We have been talking about feeling a sense of home, feeling familiarity. These are different ways of expressing “the pavilion of the five wisdom lights.” These examples in the refuge prayer are not only a metaphor, they are actual experiences.

There is great value of being connected to this lineage. We say “unshakable lineage, unshakable instructions, and unshakable experiences.” There are details and perspectives available that are very important, because today people can find many inspiring things, but not with the detailed perspectives and classification of these lineage teachings. Personally, I believe there is something deep missing. Everybody talks about being present, being here now, and everybody talks about stillness, but not with the perspectives we have.

There are different doors, different variables, different experiences, and different depths of knowledge. This knowledge has been handed down for thousands of years. It is important to understand that this is valuable knowledge, and not just everyday knowledge. You benefit from being connected to such an old tradition. If others talk about presence it is not a

problem. I am going to California next week, and California is the source of such discussions! People talk about so many things that look interesting and inspiring, but nobody really knows what they are talking about. You only have to ask two questions going towards more depth, and that is the end of the road. People say: “That's true; I am not sure what refuge means.” But it is amazing how long they can talk about it. That is the beauty in a tradition like Dzogchen, where there is so much knowledge accumulated over centuries, kept alive through many masters until the present day. I feel very lucky and fortunate not to get lost in words. We have finger-pointing instructions. And there is something to point to, not just words.

**Transcription by Ton Bisscheroux**  
**Edited by Marcy Vaughn**





# THE SEVEN TREASURES OF LONGCHENPA

Frits de Vries attended the European Summer Retreat 2012 in Buchenau, Germany, where Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught from the *Twenty-four Masters of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. Frits studied the book *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud*, and read that H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche reflected on the Nyingma Dzogchen texts. Frits also studied the Nyingma tradition, and invites us to learn more about the Nyingma treasures. Despite the differences between Bon and Nyingma, they may share the same roots.

Dzogchen is the highest teaching, not only in the Bon school of Tibetan Buddhism, based on the teachings of Buddha Tonpa Shenrap, but also in the Nyingma School, based on the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni. Dzogchen is thus an important connection between these two schools.

In the book *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud* H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (Yongdzin Rinpoche), and others, have suggested that the first human Dzogchen teacher in the Nyingma tradition, Garab Dorje, might be the same person as an important Bon teacher named Zhang Zhung Garab. In that book Yongdzin Rinpoche says:

*"It may be then, that both Tibetan lineages of Dzogchen have a single root not only in terms of their ultimate source, Bönku/Dharmakaya, but also in terms of lineage."* (p. 29)

Yongdzin Rinpoche is holder of the lineage of Zhang Zhung masters, but his understanding is not limited to one school:

*"On many occasions Yongdzin Rinpoche has urged his students to keep an open mind and non-sectarian attitude saying that Buddhas, be they from Bönpo or Indian Buddhist lineages, are fully realized beings beyond any sectarianism and that in the real sense, Buddha is our own non-dual and totally pure Buddha-*



Longchen Rabjam

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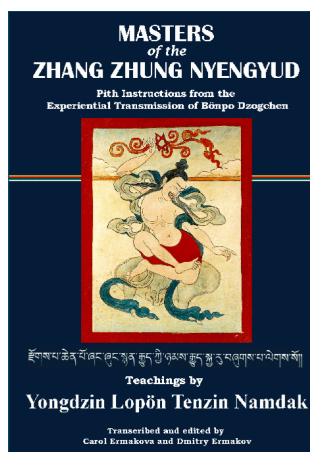
*Nature."* (p. 24)

Yongdzin Rinpoche also studied the foundations of various schools of Tibetan Buddhism. He has high regards for the works of Longchenpa (Longchen Rabgyampa) from the Nyingma school:

*"My feeling is that [the works of] Longchen Rabgyampa are [in] the same [style as Zhang zhung snyan rgyud], [the language] is similar, and the meaning is the same, too. It is beyond thoughts it is very essential, very essential. He has described everything [about the Natural State] very clearly in the Seven Treasures, in the second volume of the Treasury of the Great Vehicle."* (p. 24)

## Who was Longchenpa?

Longchenpa is the most famous Dzogchen master of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. Basic information on Longchenpa can be found in [Rigpa Shedra Wiki](#), an online encyclopedia of Tibetan Buddhism with thousands of articles, although Bon-buddhism seems to be neglected here. It tells us about Longchenpa



how he systematized the Nyingma teachings in his *Seven Treasures* and that he wrote extensively on Dzogchen.



On the same [Rigpa Shedra Wiki](#) page Sogyal Rinpoche explains the position of Longchenpa in the Nyingma School:

*"The figure of Longchen Rabjam stands out as one of the greatest Dzogchen*

*masters in the Nyingma tradition, and amongst the most brilliant and original writers in Tibetan Buddhist literature. He was the author of over 200 works, of which only about twenty-five survive, and amongst which the [Seven Treasures](#) and [Three Trilogies](#) are most well-known."*

### Seven Treasures

Although frequently bundled as a group, the *Seven Treasures* were not written by Longchenpa as a collection. However, a certain order is often used. The sequence of the Seven Treasures of Longchenpa, as shown on the [Rigpa Shedra Wiki](#) page, is as follows:

Nr	Titles Seven Treasures	Tibetan title
1	<a href="#">The Wish Fulfilling Treasury</a>	Yishyin Dzö
2	<a href="#">The Treasury of Pith Instructions</a>	Mengak Dzö
3	<a href="#">The Treasury of Dharmadhatu</a>	Chöying Dzö
4	<a href="#">The Treasury of Philosophical Tenets</a>	Drubta Dzö
5	<a href="#">The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle</a>	Tekchok Dzö
6	<a href="#">The Treasury of Word and Meaning</a>	Tsik Dön Dzö
7	<a href="#">The Treasury of the Natural State</a>	Neluk Dzö



On the [Wikipedia](#) page you will see that the ordering of the Seven Treasures is slightly different, and some Tibetan titles are also translated differently. This ordering is based on recommendations by

Yongdzin Rinpoche, and H.H. the Dalai Lama (from two publications *Dzogchen, The Heart Essence of the Great Perfection* and *Meditation on the Nature of Mind*), as well as by findings from the researcher Samten G. Karmay.

The positive regard of Yongdzin Rinpoche in *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud* toward the works of Longchenpa, can be considered as a recommendation to read the text of the highly acclaimed writer of the Dzogchen Nyingma School. We can therefore read the pith instructions of the *Masters of Zhang Zhung Nyengyud* along with pith instructions from the *Seven Treasures* of Longchenpa. The late [Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche](#) started a project to translate and publish all *Seven Treasures* by [Padma Publishing](#). Yongdzin Rinpoche mentions that *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle* is very good, but unfortunately it is not yet published in English.

### The Dalai Lama appreciates Longchenpa

In the book *Dzogchen, The Heart Essence of the Great Perfection* (p. 119-120) the Dalai Lama explains that the practice of the Great Perfection (Dzogchen) should be based on the understanding of two important texts of Longchenpa:

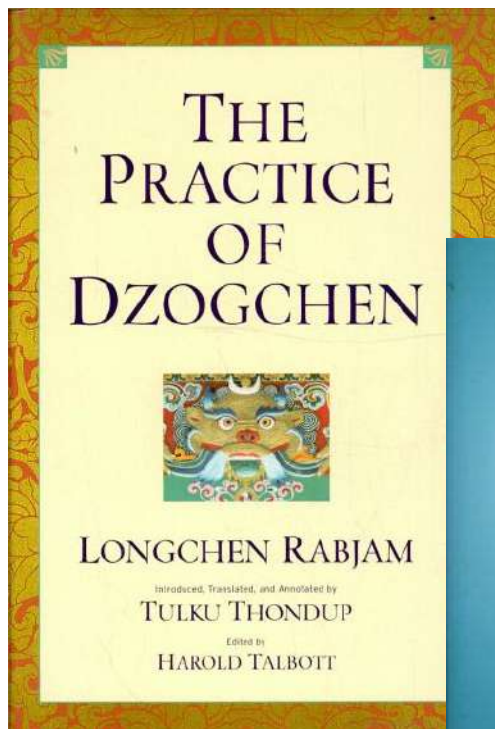
*"One can begin to appreciate the profundity and difficulty of attaining this view by reading Longchen Rabjam's own text on the practices of the Great Perfection, The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle. The root text is very difficult and the auto-commentary is rather copious and itself difficult to comprehend. Another text by Longchenpa is The Treasury of the Expanse of Reality (The Treasury of the Dharmadahtu), in which he also outlines the practices of the Great Perfection. In fact this second text is like the key to Dzogchen. Only by comprehending the practices of Great Perfection based on these two texts can you hope to have a good, reliable understanding of the Great Perfection."*

The last mentioned treasury is also known under the Tibetan title as *Chöying Dzöd* and is published in two volumes by [Padma Publishing](#).

In a foreword by the translators to the auto-commentary of the book *A Treasure Trove of Scriptural Transmission* they declare the *Chöying Dzöd* as a work held in the highest esteem by the



masters of the Great Perfection tradition. As an indication they claim the famous writer of *The Words of my perfect Teacher*, Patrul Rinpoche, always carried a copy of the *Chöying Dzöd* with him in the later part of his life. In the Introduction to the auto-commentary Tulku Thondup quotes a verse written by Paltrul Rinpoche:



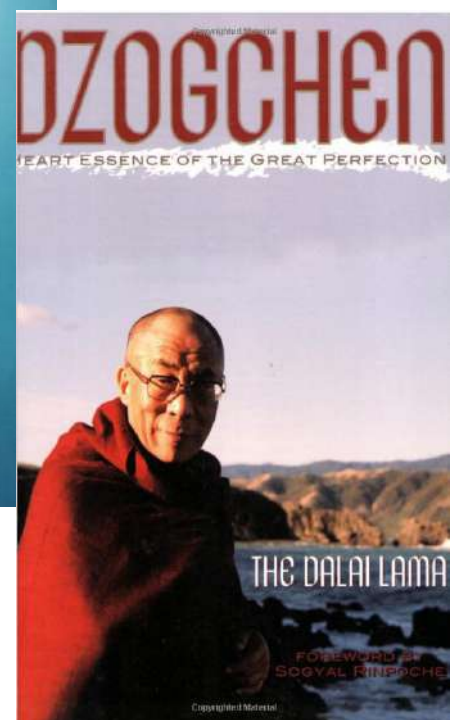
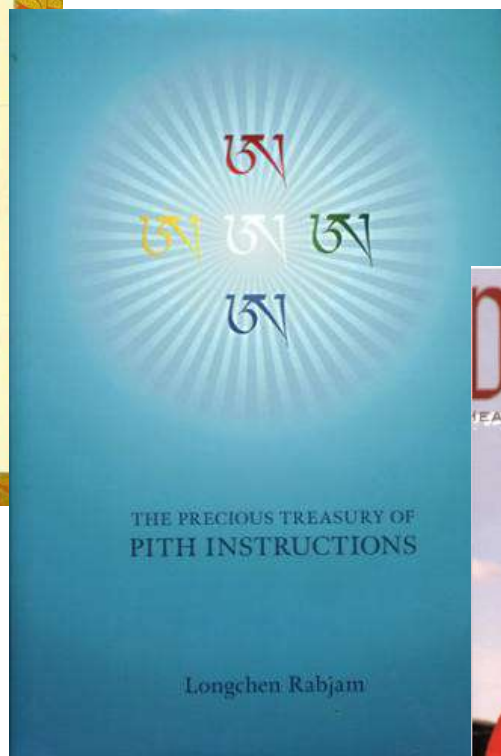
This 'most profound of all profound teachings' is also used as meditation guide and as a sacred introduction for dying meditators.

The source verses of the *Chöying Dzöd* have also in the West certain fame by now, because you can buy a special bound English edition to put as relic on your altar.



*"Simply having [this] book in one's home is more valuable than having statues or stupas, for it is truly a relic of the dharmakaya."*

From the preface by Chagdud



*"Chöying Dzöd is the meaning of the innate nature of mind, dharmakaya. It elucidates naked primordial wisdom without affirming or negating anything. It is the heart essence of the visions of the Omniscient Lama [Longchen Rabjam]. It is the most profound of all profound teachings. It is the vivid arising of pure dharmakaya as the teaching. This excellent teaching is a living buddha. It fulfills the Buddha's activities in this world. It manifests the absolute vision of the Buddha. Even if you were to see the Buddha in person, there would not be [any] greater [teaching] than this."*

### The texts refer to the Natural State

When you read the pith instructions of the old Masters and the treasures of Longchenpa, perhaps you notice the same atmosphere. It should not be a surprise because the Nature of Mind does not depend on culture, philosophy or school.





Here is a stanza from Longchenpa from *The Precious Treasury of Pith Instructions* (p. 113):

#### THE TRUE NATURE OF REALITY

*“Six points have to do with resting in a meaningful experience of the true nature of reality:  
Do not use your five senses to fixate on the objects you perceive.  
Do not use your perceiving mind to create thoughts that come and go.  
Do not perpetuate thoughts, but experience the unity of bliss and lucidity without fixation.  
Do not overlay the naturally occurring state of relaxation with conceptual elaborations.  
The unfettered nature of reality cannot be bound by the chains of mental concentration.  
The open mind of spacious freedom cannot be confined within the cage of ideas.  
Whoever understands these things is nearing the meaningful experience of authentic being.”*

And a pith instruction of master Mashen Legzang from *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud* (p. 77):

*“This Nature you have experienced doesn't depend on anything anywhere. There is no grasping, no perceiving, no binding thoughts. This Natural State is just kept as it is. That is the real meaning. You need only try to keep this Nature stable.”*

Profound works from both the Bon-Buddhist and the Nyingma tradition are being translated from the Tibetan language into English. So, we

Dzogchen practitioners are double fortunate because we can read texts from both schools.

#### Text by Frits de Vries

Photos: courtesy of Frits de Vries and Kumar Lama ([Tibetan Painting](#))



**Frits de Vries**

was in his professional life a teacher at the University of Amsterdam, teaching human-computer interaction, programming and statistics. He has been attending Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's seminars since 2002. A birthday present from his brother, the book, *Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep*, was his first contact with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings. As he is retired, he spends more time practicing the Ngondro and reading books about Dzogchen.

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# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2013 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

## January

12 - February 3		Your computer	Interactive online course in Tibetan meditation: 'Awakening the Sacred Arts - Discover Your Creative Potential' <a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
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## March

1	France	Paris	Awakening the Luminous Mind (evening talk)
2 - 3	France	Paris	Dream Yoga
15 - 17	Austria	Vienna	Awakening the Luminous Mind

## April

13		Your computer	Live Webcast 21.00 - 22.30 (Central European Time)
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## May

10 - 12	Netherlands	Amsterdam	A-tri, Part 1 (of 3 Parts)
24 - 26	Germany	Berlin	Awakening the Luminous Mind

## July

23 - 28	Poland	Warsaw	The Twenty-One Nails, Part 1
30 - August 4	Germany	Buchenau	The Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu Masters, Part 3

## August

30 - September 1	Denmark	Copenhagen	Living with joy, dying in peace
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## September

6 - 8	Switzerland	Bulle	To be announced
13 - 15	Russia	Moscow	The Six Lamps

## October

12		Your computer	Live Webcast 21.00 - 22.30 (Central European Time)
15 - 20	Austria	Maria Alm	Dzogchen Teachings: The Experiential Transmission, Part 4





# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 8 – Spring 2013*



Celebration at Triten Norbutse

Contribute to the European center

Meet the Dutch sangha

Lishu welcomes practitioners





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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

We are happy to present to you a Magazine full with information of our sangha, the European Center, Lishu Institute, the celebration of Tritten Norbutse Monastery; poetry; books; and more.

Maybe the most important event of the past few months was the all-day live webcast on the topic *The Gift of Inner Refuge* by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche along with the three practice sessions with senior teacher Marcy Vaughn. People from twenty-eight countries connected to these teachings, and there were nine live translations.

Rinpoche, and some sangha-members, put a lot of effort in making this free webcast possible. The only thing Rinpoche asked from us, when you feel these teachings benefit you, to tell your friends and family about this possibility to connect to these teachings. So, if you have not done so yet, please use your social media to let other people know about the recordings, which are always accessible at: [www.ustream.tv](http://www.ustream.tv).

Another exiting project, in which people have been working on for more than two years, is the new website [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org). The information of all the sanghas worldwide are now



Rinpoche wrote in a letter to the Cyber-Sangha: "For a long time, my dream has been to be able to provide teachings without being so restricted by the boundaries of time and space, without the need to travel from place to place. And I feel that the Internet provides just such a means. We began years ago by putting many teachings up on YouTube. Our goal is to eventually have hundreds of hours of the teachings available on the web, not only of my own, but also other Bon lamas and Buddhist teachers. It has been my dream to do that."

brought together on one website. It continues to be a work in progress, but it looks great already.

On the old website there was a possibility to download this Magazine. Now, when you want to print it, you have to go to [issuu.com](http://issuu.com), log in, and there you can download it as PDF-document to your computer and print it. If this does not work, you can also find it at [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com).

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



# THE 'DEDICATION' SEALS THE PRACTICE

During the European Summer Retreat 2012 in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explained why he wrote a new dedication prayer and also why it is important to end our practice with the dedication.

"I wrote this dedication to accompany the prayer of inner refuge. These two prayers are at the core of The Three Doors program. During every meditation practice, ritual, or ceremony we accumulate positive energy and merit, and with the prayer of dedication, whatever is collectively accumulated we dedicate to the welfare of others.

## **Dedication**

**May I attain great confidence in the three refuges.**

**May my experiences and realization of the wisdom of the three doors increase.**

**In purifying the three poisons, may I obtain the three bodies.**

**In liberating my own being, may I benefit others.**

According to the teachings, every meditation practice needs three seals. Before engaging the practice you generate the intention to practice for the benefit of others, and so your practice is sealed by compassionate intention. During the practice you have awareness, which is the second seal. After every session of meditation, we seal it with profundity through a prayer of dedication. Through those three seals we stabilize and secure our practice. Any practice that is done as a habit without a clear intention to benefit others, or one in which your mind is all over the place, planning and thinking of what you want to do next, or in conclusion has not been dedicated for the welfare of others is not sealed. So if you were to have a burst of anger after the practice, it exhausts any merit from the practice. But when the merit of your practice is sealed, anger cannot burn or exhaust this merit. This is what is said in the teachings. I'm not sure exactly how it works, but it is better to be on the safe side. So that is the principle of the dedication — to seal the merit of your practice.

We begin the dedication by saying: "May I attain great confidence in the three refuges." This first

line is very important. There are many ways we can look at this confidence. We talked about the shaman, the priest, and the monk who have confidence in the sacred images of the mountain, Christ, and the Buddha. Do you have the same kind of confidence toward the inner refuge?

So we state this intention to have that same kind of confidence. We know this is our path, we are moving towards this direction, and this is important to recognize. This means we have confidence in the three inner refuges. Or you could equally say we have confidence in three kayas: in their essence, in their energy, and in their appearance. You cannot skip one of them. If

you really want to skip one of them, you can skip the energy or the appearance, but you cannot skip the essence. We talked yesterday about a student who is in

the process of dying. She has confidence and trust in Sherap Chamma and the Virgin Mary. This is confidence in appearance. In that appearance she's also feeling a great sense of inner trust. So if she has to keep only one of the three refuges, then she has to skip the form of Sherap Chamma and the Virgin Mary, and skip their energy, but not skip their essence.

So basically, the bottom line is we are stating that we wish to have confidence in the inner refuge, the three refuges. Trust will be feeling that every practice concludes there; that's the core of every practice. So, in some sense I don't have to do anything but that, and I can do everything from that.

The second line of the dedication states: "May my experiences and realization of the wisdom of the three doors increase." We can have experiences of stillness, and the experience is not the realization; we can experience the silence of speech and sound, but not have the realization. The experience of the mind as spacious and completely open is an experience, but not a realization. We call it three experiences, and they





are very important, because they are a doorway. They are called the three doors to the three inner refuges. So first we have these experiences, and then we take care to experience their realization. Just this morning we practiced the inner refuge. We try to feel that stillness, and when we feel this stillness deep enough, at some point you almost forget about that stillness and you just feel the space that arises there. Then you become one with that space. Knowing unbounded sacred space is a realization. That knowing is the realization.

The confidence and realization of the wisdom of the three doors will help you to overcome or be free of the three root poisons of anger, attachment, and ignorance. So the third line says: "In purifying the three poisons, may I obtain the three bodies." The three bodies are the three kayas, the three buddha's, the three dimensions, the three enlightened states. The three doors, the three poisons, and the medicine are all within ourselves. All is within us. The poison as well as the medicine is inside, so we are not talking about somebody else as either the cause of our suffering or our liberation.

The final line is: "In liberating my own being, may I benefit others." In order to help others, you have to help yourself. In order to give others space, you have to have space yourself. In order to give happiness to others, you have to have happiness in yourself. First, it is important to reflect inside. It seems from the moment we are born, we just want to make everybody in our family happy. Sometimes in the process of trying to make other people happy, we suffer a lot. And we suffer more when we try to make other people even happier. So it seems the cycle goes in the wrong direction. I really want to make you happy, but I can't, so I'm suffering. In not making somebody else happy, you make yourself unhappy. It seems strange, but we try it all the time. How many times does it happen that you try to help somebody else, and as a result, you are not helping yourself? You

suffer and feel weaker.

Here, it is the opposite. We say: "In liberating my own being...." So, when I feel it in myself, may I benefit others. The notion of helping others is very important. When you are feeling good, that goodness can affect others. You have to trust this. Sometimes people say "I am a little person; I cannot help others." But it is not like that; everybody affects everybody else. You affect your brother, your sister, your mother, your father, your friend, your therapist, your patients — everyone with whom you have a relationship. How many people are you related to? Within the inner refuge, you have a chance to be a better partner, a better father, a better friend. Finding inner refuge you recognize that you have a role in helping others.

In Bon and Buddhism you need to have compassion. Compassion is a commitment to help others. The bottom line is that there is some sense of trust in yourself, therefore you can help others. Within the inner refuge you have a lot of space to impact others positively, much more than you do

now. Knowing this and praying will reinforce your ability to impact others positively. By being aware of this and stating your intention through the prayers, the fire in you becomes stronger and expands. With every session of abiding in the inner ref-



Tapihritsa, the representation of a fully realised Trikaya Buddha.

uge, you cultivate confidence in the inner refuge; you experience the three doors; you have realization; you minimize your poisons; and you maximize your connection to the three kayas. Your ability to help others naturally increases. With every session of abiding in the inner refuge, there is a little shift, a little change in your capacity to benefit others. So you are basically stating: "May this help to liberate me and benefit others." That is the purpose of these prayers."

**Transcription by Hilly Lokken**

**Edited by Marcy Vaughn**

Photo by Martin Schroeder



# DONATE FOR OUR 'NEW HOME': AUCTION IN BUCHENAU

**The European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, is slowly approaching (July 29 – August 4, 2013) and with it, the auction, held annually there. You can support...**

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

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

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

Your participation may be that you give an object for sale, or to support the auction by your bids.

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

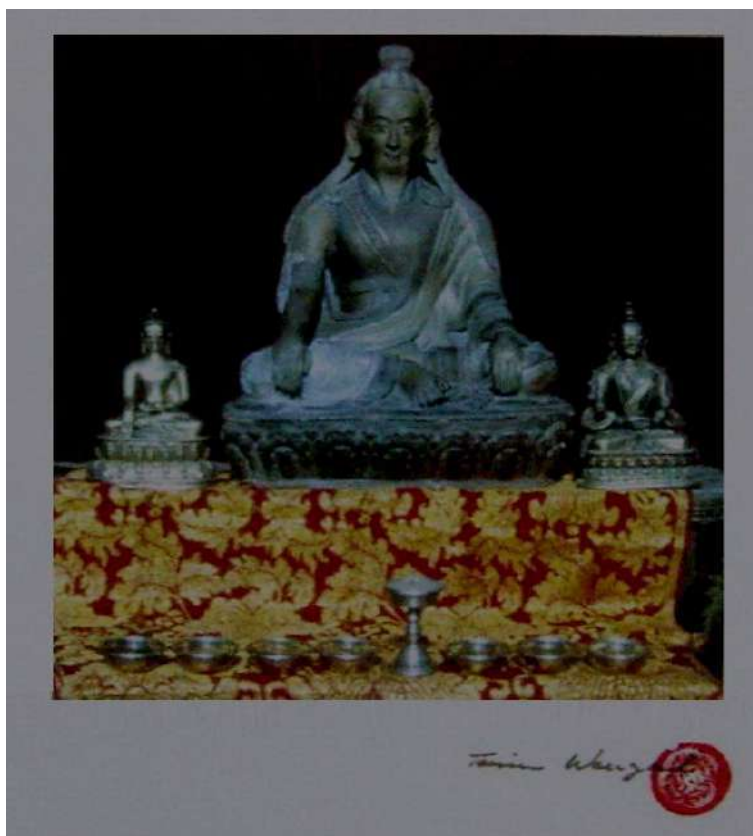
At the last auction, we were able to witness, that by the spontaneous and inspiring combination of several persons some significant bids came about. In this way already some precious items were purchased (e.g. a photo of Shardza Rinpoche and a Stupa-figure made of crystal) for our retreat center.

When you contribute to the auction, we would like to ask you to take pictures of the object you want to donate in advance and send the photo with a brief description to [fundraising@ligmincha.de](mailto:fundraising@ligmincha.de)

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

The *Circle of Founders*, which supports this project, includes the sanghas of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands. The other sanghas are welcome to join in the future.

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



One of the sangha members bought this photo of Shardza Rinpoche at an auction at Serenity Ridge, and donated it for the European auction in 2012.

**Watch the video:**

***Ligmincha Europe: Finding a Home***

[www.home.ligmincha.eu](http://www.home.ligmincha.eu)





# IMPRESSION OF TRITEN NORBUTSE'S CELEBRATION

The Triten Norbutse Monastery was established in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 1987 by His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche with the purpose of preserving and propagating the teachings and cultural heritage of Yungdrung Bon. From 9th December 2012 till 2nd January 2013 the 25th anniversary was celebrated. The main event was a sixteen day medicine blessing ritual. Anja Benesch shares with us some of her photos.













# THE DOORS ARE WIDE OPEN AT LISHU INSTITUTE

Anna Kaisa Hirvanen has spent long periods of time at Lishu Institute from 2011 to 2013. Anja Benesch participated in a personal retreat there in spring of this year. Here they share with you their experiences and photos.

Lishu Institute in Uttarakand, India, near the city of Dehra Dun is opening its doors to welcome Western practitioners and provides a beautiful home to study, practice and dive into stillness, silence and spaciousness. For the first time a Mexican couple got granted a one-year-student-visa, which is great news and might encourage others to apply for it too (YOU?).

Also the first Tibetan texts for the library have arrived, and preparations are being made to host retreats, but also simply invite people to come and stay for a couple of months and help in establishing Lishu as a home for the Western practitioner.



## Lishu, December 2011 and February 2012

The beautiful big Lishu building stands on top of a hill in the middle of a small Indian village. The surrounding mountains, fresh air, vast sky offer a natural feeling of space. Lishu is a welcoming place, a home away from home. The warmest welcome, of course, is that of Geshe Thubten which makes one feel at home right from the very beginning.

Far away from hectic modern city-life, the pace of life in Lishu is slow and there is an ease to everything. In this ease and peace it is easy for the mind to get calm and settled for practice. Silence and peace surround Lishu. Within this silence and peace there is movement all of the time, somebody visiting, coming, going, eating, talking, drinking *chai*, working and chatting.



## Lishu

I have been extremely happy to spend a total of three months in Lishu during the winters of 2011-2013, studying, doing personal retreat, living a simple and calm life, which Lishu so readily provides. Below is some personal writing which arose from the experience of staying there in 2011-2012. I am looking forward to the next opportunity to return to the home of Lishu!

Anna Kaisa Hirvanen

I felt a part of the Lishu-family, and that family was a living concept throughout the whole stay. We shared practice and experiences with a few other guests from Russia, the Netherlands, Mexico and Turkey. We exchanged some hindi-kitchen-vocabulary with the women cooking delicious food every day. We played with the dogs, greeted the cow who gave the milk for our *chai*, the neighbours who owned the cow, villagers and kids passing by the quiet road home and many visitors and guests from different places in India. It was great to meet the man who was in charge of the construction work





of the first building and many others who contributed their work to it.

The heart of Lishu is Geshe Thubten, who knows everyone and is greeted by everyone with a smile. Geshe Thubten seemed to be in constant movement, it must be his first nature! His warm energy is clearly seen in his actions, taking care of everything with a big smile. I saw him in so many roles, making hundreds of phone calls, buying food, cooking, being a driver, secretary, farmer, spokesman, connecting to all the countless people in the village and further in the city, workers, friends and strangers. Like one guest expressed, "it is truly a lesson of humanity to see Geshe-la in action." We all felt inspired and touched by his presence.

We were also blessed with a visit by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the beginning of December 2011. The vast amount of vision, energy, finance, work and trust that has already been invested to Lishu is very much visible. There is much more work to be done, of course, but already it is a remarkable achievement of our teacher and all the innumerable people who have brought this project to life. Deep appreciation and inspiration arises when looking at the future of Lishu, being a remarkable institute for many, many people to come. How wonderful!!!

## Queen of Lishu

In late 2012, I asked Rinpoche if it was possible to go to Lishu and stay there for a while, as I was planning a trip to Nepal and India, visiting the Bonpo monasteries and Lishu, to study our tradition. He contemplated my question and then said "Sure. You can be Queen of Lishu," and broke into a broad smile. He was referring to the fact that Lishu had not been in full operation back then, and he added that because of this there would not be many people there.

*Anja Benesch*

It turned out he described exactly what I felt like when staying at Lishu Institute. Lishu is built on fertile land, surrounded by beautiful nature, high mountains, vast sky, and so much land full with plants, fruit and small waters. A spacious, natural area, where things seem to be growing organically at their own pace.

Life is quiet and slow here. You go to bed when it gets dark as the nature surrounding you gets sleepy and the city lights and noises are missing. Often you simply rise with the sunrise, it just happens, as the birds are waking you with their morning glory chants and in another breath – taking in the sunrise on the rooftop, it simply calls to you.



The sound of birds, cows, and barking dogs fills the air temporarily, though mostly one is listening to the wind in the trees, and one's own thoughts. Geshe Thupten and his relatives take care of you so you are a family member, friend and queen at the same time.

I did a one-week personal retreat, and it was perfect. If you are looking for a supportive environment for you to connect to stillness, silence and spaciousness, that's your place.



**Text by Anja Benesch and Anna Kaisa Hirvanen**  
Photos by Anja Benesch and courtesy of Geshe Thubten  
**More information:** [www.lishu.org](http://www.lishu.org)



# RINPOCHE HAS INFLUENCED THE LIVES OF MANY PEOPLE

To introduce the Dutch sangha we interviewed Jan Dinkelaar, Chair of the *Bön Garuda Foundation Holland* from 2000-2012, and present Chair Anneke Dekkers. In 2012, there were many changes on the Board of Management, including a change to the name of the foundation to *Ligmincha Nederland*.

## How did the teachings of Rinpoche come to the Netherlands?

**Jan:** I met Rinpoche in 1999 in Buchenau, Germany. On the request of a publisher, I read many books on Buddhism to see if they were suitable for translation to Dutch. Throughout my reading, I discovered the book by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche on the subject of *Dream Yoga*. I had read a number of books on dreaming, but I had never read how to practice *Dream Yoga*, or the effects of such a practice, until I read Rinpoche's book.

I immediately advised the publisher to translate this book and when I invited Rinpoche to come to the Netherlands, his agenda appeared to be fully booked. But as a surprise he called a month later: when a weekend teaching in Milan had been cancelled. Finally, Rinpoche could come to Holland, and we had only a fortnight left to organize for the seminar. By coincidence the



Maitreya Institute, which was always fully booked had just one weekend left, precisely the weekend Rinpoche could come to visit Holland.

So we quickly organized a lecture, a book presentation in a bookshop and a weekend seminar in the Maitreya Institute on the subject of *Dream Yoga*. Also there was a TV broadcast by the Buddhist Broadcast Foundation (BOS) on Rinpoche's stay in Amsterdam. After his first successful visit, we asked Rinpoche for another teaching, which took place a year later. After some single weekends, I requested Rinpoche for a longer period, and from 2002 to 2004 Rinpoche taught us the 'Six Yogas' of the MaGyu (Mother Tantra). It was such a fantastic practice, that we requested this teaching a second time, and Rinpoche taught it once again from 2008 until 2010. It gave us a lot of spiritual expansion.



The 'old' Board: Erik Robbemont, Veronique Leenders, Wil Leenders, Jan Dinkelaar, Tonny Maas and Anneke Dekkers with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

## Rinpoche has recently decided to support the establishment of a European Center in Central-Germany. Which role did you play on the European level?

**Jan:** I talked with Rinpoche extensively about the European center and about the close cooperation of the other European countries. Initially, we came across a lot of problems as each country had its own particular structure. I quickly began to put some structures in place; I organized monthly Skype meetings for all of the







The Posthoorn church in Amsterdam, May 2009.





European sangha's. Due to my state of health, I had to withdrawn a few years ago, but the monthly meetings have continued to flourish.

**When looking back on your period as chair of the Dutch sangha, do you have any remarks?**

**Jan:** I did the work with a lot of enthusiasm for ten years, but I was not on my own. From the beginning, I managed with a lot of support from Wil Leenders and Veronique Leenders. I have fond memories of my cooperation with Tonny Maas and Erik Robbemont of the Lishu-project. Finding the best way of cooperation was a recurring challenge. When working together one can stumble on all kinds of obstacles especially when working with other people on a personal level.

same time people held opposition to my ideas. That's why I am very glad Anneke has the Chair now and she does the job very well. As Adviser of the Board there is also a lot of consultation going on with Veronique and Adrienne. I truly hope that the board will find the right way of working in harmony and agreement into the future.

**What kind of advice will you give as support for the diverse levels of practicing?**

**Jan:** The board has plans to separate practice programs for beginners and more experienced practitioners. A group can come together in a private home where under guidance basic exercises can be initiated. As far as the more experienced students, lacking any progress, I can endorse the view of Sogyal Rinpoche (of the



Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Jan Dinkelaar give information about the first Lishu trip in the Muider church in Amsterdam, May 2007.

Until 2011, Rinpoche had visited Holland twice a year to teach us a four day seminar. From 2012, Rinpoche reduced this to once a year for a two day seminar. We were disappointed. Back then we asked him to consider establishing a center in Europe. He explained to us that buying land in the United States was much cheaper due to the gift system and resources available for projects such as ours and that in Europe such resources were not easily available.

For me it was not an easy time, as Chairperson, I was supposed to contribute new ideas and at the

Nyingma Rigpa organisation) who says some people in the West need some kind of therapy first, before going on. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche once said to me: "Some people are very enthusiastic in the beginning, they frequently come to the seminars and then they don't show up at all for some reason." An always approachable teacher is needed, a Tibetan teacher, who can answer all your questions regarding the practice and exercises, who can tell you to go to the next exercise or call you back to a previous one.





H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Chongtul Rinpoche, Geshe Gelek Jinpa and Geshe Lhasay Tenzin with representatives of the European sangha in Amsterdam, June 2006.

There is a Dutch group going to the five-year cycle of *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teachings in Austria. The energy built up there gets diluted when coming back home. My health conditions did not permit me to follow these teachings, starting with the *Ngöndro* in the first years. If I could have participated, I would have loved to take the initiative to start an intensive supported *Ngöndro* group in the first year.

**Can you say something about reading and studying with the active practice?**

**Jan:** In principle you should read the books about Bon and if you read books next to it, it might be interesting, but it can also be confusing. And also: you can read Bon books ten times without being bored. Books of Rinpoche can be repeatedly read and it still offers something new.

Along with reading you have the practical exercises and the new experiences which come with them. Most important for us is: what you experience in practice, what you read, what you hear in the teachings, how can you integrate these in your normal daily life?

**In closing up this interview are there any other remarks you wish to make?**

**Jan:** I am very glad that I have met Rinpoche in this lifetime. At my farewell gathering as Chairperson, Rinpoche remarked on how I have influenced the lives of many people by inviting him to the Netherlands. I too feel Rinpoche has influenced a lot of people and certainly touched

me in a profound way. I am grateful for that. I sincerely hope he has a long and happy life and will continue his teachings for a long time. Also I wish the readers of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* a lot of success, happiness and prosperity.



The 'new' Board: Anneke Dekkers, Jan Dinkelaar, Veronique Leenders and Adrienne van de Maas

**Anneke, when you became the Chair of the Board of *Ligmincha Nederland* the management structure had changed. Did you have an example of this new structure in the worldwide sanghas of Rinpoche?**

**Anneke:** This structure surely has many examples. The old board had previously spoken to Rinpoche about changing the organisational structure. We took the organisation of *Ligmincha Virginia U.S.* as an example. The tasks of the board are clear in







H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche give teachings in Amsterdam, June 2006.

their role in supporting working groups. As a reflection of this model the organisation in Germany was set up a few years ago, under the guidance of Oliver Wirtz. Originally they were a small board managing all tasks on their own. They switched to the workgroup model of Ligmincha as an example for their new structure. It is always good to observe and learn from others. You need a certain scale of the sangha to fill a vacancy in the board and the working groups. I think our situation is rather unique with a large support group of twenty people. We meet every month and everyone participating contributes in his/her own way. We also have the advantage of a small country: each member of the support group can arrive within two hours at the central meeting place in Utrecht.

#### **What are the experiences until now with the new organisational structure?**

**Anneke:** We play around a bit, because the new board is very much in the process of letting go of the old structure and to delegate tasks to the working groups. More importantly, is the trust in one another, keeping in contact and trusting to see things organized differently to how you would do it yourself. Developing a feeling of responsibility, how far you can let things go, when to interfere, or not interfere at all. We have the basic structure of governing and we follow-on at a distance what's going on. We keep in contact with the different working groups and we stay open. We are learning on our way and as a collective we

are growing into this new structure. In some parts of the organization we have some staffing shortages.

#### **In which areas do you need more support?**

**Anneke:** This year we would like to organize some new activities, like common practice days and in September readings by Alejandro Chaoul-Reich (a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche). We need to find more support to manifest that.

#### **Rinpoche advised the old board to look at the structure of the Mexican sangha. Did you learn from their experiences?**

**Anneke:** Rinpoche advised us to contact them about the programming of the practice groups and their organisational structure and not about the general organisational structure of the sangha. Mexico has a structure with several levels of practice groups. They split levels of practicing for students just starting, and those already following a programme. In the Netherlands practicing in groups continues with the same group all together. In Mexico there is a starting hour for beginners and continuation hours for more experienced students. I think we also have to differentiate more in practicing levels, because we see a challenge now. We have mainly the senior students and no new inflow of younger students and beginners. The question is: "by more variation in your supply, can you attract more people, particularly younger people?" I think that's an important lesson of the Mexican sangha.





Boat tour on the Amsterdam canal, celebrating 10 years teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the Netherlands, May 2009.

They say: “The sangha has several levels of practicing, expecting diverse levels of expertise; we can offer that to everyone.” And it is working fine there, they organize family days, where families come together to practice.

**Some practitioners suggest there is a need for diversity within the practice groups. They make a distinction between three groups: a. beginners, who have no experience at all and no results; b. practitioners following Rinpoche for a while and have already some experience; c. long time practitioners, who have had a first ‘glimpse’ of the *rigpa* experience. What are your ideas about differentiation in this way in the practice groups?**

**Anneke:** In the beginning, we only had Rinpoche’s seminars and our experience consisted solely of the exercises within those seminars. Nowadays people in the Dutch sangha have many other activities, for instance: the five-year cycle of *Zhang Zhung* training in Austria; another group did the *Thrul Khor* practice. As a board of the Dutch sangha we take the position to facilitate students to come together, not to organize it for them, if it develops in an ‘organic’ way, then we welcome and support these activities.

**Can you say something about the European collaboration?**

**Anneke:** We have a monthly European Skype meeting, where we talk about what’s going on in the different countries. We are seeing each other more and more, I think when we can see the European Center manifesting, we will have a center for the European practitioner, which can give a great boost on the European level. We need a solid base in the Netherlands, and people like to practice close to where they live. It is a question of finding the right balance in the activities on the national level and the coordinated actions on the European level.

**Anything else you would like to share with the readers of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*?**

**Anneke:** I have the feeling more and more that I am part of a worldwide community, supported by the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* as well as the worldwide Ligmincha website. It has grown consistently in the last few years, with noticeably more spirit and energy.

**Interviews by Frits de Vries**

Photos: Henk Scholten and courtesy of Dutch sangha



# THIS HAPPENED IN EUROPE

The European sangha is very alive, and we like to share that with you. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Paris and Vienna, other lama's and teachers travelled through Europe. Here is an impression of these happenings.



March 1–3: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's *Dream Yoga* seminar in France is visited by about two-hundred participants. Special guest are Geshe Nyima Woser and Geshe Gyatso Choekhortshang.



March 21–30: Geshe Gyatso Choekhortshang taught in the Polish cities Warsaw, Sopot and Poznań.







March 22–24: John Jackson, a senior student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, taught the *Red Garuda* in Buchenau, Germany. The thirty participants also watched Rinpoche's live internet teaching.



March 23: Many people watched the live webcast of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, some alone behind their computer, others in groups. Worldwide several thousand people were connected online.



**Całodzienne nauki internetowe**  
wolne od opłat

**“Dar Wewnętrznego Schronienia”**  
poprowadzi  
**Gesze Tenzin Wangyal Rinpocze**

**Sobota, 23 Marca, 2013**  
**14:00 – 21:30 naszego czasu**  
9:00 am – 4:30 pm EDT (czas Nowy Jork)

**Więcej informacji na [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)**

Gesze Tenzin Wangyal Rinpocze i doświadczeni instruktorzy poprowadzą całodniowy retriť on-line. W programie dwie 90-minutowe sesje nauczania Rinpocze oraz dwie 60-minutowe sesje praktyki.

Tłumaczenie na bieżąco na język hiszpański, niemiecki, polski, włoski, francuski i wiele innych języków!

Mądrość Rinpocze i klarowne prowadzenie ku doświadczeniu Wewnętrznego Schronienia są teraz dostępne dla każdego.



March 8–9: In Berlin, Germany, Geshe Gyatso Choekhortshang gave an evening talk: *Rituals and daily practice*, and a day practice *Preliminary Tsa Lung Trul-khor of Zhang Zhung Nyengyu and Chöd practice: Cutting through the ego*.







February 8–10: European sangha practice weekend in Buchenau, Germany.



April 12–14: a course on *Tsa Lung* in Prague, Czech Republic, with the Polish instructor Darek Orwat, is visited by about twenty participants. In the evening they all watched Rinpoche's webcast.



April 5–7: a retreat with Lidia Castellano in Pantelleria, an island in the Mediterranean, south of Sicily, Italy. A small sangha seems to be growing there. For three days they have merged with the fantastic openness of the island's clear skies.







March 15–17: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's seminar *Awakening the Luminous Mind* in Vienna, Austria. At the website [www.ligmincha.at](http://www.ligmincha.at) you can find guided meditations and teachings from this seminar.



April 10: At one o'clock in the early morning (Central European Time) several people sat behind their computer to watch the live webcast of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, and many watched it later on: [www.ustream.tv](http://www.ustream.tv)

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche 2013

Teachings free live webcast

**APRIL 09**  
7 – 8.30 pm  
New York time

**Embracing Impermanence: Inner Refuge in the Face of Change**  
broadcast from a free public talk

Next 2013 webcasts with Rinpoche:

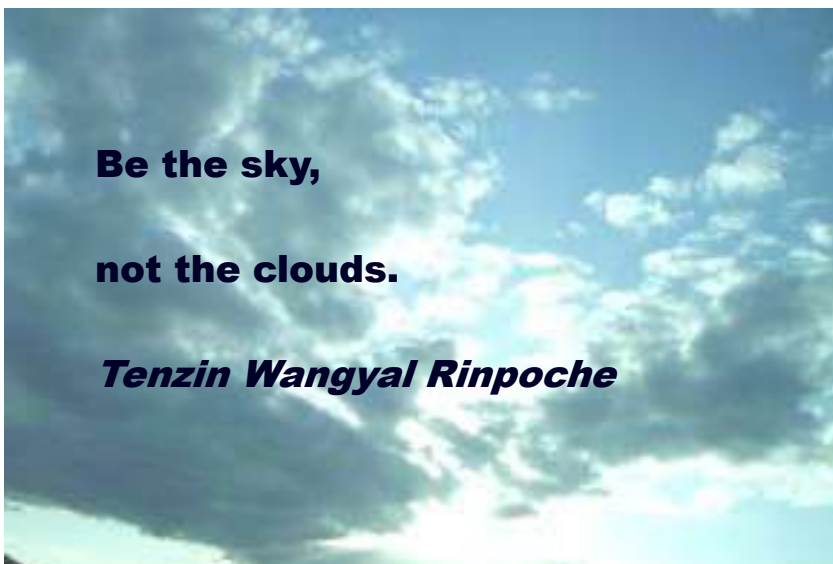
**April 13, 3 p.m.–4:30 p.m.:** "Embracing Impermanence: Inner Refuge in the Face of Change," broadcast from the annual Spring Retreat at Serenity Ridge

**July 6, 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.:** Full-day online retreat, broadcast from the annual Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge. Joined for a portion of the day by His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche. More information coming soon.

All webcast teachings are free and open to all. Times listed are Eastern Time U.S. (New York time).

To View the Webcast Visit

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



April 13: At 21.00 h (Central European Time) many people in Europe watched the live webcast of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. When you missed it, go to this link: [www.ustream.tv](http://www.ustream.tv)





# MEDITATION IN THE SOUTH MEDITERRANEAN

## The Five Elements Practice

Healing through the Five Elements according to the Bon-Buddhist tradition of Tibet.

with John Jackson

Bukkuram, Pantelleria (Sicily) - 2013, September 7th - 8th

The spiritual path leads to inner insight and deep connection with nature. Through a clear understanding of the primal elements, earth, water, fire, air and space, one can balance emotions, thoughts and actions, leading to a rich and peaceful relationship with ourselves, others, and our world. In nature we clearly see the elements at play, and through our spiritual practice, become deeply appreciative of our natural environment and our responsibility to respect and preserve. Through appreciation and respect, right relationship and action manifests.

Experience the world as a sacred place and you will be gradually transformed into sacred being. Bring your inner elements into harmony, and bring balance to yourself and the world. Take only what you need, knowing that all is life, all is sacred. These are the ways of the spiritual path of the five elements.

The weekend seminar will be held in the wonderful natural setting of the island of Pantelleria in the South Mediterranean, to better allow and support our connection with the elements.



John Jackson is director of the Chamma Ling retreat center in Colorado, is co-leader of the Three Doors Academy of Europe, and has been practicing meditation for over 35 years under various great teachers, including H.H. Menri Trizin Rinpoche, H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Rinpoche, and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. He has been a founding stone of Ligmincha Institute in Virginia. He has been teaching meditation at centers across the United States and Europe since 2001, and was a professor at the University of Virginia for 23 years. He is known for his warm, simple, and easygoing teaching style.

*The number of places is limited.  
Registration and information:*

Lidia Castellano  
lcast@hotmail.it  
0039 3203837211  
skype: lidiacastellano





# THE MAGICAL MOVEMENTS OF TIBET

**In September 2013 Dr. M. Alejandro Chaoul-Reich will come to Europe for public talks and a workshop in the Netherlands and Germany on *Trul Khor*.**

*Trul Khor* — the Magical Movements of Tibet — is an ancient Tibetan Yoga practice, in which breath and concentration of the mind are integrated with particular body movements. By harmonizing the vital breath and guiding its flow through the physical and energetic areas of the body, *Trul Khor* can clear long-held blocks in body, energy and mind and support spontaneous arising of awareness. In this way *Trul Khor* is supporting our physical and mental wellbeing and works as an effective method for developing our spiritual practice.

As Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche says: “*Trul Khor* is a wonderful daily practice, especially to control and handle the stress of our modern life in society. It has the power to balance the energies of mind and body, and it also helps enormously to support one's meditation practices.”

Alejandro has been teaching this Yoga tradition, little known in the western world, for over a decade, at the request of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. And this will be the first time he will be teaching

this *Trul Khor* in Berlin, Germany. The teachings will be suitable for beginners as well as for experienced practitioners. Translation will be provided for both public talk and workshop.

Dr. Alejandro Chaoul-Reich is an assistant professor of integrative medicine focusing on mind-body practices at the University of Texas (UT) MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he is investigating the supportive effects of *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor* on people with cancer. As a senior student of Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, one of the most important teachers of the Bon tradition, he is Director of Research of *Ligmincha Institute* and is on the Board of *Ligmincha Texas*. Alejandro is also an associate faculty at the UT's medical school in the area of spirituality and healing. He holds a Ph.D. in Tibetan Religions from Rice University in Houston, Texas. You can find his PhD Thesis/Dissertation *Magical Movements ('phrul 'khor): Ancient Yogic Practices in the Bon Religion and Contemporary Medical Perspectives* at: [www.scribd.com](http://www.scribd.com)

**Information and registration:**  
**September 4: the Netherlands**  
[www.ligmincha.nl](http://www.ligmincha.nl)  
**September 5–8: Berlin, Germany**  
[www.berlin.ligmincha.de](http://www.berlin.ligmincha.de)



# DANCING LIFE

How many times have I lived this life,  
laughed this laugh, cried this eye.

How many times have I dragged this weight,  
wounded this knee, gave this show away.

As I turn and turn and spin and swirl,  
the world and I become the same.

When dizziness is complete,  
innumerable rays shine through.

Reach all highs and lows  
and everything is new.

*Floor*

Photo by Jiří Růžička





I am always  
I'm just here,  
I'm obscured  
I am clear.

I am open  
I am stuck,  
I am valuable  
I'm just crack.

I am the leader  
I am led,  
I am wisdom  
I am who I just met.

I am strength  
No I am proud,  
I am confused  
No I am stout.

I am joy  
I am excited,  
I am anger  
No I am delighted!

'I' is pain  
Growing so cold,  
Sadness in time  
Is not able to hold.

I, I, I, I and I  
Dancing in grace,  
Feeling welcomed  
In a heart-warming place.

No matter  
How solid 'I' erase,  
I simply dissolve  
In a warm and endless space!

***Tonny Maas***

Photo by Ton Bisscheroux



# FINDING REFUGE THROUGH THE THREE DOORS

In the poem on page 22 Tonny Maas, participant in The Three Doors Academy in Europe, writes about her experiences as the “I” slowly dissolves.

In the First chapter of *Awakening the Luminous Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche gives us instructions on how to stop paying too much attention to the ego. By doing so we will recognize our natural mind. We bring you the pages 1 to 6 from Rinpoche's book.

“Our ordinary experience offers us three opportunities to transform our lives and find the inner peace, joy, and liberation from suffering that we all wish for. Since our confusion is expressed through our body, our speech, and our mind, these three places also offer opportunities to dispel that confusion. The three areas of body, speech, and mind are referred to as the three doors. By shifting our attention in specific ways – away from the expression of pain and toward the release of that pain – we enter these door-ways to discover the gifts of openness, awareness, and warmth.

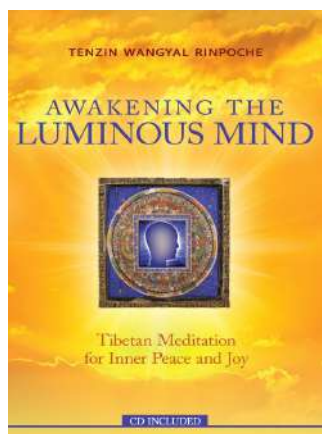
There are three ways in which you will learn to shift attention. While directing attention to the pain body, you are instructed to feel the *stillness* of the body. While directing attention to pain speech, you connect with hearing the *silence*. And while you direct your attention to the pain mind, or the moving mind, the instruction is to recognize and connect with *spaciousness*. In these ways, it is possible to find a deep place of stillness, silence, and spaciousness. These three doorways lead to accessing important places of protection and refuge.

Many people find it difficult to become aware of the space of *being* itself rather than simply being aware of the sensations they are feeling, the inner dialogue they are having, or the contents of the moving mind altogether. What kind of shift are we describing? First, it is necessary to open and simply experience your discomfort. Can you be fully open, as the sky is with the clouds? In this analogy, clouds can refer to your thoughts,

feelings, sensations, or memories. Does the sky have a problem with the clouds? Is the sky agitated? Does the sky say, “You have been here too long! Why are you still here? What does it mean that you are here?” No. The sky simply allows the presence of clouds, and when the clouds eventually dissipate, the sky does not comment. The sky is not lonely when the clouds leave. Can you *be* like that sky and host the clouds? If you are able to do that – to be with your pain directly – the pain heals itself: it self-liberates. As your pain or discomfort shifts, it is important to simply remain present and aware of the openness itself.

Each person's path is unique, and each must be willing to directly experience the sense of limitation and pain as it occurs in body, speech, and mind, and become familiar with turning to the inner refuge to discover the positive benefits that arise in so doing. It is important to recognize that we pay so much attention to ego, to our problem-solving, moving mind. We must recognize ego for what it is – a pain identity. We have a constant dialogue of pain talking to pain, which is what usually guides us or drives us, sometimes driving us crazy. And no matter how smart or sophisticated, ego only operates within the logic of pain, and therefore produces more pain. Perhaps it is time to discover there is something other than ego to turn toward and to trust.

For each of us to heal personal, family, and societal suffering, we need to recognize the habitual reactions that obscure our true nature and block us from living in full relation to our inherent intelligence and capacity. Our habitual reactions to the challenges in life I refer to as the *pain body*. By using the word *body*, I am not only referring to the physical body with its tensions, aches, constrictions, and illnesses, but to our sense of identity altogether, our sense of “I” or “me.” In the Bön teachings, this identity is known as the “karmic conceptual pain body.” This pain body is who you feel and think you are in any given moment.





It is useful to draw your attention to moments of pain and challenge in your life because the pain body is more obvious in those moments. When we react in stressful moments, the karmic conceptual pain body is triggered. But this sense of “me,” this “I,” is a completely false idea of self. Perhaps you have heard yourself, saying at one time or another, “I’m going through a hard time. I broke up with my wife. I’m having a hard time with my boss. I am getting old. I am sick.” I. I. I. Who is that “I”? Is it really you? It appears to be so. That’s what you believe, and in a particularly painful moment, you may have full conviction in that identity. And yet it is your belief in your identity that is the fundamental problem.

of the fundamental separation from our essential nature. Our stories can delight and amuse as well as shock and horrify us. But we are not our stories. And no matter how smart or sophisticated the storyteller is, the pain mind cannot liberate us from the suffering we experience.

What *does* liberate suffering? The moment you have some glimpse that you are bigger than what you are thinking or feeling is a healing moment. In such a moment, the false sense of “I” begins to lose its grip. Through meditation, noticing this dissolution of a solid self is encouraged by drawing your attention to the sense of being itself, rather than to a given momentary reaction.



Valley at Kopan Monastery in Kathmandu (Nepal).

From this sense of “I” develops pain speech, which articulates the distress of separation. Sometimes this distress can be felt as restless, upward-moving sensations in the chest, throat, and breath, and often it emerges outwardly in speech, or inwardly as inner dialogue. It can be as simple as a sigh or as elaborate as habitual negative self-talk that accompanies us through our sleeping and waking hours, often unrecognized for the damage it does in reinforcing our pain identity.

As human beings we are storytellers. The pain mind involves the imagination of ego, the story that is woven of thoughts and images that may appear intelligent, but fail to recognize the truth

The moment that false sense of “I” starts to dissipate, you begin to feel different. If you trust in the space that opens up, you can discover a deeper support than the reactivity of your ego. This deeper support is the inner refuge, and this is your protection.

Our false self thinks, *This is not okay. That person has hurt me so much. This is not acceptable to me. Or, I have to push back. I have to be strategic. I need the upper hand.* Who is that “me,” that “I”? We want to have a very clear sense of being a victim or a victor. But that view, that ego, those voices, are what we need protection from, because from this “I” we suffer. How do you connect with what is larger than “I”? You don't



connect with what is larger than “I” by having a conversation with that “I.” You don’t connect by negotiating with “I.” You don’t try to improve it, destroy it, or ignore it either. You start by simply feeling what you are feeling. The very moment in which you feel awkwardness, confusion, irritation, or a reaction of any kind is an opportunity to discover that you are not that reaction.

To take full advantage of the challenges in our life so that they become the doorways to healing and positive development, we need to discover where to look. Go to stillness, go to silence, go to spaciousness. From these three places, allow your

The teachings of Bön dzogchen, as mentioned in the preface, tell us that our natural mind is pure and perfected, giving rise spontaneously to positive qualities such as love, joy, compassion, and equanimity. We do not need to directly cultivate these positive qualities nor produce them through effort, because they naturally arise. That is why *recognizing* the natural mind is the inner refuge, and is the purpose of the meditation practices in this book. We access the inner refuge through the experience of the stillness of the body, silence of speech, and spaciousness of mind, the three doors.



reaction. You allow it by not resisting, talking back, or rejecting it in any way. And, at the same time, you are not allowing it to affect your stillness, your silence, your spaciousness. If you examine your own experience, you will often find that, because of fear, you do not allow pain to be as simple as it is in the moment. And because we fear pain and vulnerability, we try to manage it, to handle it. I refer to the one who is managing and handling the situation as “the smart ego.” While it may seem reassuring to have some aspect of ourselves in charge of a given situation, the smart ego is not the one who will find release from that false identity and find the end to suffering. You think that smart voice is the solution. That is a mistaken belief. Because it is so easy to believe in the false ego, it is all the more important to find inner refuge in stillness, silence, and spaciousness.

The inner refuge of the natural mind is not a belief or a concept. This experience has no shape, no color, no definition, no single location, nor is it the product of any religion or philosophy. Recognizing the natural mind, we are freed from suffering; failing to recognize this, we continue to suffer. The discovery of the natural mind heals divisions, resolves conflicting emotions and thoughts, and extinguishes confusion and suffering. When we recognize our natural mind, and attain stability and maturity in the recognition of this source within, we refer to this attainment as enlightenment. As humans, we each have an incredible treasure a place of wisdom in ourselves. But we have lost touch with the refuge within ourselves.”

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Ton Bisscheroux and Sarah Edgehill





# THE FLIGHT OF THE GARUDA

In the book *The Flight of the Garuda* Shabkar Lama wrote in the nineteenth century a series of twenty-three songs designed to inspire and instruct the yogin practice of Dzochen *trekcho*. This text is not from the Bon tradition, but from the Nyingma Dzogchen lineage. We bring you 'Song Two' from the book which is compiled and translated by Keith Dowman.

"EHMAHO! Nobel beloved sons and daughters, listen without distraction! All the Victorious Buddhas of the past, present and future have taught eighty-four thousand books of scripture, teaching as boundless as space itself, but all to one end: how to realize the nature of mind. The Buddhas taught nothing more than this.

If the principal root of a tall tree is severed, its ten thousand branches and leaves will wither and die all together; likewise, when the single root of mind is cut, the leaves of samsara, such as dualistic clinging, perish.

The empty house that has stood in darkness for millennia is illuminated instantly by a single lamp; likewise, an instant's realization of the mind's clear light eradicates negative propensities and mental obscurations inculcated over countless aeons.

The brilliance and clarity of sunlight cannot be dimmed by aeons of darkness; likewise, the radiance of the mind's essential nature cannot be obscured by aeons of delusion.

Indeterminate is the color and shape of the sky, and it's nature is unaffected by black or white clouds; likewise, the color and shape of mind's

nature is indeterminate, and it cannot be tainted by black or white conduct, by virtue or vice.

Milk is the basis of butter, but the butter will not separate until the milk is churned; likewise, human nature is the ground of Buddhahood, but without existential realization sentient beings cannot awaken.

Through gnostic [a pure nature of mind, or basic cognizance independent of intellectual constructs] experience of the nature of reality, through practice of these precepts, all beings can gain freedom; regardless of the acuity of his [their] faculties even a cowherd attains liberation if his [their] existential experience is nondual realization.

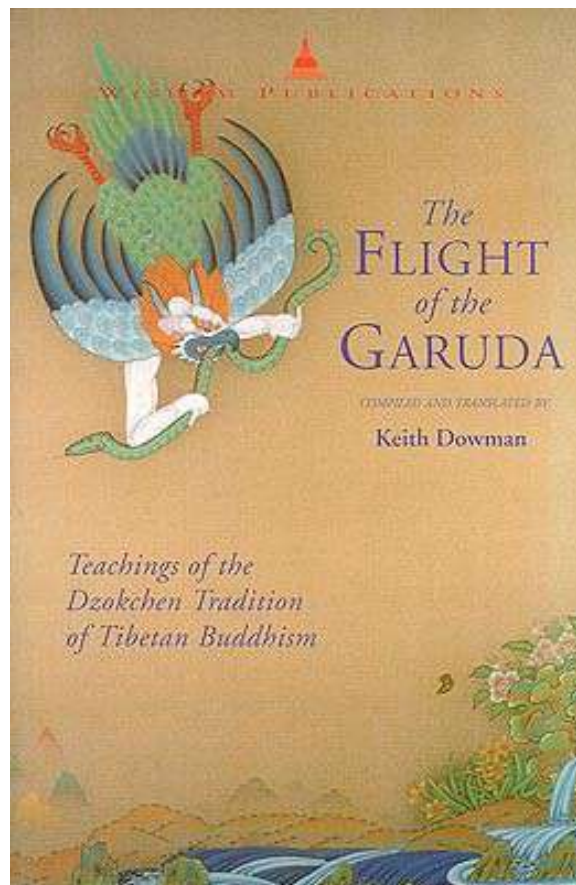
When you realize the clear light of mind's nature, the pundit's words of wisdom are redundant. How relevant is another's description of the taste of treacle when your mouth is full of it?

Even the pundit is deluded if he [one] has no existential realization. He [One] may be skilled in comprehensive exposition of the nine approaches to Buddhahood, but he [one] is as far distant from Buddhahood as the earth is from the sky if he [one] knows of it only from second-hand accounts.

You may keep your strict moral discipline for an aeon and patiently practice meditation for an eternity, but if you have yet to realize the clear

light of the mind's immaculate nature you will not extricate yourself from the three realms of samsara. Diligently examine the nature of your mind!"

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**



# DECIDING TO PRACTICE WITHOUT PRACTICING

The book *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya* presents a complete Dzogchen meditation manual from the Bon Tradition. Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, who lived from 1859 till 1935 is the author of this text. In the book you also find a commentary on the text by H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche. We bring you the pages 70 to 74 and parts of the commentary.

“When you have fully understood the natural state then all doubts are stopped.

A qualm: Surely if everyone who exists acts without action then whatever practices are done in the lower eight paths must be without purpose?

The Dzogchen reply is that everything that is practiced in those paths is made up by thoughts, and their practitioners never achieve the stage of acting without action, without thoughts.

Dzogchen never pursues them, but all their achievements, like Sambhogakaya or Dharmakaya or purification of knowledge are naturally present in Dzogchen Buddhahood. The reason for this is that all existing things are like illusions coming from the natural state.

Therefore there is not any misview, as everything is liberated into the natural state.

Lopon comments, “Why do they criticise this view? It is because all these schools, even the tantric schools, depend on visualisation, body posture, breathing, etc.”

Quote from the same text: “The ways of the eight practices are outshone like the stars are outshone by the rising sun. Dzogchen does not need a plan to achieve Buddhahood; everything comes from

remaining in the natural state — to spontaneously exist.”

Lopon comments that in a horse race the horse has no time to look at the ground and pick flowers or grass; in the same way when you practise the natural state all thoughts and activities are naturally liberated into the natural state without plans or actions.

Therefore to the nature of the Dzogchen view there is nothing to do with acting. Day and night remain in the natural state — without any action,

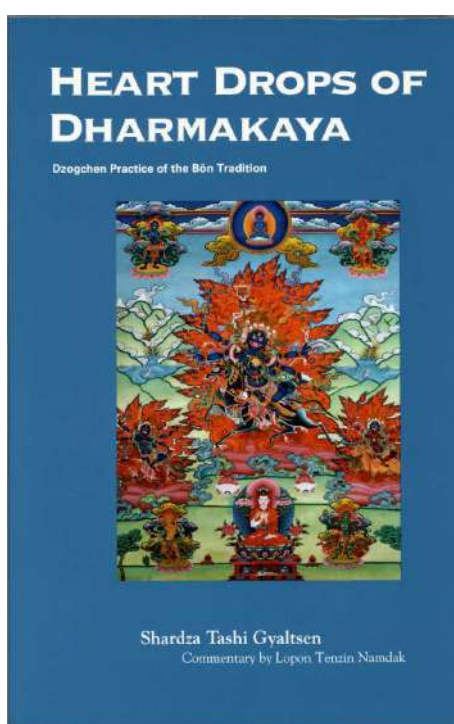
even planning or thinking, no expecting, no reciting, no visualising — even during sleep. So the practitioner practises days, months and years without distraction in the natural state. All the four actions are carried out without distraction.

The practitioner is contemplation. Everything is the ‘Unstoppable Action’. Whatever the practitioner experiences, whatever comes is an experience for the practice — happiness, bliss or whatever. He or she does not even care if the thoughts are racing — there is no hope or path — so thoughts are left as they are. That is the method of practice. Sometimes there are raging emotions, like

anger or sorrow or whatever, and the practitioner does not care. They are just left as they are. This is the teaching.

Whether the practitioner collects merits or sins does not matter, things are left just as they are. Not far away from the natural state, the practitioner leaves behind no trace. There is no base of keeping past actions.

Lopon comments that while the practitioner is not distracted but is continuously in the natural state it is as if he or she is in space — whatever is done, no traces are left behind. As we said, whether you paint black or white on space noth-





ing remains. The base that keeps the traces is lost; it is empty. (...)

The teachings only apply when you are totally absorbed in the natural state. It depends on your practice and only you can judge.

So it is a paradox that beginners must take actions even though the ultimate Dzogchen view has no action. The beginner must take a very strong action — a decision — otherwise there will be doubt and hesitancy. All the preparatory methods help us realise the natural state. But once it is seen and understood then the situation is different. The experienced Dzogchenpa would not need to do preparatory practices at all.

That is the practice of the Dzogchenpa. There is no trying to practice antidotes or removing negativities — that is the fruit. And not to seek antidotes — that is the commitment. Everything is to be left as it is.

Lopon comments that this means not hesitating or meditating, and this is why many Buddhist masters criticised Dzogchen. (...)

Purification is needed for Dzogchen, however; that is the reason for the preliminary practises. It is a great error to try to apply these teachings without this period of preparation. You must always understand the perspective of any comment — be it about the natural state or the individual. Otherwise you fall into nihilism.

There is no measure of being understood or not understood — that is the sign of the practitioner's knowledge.

Another criticism might be put in this way: You say that the Dzogchen view is not limited; yet here you say no action is your view. Is this not a contradiction?

The answer to this lies in non-action. From the Dzogchen view this term means no action, but from the practitioner's point of view this is not a choice — one just does what comes next in the natural state. But to explain it a term must be used. Whether it is to look or not to look, to act or



Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen

not to act, everything is self-liberated; therefore there is no missed view or right view — I do not care.

Lopon comments that in the philosophical background to Dzogchen there are various mistaken views which are described in the *Namkha Truldzo* (*nam mkha' 'phrul mdzod*), a major text on the philosophy of Dzogchen taught at Dolanji:

(...) “Some of the masters of Dzogchen introduce the view directly with a crystal or mirror; some say you must go to a quiet place to meditate; some say you must have hardship and others that you must be a beggar. Some of the masters say that you must give up all your property and go and live in a cemetery or in the mountains; some again say, “Go now and live as a madman!” Some say, “Don't desire anything, go and live as a small child.” Others say you must live the opposite of what they teach; some say, “You should avoid objects that cause anger and desire and don't expect to have a good reputation!” Others say whether people say good or bad things about you, you should not care. These are the sayings of the Dzogchen masters. (...)”

Text selected by Frits de Vries

Photo: [bonreligion.tribe.net](http://bonreligion.tribe.net)



# TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2013 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

When	Where	What	More information
May 24 – 26	Berlin, Germany	Weekend seminar: Awakening the Luminous Mind	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>
June 8 – July 7	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Tibetan Dream Yoga	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
July 6, 15.00 – 21.30 CET	Your computer	Free full-day webcast, from Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
July 23 – 28	Warsaw, Poland	Summer retreat: 21 Nails	<a href="http://www.bongaruda.pl">www.bongaruda.pl</a>
July 29 – August 4	Buchenau, Germany	Summer retreat: Pith realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters, part 3	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>
August 3 – 25	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Tibetan Sound Healing — The Five Warrior Seed Syllables	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
August 30 – September 1	Copenhagen, Denmark	Weekend seminar: Topic to be announced	<a href="http://www.bongaruda.dk">www.bongaruda.dk</a>
September 6 – 8	Switzerland	Weekend seminar: Topic to be announced	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.ch">www.ligmincha.ch</a>
September 13 – 15	Moscow, Russia	Weekend seminar: Topic to be announced	<a href="http://www.bonpo.info">www.bonpo.info</a>
September 21 – October 20	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Awakening the Sacred Arts — Discovering your creative potential	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
October 12, 21.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Live webcast from the annual Fall Retreat	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
October 15 – 20	Maria Alm, Austria	Retreat: Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud, part 4	<a href="http://ligmincha.at">ligmincha.at</a>
November 16 – December 8	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Tibetan Dream Yoga	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
December 14 15.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Free full-day live webcast	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
December 29 21.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Live webcast from the annual Winter Retreat	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

*# 9 – Summer 2013*



Transmissions trough Internet

Taste of The Three Doors

Meet the Irish Sangha

Inner Refuge



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

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# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

When we start with a new issue it is always a challenge for us to get about twenty pages filled. But when we are ready with our work we are always surprised that we have much more content than those twenty pages.

When I met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche seven years ago he had a dream: to realize the manifestation of the Lishu Institute, a Center in India where western students could study and practice for longer periods of time.

Even before it was realized he worked to realize another dream: The Three Doors Program, where people who have not necessarily a connection to Buddhism or Bon can profit from these ancient teachings, which were for many centuries kept very secret, and were often only passed on from a teacher to his students.

To spread the profound Bon teachings, Rinpoche discovered that the internet is a way to reach a lot of people. So, for the past number of years he has uploaded more and more videos on the internet and offers many free internet teachings. In July of this year, we had the opportunity to receive special Dzogchen transmissions from His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche.

A European Center was not one of Rinpoche's dreams, but in his opinion we need it and the sanghas in Europe were ready to realize this project.

In this issue, we are happy to share some long enduring dreams of Rinpoche and news from the European Centre. Furthermore, we will present our ever expanding sangha, as well as some wonderful poems from its practitioners. Finally, in this issue, you will learn more about *Refuge*, *Soul Retrieval*, the *Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, and much much more.

The next issue will be number 10. Then we want to do something special for the sangha and the main Monasteries in the Yungdrung Bon tradition and Rinpoche's Centers. We want to give a full-coloured book of the first ten issues of the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* to: Menri Monastery, Tritten Norbutse Monastery, the Lishu Institute, Serenity Ridge Retreat Center and the European Center. When we have collected enough money we will also give a book to Chamma Ling Poland, Chamma Ling Colorado and Chamma Ling Mexico.



One book costs about € 108, and since we have always given this Magazine for free, we have to find sponsors to make this happen.

If you are willing to sponsor us for € 108, we will publish your name in this special edition that goes to the Monasteries of our tradition and to the Centers founded by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. If you are interested, please send an e-mail to: [magazine@ligmincha.eu](mailto:magazine@ligmincha.eu).

In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux, Chief Editor**



# BON AND SOCIAL MEDIA: EAST MEETS WEST

For some people the combination of Bon and Social Media may sound a little strange, but Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has been emphasizing for several years that he wants to use – and that he wants us to use – Social Media to spread the precious Bon teachings. Through Social Media we have access to the teachings twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week. We can also use Social Media to let other people know about these treasures on the internet. Since not everybody in the sangha is familiar with these possibilities, we will inform you where you can find what Rinpoche shares with us in the *Sacred Cyber Space*.

## YouTube

YouTube is a video-sharing website, created to display a wide variety of video content. Everybody can upload his/her material via the site, and everybody can watch the videos for free.



Turning Pain Into the Path

Rinpoche has put a lot of effort in making many teachings available on YouTube for everybody who is interested, and he will continue to do so. On the Ligmincha International website you can find links to recorded live webcasts in the menu: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche / Published Works / Internet Teachings at [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org). If the link on the website does not work, just go to [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for *Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche*. When you are looking for something specific, e.g. for guidance when somebody has

died, search for *Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche Bardo*. A few examples of the videos you can find there are: [Finding Refuge Within](#), [Turning Pain Into the Path](#), [The Five Elements Practice](#), with [Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche](#) and many more. Some videos are translated into French, German, Spanish, and other languages.

## Ustream

Ustream provides video streaming services to viewers and broadcasters.

This service is used for the free Live Webcasts of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. There you can also watch the recorded Webcasts. On the website [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org) you have to scroll down the page to get to the Ustream videos. U-stream is free, but for this service unavoidable advertising pops up regularly while you are watching. When you want to watch the Ustream content ad-free you must pay \$3,99 a month (more information at: [www.ustream.tv/premium-membership](http://www.ustream.tv/premium-membership)). A few examples of the recorded Webcasts you can

find there are: [Transcending Fear](#), [Discovering Your Creative Potential](#), [Freeing Yourself From Guilt, Blame and Shame](#), [The Gift of Inner Refuge — Part 1](#), and many more.

## Online workshops

You can participate in several online courses with personal guidance and

support provided by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, as you work with the practices. The instruction is via Internet-based video, and there are no set class times. The instructional videos remain available throughout the course. You can practice in the comfort of your home and on your own schedule. You can discuss questions with a teacher from Ligmincha Institute and with fellow students participating in the course. How exciting it is to participate in an online course you can read more in [Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 6](#), page 10-12.





## Facebook

Facebook is an online social networking service. You must register before using the site, after which you may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, exchange messages, and receive automatic notifications when they update their profile.

In the sangha we use Facebook to make announcements and share events and photos. Most of the sanghas have their own Facebook page. Rinpoche has his own page where he shares where he has been, and sometimes he finds the time to look at a page of sangha members...

To give you an impression of how Facebook can work, here is a story about this Magazine. After we put Ligmincha Europe Magazine # 8 online, we made our initial announcement on the Facebook page of Ligmincha Nederland. A few days later more than 4.000 people from all over the world had found the Magazine online!

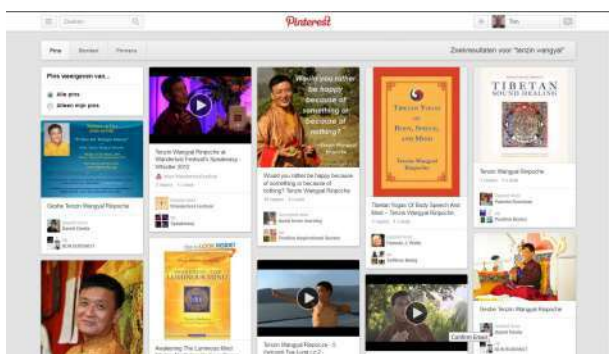
On Facebook we invited people to recite mantra's for His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, and later we published the result (photo).



## Pinterest

Pinterest is a pinboard-style photo-sharing website that allows users to create and manage theme-based image collections such as events, interests, and hobbies.

Here you will find only photos, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche may also be found there.



## Twitter

Twitter is an online social networking service and microblogging service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as 'tweets'.

In the sangha this medium is not used much. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started to use it in 2009; his last tweet is from February 22, 2013, and until now he has written only sixteen 'tweets'.

## Google

Google is most famous because of its search engine on the internet.

I have googled 'Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche', just for fun, and I got 180.000 results. I looked at a few hundred of them, and I was surprised about the things that Rinpoche does. I knew that he has a family, teaches, writes books and runs centers all over the world. Googling Rinpoche I found out that he is also frequently invited for conferences and interviews, visiting Bon Monasteries in Tibet and answering questions of readers of the magazine *Buddhadharma*, and so much more...

## Concluding

When you are not feeling so good, just turn on your computer and watch the video [When you believe you can't practice](#). Here Rinpoche explains that you should practice more when you are having a difficult time in life. And you can choose from so many videos, available 24/7, to help you 'host' whatever you are experiencing. And when you're feeling good, you can also watch and practice...

## Text by Ton Bisscheroux

Photos are screenshots from internet pages



# THE THREE DOORS TEACHINGS ARE ELEGANT AND SIMPLE

During the Taste of The Three Doors weekend in the Netherlands, June 14-16, Ton Bisscheroux talked to Marcy Vaughn, teacher of The Three Doors Academy, and Kallon Basquin, Director of Operation of The Three Doors Academy. Here is a transcript of their dialog.

**Ton:** Can you speak about the difference between psychotherapy, Buddhism, and The Three Doors?

**Kallon:** There are many paths to working with our pain. In psychotherapy we work with the mind to overcome suffering. There is a focus on the story, on what we know as relative truth, like “I have always been this way,” and it gives many people relief to tell their story. So it is not that we are judging psychotherapy, but we make a distinction. Marcy can explain how we work in The Three Doors with suffering.

**Marcy:** In The Three Doors we have an emphasis on the Inner Refuge. Entering the Inner Refuge through the stillness of the body, or hearing the silence of inner speech, and recognizing the spaciousness of mind allows us to recognize the spell of our inner talking, and allows the story that often constricts us to release, to open. Your nature cannot be contained by a story and it cannot be told by your voice. Sometimes the stories we tell ourselves hold us and keep us from discovering the deeper nature of our being. It is not that we are against stories, but when you ‘host’ a story it will release its hold on you. A deeper capacity becomes available. Even a simple story like “I am sad today” is just a story, because there is no ‘today,’ there is just ‘right now.’ So if you embrace your sadness right now and you completely allow and feel how it is right now, in this moment so fully, does it remain in the same way? It is quite possible that it does not. That is what you discover. But the story would keep it remaining: “I am so sad today.” We take this kind of thinking for granted all the time. We talk that way all the time, and we hold patterns that prevent us from other possibilities. In that sense we are very interested in how stories work and how they fall apart, how we discover openness as a result.



Kallon Basquin and Marcy Vaughn in Exloërveen.

**Ton:** So, instead of going into the history of the story, you ‘host’ it.

**Kallon:** It seems a simple distinction. Conceptually we can understand it, but to practice it experientially... The trade secret of The Three Doors is how to practice.

**Ton:** It is very special to be here in this ‘Taste’ weekend, but for people who do not participate in The Three Doors Academy or in a ‘Taste’ weekend it is difficult to understand.

**Kallon:** It is elegant, simple, and extremely penetrating.

**Marcy:** I experience it that way too. It is easy to forget how direct you can be with your experience. Even when we say “I am sad today”, who is that ‘I’? You can actually turn your awareness to the ‘I’ that is sad, and if you are present, even that sense of oneself will shift. And when you allow that and you recognize that, it introduces another experience of yourself — being. I think of it as wonderful medicine.

**Ton:** I noticed you talk of the ‘essence’, the true nature in people. Yesterday you said, “When we see pain in another, compassion or love is our first response.” I thought, “That can’t be true, because my normal reaction is contraction.” But later I realized that you are right, that it is the natural response, but for me it is more familiar to react by contracting.





**Kallon:** And seeing that is part of the path, because in The Three Doors approach we can 'host' it. In psychotherapy it is put in a very different perspective.

**Marcy:** We also pay a lot of attention to when something shifts, when there is a natural release, an opening. We don't move on to the next thing right away, but we appreciate that openness. When you do the *Tsa Lung* exercises you open. We stay in that openness without a story. Normally we think "There is nothing happening here. What's next?" But that 'nothing' is what we need to become familiar with, because that 'nothing' is not nothing but is openness itself, which is lively and full as we become aware of it. That habit of moving onto the next thing, that restlessness, is very powerful to become aware of, because that is how we are in our ordinary life when we are always pulling ourselves together and trying to control our experience.

**Ton:** Actually, you teach the Bon-Buddhist wisdom but you took away the ornaments, the statues and rituals, but you didn't change anything about the teachings, and the way you present it is very personal.

**Marcy:** The teachings of The Three Doors should allow people who may have varying philosophies about life to gain direct access to this experience of openness and awareness that can then support them to transform their lives. It is not that you have to believe what I believe, but here if you practice this, you may have an experience of openness and you take that out into your life. You might start as a Christian and end as a Christian, hopefully in an even more intimate way.

**Ton:** So, religion does not matter.

**Kallon:** An example of this is the second Three Doors Academy in the United States. In the first



**Ton:** So it is not like working to change something, but more like accepting and welcoming whatever there is. Although I have been practicing for many years, I still find that very difficult to understand. How do people react when you just say, "Let it be"?

**Marcy:** In our introductory weekend we try to literally give a 'taste' of the openness. You begin to feel it in the atmosphere and recognize it in yourself. Perhaps you begin to see it in somebody else, and that openness is very alive, very fresh, and it is new. Then you become interested. Hopefully we can convey that you don't need to reject your experience, but see your experience, even your confusion or struggle, as an opportunity to open. Becoming aware of a place in your experience where you may have closed down becomes an opportunity to open. In openness the positive qualities in us can move and come forth. That is a delightful discovery.

training many people were drawn in by Tenzin Wangyal. In the second training a large portion of the people had not studied with him for long or even at all. So they don't have the statues and the thangkas and other external supports because for them the language and the experience and instructions are understood with no metaphysics. That is the beauty of The Three Doors.

**Ton:** I experience the instructions also as very direct. So, how are you going to reach other people?

**Marcy:** Word of mouth is very important. Friends and relatives notice changes in you. Even my mother noticed something was changing in me. When my mother noticed, I was shocked. One day she asked: "Marcy, what have you been up to?" I said: "I have been writing my transformations for my teacher, because of The Three Doors training I am involved in." She said, "That is interesting,



because last night I used that very word with your father, “Marcy has really transformed, she is so much nicer and more loving to us.” I could have thought, “Oh, I was not nice before,” but it meant so much to me that my mother actually had that experience. We do not share the same religious beliefs, and she does not even really know what I do, but being more open to her and to my father was something I was ‘hosting’ in my practice and in my life. So that was very encouraging. Hopefully, the acquaintances and the friends of the people in the Academy will notice something good in them and ask, “What is happening in your life?”

**Kallon:** Another thing we did not plan, but it seems to be happening, is that as the process in you in the Academy is going deeper and all the qualities begin to percolate, creativity starts to happen. Because the first inner refuge, the mother, is the source of all, the creative impulse or process happens as we connect with that source. The people in the Academy are finding ways spontaneously within their own professions to use The Three Doors approach and perspective to influence their work, whether they are lawyers or psychotherapists or nurses. Not that they are necessarily going to teach the practice, but by osmosis, that goodness, that energy starts percolating, and the person brings that out in a new way, and their lives are transforming. So the tour of ‘Taste of The Three Doors’ gives people a chance to see the power of meditation. And we will return, and they can bring their friends. And we are also going to reach out by doing online teachings.

**Ton:** You make a big investment, going for just one weekend to so many places around the world for a ‘Taste’ weekend.

**Marcy:** Wherever we are, it reminds us that we should make that investment. It is a very special thing to spend time valuing being, so should we treat the rest of our life as if it is nothing? It is a reminder for me to treat my entire life this way.

**Kallon:** I guarantee that wherever we go some people will be touched. It is an inside joke that we are touched by our nature. For us it is a lot of energy, but it is well spent.

**Ton:** Do you know if people who study on the Academy now are going to give trainings after

### “I ‘hosted’ my mother”

After doing some courses from the Bon Buddhist tradition with Cindy Bloemberg, I participated in the ‘Taste of The Three Doors Weekend.’ It was organized at a great location with a wonderful host and hostess.

Dealing with what's in your mind looks simple and familiar, but you have to go through several layers of awareness. You start with some outer layer and then you discover a more inner layer, and so on. In working within a group, peeling off these layers, it felt very warm and intimate. Working with the body, voice, and mind exercises were special experiences for me.

We were invited to ‘host’ problematic relations. ‘Hosting’ means giving them space and showing openness. In my heart chakra I discovered disturbed relations with family members. When I ‘hosted’ my mother, she did let me know she had not treated me well after my birth. This period of my birth was on my mind lately, and now I could accept it as “this is how it went.” This new experience in ‘hosting’ my mother gave me a deep, peaceful feeling. I felt accepted in spite of all the negative feelings in this early period of my life.

Under the guidance of Marcy Vaughn, Kallon Basquin with the translations of Jolinda and Anneke, I look back on a very valuable weekend with wonderful people. And I want to develop myself more in meditation exercises for body, speech, and mind. The weekend was an enrichment!

A thankful participant,  
**Iepy Hooijenga**

they finish?

**Kallon:** The primary purpose of the Academy is to go deeper in oneself and transform life and to actually master the practices for yourself. And when you finish the Academy and graduate, you will know what to practice for the rest of your life. That does not mean that you are only a Three Doors person. The Three Doors is a support, and it will help you to be strong in yourself and in relation to what is sacred for you. As far as bringing The Three Doors into the world, everybody will do it in his/her own creative way.





**Marcy:** Everybody in The Three Doors has a mentor, and the mentor supports you, for example, when you have the opportunity to give a talk at your work. You can speak with your mentor: “This is what I want to say; what do you think about it?” So you have support. And also, it is not just that you have to train someone or tell someone what to do; you can offer something that is beautiful to your friends.

**Kallon:** There will be people that do want to teach. That is an additional skill and requires further amplification with their mentor.

**Ton:** I can imagine that people who came this weekend want to continue practicing.

**Kallon:** We want to support that formally, and people in the Academy will be local practice guides. And we don't just come and leave; we will come back.

**Marcy:** People in the Academy make a commitment to practice every day. That does not mean that every day you perfectly keep that commitment, but that is your aspiration. After practicing for two and a half years every day, what would it be if you invite anyone who wants to practice with you to join you once a week? That is an organic evolution. It is simple; it is friendly and warm. It is not a formal top down structure. Welcome to my house, come into my practice room. Maybe just one person shows up, but even knowing that it exist, keeps it alive.

**Ton:** Before coming to this weekend I was worrying about the sixty-three transformations, and I thought, maybe in the weekend we have to work on three. And I asked myself: “Do I want to do three transformations?” I really want to work on myself, but sometimes it feels like a burden.

**Kallon:** People don't have to go to the Academy to experience The Three Doors. In fact we have public programs we want to offer, and we come back with other versions of ‘Taste.’ So there will be a program for everybody, according to their feeling and connection. But those people who really want to commit to themselves to transform, they look at the Academy and they will have to take stock of themselves. We lay it right out at the beginning: here is what we do, these are the commitments. We try to provide as much support,

### “I experienced who I am”

I had no idea about what to expect this weekend, but I was very excited about it. How many times do you get an opportunity to participate in such a wonderful event? On Saturday I felt a little uneasy because everything was new to me, but Marcy made me feel comfortable. I decided to let go and just experience. Marcy's explanations were very clear and they touched me. The meditation sessions weren't too long. Right from the beginning I felt different sensations within me. I can't describe the sensations, because many things were happening. I also saw that the other participants were moved. It really felt great! I am familiar with meditation, but this kind of depth within meditation was new. As this was only a ‘taste,’ I am curious about what happens when you participate in the three year program! I hope The Three Doors will continue. It was wonderful to find who I am by experiencing the three doors within myself: stillness, silence, and spaciousness! Every day I am aware of the results of this weekend, and I experience life very differently after this weekend. And it was nice to meet the other participants, who came from all over the country, and one from Austria.

**Geertje Hilgen**

continuity, and confidentiality as we can to create a container, where the container itself helps to generate security and warmth so that things begin to percolate in a good way. So, it is not like “I have to do all my sixty-three transformations,” but things start to happen when you practice so intensely.

**Ton:** I am glad to hear that you come with other programs that are not so expensive, because I heard from people they find the program of the Academy too expensive.

**Kallon:** There will be programs that are for free. And we have a special fund that even the teachers and staff give their own money to. With this fund we can finance projects, programs, events that are for free for people that otherwise could never afford meditation.

**Marcy:** For instance, some of us have an interest in working with women who have been involved in sex trafficking. So a program might develop in



the future. I have no idea of how it will happen, but I am open to it. The *Warrior Syllables* is a healing practice that wonderfully supports someone to reclaim a sense of dignity and self-worth after having suffered abuse. So there is no rigid structure in the development of The Three Doors programs. Everybody carries unique qualities and interests and is uniquely connected in the world, and that may bring alive an opportunity we don't know about yet.

**Ton:** I struggle with the practice of Inner Refuge. For me it is difficult to listen to silence.

**Marcy:** What happens when you do?

**Ton:** I start to concentrate on my ears, and I hear all kind of noise and there are a lot of thoughts. Sometimes I try to listen with my whole body, but most of my concentration is in my head, and I try to find the silence somewhere. I can't hear the silence in the noise, inside the sound.

**Marcy:** Remember the analogy of the ocean and the waves. The ocean is water and wet, and the waves are water and wet. So the whole thing is silence. What happens when we listen to the noise we leave the ocean and we are just involved in the waves. All we are doing is opening back up to the awareness that feels and knows the whole ocean. So it includes the noise, but it also includes the environment in which the noise arises.

**Ton:** The analogy helps, but it is still the most difficult door for me to enter.

**Kallon:** I will do a plug (cheap advertising) here. If you were in The Three Doors Academy, and Marcy was your mentor, this would be the beginning of a transformation for you. To be able to find that, because it is obstructed in some way, you can count it as a transformation. So it is not that hard.

**Ton:** I have heard that meditation is not advised for people who are psychotic or have psychological difficulties. Do you have any experience with that?

**Marcy:** We have had experiences with people who were psychologically disturbed for a period of time. At those times, formal practice was not possible. But knowing the Inner Refuge carried them in a sense, and they were still able to turn

toward to the Inner Refuge as they were walking or chopping vegetables. They would still glimpse the stillness, silence, and spaciousness. So they would still have some protection for knowing that experience, as crazy as it is, is not who they really are. Yes, there are times when formal meditation is not conducive for a person's state of mind, but the Inner Refuge is always supportive as is taking the three pills (focusing on stillness, silence, or spaciousness.)

**Ton:** One of the things I appreciate about The Three Doors program is that if we see Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche less for the teachings in Europe, there are still teachers who can guide us.

**Marcy:** It can be very encouraging when you realize that ordinary people can deeply benefit from the practices, and when you see and share the results with each other it is inspiring.

**Ton:** We are ordinary people and not Tibetan lamas; at least nobody has recognized us yet! So it is good news that we can practice, and that it transforms us.

**Transcription by Ton Bisscheroux**

**Edited by Marcy Vaughn**

Photo by Ton Bisscheroux

### 'Taste of The Three Doors' in Europe:

#### Germany

September 14-15, 2013 in Frankfurt

Presented by Marcy Vaughn

Contact: [g.ajhar@gmx.de](mailto:g.ajhar@gmx.de)

September 21-22, 2013 in Berlin

Presented by Marcy Vaughn

Contact: [anja@the3doors.org](mailto:anja@the3doors.org)

#### Switzerland

November 9-10, 2013 in Zurich

Presented by Marcy Vaughn

Contact: [walterhofmail@gmail.com](mailto:walterhofmail@gmail.com)

#### Denmark

November 16-17, 2013 in Copenhagen

Presented by Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin

Contact: [birgit.bastholm@gmail.com](mailto:birgit.bastholm@gmail.com)

**More information:** [the3doors.org](http://the3doors.org)





# A NEW ROAD ON AN OLD PATH

**Jolinda van Hoogdalem, a participant of The Three Doors Academy, wants to share some of her transformations with us. She has experienced that sharing opens her heart.**

It snows on our way to the fourth meeting of The Three Doors Academy. It is March 24, 2013. Spring should have started, but not this year, it seems. The sun is low on the horizon and gives the snow a golden shine. We drive through a forlorn and empty Vorpommern, the former hunting area of the government officials of East Germany. In some places we see deer digging for shrubs.

During the past three Academy retreats (we started in August 2012 and have come together every six months for a week) we had a thorough introduction to *Tsa Lung*, the *Five Warrior Syllables*, and the five lines of Dawa Gyaltsen. With Dawa Gyaltsen I feel quite comfortable, but connecting with the other two practices is more difficult for me, although I find them interestingly concrete.

The Three Doors Academy asks each of us to look deeply into our lives and experience everything we rather would not. Let me give some examples. I used to see and feel the world with an undercurrent of sadness. But this sadness has transformed into liveliness and cheerfulness. I used to grumble at my partner. Now we laugh about each other's habits and are more at ease. My personal life has changed, and my professional life as well. I feel more connected to my acupuncture patients. I am more open in my *Tai Chi* classes, and I feel more confidence in teaching. At the personal level I am much closer with my brother, and the relationship with my mother is getting better. And I am not the only one who is going through these transitions. During the circle of sharing at the beginning of each retreat, everyone speaks of how his or her life is going. Some changes are miraculous, not always easy, but always positive.

Sometimes I feel myself to be a real beginner among the students of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. For me, this is a new way of working with what is going on in daily life. I am a Zen student, whose practice mainly consists of sitting still and looking



into the mind directly. We hardly ever talk about our meditative experiences, and then only with the Zen master. So for me, sharing our experiences in such an intimate way is a revelation. It becomes immediately clear that I am not the only one who is suffering and in pain. Sharing opens my heart to each and every person. But also for Rinpoche's students, the Three Doors Academy seems to shed new light on old exercises. It is amazing how we all feel the energy of our ancestors and how we all long to work to clear karmic traces in our family and even our culture.

This week in the snow has brought me two poems:

## **Cat Claws**

Cat claws in the snow  
Frozen in time  
The sun will melt them down

## **New Road, Old Path**

Fresh snow in old footsteps  
A new road on an old path  
The sparrows in the tree:  
nesting again

For everyone who is interested in the power of the Three Doors, I recommend a Taste of The Three Doors when it happens in your country. Your life will transform!

**Text by Jolinda van Hoogdalem**

Photo by Hille Huigens



# LIVING AND STUDYING AT LISHU INSTITUTE

**Two students from Mexico are going to live and study for one year at Lishu Institute. Recently they moved to India, and here is their report.**

Friday, June 7, 2013.

It was during a *Phowa* retreat at Chamma Ling Valle de Bravo, Mexico — where the Stupa for World Peace was at the time under construction — where we spoke with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche about our desire to stop living in the second largest city in the world (Mexico City) in order to move to a place surrounded by forest so that we could lead simpler lives and practice the Bon teachings more consistently.

Rinpoche told us about the ongoing construction of a place called the Lishu Institute in India, which was close to Menri Monastery and was designed to be a place where western practitioners could go to live, study and practice the Bon teachings in a more dedicated and in-depth way. We were instantly drawn to the idea.

Three years later we were ready to go! Two days after our wedding, which also served as a good-bye party for our friends and family in Mexico, we were on a plane headed for the other side of the planet; we were thrilled and ecstatic!

We arrived in Delhi and were greeted by our dear friend Geshe Thupten G. Negi whose contagious smile warmed our hearts and spirits after a long journey across the globe. We ate lunch at a Tibetan restaurant, where we discovered *momos*! Those delicious Tibetan dumplings are now one of our favorite dishes! After a lovely meal we set out for Dehradun, and from there we drove up the three or four

hundred meters through the forest and finally arrived at Lishu Institute.

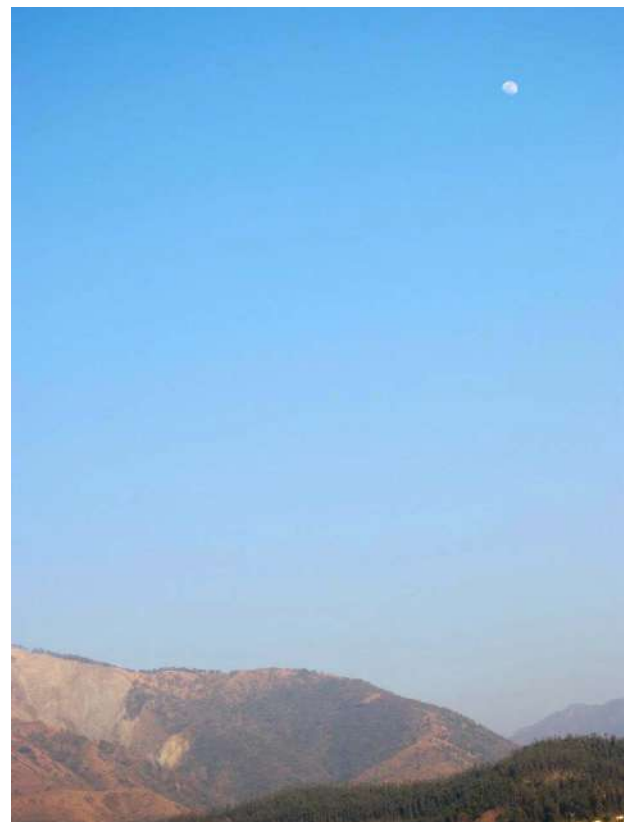
Even though we had seen photos, we were genuinely awe struck when we got out of the car and stood in front of Lishu's main building! What a beautiful building it is, indeed! And the surrounding scenery is breathtaking! The mountains to the northeast and the valley to the southwest create a wonderful setting for such a magnificently designed structure.

We've been at Lishu Institute for seven weeks now and we couldn't be happier! The environment is totally perfect for spiritual practice, birds sing constantly, the air is clean and pure, and the trees and mountains embrace us and welcome us to our new home. The sounds of city life are absent here, and only occasionally do we hear the sounds of motor engines approaching, mostly a motorcycle or two when the neighbors return from their errands.

Geshe Thupten has been so kind, patient, and helpful with us and has become a good friend of ours. Our primary focus right now is Hindi and Tibetan, since we'd like to master these two







The surroundings of Lishu Institute.







Lishu Institute

languages to eventually enjoy fluid and effective communication with Indian and Tibetan people.

It's a great relief that India is the most vegetarian country on the planet. We've been vegetarian for over four years now — mainly influence by our Bon beliefs — and here, it's super easy to follow our regimen. All restaurants have many veg options and everyone in general respects if not follows the vegetarian lifestyle. It's also great to live in a country where even though Buddhism is not the most prominent religion, everyone is well aware of its core tenets and belief system, and holds it in high esteem. All this is in stark contrast to our experiences back home in Mexico where vegetarianism and Buddhism are very poorly understood.

We are truly very enthusiastic about being here, about having moved to such a harmonious place with the express intent of dedicating our time and energy towards the study and practice of Bon, and we look forward to seeing the arrival of more western students and visitors here at The Lishu Institute. We encourage everyone to consider taking some time to come here, whether for a short period of time or for extended stay, as getting to know this place is an enriching experience. Menri Monastery is very close and

you can visit it while you are here; if time permits, Triten Norbutse Monastery (in Nepal) as well.



Monika Cardenas, Geshe Thupten G. Negi and Paco Albusua at Zamon Gyal Bonpo Monastery in Manduwala, India.

**Text by Monika Cardenas and Paco Albusua**

Photos by Anja Benesch and courtesy of Monika Cardenas and Paco Albusua





# STRONG PRACTICE AT THE SOUTH COAST OF IRELAND

One of the smallest European sanghas might be the Irish one, located in the beautiful south coast town of Cork. With more than 500.000 inhabitants Cork is the second largest city of Ireland. We interviewed Mary Sky, who started a practice group and organized several seminars with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche there.

## How did you first meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?

Nine months after my father had died, a friend handed me a copy of *Healing with Form, Energy and Light*. By then I had already been involved in healing practices and had been a student of Sogyal Rinpoche from the Nyingma tradition for many years. I was very much inspired to meet the author of the book: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Two weeks after reading the book I went to his *Dream and Sleep Yoga* seminar in Amsterdam and I felt a strong connection to him and the teachings. For me it was a visceral connection, like being plugged into a universal, powerful grid. For three or four years I followed the cycle of *Mother Tantra* teachings in Amsterdam. I also visited Serenity Ridge Retreat Center in the US several times and *Trul Khor* teachings in Poland and studied and practices the *Tsa Lung* and healing sounds practices. The *Tsa Lung* and sounds practices are for me a strong foundation for an already existing meditation practice. They strongly assist in embodying the teachings.

## Can you tell us about the Irish sangha?

In Cork our sangha meets every week. The core practice group exists of six to ten people. We practice *Tsa Lung* and *Sound Healing with the Five Warrior Seed Syllables*. For us the *Tsa Lung* is a very important practice. We have developed a strong practice together. But following retreats is important to deepen our practice and I encourage others to attend retreats. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche came to Cork three times; the last seminar took place in 2011. In Ireland Rinpoche has taught on the healing sounds practices, *Dream and Sleep Yogas* and the elemental healing practices. Last year John Jackson taught the *Red Garuda*, which was a fantastic and very powerful event also. For our sangha the webcasts with Rinpoche are very supportive: we watch them together.

So far, I have been leading the practice group, but as I'll be staying in Peru for a period of time this year, in fact I am in Peru now, the group will continue weekly practices without me. I feel a strong connection to Bon and to Rinpoche. And even though I haven't been at a retreat with Rinpoche lately, I always feel the



connection. In the upcoming six months my *Tsa Lung* practice will take place in the jungle of Peru. I am curious to practice the yogas and sounds in such an unspoilt, primal and energetic place. Perhaps while there I will be able to attend a retreat with Rinpoche in Chile or Peru. Who knows as they say here in Peru.

## Any plans for the future of Ligmincha Ireland?

To reach a broader audience we – together with the Shambala group – have discussed inviting Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to Dublin. Even though Cork is very active in terms of Buddhist groups, it's not the most accessible place. And as we enjoyed the *Red Garuda* retreat with John Jackson so much, it would be great to have him back again at some point in the future. Also I would like our sangha to grow. We have a strong core group now and this can be the ground for new people. As there are strong sanghas all over Europe, I also encourage Irish practitioners to travel to European retreats. The future European Center could change a lot and might motivate people to travel more for teachings.

## What else would you like to say to the international sangha?

Anyone in Ireland interested in coming along to our practice group can contact me anytime. By e mail at the moment of course: [Maryskywalker1@hotmail.com](mailto:Maryskywalker1@hotmail.com). I intend to do an introduction to the *Tsa Lung* and healing sounds practices when I return to Ireland. Many people are interested. Also people can see my web site ([www.dancingtheworlds.com](http://www.dancingtheworlds.com)) for dates.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to express gratitude to Rinpoche and to the Bon teachings. They are truly transnational. Rinpoche's book *Awakening The Sacred Body* I highly recommend others to read as a beginning to these profound practices.

Many blessings from the 'little' Irish sangha.

## Interview by Floor van Orsouw

Photo: courtesy of Irish sangha



# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

The European sangha is very much alive, and we would like to share it with you! Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Amsterdam, Berlin and Warsaw. Marcy Vaughn and Kallon Basquin visited Europe for two 'taster' weekends. And we could enjoy a daylong webcast. Here is an impression of the events.



April 12-14: Geshe Gelek taught *Tummo* in Helsinki, Finland.



May 10-12: Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche started teaching a three-year cycle of the *A-tri* teachings in Amsterdam, Netherlands. About one hundred and sixty people from all over Europe attended the seminar.



May 18-19: The first European weekend of 'Taste of The Three Doors' in Helsinki, Finland, with participants from Finland, Austria and Italy.







July 6: Free full-day webcast, broadcast live from the annual Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge, where His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche joined during the first part of the program. The webcast was translated into eleven languages.

July 8 and 9: Special transmissions by His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche. On Saturday Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche surprised us with the announcement of an extra broadcast on Monday. And on Monday we heard there would be another live broadcast with His Holiness, on Tuesday, so many people around the world could receive the transmissions through the internet.

## Free Daylong Webcast

Live dzogchen teachings from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition with

**H.H. LUNGTOK TENPAI NYIMA RINPOCHE**  
AND  
**GESHE TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE**




**July 6, 2013 9 a.m.– 3:30 p.m. New York time**

Broadcast from the annual Summer Retreat at Serenity Ridge, Virginia

Next free webcasts with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

- Oct. 12, 2013, 3–4:30 p.m.
- Dec. 14, 2013, 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.
- Dec. 29, 2013, 3–4:30 p.m.

All webcast teachings are free and open to all.  
Times listed are Eastern Time U.S. (New York time).

To view the webcasts visit  
[www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)

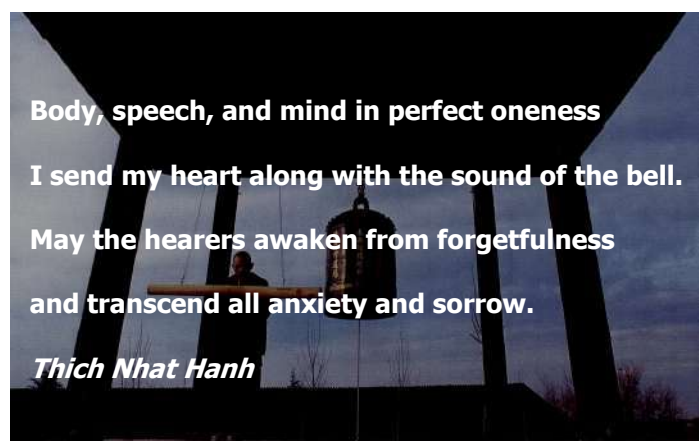




May 24-26: The Berlin sangha together with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and guests after the seminar *Awakening the Luminous Mind* were grateful, inspired and happy.



June 15-17: The 'Taste of The Three Doors' in Exloërveen, Netherlands. In the garden there were several poems by the Buddhist Zen Master Thich Nhat Hahn.



**Body, speech, and mind in perfect oneness**

**I send my heart along with the sound of the bell.**

**May the hearers awaken from forgetfulness**

**and transcend all anxiety and sorrow.**

***Thich Nhat Hanh***



# FUNDRAISING FOR THE EUROPEAN CENTER

During the *Atri* seminar in Amsterdam, Netherlands, May 2013, there were not only teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, but there was also a Fundraiser for the European Center. One of the participants of the seminar, Emmanuelle van Tuijn, writes about her findings.

On Saturday afternoon there was a short video presentation by Oliver Wirtz (chair of Ligmincha Deutschland) and Anneke Dekkers (chair of Ligmincha Nederland). It was a heart-warming movie showing the diversity of the European sanghas, and that these sanghas are going to create a new European Center together in Germany. You can watch this video at: [home.ligmincha.eu](http://home.ligmincha.eu).

I enjoyed the presence of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's students from across Europe during this seminar. And I got the impression that several countries had already been collaborating for some time.

To collect money for the European Center, there were various activities conceived: a lottery, the sale of the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* and the sale of meditation chairs. The chairs, designed and made by Gert-Jan Evelo, are inspired by a famous Dutch designer/artist Gerrit Rietveld.

What I noticed was the openness, spontaneity, improvisation ability to respond to unexpected situations (problems with the sound), and the personal qualities and creativity that were deployed to make this fundraiser a success.

During the lunch break on Sunday you could buy one or more tickets for the lottery, and thus contribute to an amount that would fit everyone's personal situation. For the lottery there were all kinds of prizes figured out. There were even several calligraphies freshly made by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. Anneke and Olivier presented the lottery and it was a joyous occasion. Rinpoche had the honour and impartiality of drawing the lottery tickets. He did this with a lot of humour and playfulness, and made a feast of it. On one occasion, Rinpoche drew tickets without a winner,

because there were fewer tickets sold than there were in the bowl from which it was drawn. With every win many screams of joy were heard, and there were tears of emotion from the winner of the first prize, a *thangka* of the *Dream Goddess*.

After the lottery Gert-Jan handed a meditation chair to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, so that there will be a comfortable seat for him in the new European Center. Gert-Jan demonstrated how to sit comfortably, open and aware on the chair, and Rinpoche tried it too. Gert-Jan exhibited two more chairs and showed how you can sit on it in the five point posture. Each chair made by him is unique; the chairs are for sale for € 300 to € 500. Twenty percent of the proceeds will go to the European Center, and they can be ordered via his email: [gertjanevelo@gmail.com](mailto:gertjanevelo@gmail.com).



The lottery and the sale of the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* yielded € 900, and this amount was doubled by the board of Ligmincha Nederland to € 1.800 for the European Center. The proceeds of the chairs are not included yet in that amount.

In the past, I have not been happy with the style of fundraising, but this form felt rather like a party. Probably because every form of moral pressure and obligation, at least for me, were absent and the contributions were given in freedom and with pleasure, simply because the possibility of a European Center can become a reality.







The winner of the main prize of the lottery: Anne Klanderud pictured in the middle with Oliver Wirtz and Anneke Dekkers.

The *thangka* of the *Blue Dakini of Dreamyoga* is here with me. She invited herself – giving me the unexpected task of getting to know her and taking her in. Feels like a responsibility – a joyful one. I don't own this thangka. She is just visiting as an honored guest. As there is no Bon sangha here in Norway, later she may have to travel

to a place where there is one, some time in the unknown future. However, I am most grateful and feel very honored that she has chosen to come and stay and have an impact on me. I saw this as a sign, and did in June the online course *Tibetan Dream Yoga*.

Anne Klanderud

## Emmanuelle van Tuijn

For three years I have been visiting the seminars of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Amsterdam. For more than twenty years I have been studying and practicing at the *School voor Zijnsoriëntatie (School for Orientation on Being)* in the Netherlands. It is a Western path of realization, inspired by the Nyingma Dzogchen tradition and developed by Hans Knibbe. I work as a transpersonal coach and



awareness trainer. Initially Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche books made me interested in the person to person teachings and transmission of Rinpoche. I experience the vision of the '*School for Orientation on Being*' and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings as mutually fertilizing. Much of what Rinpoche teaches and transfers during the seminars has become part of my meditation.

**Text by Emmanuelle van Tuijn**

Photos by Joop van Spronsen and courtesy of Emmanuelle van Tuijn



# SOUL AND LIFE-FORCE RETRIEVAL

Cindy Bloemberg, living in a small village on the countryside in the Netherlands, goes to America to learn the *Causal Path of Soul Retrieval*. She is participating in a Two-Year-Certificate Training Program, from May 2012 through October 2013. Here she reports how she finally came home by travelling so far.

Since 2009 I have been a student of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. After twelve years wandering around in other traditions like Zen, Gelugpa, Kagyupa and Nyingmapa I finally found my roots in Bon. The *Soul Retrieval* seminar in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 2010 was very important to me because there ended a long journey. Since I was a little child I was different from other children. It was like I was much older and understood more.

When I was a teenager my life was complicated and again I was different in a way I managed these difficulties in my life with some kind of wisdom. People didn't understand my ways of coping with painful situations, but were also very intrigued. I had visions and dreams during daytime. I had dreams about a monastery, but didn't know what it was. I have been talking to beings in the unseen world since I was a little child and they taught me how to meditate and deal with difficulties.

When I was twenty-six, I discovered the way I coped with difficulties and the way I believe we can live our lives comes from Buddhist point of view. At that time started my quest. I wanted to understand where this knowledge within comes from. I had many teachers and learned many meditation techniques, but still it wasn't the same knowledge like the knowledge my heart was showing me.

In 2009 I read a book written by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. I had to put the book several times beside me because I couldn't read any longer because of my tears. I was very confused, but at the same time very thankful. I have had a healing practice since 2004 and people come to me with all kind of questions. I am also a teacher and teach about meditation and how to cope with difficulties. And in this book I read my own words! I took the notes I made years before when I



taught other people, and the words were exactly the same like the one I read in Rinpoche's book.

This was not easy, because it made me feel crazy, having no respect, being arrogant, or wanting to be a special person. But that was not the case. I struggled a lot while reading the book, like I struggled my whole life with this inner knowledge. Is it allowed to have such knowledge? What do I have to do? "What is happening?", I thought. So I decided to go to a seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Amsterdam. It was my first introduction to the Bon tradition. It felt like coming home.

In October 2010 Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *Soul Retrieval* from Dzogchen point of view in Amsterdam. During this seminar we waved with the *Dadar*. It is like an antenna. A stick with colored drapery. I waved with this *Dadar* and the visions came like I was really on that mountain in Tibet and became very emotional.

During the break I wanted to ask Rinpoche about something he told during the teachings. Just a simple question. So I knelt down next to him and suddenly very deep emotions came on the surface, I was deeply grateful. I couldn't help myself crying and couldn't stop either. Rinpoche was very surprised. But, then he surprised me! He told me it was very important for me to go to America and learn the traditional *Soul Retrieval* from the causal path.

Because, he told me, I did this same practice a long, long time ago. He told me about my strong







A *Torma*, *Dadar* and *Mirror*, all ritual objects from the *Soul Retrieval Practice*.

karmic connection to this practice. He also told me about shaman people in Tibet who are also *Tantric* or *Dzogchen* practitioners and help other people. They are clairvoyants, like me, and work with the elements and the spirits. It was like someone was telling me I am not crazy or schizophrenic! I was very surprised.

And so I went to America. This was a big adventure. My husband had to take many days off work. Our son is mentally handicapped, deaf and autistic. So, we had to hire a professional caretaker to take care of him and that was very expensive. But my husband said I had to go, because this is where I would find my answers. And so I did. May 2011 I travelled for the first time in my life by plane, to Serenity Ridge. It was amazing, because I finally found my roots.

The *Soul Retrieval* in the causal path is very different from the one Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught during the seminar in Amsterdam. It takes about seven hours to do the whole ritual. Luckily we also learn the short form! It is a beautiful ritual with many recitations, mantra's, *tormas*, melodies and visualizations. And drum and bell of course. It is very complicated because of the

many, many details.

The ritual is about calling the spirits and learning about why people get mentally or physically ill. It tells about the elements, life force and lifespan. About how the elements can be stolen, damaged or exhausted by internal or external factors. But also about many more theoretical knowledge about the soul. We learn about the Long Life practice of Tsewang Rigdzin and about two other texts and how to use these.

We have to do a 'white retreat' before we go to America in October. I have planned to do the exam in October. After passing the exam I am allowed to do this ritual to help other people. Like I did before in a previous life. I hope I will succeed, because it is very difficult to learn. Because we are the first students, the teachers Geshe YongDong and Geshe Nyima Kunchap had to organize many things to make this possible. Many lessons aren't ready yet and we don't have all the material yet, so I am a little afraid I am not going to pass this exam. But I will try to do so.

I am very thankful I did learn this ritual. It is very powerful. But I also noticed all of the other





practices like *Tsa Lung*, *Sang Chöd* and *Sür Chöd*, Dawa Gyaltsen, *Phowa* or other ones are coming together like a big jigsaw puzzle. It has deepened my understanding of Tantric and Dzogchen practices I am practicing in daily life. It's like understanding the floor that belongs to a room I was sitting in to do my Tantric and Dzogchen practices.

There are about thirty-six people coming from places like America, Mexico, Chile, Australia and only two people from Europe. One of the

European people comes from Sweden and there is me. I heard rumors about this Soul Retrieval study will be repeated someday.

When you want to talk with me about this ritual, my experiences or if you have questions about it you can contact me at:

[bloembergcindy@gmail.com](mailto:bloembergcindy@gmail.com).

**Text by Cindy Bloemberg**

Photos by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and courtesy of Cindy Bloemberg

## Soul and Life-Force Retrieval

The Tibetan people traditionally view the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and space as pervading all of life and as the essential components of our entire worldly existence. The soul (*la*) is said to be composed of these elements at a very subtle level — and it is believed that a traumatic event or other shock can cause an individual to lose connection with the elements and become dispirited.

The ancient shamanic rites of soul retrieval (*la gu*) and life-force retrieval (*tse gu*) from the Mother Tantra of the Bon tradition are methods of calling on the living essence of the elements — the elemental spirits — to balance and heal the individual.

Just attending the ritual in itself brings a healing effect. Students receiving the teachings addition-

ally learn how to diagnose the need for soul retrieval as well as how to perform it.

Through ritual and meditation practice, they learn to overcome negative influences and bring back the positive qualities that are missing or reinforce the qualities that are weakened in themselves or in others. Cultivating these personal qualities, in turn, serves as a foundation for spiritual awakening.

In-depth information about the natural elements can be found in Tenzin Rinpoche's book *Healing With Form, Energy and Light: The Five Elements in Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra and Dzogchen*, (Snow Lion, 2002).

Source: [www.ligmincha.org](http://www.ligmincha.org)





# WHAT THINGS ARE

From space  
I see  
come forth the light

From the light  
I see  
things take form

Every thing is light  
Light is space

Why fear forms  
They are only light  
and light has never destroyed anyone



Why turn your eyes aside  
before this light  
since it is only space  
and space has never blinded anyone

It is not that “they say it”  
we are face to face

It is not that I believe it  
I have it before my eyes

Unto the infinite

*Christiane Bozza*

Translation by Birrell Walsh  
Photo by Christiane Bozza



# HOMAGE TO KUNTUZANGPO

Self-born, generated from ashes  
Free of intention you leave thought  
As it is.

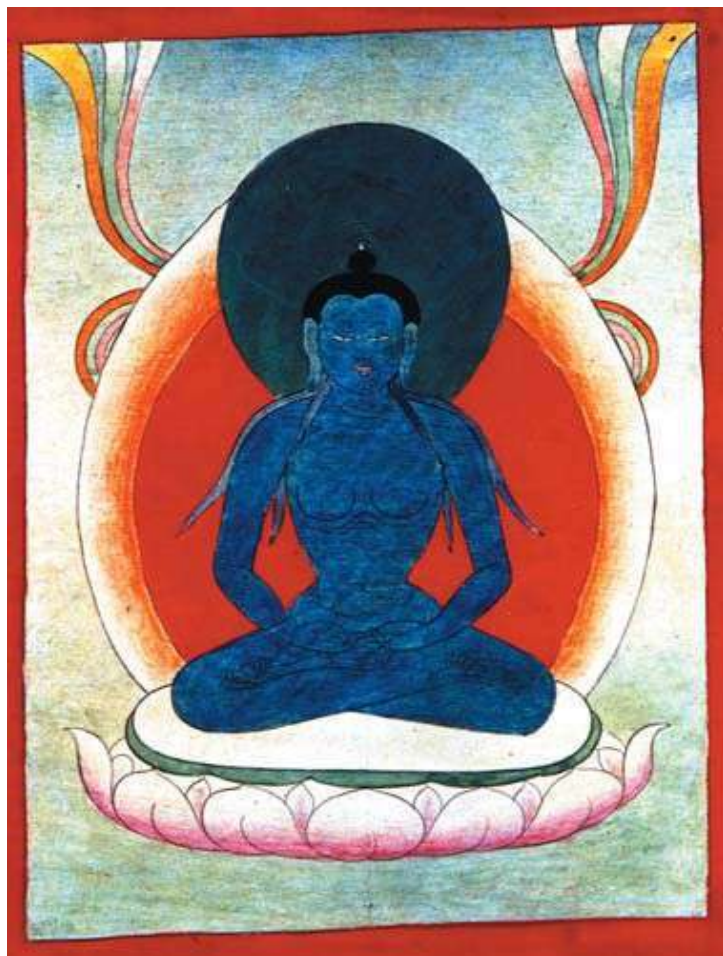
Gem of fulfillment, unknown siddha  
Of a simple wisdom which liberates all.

As a beacon of hope for the lost  
You remain. I will simply sit here  
Shredding this ego, severed to pieces.

Placing at your feet what is seen in the mirror  
Under your bodhi tree I rest tired  
Of lifetimes of struggle.

With you as my sole refuge  
Covered by my own ashes  
Eternally I dwell silent.

*Pier Colonna*





# ZOOM IN/ZOOM OUT – LIBERATION OF NOW

Where there is emptiness  
there is space.  
Where there is space,  
there is silence.  
Where there is silence,  
there is awareness.  
Where there is awareness,  
there is trust.

Where there is trust,  
there is warmth.  
Where there is warmth  
there is union.  
Where there is union,  
there is connection.  
Where there is connection,  
there is energy.

Where there is energy,  
there is light.  
Where there is light,  
there is life.  
Where there is life,  
there is creation.  
Where there is creation,  
there is bliss.

Where there is bliss,  
there is enlightenment.  
Where there is enlightenment,  
there is silence.  
Where there is silence,  
there is space.

Your own natural, given space  
to keep on shining,  
unconditionally — liberating Yourself —  
experience Now.

*Nyima Jigme (t.a.) Hachi*

Photo: photoshop-painted by Nyima



# REST IN THE NATURE OF MIND

From March 22 – 24, 2013 John Jackson led the *Red Garuda* practice in Buchenau, Germany. On Saturday, after we watched the live Internet teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, John talked about how can we integrate the practice of the *Red Garuda* with the practice of the *Inner Refuge*. Here is an edited transcript of his explanation.

Traditionally there are three types of Refuge: the *Sutric Refuge*, the *Tantric Refuge* and the *Dzogchen Refuge*. We will discuss each of these and then examine the *Inner Refuge* that Rinpoche speaks of, and how it relates to the traditional refuges. Fundament to all these is the term Refuge. What exactly does Refuge mean? It means different things to different people, but generally it is our source of wisdom. What do we look to for our source of wisdom? What do we look to in a time of difficulty and trial? And what do we look to for the enlightened vision of what might be?

In the *Sutric Refuge* we take Refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The Buddha represents the enlightened mind, the Dharma the great body of teachings, and Sangha the community of practitioners. This is called the path of the virtuous adherers, specifically the path of monks and nuns, those who cultivate virtuous qualities and try to avoid any negativities in life.

The *Tantric Refuge* is in *Lama*, the teacher, *Yidam*, the enlightened manifestation, and *Khandro*, the supporter of manifestation. The Refuge prayers that we say as part of many of our practices are drawn from the *Ma Gyud*, or *Mother Tantra*. In this system the Lama is the representative of the Buddhamind. It is said that the Lama, our teacher, is even more precious than the Buddha, because our Lama is actually the one who gives transmission into the teachings rather than the historical Buddha. That is why the Lama in the *Tantric Refuge* holds a similar place as the Buddha held in the *Sutric* system. The *Yidam* is in a place similar to the Dharma, because in the Tantric system the *Yidam* gives the direct transmission of wisdom and energy. So rather than emphasizing the study of the teachings, through the practice of the *Yidam* we receive the essence of the teachings



directly from the source. The *Khandros* are the support, for they are the helpers, the active energetic manifestations of enlightenment. They have a parallel to the community, the sangha, because they are like a spiritual community supporting you in your *Tantric* practices.

In the Dzogchen teachings the Refuge is said to be in *Tsa*, *Lung* and *Tigle*. To translate that, *Tsa* would be the subtle energetic channels in the body. *Lung* is the wind or energy that moves through these channels. *Tigle* are the spheres of wisdom lights that arise during the practices. In many Tantric and Dzogchen practices *Tsa* and *Lung* are used, because they work with the channels, the chakras and the wind, and the subtle energetic results. In Dzogchen the result is many times through the *Tigle*, a direct insight or wisdom.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has evolved a whole new language in *The Three Doors*, where he talks about Stillness, Silence and Spaciousness. I have known Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche for twenty-two years, and over all that time I have observed him progressively making his teachings simpler and simpler and simpler, trying to reach the broadest





possible audience. This new language is the result of the simplification of the Dzogchen view. He has created a new language, one which he has drawn directly from the ancient teachings, that is beautifully suited to modern times.

Through Stillness one learns to discover the Nature of Mind. Through Silence of just listening and using the *Five Warrior Syllables* one learns to enter the Nature of Mind. Through the *Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltsen*, a traditional Dzogchen practice, one enjoys and explores the Nature of Mind. We use this particular language because we wish to make it accessible to people who are not Buddhist and may not even be interested in Buddhism. What we are all experiencing is an evolution of spiritual ideas, changing day to day. There are six teachers for The Three Doors Academy for the three regions of Europe, the US, and Latin America, and we periodically meet and talk about what is going on in our own practice and in our teachings. And one of the topics we always discuss is: “How is Rinpoche teaching now?” because his language is constantly evolving and changing. This is a bit of a challenge for everyone, because it is ever evolving. But it is said, “Unless something is growing, it is dying.” What we see evolving is a ‘second path’. Through The Three Doors programs a path is open to many more people, because it does not require being a Buddhist. Rinpoche is very excited about this program, for being able to disseminate these practices in many different contexts will be a great benefit to our society. We are going to see many different manifestations of the Three Doors teaching in secular formats.

But at the same time we will also continue to offer teachings that are a pure Bon-Buddhist format as well. Last year I taught the *Red Garuda* practice in Ireland, and there was a practitioner attending who had been studying with Rinpoche for some time, that had a strong analytical mind and a regular practice. After we had practiced for two days she raised her hand and asked: “Why

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



In the teachings it is said there are 84,000 methods for the 84,000 thoughts. Each person is different. Each person will connect with the practices in a different way. That is why there is such a variety of teachings, because there are so many different people that come to the teachings with different tendencies and backgrounds. Some will resonate with one teaching, and some will with another,

but you don't know which will be the most effective for you until you try them. It is said that when you rest in the *Inner Refuge* all the perfected qualities are present. In the same way it is said that when you completely manifest the *Red Garuda* all the enlightened qualities manifest. But there is a big difference in how we get there, and in our experiences that arise along the path. The *Red Garuda* has an incredible power to give us the self-confidence and energy that help us manifest in the world. The fire of the *Red Garuda* is an energy that gives us great creativity and incredible life force. If this is something that you particularly need, the *Red Garuda* is well suited as your practice.

**Transcription by Ton Bisscheroux**

**Edited by John Jackson**

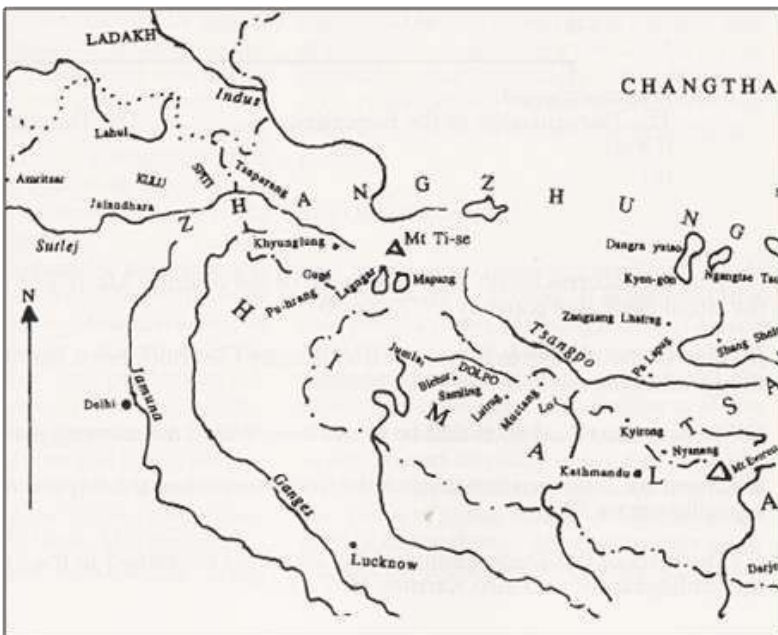
Photos by Maria Boehm and Oliver Wirtz



# THE EXPERIENTIAL TRANSMISSION OF ZHANG ZHUNG

Maybe you have heard of *The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, or the *Oral Tradition of Zhang Zhung* or the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud*. What kind of teaching is it, what does *Zhang Zhung* mean, and what is the importance of this teaching? Frits de Vries, participating in the five-year training in Maria Alm, Austria, writes about his own experience and quotes several books in an attempt to answer these questions.

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explained in his book *Wonders of the Natural Mind* (1, p. 43), that up until the seventh century A.D. there was a separate state called Zhang Zhung, comprising all of Western Tibet around Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar (2):



Detail of the map of Tibet, with Mt. Ti-se (Skt. Mt. Kailash) in the centre.

The last king of this state was King Ligmincha. These Bon Dzogchen teachings originate from the area of Zhang Zhung. The *Oral Tradition of Zhang Zhung* is the oldest and most important cycle of Bon Dzogchen teachings in Yungdrung Bon. Now, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is the holder of all the Yungdrung transmission lines. He is the most senior teacher of the Bon tradition and is considered the world's foremost expert on Bon.

The importance Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche attributes to this cycle was expressed in the very first introductory lesson at the starting of the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* teaching cycle in Austria in October 2010. Rinpoche told a story from his youth. While he was still a young boy he asked himself the question: "What if you could carry only one book in your life, just one practice book. What would that be?" He knew the answer back then and to this day it continues to be: *The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* (in short continued here as: ZZNG). The reason is that it takes the practitioner from basic exercises to the very end: liberation.

In *Wonders of the Natural Mind* Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche explains briefly the three Dzogchen streams in the Bon tradition, each stream holding its own practices, transmissions and lineage of masters (1, p. 54-55). The ZZNG is one of these three and it has a special status in Bon because it has never been hidden as a treasure and has an uninterrupted oral transmission lineage going back to Buddha Tonpa Shenrap himself. Including the necessary preliminary training, ZZNG offers a complete path to liberation in one single life. Dzogchen (*Rdzogs chen* or *Atiyoga*) is the only path in Tibetan Buddhism that promises you can attain liberation in this very life from the unending cycle of *samsara*.

The Dzogchen teachings are also found in the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, going back to Buddha Shakyamuni. The Dzogchen teachings are the highest in both schools. From a clarification by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche you can read about the similarities and differences (1, p. 53-54) on Dzogchen between the Yungdrung Bon and the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism. As the famous Dzogchen master Namkhai Norbu has pointed out, these teachings are in essence not different (3, p. 28): "Dzogchen is not a school or sect, or a religious system. It is simply a state of knowledge which masters have transmitted beyond any limits of sect or monastic tradition."





The Dzogchen teachings are the most precious teachings in the Yungdrung Bon as well as in the Nyingma school; they are an important connection between both schools.

### **Orientation: Dzogchen – liberation in one single life**

We know Dzogchen has certain special qualities. A remarkable quality is that Dzogchen is not a privilege of a religion, a school, a philosophy or a culture, as Namkhai Norbu has stated.

Even the name Dzogchen is not a privilege. Other names might be used for the same path, as for instance the name *Mahamudra* in the Tibetan Kagyu school instead of Dzogchen (4, p. 34-41).

So the main experience of Dzogchen called *rigpa* is in Bon the same as the Nyingma *rigpa*. The books of the contemporary masters of both schools use the same word.

You don't need to have a special education or profession for the Dzogchen exercises. In *The Introduction to Awareness: Natural Liberation through Naked Perception* Padmasambhava states in his conclusion (5): “Nonetheless even a cowherd will attain liberation if he or she engages in experiential cultivation.” What is a cowherd in Western, modern society: a garbage man, a mailman, a dish washer? Anyway it means the Dzogchen experience of *rigpa* is open for everybody. However this ‘experiential cultivation,’ cultivation like taking care of a delicate growing flower, can only happen after first recognizing or have a glimpse of the state of *rigpa* or else you have no idea what to cultivate.

The special state of knowledge in Dzogchen is thus called *rigpa*. In his speech in London back in 1984, titled *Hitting the Essence in Three Words*, His Holiness the Dalai Lama took some time explaining some special qualities of Dzogchen. The Dalai Lama referred to the three famous final words of the first human Dzogchen master Garab Dorje.

As H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche pointed out Garab Dorje, might be the same person as an important Bon teacher named Zhang Zhung Garab (6, p. 28-30).

**Preparation phase: Are you ready for the Dzogchen path?**

The Dalai Lama emphasized the difference between the first eight Nyingma paths and the ninth path. The first eight paths are based on ordinary awareness and the highest path is based on pure, intrinsic or self awareness also known as *rigpa* (7): “..... in Dzogchen the whole path is based on this *rigpa*: first you are introduced to it directly, and then you put it in practice.”

Ordinary awareness is based on the use of concepts, with which you can teach, explain, discuss and communicate experiences. The experience of this pure awareness on the other hand is ineffable, so you cannot talk about it. In the introduction to the translation of famous Chöying Dzöd of Longchenpa (8) it is stated as: “Dzogchen, on the other hand, solely maintains intrinsic awareness, *rigpa*, and uses it as the path. It does not employ concepts, since concepts are the province of mind, and Dzogchen involves meditation on intrinsic awareness after distinguishing mind from intrinsic awareness.”



Garab Dorje, with right-hand *mudra* of ‘Direct Introduction’ (4, p. 39)

You might say then the Dzogchen path has a great advantage to be conceptually easy to understand, since *concepts* are not involved. You only have to work on one concept-free, unspeakable, ineffable



experience the rest of the Dzogchen path towards your liberation: the experience of *rigpa*. In his introduction to the *Masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyengyud*, H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche warns us not to take Dzogchen lightly, although it seems easy (6, p. 8): *“Dzogchen sometimes seems easy but it is very hard, very hard. We are always saying that we need to purify ourselves in many ways, but here we say there is only the Natural State, so although it sometimes looks easy, in fact the Natural State is very difficult to realize.”*

That is why you need a fully qualified Dzogchen master to point the Natural State (*rigpa*) out to you. Reading holy books is not sufficient. As Namkhai Norbu concluded after he received transmission from his master Changchub Dorje (9, p. 38): *“And I understood that the principle of transmission is not just the performance of rituals or initiations, or the giving of intellectual explanations. That day my mental constructions completely collapsed.”*



Rigpa - open awareness

© Tenzin Wangyal

A gradual, step-wise, conceptual instruction to obtain the state of *rigpa* is not possible. You need a master to point it out to you. Namkhai Norbu, who invited Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche to Europe in 1989, concludes (9, p. 113): *“The state of rigpa is the pillar of the Dzogchen teachings, and it is this state that the master seeks to transmit in the Direct Introduction.”*

### Do you have the qualities of a Dzogchen practitioner?

Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche emphasizes the indispensability of the *rigpa* exercises when working with the intrinsic awareness. He clarified the Tibetan word [*rig pa rkyang dad*] from the *Dzogchen text on Meditation* as meaning: the

Dzogchen practitioner should have the quality to be committed to pursue a single state of awareness, *rigpa*. Apart from this quality, a Dzogchen practitioner should have also the qualities to be fully motivated to reach enlightenment, to have full devotion to the teachers, to the lineage, to the teachings and the ‘not grasping’ samsara quality. This is a friendly expression. Other Dzogchen texts speak about arousing ‘disgust’ of samsara. Also the moods of disenchantment with the samsaric body, speech and mind can be seen as a sign of progress with your preliminary practices (10). The best or foremost practitioner, satisfying all the required other meditation qualities, needs no more than the quality of pursuing *rigpa* to go on. No other practice is necessary. The lesser or more lazy practitioner needs to do also supporting exercises. For the aspiring Dzogchen practitioner it is important to know these qualities.

### Phase 1: The preliminary exercises

You can get in touch with *rigpa* through the preliminary exercises, which are part of the ZZNG. They should lead to a first glimpse of *rigpa*. In general the so called *Ngondro* program is considered as the indispensable Dzogchen preparation. According to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche the *Ngondro* is a prerequisite for continuing to study and practice of the Bon Dzogchen path ZZNG.

Dudjom Rinpoche, the famous contemporary Nyingma master, writing in great detail about the preliminary practices, also maintains (11): *“The realization of the teachings of the Great Perfection depends entirely on the preliminary practices, the ngöndro.”*

The traditional Tibetan Buddhist *Ngondro* training takes a lot of time. You can get an impression from the generally recommended book *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* of Patrul Rinpoche (12). This book about the preliminary practices takes a few hundred pages to fully explain these practices. The comparable ZZNG *Ngondro* practiced as a full-time job in a monastery takes six to nine months to complete, according to Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. When, as a lay practitioner, you can only meditate a few hours a day, next to a job, family and friends, consider to spend several years on this training. Rinpoche suggests it is doable in five years spending some hours a day on the necessary practices.





## Phase 2: Recognizing *rigpa*

What can you expect as a result of this long and arduous training in the preliminary practices?

Tsoknyi Rinpoche, a contemporary Dzogchen master (13, p. 141) formulates it this way: *"(...) the ngöndro training creates tremendous merit, which makes recognizing rigpa almost unavoidable. That is what merit does. You almost have no other choice than to recognize rigpa (...)"*

John Myrdhin Reynolds makes a clear distinction between two kinds of transmission from a Dzogchen master when working on the actual experience of *rigpa* (14): *"In general, the Ngöndro represents a preparation designed to purify one's mind stream so that it becomes a suitable clean vessel to receive the full transmission from the master of the Dzogchen teachings. (...) The initial transmission includes a pointing out or direct introduction to the Natural State of the Nature of Mind and its intrinsic Awareness (rig-pa) in its nakedness, free of discursive thoughts and the normal conventional operations of the mind or the thought process."*

The direct introduction to the state of *rigpa* is given by a fully qualified master. In a monastery the monks receive this transmission after having finished the *Ngondro*. The direct introduction into the Nature of Mind is in the second ZZNG year. Part-time practicing western laypersons have not finished the *Ngondro* by then.

## Phase 3: Getting confidence in this State

After years of training you might think the first recognition of *rigpa* in 'actuality' is the endpoint of your meditation. But it is not. It is only the starting point of the Dzogchen practice and study. So in an indefinite number of years training we get confidence in *rigpa*. Adeu Rinpoche expresses it this way (15): *"Recognizing rigpa is only the beginning of the Dzogchen path. We need to follow through and it requires a lot of perseverance. Giving the pointing-out instruction is like pointing to the ground and saying, 'This is the road to Lhasa.' If you just stand there, you will never get to Lhasa."*

According to an instruction from a talk by H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche about the Natural State: *"We must discover the Natural State of Rigpa within ourselves over and over again, so that we have no doubt about it."*

## The last phase of Dzogchen

But when this Ngondro training is finally successful and the internal and external signs appear, you are ready for the 'offering' of your experience to your master and to receive the full transmission from him. When such an experience happens you can go on the road, with the main Dzogchen practices of *Trekchö* and *Thögel* (1, ch. 15) for the rest of your life, on the shortest and highest Buddhist path: liberation in one single life. *The Experiential Transmission of Zhang Zhung*, or *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* is such a precious path.

## In conclusion

Dzogchen as a lifelong learning process is clearly summarized by Patrul Rinpoche (12, p. 256): *"Of all that we perceive as forms and sounds there is nothing that does not arise from the mind. To realize that the mind is awareness indivisible from emptiness is the view. Keeping this realization in mind at all times, and never being distracted from it, is meditation. To practice the two accumulations as magical illusion from within that state is action. If you make a living experience of this practice, it will continue in your dreams. If it comes in the dream state, it will come at the moment of death. And if it comes at the moment of death it will come in the intermediate state. If it comes in the intermediate state you may be certain of attaining supreme accomplishment."*



H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche  
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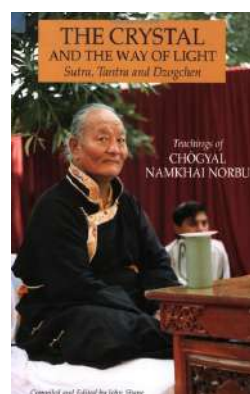
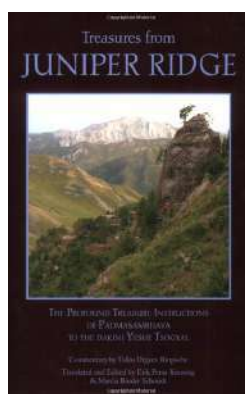
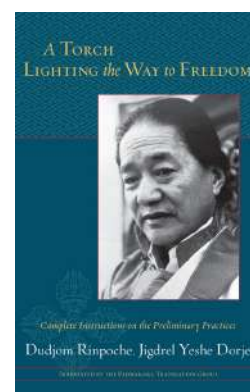
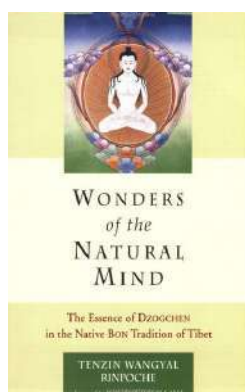
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## Text by Frits de Vries





# THE STORY OF TAPIHRITSA

In the European Summer Retreat 2013 in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche teaches from the *Pith Realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters*. In the *Voice Of Clear Light*, May 2005, there was an article titled “The Pantheon Of The Bon” – a column devoted to deepening our connection to our great Bon family. Here we reprint the article, because Tapihritsa is one of those great Masters.

“Many of us are familiar with the image of Tapihritsa, central to our Bon practice and to our shrines and thangkas. The white luminous figure of Tapihritsa in meditation posture radiating light and encircled by rainbow light is often visualized as representing the realization of all the masters of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyu lineage, one of the three Bon dzogchen lineages.

At a Ngondro retreat with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung, he strongly urged us to learn about the masters and their lives and to recognize them as real beings like us. I was a bit awe-struck to hear him say that Tapihritsa learned these same teachings and practices that we are learning – just like us. Khen Rinpoche assured us that through connecting with the masters we will find inspiration and develop devotion. And through devotion we will open our hearts.



Here is “The Story of Tapihritsa” as told by Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche during the Summer Retreat in 2000 (excerpted from the edited transcript of his oral teachings translated by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche). Knowing the details of Tapihritsa's very real life makes the “Invocation of Tapihritsa,” an offering composed and sung by Nangzher Lopo, Tapihritsa's student, all the more inspiring! It seems the perfect accompaniment to Lopo's great story. Enjoy!”

**Aline Fisher, editor Voice Of Clear Light**

“Tapihritsa was an ordinary person from a nomadic family in the country of Zhang Zhung. The main teacher of Tapihritsa was Dawa Gyaltsen. Tapihritsa practiced for nine years before he attained illumination. The place where he practiced is a holy place outside Mount Kailash, a place called Senge Tap. After nine years of practice there, Tapihritsa achieved the rainbow body. Tapihritsa was a contemporary of the king of Zhang Zhung, Ligmincha, and the king of Tibet, Tritson Detsun, and other famous yogis of Bon. Nangzher Lopo was a very famous master, a knowledgeable and very accomplished practitioner, famous at that time in Zhang Zhung. Later he became the main student of Tapihritsa. Even though Tapihritsa had been taught by Nangzher Lopo before, Nangzher Lopo had had a problem with pride and had not been fully realized. Therefore, at this time, Tapihritsa emanated as a young boy and came down to the village where a rich man, Yungdrung Gyal, the main sponsor of Nangzher Lopo, lived. Tapihritsa came in the form of a young boy seeking employment in the family of Yungdrung Gyal, and he served them for a number of years. Nangzher Lopo was meditating on a mountain where there were bushes, and Tapihritsa was taking care of the family's animals. These very places can be identified today in the Western part of Tibet. Today when people go to these powerful places they have a lot of experiences and visions.

Some people who don't know the history of the place think they are seeing ghosts or something.

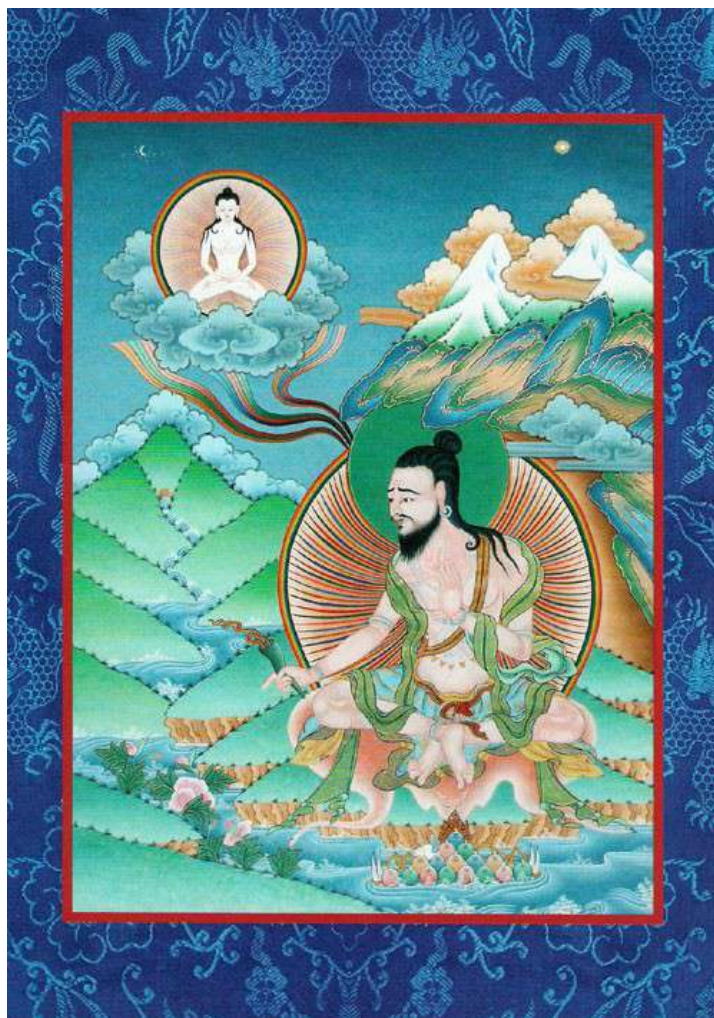
Tapihritsa was carrying a lot of wood in his bag for cooking food. He went to visit Nangzher Lopo to pay respect. Nangzher Lopo hesitated when he saw the behavior of this young boy. The way he was paying respect seemed special and mature, and he thought, “Who is this guy?” So Nangzher Lopo said to the boy that it looked like he had worked through some doctrines and tenets. He asked him, “Who is your teacher and what is your



practice? What are you carrying? Why are you behaving this way?" The young boy said, "My teacher is this vision. Visions are my teacher. My practice is thought-less, my meditation is all sentient beings. What I am carrying is my thoughts. I am behaving like this because I am a servant of the family of samsara."

Since the young boy answered in that way, Nangzher Lopo was surprised and they entered into a debate. Nangzher Lopo said, "If these visions are your master, it probably means you don't have a master; if your meditation is thought-less, you don't need food; if you are meditating on sentient beings, that means you are enlightened; if you are carrying thoughts, you don't have desire; and if you are a servant of samsaric beings, you don't suffer!"

The young boy answered again (and in this debate the teachings have already begun). "If you don't realize that vision is your master, who taught Samantabhadra?" asked the young boy. "My practice is thought-less because in the base there is no thought, and when there is a thought, there is no practice. I am meditating on all sentient beings because I don't separate or discriminate among others, because if one is discriminating there won't be meditation. I am carrying thoughts. That means I don't have thoughts. Because I don't have thoughts, I don't have desire. I realize that everything is illusion. I help all sentient beings because I don't make a distinction between suffering and not suffering."



Nangzher Lopo and Tapihritsa

© Ligmincha Institute

Then the debate continued. "If you are that good," says Nangzher Lopo, "we need to go in front of the king and debate. If you win, you will become my master. If I win, you will be punished by the king." Tapihritsa had a big laugh. "All karma and conditions, causes and results are false." Basically, he was teasing Nangzher Lopo, saying, "All these meditators are prisoners of

thoughts; they keep thoughts in a prison and are prison guards! All these intellectuals who debate don't realize they cast a net in the darkness. All these discussions are like a joke and a play, a weapon of words. All the sacred tantras are merely elaborations of one's mind. All these knowledgeable persons are meaningless – they know and have no experience." So he was teasing, saying, "These great views are bubbles of words – all these things are meaningless and make no sense. The real condition cannot be changed. The real essence cannot be practiced. Self-arising wisdom can-

not be obscured. When you realize, you cannot re-realize or try to realize again. So what is the matter? Who is complaining?"

Now Nangzher Lopo was getting a bit irritated and realized this was not just a boy, but a special person. He was shocked and could almost not speak. In that moment of shock and surprise, he looked at the young boy who was sitting up in space and that is how we draw him – in space and in the rainbow. So Nangzher Lopo was really sad, realizing all this bad karma he had created by





having the wrong view. He did prostrations and confession, realizing the boy was a manifestation of his teacher. Then he requested the teaching. Right at that moment, the owner of all the animals, Yungdrung Gyal, came and saw this discussion. He said, "What are you doing there all this time? Where are all the animals?"

So immediately Nangzher Lopo – who knew Yungdrung Gyal very well – said, "What bad karma we created! You put the master as a servant and I said all these things to him!" Yungdrung Gyal went into shock. Those shocks are good. When you wake up, you are in a different place. So the young boy went up into space and said, "I am Tapihritsa and I came especially for you."

So this is the story. Then Tapihritsa began teaching Yungdrung Gyal and Nangzher Lopo. He said, "Listen carefully and do not be distracted." So both were clearly listening. Do you understand

who Tapihritsa is now? This is not just a story; it is a fact; it happened. It happened during the seventh or eighth century. The teachings are the Dzogpa Chenpo, the Great Perfection.

The result is the rainbow body. There is no doubt. If there is doubt in you, it is your karma. (Actually, Tapihritsa asked them to listen carefully, but at the same time he was speaking to all beings, and Lopo is saying that basically he is talking to all of you.)"



### **INVOCATION OF TAPIHRITSA – composed and sung by Nangzher Lopo to his teacher, Tapihritsa**

How marvelous!

You are the heart emanation of Küntu Zangpo,  
Your body appears like a white luminous crystal,  
clear and without impurities, radiating light in the  
ten directions.

You are naked, without ornaments, signifying the  
innermost essence, the primordial state.

Endowed with the two-fold wisdom of emptiness  
and skillful means,

With compassion you contemplate the benefit of  
beings.

You embody dzogchen, the great perfection,  
supreme among the teachings, the essence of the  
awareness of the realized ones, the peak of the  
way of realization, the heart of the tantras, of the  
essential scriptures, and of the secret instructions.

You point out the natural state, the base that is  
self-clear of delusion, which is samsara, of  
liberation, which is nirvana, and of the defects  
and virtues of sounds, lights, and rays.

Having completely dispelled the darkness of the  
minds of beings,

You enable us to experience the base as empty  
and rootless,

And simultaneously realize all stages of the path.  
Experiences and realization become manifest, and  
samsara and nirvana liberate in one's natural  
mind.

In that vastness, the three dimensions, which are  
the fruit, are arrayed.

With one-pointed devotion I pray to you,  
Tapihritsa, protector of beings.

Grant the blessings of bestowing the empower-  
ment upon me and other beings.

May the external, internal, and secret obstacles  
be pacified.

And may the error of self-grasping, which is  
ignorance, be liberated.

Having recognized self-awareness, may the view  
and the conduct be fully realized.

Please bestow upon me, at this very moment,  
The great meaning beyond intellect of the  
primordial base, empty and rootless.

To you, Tapihritsa, noble protector of beings, I  
pray:

May the beings of the six realms be protected by  
your compassion

And may my mind be liberated!

**Text selected by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos by Joop van Spronsen and courtesy of Ligmincha  
Institute



## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2013 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

When	Where	What	More information
August 3 – 25	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Tibetan Sound Healing — The Five Warrior Seed Syllables	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
August 30 – September 1	Copenhagen, Denmark	Weekend seminar: Living with Joy, Dying in Peace	<a href="http://www.bongaruda.dk">www.bongaruda.dk</a>
September 6 – 8	Bulle, Switzerland	Weekend seminar: Awakening of the Luminous Mind: the gift of inner refuge	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.ch">www.ligmincha.ch</a>
September 13 – 15	Moscow, Russia	Weekend seminar: The Practice of the Six Lamps	<a href="http://www.bonpo.info">www.bonpo.info</a>
September 21 – October 20	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Awakening the Sacred Arts — Discovering your creative potential	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
October 12, 21.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Live webcast from the annual Fall Retreat	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
October 15 – 20	Maria Alm, Austria	Retreat: Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud, part 4	<a href="http://ligmincha.at">ligmincha.at</a>
November 16 – December 8	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Tibetan Dream Yoga	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
December 14 15.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Free full-day live webcast	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
December 29 21.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Live webcast from the annual Winter Retreat	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>

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

**Free internet teachings and videos on [YouTube](#) and [Ustream](#)**







# Ligmincha Europe Magazine

**# 10 – Autumn 2013**



His Holiness at Serenity Ridge

Meet the German Sangha

What's Happened in Europe

Who is feeling guilty?



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

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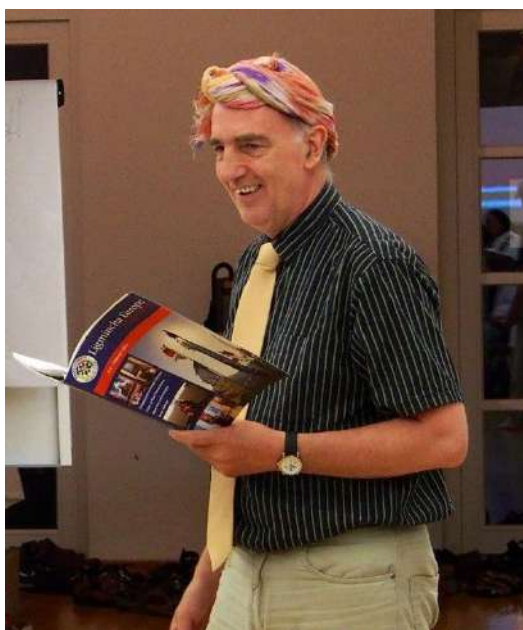
# GREETINGS AND NEWS FROM THE EDITORS

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

In 2011 we issued the first Newsletter for the European sangha when Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche celebrated his 50th birthday in Nepal with sangha members from all over the world. We then called it the *European Bon Garuda Newsletter*. In the following months many things changed. The layout of the newsletter changed. We decided to call it *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*, since Rinpoche had decided to change the names of the organizations in Europe from 'Bon Garuda' to 'Ligmincha'. And now we have reached number 10.

I think the way they present themselves is beneficial for all of us, because every sangha and sangha member has his/her own challenges, caused by a lack of openness. And by sharing them we all can learn from it. There is a report from the visit of His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche to Serenity Ridge. We share what's happened and what's going to happen in our sangha; a song performed during the Summer Retreat Party in Buchenau; a report of the *A-tri* teachings in Shenten Dargye Ling, and much more.

In the last issue, number 9, we announced that we want to give a full-coloured book of the first



Party in Buchenau, Germany: Ton was not there to promote the Ligmincha Europe Magazine, he was just a storyteller in a performance.

For me it always has felt as an honor to contribute to this Magazine, because Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and the other teachers in the Yungdrung Bon tradition have been giving us so much with their teachings and their blessings. And it is also a wonderful sangha, because many people in the sangha make it possible that this Magazine can be issued, by writing articles and poems, sharing photos and experiences, proof-reading, editing, transcribing interviews, putting it on the internet, giving feedback, and so on. In this issue we present the German sangha, and

ten issues of the *Ligmincha Europe Magazine* to: Menri Monastery, Triten Norbutse Monastery, the Lishu Institute, Serenity Ridge Retreat Center, the Chamma Ling Centers, the European Center and to H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who has a center in France. So far we have found six sponsors, and we need one or two sponsors to complete the project.

In Bon,  
**Ton Bisscheroux,**  
**Chief Editor**



# A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO BE TREASURED

**During the Summer Retreat 2013 at Serenity Ridge, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche was present, and he gave some online transmissions. Lourdes Hinojosa shares with us her personal experiences.**

For sure we are very fortunate, to be in the presence of such a high being, the head of the Bon lineage: His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, the 33rd Menri Trizin. With his deep and outstanding presence, his simple and direct ways, and an ever present joyful smile, radiating openness. As well, thanks to Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's open generosity and willingness to share the unique occasion of the two of them together presenting the precious teachings and His Holiness's blessings and transmissions. Hundreds of people around the world were able to see him, to have this unique experience, and to receive this precious gift, during the July 6th webcast, broadcast from Serenity Ridge's *Gompa*, during the 2013 Summer Retreat. Words cannot describe the richness of the whole event... but I'll do my best.

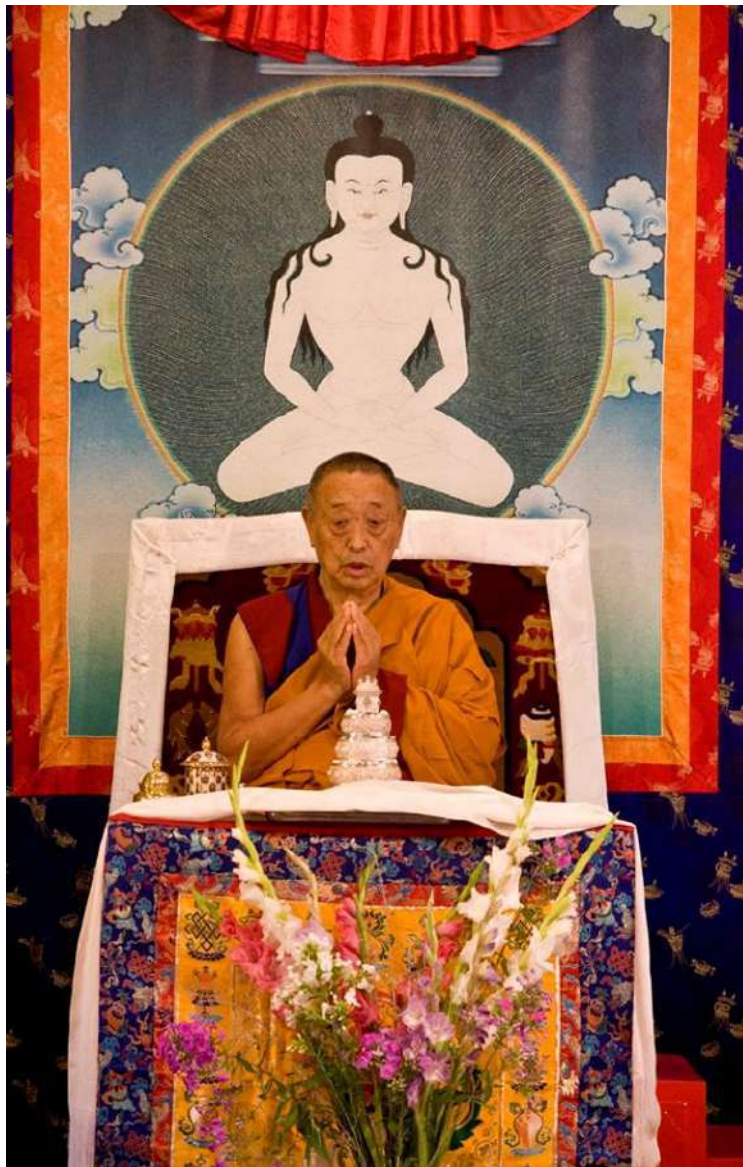
On the second week of Summer Retreat, our expectations were high. We all were so enthused to receive His Holiness' visit and many practitio-

ners were sharing their skills and inspiration to prepare Serenity Ridge Retreat Center for this such special occasion. Some were beautifully arranging the *Gompa*; others were creating a lovely Tibetan deer symbol bamboo arch at the end of the entrance road; some were hanging brand new prayer flags and some others, painting beautiful – and impermanent – colored auspicious symbols drawings on the road pavement, followed immediately by heavy rain! With loving devotion,

they drew them all again, just in time for His Holiness' arrival.

A group of us went to the airport to greet His Holiness, and his accompanying Geshe. Many of us were wearing traditional Tibetan garments. It was such a joy when, after a longer than expected wait, his familiar image finally appeared in the distance! The energy shifted as he walked by, close to all of us – the Wangyal family: Tenzin Rinpoche, Tsering Wangmo and Senghe; people from the local Tibetan community, practitioners and friends – as we all offered His Holiness our white khatas and beautiful flowers.

Then, a moment of rest: tea and biscuits were offered to all at an airport hall. Meanwhile, many others were patiently awaiting his arrival at Serenity Ridge, forming two lines by the sides of the entrance road, umbrellas and khatas in hand.







His Holiness and his accompanying Geshes were greeted there by a lively snow lion – embodied by two young practitioners – which opened the path before them. With background Tibetan ceremonial music, He blessed us all and we could see that, although being tired from the journey, he was happy to arrive and to feel our loving joy and devotion.

Then, on Friday July 5th, a Fundraising Banquet was held, to support His Holiness's children's project at Menri. We could appreciate the lovely sight

of the main table, where His Holiness, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Tulku Jorge Rene, Geshes, Tsering Wangmo and Ligmincha's board members were seated with full front view of the specially decorated dining hall. While enjoying delicious food, entertainment was provided by sangha members who joyfully played drums and musical instruments sang the Tibetan alphabet, recited heart felt poems, danced and even rapped in Tibetan. The Tibetan snow lion appeared again, now within a beautiful story which engaged even Rinpoche as well as some of the banquet guests to







Tsering Wangmo, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, His Holiness and Tulku Jorge Rene.

participate. But the peak moment was when His Holiness was handed a beautiful card, containing the information on the Long Life Mantra accumulation done with devotion specially for him, by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's students, throughout all Ligmincha Bon Buddhist Centers worldwide. We all were amazed when we learned the number: **3.090.800**. E MA HO!

The following morning, July 6th, a raising of prayer flags, special celebrations and long life prayers were held for His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his birthday.

Right after, the full day Webcast started. The magic of the Cyber Sangha gathered around the world, through Tenzin Wangyal's vision and open generosity. Broadcast from Serenity Ridge's *Gompa* – which was also packed with students – the fusion of the live sangha and the Cyber sangha took place. We were all together as one, in the presence of the 33rd Menri Trizin and Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche. What a special moment! Our hearts were filled with joy and gratitude, while His Holiness blessed us all with the transmission of the *Praise and Mantra of Sherab Chamma*, the Wisdom Loving Mother. The Webcast was being translated live into nine languages.

To view the recording of His Holiness and Tenzin

Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings – shared through the webcast with the international Cyber Sangha, please go to: [ligmincha.org](http://ligmincha.org).

His Holiness remained with us for three more wonderful days. He took time to visit the Tibetan Shop at Serenity Ridge and bless the whole place. He gave us teachings – within the *21 Nails* part 1 teaching program of Summer Retreat – as well as an initiation and another transmission, this last one shared through a spontaneous additional webcast, for the blissful delight of us all.

Finally, the time to say goodbye came. Most of the students lined up by the side of the road, holding white khatas as His Holiness passed by, and we were singing Long Life mantra with heart felt gratitude and perhaps secretly praying for this not

to be the last time we get to be in his presence. Some others, went along with him to the airport, to stay with him until the very last moment.

Thank you, dear Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, for making this experience possible for all of your students worldwide. Thank you, His Holiness Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, for giving us the gift of your precious visit, teachings, blessings and transmissions.

**Text by Lourdes Hinojosa**

Photos by Celina Mejia, Polly Turner and Regula Franz





# SHENTEN DARGYE LING: YUNGDRUNG BON IN THE WEST

With eighty-five people from all over the world we were in Shenten Dargye Ling, France, for a week's retreat in August 2013, of the *A-tri* teachings lead by H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. Here a personal account of the impressions and experiences from Frits de Vries.

Shenten Dargye Ling in France is the European outpost of the Triten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal, home of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (in short: the *Lopon*).



Shenten Dargyé Ling.

Shenten was established in 2005 as the first congregation of Yungdrung Bon practitioners in the West. It is a European centre for the preservation of the teachings of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab for coming generations. The Shenten mission is to transmit the Yungdrung Bon tradition to the West in a completely authentic way, in its entirety and at the highest quality.

It is important to note here that the *Lopon* recognises three distinct types of Bon – old Bon, which is entirely shamanistic; new or reformed Bon, which arose in response to competition from other Buddhist schools; and Yungdrung or Eternal Bon, which

is the tradition presented here. Yungdrung Bon shares many similarities with other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, but traces its origin to a much earlier teacher than Shakyamuni Buddha, namely Tonpa (Buddha) Sherab, who taught in a country to the west of Tibet. [1]

The *A-tri* (or *A-khrid*) teachings from the *Lopon* as well as the *A-tri* teachings from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche are from the same source, namely the *Zhang Zhung* Dzogchen teachings named after this country to the west of Tibet.

As far as I understand the word 'congregation', it means that in Shenten there are some resident monks, originating from Triten Norbutse Monastery, who maintain a complete daily liturgy from dawn to dusk. In addition to this, Shenten has a secular organisation responsible for the organising of retreats, like this *A-tri* retreat. The organisation of the daily meals for a large group of participants is the responsibility of the secular organisation. Outside organised retreats and short personal retreats are also possible in Shenten. More elaborate retreats are from the *Gomdra* Meditation



Triten Norbutse Monastery with monks.



school, a four years *Gomdra* teaching cycle. For more information see the Shenten Schedule on the website: [www.shenten.org](http://www.shenten.org).



The *Sang Chöd* smoke offering at daybreak.

### Back to our *A-tri* retreat.

The daily program for our *A-tri* retreat was an alternation of liturgy, teachings, meditation, eating and resting times. Like the morning of our daily program, with the smoke offering starting at 6.30 in the morning outside, followed by a meditation in the *Gompa*. And after breakfast there was another meditation, followed by teachings after a short break.

The daily program included two teaching sessions lasting two hours each, with teachings from 10.00 to 12.00 by the *Lopon* and in the afternoon from 15.00 to 17.00 by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche. The teachings given were *A-tri* Dzogchen teachings from a Tibetan text, translated on the spot and commented into English by the teachers and then translated into French by a translator. The text itself was not available in English. A recommended reference to an English text was under the title *The Stages of A-Khrid Meditation* by Per Kvaerne and Thubten K. Rikhey. The Tibetan text contains fifteen sessions of *A-tri* by Dru Gyelwa Yungdrung, who lived from 1242 to 1290 [2]. The recommended text contains a main translation of the text for the first ten sessions. Most of the teaching could be followed based on this text.

Most participants were making notes during the teachings. As you can see on the photo small writing desks were available in the *Gompa* (teaching hall) for participants sitting in the front.

In the previous year, the first four sessions were covered, this year the teachings ended with session number eight. Audio-recordings of the *A-tri* teachings for 2012 were available in the, sometimes crowded, room hosting the bookshop. I assume audio-recordings of 2013 will be available in 2014. The bookshop had a lot of printed teachings from the *Lopon* for sale, including the rare given *Yetri Thasel* teachings the *Lopon* gave in 2007 and 2008 in Pauenhof, Germany [3]. Opposite the large table of the bookshop there was also another large table, with ritual items, like statues, thangkhas and the like, as well as the usual selection of small bags and other nice small things.

For me, the most important message and eye-opener in the teachings was the use of the well-known Zhiné practice [4] as a basis (sessions 5-7) of the main practice, which is said to lead to the direct Introduction to the Nature of Mind (*rigpa*). And so, if you make a serious practice of the first seven sessions of this *A-tri* Dzogchen, there is an alternative to the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* Dzogchen program, where the elaborate, year-long *Ngöndro* leads to the Introduction to the Nature of Mind.

The teachings also put great emphasis on: signs of progress, several aspects of *rigpa*, checking *rigpa*, stabilizing and developing the ‘unspeakable’ state, as the *Lopon* again and again labelled the experience of *rigpa*. Dzogchen meditation leads to many different signs the *Lopon* explained: visions, sounds, rays, light, it all comes from your own nature. Dreams can be very supportive in



A French monk at the instruction hour, explaining the Refuge Tree.







An impressive five-feet high statue of Buddha Tonpa Shenrab in the *Gompa* of Shenten.

training the mind, because when your body dies, your mind continues to live. Then you have to remind yourself of the meaning of your former view and meditation training.

The special character of this retreat in Shenten for me was the mix of a 'normal retreat' program with the daily ceremony lead by the resident monks. A normal retreat program consists generally of listening to the teachings, doing some practice discussed in the teachings, reading advised text, etc. But the daily ceremony led by monks followed by the meditation hours four times a day, added for me something special not found in a normal retreat. After a ceremony you could meditate and sit in the quiet *Gompa* for an hour long in silence and relax or do a meditation exercise.

The meals were as usual: common meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) while talking to retreat participants, with whom you could exchange experiences. When the weather was good you could sit outside, or else place enough was inside. Coffee and the self-service was plain: free tea and instant coffee available the whole day. Several hours a day espresso-style coffee was available, which you had to pay for. Every participant was

expected to do some *karma-yoga*, by choice: helping in the kitchen, cleaning the tables, cleaning the floor, weeding the garden, etc. Well organized and not a burden to participate in.

Our retreat days were closed by a meditation session from 20.00 to 21.00 and directly followed by the daily concluding extended *Chöd* ceremony with singing, drums and bells from 21.00 to 21.30. And so the complete daily programming-schedule was indeed from dawn to dusk.

### Summary

A visit to Shenten can be recommended when considering to follow (more) teachings from the Yungdrung Bon transmission line. A visit to Shenten, with teachings from this line, can be an enriching experience. The teachings of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche are also from the same transmission line. Although teaching-styles can be very different, the underlying concepts and principles



Lopon (right) and Khenpo (left) at the traditional photo session.





Shenten stupa early evening in the moonlight.

are just the same. Also the rituals, prayers and mantras are the same. You will find there the silence and rituals of a semi-monastic environment. Follow the programming on their website: [www.shenten.org](http://www.shenten.org).

#### Numbered references

- [1] From the Preface by Richard Dixey, p. 7-8 in: Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen, 2002.
- [2] Although the recommended text was not a complete translation of all fifteen sessions, it contains also an important Introduction by Per Kvaerne, published earlier. An abridged version of all fifteen sessions can be found in Jean-Luc Archard, 2012.
- [3] The rare *Yetri Thasel* teachings are available in book form as: *Heart Essence of the Khandro*.
- [4] See Chapter 6 on *Zhiné*, in Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's *Wonders of the Natural Mind*.

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Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, *Wonders of the Natural Mind*, The Essence of Dzogchen in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet, First edition, 1993, Barrytown, Sation Hill Press; Snow Lion edition, 2000.

#### Text by Frits de Vries

Photos from the website of Tritten Norbuse Monastery and by Frits de Vries





# LOOKING FOR PERFECTION

All of the sanghas are unique, and this time you can read the story of two associations in Germany, working closely together. Ton Bisscheroux interviewed Oliver Wirtz and Florian Bruckmann, chair and vice-chair of Ligmincha Deutschland and Ulrike Bross-Kurat and Carmen Dietrich, chair and vice-chair of Ligmincha Berlin. Furthermore the Board, Council and the people who fulfill further functions introduce themselves.

**How did you first meet Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche?**

**Florian:** My friend Manuel told me that a Bonpo Lama was coming to Frankfurt; we went there and in the same evening I was completely confident with everything and it never changed. This evening was a talk about the *Nine Breathings of Purification*. Over the years previously, I read many books from Shanti Deva, Aryadeva and Madhyamika philosophy, mind, consciousness, and everything. That was heavy material, it was all circulating in my head and I could not relate it proper to myself and got a bit confused. When Rinpoche was teaching the *Nine Breathings*, it was so beautiful to recognize that the three root poisons are very concrete and inside of me. It became very clear that the teachings are really related to me and the other beings. He gave me a possibility to connect, and all the information of the philosophy I read could find their place. And now I am practicing, not thinking of practice or wishing to do something special. For me it is not interesting from which tradition the teachings

comes, first it is the teacher, than the teachings and finally the tradition. So for me there was never a problem with the Karma Kagyu tradition and Bon tradition. I once read a book by the Dalai Lama about Dzogchen and understood nothing. It was so different to the old Madhyamika text that I was working with. But Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings are so clear and accessible. Before Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's teachings, I thought: "Dzogchen, those people are crazy." I never forced to get in contact with a Dzogchen tradition, and now I find myself in the middle of it. Everything developed very naturally by itself.



**Oliver:** The first year I brought Florian to *Tummo* part two. I made it to the tent place, and I was far away from the *Gompa*. The second year when I picked Florian up from *Tummo* part three, I met Rinpoche for the first time. Rinpoche said "Welcome, and sit here." I took photos of the group in the summer of 2009 and felt how easy it was in the group and that everything was so accessible. Then I decided that I wanted to participate in a course. I am, contrary to Florian, not a book reader. Florian is a reader and a practitioner. For me it is a wonderful gift that Rinpoche finds the words that come inside of me. In May 2010 we went to Berlin for *Soul Retrieval*. At that time Nine Huber was chair, and thinking of resigning from the board. When she discussed that with Rinpoche he asked her: "Ask Oliver and Florian." On our way home Nine called us and asked: "Can we meet and discuss that you come on the board?" We said immediately yes, because when





Summer Retreat in Buchenau 2013: everybody is waiting for dinner together with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and his family.

a high lama and wonderful teacher asks you for a favor to apply such a job, saying no did not come in our mind.

**Florian:** At that time we both had various dreams with lots of auspicious signs which gave us so much confidence to do this.

**Oliver:** The dreams made us clear that “yes” was the only right answer to the question.

**Can you please tell us something about any changes you made to the board of Garuda Bön Deutschland / Ligmincha Deutschland?**

**Oliver:** Up until three years ago Nine Huber was the chair, Gabriele Penders was treasurer and Wolfgang Krebs was on the board. Three years ago Nine and Wolfgang stepped out and Florian and I came on the board. Wolfgang does still the same work, being responsible for the translations. Every now and then we still ask for Nine's support, because she has a lot of helpful experiences. Here I would like to thank Nine again because the Garuda Bön Deutschland had some challenging times. She went through that, and made it so easy for us to take over. This year we said goodbye to Gabriele as treasurer, and welcomed Elke Rung.

**Florian:** Talking about phases: year one was looking for supporting people. After the first year we had found some of the council members. They introduced themselves in this article. In year two it was learning how to move the people, which

means, how to serve their engagement and giving them tasks and bring them actively inside the association. This year we established what we could use from the US structure for Germany. We found people who engaged very much. Now, after three years everything is working very well, with not only people from Germany. We had a very good Summer Retreat with support from all participants.

**Oliver:** When we started we went through the *Ligmincha Institute Mission Statement and Structure*. We translated that into German and tried to adopt it. In our Mission Statement we also included the *Five Ways to lead with more compassion*, based on Susan Cramm, from Harvard Business Review. In short they are: assume the best in others; understand what makes them tick; serve their needs; accept responsibility; and assume the best intentions.

**Florian:** First we had to find out what to do as board. When we had decided about the structure, we had to find people. In the beginning we had been focused too much on perfection, trying to find the perfect students for the organization who would do everything perfect without making errors.... And we said “Rinpoche, there is nobody fit for the tasks,” and we expected Rinpoche to say “Oh,...”, but he said: “You have to be more open.” Then we became more open to the people, to the different shapes of the people. And when you are really open everything is working well, no





disturbances. We realized that everybody is coming from his or her own place. You have to accept that everybody has their own experience and potential to integrate into the sangha. To realize that was so helpful for us, and we saw the colorfulness and richness around. We are no longer afraid of making faults.

**Oliver:** I think the intention of perfection in an organization does not offer Space. If there is Space, there will be perfection. So, it is just the other way around. Even when you have the motivation to be perfect, you can't be perfect by then because you don't know what you don't do or what you don't know. But when you are open and you allow the energy then you can get a glimpse of perfection.

**Florian:** When we found the people we had to give them the starting point to engage. First it was like finding rocks. What to do with these rocks? We have to move them. And when we give them a little push, in relation to their natural shape they will roll by themselves, by their own energy. The nice thing is, the rocks manifested by themselves in front of us. We just had to learn, to be aware of them and to serve them accordingly.

**Oliver:** We no longer said 'no', but give people a little piece of what they need or want, which would not cost us too much energy. We started to say 'yes' and if it should not be, it would not be. But then it was not dependent on our 'no', but on a lack of energy.

**Florian:** When somebody has an idea, sometimes a crazy idea, we say "Wonderful, try it, work for it, present it, and then we see." So we don't cut the energy by saying 'no', because then the people are sad since they wanted to engage. When you are the one who is responsible, it sometimes is frightening that people have all types of ideas. Since we don't bind it, it is flourishing. During the Summer Retreat we let people move naturally. Now we feel very comfortable.

**Oliver:** We are very happy that after being three years on the board and working with the councils for two years, that we now get into a phase where people start realizing their part of responsibility and living that responsibility. Because we are spread all over Germany, we have every month an one hour Skype meeting, and everybody tells what



Volunteers making decorations for the Party in Buchenau 2013.

he/she did and what he/she is planning to do.

### **Can you tell more about the organization of the practice groups in Germany?**

**Florian:** The Berlin sangha is on one spot, while the rest of the German sangha is spread all over the country. It is very useful that they have an own association with its own board in the capital city of Germany. Ligmincha Deutschland is the umbrella for the whole sangha in Germany, and we also support practice groups in Frankfurt, Munich and Osnabruck. And when people can't go there we give them possibilities to connect and meditate through internet (Skype).

**Oliver:** Ligmincha Berlin is focused on practicing and organizing the local events. Ligmincha Deutschland does translations and focuses on infrastructure on a national scope. The other cities don't have such a big sangha to have such an association.

**Florian:** In Frankfurt we practice every second Tuesday and we are five to ten people. Mostly we practice the teachings from the last Summer



Retreat in Buchenau. We are open for everybody, and have no special beginners group or anything like that. Everybody is integrated into the same Practice group, to learn from each other and remind each other of the essential instructions ongoing. In Osnabruck two to five people attend the weekly practice group, and also practice intensely during weekends.

**Oliver:** In Munich we have a practice group which meets regularly and there are some changes going on. At the time there is also a practice group in establishing progress in Saarbrücken. We keep our website up to date on this.

#### **How often does Rinpoche visit Germany?**

**Oliver:** Every second year Rinpoche came to Frankfurt, and every year he comes to Berlin and Buchenau. The Summer Retreat in Buchenau is special, because he only offers one week or longer retreats in the US (Serenity Ridge), Poland and Germany. So, looking to the future we don't want to ask Rinpoche in addition to his visits in Germany to also to come to Frankfurt. Of course we would like to invite him, but we realize that Rinpoche has a very full schedule. The last year he also had a weekend seminar in Saarbrücken.

#### **Do you also have plans to invite other lamas and teachers?**

**Florian:** This year in March we invited John Jackson to Buchenau for the *Red Garuda*, because various people in the sangha wanted to get in contact with these teachings. It was a special weekend with about twenty-five participants. In September we organized a sangha day with Geshe Thupten G. Negi in Frankfurt. And we had a Taste of The Three Doors weekend with Marcy Vaughn organized by George Ajhar in Frankfurt.

**Oliver:** If there is a wish and people want to organize it themselves, things will happen. When you give people the charge to do something, people get aware that they are not consumers. We once experienced that people had all kind of wishes, and when we started to

ask people for support they became a little calmer. The good experience we have now is that people are engaging.

#### **Can you say something about the European Center?**

**Oliver:** Last year we send an invitation letter to all the European sanghas. I am very happy that already six countries participate in the *Founders Circle*. This makes clear that the national sangha in Europe are standing next to each other and are going step by step in the same direction. We meet every month on Skype. We do everything organically, and everything is still open. We have a wish, we have plan and we look what to do, and we all have to stay open. It gives us a very good feeling that not somebody from Germany is doing something for anybody.

**Florian:** When there is the right time and place with the right people there will be the right money. We have established a project fund, and we are collecting money, but we don't force people too much. Depending on the price of the land we can say we have about ten percent of the money. This year in Buchenau with the auction we collected more than € 10.000.

#### **Is there something you would like to share with the readers of *Ligmincha Europe Magazine*?**

**Florian:** We love the European sangha, meeting friends all over Europe, it feels like a family. It is not only a little community. The openness is very inspiring, the warmth of the people, we can feel the community is growing and everybody in the community grows with it. We feel this not only in Europe, but also with the US, John Jackson, Marcy Vaughn, Alejandro Chaoul visiting Europe. We became a strong and brave sangha.

**Oliver:** During the international gathering on Serenity Ridge in summer 2012 I learned that in every sangha we have the same challenges, the same needs and it is wonderful to connect. We are thankful to share our experience, and may all benefit from it.







# Ligmincha Deutschland (Germany)

**Preserving Bön Buddhist Wisdom in the World**

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

The basic integral structure of the operation of Ligmincha Deutschland is described in the *Structure and Mission Statement of Ligmincha Deutschland*: the organization consists of the General Assembly, a Board and a Council, all under the spiritual guidance of Tenzin Rinpoche.

The function of the board is to direct major decisions in the organization and to oversee the direction or intention of the organization as it seen by the vision of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche.

The council is currently six volunteer positions whose members oversee and direct important

areas of the organization. Council members collaborate together and are in frequent communication with each other via a shared email list in which members receive communication from everyone. This allows for open communication and fosters collaboration between the various council positions and their responsibilities.

The General Assembly elects the Board, as well as receives and recognizes the Boards report of activities and finance for the last period.

On the following pages are the people who fulfill these functions and who be introduced.

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## Ligmincha Deutschland e.V.

General Assembly			
Further Volunteers	George Ahjar <i>Data Management</i>	Manuel Weihrauch <i>Volunteer Management</i>	Angelika Krone <i>Donor Management</i>
Council	Delia Liesegang <i>Programme and Events</i>	Wolfgang Krebs <i>Practice and Teachings</i>	n.n. <i>Communications</i>
	Gabriele Penders <i>Sangha Support</i>	Barbara Rung <i>Budget and Finance</i>	Ulla Riewer <i>Fundraising</i>
Board	Oliver Wirtz <i>Chairman</i>	Florian Bruckmann <i>Vice Chairman</i>	Elke Rung <i>Treasurer</i>
Spiritual Lead	Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche		



## The Board



**Oliver: Chair**  
[oliver.wirtz@ligmincha.de](mailto:oliver.wirtz@ligmincha.de)

Oliver Wirtz encountered the Dharma through his partner Florian and for the first time met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in August 2009 whose openness and clarity instantly enthralled him. Directly receiving the teachings from Rinpoche, starting with *Dream Yoga* in Frankfurt in 2010, to him is a great gift. In 2010 Oliver was made the Board Chair of Ligmincha Deutschland and thus enjoys having the opportunity to support Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's activities in Germany as well as the sangha. After the successful completion of his MBA studies being at the age of 43, Oliver is at the peak of his professional life, working as an executive in the financial service industry.

**Florian: Vice Chair**  
[florian.bruckmann@ligmincha.de](mailto:florian.bruckmann@ligmincha.de)

Florian Bruckmann was born in Frankfurt/Main in 1982. Through his parents, who have been students of Kyabje Tenga Rinpoche since the 1970's, he has been in contact with and practicing in the Karma Kagyu tradition since his early childhood.

When in 2007 he spontaneously listened to a *Tsa Lung* talk in Frankfurt, he was very surprised and instantly convinced by Tenzin Rinpoche's brilliant instructions and the multitude of tangible methods conveyed in such a warm and authentic way. Since then he focuses on Rinpoche's teachings in study and practice, actively involving in the local sangha and Ligmincha Deutschland, functioning as Vice Chair since 2010. Florian works as MTA at the laboratory for rare metabolic diseases at the pediatric clinic of Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe University Frankfurt/Main.

**Elke: Treasurer**  
[elke.rung@ligmincha.de](mailto:elke.rung@ligmincha.de)

After having been working in the Council Fund-raising department of the association for one year, Elke Rung was made treasurer in 2013. She's happily looking forward to facing the challenges of her new position. Aged 32 she works as assistant tax consultant freelancer in tax offices and companies. After having read the book on *Dream Yoga* and having had incisive dreams in search of a teacher, Elke met Rinpoche in the summer of 2006 and recognized him as her root teacher.





## The Council



**Wolfgang: Practice & Teachings**  
[wolfgang.krebs@ligmincha.de](mailto:wolfgang.krebs@ligmincha.de)

Wolfgang Krebs, age 63, conservator at the Museum of Ethnology in Frankfurt, first met Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in 1989/90 at Namkhai Norbu's center in Italy, listening to his first teachings. He was so impressed by Rinpoche's attempt to understand the Western obstacles in terms of comprehending the Dharma and especially Dzogchen, that since then he never missed an opportunity to attend the retreats in Germany and Austria with full trust. In 2001 he was one of the founding members and board member of Garuda Bön e.V. association (now Ligmincha Deutschland e.V.), organizing the annual German retreats with Rinpoche since. Having resigned from the board in 2010 Wolfgang is working within the Council Practice & Teachings.



**Delia: Program & Events**  
[delia.liesegang@ligmincha.de](mailto:delia.liesegang@ligmincha.de)

Delia Liesegang freshly joins us in the Council Program & Events of Ligmincha Deutschland. Another student of Rinpoche's called her attention to Tenzin Wangyal, and she first met him during the summer retreat in Buchenau in 2013. Being instantly enthused by Rinpoche's distinct and encompassing way of teaching she found the desire to continually attend his teachings and actively contribute something. Now she is looking forward to the cooperation and to new experiences. For many years Delia has been working as a chemist in the arena of science and quality management abroad, as a side line engaging in Naturopathy, *Prana* Healing, and shamanistic ways of healing, which increasingly forms her professional arena now.



**Gabriele: Sangha & Practice Support**  
[gabriele.penders@ligmincha.de](mailto:gabriele.penders@ligmincha.de)

Gabriele Penders (54, Psychologist, Respiratory Therapist and Body Therapist, Osnabrück) attended her first

retreat with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in the year 2000. Initially looking for teachings that unify Buddhist and Bon-Shamanist traditions, she was mutually fascinated by Rinpoche's distinct in direct way of teaching. Thus she recognized him as her teacher. During the following years she got involved in organizing the annual event in Buchenau as well as attending international retreats, supporting the idea of a common European sangha. From 2009 to 2013 she was a member of the board of Ligmincha Deutschland as treasurer. Now she committed herself to the Council Sangha & Practice Support.



**Barbara: Budget & Finance**  
[barbara.rung@ligmincha.de](mailto:barbara.rung@ligmincha.de)

Barbara Rung, age 56, has been an active member of the association in the Council Budget & Finance for one year now. In the summer of 2007 she had her first encounter with Rinpoche and the Dharma, accompanying her daughter to the retreat in Buchenau. There she managed to overcome her Asthma disorder within but a few days by the *Tsa Lung* exercises. This healing experience generated a notion of deep connection with Rinpoche and the Doctrine of Yungdrung Bon. Barbara is a self-employed entrepreneur of Financial Accounts.



**Ulla: Fundraising**  
[ulla.riewer@ligmincha.de](mailto:ulla.riewer@ligmincha.de)

In 2004 an American student of Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche recommended Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* to Ulla Riewer. He also recommended meeting him in person. The perspicuity of the book enthused her to read some more. In early 2005 Ulla received Dzogchen teachings in Dharamsala and since she is related to these teachings. In 2009 she first attended a teaching of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and was spontaneously thrilled by his vivid, joyous, plain way of teaching. Ulla wants to commit herself to the spreading of the distinct Bon Doctrine the way Rinpoche conveys it. The future Ligmincha Europe



Center is especially dear to her, providing a realistic chance of deeply rooting peace among people to her eyes. This is being generated by the individual, and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche is able to convey solutions for everyday life in his pragmatic way. For many years Ulla has taken an interest in spirituality, healing, and Buddhism. Among her teachers are the Dalai Lama and Master Zhi Chang Li, Stille Qi Gong. She is a Master of Communication Management, age 47, and wants to contribute her abilities to the fundraising.



**Manuel: Volunteers Management**  
[manuel.weihrauch@ligmincha.de](mailto:manuel.weihrauch@ligmincha.de)

Because he was interested in lucid dreams Manuel Weihrauch discovered Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan*

*Yogas of Dream and Sleep* in 2006. The distinct direct approach of Tibetan Dream Yoga and Rinpoche's style instantly appealed to him. He was lucky to meet with him first time in 2007 during a talk on *Tsa Lung* in Frankfurt. Since then, he has been attending the Summer Retreats and other events. Manuel's spiritual aspiration found a fertile home in the Bon Dzogchen practices of *Tummo* and *Red Garuda*. The *Inner Refuge* bestows power, deep trust and undreamt of stability for his life on him. Besides Bon he enjoys intensely communicating with shamans of the Shuar tribe, learning a lot about alternative healing and the indigenous Amazon culture. Within Ligmincha Deutschland Manuel sees to the volunteer management.

## Further Volunteers



**Claudia: Newsletter editing**  
[claudia.petri@ligmincha.de](mailto:claudia.petri@ligmincha.de)

Claudia Petri, age 58, read Rinpoche's books before finally meeting him in person in spring 2011 during a seminar. She recognized he was the teacher she had been looking for a long time. Now she helps in designing the newsletter. She is a natural health practitioner specialized in life care, end-of-life care, *Bardo* care, with graduations in Five Elements Diet, Aura Soma, Feng Shui and Homeopathy.



**George: Data Management**  
[george.ajhar@ligmincha.de](mailto:george.ajhar@ligmincha.de)

George Ajhar was fascinated by the distinct language and complexity of the topic of Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep* he had read for the first time in 2008. After the first personal encounter in March 2009 during a *Tsa Lung* teaching in Hamburg he knew he was

keen on learning more from this unique teacher. After having attended many more retreats and seminars he finally participated in the Three Doors Academy. George is 38 years old, taking care now of the data management within Ligmincha.



**Angelika: Donors' Management**  
[angelika.krone@ligmincha.de](mailto:angelika.krone@ligmincha.de)

During a psychotherapist advanced training, Angelika Krone heard of monks able to melt snow with their inner heat. When she found out that this is *Tummo* she registered for a retreat in Buchenau, finding more than she had looked for. Building on her Zen meditation experiences she is now devoting herself to the teachings and practice of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche since 2009. The power of the unbroken lineage to this day fascinated her, so she decided to become a member of Ligmincha and to help with preserving the lineage. Since 2011 she is in charge of Donor Management. She is self-employed as a psychotherapist with additional qualifications in Respiratory Therapy and reincarnation Therapy.







# Ligmincha Berlin

Preserving Bön Buddhist Wisdom in the World

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

## The Berlin sangha has a center with several regular practice groups

### When did it all start?

**Ulrike:** We organized the first teaching with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Berlin in 2006. Since then Rinpoche came every year for a weekend teaching and additionally at least once a year for an evening talk, except for 2013. The Berlin sangha grew fast, and people responded enthusiastically when Rinpoche suggested establishing a small center in Berlin with regular practice groups. In 2009 we found a place we could rent in Berlin-Kreuzberg, which is famous for its counterculture tradition and has a lively neighborhood. We also

fulfilled Rinpoche's wish to found a non-profit association for the Berlin sangha and friends. Now we have twenty-six members in our association, and four members on the board of Ligmincha Berlin: Ulrike Bross Kurat, Ilona Tullmin, Angelika Döhnert and Carmen Dietrich.

**Carmen:** In the beginning we had no money to pay the rent, so we asked all of our practitioners for a regular contribution. Since most of them were willing to commit themselves we took the chance. And the German association (Ligmincha



The founding of the association Ligmincha Berlin.



Deutschland) was so kind to support us financially in the beginning.

**What do you organize?**

**Ulrike:** After each seminar with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche we started a practice group. For us it was important that new students would get a chance to practice what they

just learned during a teaching with Rinpoche. Only after the *Bardo* teaching we did not start a practice group. Now we have six practice groups which meet for one evening every month with the practices of *Tsa Lung* and *Inner Refuge*; *Sherab Chamma*; the *Five Warrior Seed Syllables*; *Elemental and Life-Force Retrieval*; *Tummo* and *Dawa Gyaltsen*. In the practice groups, depending on the theme, there are about five to fifteen people.

**Carmen:** Rinpoche suggested that Ulrike would see who could lead the practice, and she discussed this with him until other solutions could be decided. So everybody who leads the practice has Rinpoche's permission. We also consulted Wolfgang Krebs who is the only instructor in Germany for the practice groups about which specific instructions should be given and which texts should be used. The people guiding the groups need to have some experience with the practice and should be able to answer questions about it; in most of the groups there is a mix of beginners and students who have been visiting Rinpoche's teachings for many years.

**Ulrike:** We invite other lamas, like Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, his brother Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso Choekhortshang, Khenpo Tenzin Yeshe and Geshe Thupten Negi for weekend teachings and/or talks and then there are always about twenty to twenty-five participants. It seems that the lamas love to come here in order to visit Rinpoche's students, give teachings and practice with us. Geshe Nyima has been here four times, and he gave the traditional Bon teachings on the *Nine Ways of Bön* and the *Three Heart*



Geshe Yungdrung Gyatso Choekhortshang in Berlin in 2013.

*Mantras*. We had the chance to ask detailed questions about the teachings and to discuss our experiences with him. With all the lamas we could learn more about offerings and rituals. We are happy with these teachings and instructions in a smaller scope.

**Carmen:** Since 2009 we also invited Wolfgang Krebs every year for one weekend. Wolfgang repeats Rinpoche's teachings and guides the practices from the Summer Retreat in Buchenau. For those who attended the retreat it is refreshing and deepens the experience, and for the others it is a unique opportunity to practice and to stay in contact with the teachings.

**Ulrike:** We also like to meet Rinpoche's long-term students from the US like John Jackson, who visited us last year, Alejandro Chaoul, and Marcy Vaughn, who gave a 'Taste of the Three Doors' (organized by the Three Doors Academy). She will visit one of the practice groups. It is wonderful to experience how each person integrates Rinpoche's teachings in his or her unique way.

**Carmen:** Sometimes we have special activities organized by someone of the sangha, like the *Tsethar* ceremony in 2011. Sarah Edgehill was going strongly for that and even made a website for it. This year she wanted to organize another *Tsethar* event, but it could not happen because it was too cold.

**Ulrike:** When Alejandro Chaoul taught the *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* in Poland last year some of our sangha members went there. After Poland he came to Berlin for an evening talk and inspired enough people to engage more with the *Tsa Lung* and *Trul Khor* practices. So this year we could invite him to teach *Tsa Lung Trul Khor* on a weekend in September. Practicing with his instructions was wonderful and helped us very much to become more precise with our *Tsa Lung* practice





besides learning the *A-tri Trul Khor* practices.

**Carmen:** Sangha members who go to the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle in Austria practiced for some time together. But then this stopped, because there has not been anyone to take care and organize the group. We also practiced for one day with Geshe Gyatso the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Trul Khor*. Again people liked to practice and reflect together what they had learned, but it has not started yet. We like to give those who want to, the possibility to practice together, but the board is not able to organize every group.

**Ulrike:** Most of us were quite new students of Rinpoche with different Buddhist or other spiritual backgrounds when we opened the center. In the beginning we were a little bit overwhelmed with the amount of different Bon practices we could do, and the different directions sangha members could focus on like doing the practices after the weekend retreats with Rinpoche or focusing more on the *Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud* cycle or *Trul Khor*, or The Three Doors. Everybody had to make decisions for himself or herself, and as a group we had to find a way how to deal with the variety of possibilities opening up. But now we have a good structure with the practice groups, all the weekend seminars and other events happening.

**Carmen:** We also had a sangha weekend this year for the second time. With a group of fourteen people we went to a very nice place outside Berlin and had an intense practice retreat. It is also a way to know each other better since we plan and organize the practice schedule, as well as prepare our meals together. In the center we organized two or three times a year a practice day with one special practice like the *Element Retrieval* or *Tsa Lung* and the *Five Warrior Syllables*. When we have something to celebrate or overcome obstacles we also practice the *Healing Ritual of Yeshe Walmo*.

**That's a lot what you offer. What are your plans**



Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang in Berlin in 2012.

**for the future?**

**Carmen:** One of the main projects in the future is to find a bigger center. So we have to check out what could work financially and also how the work can be managed.

**Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche has an apartment in Berlin. Can you tell about that?**

**Ulrike:** Since 2006 Rinpoche has an apartment, where he stays when he teaches in Berlin and where also his Geshe guests can stay when they teach here. Sometimes he spends time with his family there and sometimes Rinpoche visits our practice groups when he is here, but most of the time we do not know about his short visits here. He seems to be 'in and out' while he is traveling within Europe.

**What relation do you have with Ligmincha Deutschland?**

**Ulrike:** A good one; and we are so grateful that they are doing the long term national and European PR-work on a very professional level, and organize the wonderful one-week Summer Retreat for all of us. Compared to Ligmincha Deutschland we feel more like spontaneous activists although we are doing long-term planning as well, like with the seminar with Alejandro. Most of our active members including the board are members of Ligmincha Deutschland as well. Since March 2013 our website is integrated with Ligmincha Deutschland.

We exchange news and information and Ligmincha Deutschland provides translations of Rinpoche's teaching materials of each teaching for us.

**Carmen:** Our work is more on a local focus to cultivate and support a sangha life in Berlin. Together we try to find the best way to help people who are interested in Bon and Rinpoche's teachings.

**Interviews by Ton Bisscheroux**

Photos: courtesy of the German sangha



# WHAT'S HAPPENED IN EUROPE

We want to share the events of the European sangha with you. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche visited Buchenau, Copenhagen and Moscow. Marcy Vaughn, Alejandro Chaoul-Reich and John Jackson visited Europe. And Geshe Thupten Negi is travelling through Europe. Here is an impression of the events.



**June 21-23:** The *Sherab Chamma* Workshop in Vågå was the first Bon workshop in the heart of Norway. It was led by Jaroslaw Kotas, an instructor from Poland. Even when there were only three participants, the retreat was fully successful and absolutely perfect for all.



**July 29 - August 4:** The European Summer Retreat in Buchenau, Germany, was visited by about one-hundred-thirty people from many countries. Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught the *Pith realizations of the Zhang Zhung Nyen Gyud Masters*, part 3.







**September 13-15:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *The Practice of the Six Lamps* in Moscow, Russia.



**September 7-8:** John Jackson taught the *Five Element Practice* in Bukkura, Pantelleria (Sicily), Italy.







**September 4:** Alejandro Chaoul-Reich came for an evening talk about the positive effects of Tibetan yoga for cancer patients to Utrecht, the Netherlands. One of the things he said was: "Others go first, but not instead of yourself."



**September 6-8:** Alejandro Chaoul-Reich in Berlin, Germany, with people from Argentina, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, and other countries united in a wonderful weekend *Tsa Lung Trulkhör*.



**September 13-15 and 21-22** in Frankfurt and in Berlin, Germany, Taste of The Three Doors presented by Marcy Vaughn.







**July 23-28:** Summer retreat in Poland where Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche taught *21 Nails*.



**September 6-8:** Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Bulle, the French speaking part of Switzerland, The topic was: *Awakening of the Luminous Mind: the gift of Inner Refuge*.







**August 30 - September 1:**  
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche  
taught in Copenhagen,  
Denmark, *Living with Joy,*  
*Dying in Peace.*



H.E. Yongdzin Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, Geshe Samten Tsukphud and Geshe Thupten Negi.



**September 13 - 17:** Geshe Thupten Negi's Europe trip, organized by Ligmincha Deutschland, started near Frankfurt with *The Precious Treasury of Space and Awareness* (Tib. *Yingrig Rinpoche Dzö*), by Shardza Rinpoche. The teachings were organized by Dorothea Mihm.



**September 28:** Geshe Thupten Negi practiced with sangha members from Belgium and the Netherlands in Namur, Belgium.







Ligmincha Poland

Preserving Bön Buddhist Wisdom in the World

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

## Teachings from text *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen* and Blessing of new Gompa



**H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak, Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung and Tenzin Wangyal**  
**24-27th October 2013**  
**Chamma Ling Center in city Wilga (60 km from capital Warsaw)**

**Dear practitioners and supporters of the Bon tradition!**

We have great pleasure to announce the official opening and consecration of the new *Gompa* at Chamma Ling Retreat Center in Poland. We are honoured to receive a special visit by H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (the most important teacher of Bon Buddhist tradition), who will be conducting this unique ceremony, along with teachings from the text *The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*. He will be accompanied by Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche (abbot of Bon monastery in Nepal) and Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche (main teacher of Ligmincha Poland).

H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche will introduce us to the *Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*, a powerful heart-essence teaching from the Tibetan Bon Buddhist tradition. This teaching will give a direct introduction to the clear, open awareness of the Dzogchen view as well as methods for maintaining this state.

***The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen are:***

1. The Heart Mirror of the View
2. The Heart Mirror of the Meditation

3. The Heart Mirror of the Result
4. The Heart Mirror of Conduct
5. The Heart Mirror that Explains the Pure Realms and Lands of Samsara
6. The Heart Mirror of Six-Fold Consummation
7. The Heart Mirror that Explains the Benefit of Meeting with This Teaching.

You are all most welcome to join us in Chamma Ling for this wonderful occasion! Please tell all your friends and family to join us as well!

You can watch short film (4 minutes) of invitation for this special event [here](#).

You can register for the teachings, accommodation and food in Chamma Ling: [goc.kocur@poczta.fm](mailto:goc.kocur@poczta.fm).

The retreat will start 24th October at 10.00 and will end 27th October at 18.00.

We would greatly appreciate financial support and voluntary help, no matter how great or small. Contacts:

Promotion: [anelka86@op.pl](mailto:anelka86@op.pl)

Financial support: [rbiernacka@poczta.onet.pl](mailto:rbiernacka@poczta.onet.pl)

Volunteering: [debowski@reklamaforma.pl](mailto:debowski@reklamaforma.pl)



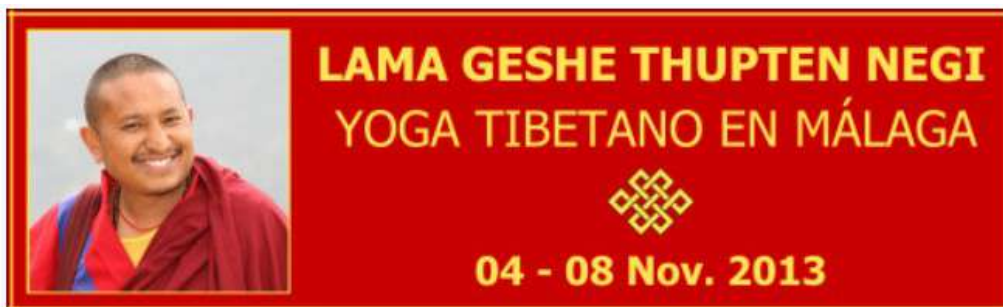


# Ligmincha Spain

## Preserving Bön Buddhist Wisdom in the World

TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE

### Tibetan Yoga and Sound Healing



**Geshe Thupten Negi** is a scholar from the Bon-Buddhist Tradition. He is responsible for the new Bon-Buddhist Lishu Institute in India and for the third time he is visiting Spain in November 2012. He gives introductions to meditation and Tibetan Yoga.

#### Meditative Practice *Tsa Lung*

**Tuesday 5 November 17.30 - 20.00**

Through the five *Tsa Lung* exercises and The *Nine Breathings of Purification* is to open blockages and obscurations in the chakras and to rebuild the proper flow of the energy through the whole body, to heal our body, to overcome our negative habits and to improve our relationship with the surrounding.

#### Sound healing

**Wednesday 6 November 17.30 - 20.00**

Through the singing and chanting of sacred syllables and mantras, spiritual practitioners, healers, and lay persons are able to purify and restore harmony to a range of physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions.

#### More information:

Language: English with translation to Spanish

Entrance: free

Place: Centro de Recursos Participativos, Málaga

Contact: tel. 666 919 274 (Bogusia) or tel. 685 893 624 (Laura sólo tardes)

email: [info@vivesano.eu](mailto:info@vivesano.eu) website: [www.ligmincha.es](http://www.ligmincha.es)

#### Private consultations:

You can make appointments with him to perform rituals for blessing, prosperity, healing and purification for your home, workplace, land etc.





# GURU DEVOTION REGGAE

Lucky disciple, blessed disciple,  
happy disciple, blissful disciple,  
from the depths of Samsara  
brought forth by the Guru,  
introduced by the Guru  
into the essence of the Dharma ...

Namo Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe  
Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe

Listen to the teachings –  
It is all about YOU,  
spontaneous devotion  
in the shower of blessing,  
resting in the nature  
effortlessly blissful,  
try to understand that  
it will always be with you

Namo Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe  
Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe

May all sentient beings  
come in contact with their Guru,  
turn from wand'ers in Samsara  
into Bodhisattva princelings,  
dissolving their obstacles  
and unfolding into vastness

Namo Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe  
Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe Namō Gurubhe

If you know your nature  
you will always have a place to go.

*Michael Bachnick*

(to the melody of Buffalo Soldier by Bob Marley)



# THE SIX VAJRA VERSES

**Although apparent phenomena  
manifest as diversity  
yet this diversity is non-dual,  
and of all the multiplicity  
of individual things that exist  
none can be confined in a limited concept.**

**Staying free from the trap of any attempt  
to say it's 'like this', or 'like that',  
it becomes clear that all manifested forms  
are aspects of the infinite formless,  
and, indivisible from it,  
are self-perfected.**

**Seeing that everything is self-perfected  
from the very beginning,  
the disease of striving for any achievement  
comes to an end of its own accord,  
and just remaining in the natural state as it is,  
the presence of non-dual contemplation  
continuously, spontaneously arises.**

Source: *The Crystal and the Way of Light - Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen*, Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Compiled and Edited by John Shane, Snow Lion Publications, NY, 2000 page 15.



Photo by Anja Benesch







## heaven earth human rediscovering gratitude

Call for artists:

We are selecting artists for an international fine arts exhibition  
Europe

May 2014

theme:

OFFERINGS, MASSES of ORNAMENTS & INEXHAUSTIBLE

**NECTARS: A VISUAL DEDICATION FOR ALL THE PRECIOUS  
TEACHINGS WE HAVE RECEIVED**

This call is open for all artists who are Bon practitioners to exhibit their artwork as part of our continued commitment of support to our vibrant Ligmincha community. All artists who reside or maintain studio space in Europe can submit works. However, applications are also open to those worldwide whose work is in digital format.

We are seeking 2 and 3 dimensional works of art including prints, drawings, mixed media compositions, paintings, photographs, ceramics, and moveable sculptures. We strongly encourage video artists and other technological innovators to submit new media forms of contemporary art as well.

Even though we are open to all proposed forms of art and media, we will focus on works which cause people to reflect on the behaviours of gratitude and respect for mother earth in our local community, and a kind of art capable of challenging the viewers' traditional perspective on gratitude itself.

For application details and submission requirements, please send a mail to:  
[bonarts2014@gmail.com](mailto:bonarts2014@gmail.com)



please note: Artwork must be created since becoming a meditation practitioner in the BON TRADITION.

The arts exhibition is structured around 3 main themes: **heaven earth human**

**heaven** is the place where we will explore visual displays of gratefulness, appreciation for this precious life and for all the Bon / Tibetan wisdom teachings we have received.

On **earth**, we will display the recognition of our place in the world, and how it directly relates to our expressions of appreciation. What kind of impact do we make on our family, communities, culture, futures, the environment?  
How do we align ourselves with the critical situation of our planet?

As **humans**, how do we manifest the results of regular practice and our expressions of respect into contemporary material form? How does the result of being connected to this ancient culture affect the way we express ourselves?



# WHO IS FEELING GUILTY?

**During the European Summer Retreat 2013 in Buchenau, Germany, Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche talked about guilt, which is a typical mind or ego game. Here is an edited transcript on this subject.**

On YouTube you can watch a video where I talk about guilt: [Freeing Yourself from Guilt, Blame, and Shame](#). And now I would like to say something as well. It seems that the mind is always looking for something to be unhappy about. It is as if we have a goal to be unhappy. Guilt is identifying with some wrong doing or wrong being, and the reason we seem to be excited about, or secretly identifying with this pain identity is because we don't think we have any other answers. That is simply not true. When we find access to the Inner Refuge, when we find access to that unconditional space and that awareness, then guilt is not all that exciting.

You are not that interested in being in that kind of space, but, only if you know a better space in which to be. When there is no better space to be, then guilt or pain is the space in which you dwell.

For example, when something isn't working in your life, have you noticed that you often repeat to yourself, "This is a problem; this is a problem; this is a problem"? I wonder why you have to repeat this so many times as if "this is a problem" was a special mantra? One time is okay; two times is okay; even three times is okay, but it seems that you have to repeat it endlessly. "This is a problem; this is a problem; this is a problem. Do you get my problem? I want you to know my problem."

Somehow you are very persistent in letting information about your problem pervade to the rest of the world. Who cares about that and why? It is all because you don't know anything better.

If you find a more open space in your mind, you will be able to feel more peace and be more protected. If you find a better place to be, then guilt, pain, or a persistent focus on problems is less exciting. When you feel guilty, for example, you may find yourself thinking, "I should have done that, and I didn't; I said something wrong to that person." Instead of thinking, "I should have done better; I should have done better," be more aware of the one who is feeling guilty. Try to understand the mind who is saying, "I should have done better."

That mind wants to feel guilty and to feel pain. It is basically a pain body or pain identity. So treat that mind with compassion and with openness. You want to host that mind, but do not think that mind has this incredible logic, and that you really should have done something completely

different. Allow the pain; feel the feelings; and then let it go. You feel bad, and one characteristic of that mind is to ruminate on what you could have done better. The reasoning of your mind is not good logic; it is just a series of stupid thoughts. So, treat stupid thoughts with kindness: "You are stupid, but I love you," rather than thinking, "You are smart and you have an absolute reason to make me suffer for the rest of my life." That is not good logic. Instead: "You are stupid, but I love you, and I am hosting you; I give you light; I give you warmth; and I let you freely go."

**Transcription by Ton Bisscheroux  
Edited by Marcy Vaughn**





# FREEDOM FROM FEAR

In 2003 His Eminence Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche visited the Netherlands and was interviewed. Gaby Hollmann transcribed the interview, edited it slightly in 2007, and put the text on internet. Here we reprint the text.

**Rinpoche, do you feel anger and aggression in yourself?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Yes, of course. Not only me, but all sentient beings experience in themselves fear, aggression, and anger. It is painful feeling these kinds of things. One can't do much about these feelings directly, but I do believe that investigating where fear and aggression come from, asking what is happening and what is the source of the afflictive emotions make it possible to correct the source. One can then directly and concretely eliminate or purify an emotion at its source. Once you realize where an afflictive emotion comes from, how it started, what it leads to, you can soften it. If you know the source more and more, then it can be helpful.

**What is the head ... 'up here'?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Yes, you can see it clearly. When you notice that something is going wrong, you correct your vision immediately. What happens to your feeling? If you ever feel contempt or say something mean or bad sometimes, immediately it is an experience for you.

**How does one transform an experience?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** If something is good or comfortable for you, you accept it without a doubt. Yes, you accept it, and it doesn't matter whether it is something good or bad. If you feel comfortable and something is easy and pleasant for you, then you turn it into a friend ... 'up here.' Our connections are very much like a reflection: If you look in the mirror, then you will see your face ... 'up here.' It is similar with feelings. If you look at feelings, you are closer to them, you can meet and connect with them, and you can make yourself happier. If your feeling and someone else's view are not close but in discordance, it causes a headache. If you push and push, more grey hair will grow, and this makes you more and more angry – then you fight. If you are the leader of a nation,

you can even make war.

**Do you know an antidote against anger?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** The real antidote against anger depends upon the person who wishes to purify and eliminate the headache. That individual tries to follow the instructions of the Buddha, who first teaches us to investigate and understand why we suffer, why we are fearful, why we are miserable, and how painful that is. What does one do when one looks at those feelings the moment they arise? Calms down and generates compassion. Those are the very antidotes.

Compassion does not mean to only speak about it, rather it means to have it for all sentient beings in the same way as one has it for oneself. It means realizing that every living being suffers the same way one does too. In moments of realization, it is impossible to be angry and resentful; instead, one realizes that one wants to eliminate suffering as quickly as possible. Thinking this way, i.e., not wanting to heap suffering upon suffering, one calms down as fast as possible when difficulties arise. That is the only way to practice compassion. With the intention to eliminate anger and resentment, one does not act out with body and speech, rather one calms down just as fast as it takes to switch on a light.

Suffering is created by ignorance. The antidote is realization of emptiness, the true nature. Depending upon how much you learn and practice, you slowly become purified at the root. When you are purified at the root, i.e., the source, the emotions do not grow as seeds again. So, there are two ways to apply antidotes: immediately having compassion and, from the root, realizing the true nature, which is emptiness.

**Let us assume that the Buddha meets someone like binLaden. What happens when they meet? What would the Buddha say?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Yes, it depends upon the connection. For instance, if the Buddha came directly in front of binLaden, then he probably would not trust the Buddha. It doesn't help just to see the face of the Buddha. If his intention changes a little and he wishes to follow the Buddha's advice, then the Buddha can do something for him. If binLaden

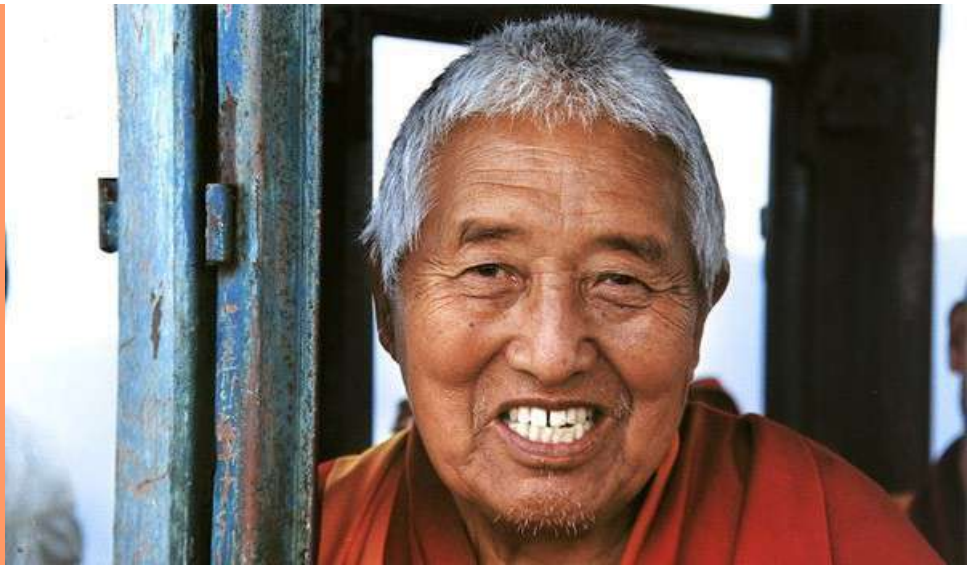


## H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

H.E. Lopon Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche is a senior teacher of Bon, the native cultural tradition of Tibet. He was born in 1926 in Kham, Tibet, began his studies when he was very young, and took the vows at 15. He continued studying at the major Bon institutions in Central

Tibet, obtained the Geshe degree from Menri Monastery, and was elected Lopon ('head teacher') when he was 27. Wounded severely while imprisoned during the turmoil of the 1960's that was China's Cultural Revolution, he saw himself forced to flee to Nepal.

Prof. David Snellgrove invited Rinpoche to London; he became visiting scholar at both London and Cambridge Universities until 1963. The collaboration with David Snellgrove resulted in the publication of *The Nine Ways of Bon*, which was the first academic study of the Bon Tradition conducted in the West. In 1964 he returned to India, worked for the American Library of Congress in New Delhi, and published many Bon texts. In 1967 he founded Tobgyal Sarpa in Himachal Pradesh, the settlement for Bonpo refugees in India. At the invitation of Prof. Helmut Hoffmann, Rinpoche was visiting scholars at the University of Munich in 1969 and contributed significantly to compiling the *Tibetan-German-English Dictionary*. From 1970 to 1986 Rinpoche taught the monks at the newly established Dolanji Monastic Centre in India and supervised further publishing of major Bon texts. Having granted six monks the *Geshe* title after they completed the nine-year curriculum, Rinpoche travelled to Tibet and encouraged the monks at Menri and many other Bon sites in East and Central Tibet to stay and restore the destroyed monasteries; he bestowed initiations and ordained many monks during his visit.



In 1988 Lopon Namdak Rinpoche inaugurated the Tritten Norbutse Monastery in Nepal; he accepted many invitations to teach in the US and Europe. During the Kalachakra Initiation that His Holiness the Dalai Lama imparted in New York in 1991, Rinpoche was asked to speak about the nature of the mind. He returned to Tibet the next year, imparted many teachings, ordained a great number of monks, and founded the 'Reception House' for Bon followers in Lhasa. Starting 1993, he offered a seven-year cycle of instructions at the Ligmincha Institute that was founded by Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche in Virginia. In that year he published the book *Heart Drops of Dharmakaya: Dzogchen Practice of the Bon Tradition by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen*. Rinpoche continued travelling to Tibet to support the monks there, founded the Dialects School in the monasteries in India, built a library at Tritten Norbutse Monastery, and continues presenting teachings worldwide.

In 2005 he founded the new Bonpo Shenten Dargye Ling. The first teaching in Shenten Dargye Ling was the *Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen*.

In August 2010 he consecrated the stupa in Shenten Dargye Ling with H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima, 33rd Abbot of Menri, and in December 2010 he consecrated the Great Stupa in Chamma Ling, Valle de Bravo, Mexico with H.H. and many Bonpo teachers and Geshe.





has no intention to change, then just seeing the Buddha doesn't help, because everything comes from one's own intention. Seeing the face of the Buddha doesn't change anything.

**If binLaden wants to kill him?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** If he could, but he can't, because the Buddha's body is not a material thing. He can't shoot him with a gun, so it's not possible. Even if it were possible, then if he wanted to, maybe then.

**May I ask you a personal question?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Yes.

**What makes you cry? What moves you?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Fear, suffering, and sadness. Sometimes when somebody is extremely happy then tears also come to their eyes. It depends on the cause.

**It seems that my question makes you happy.**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Yes, sometimes something that makes one happy or is funny makes one laugh.

**Do you think I am a funny man?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** I don't mean you directly, but you asked me why tears come, so those are reasons. Sometimes one is too happy, and sometimes one laughs very much, then tears can come to one's eyes.

**What happens if one has no antidotes to fear?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** If one doesn't have any antidotes, one can't do anything. Fear is a thought. Without applying any antidotes, fear cannot disappear, rather it grows more and more – more and more thinking, stronger and stronger, and more and more fear. Arousing compassion in one's mind can temporarily help against fear and a headache, but the more fear that comes, the stronger it grows.

There are so many belief systems, like Christianity, Buddhism, Muslim, and they offer various instructions. But the real antidote against fear and suffering is purifying the cause at the root. It is necessary to find the root, then you can apply the antidote. Simply taking a pain killer when you have a headache only offers temporary relief. Suffering is not one's real nature; it only comes from temporary conditions and from consciousness. Seeking reality is the way to overcome fear and pain. There is no use converting or forcing someone to do this or that, which only creates more fighting and can lead to a war – more headaches, more fear. So, it is better to try to appreciate, acknowledge, and integrate what the real truth is, what the real medicine is to purify fear and suffering.

**Is there anything you wish to tell the people in Holland?**

**Yongdzin Rinpoche:** Yes, let's see how many people you convert to purify and attain freedom from suffering and fear.

**Thank you very much.**

With gratitude to the Yungdrung Bon Association for hosting the interview broadcast in Holland in 2003.

**Transcription by Gaby Hollmann**

Photo from the website of Shenten Dargye Ling



## TENZIN WANGYAL RINPOCHE'S 2013 AND 2014 EUROPEAN SEMINARS AND ON-LINE TEACHINGS

When	Where	What	More information
October 24 – 27	Chamma Ling Center, Wilga (near Warsaw), Poland	Teachings from text The Seven Mirrors of Dzogchen and blessing of the new Gompa; with H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak and Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung	<a href="http://ligmincha.pl">ligmincha.pl</a>
November 16 – December 8	Your computer, GlideWing Productions	Online workshop: Tibetan Dream Yoga	<a href="http://www.glidewing.com">www.glidewing.com</a>
December 14 15.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Free full-day live webcast	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
December 29 21.00 – 22.30 CET	Your computer	Live webcast from the annual Winter Retreat	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.org">www.ligmincha.org</a>
<b>2014</b>			
February 28 – March 2	To be announced, in Germany	8th International sangha practice-weekend of the European sangha	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>
March 14 – 16	Paris, France	Weekend seminar: Awakening of the Luminous Mind	<a href="http://ligmincha.fr">ligmincha.fr</a>
March 21 – 23	Vienna, Austria	Weekend seminar: Dreamyoga	<a href="http://ligmincha.at">ligmincha.at</a>
March 28 – 30	Berlin, Germany	Weekend seminar: Dreamyoga	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>
May 15	Helsinki, Finland	The Fivefold Teachings of Dawa Gyaltzen	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.fi">www.ligmincha.fi</a>
May 23 – 25	Amsterdam, Netherlands	Weekend seminar: A-tri, Part 2 (of 3 Parts)	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.nl">www.ligmincha.nl</a>
August 4 – 10	Buchenau, Germany	Summer Retreat: The Six Lokas	<a href="http://www.ligmincha.de">www.ligmincha.de</a>
September 12 – 14	Moscow, Russia	Weekend seminar: The Practice of the Six Lamps, Part 2	<a href="http://www.bonpo.info">www.bonpo.info</a>

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

**Free internet teachings and videos on [YouTube](#) and [Ustream](#)**

